

DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION:
A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS AND ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

by

Barbara S. Smith

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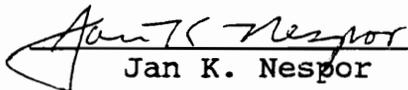
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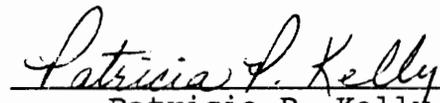
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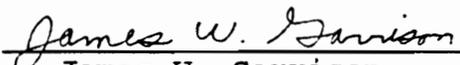
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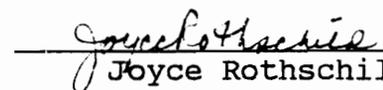
Jan K. Nespor



Patricia P. Kelly



James W. Garrison



Joyce Rothschild

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Committee Chairperson: Rosary V. Lalik
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(ABSTRACT)

A philosophical and historical review of the evolving and growing definition of democratic education through the writings of John Dewey, Nel Noddings, and Joyce Rothschild was accomplished in a literature review that included commentaries from the works of Jesse Goodman, John Goodlad, Amy Gutmann, Hugh Sockett, Kenneth Strike, and Maxine Greene, and others. The review of literature leads up to the ethnographic case study of an alternative school that has been in existence for twenty-two years and is a member of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools. As an ethnographic work, I "write the culture" as I find it at Connectionist School with a special interest in the systemic, organic differences between their democratic organization and traditional bureaucratic public and private schools.

The study is a contribution to school reform efforts that are directed toward transformation of schools (Goodlad, 1990; Strike, 1993; Sockett, 1993) and emphasizes the need for a pervasive ethic of care (Noddings, 1984, 1992).

DEDICATION

For Dad: my first best friend and my lifelong teacher. Anything I have accomplished or will accomplish is inspired by the love, diligence, and tenacity I have learned from his companionship and humble example as we accomplished the work of the farm together. I have been taught by his life, and occasionally by his few and well-chosen words given at the times I asked for them. He has always made his material resources my resources, providing I was willing to take responsibility to restore the supply. Such an approach I am grateful for since it taught me something about fairness, to understand the true sacrifice and work it takes to build up the store, and because his approach does not spoil or provide unmerited privilege that will end up dominating others. Dad has shown genuine and responsible unselfishness. Dad, you're the wind beneath my wings, and I'll always be trying to be like you.

For Mom: she makes my Dad a better Dad. She has supported him in all of his work, taking up more than her share at his side. She has also unselfishly supported her children, showing interest and care at all times. Because of her influence I am a more sensitive and confident person. She, too, has become a best friend to me. Because she has not always had what is due her, particularly an opportunity to develop her beautiful "voice," I am more dedicated to

critical democracy that is for everybody and I hope her melody will sing through me.

There are not two better parents a daughter could wish for, and I am glad for the opportunity to say so upon the completion of an accomplishment they helped to make possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the last three years at Virginia Tech, I have received instruction from professors who cared deeply about education--for everybody, and who have cared about me as an individual student as well, being more than fair to me when the pressure has been on. They have expressed "faith" in me (Fromm, 1956; 102-107) and provided an atmosphere of "confirmation" (Noddings, 1984, pp. 178, 193; 1986) for my work. Without such a context, the completion of this program would have been unnecessarily more difficult and would have been of much less value. Modeling by teachers may be said to be more important in teacher education programs than in others (Goodlad, 1990), but it is undeniably important in all teaching (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). It seems especially important, then, for it to be present in teacher education for democracy. I am deeply grateful that excellence of care and instruction have been thoroughly present in the program of studies I have undertaken.

Words that would describe Drs. Rosary Lalik, Jan Nespor, Pat Kelly, Jim Garrison, and Joyce Rothschild would be: kind, thoughtful, caring, perceptive, believing, intriguing, and stimulating to the growth of the total person. Additionally, Dr. Rosary Lalik as my advisor, has provided more support, guidance, and confirmation than I could have imagined possible. Because of new understandings I have gained

through her life and teaching, new possibilities and directions are available for my own.

Special thanks also to Dr. Jerry Niles for his unforgettable and life changing course "Teaching and Teacher Education" as well as his example to me as a student teaching model director. I have identified myself as a "teacher educator" and considered "how to be" (as a teacher educator) through his thoughtful instruction and example.

For the last two years, the staff, students, and parents have welcomed me into their school and lives at Connectionist School (a fictitious name) where I conducted my research study. Their interest, cooperation, and enthusiasm have not only informed my study but are a shining example of what is possible for an organization where caring about people is put ahead of concern for things, both material and immaterial.

Last, I would like to thank my friends for their love, encouragement, and sacrifices, most notably Kathleen Carico. Her incredible depth of kindness continues to inspire and shape me into a more deeply kind person myself.

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CHAPTER 1

Nature of the Problem

Purpose of the Study

A study of democracy in education is needed that is grounded both in the writings of the theorists of democracy and in an actual school that is striving toward the realization of democratic association in its practice. The writings of the theorists do not define or evaluate the practices of the actual school; theory and practice are looked at alongside one another. This way they can have the potential to interact or converse with one another, sometimes affirming and other times raising new questions to explore.

The purpose of this study will be to better understand the qualitative difference of school life in a democratic rather than bureaucratic organization. By working toward an understanding of democracy I am not suggesting that there is an essentialist, non-evolutionary definition. Nor am I suggesting by the study of one school that there is any one democratic organization to be emulated as a model, regardless of how fully it meets certain criteria. Rather, the study explored the potentials and dilemmas associated with democratic life in a particular school, the ones that become more apparent when theory and practice are considered together.

Of particular interest to me in this study will be the effect that the organization of a school, as a democratic

workplace, has on the organizational structure itself, on the role of the teachers in the school, and on the design of curriculum. As will be shown, two issues moved to the forefront in the study of Connectionist School: communication and control. Both issues are inherent in a definition of democracy. The task of defining democracy is the subject of the following section.

Definition of Democracy

The problem of democracy in education is, in part, one of definition (Giroux and McLaren, preface to Goodman, 1992). The etymological definition is "commons, the people" from "demo," combined with "rule" from "cratie," so we have as a definition "government by the people" (Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. IV, 1989). To the Greeks it meant popular government, and eventually to Aristotle "government by the mob." Democracy came to be distrusted as a societal form in Greece because it degenerated into a situation wherein the rich paid for votes, contributing to the collapse of the city-state.

In contrast, through Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson, and others, our nation has come to regard democracy highly, claiming it as a national ideal. Democracy means different things to different people: to some it means active participation in decision-making, with the intent that all of the people affected play a role in evaluating, discussing, and deciding policies and courses of action. To others, democracy

simply means to have the people choose their representative leaders and leave the "driving" to them, including discussion. A corollary of this latter view is that many of the people, due to apathy, will not bother to participate. This is considered an advantage by some who think that the participants should be limited to the more informed, and therefore more "involved" members of a society (Berelson in Pateman, 1970, p. 7). However, limited participation cannot be considered to be an "inspiring" conception of democracy; to limit participation is equivalent to representing only some of the people (Goodman, 1992, p. 3). Limiting participation in a "democracy" is the same problem Jurgen Habermas (1979) describes as distorted and coercive "conversation," which results in an undemocratic ethos. Limiting participation in conversations is the same as saying democracy is not for all of the people, otherwise they would be welcome to participate and communicate their interests and be recognized. Democracy falls short of its promise if taken to mean rule by the elites who "rise" (however unfairly) to power.

Others define democracy primarily as a "way of life" or philosophy. To most, it at least means rule by the people without admitting privilege due to birth, wealth, sex, race, or creed (Good, 1956). It also means recognition of the inner dignity of each individual, protecting and promoting the personality of all. Each person is free to think, to investi-

gate, to express him/herself, and to create. Along with this regard for the dignity of each person goes the assumption that individual accomplishment enriches the lives of all (Good, 1956). The beauty of democracy, then, is that each individual is valued, and his/her growth is fostered and sought after, resulting in the heightened experience of the whole of society based on the common regard for fellow man.

Mary Catherine Bateson (1989), in discussing "complementarity," shows how people with varying strengths and abilities can have the effect of bringing out the good by valuing rather than denying the better features of another. She draws on an experience of working on a project with a past associate to illustrate:

(We) worked well together.... He did not assert or defend dominance, either as a male or a natural scientist. Each of us had knowledge and skills the other lacked; we had no need to prove that one set of skills was superior to the other or to conceal our areas of ignorance.... We had genuine differences that allowed each of us to meet a need in the other, pursuing mysteries that only the other could unravel, with a mutual delight in teaching and learning.... For complementarity to be truly creative, it is not sufficient for need to run in both directions; it is necessary to acknowledge that

both contributions are of equal value and that both are freely given. (pp. 8-9)

I would like to believe that no class, status group, sex, race, or creed has a privileged position or taken for granted set of advantages over other classes, groups, sex, races, or creeds. In this same spirit, individuals, including parents over children, do not hold sway over other individuals in such a way as to thwart the development of a self-determined course in life (Gutmann, 1987, p. 45). If this kind of freedom from domination cannot be considered to be part of the meaning of democracy, then we have an inadequate definition, and nothing to prize beyond the meaning we would ascribe to being called a "republic." There needs to be "more truth than poetry" to the meaning of democracy. Throughout this document, I will show how Dewey, Pateman, Noddings, Rothschild, and others share this fuller meaning with me.

Whether schools are democratic workplaces, or whether they are toward the bureaucratic end of the continuum, makes a qualitative difference in school life. Particularly, it affects the kind of education students receive, and the nature of work teachers enjoy. The issues involved in an improved quality of school life are open communication (Habermas, 1979) and non-hierarchical control (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). For instance, when teachers design and implement curriculum in view of the students in their classrooms rather than by

carrying out the directives of "experts" through curriculum guides, teaching takes on a qualitatively different character. It is further shown that the coordinator of the overall program and staff has a qualitatively different, and more meaningful role. More authentic efficiency and effectiveness are possible. Inclusive and open conversations are at the heart of the difference.

Inclusion or exclusion from conversations, and who chooses whether to include or not include the others, is the way we may locate the locus of control (Garrison, 1991). I assert that the individual is valued and cultivated less in a bureaucratic setting than in a democratic one. These assumptions, which I subsequently questioned as I conducted the study, are the reasons a study of democracy as it relates to organizational design of the school is important.

Individuals must not only be free in a democracy, but they must be supported in their efforts toward "self-actualization." (Goodman citing a concept of Fromm, 1992, p. 9). On the other hand, Goodman states "each individual's self-actualization can be fully realized only within a just and caring society" (p. 9). A democratic education must include not only a high value on every individual, but a balancing ethos of community. If the dialectical tension between the two becomes out of balance either way, Goodman shows that democracy cannot be realized. With too much emphasis on

individualism, democracy may be displaced by selfishness. On the other hand, an overly strong sense of community can lead to social conformity (pp. 9-10).

Dewey's Definition of Democracy. John Dewey's conception of democracy in education includes all of the considerations I have outlined as important to my definition of democracy. He says any social group, be it a school or a gang of thieves, has some interest in common. Further, there is found at least some amount of interaction and cooperative discourse with other groups. For each of these traits, interaction and cooperative discourse, Dewey derives a standard. For the first, how numerous and varied are the interests which are commonly shared? Second, how full and free is the interplay with other forms of association? (1916, p. 83).

The whole point of his definition is succinctly stated a few pages later, and may be seen as the cornerstone of his conception of democracy, including democratic education:

Democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a form of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. (1916, p. 87)

As I went about my study at Connectionist School, democracy could be seen in the associated living, and a commonly shared, as well as communicated, experience. This is not to say that Dewey's philosophy was the impetus or sustenance for the kind of living and educating that may be seen at Connectionist

School. It is, however, an example of practice confirming theory as they are viewed side by side.

Dewey further notes while he is defining democracy that with a band of thieves, the conscious ties that hold the group together are few in number; further, they are of such a nature as to isolate the "group" from other groups in the society as far as give and take of the values of life. Such an education, one that limits rather than promotes associations with others, he considers to be partial and distorted (1916, p. 83). This type of "education" advances an inadequate definition of democracy. "Democracy" that limits rather than encourages interaction and communication with as many different groups and perspectives as possible, is not authentic democracy insofar as it fails to value and cultivate the growth and inner happiness of all individuals. It is instead concerned mainly, or only, for those within its own group, which cultivates a near-sightedness in societal perspective, and a selfishness, and sometimes bigotry, in disposition (1916, p. 85).

Dewey goes on to say, on the other hand, that if education is modeled after a kind of family life, we find material, intellectual, and aesthetic interests in which all participate and that the progress of one has worth for the experience of the other members (1916, p. 83). It is readily communicable so that the family is not an isolated whole, but enters

intimately into relationships with business groups and other agencies of the culture (Dewey, 1916, p. 83).

The second aspect of his definition, varied and free points of contact, secures a "liberation of powers which remain suppressed as long as the incitations to action are partial, as they must be in a group which in its exclusiveness shuts out many interests" (1916, p. 87). In other words, when any social group lacks a reciprocity of interest in other social groups, the resulting isolation and exclusiveness brings about an antisocial spirit. He goes on to emphasize that considering the actions of others to give point and direction to one's own actions in democratic living is synonymous with "breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory...." (1916, p. 87).

Nations, families, schools, and individuals who hold "interests of their own" as their prevailing purpose are focused upon "protection of what (they) have got, instead of on reorganization and progress through wider relationships (1916, p. 86). "The essential point is that isolation makes for rigidity and formal institutionalizing of life, for static and selfish ideals within the group" (1916, p. 86).

Dewey had a special problem with the idea of limiting what he called the two "intellectual opportunities," individuality and adaptability, to members of the "ruling class." Dewey defined individuality as "personal initiative" and

adaptability as " broader community of interest." If either of these qualities are left out, or are less accessible to some, we have less than democracy. Such an approach creates a society populated by an overwhelmed mass whose confusion limits their vision and makes them susceptible to uncritical external direction (1916, p. 88). The end result of being directed externally by others, due to lack of opportunity to understand the connections and significance of societal changes, was, to Dewey, a master-slave relationship (1916, pp. 34-35). This form of domination, not making intellectual opportunities easily available to all, is taken to be ingenuine democracy by Dewey, and by me. Intellectual opportunity that is genuine is where education intersects with democracy. An "ideal speech situation" is at the nexus of the intersection (Habermas, 1979).

Pateman's Definition of Democracy. Carole Pateman, a political scientist and feminist scholar, thoroughly analyzed the classical and contemporary definitions of democracy. She seems to have read Rousseau's writings with the same fascination I had for them as she examines what has come to be accepted as a "classical" definition. By having read the original sources for these classic definitions herself, she is able to observe that Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and G.D.H. Cole's theories have been seriously short-changed by sociologists and political scientists who seem unable to exercise

their imaginations commensurately with the classical writers.

Because modern-day political scientists (of this century) see "true democracy" (through genuine, broad-based participation) as nothing more than a pipe dream, they have adjusted their own definitions of democracy to be limited to representation, usually through elected officials (Pateman, 1970). If participation were to have more than the most minimal role, these theorists would fear for the instability and "lack of organization" for the political system. Joseph Schumpeter has probably been most influential in propagating this narrower view according to Pateman's tracing of the definition:

The starting point of Schumpeter's analysis is an attack on the notion of democratic theory as a theory of means and ends; democracy he asserts is a theory unassociated with any particular ideal or ends. 'Democracy is a political method, that is to say, a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political--legislative and administrative--decisions.' In so far as one expressed 'uncompromising allegiance' to democracy this was because one expected the method to further other ideals, for example justice (Pateman quoting Schumpeter, 1970, p. 3).

Pateman goes on to explain that in Schumpeter's theory, the only means of participation open to citizens is voting for

leaders and discussion. Schumpeter says the electorate normally does not control their leaders except by replacing them at elections with alternative leaders, so in his theory, there is no special place or central role for participation. There is only a "protective function" assigned to the electorate. It would seem such a distancing of the electorate would provide for "things getting pretty bad" if all the electorate may do is protect itself rather than represent itself. The electorate is excluded from the conversation in such a view of "participation" and the minority elite are instead the only "communicators" in the conversation.

The focus of the theory is on the minority of leaders. "The electoral mass," says Schumpeter, "is incapable of action other than a stampede," so it is leaders who must be active, initiate and decide, and it is competition between leaders for votes that is the characteristically democratic element in this political method (Pateman, 1970, p. 5).

Schumpeter's view is that for this "political method" (democracy) to work, "everyone would have to know definitively what he (sic) wants to stand for... independently of pressure groups and propaganda" (p. 17). This is untenable to Schumpeter because he believes the common man incapable of such rationality, and further, he believes the classical theorists

virtually ignored leadership. This is not the case, as Pateman clearly shows in the pages and chapters that follow in her book. Still, these views of Schumpeter were to greatly influence the major theorists who followed him, and who promoted his views as our democratic orthodoxy in political science.

One of his followers, Berelson, points out what he considers to be a "positive" function of this narrower view of democracy: limited participation and apathy by the electorate. He explains that these features are protective of the whole system because they cushion the system from the shock of disagreement, adjustment, and change. His position is representative of the political theorists of this century whom Pateman describes as being pre-occupied with stability and organization. If these are over-riding concerns, then we need not aim for a society that is thought to be higher than a class based one, as democracy has commonly been thought to be. Stability and organization, as in prisons, may be accomplished in society by having a "ruling class." The rest of society functions according to the will of that ruling class. This view of "participation" once again points to the inclusion or exclusion from conversations. Conversations that are not open to all are not democratic.

According to the scientific management pattern for efficiency of labor, the will of the ruling class has largely

been accomplished by laborers. The idea of separating the planning of work from its execution, as in the Taylor system, promotes an orderliness and stability that we have prized as a society. However, this management pattern also, unfortunately, promotes the degradation of work itself, and leaves workers alienated from their work, and as a result from themselves. A society which emulates such an organizational design, as ours has, degrades itself as a society as well (Braverman, 1974). Our national ideal of democracy is supposed to be a context where individual dreams benefit the whole, not where individual dreams are squelched by the planning and at the pleasure of the managers who exploit the potential of their laborers.

Pateman goes on to discuss the work of Sartori, another political theorist of democracy who after Schumpeter stresses that "it is not just minorities that rule (in a democracy), but competing elites" (p. 10).

According to Sartori a completely unbridgeable gap has appeared between the "classical" theory and reality; "the ingratitude typical of the man of our time and his disillusionment with democracy are the reaction to a promised goal that cannot possibly be reached...." Once a democratic system has been established--as in Western countries at present--the democratic ideal must be minimized....

The fear that active participation of the people in the political process leads straight to totalitarianism colours all Sartori's arguments. The people, he says must "react," they do not "act;" react that is to the initiatives and policies of the competing elites.... (pp. 10-11)

Interestingly, Eckstein, another political theorist of democracy following Schumpeter, argues that certain authority structures simply cannot be democratized, listing the family and schools as examples. "For, although we might pretend that these are democratic, too realistic a pretense would produce 'warped and ineffectual human beings'" (Eckstein in Pateman, 1970, p. 12). He says the same of the workplace--none of these institutions is to be considered truly democratic. His reasoning is that our political system cannot be truly democratic so we must not develop this expectation through our other societal institutions without creating a great deal of incongruity and resulting dissatisfaction. Like Schumpeter, Eckstein concludes that a truly democratic government would be "unstable." If holding the masses out of the real conversation is "necessary," this is legitimate to theorists who prize order.

Our modern theory of democracy, then, according to Pateman's summary analysis of the evolution of the definition, is that "democracy" refers to a political method or set of

institutional arrangements at the national level. The method by which democracy is accomplished is "competition of leaders (elites) for votes of the people at periodic, free elections" (Pateman, 1970, p. 14). Equality is achieved through universal suffrage, so that "participation" comes to mean, for the majority, participation in the election/choice of leaders. This view was almost universally supported at the time of Pateman's writing of her book in 1970. My personal experience and readings in sociology do not allow me to conclude that the definition has changed much over the last twenty-two years. Democracy and justice are not considered possible and therefore are not pursued very seriously, it seems to me.

Finding Schumpeter's review of the classical writers of democracy inadequate, Pateman clarifies what she thought the classical writers had in mind, thereby restoring a more optimistic meaning to the word. She reviews the writings of Rousseau, Mills, and Cole, hoping to leave a better legacy to another generation of scholars. By "better," I mean a definition of democracy that is inclusive rather than exclusive, which, as has been shown, was one of Dewey's criteria for democracy as well. Having read Rousseau's works myself, I fully agree with Pateman's discussions of them and what she finds to be Rousseau's intentions for democracy. Inclusiveness is a quality of conversation, which is largely what Pateman had in mind when she reviewed the evolution of the

meaning of participation in democracy.

The crucial variable here is whether or not the institution is a participatory one and the central function of participation in Rousseau's theory is an educative one, using the term "education" in the widest sense. Rousseau's ideal system is designed to develop responsible, individual social and political action through the effect of the participatory process (Pateman, 1970, p. 24).

The beauty of Rousseau's theory of democracy, and the process that keeps it "working" (stable, organized) is explained by Pateman:

...During this process the individual learns that the word "each" must be applied to himself; that is to say, he finds that he has to take into account wider matters than his own immediate private interests if he is to gain co-operation from others, and he learns that the public and private interest are linked. ...He is forced to deliberate according to his sense of justice.... As a result of participating in decision making the individual will eventually come to feel little or no conflict between the demands for the public and private spheres. Once the participatory system is established...it becomes self-sustaining because the

very qualities that are required of individual citizens if the system is to work successfully are those that the process of participation itself develops and fosters; the more the individual participates the better able he is to do so. The human results that accrue through the participatory process provide an important justification for a participatory system (Pateman, 1970, p. 25).

Pateman's book continues in an intriguing way showing that participatory workplaces are primary shapers of the people who occupy them. If we are to describe our society as democratic, it is important that the shaping institutions which make it up be democratic. If the institutions, such as schools and workplaces, are not democratic, then the society itself is democratic in name only. "The theory of participatory democracy is built round the central assumption that individuals and their institutions cannot be considered in isolation from one another" (Pateman, 1970, p. 42). In order for things not to be in isolation, there must be genuine conversation and connection without coercion. This is exactly what Jurgen Habermas had in mind when he spoke of the ideal speech situation: competent and undistorted communication, which was also uncoerced (Habermas, 1979), and is the central focus of democracy in this study. I would also like us to be reminded at this point that Dewey said: "A democracy is more than a

form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint [connected], **communicated** experience" (1916, p. 87).

Eckstein may not have been far off to say it is "dangerous" to have schools or workplaces take on too much appearance of democracy, for then it is thought about as something that may really be possible and should be sought after. He says this type of democracy (real, authentic) is impossible for government so we should not foster the desire for it in other institutions of our society. At least he is consistent and forthright about his views. The problem is, I believe democracy is possible, as do many others, and even if we can never achieve it as an ideal, it is a worthy goal to pursue. It is, after all, built upon the desire for justice, rather than privilege by birth. It is also what we say we are about as a nation, perhaps providing another example of Habermas' ideas of "distorted communication" that advantages the elite. Love is also an ideal; shall we not bother to develop an appreciation for it either since it is never fully attainable? Such thinking leads to inhumane living and unjust social practices. Both democracy and love would be pursued as ideals in the society in which I want to live.

The Practice of Democracy

The problem of democracy, then, is not just one of definition, but of practice. Thomas Jefferson's life illus-

trates well the paradox of definition and practice that has continued to be troublesome in the United States. While he was the author of one of our cardinal documents in which he proclaims, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal;" he at the same time "owed his social status, his economic independence, his self-indulgence in scientific, literary, and artistic pursuits, to the slaves he owned until the day he died" (McLaughlin, 1988, p. 98). This irony of American democracy available for some classes while not to others obviously has a long history. Jefferson's statement may be seen as an example of distorted communication in that he was privileged to speak and to be heard, but slaves (and others) were not. If it had been an "ideal speech situation" (Habermas, 1979), all participants would have had free and equal access to each other, would have attempted to understand the issues and arguments, yielded to the "force of the better argument," and accepted the resulting consensus (Antonio and Kellner, 1992, describing Habermas, 1979).

Jefferson followed Plato in his idea of making education available to certain classes, although he did at least begin his plan, theoretically, by making education available to both sexes which Plato had not done. Jefferson fought for thirty years to get taxpayers to support the "General Diffusion of Knowledge Act" in Virginia, which paid for the first three years of school for all citizens. Only boys could go on at

taxpayer's expense, however, after the first three years in this plan. Further, slaves were not considered to be citizens.

Jefferson also borrowed a notion from Rousseau for his conception of political democracy, that of a "general will." However, he was short-sighted by not applying the idea of a general will to all individuals in the society, notably slaves. This blindspot was common to his generation. While gains have been made, the seriousness of the "congenital birth defect" of America, "the slavery of its black people," needs to be remedied by serious attempts to come to grips with inequities rooted in prejudice (Goodlad quoting Conant, 1990, p. 4). For this to become a reality, the prejudice first has to be recognized. The educational system of a democratic society is a prime place to begin inculcating this awareness.

According to Antonio and Kellner (1992),

Dewey believed that Jefferson expressed a unique conception of democracy that demanded much more than extensions of suffrage and representation. Jefferson called forth, Dewey held, and entirely new form of "radical democracy" that values the pursuit of happiness" over property and empire, that treats democracy as an ongoing experimental process rather than a fixed structure, and that insists on free interaction, self-cultivation, and

participation in private spheres as well as in public life.... Dewey held that Jefferson envisioned a communication community animated by shared "emotion," "ideas," and "participation." (p. 266)

This idea was more a part of American education until the Smith-Hughes Act of 1918 when tracking and ability grouping were employed to bring about greater "social efficiency." At about the same time, Alfred Binet developed a test for measuring intelligence. These "facts of nature" have distorted the American education conversation in many ways (Garrison, 1991).

While sociologists focus primarily on the workplace as the socializing institution of a society, educators focus on schools as the shaping institutions for the young of their society. Education in the broadest sense of the word (as Rousseau used it) is obviously important in both schools and workplaces, especially in a democratic society where citizens need to be conscious of the way their political system and institutions work. It is only then that genuine participation is possible, and it is then, for many political scientists, that wide participation becomes desirable.

For my own part, the practice of democracy that I enjoyed in my upbringing, but not in my most recent and former workplaces, is one of the most significant motivating forces that drew me back to graduate school. As Smith (1987) and Rosaldo

(1989) assert, our own histories cannot help but influence the perspectives we bring to research, so for that reason I share some of what I believe is relevant from my personal life to this study on democracy.

Though my adult workplace experience has been in Christian schools, my upbringing and my interest, has always extended beyond them to public schools. Grandma Smith was a teacher in a one-room school house, and three in my family and many of my friends are in public education. I am concerned about the quality of education all children receive. I had believed when I began my career that a Christian school would be the place where I could best exercise my values. (The by-line of the first Christian school in which I worked was "Where the Love Is.") After my thirteen years in Christian schools, I no longer see them to be better places to exercise my values. I am not complaining that Christian schools are worse than public schools, but that they are no better systemically. And when I speak of the educational conversation specifically, I do see it as more systematically distorted in Christian schools than in public or other private schools. I see the public school system as silencing a large portion of its participants due to massive size (as well as the other "ubiquitous forces" described later by Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). I see Christian schools as silencing a large portion of its participants due to distorted ideology

that is defined mostly by the ruling elite, ignoring educational theorist as well as most of their organizational participants.

The latter is more serious and pervasive, at least in my observation of it. The teachers, parents, and students in both of the schools in which I worked are among the dearest people anywhere. However, the politics in the top leadership that repelled me from both schools, were politics of ambition, greed, sometimes hypocrisy (conveniently unconscious in one case), and doubletalk that are often found in bureaucracy (Smith, 1990). Because of this situation in both schools, I could not continue my work.

The sacrifice of teachers and parents that goes into establishing and maintaining Christian schools organizationally is done with the belief that their efforts are advanced for a higher purpose than other schools. This largely is not the case, although the power elite proclaims loudly that it is. This soliloquy from the power elite, rather than a dialogue that is genuine, creates distorted conversation that advantages the few, not the many. Such a situation is not democratic, or Christian, in my view of it.

Two other "top leaders," whom I knew personally in Christian schools, could not survive the politics they encountered in the national Christian school organization either. They were shoved out by "the way it works" in bureau-

cracy, too, when they applied ethics of fairness and consideration of others as a "Christian" way of doing administration.

Vicki Smith's (1990) description of the experience of middle managers in a large American bank system over the last twenty years paralleled my experience as a principal. It is the norm in American bureaucratic corporations for the top leadership to be motivated in the last analysis by profit. It has been particularly disappointing for me to lend support to organizations which, according to their mission statements, were supposed to be different from banks or corporations whose primary purpose is profit. I am not opposed to organizations, Christian or otherwise, making profits. I am opposed to this being primary in the thinking of top leadership of any educational institution, however, especially in one that calls itself Christian. It is unethical for any organization to look upon students more as commodities or stock in trade than as human beings who are to be cared for and provided an education.

As is true of other bureaucratic organizations in our capitalistic society, so it is true of some "Christian" organizations, that to be the "direct organizer and manager" (administrator) of the organization....

...a process of selection goes on having to do with such qualities as aggressiveness and ruthlessness, organizational proficiency and drive, technical

insight, and especially marketing talent (Braverman, 1974, p. 258).

We don't call this style of leading "undemocratic;" we more often call it "business savvy." The situation clearly points to an inadequate definition and/or understanding of our society as a democratic one, and in some Christian organizations, of the practice of genuine love.

I note also that Mary Catherine Bateson (1989), as dean at Amherst, experienced similar feelings toward her former organization after going through "some stuff that was incredibly nasty." She says, "All of which is okay if they wouldn't be so self-righteous, if they wouldn't keep separating themselves from the corporate world, from those nasty people in business!" (p. 98).

Abraham Lincoln had some basic principles I also see as applicable to the discussion of democracy. They are related in a text by Donald Phillips (1992):

Dictatorship, force, coercion--all were characteristics of tyrants, despots, and oppressors in Lincoln's view. All violated the basic rights of the individual to which he was so committed and upon which the nation was founded. All violated a basic sense of common decency. And here is where Lincoln tied in the Golden Rule and the law of the land to his personal leadership style. He treated

people the way he would want to be treated, the way he knew others would want to be treated.... And it was no small factor in his eventual success. "No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent," he remarked in 1854. "Familiarize yourselves with the chains of bondage, "he said in 1858, "and prepare your own limbs to wear them." And in 1859 he asserted: "Understanding the spirit of our institutions is to aim at the elevation of men; I am opposed to whatever tends to degrade them." Without question, dictatorship in any form degrades human beings. (p. 40)

In order to understand a group of people who would want leadership that tends toward the dictatorial style (which Phillips says is no longer leadership, but dictatorship), rather than a style that is nurturing of and believing in human beings, I wonder if it takes what I would see as a distorted view of the "fall of man." In such a view, it may seem that any goodness that is obtained is because the man is forced to be good against his own inclinations. Such an idea is not a foundation that I would think worthy of building an education (or life) upon, "Christian" or not. This view does not give even Christians a basis for giving a loving God any level of credit for creating man in His own image. Miseducation is the result of such a view, that man is inclined only

toward selfishness and evil. The view itself degrades those who hold it.

A more honest assessment of man's condition, I think, is that he is neither predisposed to only evil or only good, but is influenced, and shaped, having the capacity for either or both. I am saying we are socially constructed beings; however, I do not take this so far as to believe we are therefore socially determined, though there is not much difference if/when we do not educate for critical democracy. Students must be conscious of what is constructing them in order that they may experience any level of choosing. Further, if it is correct to assume we are socially constructed, it is even more important that students are being shaped with an affinity for democracy rather than domination.

Increasingly, to me, religion is more a matter of how one acts than what one says. Whether a school is democratic (or Christian) depends on how all of the people are treated. If there is little or no real concern for a just society other than through abstract discussion of and commitment to "principles," and when practices are unjust, and when the system itself is becoming increasingly a closed one, it is not the place for me to spend my life.

Ultimately it takes ethical, genuine, and fair support from the top leadership in order for school personnel to carry out good work that is primarily for the benefit of students.

I therefore took particular interest in the context generated by administration in my literature review and in the case study. This context is the one in which teaching is carried out, and in which students learn, so it is of importance to me.

As a part of my program at Virginia Tech, I have been a graduate assistant supervising student teachers in eleven River City county and city schools for two and a half years. My experience as a university supervisor working with thirty-some supervising teachers, seventeen principals and assistant principals, and sixty student teachers for approximately twenty hours per week has given me some acquaintance with the River City area public schools. This public school experience will help to serve as a comparison in my study of democratic education as well as my private school experience.

Organizationally, I perceive most public and private schools to be much the same: they function as bureaucracies typically do in our society (Weber, 1946). They reinforce the status quo primarily, and are very resistant to change, including improvement. This is one of the reasons why reform efforts in education so often seem to "fail," and our society becomes increasingly disillusioned with promise of change or improvement in our educational system when they have heard promises before and see little change. It seems the more desperate our culture becomes for reform, however, the more

tightly it holds to "tradition." This is an ironic twist that would not surprise Max Weber:

Bureaucracy may well make us men who need order and nothing but order, who become nervous and cowardly if for one moment that order wavers, and helpless if we are torn away from a total incorporation in it (Weber, 1978).

It seems odd to me that we take bureaucracy so for granted as the "one best system." It clearly has its advantages (Campbell, Corbally, & Nystrand, 1983), but the pitfalls need to be more clearly understood and dealt with (Braverman, 1974).

Does my study focus, then, on the definition of, or the practice of, democracy in education? My intention has been to focus on both; but more on the practice (actions) than the definition (words). High sounding theories that do not find their way into practice, both individually and corporately, are not worthy of a life being spent on them, and I do not want to waste mine.

Purpose of Study (Revisited)

In cases of democratic organization, to the extent we have democratic organizations, Rothschild and Whitt (1986) return the locus of control to the individual. Collectives are highly unusual as economic organizations because their main concern is in the value placed on participation and democratic control, not on profit and growth, which is the

typical benchmark of success in our society. Clearly, profit maximization is not the main point in a democratic organization.

What are the characteristics that are more present in democratic workplaces that Rothschild & Whitt found (all quotations are derivations from Table 3.1, pp. 62-3)? First, authority resides in the collectivity as a whole; it is delegated, if at all, only temporarily and subject to recall. Compliance is to the consensus of the collective (Rousseau's "general will"), which is always fluid and open to negotiation.

Second, there are minimal stipulated rules. The organization is driven by negotiated values, not rules as in bureaucracy. Third, social controls are primarily based on personalistic or moralistic appeals. These are insured as effective procedures by the selection of personnel with homogeneous values.

Fourth, the ideal is the formation of community (rather than impersonality as in bureaucracy). Relations are to be wholistic, personal, and of value in themselves.

Fifth, employees tend to be recruited based on friendships, social-political values, personality attributes, and informally assessed knowledge and skills. The concept of career advancement is not meaningful since there is no hierarchy of positions.

Sixth, incentives are primarily based on normative and solidarity values; material incentives are secondary. Likewise, seventh, the social stratification is egalitarian. If there are any reward differentials, they are strictly limited by the collectivity.

Last, there is minimal division of labor so that administration is combined with performance tasks, thus reducing the division between intellectual and manual work. Rousseau said, "The great secret of education is to make the exercises of the body and those of the mind always serve as relaxations from one another" (1762, p. 202). The generalization of jobs and functions is sought rather than the specialization and "mystification" of them.

This type of organization has its "potentials" and its "dilemmas" as the authors clearly state. There is no hybrid, or pure form, of democracy or of bureaucracy for us to look to in reality. Organizations tend toward one pole or the other, and to varying degrees, even among the eight dimensions.

In order to compare and contrast (which I intended as a descriptive rather than evaluative device), I draw from time to time upon my own personal history in bureaucracies to illuminate the differences found in a more democratic organization.

Guiding Questions

The frame of reference I used to develop guiding ques-

tions as I approached the study were oriented around one main question: What is it about the organization and interaction of Connectionist School that makes it different from schools that are more bureaucratically oriented? The organizational design sets a context for the education that students receive and for the climate in which teachers teach. Therefore the style of operation that is accepted as appropriate for the administrator to practice in the school is an important aspect of the school's life. Whether the top administrator acts democratically or bureaucratically, and whether and how long that administrator remains at the school, makes a qualitative difference in the kind of school that exists. The style of communication (Habermas, 1974) and control (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986) employed in the organization are at the heart of the issue.

Not all of the questions that I raise as I discuss the study could be addressed, but I mention them anyway to offer the frame of reference I had in mind as I approached the study. I address the issues in my write-up which I have the most basis to discuss in the way of information that I gathered.

My questions are related to the above main question I raised about the organizational design, and are oriented around the eight dimensions of democracy Rothschild and Whitt (1986) identified as well as the two aspects of Dewey's

definition for democracy. The next question is based on a study of three free schools by Swidler (1979) at their inception. The last question is adapted from Vicki Smith's (1990) organizational study. While I did not evaluate to see if Connectionist School is democratic, these guiding criteria aided in qualitative description of the school. The description particularly points to the difference it makes that the school is oriented democratically more than bureaucratically as a system.

Other questions related to this main question which will guided the study are as follows:

1. How is authority viewed at Connectionist School? How are decisions made? Who has the power/authority to make which ones? What kind of abilities/powers do students have?
2. How do the teachers interact with their students? with each other? with parents?
3. What values does Connectionist School choose to be oriented around? What evidence is there that stipulated rules are kept to a minimum? Which rules, of the few they choose, are deemed of enough importance to keep?
4. How are the parents involved?
5. What connections bring Connectionist School teachers, students, and parents into the school?
6. How many and varied do the societal connections seem to be?

7. What kind of teachers teach at Connectionist School?
8. What kind of students and parents have chosen Connectionist School?
9. What kind of director does it take?
10. Are the incentives based on solidarity and normative values with material incentives being secondary? Are reward differentials strictly limited by the collectivity?
11. How is the curriculum constructed? by whom?
12. Is division of labor kept to a minimum so that intellectual and manual work are combined? Is administration combined with performance tasks?
13. Is the democratic school smaller than its local bureaucratic counterparts?
14. How is social control maintained with the use of personalistic and moralistic appeals?
15. Is there a lack of transparency on the part of the "strategic management" necessitating doubletalk on the part of middle management about organizational plans or goals?

The first question addressing how decisions are made points to whether the school is hierarchical as are most other public and private schools. It was my hope that this question would lead me to insights about the formality or informality of relationships, as it did.

Second, how teachers interact with their students, with each other, and with parents more directly speaks to the issue

of formality (which is characteristic of bureaucracies) and informality (which is characteristic of cooperatives, or democratic organizations).

Third, the issue of rules, or more so, the absence thereof, reveals a great deal of the nature of difference in goals. In "conservative moralism," the goal of rules has not the process but the result at heart (Gutmann, 1987, p. 57). Not so for "liberal moralism," which identifies moral autonomy as the goal (also Gutmann). Liberal moralism, with its emphasis on process, and individual choice, is inclined not to go by rules, but by "principles that would be generalizable among all persons" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 59), and thus fits a more democratic conception of education.

Fourth, examining how the parents are involved points to the formality and informality issue, and to the issue of depth of hierarchy. It also may make a point about a broader definition of participation and special definition of community than is usually found in more bureaucratic schools.

Fifth, the philosophies espoused and enacted point to whether the school is organized for the purpose of seeing how many and how varied are its associations, as Dewey characterized democracy in education, or if they have separated themselves off for their own purposes.

Sixth, studying the connection that brings parents and students to the school gives an indication of how many of the

varied and free associations there are that Dewey calls for, and which ones are responded to. The ones that bring people to the school point heavily toward values.

Seventh, the kind of teachers who teach at Connectionist School points to values the organization finds to be primary. Teachers pass on their values to students, not just through the formal curriculum but also by the informal curriculum.

Eighth, the kind of students and parents at Connectionist School has much to do with the informal curriculum. The more diversity in individuals represented, the more diverse this aspect of the curriculum. Further, the kind of students and parents points toward the issue of how much actual diversity is represented at the school.

Ninth, the kind of director it takes to facilitate the programs of the school indicates something of the values of the organization, of the depth of hierarchy in the school, and of the degree of formality and informality. What the director is like, and how long he or she has been at the school is a significant means of determining long-term values the school has held. One school administration text explains, further, that the degree of satisfaction or happiness teachers experience in their work is more related to the relationship they have with their direct supervisor (usually principal) than to any other factor studied (Campbell, Corbally, & Nystrand, 1983). I spend a great deal of time exploring this topic

believing it to have relevance to many of the other questions I have raised.

Tenth, whether profit or values is primary to the participants individually or collectively in the organization is a prime feature in distinguishing it as a democratic one. Various attitudes toward a "consumerist approach" to life will be considered.

Eleventh, how the curriculum is constructed points to the hierarchy issue, values espoused, and division of labor.

Twelfth, the division of labor issue is approached in cooperatives such that everyone shares in all of the types of work to be done: physical, mental, administrative, or secretarial. This combination of work insures that none of the tasks are "mystified," and that no "expert" oversees the work of the others; all are "equally expert" in a hybrid collective.

Thirteenth, Rothschild points to the issue of democracies being relatively smaller. Some teachers at Connectionist School wonder if the main difference of their school is that class size is strictly limited to fifteen (Fieldnotes, 1992). Size does play a tremendous factor in the qualitative difference, and this issue is explored further in the study.

Fourteenth, Swidler's (1979) study of three free schools deals extensively with the issue of social control. Guided by her notions and my observations, this topic is explored as

well.

Fifteenth, Smith's (1990) study of middle management in bureaucracies revealed pressure from top management to engage in doubletalk and lack of transparency if needed to further goals they (top management) had set for the organization. It was assumed that transparency is more characteristic of democracies, by virtue of "liberty, equality, and justice" being seriously sought after and considered to be desirable in democracy (Giroux & McLaren in Goodman, 1992, xi-xii).

While I did not promise that there would be findings for all of the questions I raised, I provided the framework and goals that were attempted, even if not all addressed, in my study.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

When reviewing a democratic conception of education, three authors are of particular interest to me: John Dewey, Nel Noddings, and Joyce Rothschild. Dewey and Rothschild have made significant contributions to the discussion of democracy; Dewey and Noddings to education. All three are related to the discussion of both democracy and education in my view, as will be seen in the pages that follow. The writings of others will be brought to bear throughout the review of this literature as deemed relevant. After the writings of Dewey, Noddings, and Rothschild are consulted to further extend the understanding of democracy, particularly as it relates to education, the same authors' views will be elaborated with relationship to organizational structure, curriculum design, and teacher role through analysis of their literature.

Overview of Democracy in Education by Selected Authors

John Dewey. John Dewey is of enduring interest to those concerned with a democratic conception of education because his views cannot be confined to any one movement of his time, or to any one or two representations of his philosophy since. His major work, Democracy and Education, is a work of social, political, and educational philosophy more than a practical pedagogy (Burnett, xx).

His later educational piece, Experience and Education

(1938), is an especially important one for educators because it concisely summarizes the over-arching themes of Democracy and Education (1916) after twenty-two years of observation. The perspectives of the later piece additionally have the advantage of comparing and contrasting two predominant themes that had arisen in education, and had been competitors for these two decades: traditional education and progressive education. The issues Dewey raises, and on which he elaborates, are as contemporary to a democratic conception of education today as they were in 1938.

To Dewey, "education" was a fostering, nurturing, cultivating process. Etymologically, he recognized it meant simply "a process of leading or bringing up" (1916, p. 10) He believed that the leading or bringing up required of education was to be involved in the transformation of the quality of experience of students since the growth process is not merely physical; it is also social. This being the case, the environment, or context, of education was vital. He said the environment strengthens or weakens individuals, and leaves them with a certain disposition of action. These actions are taken among others and have an effect. There is reciprocal relation in social contexts. Therefore, students are not "trained" like animals (citing as an example, horses), who do not share reciprocal action. Students, then, unlike animals, are to be "led out" rather than trained, through educative

teaching.

Along with Eliot Wigginton (1985, p. 280), I wonder why, especially in a field that occupies as much of life as education does, we continue to "reinvent the wheel" of our educational philosophy, when, for fifty years, we have had Experience and Education that could be such a rich starting point. John Dewey's dream of a democratic society through education is a long way from being realized, but his dream continues to inspire those who read him, and who have been able to pause long enough to think seriously and deeply about what education is doing, and what it should be doing (Greene, 1988; Shannon, 1990; Wigginton, 1985). Dewey will continue to profoundly influence education for years to come, even if not as broadly and as quickly as some would desire (Gee, 1990; Kincheloe, 1991). Totalizing bureaucracy and genuine democracy are impossible partners as will be shown.

Nel Noddings. Nel Noddings (1984), in her philosophical development of an ethic of care, begins with the statement of dissatisfaction that, in education, the dominant model for the study of morality is a hierarchical, male model, giving ethics the appearance of a mathematical or purely logical quality. She believes that ethics has largely been discussed in the language of the father, in principles and propositions, rather than in the language of the mother, which, Noddings believes, has been silent.

This silence she wants no longer. The feminine spirit, the notion of psychic relatedness, is at the heart of her ethic of care. She no longer wants to see fighting, killing, and violence in the name of principle, as if principle makes these actions ethical. She directs her efforts, then, at the conditions that will permit caring to flourish. There must be the "one-caring" and the "cared-for," in reciprocal relation. The "problem" of reciprocity is presented throughout the remainder of the book.

Her ethic begins with a longing for goodness, out of love or natural inclination; it does not begin with moral reasoning, a masculine approach. She rejects an ethic based on principle because it tends to separate us from each other. Instead, caring and commitment to sustain the caring, forms the heart of her feminine ethic. In aloneness and emptiness (masculine) she identifies anguish; in relation (feminine) she identifies joy. This is not unlike Dewey (1916, pp. 85-6), Fromm (1956, p. 8), or Buscaglia (1972, pp. 76-7), although none of them specifically says it is "masculine" or "feminine;" to them it is "human."

Noddings believes we should care first, and decide what is moral based on the caring. This is rather than deciding what is moral on the basis of principle, which never did get a place in her ethic that I could determine. Does this mean she is not calling for a blend of the masculine and feminine,

but an emphasis on the feminine over the masculine in all of us? She does acknowledge that there is masculine and feminine within all of us, but never ends up showing a distinctly inclusive attitude toward the masculine.

I strike many contrasts between masculine and feminine approaches.... These are not intended to divide men and women into opposing camps. They are meant, rather, to show how great the chasm is that already divides the masculine and feminine in each of us. (p. 6)

Later Noddings says there is some advantage in using the masculine spirit, maybe as a starting point so we have something tangible to grapple with, but then she says that it is not the "best way" so even a "starting point" is back "out" again really (p.7). While it cannot be said that Noddings is exclusive of the masculine, it is difficult to say that she is inclusive either:

An ethic built on caring is, I think, characteristically and essentially feminine--which is not to say, of course, that it cannot be shared by men, any more than we should care to say that traditional moral systems cannot be embraced by women. (p. 8)

Does an ethic of morality have to be more masculine or more feminine? Can they not be equals (in the sense that Dewey

said the individual and society were)? Or does one actually displace the other? While I think Noddings is silent in answer to these questions, I did think of a distinction that would fit her proposed ethic. She may reject principle, but not the masculine. Since the masculine spirit has more often been characterized by principle, she thinks, than the feminine, she begins with masculine and principle characterized together, although she admits they don't have to go together. As for "moral reasoning," she says, certainly the feminine spirit can reason. She further says both masculine and the feminine are "moral" by means of caring. Again, this means "principle" is not "moral," nor is it "reasoning," which is often more attributed to the masculine spirit. I think this could mean she rejects principle, but not the masculine spirit. This, however, would have to mean the two could be separated, not just in exceptional cases, but generally, which she doesn't seem to believe. This conception of rejecting principle as an a priori claim would fit a post-positivist paradigm, and could suggest a hypothetical answer to whether the proposed ethic necessarily tends toward being generally "either/or" about masculinity and femininity. She may not be as dualistic as she appears to be on the surface to readers like myself who have not been long accustomed to views informed by post-positivism. She does not consider herself to be an essentialist:

I, too, reject an essentialist argument. However, with Dewey, I believe that we may refer to essences as "enduring" qualities or attributes without accepting them as eternal or immutable. The difference between men's and women's experience has been so great for so long that a real difference in world views may in fact exist. (Personal Correspondence; June 26, 1992)

I did enjoy the reading of the book immensely because of her rich theme development of what it means to be in reciprocal relation: with "one caring" and the completion of this condition in the actions of the "cared for." She explains that the assignment of these roles is not static, that with varying persons, times, and situations, both roles can be occupied at once, or they may rotate.

Noddings believes her ethic, if applied to education, in all of its forms (home, police, social work, neighbors, etc.), would make a tremendous qualitative difference in our society. This is where I connect most heartily with her. I believe that schools, because they are involved in the shaping of human life, and not of "products," should be organized with "caring" as their "way of life."

Noddings' ethic is highly applicable to a conception of democracy in education because inherent in the meaning of democracy is concern for the individual. The quality and

depth of this concern is vital to my understanding of what a democratic education should be.

Joyce Rothschild. Joyce Rothschild, a sociologist who has examined the historical roots of our long-time and present-day emulation of bureaucracy, has written about her further examination of the polar opposite, participatory democracy (1979, 1986). Her treatment of democracy has particular appeal for me as I envision democratic school-workplaces in which I would like to be involved: places where teachers and students have a genuine part in their school's conversations. The locus of control, as I have said, is returned to the individual in a cooperative, democratic organization (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986); "The central characteristic they all have in common is direct, democratic control by the members" (p.2).

Because of Nel Noddings' observations of the "feminine and masculine spirits," I found it interesting that it was a feminine scholar who had critically viewed and tackled the theories of Max Weber. His near century-long accepted model of social action, bureaucracy, is characterized by impersonal, "business" relations, and authority based on rules. Rothschild focused her attention where Weber had found no need to elaborate. He had identified four social actions: traditional, affectual, instrumentally-rational, and value-rational. Yet he found corresponding bases of authority for only the

first three: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational, respectively (Rothschild, 1979; Rothschild & Whitt, 1986).

It intrigued Rothschild that Weber chose to advance no organizational form for his last type of social action, value-rationality, an organization founded on common values. Based on an historical view, he believed that virtually all organizations fit the first three categories. (These were the three leadership styles I studied as a graduate student in school administration, though I didn't know their origin.) Rothschild, and a few others mentioned in her article, began to look to Weber's missing type to understand certain kinds of organizations, "alternative organizations," that were mushrooming in the 1960s and 70s. She described this missing model as follows:

A value-rational orientation to social action is marked by a "belief in the value for its own sake...independent of its prospects of success" (Weber, 1968:24). It is evidenced by actions that put into practice people's convictions.... The polar opposite of the monocratic, formal bureaucracy drawn by Weber would be a fully collectivized democracy which turned on principles of substantive [rather than legal] rationality. (1979, pp. 509-10)

She finds eight dimensions by which to distinguish collectiv-

ist-democratic organizations from bureaucratic ones (1986). These will be delineated in subsequent pages.

We will now turn our attention to the discussion of organizational structure, curriculum design, and teacher role in relation to each of the aforementioned authors.

Organizational Structure, Curriculum Design,

and Teacher Role in Relation to Democracy in Education

John Dewey

Organizational Structure. John Dewey was an advocate of the Hegelian tradition in philosophy, which was a unifying philosophy opposed to dualisms of every kind. He saw no validity in dichotomies such as those made between education and culture and society or life. His view of organization follows accordingly: "Organization is nothing but getting things in connection with one another" (1899). Because of a lack of organization, he believed there was great waste taking place in education, but not the kind of waste the social efficiency experts were concerned about.

...This question is not one of the waste of money or the waste of things. These matters count; but the primary waste is that of human life, the life of the children while they are at school, and afterward because of inadequate and perverted preparation.

So, when we speak of organization, we are not

to think simply of the externals; of that which goes by the name "school system"--the school board, the superintendent, and the building, the engaging and promotion of teachers, etc. These things enter in, but the fundamental organization is that of the school itself as a community of individuals, in its relation to other forms of social life. All waste is due to isolation. Organization in nothing but getting things into connection with one another, so that they work easily, flexibly, and fully. (Dewey, 1899, p. 39)

Such conditions exist best in organizations where communication is open and uncoerced.

Among the scientific management experts were John Franklin Bobbitt and Frederick Taylor. Their brand of efficiency focused on subordinating the individual to society with as little waste as possible, and their influence on curriculum design and administrative approach was profound. It dominated the educational scene from 1900 to 1920 (Cremin, 1961; Kliebard, 1987), and its effects are still felt deeply today (Shannon, 1990; Wirth, 1983). In this model of social efficiency, administrators were the "foremen" and teachers were viewed as the "assembly line workers."

Such a view of "efficiency" robs students, as well as teachers, of quality of life. Dewey knew this well, and

addressed this deficiency before the movement gained momentum (1899). But, according to Kliebard (1987) dominant American values were not on Dewey's side. (I would note that the "dominant" values does not necessarily, or even probably mean, the majority of people. It means the values of those in power. Herein lies the distinction between what I view to be legitimate and illegitimate leadership--domination, rather than exercising and carrying to completion the work of commonly shared goals, makes leadership illegitimate.

The appeal of a stable social order with people fulfilling appointed tasks was far more compelling to those in power in the early 1900s than a commitment to growth, which implied change and risk (Kliebard, 1987). Dewey's desire, in contrast, was to organize schools so that the basic function of education would be the development of a kind of intelligence that would lead to a command of the conditions of one's life and ultimately to social progress (1916, p. 88). To do otherwise, he believed would result in chaos:

Modern life means democracy, democracy means freeing intelligence for independent effectiveness--the emancipation of mind as an individual organ to do its own work. We naturally associate democracy, to be sure, with freedom of action, but freedom of action without freed capacity of thought behind it is only chaos. (1903, p. 229)

This condition, he said, could also be described as slavery, that is, in Plato's terms, one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct (1916, p. 85). "In the degree in which men have an active concern in the ends that control their activity..., [we have a] democratic social organization.... An education which should unify the disposition of the members of society would do much to unify society itself" (p. 260).

That an obscure Franklin Bobbitt would have more influence, in terms of practice and immediacy, through his 1923 printing of How to Make a Curriculum than would world-renowned John Dewey through Democracy and Education (1916), is astounding. With the flood of immigrants, the tenor of the day was a frightened view of the conditions of American city life. Dewey was well aware of city conditions having experienced Chicago life, joining Jane Addams and Ella Flagg Young in their efforts to improve people's quality of life through their developing control of it (Tyack, 1974, p. 178). What he was also aware of, that some other social planners were not, or had forgotten, was a quality of life he had known in rural Vermont growing up. He equated quality of life more with making one's own transactions than with "having a place" in society, particularly an assigned one, as formulated by the social efficiency "experts."

This is the critical difference in the two positions.

Dewey would have a society comprised of individuals who were growing and vitally involved with actuating their own society as changing conditions warranted. The social efficiency experts sought an insurance plan, of sorts, that would preserve the present order, assuming that it was the "best order," and not in need of transformation with a view toward the future or the varying needs of individuals. In fact, the varying needs of the individuals was a threat the "experts" felt at the presence of the immigrants--they wanted to prescribe "Americanism," traditional style, to them. Such an approach cannot be conceived of as democratic, as we have defined it. The "unum" of "e pluribus unum" was more predominant than the "pluribus" (Hunt, Class Notes 1990). Dewey was not for this type of dualism. He found society and individuals to be equals in consideration, not one over the other, though some criticize him erroneously for having more concern for the individual (Burnett, 1977, pp. xxi-xxii).

We might now wonder what Dewey's philosophy of organization meant for schools in particular. It first of all seemed to mean that control of the school would reside in those immediately present in an individual school, rather than having external authority, which is one of the criteria for democracy rather than bureaucratic organizations (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986). I base this on the micropolitical context of his departure from the University of Chicago, which necessi-

tated his abandonment of what is considered to have been his most important experiment, the Lab School.

Dewey's departure from The Lab School in 1904 seems less to be the result of "a series of wranglings with President Harper" (Cremin, p. 119) or "a dispute over the retention of the Laboratory School staff" (Shannon, p. 72) than it was a basic philosophical difference of how the school would be run. This is none other than the basic issue of control (the same issue that drove me, and others, from continuing in Christian schools). Dewey was not intending to organize the Lab School with respect to the way Francis Parker organized his elementary school, nor was he planning to staff it by the design of the university president. Of course philosophical differences running as deep as these do lead to "series of wranglings," and departure of one or the other of the protagonists. Such was the case with John Dewey and President Harper, I believe, in view of the circumstantial account of Robert McCaul citing documents of the participants in the struggle (eds. Brickman & Lehrer, 1959).

One finishes reading McCaul's account knowing that the situation was a complex one, with neither Harper or Dewey definitively and primarily "at fault," or lacking the personal qualities that prevent bickering. The vested organizational interests of each were irreconcilable, no matter how much respect they had for one another personally. This scenario

illustrates well what I have named as systemic problems: distorted communication and narrower control by a privileged few.

In reviewing the situation that drove John Dewey from the Lab School, it may be seen, basically, that Dewey was not going to have his name or reputation attached to a school that would no longer be of his and his teachers' making. Because President Harper had brought Colonel Franklin Parker's Elementary School under the auspices of the university, without Dewey's collaboration, the university ended up with two different elementary schools: Dewey's Lab School and Parker's University Elementary School. Harper had assumed the two to be philosophically alike, and thus further assumed that Dewey could and would "live with" a merger of the two. He arranged for a merger of the two without Dewey's knowledge.

Although the schools had some similarities, there were essentially important differences. There was an outcry from educational leaders when they learned of Harper's decision. They were concerned that the Parker school would be allowed to swallow up the Dewey school just getting underway (p. 42). Dewey's Lab School was literally an experiment; Parker's school was a "model" or practice school for use in training teachers. Dewey sought to reconcile the difficulty of having schools of different purposes by arranging with Harper for the two elementary schools to coexist, which Harper did not favor,

but allowed (at least for another year).

The result was confusion on the part of university personnel when trying to decide which school to chose for their own children, and for the secretaries as they tried to answer questions the general public would ask them (p. 44). Division between the two schools also resulted because of the dean siding with the new University Elementary School. Dean Jackman was unfavorably disposed to Dewey's activities and plans, it seems to me, because Dewey did not consult him or keep him informed; Dewey chose instead to work directly with President Harper (p. 57).

When the two schools were to be merged a year later by President Harper's plan, cries of nepotism came from the University Elementary School personnel, and from the dean, as they noted that Dewey's wife was directly under him as principal (a decision Dewey had made without President Harper's prior knowledge a year earlier).

Additionally, many of the University Elementary School staff feared they would lose their jobs through the merger, having heard Alice Chipman Dewey to be "quick to dismiss teachers from the Dewey School" (McCaul in Brickman & Lehrer, p. 58), and knowing they did not fit in with the philosophy guiding the Lab School. (In a democratic organization, Rothschild and Whitt mentioned that particularly in democratic organizations, when staff members are retained who don't share

values, the result is goal displacement for the organization.)

Because President Harper made decisions like bringing Parker's elementary school into the university for financial considerations, independently of Dewey, and because Dewey was not allowed to choose his staff as he saw fit (his wife's position as principal was to be discontinued for the following year, without Dewey's prior knowledge or approval), Dewey chose to abandon the experiment, as well as the complication of this type of administrative position (dealing with external decision makers who took control of his own experiment out of his hands by "just doing their jobs"). He instead became a professor of philosophy at Columbia University where he obviously enjoyed a very rewarding career. President Harper was acting within bureaucratic bounds (legal rationality; "following the rules"), but not democratic ones (substantive rationality; "holding to values"), and in such a situation professionals choose to leave. Some call bureaucracy dysfunctional when it silences professionals from doing genuine work of their own. Since the knowledge of a professional is their "stock in trade," silencing them is tantamount to "shutting down their business" (Class Notes, Snizek, 1992).

This micropolitical account indicates to me Dewey's belief that he, and his staff, should administratively run their own school without consideration to external authorities (President Harper, Dean Jackman, University Elementary School

staff). If the Lab School had not been financially dependent on the university, the story may have had a different ending. Financial dependence is often the cause for alternative, democratic organizations discontinuing, or for the original goals to be displaced if they do continue (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986, p. 100).

Now that we have addressed something of Dewey's view of organizational structure from without, we will next look within. Dewey's conception was that schools would be set up so that they had a close affinity to a natural, human social setting. The school would be an embryonic, miniature community. The closest illustration of the kind of interaction Dewey had in mind was that which takes place in a family:

Call up in imagination the ordinary school-room, its time-schedules, schemes of classification, of examination and promotion, of rules of order, and I think you will grasp what is meant by "pattern of organization." If then you contrast this scene with what goes on in the family, for example, you will appreciate what is meant by the [typical] school being a kind of institution sharply marked off from any other form of social organization."

(1938, p. 18)

For schools to be isolated from life and society as they ordinarily were, was unthinkable to him. His Lab School did

have an atmosphere like a family. According to one renowned Dewey scholar, no other school since had achieved the same degree of quality in environment or directed and designed inquiry as the Lab School through 1959, including those schools John and Jane Dewey portrayed in Schools of Tomorrow (Greene in Brickman and Lehrer, pp. 87-8). It is likely Greene would not even consider the Connectionist Schools and Free Schools of the 1960s and 70s as adequate representations either. Their philosophy of experience was not developed and practiced as was Dewey's (1938) in her estimation.

Also unique to the Lab School was John Dewey's democratic leadership style. It is evident in the description of two of the teachers who worked with him during his years there. They said he was never dominating and had a fair and impartial attitude of faith in the growing ability of every individual, whether child or teacher. "His respect for the opinions of even the youngest and least experienced of his staff bore fruit in the creative character of the work done" (Mayhew and Edwards, 1966, p. vvi). Their next commentary is one of the finest reasons, in view of the school as a workplace for both students and teachers, to operate a school as a democratic organization:

Only a person who has worked in such an atmosphere can understand what inspiration to creative work such freedom gives. After all, teaching is a

social art. (p. vii)

What context could be more desirable or conducive to authentic growth of persons than this? Democracy was Dewey's desire for schools, and thereby for society.

Curriculum Design. Dewey's clearest depiction of his design for curriculum is probably found in Experience and Education, published in 1938. He began by saying he doesn't hold to dualisms of any kind, then talked about the danger of forming an ideology simply as an opposition to something else, for example, in opposition to traditional education. The result is having no clear idea of what one is for, giving clear aims and purpose.

The recognized differences (and good cause for opposition, I presume) between progressive and traditional education were given as follows (1938, pp. 19-20):

Traditional	Progressive
-imposition from above	-expression and cultivation of individuality
-external discipline	-free activity
-learning from texts and teacher	-learning through experience
-acquisition of isolated skills and techniques as means of attaining ends (which make direct vital	-acquisition of skills and techniques as means of obtaining ends

appeal)

-preparation for a more or less remote future

-making the most of the opportunities of the present life

-static aims and materials

-acquaintance with a changing world

Both progressive and traditional education were deemed to be inadequate by Dewey, even with the above noted important distinctions, because neither approach had a clear philosophy of experience.

It was vitally important to Dewey that progressives develop their own idea of what correct school experience should be. The main question would be: "What is the place and meaning of subject-matter and of organization within experience?" (1938, p. 20).

A dualistic approach could bring about other shortcomings in development of a unique and positive philosophy. Following are some of the ones he cited (1938, pp. 21-2); in parentheses under the right column we have statements from Dewey that point toward "completing" the inadequately developed philosophy of experience:

Traditional Characteristics

-"ready-made" organization

Inadequate Progressive Reaction

-reject principle of organi-

- | | |
|---|--|
| | zation in toto; (should strive to discover what organization means and how it is to be attained on the basis of experience) |
| -external control | -rejection of external control; (should instead find the factors of control that are inherent within experience) |
| -external authority | -rejection of all authority; (should instead search for a more effective source of authority) |
| -impose knowledge, methods, and conduct of the mature person upon the young | -belief that the knowledge and skill of the mature person has no directive value for the experience of the immature; (should mean more multiplied and intimate contacts of the mature and the young) |

To solve the problem of a well-defined philosophy of experience, then, Dewey says we have to include a well thought-out philosophy of social experience (p. 21). Some find these observations on Dewey's part to be "easy for him to say" after observing the progressive experiment for twenty-two years, locating the shortcomings, and not taking enough responsibility for their occurrence:

Examined in the light of his total system of thought, as it is now before us, Dewey's philosophy of education is no longer characterized by his Pedagogic Creed or his main educational work,

Democracy and Education.... Had he from the beginning expressed himself so unambiguously about the necessity of regulative and persistent values as he did after 1930, when the crisis of our modern society had become apparent, then he would not have needed to remind his own followers that they had misunderstood his philosophy [cites Experience and Education, 1938].... (Ulich, 1945, p. 335)

I do not agree with this criticism for the most part because I do not find Dewey with an "essentially undefined concept of growth," with an "emphasis on experience for its own sake" in Democracy and Education as Ulich posits. A serious reading of Chapter 3, "Education as Direction," and Chapter 4, "Education as Growth" in Democracy and Education answers Ulich's criticisms clearly; Dewey held his philosophy of experience from at least 1916 on. If anything, Democracy and Education says more, not less than Experience and Education; its length only made it less accessible to "Dewey's followers," in my opinion. It was not Dewey who was unclear; it was those who assumed they were his followers who were unclear, and probably his critics as well (also see Greene in Brickman & Lehrer, 1959, p. 87).

What did this philosophy of experience do for particular subject areas? First of all, it meant that they were not approached as preparation for something else; instead they began

with what was of value and interest to the child in the present, then inquiry was directed and designed with the help of the teacher to keep the learning going (Kliebard, 1987, p. 65; Greene in Brickman & Lehrer, 1959, p. 87).

Secondly, it meant that subjects were not isolated from one another as was the case in typical schools. Dewey felt that subjects lost much of their meaning when separated, especially noting history and geography. Related to this was the problem of presenting subjects as finished forms rather than ongoing studies (Kliebard, 1987, pp. 65-6). Reading, "the touchstone of the elementary curriculum," was not to be taken out of its natural context either. To do so made it appear "inevitable to him that the child would regard reading merely as a task to be accomplished without any sense of what a book is for" (Kliebard, 1987, p. 78). As we can see now, 93 years since Dewey said this, standardized testing, a positivist assessment practice (Lalik and Glasson, 1992) dramatically influenced reading in schools to become just that: "merely a task to be accomplished."

Dewey was also "prophetic" of our present day educational situation with regard to curriculum design when he wrote what he thought was "The Educational Situation" in 1899. In this paper he had observed for twenty to twenty-five years how a progressive idea would be introduced to a school, last a year (or a month), and be discarded as inadequate, only to have the

cycle be repeated. We are still in this cycle, but it probably lasts from 3 to 5 years in my observation of it. The reasons we continue in it are the same as they were when Dewey noted them. First, we have a lack of intellectual organization (which I noted along with Wigginton earlier); second, we don't recognize the factors which must enter into any such organization (maybe Rothschild can help us here). Third, we have no conscious educational standard by which to test each aspiring claimant (Goodlad, 1990; Sockett, 1993; and others are still working on this). Because of these deficiencies of organization we yield to popular pressure and clamor; "first on the side of instinct for progress, and then on the side of the habit of inertia" (1899, p. 265). Dewey ended that portion of his 1899 paper on an optimistic note, saying he believed we were on the verge of learning our mistake in this inefficient cycle and thought we were about to make headway with instinct toward progress and illumination of vision. There have been some "shining moments," but by and large we are still more politically than we are intellectually organized in education as we approach the next century beyond Dewey's aspirations (Goodlad, 1990; Shannon, 1990).

We will now turn our attention to the role of the teacher, remembering that it is tied to this conception of curriculum design.

Teacher Role. The teacher's role in the Lab School was

to provide opportunities and help the students develop ideas around the commonly held view of "school-house as home" where the activities of social or community life were carried on (Mayhew & Edwards, 1966, p. 43). The teacher's were to become able to recognize when the students were ready for the next step intellectually or socially. The indication of whether there was a right learning condition in the classroom and whether the teacher was fulfilling her function was often based on the attitude on the part of the child as he went to the next class; the teachers would not whether students seemed poised and happy, or nervous and irritated (p. 382).

This criteria is in keeping with Dewey's assessment criteria for experience: it was to be humane, not harsh; it was to result in growth; growth in one direction should promote, not retard growth in general; it should arouse curiosity and strengthen initiative; and it should leave the student favorably disposed to the experience in the future (Dewey, 1938, ch.3).

This was no small mission for teachers to accomplish. They were able to do so because they were trusted and supported, they worked cooperatively with one another, and they were allowed to make differences for themselves and for their students as individual characteristics were considered (Mayhew & Edwards, 1966).

The teachers also bore responsibility for the daily

decisions of running the school, as written by Dewey and quoted in Mayhew and Edwards:

The principles of the school's plan were not intended as definite rules for what was to be done in school. They pointed out the general direction in which it was to move.... Their application was in the hands of the teachers, and this application was in fact equivalent to their development and modification.... (pp. 355-6)

This condition shows earmarks of an authentic democracy within the school rather than hierarchy; I can't help but notice that Dewey did not enjoy the same context from his own role at the Lab School while he was at the University of Chicago.

The teachers worked with the students based on groupings according to interest and social compatibility. This ended up being age groups, basically, with four through six-year olds, seven through ten's, and eleven through fifteen-year olds. These groupings, as with all of the practices of the Lab School, were not intended as any type of pattern for other schools. I have chosen to record them in this paper to give illustration of one of many possible representations of John Dewey's ideas.

We will now turn our attention to Nel Nodding's appeal for an ethic of care to become our guiding ethic in education. Quality of relationships, and thus conversations, even around

educational matters, can be seen as an important part of democratic education as Noddings conceives it.

Nel Noddings

Organizational Structure. Nel Noddings (1984) ends her book by outlining a specific application of her moral ethic to education:

The primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring.... It functions as end, means, and criterion for judging suggested means. It establishes a climate...and a lens through which all practices and possible practices are examined. (pp. 172-3)

What she means by this ethic of care is to receive and be received by another, to care and be cared-for. Along with others, she suggests that these are the basic realities and the aim of human beings (Buscaglia, 1972; Fromm, 1956; Noddings, 1984; Williamson, 1992). Noddings's belief is that to be with another in time of trouble is better than to be permanently alone because one loses both the "human" and the "being" when one is severed from having relationships. This being the case, her aim of life is not primarily happiness through avoiding pain or trouble; nor is it in developing some kind of perfection in the sense of preparation for another life, which Dewey also complained against (1979, pp. 79, 93).

Instead, this aim of caring and being cared for in the human domain, she says, is preparing one for "full receptivity and engagement in the nonhuman world" (p. 174). It seems it should be obvious that this could be considered an ideal climate for education. That is not what we find in most schools, however. Noddings believes the context should be set by caring and being cared for, for a life and education of "joy, wonder, engagement, and tenderness" (pp. 173-4).

There are ways she suggests we could be set up organizationally so that contact is extended and deeper relationships may develop. We could start with schools as they are, identify their primary functions (which is to say we haven't done so yet), and decide how to best serve those functions. Better though, would be asking, "What sort of organization would be compatible with our picture of caring and education?" She answers by saying we may first need to consider smaller schools rather than continue in the large ones we became enamored with in the 1950s in the James Conant era that are still in use today (p. 180).

She also says it should function more like a family (1992, p. vii). This is not unlike Dewey. Also needed is more connectedness through having more time (1984, p. 186; 1992, pp. 68-72).

The student responding or reciprocating as the "cared-for" is also needed in her idea of how we might get organized.

This would call for students rewarding teachers with responsiveness: with questions, effort, comment, and cooperation. The cared-for is essential to the relation of caring (p. 181) because reciprocity is necessary to sustain the relationship. Noddings also reminds us that schools as institutions cannot care directly, either for teachers or for students, so the teachers and students must do so for one another (p. 182).

Noddings also calls for less bureaucracy: "I am recommending that we carefully, deliberately, and generously dismantle the professional structures that separate us into narrow areas of specialization. We might even explore the "deprofessionalization" of education. In this vein she thinks one way to deprofessionalize is to take a careful look at credentialing, suggesting it could be approached in a variety of ways (pp. 197-8).

Also suggested is the idea of cycles: career teachers might teach for three years and then spend a year in administrative work or study. This would do a lot for teaching and administration in my opinion. They need more connection, which Dewey says is an organizing principle; the isolation needs to be broken down. Noddings realizes this would displace many career administrators (p. 200). She must think this a good idea, as I do.

She realized that such a plan would be called inefficient. This is the "down" side, or at least has been purport-

ed to be, of all truly democratic organizations. Longitudinal studies have not confirmed that yet, but there is that possibility according to Rothschild and Whitt (1986, pp. 109-113).

Noddings believes there is no reason to believe that the existing mass of deans, principals, supervisors, assistants, directors, counselors, and consultants has really contributed to either efficiency or effectiveness (p. 199). Rothschild has observed similarly. She commented that the present recession we are experiencing nationally is because our bureaucracies have become too deep (too many levels). We have been so proud of the "efficiency" of all the levels within our organizations in the United States, that we have lengthened them to the point of inefficiency. She believes many of the middle management jobs that have recently been lost will never be replaced (Personal Conversation, February, 1992).

Noddings suggests that grades K-12 might be better organized as K-7 and 8-12, because first, there would only be two "school environments" to encounter. Secondly, grade 7 would serve as a "finishing experience." Grade 8 could be an introductory year to high school, but not with tracking, she specifies (p. 176).

Noddings also addresses what is to be done about the numbers of school rules. Under the guidance of an ethic of care she thinks it compatible to expect teachers and students

to be on time for class, to be regular in attendance, and to turn work in as promptly as good work will allow; but if these guidelines are not followed, there will be no penalty. She explains if a student is consistently late, the teacher would care to know why. She precludes giving zeros for work missed (I agree heartily with this point; it teaches nothing positive, and seems only to reinforce a student's impression of him/herself as a "bad student," and therefore they only expect "bad work" of themselves.) Noddings says zeros gives the wrong message about both intellectual work and our relations to each other (p. 201).

Curriculum Design. If we take intellectual receptivity seriously, she says our organization of subject matter would need to be reconsidered. She does not suggest "a great many subjects" in the curriculum. Neither does she suggest they be "clustered" around some organizing theme. "Laid out along the entire range of human experience, both personal and cultural aspects of the subject are revealed" (p. 191). This at least means to consider a subject's history and application, which is also considered to be a Deweyan approach.

Along this line, more biography and the meaning of subjects in individual lives needs to be considered. She would like to see them offered freely, with students encountering subjects as "Thou" (in the Martin Buber sense). By "freely" she also means "no demands for specific achievement

and no attempt at systematic evaluation" (p. 192).

Noddings sees our present, traditional curriculum to be a masculine one, and therefore deficient:

...some of us see traditional curriculum as a masculine project, designed to detach the child from the world of relation and project him, as object, into a thoroughly objectified world. ...I have emphasized that an alternative feminine approach allows the child to remain in relation and also to grow intellectually. (p. 192)

John Dewey was in favor of what Noddings has identified as a feminine approach, as we have seen.

She concludes the curriculum discussion by saying, "Obedience to law is simply not a reliable guide to moral behavior. One must meet the other in caring. From this requirement there is no escape for one who would be moral" (p. 201).

Teacher Role. Noddings thinks teachers need different credentialing than they are presently getting, as mentioned previously. Her requirements are, first, that the teacher be "one caring," and next that she be knowledgeable in her field so she can give full attention to her students without the necessity of maintaining order and control as a dictator. All sorts of pressure groups and organizations force their agenda into the curriculum and the teacher isn't deciding what to

teach. This should stop as well when we trust teachers themselves as knowledgeable.

Why not have teachers take their turns at administrative tasks? Noddings says there are a few objections given. One is that it would be expensive. She concludes that it actually would be less expensive when considering the orientation we have characterized by hierarchy, specialty, separation, objectification, and loss of relation (p. 200). She then points out who it is that climbs this ladder and then insists on rounds of testing, labelling, sorting, and credentialing. This is a traditionally masculine structure, and she thinks its time for the feminine to be heard, not silenced.

Second, the objection may come that teachers are not qualified to be administrators. She answers this by arguing that teachers could learn these functions, saying further that if it were required that they master these functions, it could raise the level of aspirant in teaching. Also, she points out that the condition our schools are in suggests we have more to gain than to lose by trying something different.

The most fundamental answer to the objections raised is that her suggestions represent an invitation to dialogue between the masculine and the feminine that embody "dialectics between feeling and thinking, between concrete and abstract, between present and future, between community and school" (p. 200). For these reasons, a new role for teachers should be

considered; one that includes sharing leadership. I would add that as Pateman explained earlier, participation is itself educative, and teachers could be broadened by this participation in administration. I don't think they should or could be asked to do this without provision of time and apprenticeship type of support, nor should any teacher be forced to take a turn at it who does not wish to.

I appreciated the posture Noddings said she would assume as teacher if a student should exhibit discomfort or disinterest in a topic:

I would not hesitate to teach that which I, as teacher, believe the student should know if he is to be credited with mastery of a particular set of topics. Throughout the process, however, I would accept his attitude toward the subject, adjust my requirements in light of his interest and ability, and support his efforts nonjudgmentally. He must be aware always that for me he is more important, more valuable, than the subject. (p. 174)

This is a mark of authentic democracy in a classroom; it is "value-creating" in the other, and does not leave students with an either/ or choice of being dominated by the subject matter or being excluded. The student is included and welcomed, with respect for his or her individual characteristics. The fundamental difference is that "the student is

infinitely more important than the subject matter" (p. 176), and of course this is not to say the subject matter is not important; it's a statement of its relative importance.

It is interesting to me how Noddings describes herself as a teacher having a hand in guiding the student:

The one-caring as teacher is not necessarily permissive. She does not abstain from leading the student, or persuading him, or coaxing him toward an examination of school subjects. She recognizes that, in the long run, he will learn what he pleases. As cared-for, the teacher may indeed coerce the student into choosing against himself. He may be led to diminish his ethical ideal in pursuit of achievement goals. The teacher's power is thus awesome. It is she who presents the "effective world" to the student. In doing this, she realizes that the student, as ethical agent, will make his own selection from the presented possibilities and so, in a very important sense, she is prepared to put her motive energy in the service of his projects. She has already had a hand in selecting those projects and will continue to guide and inform them, but the objectives themselves must be embraced by the student. (pp. 176-7)

This last sentence, indeed, shows the authenticity of democra-

cy in Noddings' conception of teacher and student role in her ethic of care. Similarly, it can be shown that Dewey "did not succumb to laissez-faire freedom on the one hand or authoritarianism on the other. ...He showed how educative experiences can be improved by teaching students how to engage meaningfully in problem-solving activities" (Rich, 1985, p. 157).

Noddings says the teacher, as one-caring, meets the student directly but not equally. By "inclusion" of the student, the teacher becomes a duality: feeling the student's feelings toward the subject matter, looking and listening with the eyes and ears of the student. As she does this, she accepts the students motives for learning and reaches toward what he intends, as long as she doesn't have to abandon her caring ethic to do so. "Inclusion as practiced by the teacher is a vital gift. The student's attempts at inclusion may result in a deterioration of the learning process" (p. 177). This is like parenting, I think. "First you were my parent, but now you are my friend" is what children say to parents as they become increasingly older and independent, but understood, is that the loving parent was friend all along; it is just more recognized with age and growing responsibility of the child.

Noddings says that her view is practical not Romantic. I say, and Rousseau (1760, p. 163) probably would, too, that it is both, and because it is both, it is better. By Romantic

I don't mean sentimental or eros, but caring and agape, which to come full circle, is what I believe Noddings means.

This type of caring often gets dismissed as impossible because of "constraints of number, time, and purpose," Noddings (p. 179) laments. Is it possible in reality? I think aiming for it is, and the difference this aim itself would make is monumental. Noddings says that to have this sort of relationship with students, described as engrossment and displacement of motivation, she does not need to...

...establish a deep, lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student. What I must do is to be totally and nonselectively present to the student--to each student--as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total. (p. 180)

This does seem to be "agape" love that she is talking about, and it is why she wants schools reorganized as we already said: smaller, and with less bureaucracy.

I desire this more democratic workplace for the same reasons. The only distinction I would make between myself and Noddings, as I said previously, is that I find it "human," as much as I do "feminine." It is a truly integrated concept, like Dewey envisioned. I don't think these men were necessarily feminine in their views; though they do seem to be unusual men in that they were more integrated human beings than most

seem to be. I presently think positivistic science has as much or more to do with our school situation as masculinity does. Some may say it is men who have shaped and chosen this positivistic science in order to dominate women. This may be so. In any case, it is the dominating of others for personal advantage that I object to and describe as undemocratic and inhuman, and unloving. Dominating is more animalistic than it is human, and it is "inconsiderate" or "unthoughtful" in all senses of the words.

If there are those who insist on having such workplaces (dominating, bureaucratic), I say let them have them. I will construct another type, and I think such places will show themselves "better." I would dominate there, for the purposes of leadership, as Noddings, or Dewey would, to protect the organization's values. Otherwise, there is no reason to go to the effort of setting up such a workplace (and such effort is beyond the imagination of most, including mine, I presume). Not to exercise "legitimate" dominance would be to compromise the quality of and reason for the alternative workplace. This may include exerting "dominance" insofar as letting teachers go who don't share an "ethic of care" by engrossment in the work of the school at a minimal level decided by the consensus of all the members. I say this because I have known teachers and prospective teachers who dislike "bureaucracy" simply because they don't like to have a system that accounts for

people carrying their share of the total load of work. They should not think that they would find a haven in a "democratic" workplace. There is more work in a democratic workplace because there is more care, and the work is a better kind. It should be a place that is "fair" by insisting that each carries their share. For one to say they are "against" bureaucracy is not sufficient evidence that he or she knows what they are "for." This is so just as Dewey observed that being against traditional education was no real reason to assume one was "for" progressive education. There needs to be a clear idea of what a democratic workplace is, not just what it is not. It is a place that supports genuine commitment and work. Fleshing out more of what that means is one of the intentions of my study. Our next author makes a significant contribution to the identification of democratic workplaces in general, including schools in particular.

Joyce Rothschild

Organizational Structure. The essence and meaning of collectivist, or democratic workplaces, was distilled in a quotation by Bookchin, according to Rothschild and Whitt, even though he was not claiming to describe such an organization:

You may have changes in the economy, you may have changes in who rules, you may have changes in who rules what and in who rules who, but there is no revolution without freedom, and there is no freedom

without individuals controlling the conditions of their lives. (Bookchin in Rothschild and Whitt, 1986, p. 145)

To the extent we have democratic organizations, Rothschild and Whitt return the locus of control to the individual. Collectives are highly unusual as economic organizations because their main concern is in the value placed on participation and democratic control, not on profit and growth, which is the typical benchmark of success in our society. Clearly, profit maximization is not the main point in a democratic organization. In fact, determining what the "benchmarks of success" are for collectives is an "ambiguous and multifarious" proposition (p. 145).

The following criteria are the estimations of Rothschild and Whitt based on their study of five organizational democracies; they assess themselves in terms of 1) how well they are practicing their democratic ideals, 2) the quality of the products or services they are providing, 3) their ability to provide alternative places of employment, 4) satisfaction of their members, and 5) most ambiguous of all, their contribution to larger societal change (p. 145). These are not necessarily priority order for all collectives, or even within a single organization over time. This makes assessment difficult, but the authors insist, at a minimum, these benchmarks must be used (p. 145).

The whole issue of assessment itself is critical in considering democratic schools. It has been shown to be the linchpin of curriculum development and institutional practices (Lalik & Glasson, 1992, pp. 4-5). It is necessary to assess democratic schools on the basis of alternative practices and values they hold. This precludes the use of "standardized testing" as a primary indicator, precisely because it is "standardized," and not "democratized." As I approached the research in a democratic school in the field, I primarily described it in relation to the aims it had set for itself, and that had been established for cooperative-democratic workplaces in the Rothschild & Whitt study. The eight polar dimensions of bureaucratically and democratically oriented organizations have already been cited.

This type of organization has its "potentials" and its "dilemmas" as the authors clearly state. There is no hybrid, or pure form, of democracy or of bureaucracy for us to look to in reality. Organizations either tend toward one pole or the other, and to varying degrees, even among the eight dimensions.

The Lab School seems to have exhibited some of the dimensions of a truly democratic workplace from this sociological view. Dewey reflects on what it was like having the teachers operate on general principles they all agreed upon rather than having definite rules (Mayhew & Edwards, p. 365)

and he says the work of the teachers increased, but was also vitalized. If he were to do it over again he didn't think they would want it done differently, although he thought it was almost unfair for the teachers to be responsible for so much. He thought everyone concerned, however, would unanimously rather have erred in this direction of too few rules than too many. It provided the context for constant growth (p. 366).

Dewey also reflected on what is considered one of the "down" sides of cooperatives; that they can be very time consuming in achieving unity (and thereby are criticized as inefficient).

While constant conference was needed to achieve unity, the movement of the school as a whole secured correlation of the work in different branches more automatically than would be supposed by one who has not seen the principle of activity in operation. It is very difficult to put in words the extent to which the spirit and life of a school can control, by means of its own developing movement, the work of different individuals and thus effect a reasonable degree of unity in the whole. ...Almost unconsciously teachers of native ability, even if they were without much previous experience, gained confidence in their own independent and

original powers and at the same time learned to work in a cooperative way as participants in a common plan. (p. 367)

This indicates "demystification" of teaching for the newcomers, and even more, a practical example of how coming to consensus on matters as a total group tended toward unifying the whole. Dewey is showing in practice what he said were his beliefs philosophically: "Organization in nothing but getting things in connection with one another." As an administrator, he chose to spend his time connected to the interests of the teachers rather than isolated from them. He was criticized for listening to the women on his staff too much, but this is not surprising when one acts upon their beliefs and the beliefs are not the commonly accepted (bureaucratic) norms.

Rothschild and Whitt (1986) found this to be so in the five cooperative organizations they studied:

Extra-organizational constraints on the development of collectivist organizations may be legal, economic, political, or cultural. ...The law can be changed but the more ubiquitous forces against collectivism are social, cultural, and economic.

(pp. 68-9)

Dewey experienced all three of the "ubiquitous forces" against collectives, in great measure, at the Lab School. This is evident in the McCaul account detailing the circumstances of

Dewey's decision to leave the school for Columbia University in 1904.

Curriculum Design and Teacher Role. Little is known about curriculum or teacher design specifically from the Rothschild and Whitt study, because the research as a sociological study focused on workplaces in general rather than on education. However, one of the five alternative organizations studied was a "free school," and the short history may give some hint at curriculum and teacher role. The following account is from pages 29-31.

She and Whitt called the school in their qualitative study "Freedom High." It came into existence in California in March 1970. The 12 students who attended were not considered truant by the state, but neither was the school "accredited."

As an important aside, many public schools in the United States are not accredited either, as many as 40% was the number quoted to me not more than five years ago. This does not seem to be commonly known. I would also point out that Dewey's school would not have fit usual accreditation criteria, and Noddings speaks for herself that hers would not.

The school financed its meager budget through sliding-scale tuition payments. By May, there were 50 students who wanted to attend Freedom High for the next school year. It was located in a storefront in a downtown area with a large volunteer staff.

Decisions were reached by consensus, and meetings were long and frequent, with attendance being a right and responsibility of members. The meetings held were of three kinds, and all members were welcome at all meetings. The three meetings were "all school meetings," staff meetings, and coordination meetings. The members welcome at any of the above meetings were full-time staff, part-time staff volunteers, and students. Decisions were not reached by vote, but by consensus, thus the discussions (and meetings) were long. The dichotomy between staff and students was blurred intentionally, and there was a student to teacher ratio of 3 to 1. A board of "wealthy, liberal" adults sponsored the school, and basically let it "run itself." The tensions that developed were between two main sets of goals: those who wanted personal change, and those oriented toward social change.

The observations of the researchers lasted over a period of two years and three months. The school closed at the end of the third year, after an "unsuccessful" second year. (It "existed" a fourth year, but in name only.)

The two nonstudent members who had the motivation to begin the school moved out of town the first year (no reason given as to why), leaving the school behind to two friends who had not been in on the original vision. The public school had concurrently liberalized its program due to the threat of the "alternative school," thereby lessening the need for it in

that community. What had begun as an enthusiastic, self-initiating student body turned into a passive student body, largely interested in escaping the "punitive aspects" of the public school. (When members are allowed in collectives, not because they truly share the values of it, the goals of the organization are displaced, and in this case, very rapidly.)

Rothschild and Whitt conclude their book on the note that work and play do not have to have as much distinction as we ordinarily have given them in our society. Collectivist organizations may be said to be developing a coalescence of work and play in their dual commitment to process and product (means and ends) (p. 189).

...In co-ops, the purpose of democratic control over the organization is to ensure that the product or service will be in line with one's own values, that the distribution of surplus will be more egalitarian, and that the process of work will be, in and of itself, more "fun." (p. 189)

The authors are honest in presenting that there is also more work and more stress (more local control and responsibility) in such organizations. In a world of complex questions and limited resources, they say "values and priorities assume more importance. And so democracy comes to the fore" (p. 190).

Dewey was ahead of his times as he reflected on the "complex questions" brought on by the industrial revolution.

As he reflected and thought, his thinking included risk-taking (1916, p. 148). He came to exactly the same conclusions as Rothschild and Whitt in his view of democracy in education. What he termed as "active occupations" for the classroom included both work and play.

In their intrinsic meaning, play and work are by no means antithetical to one another as is often assumed.... The difference between them is largely one of time span, influencing the directness of the connection between means and ends. (1916, p. 202)

This getting life in connection with the classroom, made the classroom more meaningful, both for students and for teachers. It was the way he wanted education to be vitalized, and relevant.

Rothschild and Whitt show that collectives, by putting process before product, are "trying to find a place for expressive impulses in an arena ordinarily reserved for instrumental activity" (p. 191).

Of course it might be argued that even the most formalized bureaucracy cannot eliminate all traces of human emotion and expression, but the point is that these are regarded as inappropriate and misplaced in the bureaucracy. In the collectivist organization they are cultivated and sought. They are a part of the way that the organization accom-

plishes its business. (p. 191)

The over-all contribution of organizational characteristics for collectives versus bureaucracies is invaluable in the consideration of democratic schools. I look forward to conducting a study of one that has operated for twenty-three years (Connectionist School), and to envisioning more possibilities.

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Research

I have chosen to do an ethnographic case study in alternative education. Bogdan & Biklen (1992) describe a case study as a detailed examination of one setting, one subject, or one event. They also explain that a person's own biography is often an influence in defining the thrust of his or her work. If it is a subject about which the researcher has some passion, the effort necessary to sustain the work is more likely, and will more possibly go beyond the ordinary. The location of the study and data is also important, as well as choosing something in which the researcher is not directly involved.

Bogdan & Biklen (1992) explain that the design of a case study is represented well by a funnel. The beginning of the study is the wide end, and as data is collected and ideas are reviewed and explored, over time, specific decisions are made and the study develops focus.

While I am not suggesting that there is any one social reality that I can objectively study at Connectionist School (Lather, 1991), I can seek to offer multiple perspectives on the questions of "What is going on here?" providing as much rich context as possible (Wolcott in Jaeger, 1988, p. 202). Wolcott explains that such a descriptive account will not point out "lessons to be gained" or "action that should be

taken;" instead, the complexity of the problem or setting is increased in ethnographic accounts (1988, p. 203), and what they do offer is the ring of authenticity to fellow educators. Further, they ought to help the researcher and the readers better understand the central process in which they are engaged both personally and professionally: human learning (Wolcott in Jaegar, 1988, p. 204). There is also the potential for relationship in a study such as the one I am conducting, which Lather (1991) discusses as two aspects of reciprocity.

Reciprocity

Lather (1991, p. 57) has spent some time illuminating the concept of reciprocity in research, which implies a give and take approach. She explains that reciprocity operates at two primary points in emancipatory empirical research: "the junctures between researcher and researched and between data and theory" (1986, p. 263).

Concerning the researcher and researched, she acknowledges that reciprocity has long been considered to be a valuable condition of research because the condition of reciprocity generates rich data. Rich data is less possible when the researcher is treated as a stranger rather than as a friend. However, this condition stops short of another condition of reciprocity that is important to Lather:

I argue that we must go beyond the concern for more

and better data to a concern for research as praxis. What I suggest is that we consciously use our research to help participants understand and change their situations. (1991, p. 57)

She further proposes that "the goal of emancipatory research is to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the researched at least as much as it is to generate empirically grounded theoretical knowledge (p. 60).

When the give and take of the research process has led to insight, and ideally for Lather, to activism on the part of the respondents, we have the condition she labels as catalytic validity (1986; 78). Of course this applies to the researcher as well since we have named this activity as reciprocal, and there is room for growth or change in researchers as well as the researched.

The second aspect of reciprocity she identifies, that of reciprocity between data and theory, is discussed in part as face validity in the next section.

Validity

While validity is not evaluated in qualitative research as it is in quantitative research, in terms of statistical orientation or ability to be standardized (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), it is concerned with "making sure [it] captures perspectives accurately" with a special concern for "capturing the people's own way of interpreting significance as accu-

rately as possible" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The authors explain further:

To understand behavior, we must understand definition and the process by which they are manufactured. Human beings are actively engaged in creating their world; understanding the intersection of biography and society is essential. People act, not on the basis of predetermined responses to predefined objects, but rather as interpreting, defining, symbolic animals whose behavior can only be understood by having the researcher enter into the defining process through such methods as participant observation. (p. 33)

These ideas from Bogdan and Biklen are related to what Patti Lather has termed "face validity."

Face Validity. In order to understand a setting, then, it is necessary to seek out how the people themselves in that setting interpret it. Lather calls this issue face validity which she describes as "recycling description, emerging analysis, and conclusions back through at least a subsample of respondents" (1986a, p. 266; 1986b, pp. 72-4; 1991, p. 67).

In discussing interpretive criticisms, Moss (1992) explains:

Standardized assessments have been criticized for disenfranchising teachers and students from setting

their own intellectual problems and from debating the criteria and standards that will be applied to their work. The potential negative impact has been noted in both the context of students' development and the context of teachers' development. Inherent in much of this criticism are concerns not only with the kind of assessment practices that technical validity criteria are likely to promote (or preclude) but also with differential access to power and authority over educational interpretations and decisions.... This emphasis on participants' perspectives as a guarantor of validity is reflected in the methodological writings of a number of interpretive researchers. (p. 251).

It is clear, then, that some measures need to be taken to insure that participants' views are being accurately reflected by providing participants some level of opportunity to verify them. I will later describe what I called accuracy checks in which I offered participants the opportunity to review their transcripts.

Issues from Narrative Discourse. Potter and Wetherell (1987) have some suggestions for insuring validity in narrative discourse that has application for my ethnographic research as well. The four main analytic techniques they employ are coherence, participant's orientation, new problems,

and fruitfulness (pp. 169-172). **Coherence** is defined as a set of analytic claims that give coherence to a body of discourse. "If the explanation covers both the broad pattern, and accounts for many of the micro-sequences, then we will take it more seriously" (p. 170).

Participant's orientation is important in looking at variability and consistency. "It is not sufficient to say that as analysts we can see that these statements are consistent and these dissonant; the important thing is the orientation of the participants, what they see as consistent and different" (p. 170).

The criteria of **new problems** refers to the situation of the resource of discourse analysis not only "solving" some problems, but also creating new problems. The fourth criterion of validity, **fruitfulness**, is considered by the authors as the most powerful. "This refers to the scope of an analytic scheme to make sense of new kinds of discourse and to generate novel explanations" (p. 171).

This is, of course, a general criterion of validity for scientific explanations and theories; if they can be used to generate fresh solutions to the problems in a field of research then we accord them more respect. (p. 171)

These four qualities have been sought after throughout this study, and are reflected as the description and analysis

ensues.

Reflective Thinking

In keeping with Dewey's admonitions for engaging properly in reflective thinking, it was my wish to proceed with open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness as he suggested (Dewey, 1933, pp. 30-33). **Open-mindedness** is described as an attitude free from prejudice, partisanship, or other such habits that close the mind and make it unwilling to consider new problems and ideas. Humility, troublesome work, and ridding oneself of unconscious fears are needed to cultivate this quality. **Wholeheartedness** is achieved when a person is so absorbed in a subject that it carries him/her along. Intellectual **responsibility**, Dewey says, "secures integrity; that is to say, consistency and harmony in belief" (pp. 32-33).

Feminist Research

Jesse Goodman (1992b) quotes Shrewbury (1987) as saying: Feminist pedagogy begins with a vision of what education might be like but frequently is not. This is a vision of the classroom as a liberatory environment in which we, teacher-student and student-teacher, act as subjects, not objects. Feminist pedagogy is engaged teaching/learning--engaged with self in a continuing reflective process.... (p. 176)

I would add to Shrewbury's comments that in my own experience, the principal (or director) may also need to be included in the vision of those who should be liberated to act as subject rather than as object.

This is what I intend my research to be, a vision of what could be, and reflective about myself as well as about the processes I see in the school of my study. This is what Dewey (1933) called for, as has been shown.

Sandra Hollingsworth (1992) summarizes Harding (1987) to give her reasons for including the researchers' histories as part of the methodology:

Feminist research recognizes the epistemological value of using women's experiences as resources for discovering new theory. Instead of simply validating or uncovering "scientific truths" about mainstream cultures, feminist research asks questions that lead to social changes in oppressed conditions.... (T)he researcher is cast in as critical a perspective as the researched. The individual is not an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but appears as a real, historical individual whose beliefs and behaviors must be open to critical examination. (pp. 376-377)

Hollingsworth explains further the appropriateness of such a self-reflective approach stating that the willingness

to take such a risk and be changed by the research process oneself is a form of feminist praxis that promotes a "better, fairer, more humane world" (1992, p. 377). Finally, she explains, "The use of such an approach is justified not only by our experiences as women and the context of our work in urban schools and challenging classrooms, but also by the personal and social intent of our study" (p. 377).

Processes of Gathering Information

Getting Access. I first visited Connectionist School in December 1991. I had not seen any literature from the school or had any exposure to their program before that time. The visit I made was impromptu. I had wished to call ahead, or even to ask the school to send some literature to me in the mail. Since I had not accomplished this and had intended to for some time, I just stopped in one late morning after finishing some other errands. The students were getting ready to eat lunches in their classrooms as I arrived.

Carol Tripp, the secretary, was very welcoming to me. I told her my name, that I was a doctoral student from Virginia Tech, and that I was interested in finding out information about their school as a possible site for my dissertation research. She immediately seemed favorably disposed to that prospect, at least by her facial expressions, and started gathering brochures for me.

She enthusiastically talked about the school to me as we

walked down the stairs to meet the director, Joan Martin, who was teaching that particular morning. On the way to meet her, Carol explained that Joan was a doctoral graduate of the school administration program of Virginia Tech and that she had been at Connectionist School for five years. I was fascinated by this.

While Joan and Carol were together, I told them I had been the elementary principal at River City Christian Schools, one mile down the road, before going to Virginia Tech. I told them I knew relatively little about them, at Connectionist School, but that the impression I had of them while a principal had been a positive one.

Joan inquired who my advisor was. I told her Rosary Lalik was my advisor, and Joan became immediately enthusiastic, and "on the spot" welcomed me to do the study at their school (which Carol had just mentioned to her as a possible interest). I could tell Joan was torn between teaching her class or coming along herself to give me a tour. She felt she must stay in the classroom and had Carol continue with me, as is often the case when visitors come. In another fifteen minutes, I had visited every classroom, had written notes on the literature I had been given, and left feeling I had just been to a school very much like the description I had read of Dewey's Laboratory School (Mayhew and Edwards, 1966).

After Christmas break and talking with my advisor about

the school, I called Connectionist School on February 7, 1992, and asked for Joan. I reintroduced myself, and told her I had given the matter further thought and would like to do my dissertation study at Connectionist School if this was still agreeable to her. She said emphatically that she would be glad to have me, that she would be very interested in the study, and would be "available to my adviser or anyone else on my committee" (Fieldnotes, February 7, 1992). I felt very encouraged.

Permission. I worked on a permission form and a research proposal in a course during the spring term, and refined the permission form further with my advisor. These forms were completed during a meeting the last week of school in June 1992 after I talked with them briefly about my research study. A copy has been included in Appendix A. Other participants were given forms at the times of the interviews, except for students and board members. The students names were retrieved in January from the tape recorded conversations, and letters were then sent to them and their parents with requests for permission. The school application for each child includes a signed release for photographs, and the school in turn gave me written permission for use of photographs.

Schedule. I determined that the beginning and ending of a school year would be an especially rich time to conduct the study because these times are pressure points in the school

year when schedules are particularly busy, and priorities have to be determined that reveal values and goals of teachers in classrooms, and of the school in general. I began my study during the last weeks of school in June 1992. I attended school all day some days in order to get a sense of what it was like, not just in the morning, but at the end of school days, which can be of a very different nature at school. I also attended a faculty meeting after being at school all day, which inclined me to be familiar with the immediate concerns discussed, and gave me the same relative energy level as the rest of the staff had. Other days, I went to Connectionist School in the morning and afternoon seminars at Virginia Tech.

I attended the last board meeting of the school year one evening with the intention of seeing which issues were important to them at that time of year, and what summary information about the year I could gather. I was also able to see the personalities of the board members, their way of interacting, and how enthusiastic they seemed to be about the school. I gained insights by attending that I could not have derived by only seeing the minutes of the meeting, or reviewing a list of the members and their credentials and affiliations with the school.

I also attended "Celebration Night," an evening meeting for all parents, students, and teachers on the last day of school in June. This was a gathering of the whole community

for the purpose of savoring the year and saying goodbye to one another for the summer. My purpose in attending was to be able to gain some understanding of the personality of the school in general, and to visibly see the diversity that makes up the school family.

The two weeks after school was out, I "hung around" the school attending inservice teacher meetings, conducting interviews, and gathering documents. I began to feel that the teachers, Joan, and Carol were making efforts to include me as "one of them." This approach greatly facilitated my work as a participant-observer, as well as made the experience personally rich. At the same time I remained conscious of my priority as an observer as recommended by Hammersly and Atkinson (1983):

Ethnographers must strenuously avoid feeling "at home." If and when all sense of being a "stranger" is lost, one may have allowed the escape of one's critical, analytic perspective.... This is not to deny that there will be occasions, many occasions, when one will need to engage in social interaction for primarily social and pragmatic reasons, rather than with the research interests and strategies. Rather, the point is that one should never surrender oneself entirely, with more than half an eye on the research possibilities that can be seen or

engineered from any and every social situation.

(pp. 102-105)

I finished the immersion phase of on-site observations and interviews in January 1993. The analysis and write-up phase of the study was conducted from January through March. Throughout the analysis phase, I returned to the field for further conversations and data gathering as questions arose and need was indicated.

I went on campus at Connectionist School a total of 33 days that I made note of. The length of the visits depended upon the purpose(s) of the visit and researcher availability. I was in a summer class beginning in the middle of May at Virginia Tech which caused me to leave mid-day on Tuesdays and Thursdays. My fall schedule was more full than anticipated with a sociology class meeting twice a week during the school day, and with supervision of student teachers in four schools 30 minutes from my home. Still, I spent a good deal of time at Connectionist School. My longest day was from 9:00 am through the 8:45 pm Board of Trustee Meeting. My shortest visits were probably 15 minutes in length during January and February 1993. I went five or six days just to be on site at Connectionist School, check my mailbox, and make fieldnotes as I travelled home and continued reading and analyzing past fieldnotes. Most of the 33 days spent at the school were half days or longer.

Interviews. Several interviews, which are described as "purposeful conversation" by Bogdan & Biklen (1992) were conducted and transcribed. These were held with nine current students, one former student, the director, the administrative assistant (whose title was "secretary" last year), four of the teachers, three board members, and three parents.

The student interviews were recorded in natural school settings during breaks or other times convenient for the students and their teachers. The interviews with the director were done in June over a three day period, two in her office, and one during and after lunch. The administrative assistant's interview was in her office. The teacher interviews were conducted in the kitchen or in the classrooms during breaks or in one case before a nine o'clock inservice meeting in the meeting room.

Guidance was also obtained from Shumaker's Creative Conversations in thinking through protocol and procedures that experienced interviewers have picked up over the years. Schumaker's text covered such topics as suggestions for helping the interviewee to be at ease, carefully handling the topic of permission in conversation, asking the "difficult question," and so on).

Conversations. Conversations have taken place with many people at various times which were not tape recorded due to the informal nature of them. Careful field notes were either

spoken into a recorder following the conversations or handwritten fieldnotes were taken. If they were spoken, I often went out on the terrace or on one of the fire escapes that are regularly used to get to the side lawns. This was done to aid my not being distracted or distracting while trying to remember as exactly as possible, and as soon as possible after such conversations, what was said.

Observations. Observations were done in Brandi's classroom for most of two school days, followed by brief observations of 10 to 20 minutes on other days. Other classrooms were observed for shorter amounts of time, with tape recorder on and fieldnotes written on all such visits to aid my memory of details. At times, I was a participant observer, such as during an art class when I did the project along with the students.

I was a participant-observer of inservice with the faculty and Joan for several days in June and again in August, insofar as I sat in the circle with the group, received the handouts that were distributed, and participated in a personality inventory and identified mine to the group as they did theirs. I also went to the Blue Ridge Farm where the faculty had a Sunday afternoon social. Four faculty meetings were attended, three days of inservice, two board meetings, one long-range planning committee meeting.

Tape Recording and Transcriptions. A portable Panasonic

tape recorder with a built-in microphone has been used for the recordings. I have had the recorder for the last five years, finding it convenient to use and adequate for picking up meetings as well as individual conversations.

The interviews, classrooms observations, faculty meetings, board of trustee meetings, and fieldnotes were tape recorded to get as much exact wording as possible in a lesser time than handwriting all fieldnotes would take.

The first twelve cassette tape recordings, ninety minutes each, have been transcribed by Krista, my former secretary. These first drafts were done on Word Perfect 5.0. She has given me 185 typed single-spaced pages of these recordings with no breaks in the typing when speakers changed. (There would be approximately three times this volume with spaces added whenever the speakers changed in the conversations.) Four more tapes were given to Wanda, a secretary from Virginia Tech, to transcribe at her home in the evenings. Six more were given to Myra, a typist in River City. All of the typing was stored on diskettes and transferred to the Word Perfect 5.1 on my computer so that I could re-listen to portions of the recordings and make corrections.

Fieldnotes. In addition to the tape recorded field notes, written fieldnotes were taken documenting my perceptions as the participant-observer of data that could not be picked up by audio recording, particularly the social process-

es. For instance, I noted the seating arrangements, who was sitting where, by or with whom, with what attire, facial expression, and other detailed descriptions that I perceived would need written documentation (Hammersly & Atkinson, 1983).

Tape recorded fieldnotes were often recorded as I drove to and from the school. I have noted such things as my own attire, why I selected it, what my mood is, what I'm worried about in the process at certain points, what I see as I enter the driveway, and so on.

Documents. Other data to be analyzed are the weekly newsletters to parents, documents that were posted on the hallway bulletin boards for parents and on the kitchen cabinet for teachers, parent memos, and several articles about the school or its students (present and former) from the local newspaper. Other literature and documents gathered from school officials were also reviewed, such as organizational membership newsletters. I photocopied and gathered a notebook of more than 200 pages of materials, and later as I re-read them, I reorganized them within the fieldnotes by date, or in separate notebooks when the content was larger, such as the "Tuesday Notes," the weekly newsletter to parents. I also made a directory of the school families, teachers, and board members with their addresses to facilitate looking up information as needed.

I reviewed a box of scrapbook materials that was loaned

to me. These were the only historical documents the school had according to the director's knowledge. She and Allison Carlton had compiled some of them a couple of years ago for the school, and much of their work was used by the long-term planning committee in the preparation of a report, which I have also reviewed.

Photographs. As explained by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), "photography is closely aligned with qualitative research and... can be used in many different ways. [They] provide strikingly descriptive data, are often used to understand the subjective, and its products are frequently analyzed inductively" (p. 102). The authors also explain that the use of photography is controversial with some claiming that it is useless as a way of objectively knowing because it distorts that which it claims to illuminate. Others claim that it represents a significant research breakthrough echoing Hine's suggestion that images are more telling than words.

The conclusion of Bogdan and Biklen is that few argue either of the above extreme positions, and that "most social scientists neither accept or reject photography outright; they ask, 'What value does it have for me and how can I make use of it in my own work?'"

I purchased a professional quality 35mm camera 10 years ago (Nikon-FM), and was coached by a U.S. Army photographer for two years while taking pictures for a school's yearbook

before moving to River City. Photography is important to me both personally and professionally. I enjoy its use to lend credibility and detail to my writing, and have used photographs when they enhanced description in this study.

Many of the photographs have been used, not in the document, but by me to simplify the collections of factual information such as 360 degree photographs of some classrooms, the contents of bookshelves, and other inventories of the research setting.

"Is the camera a typewriter that has nothing to say on its own?" Bogdan and Biklen (1992) ask, echoing Becker, or "Is there something about the relationship between the holder, the camera, and the understanding that is transcendent?" Their conclusion about this dilemma is that photos are not answers but tools to pursue them. They suggest some minimum standards for equipment and discuss "model release," by each participant that is photographed. It is obvious then that photography involves additional time and expense for the researcher.

Black and white photographs (T-MAX professional quality film) were selected rather than color for their quality when reproduced in other documents. I photographed participants such as students, teachers, parents, and office personnel in their normal school settings. These settings include students and teachers during instruction, at recess, and at other occasions. Staff meetings and the grounds have also been captured

by photography since they all contribute to the context of education offered at Connectionist School. The researcher has the option of analyzing such photographs for the purpose of gaining rich detail of description that would not otherwise be possible (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Over 100 photographs were taken and will be made available to the advisory committee for review, but they will not be included in the final dissertation document unless they lend descriptive substance to the text.

One of the benefits I have offered Connectionist School in conjunction with my study is that they will receive the photographs I have taken when my study is completed.

Interpretive Processes

In January I began reorganizing the fieldnotes and collected documents and began reading all the transcribed interviews and fieldnotes in chronological order. Reading for as much as eight hours on some days, and three hours on others, this process took about three weeks to complete.

Indexing. About the third day of the reading I felt the need to begin an index of topics to help me find the incidents and peoples' statements that I believed I would want to return to. After a couple of days of making these notations, I had four pages of college-ruled paper that were too crowded to alphabetize any more entries, so I took the time needed to put them on word processing in case the index would continue to

grow at such a quick rate. As I continued the reading of fieldnotes, I added more handwritten topics with page numbers corresponding to the fieldnotes and the dates to the typed index. It, too, became crowded in a few days so I updated the index on word processing again. On the third update, I began dating them to see how quickly and in what volume the indexes grew; it was January 27 and there were four single-spaced pages. The fourth update was needed by February 12 and there were now seven pages. The fifth and last one was typed February 22 with 13 pages.

I thought to do this because I had used the approach while reading Rousseau's Emile, which was profoundly prolific and potentially overwhelming; in this way I could organize my responses for critical analysis at the conclusion of the reading. I had felt the need then for a technique that would aid me in finding topics that had been important to me during the reading. Writing an index of my own interests in the readings and then listing page numbers wherever I found the topic coming up subsequently had served me well. Now, with such a mass of field notes (492 single-spaced pages, or 178,809 words), I assumed I had better know what was in these pages that I would want to return to after the first time through them. Barzun and Graff (1985) provided confirmation for my process in the preface to their "classic work on research and writing." They said we come "closer to the re-

ality" we have discovered by research in much the same way as we make sense of a book:

Understanding a text and taking notes on it require the same attention to words and meanings as preparing and polishing a report. Whoever attains skill at the one and is a good researcher can develop the skill at the other and become a good report-writer.

(ix)

Though the process of indexing the field notes took about three weeks, I followed through with it believing myself to be on course and developing excitement over how rich the field-notes actually were with detail. I should not have been surprised, possibly, but the notes had "gone cold" on me partly because of the passage of time, and partly because of novice anxiety. This type of reading (with indexing) was helping to bring them back to life.

Naming. On Sunday, January 17, my journal reveals that I was puzzling over what fictitious name to give to the school. In the Word Perfect 5.1 thesaurus I looked up synonyms for the word "connection" thinking I liked the connotations of that word. They were 1) affinity, alliance, association, correlation, relationship; and 2) attachment, bond, junction, link, and nexus. I continued generating choices looking up synonyms for the word "caring," and found affectionate, empathetic, kind, sympathetic, tender, and warm. So

far, these choices seemed too fuzzy feely for the precise impression I had in mind, so I looked up the word "love" thinking more action may be involved. After looking over the thirty-six entries, there were only three I liked at all: charity, agape, and affinity. While I liked "affinity," I decided after that perusal that I liked "Connectionist School" better, probably because I very much agree with Goodman's (1992) "connectionist" perspective, and because Dewey (1901) advocated getting things in connection with one another as the key to organization in schools. And, finally, I believe that connection is the "stuff" of learning (Duckworth, 1987, p. 26-7) and of love (Fromm, 1956, p. 8), and it is largely what I mean by democracy. Sometimes I refer to Connectionist School as "Connection" because this nickname parallels a shortened version of the real name that the school uses in conversation.

Mapping. On February 8, I mapped out the topics and questions I wanted to include in the write up of the fieldnotes (Murray, 1990, p. 36). It turned out to be less productive than I had hoped because the ideas came more from my topics and questions from the literature review than from my fieldnotes, and further, it did not provide me with a plan for organizing the data. I tried another map using "setting, characters, and plot." This framework did not end up making me feel comfortable that I would portray the school as it had "shown itself to me" either, so I explored other frameworks

for the write-up in several texts. I ended up choosing to use the house itself as a framework, and started writing a description of what it is like to go into it for the first time, describing events and situations I had observed there as the "tour" ensued, and providing photographs occasionally. I was enthusiastic about the writing and was putting in long hours.

New Map. On Tuesday, February 16, I wrote that I found it difficult to stop writing and visit student teachers, but I did so anyway. I also wrote that I was excited that my adviser was going to read my work soon. I turned in the eighteen pages I had on Wednesday, February 17, and my adviser read them thoroughly and went over them with me on Friday, February 19. She was very kind and encouraging as she went over several written comments on the pages with me. I began to discern a general problem with the work thus far, however: my writing had too much interpretation in it for the beginning of a description section.

I worked on re-transcribing tapes that needed to be done and re-read parts of Jesse Goodman's (1992) book for ideas on a format I might follow. I also read Wolgar (in Jaegar, 1988) who presented some useful ideas:

One good starting point is to describe your field-work: where you went and what you did.... Another good starting point is to begin with the descrip-

tive portion of the account, resisting any temptation to begin making inferences or interpretations but simply telling the story of what happened....

(p. 201)

Wolgar's suggestions fit the advice I had been receiving from my advisor, as well as from the ethnographer on my committee. The ethnographer, Dr. Nespor, suggested a couple of approaches to organizing the write-up. One was to share the chronological story of how my understanding of democracy developed, and how my understanding of the school developed. The first part of this suggestion was accomplished in the literature review; the second part, my developing understanding of Connectionist School, could be chronologically, and strategically shared. By strategically, I mean choosing the events so that certain revelations are made rather than trying to convey "everything." This idea was appealing to me.

The other idea from Dr. Nespor was to write a flat description of the last two weeks of school in June (my entry to the field) as I experienced them, in chronological, newspaper style. I would need to step back and tell what was distinctive about the situation. This would be my problem to be examined and it could be illumined by my growing understandings as shown in my fieldnotes and interviews in the fall and winter of the next school year. In other words, I would share my preconceptions and then how I went about making sense of

what I had seen and of my own perceptions.

Both ideas were very appealing to me, particularly the second because rich description and puzzling is what the first two weeks of my field notes were filled with, and what I indeed followed up on as the fieldwork continued. I decided to use both of these ideas for my next attempt at the write up.

I gained encouragement from some words in The Modern Researcher (Barzun and Graff, 1985) by realizing the difficulties I was having were "common to man":

The digging and delving once done, the next step is to verify and assemble the data; after which we are led to ask: What is the value of the "story" we recover from records? [This is] the problem of exposition. The facts never speak for themselves. They must be selected, marshalled, linked together, and given a voice.... The expression is the knowledge. What is not properly presented is simply not present--and its purely potential existence is useless.... [T]he sole carriers of information are words; and these, as everybody knows, are hard to handle. (viii-ix)

Knowing my task was not an easy one, and that if anything, the most difficult task lay ahead, I was fueled by one further thought from the same authors:

In making your arrangements, consider that a likely cause of the distaste for beginning is that writing for all of us is an act of self-exposure. Writing requires that we create some order in our thought and project it outside, where everybody can see it. The instinct of self-protection, of shyness, combines with the sense of our mental confusion or uncertainty to make us postpone the trial of strength. Hence the desirability of being alone and uninterrupted. In silence our thoughts can settle into their proper shapes; they will be exclusively the thoughts bearing on our topic, and as soon as a few of them are down on paper they will draw out the rest. The momentum will increase until, after a time...the work will truly be in progress.... When the first draft is done the back of the job is broken. It is then a pleasure--or it should be one--to carve, cut, add, and polish until what you say corresponds reasonably well to what you know. (pp. 423, 425)

Writing. I started drafting "Design of the Research" on March 2. I wrote a description of the city, the school, the staff, and the school community following the format Jesse Goodman (1992) had used in his write up of Harmony School as

a guide. I liked what I was getting down on paper but I hated the process, and I wrote in my journal that I went to sleep that night thinking over and over, "I hate ethnography." I went to see student teachers again the next day and to speak that afternoon to a graduate sociology class.

On March 4 I began describing my first day in the field, feeling the whole while I wrote about it that I did not know how to handle the length of the material (even of the first day let alone the other thirty-some days), especially the extended transcriptions of conversations. As I worried about the length, I at the same time became attached to the richness of the detail. I decided to again read Chapter 5 "Data Analysis" in Bogdan and Biklen (1992) for guidance. I also called Dr. Nespor to see if rather than describing one or two weeks, it could possibly be appropriate to examine the first day as my "problem to be examined" since it was so long as well as rich. He said, "Sure," so I continued working on day one. For a while, I also went back and forth in considering whether to include days two and three in the "problem to be examined" also. After much editing and several revisions of days one, two, and three (which involved some level of decision making about what themes were going to be analyzed), I attempted to make day one as "reader friendly" as I could, and chose to use that day only since the length continued to be so problematic in my thinking.

I wanted readers to feel that they had almost experienced the first day themselves by the time I finished working on it. I had a lot of parenthetical explanations in the transcribed interviews and fieldnotes that seemed important as an aid for accurate understandings and interpretations of them. I left most of the parenthetical explanations in the text, but to simplify the reading of the text somewhat, I did write a section entitled "Conventions" to describe another process I used near the end to make the text even more accessible to readers.

As I worked on a section I formerly included entitled "Who I See Myself To Be In This Study" I spent a lot of time trying to refine the section, and did so. However, I ended up leaving the whole section out, primarily due to space considerations, but I also felt that there needed to be a greater passage of time since I was affiliated with my former organizations and more refining of my thinking, before it "went to the presses." To replace this section, I included a page or so instead under "The Practice of Democracy" in chapter one. I was glad about the decision once it was made.

I met with my advisor on April 4 and was encouraged by her comments, "Enormous effort and enormous success." I was ready for some feeling of success. If she had only said "Enormous effort" I may have wanted to quit. Soon after that, I decided to attend the American Educational Research Associa-

tion meetings in Atlanta for three days as advised by one of my professors. The experience was a good one for me and I felt further encouragement that my work was valuable and I must write though I had a gut feeling almost all of the time that I would never be finished. I did my best to ignore this feeling, and worked hard on the writing for weeks that turned into months.

As I worked on presenting days one, two, and three, I kept a fine-lined notebook paper where I jotted down possible themes that would be interesting to follow through the other days in the field. I wanted these themes to be relevant to the three themes of my literature review: organizational design, teacher role, and curriculum design. They didn't end up fitting quite that neatly, but were closely related enough to address those three overarching topics well. I ended up with four themes: "Being A Student At Connectionist School," "Being The Administrator At Connectionist School," "Interaction of Faculty with One Another," and "Resources That Are Sustaining Connectionist School." I felt by the conclusion that the issues I most wanted to address were covered.

In the write-up I also used a technique that Goodman (1992) had employed. He wrote a section on the setting before giving his description and analysis. I believed it would help readers feel they knew something about the school and the people in it before reading the description of day one. While

this section was also longer than I wanted it to be upon completion of it, I did not dramatically cut it because it answered substantive questions about what quality of teachers teach at Connection as well as other contextual information that is important to understanding the culture of the school.

Accuracy Checks. I conducted what I have labeled "accuracy checks" by inviting anyone interviewed to review their transcripts (See Appendix B). Six faculty, two students, and both administrators took me up on the offer. I also asked the director on four occasions to check major sections of my write-up, which she gladly did. She also read the entire document with my advisory committee for my final exam.

Re-Thinking. After spending a couple of days getting started on the first two weeks' "summary," I became reacquainted with the 77 pages of fieldnotes that I had from Day 1 at Connectionist School. These included fairly extended conversations with nine staff members, and a lengthy talk with one student. I also had a faculty meeting recorded, and, in general, for one day, lots of impressions and questions. It made sense to me at that point to decide to make the summary of the first day the "problem" to be analyzed.

Anonymity

I have given pseudonyms to the school, the city, the people in the school, and some of the professors or previous

school personnel with whom I have worked. I do this because on the permission forms I told participants I would do all I could to provide anonymity, and I have. There have been some times of misgivings about the anonymity because one of the regrets Connectionist School has is that after 23 years of service, they are still so little known. Because I was conducting research and not a public relations document, I originally thought anonymity to be the best policy. I still think so. Now that the groundbreaking work of the dissertation is done, however, I would consider going back and starting over with permission forms for the purpose of a publishable book, still not as a public relations document, but as a case study of a school that has wrestled with their commitments to democratic education over the years and is willing to share openly about their struggles as well as their successes.

Conventions

For ease of reading, and for space considerations, whenever I directly quote my fieldnotes or transcripts at length, I use italics to indicate so as well as block smaller margins. Parenthetical explanations that were added by me during re-listening and re-transcribing are indicated by the use of parentheses. Parenthetical words or comments that have been added to clarify the text are indicated by brackets, as is traditional.

Also, when two dot ellipses are used in the transcriptions, they refer to pauses, but no elimination of words. When three dots are used in ellipses, the conventional meaning applies, that a word or words may have been dropped. Sometimes it means a speaker's words are interrupted and then picked back up again after the interruption.

In the case of colloquial expressions used during interviews, I have taken the liberty of changing the following without making note of such changes in the text: "ya know" becomes "you know," or may be deleted; "cuz" may be changed to "because"; "'em" to "them"; "gonna" to "going to"; and "kinda" to "kind of." I did not always choose to change or delete these, but sometimes I did.

I have also deleted some words from transcriptions of interviews without noting the deletions with ellipses, such as "mm hm," "okay," "hmm," "yeah," or other expressions of an active listener that may distract as interruptions from the flow of the words of the speaker if transcribed into the printed text. No changes or deletions have knowingly been made that would change or otherwise deflect the intended meaning of the speakers. The changes are intended only to prevent distraction from the clarity of meanings for the readers.

In the first section of the chapter relating day one, I do not include the date of the fieldnotes, transcriptions, or

summaries since they all refer to the first day. If I quote from a date other than that, it is, of course, included.

CHAPTER 4

Description

Description of Setting

I chose to do my ethnographic case study at Connectionist School, located a mile and a half from my residence. I will describe the city in which the school is located, and then introduce the school, its staff, and its students.

The City. Connectionist School is located in River City, Virginia, a city of 96,397 (Rand McNally, 1992, p. 123). Often when people refer to River City, they are referring to the River City Valley which is comprised of River City, Winston, and Clanton. The population of the valley is 225,000 (Leisure Publishing, 1992). The River City Valley Visitor & Newcomer Guide describes River City as a bustling metropolitan area with a wealth of big-city opportunities and friendly people who still adhere to the small-town practices of good old Southern hospitality (Leisure Publishing, 1992, p.4). The city enjoys such cultural attractions as the museums of art, science, and history as well as its own symphony. There is also an abundance of natural history surrounding River City with the Appalachian Trail, Blue Ridge Parkway, and the mountains that encompass the valley. Recreation is widely available in this "country city," and the cost of living is reported to be below the national average.

The top employers in the River City Valley are Carilion

Health System with nearly 5,000 employees, Norfolk Southern Corporation with 3,500, and General Electric with 2,100. The fourth ranked employer, Dominion Bank, was bought out by a North Carolina bank in the last year causing a climate of economic anxiety in the valley (River City Times & World News, February 28, 1993).

It is worth noting that the valley has the fourth largest population of senior citizens in the state, and when considered in terms of percentage of the population, River City is first in number of senior citizens (River City Visitor & Newcomer Guide, 1992). This distinguishing quality could account for the reputation the valley has for being less progressive about attracting job opportunities, and for its reputation as more politically conservative than other cities of its size.

As far as schooling, the River City county and city school systems, educating most elementary and secondary school children, are the 7th and 8th top employers in the valley respectively, each with about 1,700 employees (River City Visitor & Newcomer Guide, 1992). Winston City is not listed, but also has its own school system. There are five private schools in the valley, three of which are religious, one college prep, and one alternative school. The enrollment of the five schools has increased by 5 percent in the last five years. Some may wonder why parents would pay tuition to send

their children to such schools when clearly there is financial sacrifice on the part of a large number of them to do so. Neal Thompson of The River City Times responded this way after interviewing across the five schools:

Parents, teachers, and students at River City's five largest private school admit it's not necessarily because they are, academically, better schools. Mainly, they say, it's because the five [schools] are better places to learn. (River City Times & World News, July 6, 1992)

For instance, Thompson told the story of the Wirth family:

When Emily Wirth of Connectionist School was getting ready to send her son Andy off for his first year of school, she visited two schools--one public, one private.

At the public school, she said, she saw stressed-out teachers in charge of too many children in a regimented atmosphere.

At the private school [Connectionist School], she saw 11 kids sitting on the floor in a circle around a smiling teacher, who had her arm around one of them.

"There really was no comparison," Wirth said.

Wirth now sends both of her sons to Connectionist School on Washington Road in River City.

They go there not because they can afford it, but because they choose to afford it. "It's a matter of priorities," Wirth said.

"I feel better about spending my money on this rather than material things. We don't need to have a brand-new car every year. We don't have to live in a big house. I can't think of a better place to put my money than my child's education," she said.

Wirth and her husband work. And with some scholarship money from the school and with some scrimping and saving, they can afford that education, she said. (River City Times & World News, Monday, July 6, 1992)

According to the newspaper reporter, the one thing the five schools have in common, and maybe the only thing (he posits), is smaller class sizes. The school that would generally be considered the more politically conservative, River City Valley Christian, had the largest maximum class size (30); and the more politically liberal school, Connectionist School, had next to the smallest maximum class size (15). The three largest schools are accredited, the two smallest are not. Connectionist School, being the next smallest in the valley, then, is not accredited (River City Times & World News, July 6, 1992). This has never been considered an issue with the board and staff of Connectionist

School since their very purpose is to be an alternative model to the traditional standards. They do not wish to have standards imposed upon them from the outside to make them "traditional." (Conversation with Director, March 5, 1993)

The School. Connectionist School has been in existence since 1971 in River City, Virginia. In the early years the school was moved from Winston to the present location across the street from Miller College, from whom they rent the school facilities. Connectionist School enrolls 100 students in kindergarten through 8th grade. The school has a preschool located across the street on the campus of Miller College with 23 students enrolled. Typically, only 3 or 4 students per year enter Connectionist School from the preschool for the K through 8 program; most of the rest enter public schools (Long Range Planning Committee Report, 1991). By 1992-93, there were 30 students enrolled in the pre-school, and the numbers continuing their education at Connectionist School were on the increase (Conversation with Director, March 5, 1993). I do not take the preschool into account when I make statements about Connectionist School in my study. My focus is on the kindergarten through 8th grade program.

The school is located on a residential estate formerly named "Boxwood," and consists of a large house and two buildings for classrooms, and six acres of woods and lawn for school grounds (School Brochures 1978 and 1992).

Connectionist School apparently came into existence because of shared values that parents and teachers felt were not possible to cultivate to the extent they desired in public schools, at least at that time. That the school continues may indicate that they still feel this way, although it is possible for an organization to go on with displaced values (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986). They wanted to establish an organization with much less hierarchy than was common to most other schools, and to teach their students according to "a progressive tradition" (School Brochure, 1992). The 1978 brochure explains:

From the start the school has enrolled students of any race, of varied creed and of diverse economic strata. The development of student independence, self-reliance and responsibility is basic to each classroom, as is an open relationship between teachers and students and older and younger students. We wish the student to experience warmth and joy as he (sic) learns.

Further, they have solidly espoused the alternative school model throughout their existence, which they feel is their most distinctive feature. I have included much of the philosophy statement of the National Coalition of Alternative Schools since it also expresses what Connectionist School has adopted as its alternative philosophy (Report of the Long

Range Planning Committee, May 1991):

The NCACS is a nonprofit, national coalition of schools, groups, and individuals dedicated to providing children (and adults) with the kind of personalized and yet globally oriented education we all need to successfully cope with, and change for the better, the society in which we live. ...There are basic ideas about which most of us agree:

Human beings learn best when we are self-motivated;

We learn best when we feel free to explore our own interests;

We learn best when we take responsibility for our own education;

We learn best when we can develop a personal relationship with our teacher(s);

We learn best when we feel comfortable in our environment;

We learn best when we get to make important decisions about things that directly affect us;

Learning and life are basically the same thing. (NCACS Brochure, 1990-91)

In addition to these philosophy statements, the coalition also developed a statement of objectives which explain their purpose further:

We are a national coalition of schools, groups and individuals committed to creating an egalitarian society by actively working against racism, sexism, ageism, and all forms of social, political, and economic oppression.

The objectives of the Coalition are to support an educational process which is alternative -

1. in intention, working to empower people to actively and collectively direct their lives;

2. in form, requiring the active control of education by students, parents, teachers, and community members who are most directly affected;

3. in content, developing tools and skills to work for social change. (NCACS Brochure, 1990-91); (also see Appendix E for full statement of philosophy from NCACS Brochure)

These specific values espoused by Connectionist School prompted me to study what appeared to me to be a democratic model of education that was Deweyan (1916). Although Connectionist School makes no explicit claims that Dewey or democracy are their model, the philosophy statements that they have adopted as their own from NCACS, and have written in their school brochures, as well as their classroom arrangements suggest to me that they are indeed Deweyan as well as tending toward the democratic side of the bureaucratic-

democratic organizational continuum described by Rothschild and Whitt (1986).

In the classrooms, students work together in groups, discussing projects and pursuing, through hands-on experience, the subject at hand. The teachers are available as "expert guides" to the various groups or individuals rather than as lecturers to a group for test-taking types of evaluation. There are no tests, letter grades, specified textbooks, or prepared curriculum guides at Connectionist School. In the middle school, some grades are given to help students who will be making a transition to public school.

An example of the school literature describing a democratic conception of education as Dewey defined it is as follows: "LEARNING BY DOING = A PROGRESSIVE TRADITION." The brochure goes on to explain that the school has a calling to cultivate the uniqueness and individuality of each child while promoting self-confidence, self-discipline, and a strong self-concept. It further explains that children are "neither held back nor pushed forward by an arbitrary grade placement." Periodic conferences rather than letter grades or report cards are the means for evaluating student work.

The same brochure discusses "READING, WRITING, AND REALITY." In it, Connectionist School is described as a place where children are not just students, but members of a community in which they learn tolerance as well as apprecia-

tion for one another. Their feelings and opinions are treated as important, the brochure further says. They see that their decisions affect their own and other's lives. As was the case in the 1978 brochure, the 1992 one also concludes with the statement that, "children of diverse religions, races, cultures and economic levels attend Connectionist School." This commitment seems underscored in the more recent edition by the follow-up statement that "A scholarship program is available to help those who would not otherwise be able to afford a Connectionist School education." Thirty percent of the students who attend Connectionist School receive scholarship funds primarily as a result of the annual school fund raiser, the Strawberry Festival (Newsletter, March 1993).

The River City Times & World News (July 6, 1992) describes Connectionist Schools as follows:

Those small classes and the comfortable atmosphere that goes with them also attract dedicated teachers willing to work cheap in exchange for the freedom some teachers say is denied them in public schools.

Limited funding prevents some of these schools from getting modern computers, high-tech lab equipment or top-quality athletic supplies that public schools can afford. But the students do get a homey atmosphere and a comfort level that breeds

confidence and self-esteem.

"You can be yourself here," said 12-year-old Bret Adams of Connectionist School"....

Natalie Tomlinson, 12, sat on a desk with her feet up while other 10- to 15-year-olds in her middle school class at Connectionist School sprawled out on the carpet. She and her classmates call their teacher "Bob," not "Mr. Hartman."

"Bob the nature freak," one pupil joked.

Tomlinson likes the small classes at Connectionist School and said teachers are much less strict than at Winona Elementary, where she attended last year.

"We're not as cooped up as much (sic)," Tomlinson said.

These summary reflections by the newspaper about Connectionist School are highly typical of life within its walls as I observed it over the next two years.

The Staff. There are eight full-time and five part-time teachers. In addition to the teaching staff there is a director, an administrative assistant, and a part-time bookkeeper. There is a full-time janitor who also serves as the bus driver, and occasionally as the cook. There is one part-time teacher who is not paid, Allison Carlton, and who by virtue of using her farm as the outdoor classroom, probably

works as many hours or more than a full-time staff member, just not always on campus. Her husband teaches part-time as well, but Allison has the main involvement with Connectionist School.

Fourteen of the staff members are women. Four of the staff members are men, three as teachers, one as janitor. All but two are Caucasian; the 6 through 8-year-old's teacher is Japanese American, and the janitor is African American. Most of the teachers are in their 30s through 55, with the exception of one teacher in her mid twenties. All are basically middle class. None are single, and in the opinion of the director and one of the board members, the salary arrangements make it impossible for a single person to be employed (Interview, January 19, 1993). This is not intentional, but de facto in their estimation.

Two of the men who teach have wives who are Episcopalian priests, so their situation does not require the same income as would be needed by a sole provider. Another of the male faculty is married to an author who has published fairly prolifically and who also directs the children's literature program at Miller College, so the same may be said of his financial situation as the other two men who teach.

All of the women on staff are married and are second income earners in their families. The base salary for the 1991-92 school year was \$11,000. None of the full-time

teachers' salaries were over \$20,000; the one salary that was slightly over \$20,000 was a shared salary so that the two part-time women teachers who received it made only half of the amount.

Connectionist school offers no extra increment for a master's degree, but three of the teachers (and both administrators) hold them. The only reward differential in salaries is for the amount of time a teacher has taught at Connectionist School, roughly \$500 per year, and at the tenth year a \$1,000 bonus is added that continues from then on. Half of the health insurance is paid by the school, and half of tuition is offered to those whose children attend the school. There is no requirement for faculty to have their school age children at Connectionist School, but most do.

Joan Martin, the director has an Ed.D. in school administration from Virginia Tech and has been at the school for seven years. She is the sixth director of the school, and as of the 1992-93 school year, has the longest tenure. A school write up about the staff for Open House by Sally Steadman further describes Joan: "Her Connectionist School family knows her not just as the director, but as teacher and friend to students and parents. Joan has been working with children for over fifteen years."

Sally's write-ups will be used, without quotation marks, in the following descriptions of the next four staff members.

My comments or clarifications will be parenthetical. Also, while definite age ranges are listed, there are frequently one or two in the class above or below the given range.

Margaret has been with Connectionist School for five years, and has been a Teacher's Aide while working on her B.S. in Psychology and Education (from Miller College). She has also worked at The Achievement Center and Richfield Nursing Center, and is a volunteer Emergency Medical Technician in River City.... Margaret's class began with 5- to 7-year-olds, (which means that during the year the class becomes the 6-through 8s.

Brandi has been with Connectionist School for 5 years, and has been a teacher in California (gifted programs), Louisiana, and Georgia for over ten years. She graduated from Radford University and has done graduate work at McNeese State University and West Georgia College. She has also completed approximately 50 hours of science education training through Hampton University. Brandi's class began with 6- to 8-year-olds.

Connie has been with Connectionist School for 4 years and previously taught fifth grade at Hillside Elementary for two years. After some time out from her teaching to raise her own children, she became a substitute at Connectionist School, then a faculty member. She received her undergraduate degree from Radford University and had taken classes at the Science

Museum, as well as 20 graduate hours from the University of Virginia. Connie's class also began with 6- to 8-year-olds.

Betty has been at Connectionist School for 4 years, and has taught for 12 years. She received her B.Ed. from Radford and her M.Ed. from University of Virginia. Betty teaches Sunday School at a Presbyterian Church, has been a Cub Scout den leader for two years, and has even tried her hand at coaching T-ball. Her two sons attend the school. Betty's class began the year with 7-through 9-year-olds.

Peg teaches upstairs in what used to be the living room and upstairs sun porch. (I mention her location because she says she and her various Connectionist School children have been "hanging out" for the past ten years or so on the sun porch.) She has been a teacher for 15 years in places including Canton (Ohio), Long Island, and Winston and River City. She graduated from Bethany College in West Virginia and has taken graduate courses at Kent State, University of Virginia Extension, and Virginia Western. She enjoys tennis, skiing, and traveling, and serves on the boards of St. Anne's Episcopal Day School and the Friends of the Winston Library. She began the school year with the 9- through 10-year-olds (Open House Information, 1991; Tuesday Notes, November 10, 1992).

Bob is new on the faculty this year and teaches middle school science while also serving as head teacher for the

middle school. He previously taught biology at South Crest (a prep school), was a chemistry tutor at the Governor's School, and was a tour guide for the Science Museum, after ten years of working in Forestry and Wildlife. His education includes an associate's degree in forestry, a bachelor's degree in biology, and a master's degree in science education from Radford University (Transcript, November 11, 1992).

Carol Tripp, the administrative assistant, has been at Connectionist School for eight years, first as a parent and volunteer, now as a parent and administrator. She holds a master's degree from Virginia Tech in Family Counseling, and runs "grand central station," the school office (Open House Information, 1991; Interview Transcript, June 22, 1992).

The additional staff members for 1991-92 were part-time, and were the following:

Mary Ann is the middle school language arts teacher and has been at Connectionist School for 12 years. She taught previously at East Winston Elementary for two years and at Spring View Junior High for one year. She is a graduate of Radford University, and has done graduate work including University of Virginia Extension classes and The Southwest Virginia Writing Project. She is near completion of her masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Virginia Tech. She believes "kids come into the world with a love of

learning... and that schools should foster that [love] and that means that the kids are active participants in the learning process" (Interview, September 1, 1992; Conversation with Director, March 5, 1993).

Ginger has been at Connectionist School for 11 years. While she has been given accolades by former students (Kristen in a School Flier, 1992) and area artists (River City Times & World News, Sunday, April 12, 1992), her own claim to fame is that she has five children: Josh, a sophomore at Yale; Sonoko, a sophomore at the Art Institute of Chicago; Sara, a senior at Patrick Henry High School; Maya, a second grader at Garden City; and Seth, a preschooler at Windsor Hills. The River City Times & World News did a feature on five River City families for their Thanksgiving edition in 1992, and Ginger and her husband Teddy were interviewed for the piece. The article begins by announcing that their feature "Giving Thanks for Extraordinary Families" is in recognition of adoption month, in which all five families have participated. Then the article continues:

It is a story about people who do extraordinary things and call it ordinary living. About folks who think that adding a couple of chairs around a table--not just on Thanksgiving--is what life is all about.

The interview with the first family in the article tells of

how the natural children made the decision to have adopted children in the home. Then Ginger and Teddy's interview is begun:

Things are not quite that democratic at the home of Teddy and Ginger Hillman, who have two biological children, a 20-year-old Joshua and 18-year-old Sara, and two adopted children, 8 year-old-Maya, and almost 6-year-old Seth, and are the legal guardians of a 22-year-old Japanese art student.

While their children are consulted about additions to the family, it is the parents who make the final decisions based on those family discussions. [This is also true of teacher and student relationship at Connectionist School.]

Still, the Hillmans have made no secret of their lifelong wish to have a big family--including becoming foster parents in the future.

When their biological children were 12 and 10, the family adopted 5-month-old Maya, a bi-racial child who also suffered from a digestive tract disorder that she has since outgrown. Two years later, the family adopted Maya's half-brother.

"We did not want Maya to be the only person of color in our family," Hillman said.... (River City

Times & World News, November 26, 1992)

Teddy is director of administration for Mental Health Services of the River City Valley according to the article.

Ginger holds an undergraduate degree from James Madison University in social work, and had a very talented artist for a mother who passed her gift along to her daughter.

Tom, who was a new faculty member at Connectionist School in 1991-92, began by teaching sports and having oversight of the after school program, the school's name for afternoon daycare. In his second year he became full-time and began the development of a media center in the library and was dubbed "resident computer expert" by the director (who herself is probably an expert in that field) and continued as sports teacher and after school coordinator. In a newsletter at the beginning of the year, he shared his intention of turning the "gold room," which has been the library, into a center "providing research assistance, computer training, curriculum support, and a reference library for both students and teachers" (Tuesday Notes, October 6, 1992). In the afternoons he said he would continue "making the 'goodies' the children eat" for snack during the after school program. Tom is a native Californian who moved to River City "just in time to get on the staff at Connectionist School" (Tuesday Notes, 1992). He had been a high school librarian and drama teacher for 6 years prior to his arrival in River City. In his

newsletter piece he concluded by saying, "I am happy to be starting another year working with a dedicated faculty and delightful students" (Tuesday Notes, 1992).

Carla is in her 7th year of teaching Spanish at Connectionist School, and had this to say in the September 2, 1991 Tuesday Notes:

Hola, welcome everyone! ...I feel that at Connectionist School we are all a big family and I am the one that speaks funny [she has a rich dialect being a Bolivian citizen and moving to the United States].

One only need[s] to be aware of the rapidly changing events in today's world to realize the value and the advantage one can have with the knowledge of a second language. My objective is to familiarize the students with the Spanish language, opening the door at an early age and increasing their exposure as they progress through speaking, reading, writing, and conversational Spanish. This is accomplished through singing songs, playing games, cooking, and watching films. These methods accustom the child's ear and mind to comprehend a second language. As we progress, and the children become more comfortable, more Spanish is spoken in the class.

For the upcoming graduating students not only do they have a broader knowledge and vocabulary of Spanish, but they also meet all the standard county requirements.

Carla has two daughters, one at James Madison University and the other at Robert Taft High School. Carla's mother lives in Bolivia, but is Hungarian. As a result of diverse heritage, Carla speaks English, Bolivian, and Hungarian and brings a practical and personal knowledge of learning languages to her classroom (Conversation with Director, February 13, 1993).

At the end of the 1991-92 school year, only Brandi left the faculty to move to Maryland and the following additions were made:

Tomico, a Japanese American who attended the University of Hawaii went on to graduate from the University of Florida, where she worked in the university lab school. She has taught in Florida and Maine, and lived on the coast in Maine before moving to River City four years ago. She was a substitute teacher for one year prior to joining the faculty at Connect-ionist School (Tuesday Notes, September 22, 1992; Conversation with Director, February 19, 1993).

John Stanton-Myers is a graduate of Iona College with a B.A. in history, having attended Columbia University and fourteen other colleges leading to the degree. He has teaching certificates for New York state and Virginia. His

involvement in community affairs and his broad experience in writing and public relations are impressive sections of his resume.

John commutes to school each day from Franklin County. His experiences in teaching range from preschool through high school, and he says he frequently reminds his own children "not to let school interfere with their education" (School Newsletter, March 1993). His fifteen-year-old daughter attends the River City Valley Governor's School, and his twelve-year-old daughter attends Connectionist School. He is married to the Rev. Joanne Stanton-Myers (School Newsletter, March 1993). He goes on to introduce himself further in the autobiographical piece:

Connectionist School appears to be the ideal match for a teacher with my educational philosophy. My involvement with social change movements has taken me to Asia, Central America, and Europe. I spent the summer trapping gypsy moths in the Blue Ridge Mountains for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs....

I was a founding member of River City's Conflict Resolution Center and former director of Plowshare Peace Center. I was recently elected to the corporate membership of the Smith Mountain Lake 4-H Conference Center. (School Newsletter, March

1993)

John began the year with an all boys class that will be grouped that way for one year as an experimental arrangement. Their ages at the beginning of the year were 10 through 12 years old.

As was the case at Harmony School in Jesse Goodman's study of an alternative school in Bloomington, Indiana, so it is at Connectionist School that "faculty members and students exert considerably more power over decisions regarding school policy, curriculum, and instruction than their public school counterparts" (Goodman, 1992, p. 54). I have heard both students and teachers say, "I can be myself at this school," when speaking of one of the qualities they think to be distinctive (Fieldnotes, November 6, 1992).

Another comment I heard even more often was "this is a laid back kind of a place." One of the long-time parents explained to me that this can be meant either as a compliment or as a derogatory remark by the speaker (Interview, January 21, 1993). The contexts I had heard it in, I would describe it as merely descriptive, or neutral, but sometimes as positive.

The ethos of the staff, which they developed themselves at a 1985-86 Faculty Meeting, and reaffirmed in 1992-93, is as follows:

...[W]e work together to determine the values we

commonly share and wish to encourage throughout our community. They are:

Love demonstrated by: Caring

Affectionate

Helpful

Forgiving... Behavior.

Imagination and creativity, independence as

demonstrated by: Growing self esteem

Responsible risk taking

Intellectual curiosity as demonstrated by:

Love of learning

Reflective questioning

Self motivation

(Attachment #2 of the Report of the Long Range Planning Committee, May 1991)

The School Community. The student body is mostly comprised of "middle class" although there are three to five families on both ends of the spectrum, though not too far either way (Conversation with Director, February 19, 1993). Connectionist School is considered by the staff to be a "very middle class" school (Conversation with Administrative Assistant, June 22, 1992; Conversation with Director, March 5, 1993). One-third of the students at Connectionist School receive scholarships, some who otherwise would not be able to attend (Conversation with Administrative Assistant, June 22,

1992 and Conversation with Director, February 19, 1993).

Scholarships are based on need and range anywhere from a few hundred dollars to almost \$3,000. An application is filled out regardless of the amount awarded and includes such detail as breakdown of monthly expenses, listing of all dependents, child care, and camps. Anyone requesting more than \$700 is required to turn in a copy of their most recent 1040 Income Tax form in addition to the four-page application. An anonymous committee of three, with representatives of the administration and school board, decides the financial aid awards (Conversation with Director, August 10, 1993).

There is some ethnic diversity in the school community, but not as much as the teaching and administrative staff express as their desire. There are five African American families in the school, and three Asian American families. One reason given is the general make-up of River City itself, which is less diverse than some cities. Because ethnic diversity is a concern of the school, they have advertised on radio stations thought to be oriented toward African Americans, and they have received inquiries as well as students as a result (Conversation with Director, February 19, 1993). One of the expressed reasons the staff and school family support the Strawberry Festival so heartily is to increase funds to be able to increase scholarship awards (though this is not the only motivation expressed), which promote diversity in the

student body.

There is a wide variety of religions represented by the school family. Some of them include The High, Buddhism, Baptist, Episcopal, Jewish, and Catholic. Some families describe themselves as agnostic (Conversation with Director, March 5, 1993).

A number of the families who send their children to Connection are social workers or have great interest in social work (Conversation with Director, August 10, 1993).

Having had an introduction to the setting, staff, and school community of the ethnographic case study, I now write of the experiences of day one in the field.

Description of Day One

In this section I convey the experiences and conversations of my first day in the field and then work to make sense of what I saw that day and the subsequent ones at Connectionist School. I will show how the teachers, parents, and others associated with the school were welcoming, informal, and trusting in that they were eager to share with me, an "outsider," their experiences in and perceptions of Connectionist School. Their association with the school will be seen as special to each of these who relate their thoughts to me, though not without ambiguity, if I am successful in portraying the perceptions I had as I went about the first day.

Second, I want to show how being set on my own to go

about meeting people and negotiating meanings about the school was a very freeing and exciting experience for me, providing a rich opportunity for research. While this was so, it was also at times less comfortable for me personally, but not so much so that I wouldn't still prefer it having been that way.

Third, I will also begin to show how the director was an important person to me in the study, not just because her role was an important aspect of what I had come to gain understanding about in this setting, but because her role was the one with which I would most closely identify, having been an elementary principal most recently in my own school career.

Last, for now, I will relate many instances of "alternative uses" the school made of various physical spaces and objects. This represents a material break from "tradition" in my thinking.

Day One. My research adventure in the field begins on Monday, June 1, 1992. I attempt to call Joan Martin, the director, but instead end up talking to Carol Tripp, the administrative assistant who also functions as secretary, and answers the phone. I remind Carol of my study we had talked about and say I would like to set up a meeting with Joan or drop by and see her whenever she is available. I also mention I would like to start coming Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, if it is convenient, and I would like to know where to park and so on. Carol mentions there are seven days of school left

for the children; I say that I am hoping at this point to at least meet people, see them in the school setting, and then have further talks with some over the summer when they perhaps are not as busy.

Carol does not seem concerned about getting me oriented to the school, maybe because she has already given me a school tour back in December. She mentions that Joan will be teaching all morning, which I do not remember her telling me until I see it later in the tape recorded fieldnotes. She welcomes me to just "hang out," since that was what I had said I mainly wanted to do. She also says the students and teachers are accustomed to visitors and to just go in any rooms I want and introduce myself, and "make myself at home." She also says the last day of school will be Tuesday of the next week, and that I can spend as much time at the school as I like (Fieldnotes Summary).

Carol also explains that the schedule has been thrown off for the staff today because of an emergency. One of the students in the group of children visiting from Mexico City had to have an emergency appendectomy during the night. This has delayed the group's planned departure, so instead of them being already gone, there is more staff involvement in keeping the rest of the group. Carol says she will not be very available on this particular day as a result because she will be taking the visitors to the airport after a last shopping

"jaunt" to the mall for the afternoon. Also, the Spanish teacher will be more tied up than usual since she is the coordinator of the groups' visit.

Carol suggests lunch and recess might be good times for me to speak with teachers and introduce myself. She says they will break at 11:45 for recess and after recess will be "on lunch time" until 12:45. I grab a copy of my research proposal to give to Joan in case she would like to see it. I also grab a can of Fresca, some cheese, triscuits, and an apple since I have been invited to lunch. My voice sounds nervous and excited as I talk on the tape recorder to dictate fieldnotes on my drive to the school (Fieldnotes Summary).

I'm conscious of the way I have dressed for my first day.... What I am conscious of is [that] I didn't want to bring a bureaucratic look into a democratic school, plus I'm also more comfortable dressed "down" a little. So I have on fairly nice slacks, you might call them green khaki, but they have more tailoring than that to dress them up a little and my short sleeves, open collar, green striped blouse. It's comfortable but has a hint of professional about it, although relaxed-professional probably. My shoes are even in-between comfortable and business-like. They'd be called flight shoes, and they're green to match the outfit. In one of our [research] classes, the professor teased about her "interviewing

costume" that she put on each time she went out to do a study because it's part of the impression she was giving. I don't know that I have on a costume, but I am aware of how I look. I want to look professional to those who are looking for that, and I want to look relaxed to those looking for that, and I think I am genuinely both so I'm not faking it in what I look like. I've just paid attention to look like what I am hopefully. (Fieldnotes Transcription)

I also have feelings of freedom, not just nervous anxiety, as I drive the mile and a half to get to Connectionist School:

Right now, I'm driving by my former school... to go a half-mile further down the road to my research site, Connectionist School. It's kind of an interesting feeling. I don't quite know how to describe it. I guess if I gave it a try, I'd say that I feel sort of free. I wouldn't be able to be dressed like this going to my former school, and I wouldn't be able to be having the fun I'm going to have doing the study. I can't believe how freely I've been invited to come and go as I please and have open access to any teachers, classrooms, or activities that I'd like in the next seven days. I'm intending to spend as much time as I possibly can of every school day over here getting to know people, and seeing what the school is like and getting a sense of who I would like to have interviews with over the summer. (Field-

notes Transcription)

Now I arrive at the school and pull in the driveway:

There are 15 students out here, (can hear children playing in background now) and one smiling, friendly teacher who just waved at me with nice eye contact and said hi as I pulled in. There are five boys, probably ten-years-old, at the basketball hoop over here in the parking lot. Over on.. what I would have called monkey bars, but it looks more like a lunar-shaped thing, there's a girl hanging upside down with her hair straight down, and four other kids beside that playing catch with a tennis ball and baseball gloves, and three girls are swinging....

I just walked back to meet the friendly lady. It was Mary Ann Goodman-Sweeney. She remembered me and asked if I knew Becky, and I said, "Yes, and remember Kathleen Carico?" and she remembered real well. I had thought the three of them were in the Writing Project together, but apparently it was some other class they had because Mary Ann just said she's going to get to be in the Writing Project this summer, asked me if I had done it, and yes, I had. She asked how I liked it, and I exclaimed how much I loved the experience, and that I thought she would, too.

Mary Ann pointed out that she'd be on the third floor and hoped I'd come by and see her which I told her I certainly would. She's supervising a softball game right now, although

I think they are playing it with a green tennis ball. She said the age range out here is six-years-old to fifteen, and that they are able to be out there because she is supervising it. It's a perfectly gorgeous morning after about two weeks of rain and overcast skies. They're coming in now. I'm going in to see if I can meet Joan. (Fieldnotes Transcription)

It was interesting that I should say "meet Joan" because we had already met back in December. But I had only met her briefly, and had not spent any length of time with her and this was a new phase in the relationship.

As Mary Ann and I walk toward the main house, she explains that eight or nine of the middle school students are at Ram House for the day as a community service project. She explains that Ram House was a shelter for the homeless. The students jobs would be to help serve lunch. Mary Ann also mentioned this being good for them "because they don't get too many opportunities to see folks who have less than they do." There is a fairly loud noise level from children in the background as Mary Ann and I entered the main house through the back door and went into the kitchen just inside the door to the right (for diagram of house, see Appendix C). This noise level seems to be fine with everyone because it continues over a period of time without noticeable comment or action by anyone. I walk with recorder in hand and set it on the table, in plain view, preparing to eat lunch and continue

visiting. After Mary Ann explains to me that she is working on a radio play with her students, I strike up a conversation with Sandi (Fieldnotes Summary).

Barb to tape recorder: Okay, and I met someone whom I'm eating lunch with and I don't remember her name, but she's here from Antioch, which is a school in Ohio, doing an internship, but I'm not sure what kind. (To Sandi:) What was your name again?

Sandi: Sandi (a quiet voice).

Barb: Okay... Sandi (as if rehearsing the name).

Mary Ann: Yeah, Sandi was my student here. Ah, let's see.. how many years ago now?

Sandi: Ummm, I think I left in '84.

Mary Ann: Un huh, that sounds right (these two sound like friends).

Barb: That's a neat connection!

Mary Ann: Ah--eight years ago, yeah.

Sandi: I was here for six years though.

Mary Ann: Yeah, right.

Barb: So you apparently thought there was something here worth coming back and checking up on (S: Mm Hmm.) some more?

Sandi: Well, my brother's also going here, too (she sounds enthusiastic about this, maybe proud). (Interview Transcript)

I ask Sandi if her parents and family live in River City, and Mary Ann, answering for Sandi who seems somewhat shy, says

they do. Sandi seems pleased to put in quickly that her mother is pretty involved in the school and wants to be chair person for the board for the next school year. Mary Ann responds enthusiastically to the idea and says that Sandi's father has been quite involved with the school over the years as well.

I ask Sandi what her internship at Antioch involves. She explains that the co-op program in which she is involved has six required co-ops, each three months long. The student finds a job anywhere, doing anything in which he/she would like occupational experience, and then goes to perform the work. Sandi has just begun her first co-op here at Connectionist School as a classroom assistant. She mentions that one of her friends is working with the movie producer George Lucas.

I then ask Sandi if she went to high school here in River City, and she explains she went to California for high school. I ask her if she likes California, mentioning that I was there a few weeks ago for a conference. She asks where in California I had visited and I tell her San Francisco. She is excited to hear this, explaining that she is going to do her next co-op there. I ask if she knows of the Adelaide Inn, a European-style hotel with people coming and going from other countries, including students. She says, "No" with wonderment in her voice and says it sounds like a good place to stay. I

tell her I'll bring her a brochure if she'd like that and she replies, "Oh, I would love that actually. I don't know where in the world I'll be staying."

Now Carol comes in the kitchen to prepare her lunch. She greets me warmly and continues to say things that would tend to make me feel comfortable about introducing myself and going around on my own as she had suggested on the phone that morning. (Conversation Summary)

I hear noise coming from Joan's office just through the French double doors near our table, and my attention is drawn to it. A group of students are gathered there that I think are the students from Mexico City. I ask Mary Ann if the students from Mexico are staying with school families for the week. She says they are, and that five students from Connectionist Schools have gone to Mexico City. I ask if any of the students speak English. She says one of them speaks it very well, and the others are taking it in class the way we take Spanish. She says the students from Mexico and some Connectionist School students were involved in "World Classroom" last year. It is an international telecommunications network. Over this network, the students from the two schools have written an international newspaper together (Transcription Summary). Most of the communication between students in Mexico City and the six 8th graders at Connectionist Schools was by way of typing messages on computers to each other.

Later, they faxed their messages back and forth. (River City Times & World News, March 21, 1991)

The conversation with Mary Ann continues:

Mary Ann: It's really neat that they are able to do that.

Barb: You seem to be able to stay up on what's happening here pretty well even though you're [only] here Monday and Friday.

Mary Ann: Well, it's very important, I think, because otherwise it just gets so that the whole program is so fragmented.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Mary Ann: We have, [that is] middle school teachers, have a joint planning time Friday afternoons for about an hour... and then I go to faculty meeting on Mondays.

Barb: That's good.

Mary Ann: Communication is a big issue around here, though. It's really hard to keep it, you know, but we, we work at it. We keep a book where we write down what we do in faculty meetings for people who aren't here.

Barb: That's nice..

Mary Ann: And Joan [got] that message board, which really has worked well this year (last phrase sounds like surprised and pleased; can now barely hear Joan's voice in background).

Mary Ann now calls out to Joan to ask her "if they're coming Wednesday." I do not know at the time that she is speaking of newspaper reporters who were to have come today to

do an article on Connectionist School as one of five private schools in the Valley. Joan replies affirmatively, that they are coming Wednesday, and says she regrets that because she had wanted to "show Mary Ann off." Mary Ann says, "Oh, hah!" in a teasing, but pleased sort of way, and Joan prevails with Mary Ann going on to say, "At this point in the year...." giving a good-hearted laugh like most teachers would to think of being observed or photographed during the last weeks of school before summer. Teachers don't typically feel that they will be seen at their best at these times, and schedules are not typical. I think to myself about my role as a researcher at this point, too, hoping they will know I understand what the end of the year is like since I have been through many of them myself. (I make this point at faculty meeting to the group later on.)

Joan goes on to say that at least she can show off Ginger, the art teacher, on Wednesday, even if not Mary Ann. Mary Ann explains to me at this point that she and Ginger work alternate days so they can provide child care for each other, saying it works out great for them to do this. Mary Ann offers Joan some of her pita, which Joan declines. Joan walks out of her office to stand by the table with us at this point:

Barb (to Joan): I brought a rough draft of what I'm doing in case later in the day you have some pocket of time. (Mary Ann laughs kind of loudly in response to my statement as if the

idea of Joan having any extra time is laughable.) You may not have a pocket of time until Friday and you may not have time then. (I was still feeling the need to do something "official" and at least somewhat informative for Joan upon my entry to the school, even though Carol had verbally waived the need for it.)

Joan: Well, to read it... (as if reading it may be easier than talking about it, I thought).

Mary Ann: Well, on top of everything else, we.. one of the eight Mexican students had to be rushed to the hospital in the middle of the night. Did you hear about that?

Barb: Carol told me that on the phone.

The "on top of everything else" leaves me wondering just how much Joan is carrying for another colleague to speak up on her behalf this way. I increasingly wonder how Joan feels about my presence now.

Mary Ann asks Joan how the student is doing, and Joan says she had the surgery and is okay. Mary Ann wonders if the appendix had ruptured and Joan doesn't think so because if needed, the medical personnel could have delayed the surgery until 6:30 am in order to get authorization from the parents first. Mary Ann and I each give verbal gestures of sympathy for the pain of the student, and then I mention the long night Joan must have had. She says hers had not been so long, but the Spanish teacher's has been as well as the Mexican teacher

travelling with the students.

Some background noise becomes apparent with one of the men who teaches entering for a break time at the kitchen table. Mary Ann and Joan do not know who I have or have not met, so I go ahead and introduce myself to him as Carol had suggested. (Fieldnotes Summary)

Barb: Hello! I'm Barb Smith.

Joan: (simultaneously with previous line) Oh that's right, you haven't met Tom Holt (voice trails off).

Joan apparently leaves now, and Tom didn't seem to hear my first name, which is not uncommon when I say "Barb," so I repeated myself for him, using my formal name:

Barb: I'm Barbara Smith...

Tom: Hi, Tom Holt...

Barb: ... working on a project from Virginia Tech. I came by here in December and thought I had seen an excellent sample of a democratic school, which is what my study is about.

Tom: Mm Hmm (pleasant, like listening for more).

Barb: ...and Joan and Carol said, "Welcome, come on, and introduce yourself to folks..."

Tom: That's good, that's great.

Barb: ...and start talking to people

Tom: Mm Hmm.

Barb: ...so I showed up today.

Tom: Well, I'm available for interviews. Call my agent.

(Barb laughs.)

Tom may have said this comment having noticed my tape recorder on the table. He could have easily avoided extended conversation during his break by going up to the gold room or somewhere else, but seeming to enjoy the conversation, he stays and continues to participate in the recorded conversation. Mary Ann explains that he's the librarian and after-school person and says I will see him teaching sports today (with a little laugh).

Tom replies to Mary Ann's statement by correcting it lightheartedly and saying that I'd see him "run and try to keep up with sports." I comment that it is a perfect day to do something outside, and Mary Ann agrees heartily, saying it is nice to finally see the sun after so much rain.

Tom continues about the kindergartners. He says, "Yeah, the kindergartners are gonna be wild and crazy..." and adds that he would attempt to get them organized into a hockey game. Mary Ann says, "Ooh, that's a challenge!" and Tom says that Friday he had been able to actually get them all involved in a team sport. He continues with "Nobody had a tantrum. I headed all of that off. They actually all played together. All of them. Girls, boys, the whole gang." Getting the students to participate in a team sport as opposed to choosing individually what they want to do can be challenging, and at the kindergarten age level, they become more easily frustrated

Tom later told me (Conversation, March 8, 1993). I noticed that he was aware of the involvement of both boys and girls in the team sports, and was glad he had not focused only on the boys, as some P.E. or sports teachers sometimes do.

Mary Ann comments that it was great that he got all of them involved, and I inquire if it was field hockey they were all playing. He says it was.

Barb: Can the kindergartners actually do that?

Tom: Not very well. We have some real.. because of our age grouping.. Again, we have a huge range of ability...

Barb: Yup.

Tom: ...and it's.. as far as I'm concerned, that's great.

Mary Ann: Yeah.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Tom: It's a whole lot more like life.

Barb: Sounds like cooperative learning so far.

Tom: It's absolutely necessary, you know, and they're still young enough to where they're, you know, to where there'll be opportunities for altruism more obvious and easy for them to grasp [later on].

Barb: Yeah.

Tom: This particular time, we aren't gonna pay attention to the rule.... (Baby ga ga-ing in the background makes sentence ending unintelligible; apparently one of the school parents has come in the kitchen with her infant). You don't have to

[pay attention to the rule] (said louder because of baby maybe, but also emphatically as well). They have a... (unintelligible). So, I gave up a while ago trying very hard to introduce alternative and new ways to do sports because they really don't care about it.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Tom: You know, they want to do what they see on TV. They all wanna be sports heroes.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Mary Ann: Yeah.

Tom: They don't have the patience to try and figure out... (unintelligible).

Mary Ann: ...how to get there.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Tom: So that's, that's okay. So they, you know, and so I set them off with their own versions of what's going on on T.V. You know, I lean on them.

Barb: That's responsive to what they are interested in...

Tom: Well, but.. Yeah.

Barb: That's what they're going to be motivated to work on.

Tom: Really, and it doesn't make sense to, you know, to try to get somebody to eat apples if they prefer grapes and grapes are available. (B: Mm Hmm.) What's the problem?

Barb & Mary Ann: Mm Hmm.

Tom: That's not good.. And it's a lot easier to get them to

give up a little bit if they see me do it.

Mary Ann: Mm Hmm.

Tom: I say, "Well I gave up this.. you give back." (He imitates some sounds they may make while having to agree with him and then pauses.)

I wonder aloud whether they have a gymnasium, and they don't, but they do have access to Miller College's gym across the street. It's not always easy to use it because sports periods are 45 minutes long, and if they don't take the younger children in the van, they take up too much of the class period just getting there and coming back, even with it just across the highway. Mary Ann mentions that the staff has often wished for a big building on their property that could be used for rainy days.

I asked about the outdoor project in which the students had built huts in the woods by the school. Tom says that was not part of the sports program, and Mary Ann says that one school year when they had studied shelters and buildings, the students built forts in the woods as part of the curriculum, and it was amazing to see what the kids did. I say I would have loved to have seen that and mentioned having grown up on a farm. Tom says that he grew up in Pacoima in the San Fernando Valley in California, and he had a lot of fun playing and building things in the vacant lots. They had underground tunnels and forts, and had rock wars since snowballs were not

available. I ask how he likes Virginia after having lived in California, and he says he really loves it!

Tom left at this point and Mary Ann and I continue our lunch together. I mention again how beautiful the weather is today with the pleasant breezes, not just to make small talk, but because the setting made me particularly conscious of the out of doors which seemed so visible and accessible at Connectionist School.

After a few comments about parking, Mary Ann mentions she needs to go check on a child and set up something for the radio play. I ask if she needs some help and she replies that she doesn't think so after considering it. I told her I had enjoyed getting to visit with her and that Becky (a former roommate) and Kathleen (current roommate) were both very impressed with her work. She replied that was nice and went on to say she had asked Becky to come observe her teaching a give some feedback that she felt she needed:

Mary Ann: One of the problems that I find from being here so long is that I feel the need for somebody outside just to say how they think we're doing and so I asked her to do that.

Barb: She is a good one to do that.

Mary Ann: I got some good ideas from her, too. There's coffee here if you drink it....

A student coming in the back door from outside, where most of the middle schoolers are walking around for their free

time, approaches to ask a question.

Student: Mary Ann, are we doin' the radio play next?

Mary Ann: Yeah, and I can be ready to start at quarter of if everybody wants to.

Student: Okay.

Mary Ann: If you want to tell 'em that.

Mary Ann (to Barb): We normally don't start until one because we (inaudible ending). (Mary Ann left here.)

As the conversation finishes, for the time being, I am comfortable again, but purpose to continue being careful during the day what kind of impression I am giving. I am interested in a couple more things about Mary Ann's continuing conversation now also. I mused on her viewing Becky's review of her teaching as the opinion of an "outsider," and that she valued it more because it was from the outside. I also notice she gave the students a choice about the schedule for the day, apparently not being bound by it herself, nor making it so to them either. That she communicated this offer of a choice through another student, by saying she was ready to begin earlier if the students wanted to was also interesting to me. This meant she was willing to give up 15 minutes of her lunch break, and suggests that the students may have more interest in the radio play than having their break time as well. These responses of both teacher and students to consider giving up their breaks would be rare indeed in a traditional school,

radio play or not. Could it be that students don't necessarily feel isolated from one another during their classes? In this sense, I was certainly seeing an "alternative" to the tradition in schools if this was so.

As Mary Ann leaves, and I get some coffee, Sandi returns, and we continue the conversation we had begun earlier. I ask her if the teachers call upon her to assist with certain activities, or give her certain children to work with, or how they're working it. She explains that she just goes around to the various classrooms and asks what is needed. She has been checking student papers, tutoring some individual students, and helping with the after-school program by making snacks and supervising children outside. She explained that sometimes she gets to go on field trips. I thought it unusual that a 19- or 20-year-old would enjoy going on field trips, and that it was a good sign about the quality of the trips. I was to find out later that field trips really are learning experiences for Connectionist School children, and given that adults aren't always needing to be "on the case" of kids on these trips (Conversation, June 19, 1993), and given that Sandi herself still enjoys learning, it is not so unusual that she would still like them.

Barb: I guess everyone goes by first names. [Back in December] I was introduced as Barb to all the kids and it was really neat that they were calling me by my name by the time

I left.

Sandi: Yeah, that's one of my favorite things about Connectionist School.

Barb: They really paid attention to.. me being here and being.. kind and responsive to use my name right away. I was real impressed with that..

Sandi: Yeah, I like that level of comfort between the kids and everybody else. (She said the word "comfort" more slowly, deliberately and with slight emphasis, and in general sounds more relaxed.)

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Sandi: I mean, when I left Connection, it was really strange for me to go to this school. I went to South Crest after Connection and it was really weird, too, you know, [to] have to say Mr. or Mrs. So and So. I was just so unused to it and it really, that enforces the big authority figure feeling (said with somewhat mimicky sound like "big deal"), whereas here, I think it cuts down a lot on the antagonism, you know, between young kids and other people.

Barb: No barriers put up like that..

Sandi: Right.

I asked Sandi if her parents had been involved in the school as staff members, and she said they had been on the board for a number of years. Mainly, their involvement had been having all three of their children attend, Sandi said.

She then remembered her mother had been one of the key people in getting the Strawberry Festival going in 1982. Sandi also remembered another involvement her mother had with the school.

Sandi: And she used to be a childbirth teacher, my mom did. She used to teach LaMaze and occasionally she would come in to school and talk about that... you know, where babies come from.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

*Sandi: And stuff like that. What happens to them as they're growing, and she was pregnant with my brother. She came here for, I think, once a week for a really long time until he was born. Each week she taught about what was going on, with her being pregnant and everything. And then she **had him** (Barb laughing lightly with her enthusiasm) and she brought him in and the class had a little party for him and everything. (Sounds like even the memory of this is still special for her).*

Barb: Wow.

Sandi: So she's.. that's about the extent of teaching that she's done here is just talking about babies and things like that.

Barb: She's been involved in offering what she had to offer. Sounds like it'd be neat for many parents to do--to get a lot of variety [in the classroom] in seeing real life that way.

Sandi: Yeah.

At this point I reconnected with the topic of Sandi going to a preppie private school after leaving Connectionist School, and she talked about the experience of having left Connection to go there:

Sandi: My last year here was when I was ten, and if they had had the middle school, I probably would have gone on in that. So, I went to South Crest for two years. It was awful (beginning to show more expression on last three words, and laugh a little, sounding like almost for relief that it's hindsight). I hated it. [It was] so horrible! And then I went to Monroe for a year after that, Monroe Junior High. And that was awful, too, but it wasn't as bad as South Crest. Um.. they're just so weird 'cuz Monroe is the biggest school I've ever been to.

Barb: Mmm (small laugh).

Sandi: It was like soo huge! (great emphasis)

Barb: And did you go there the whole year?

Sandi: Mm Hmm, just one year.. for 8th grade.

I mentioned that I thought Monroe was one of the middle schools that was a national exemplar school [Vanguard Status with the National Middle School Association]. Sandi seems impressed by this, and I said I wasn't sure what the title was, or if it even meant anything.

Sandi: ...I will say one thing of Monroe is that... I was in honors English and it was a really good program. It was much

better than the English program at South Crest. So, that was one good thing about it.

Barb: Hmm.

Sandi: And then I went.. uh, after that, I went to high school in California (lightness in voice on the word "California"; also in next part on "Happy Valley"--she sounds happy). I went to Happy Valley (both of us laughing lightly aloud now).

Barb: Was it happy?

Sandi: It was pretty happy. And um, it was 80 people in the whole school, so that's smaller than Connection is now. Um, when I was at Connection, it was only about 60 people, but I think it's grown to about 90 now. Um.. so Happy Valley was only about 80 people for 9th-12th grade.

Barb: Wow!

Sandi: Yeah, it was incredible. And actually I only went there for three years, my junior year I left, and then I went back.

Barb: Where'd you go your junior year?

Sandi: I went to the Putney School, which is a boarding school in Vermont.

Barb: Ohh... (Sandi laughs slightly) how do you learn about all these boarding schools?

Sandi: Just catalogs and stuff like that (pleased to tell me, or enthused anyway). Actually, Putney, I told the headmaster

at Happy Valley that I wanted to leave, and he said, "Well if you leave, go to Putney." So I did, and.. I didn't like it as much as Happy Valley, so I went back.

Barb: *Hmm.*

Sandi: *But they're both alternative schools. Putney is really.. hard.*

Barb: *Hmm.. do most of the students going there come from schools like Connectionist School, or do some of them go there.... (I finish my question after her initial answer.)*

Sandi: *..a lot of them do.*

Barb: *...from public schools?*

Sandi: *Happy Valley had more public school kids, but Putney had a lot of kids from, you know, Waldorf Schools, Montessori schools, and stuff like that.*

Barb: *Why do you think most of them choose a school like Happy Valley or Putney?*

First Sandi mentions the fact of its smallness, and then she mentions that at both schools, teachers are called by their first names, except for one "eccentric scientist" type teacher who would not be called by his first name. She mused further on why she herself was attracted to these schools and began to relate her high estimation of the evaluation system rather than a set grading system.

Sandi: *...Neither one really had a set grading system. I mean with like A's, B's and, and you have to get between, you*

know, a 94 and a 100 to get an A and stuff like that. You didn't have letters or numbers or anything, they just had like *evaluations* like Connection does, which is *much* better in my opinion.. because..

Barb: But you were able to handle an honors English course.. but even though you could make the A's, or whatever, I guess you..

Sandi: Yeah.

Barb: ..still liked the style that comes across or..

Sandi: I like the evaluations because it.. not only does it tell you how you're doing, but it tells you what else you need to do or what you've done that's good, and what's not so good.... When you just get an A or B, that's it. You don't know what it means. You know? And.. so, evaluations, even though they take the teachers longer (slight laugh of understanding she gives after the word), they're better because they tell a lot more about the kids, and also it lets the teachers get to know the kids better.. (B: Mm Hm.) ..and vice versa. (B: Hmm.) So Happy Valley and Putney both had those and so does Antioch actually (she gives a slight pleased laugh here).

Barb: Hmm.

Sandi: So, um, I've continued this sort of alternative schooling all my life, and that gets a little hard on the college level because, the thing about Antioch is it's really

hard to transfer. If you're there, after a couple of years, you pretty much have to stay there because of the "grading system."

Barb: ..or lack thereof (slight laugh).

Sandi: ..Yeah. So, and just, I think what attracts kids to Putney and Happy Valley is the same thing that attracts parents to Connection--the evaluations, the first-name basis, and the smallness, and also it's really tailored to the individual, which is good. Um.. well actually.. They will put.. here they put kids on whatever level the kid is on. They won't require more or less of them, which is really good.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Sandi: I remember when I was taking math here, I was like 9 or 10, and math class, it would be.. everybody in my class would be taking math at the same time, but everybody would be working in different books, on different levels, and, you know, just according to what that kid can do, which I think is good. Because then, going in to South Crest after that, I would be in a class where we were all supposed to be on the same level, and there'd be some kids who were totally bored with it, and there'd be some kids who would hold up the rest of the class not knowing what was going on, and, um, I don't know, it just wasn't good.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Sandi: So that's definitely a good thing about Connection.

Um, I didn't see that as much at Happy Valley or Putney.. but, I also think that in elementary years it needs to be more individualized.

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Sandi: I mean.... Um, so I think that's a good thing about Connection.

Barb: Mm Hmm. At college level, do you have some idea what you want to do when you finish college or isn't it that type of orientation?

Sandi: Mmm, well.. (background noise of children is loud here).

Barb: .. mainstream education tries to figure out what kids are gonna want to do....

Sandi: Well, at Antioch you have to declare your major eventually but you don't have to do it until like about the end of your third academic year. Um, depending on what... 'cuz they just switched over from the five-year program to the four-year program, so I think it used to be you could go to like your fourth year and still not have declared a major ("smile" in voice like this might seem incredulous).

Barb: Hmm (slight, almost giggle).

Sandi: ...Antioch has this thing called Antioch Education Abroad, and there's branches of this school all over the world, (loud children's voices she pretty much "talks around") like um, like in California, in New England, Germany, and

India, and various other places. Antioch actually has schools there, but not like the college, just small, and these are for that foreign study programs. Actually each student is required to spend at least one quarter in a "cross cultural experience" (said a little more slowly for emphasis), which is supposed to be outside of the country but can be in, you know, east L.A., depending.. So I'm applying for a program in Egypt.. Egyptian-Islamic studies, and in order to do that I have to declare my major. In order to do any foreign program that's through Antioch, you have to do a degree plan, and say all the classes you're gonna take over the next four or five years (ends with her laughing slightly). I mean, of course it's subject to change, but.. I mean it made me have to decide quickly what I wanted to do, and.. so I'm majoring in Comparative Religions (she laughs slightly).

Barb: Hmm.

Sandi: I don't know what I'm gonna to do with that.. Um, I might.. go into archaeology.. I've thought about going into Biblical archaeology (said these last two words with sort of hushed excitement or wonder, with no pause) or something intense like that, I don't know.

A student comes into the kitchen now to get a baseball glove out of a plastic crate by the refrigerator, and asks loudly, "Is this the right hand?"

Sandi: I don't know. What hand does it fit on?

Boy: Is this the right hand?

Sandi: No, that's your left hand.

Barb: Are you right-handed?

Boy: Yes.

Barb: Okay, then you'll catch the ball in your left hand and that leaves this hand free so you can throw it. So that's what you want.

Boy: It is?? (with great amazement).

Barb: A-huh. You'll catch the ball with your left hand so you can throw with your right one.

Sandi: I think that one fits on his right hand though.

Barb: Get it?

Boy: Mm Hmm (can hear him mumbling like some struggle with it after he says this though).

Barb: That looks good.

Boy: But I'm the batter.

Barb: Oh.. maybe people will want to trade with you, then, so when you go out in the field you can borrow it back.

Boy: Yeah! (like he's pleased with that idea).

Barb: You need a batter's cap there? I see you have a couple of hats for batters.

Boy: I don't really care... ("for those", or maybe what gloves" ??).

Sandi to Barb: Sports is kinda like.. they'll use the glove if they want to, you know (a little laugh from her; she had

not heard what Tom had already told me). And they'll put it on whatever hand they want to, I mean some of them want to get it exactly right, but.. some of them are just like.. they don't care.

Barb: I should have asked that boy his name.

Sandi: Oh.. Daniel.

Barb: Daniel?

Sandi: Yeah.

Barb: They've been real good about learning my name and stuff so I need to start picking up students' names when they ask me a question.

Carol Tripp comes back by the kitchen now and we talk about the importance of learning peoples' names. She mentions that she thinks children feel more comfortable more quickly when various people speak their name right away. (For this reason, she puts name tags on students who visit for the day - Fieldnotes, June 2, 1992). The conversation shifts gears now:

Barb: This is a neat little room. When you see it outside it makes me think of Thomas Jefferson or something, to have an eight-sided room (See Photo 1).

Sandi: Yeah, yeah I like it.

Barb: It's a nice little nook for a teacher get-away with windows.. to everywhere.

Here Foucault's "Panopticon" (1979, p. 201) flashed through my mind, too, but since neither Carol nor Sandi picked

up on my "windows to everywhere" with such a meaning as Foucault would have described, I gratefully went on thinking of the window to the green, beautiful world with them.



Photo 1. Eight-sided room viewed from outside.

Sandi: Right.

Carol (from further away now): Well, did you get to meet most of the teachers?

Barb: I've met three teachers so far.

Carol: Okay.

Barb: I don't know how many there are.

Carol: Well, the word's around that you're here, so you can..

come and go as you please.

Barb: Mary Ann waved at me on the way in.. and it was pretty good.. she remembered my name from five or six years ago.

As we continue chatting about Mary Ann and the Writing Project, a dog comes in the back door and we see it when it runs past the kitchen door and up the hallway:

Carol: Is that your dog?

Barb: A dog??

Carol: I thought I heard..

Barb: ..a dog.

Carol: Sometimes a neighborhood dog will wander through here.

Barb: Oh really? (laughs).

Carol: That's not unusual.. But I thought I heard like, ya know, the thing around its neck.

Barb: Well, I saw something running through but I didn't know..

Carol: ...whether it was a child or an animal (laughing).

Barb: It was an animal! (laughing).

Carol: Yeah, it was an animal all right.. two-legged variety? (teasing laugh).

Barb: Yeah (laughing).

Carol: Make yourself at home, Barbara (as she leaves).

Barb: Thanks...

Sandi: Well, Barbara, it was nice talking to you (said with some emphasis on "nice" with sincerity; I would feel like I

was welcome to talk more later even though she seems shy).

Barb: Yeah, well I enjoyed talking to you.. it was very helpful.

It was five minutes until one o'clock and I had already had several very nice conversations by only walking in from outside with Mary Ann, sitting down to eat lunch, and visiting with whomever came along and would talk to me and my recorder! It was like the people in the school were almost there to tell about it, and themselves whenever they could. Now I found myself alone and decided to take note of some of the physical surroundings.

I had been seated at a round table centered in a small eight-sided room attached to the kitchen. The room was about the size of a gazebo, maybe ten or twelve feet across. It seemed a comfortable place for scholarly reading or working, if not crowded, and now I was alone in it. Mark Twain had such a place for writing. His "octagonal study" (enclosed gazebo with windows) is now located on the campus of Elmira College, 30 miles from where I grew up in Pennsylvania. It used to be located on his sister-in-law's farm on the hill, overlooking the city of Elmira, New York, and the Chemung River. In his octagonal study, he felt as though he were outdoors, in the pilot's house of a riverboat on the Mississippi. It was an inspiring spot for his work, and in it he wrote Huckleberry Finn, among others of his works, during his

summer visits.

The structure off the kitchen at Connectionist School was almost identical in size and shape to Mark Twain's study. However, instead of being an outdoor gazebo that had been enclosed, it was hooked onto the outside corner of the kitchen. Two of its eight sides were taken up as an entry to the kitchen. The six remaining sides had alternating windows and panels to the outside play area and parking lot. I immediately loved this little anteroom because of the connection I felt to the outdoors as soon as I went into it. My fieldnotes describe it as a "refreshing spot" where I could see the magnolia trees, shrubs, and pink peony bushes. This is nothing like any reading room or work room of any school I had ever been in.

The panels with no windows had racks built on them to hold journals, books, and other literature for the teachers. Among some of the publications I saw in the racks were Education Week; Learning Magazine; Financial Tips for Teachers, Teachers and Writers collaborative catalog; Teaching, K-8; Arithmetic Teacher; Entertaining Science Experiments with Everyday Objects; and Economics for Kids.

Though the staff of Connectionist School, past or present, had not chosen the design of the eight-sided nook, they nonetheless had likely enjoyed its peculiar design if they were "nature lovers," and there is much to indicate in my

fieldnotes and observations that this colloquialism may be aptly applied to this staff. Being a nature lover myself, the setting of the school had great appeal to me as a place to imagine spending days working. (A view of the octagonal room from the kitchen may be seen in Photo 2).

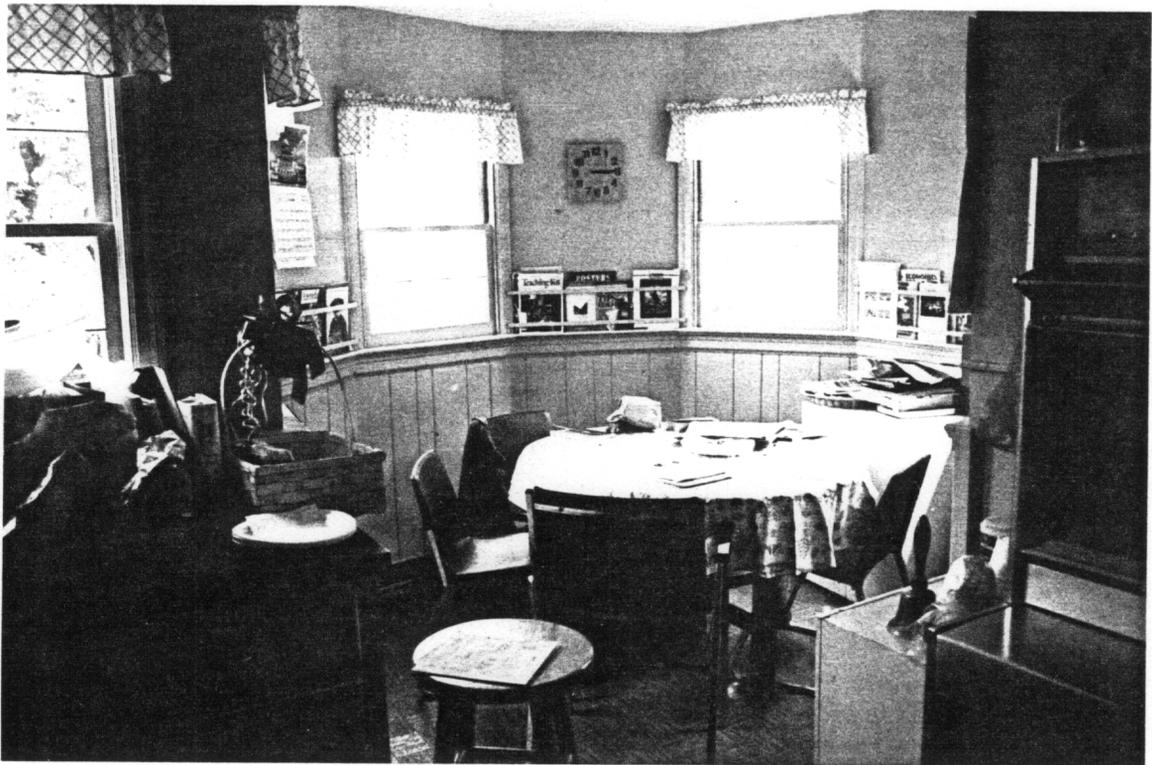


Photo 2. The octagonal room.

The kitchen (see Photo 3) to which the eight-sided anteroom was attached was about 12' X 20' and had counters and cabinets on one long wall with a centered sink and window facing the back yard. I noticed for appliances the teachers had a dishwasher, a large built-in oven, a microwave, and a

refrigerator. On the freezer door (top) of the refrigerator was a staff chore list, which struck me as unusual. It reminded me of the rotating dishwashing and drying chart I had been listed on with two of my sisters as a teenager to end squabbles over whose turn it was. There was also a magnet holding a cartoon picturing two monkeys sitting on a log, one with his mouth covered, the other with his eyes covered, and across the log was printed, "This place is a zoo!" A small markerboard had been situated on the kitchen cabinets above the coffee pot and was labeled, "Daily Notes for Staff." Near

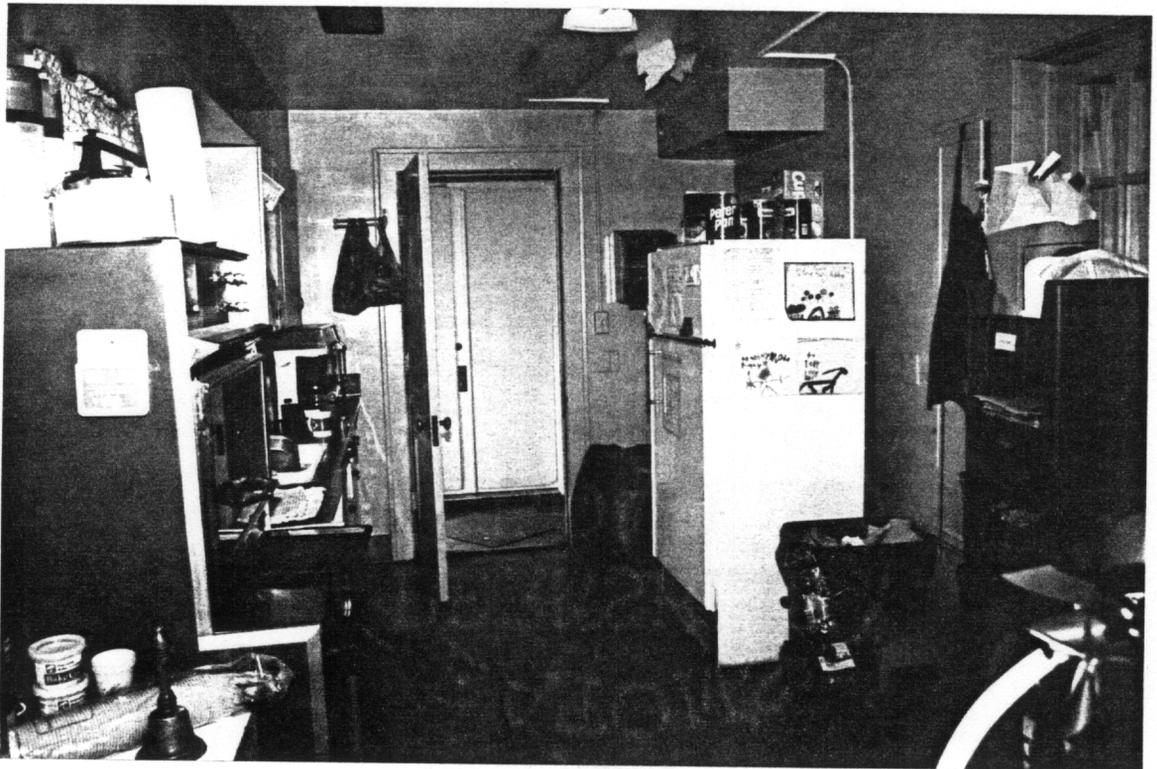


Photo 3. Kitchen viewed from octagonal room.

the kitchen door, which is just inside the back door to the house there were plastic "milk crates" storing baseball bats, gloves, and hard hats (Fieldnotes Summary).

As I stepped out the kitchen door a new person came into view and I introduced myself to her. It was Brandi Johnson who teaches the 6- through 8-year-olds in the front room. She explains to me that there will be frog dissections in her room the next morning at nine o'clock. I appreciate the information and note that it seemed important to her for me to know. As she goes into her room and I stand at the bottom of the stairway, I call up the stairs to Carol and ask if there is anything going on up there, or if she has any suggestions for me. She tells me to just walk in anywhere I want to and introduce myself. I thank her and realize she had repeated this to me. I decide to get rid of any uncertainty and just continue doing as I had been invited to do (Fieldnotes Summary).

I climb the stairs thinking there are a couple of classes up there. As I get to the top of the stairs, I notice a room about the size of a walk-in closet that has been converted to a small nook, maybe used as an art room or a teacher's lounge. I try to guess what the room is by the objects I see there. A telephone is mounted on a wall above a counter with a mimeograph machine on it. On the shortest wall there is a lower counter with a computer and monitor on it with a rolling

secretary's chair in front of it and a two-drawer filing cabinet. On the third wall there is a big ugly gray sink like you would find in a chemistry lab.

Another teacher comes along whom I do not remember, but she remembers me and reintroduces herself. It is Margaret, the teacher of the group referred to at Connectionist School as the younger group, or the 5- and 6-year-olds. At this point in the year most of them were six. Margaret welcomes me to come in her classroom anytime. Without my even asking, she gives me a rundown of her daily and weekly schedule. It is nice to have people being so responsive to my newness and thinking of ways to be helpful. Joan walks by and says, "Hi, Barb," as Margaret continues explaining things to me:

Barb: I thought the office was downstairs; I'd forgotten about this one.

Margaret: Yeah, this is Carol's office.

Barb: Great.. let's see.. Oh, what time does school begin here?

Margaret: It starts at 9:00.

Barb: Okay.

Margaret: We usually have students that come.. There's a teacher here at 8:30 and.. (children sound like they're having playground recess nearby so it's harder to hear). Teachers usually don't have to get here until about 8:30.

Barb: And it's over at what time?

Margaret: Um, school ends at 3:00, and it's usually 3:10 before the children do their jobs.

Barb: Oh.

Margaret: They have a job assigned.. and then 3:10 to 3:30 they're kind of outside and some people leave, and then our after school program starts at 3:30...

Barb: Mm Hmm.

Margaret: ...and it goes till 5:30.

I notice an adult outside with the students now and ask if she is one of the teachers, and Margaret explains that she is the music teacher for the three youngest classes. Margaret goes on to explain that Joan's office is downstairs and Carol's is upstairs. I was somewhat puzzled by the mailboxes, calendar and "everything" being upstairs away from Joan, and also wondered where the teacher's workroom was in reference to these. Margaret explains that the kitchen is the teacher's lounge, but breaks into laughter at the thought of calling it a "lounge." She also emphasizes the importance of the photocopier to the teachers, which is located in Carol's office also.

Now I meet another woman crossing the hallway and going into the little room I was trying to identify. I introduce myself to her, in keeping with my purpose and the repeated invitation to do so.

Barb to woman: I'm Barb Smith. I'm starting my dissertation

study.

Woman: Oh hi, I'm Martha Schmidt, nice to meet you.

Barb: I have this on (referring to the tape recorder in my hand) just to help me remember names..

Martha: Oh, I see, good..

Barb: ..and take notes because I can't write as fast as this can tell me what I'm picking up today.

Martha: Oh, so, how long are you going to be here? (seeming to be perfectly comfortable with the recorder in my hand).

Barb: Well, I understand there are seven days left of school.. (Martha breaks into laughter) so.. I'm, I'm going to be here as much as I can be without getting in anyone's way for the next seven days....

Martha goes on to ask me where I am attending school, what my dissertation is about, and then names four other alternative schools, all smaller, within 200 miles of Connectionist School, and tells me their approximate locations being as helpful and clear as she can be in case this may be useful to me.

Barb: And are you a volunteer or (a staff person)? (last three words barely audible because Martha is eager to answer).

Martha: No, no, I work here (both laugh). I'm, I'm the bookkeeper.

Margaret: She's done e-v-e-r-y-thing (stretching out "everything" and giving a laugh)!

Martha: I have probably been there; I've been everything at one time or another.

Mary Ann (who passes by): She's one of the "founding mothers of the school" (more light laughing).

Martha: I've been around for too long actually, but ha! but it's been a, it's been a trip I'll tell ya (she herself laughs heartily)!

Barb: So you've probably had children here of your own.

Martha: Yes, I had children here at the beginning, and a, then after they left, I started to work here, so, it, and...

Barb: Hmm. Great. I'll have to talk to you further when I figure out some things....

Martha: Yeah, there aren't too many of us around anymore that were here that, you know, that many years ago (said kind of wistfully, maybe regretfully). Um, it comes to mind Allison Carlton is the other one..

Martha tells me of another school parent who has been around for several years, Allison Carlton, whom I may wish to meet. I mention having met Sandi at lunch and wonder if she is Martha's daughter since Martha is one of the "founding mothers" and it seemed Sandi's mother was pretty involved. Martha says Sandi's mother was not around that long ago and explains what she means by founding mothers:

Martha: Well, when I think of the founding people, I think of people that were there the first I'd say two years. That was,

they were the real struggle years (laughs). Well, there were many struggle years, but they were the real struggle years to stay alive.

Martha and I had walked into Carol's office now and a volunteer sitting at Carol's desk doing work tells me to be sure to talk to Martha for this study. At this suggestion, Martha decides to tell me who she thinks would be the most important person to talk to. Pauline Gregory, the second administrator of the school, was a key person in keeping the school financially solvent and academically credible in the early years. She was at the school for six years, and is now living in a retirement center in a nearby city. I am struck that Martha would freely tell me, a virtual stranger to her, the name of the retirement center and its location. She had mentioned we could possibly travel over to meet this fascinating person in the summer, but how would she know I wouldn't just go myself. I wouldn't, but few people offer access this readily to other important people in their lives (Fieldnotes Summary).

As I walk away I can already see that I am going to have quite a time with the focus of the study, but I prefer that challenge to having limited options. I notice a teacher at work in her classroom across from the top of the stairs and next to Carol's office and continue on my trek to meet people:

Barb (to teacher at work in her room): Do you have a few

moments of peace?

Teacher: Oh yes, yeah.

Barb: I'm Barb Smith.

Teacher: I'm Connie.

Barb: You may have gotten the word that I'm around.

Connie: No, not yet....

I explain my study and hand-held tape recorder as I had to Martha, and Connie makes me feel welcome and explains that her class will be gone to music until 2:15 and then they have sports.

Barb: I'm just getting oriented today, and.. I'm interested in anything you want to tell me any time, too, of course (little laugh). What did you say the age group for this room was?

Connie: Um, basically right now, this group is 7, 8, and 9; a couple of 9s, mostly 8s, about ten 8s and a couple 7s, so it's that range. A few started out at 6 but returned shortly after they came in here, so you're basically looking at more your 7 - 8 (B: Mm Hmm) most of the year.

Barb: And have you taught here for a while, or..?

Connie: Four years.

Barb: Four years? (with interest, like that was a while to teach).

Connie: Mm Hmm.

Barb: And did you teach before you came here?

Connie: Yes, I taught at Hillside Elementary (a local county school) before I came here.

Barb: That's where I do most of my supervision of student teachers.

Connie explains that she taught, left to have a child, returned to teaching in the same public school, then left again to have another child. She stayed out of teaching altogether for a while and then did some substituting at Connectionist School, and ended up becoming a full-time teacher at Connection four years ago. We discover we have a lot of mutual acquaintances at Hillside Elementary, which is less than a mile away from Connectionist School. Connie tells me she had taught 5th grade for two years while at Hillside Elementary. I ask her how she became interested in Connectionist School, querying whether any of her own children attended:

Connie: No, I just had a friend that came here and told me there was going to be a short-term substituting job, so I just came for the short term, like three or four months, and then.. stayed (said with a pleased lilt in voice). And I've really learned to like it a lot. It's, you know, it's different from a more structured school that I did teach in, but I, I really like it a lot. (B: Mm Hmm.) I don't have the pressures that a lot of my friends have.. to conform to all the paperwork. (B: Mm Hmm.) And they feel like.. they tell me sometimes

they feel like teaching has become a side thing to what.. everything else they have to do.

Barb: Wow, what a statement.

Connie: Oh, I know! I've..

Barb: Do you have any desire to go back, or if you were able to go either way, or back and forth, would you like that, or do you like what you do here?

Connie: Well, I like the freedom here pretty well. You really can work with the individual needs of the children rather than worrying about testing for someone. I like that part of it. (B. gives light chuckle.) You can just look at what they need and go with that from week to week, and you're really more concerned about exactly what type of learning they do need or, you know, skill rather than.. "Will they be ready for something in the next two weeks?" cuz I've had a lot of little boys that especially have taken maybe a year and a half just to take off, and then in that last five months they did everything that could have been done in two years, but it just took that maturity (B: Hmm) and they wouldn't have had that time (B: Wow) otherwise, but you see it here (B: Mm Hmm) that sometimes people just need the time, and you're not on that schedule that you can't allow that, and that's nice for them, that they don't have to fail at anything. (B: Wow!) You know.

Barb: Especially at that age.

Connie: Yeah, the kids, you know, lots of times if you do come out with Ds and Fs.... I guess that's the basic plus about not having grades. Once you have the Ds and Fs, I'm not sure you ever erase in your mind that you did; you have this feeling that you weren't good at something because somebody else judged that you didn't learn a certain percentage of what they presented to you. And that's, that's a heavy thing to put on children.

Barb: It sure is.

Connie: I think it's hard enough on adults.

Barb: Really.. I don't think any of us..

Connie: But I think that that's the real plus. I think that you give them time to learn at their own speed, and then there's no really negative feeling that you don't quite keep up with the person beside you.

Barb: Mm Hmm. That's neat. Do you like the younger age as opposed to fifth, or do you like both of those?

Connie: Well, I like the older group in the sense that they already know how to work with more.. you know like the dictionaries and stuff like that.... (B: Mm Hm.) But I like this age group because they're still to the age they're real excited.. (B: Mm Hm) about what they're learning and sometimes as they get older, it's more, it's a little harder to motivate them to do different projects.... I guess that might not be true. People could change the approach, but this

is [what] the friends [say] that are teaching fifth grade [at Hillside Elementary]. (B: Mm Hm) And they all tell me it's very hard to even motivate them to do their projects.... I just go by what they say. I haven't been in it.

Barb: Well I can see that very much, from what I see going in and out of classrooms [supervising student teachers]. There's very much a coverage emphasis, [such] that [they say], "We need to have this amount by this time (C: Mm hm) because we have tests this week and if we haven't taught them this before the test, they aren't going to do as well. And.. it's difficult for student teachers even, to have freedom to try some things because there are so many things laid out.. that there's an urgency to cover this.

Connie: Yeah, and when you have that kind of feeling, I think you sort of lose that enthusiasm yourself for the flow of it, because lots of times if you see it going a certain direction, you can go that direction and feel good because you know that's the direction they're excited about. (B: Mm Hm) But if you have a plan and you want them to go with your plan, you can't always direct their enthusiasm (B: Mm Hm) like "This is the way it's supposed to go and you're supposed to be real (she gives mock chuckle between these words) excited." (B: Yup) But, ..I think that's another plus is that you can sort of take it the direction that you see different ones going and sometimes they're definitely not all going in the same

direction, you still have the, you know, when we do frog dissection in the morning, we will have, you still have a certain group that's just glad to get it over with. (B. light chuckle here) We have the other group who never once looks at the clock. You know, you still have your individual likes and dislikes about what you're learning, but basically sometimes you can head them in the direction of something they are really interested in.

Barb: Mm Hmm, that's good.. I guess this is a "biggie," and it's the first day and I'm still getting oriented to where I am. For the advantages that you have schedule-wise and being able to be attuned to students.. more so than subjects... or being able to fit them together. They're both important, but you can give priority to people (C: Right) it looks like. (C: We try.) Are the sacrifices financial or otherwise? I'm assuming teachers don't make as much at Connectionist School..

Connie: That's right, that's true.

Barb: ..as they would in a public school.

We talk about whether salary is sixty or eighty percent of what would be made in public school. I explain that it is difficult to go by what is reported in the newspaper because their statistics include the curriculum people in the central offices whose salaries inflate the scale, and many of the classroom teachers had said to me they didn't make anything close to what was reported in the paper. Connie says salary

is definitely lower, thinking it is closer to sixty than eighty percent of public school salary. I continue asking her questions along this line:

Barb: Is that worth it to you, although that's hard to say, for the advantages that you get?

Connie: Fortunately for me, it's a second salary and, you know, I can enjoy that um.. the ability to maybe do without that extra money, where, you know, somebody else, maybe it would be more of a hardship.

Barb: It couldn't be fulfilling to some people if (little laugh here by B.) basic needs aren't met.

Connie: Yeah, it would be harder but, you know, like you say, I think that there are certain personalities who just really thrive better in a situation like this and know that it is worth it to them (B: Mm Hm) to have that trade off.

I find it very interesting that she seems to think it may be worth it to some people to sacrifice greatly in order to teach in a school like Connection:

Barb: Ahh, it's, I'm happy for people who are able to say, "Yeah, it's worth it, or for me at least."

Connie to a student (with solid firmness): D.J., I need you to go out on the black top for sports.

(An outburst here, unable to tell what or who; sounds like there may be stomping steps back down the stairs.)

Connie to me: Sorry!

Barb: Sure.. is there anything I can do to help you since I've already taken up so much of your time?

Connie: No, I'm just going to clean up that table.

(Recorder off: I washed the tables with a sponge from the room where the bookkeeper works, while Connie leaves to attend to other matters.)

Connie returns before I finish washing the tables. She is very friendly, and we talk for another 10 or 15 minutes. She tells me it was 20 years ago, in 1969, that she had taught at Hillside Elementary. Next, I ask her where the restroom is, saying having been here long enough to now wonder. She takes me out in the hall and points at what looks like a closet door between her classroom and Carol's office. She explains that it is a "community" restroom so you make sure you lock the door when you go in. A 12- or 13-year-old boy is ahead of me in the bathroom, so I stand reading the fire evacuation plan while I wait.

I talk to my tape recorder in the bathroom thinking it might be a good place to catch up sometimes as Bogdan and Biklen (1992) mention. I can see that the room is a very busy place, however, so I change my plan. I go out on the top of the fire escape stairs instead. Although these were fire stairs, they are used for normal, everyday traffic. The middle schoolers especially seemed to take advantage of using them to go to the side lawn without having to go down to the

first floor of the house. In addition to people walking by frequently, there is a German shepherd just across the fence barking quite often when he sees people. It makes me wonder how the neighbors feel about having a school so close by.

While I am out on the fire stairs, I tape fieldnotes about what a kind, "easy to know" person Connie seems to be. I am impressed that she stayed with me so long. She seemed interested in finding out about me, where I was going to school, what grades I had taught, if I enjoyed what I was doing, and so on. It is nice to feel genuine interest, not that it has been lacking, but it is good to be revealing something of myself, rather than asking all the questions. As I left her room, she had reminded me that there would be frog dissections in the morning, explaining that the middle school students will be helping to teach the younger children in her class and Brandi's (See Photo 4). I tell her I will arrive with camera in hand for that. She seems pleased.

As I step out into the hallway, I notice Joan stepping in and out of the door of Carol's office. Carol's office seems to me something like the "school office" because inside it are the teachers' mailboxes, and the photocopier.

Also as I come out of the first grade classroom, I notice Martha has moved into the little workroom/closet area and is doing the bookkeeping work at a computer station that is compressed to one of the smaller walls beside the sink. When

I had come in to rinse sponges earlier, she had told me the room used to be a dark room when there had been a high school. She said she had asked to be moved over there because the



Photo 4. Middle-schooler helping younger student learn about frog dissections.

was "Grand Central Station." She had also said there were electrical problems for her computer to be used over there so, she doesn't have that difficulty either in this little room. She added, however, she did not like to have the door closed.

I also thought it had been interesting that Martha, when describing herself as one of the long-termers, said that she was now part-time. She said this in Mary Ann's presence, saying they both thought it was healthy for them to be part-time since they were long-termers. "We think the rotation is healthy," she had added. Earlier she had mentioned to me that she is the current chairman of the school board, and next year she rotates off the chairmanship, but not off the board. She said she thought it was healthy to rotate the Chairmanship (which she has held for eleven years) and added "Plus, I'm also exhausted!" Martha said sometimes she does the bookkeeping work on weekends if she feels like it because it's quiet. She can do it whenever she wants to. (Fieldnotes Summary)

I go upstairs now to the third floor where Mary Ann told me she would be today. This is not her usual classroom. As I come in, she tells the class that one of the girls had just gone to get index cards, and anyone who would rather write their statements on those may do so. The student walks in with the index cards and other students call out remarks to her, "Here, Hope!" to which Mary Ann announces, "I'll pass them out." A lot of students' voices can be heard talking at

once.

Barb to tape recorder: Mary Ann just introduced me. She has 16 to 18 students working in pairs on their "final statements" about the school year. I guess they read them on Celebration Night to the parents. She told them I was studying democratic schools. (Mary Ann to students: "There's too much talking.") A couple of them lightheartedly joked, "This isn't a democratic school; it's communistic!" Most students didn't give any response though. They were just sort of receiving [of my presence]. The students who teased about this being a communistic rather than democratic school could have been responding to Mary Ann's telling them there was too much talking, or in response to my study, or a combination of the two. It is hard to say. (Fieldnotes)

Now I decide to strike up a conversation with some of the students:

Barb to student(s): Did she call these final statements or some other kind of statements?

I may have heard someone call them "end of the year statements" and asked this because that is what they ended up being called more often. I am also verifying this because "final statements" was making me think of "last will and testament," and I am tempted to joke about this with Mary Ann, but don't.

Student: Yeah, final statements.

Barb: Final statements? What is that.. you summarize what you think about the year?

Student: Like.. we say like what like.. one of the main things we learned this year.. (B: Oh, okay.)

Student: ..and tell all the parents in the..

Another student: ..and what our name is.

Yet another student: Maybe your favorite thing you did during the year. You get up and you read it at, at the final day of the year.

Barb: Does she want it to be like a whole page or.. any amount you want?

Student: About half a page.

Another student: About a paragraph.

I decide to avoid becoming a prolonged distraction in this classroom. I go to an L-shaped room adjoining the larger room where the students were to see what is in this middle school area. In the smaller, L-shaped room I find a Tandy computer and bookbags scattered here and there. I am reading Eliot Wigginton's introduction in the Fox Fire Book of Appalachian Cookery, when Mary Ann comes to this room adjoining hers to mention that this isn't their usual room, at least not the one she usually teaches in, but it is the usual middle school room. She also explains that she doesn't usually have all these students at once, but the other teacher is at a

conference today, so she has his half as well as her own. She says I might want to go over to her usual room, and that somebody would be over there using the printer. (Fieldnotes Summary)

I take her up on the offer and talk to my tape recorder on the way, puzzling over which of the two outside buildings to go upstairs in. I choose the one to the left as I go out the back door of the main house.

Barb to students (at a computer): Is this where Mary Ann usually teaches? (No response.) Is this Mary Ann Goodman's room usually?

Student: Ah, yeah, but she's up on the third floor (meaning in the main building I had just come from).

Barb: Yeah, she mentioned that, and she said I might want to come see her usual room.. that people are printing out some things.

Student: Ah, I can't get the monitor to... (can hear a game sound bleeping).

Barb: Oh. This room has a Leading Edge computer with a Star printer and an Apple IIGS is being used in the other corner. Is there a printer?

Student: Ah, no. Yes, there is. Yes, there is.

Barb: Neat! Looks like we have a newspaper chart with deadlines listed (Student: Yup) and assignments for book reviews, the editorial, and school news. The No-Down.

There's a comics editor, puzzles, poetry, creative writing. I think the comics editor, Josh, is at work now on the Apple IIGS. There's also an "Old Favorites" section, and one called "Dear Beluga."

Josh: An advice column.

Barb to tape recorder: Oh, Josh says it's an advice column. (Other boy hollers at Josh like he's being a nuisance or bother to him.) Looks like quite a newspaper editorial staff. There's a chalkboard framed by two windows. Looks like a 3 foot by 5 foot deal that's hung there. Since there's not a regular-type classroom wall space, that's needed, but I like it. It's sort of refreshing that it's framed by windows instead of a wall. On the opposite wall the clock is at the top. The window and air conditioning unit on the left and the center is another make-shift bookshelf that shows the fronts of books. (1/17/93: Can hear computer bleeping all through this section and the boys bickering. Someone is punching keys on the computer a lot harder, in an "attempt" to get something out of it. It is much harder than I would want anyone banging on my keyboard.)

This room has about half the space of the one Mary Ann is borrowing. There's a small restroom for one off this room. Over to the left of the air conditioner window is a nook that has been made of cinder blocks and 2 by 10 inch planks that give nine shelves of storage for several paperback books and

a square turquoise carpet lines that area with two big throw pillows. (1/17/93: It's hard to re-transcribe the tape now because of the two boys at the computer, one of them hollering, "Stop! Stop!" and the other pounding keys and scoring points in a game is my guess. The machine bleeps a lot in response to him. Doesn't seem like what they're doing could be yearbook work anyway...) The rest of the room is carpeted in brown. It's not laid carpet, it's been cut to fit and it's just sitting on the floor. There's a sink and a six-tier bookshelf. If you leave the classroom from the computer side to use the fire stairs, it's like you're in a tree house of a huge tree because you are among the leafy branches standing on a platform looking down. You can also see the shale roof of the building. I left out the other staircase which takes you down to the four blooming pink peony bushes (*Fieldnotes Transcription*).

Now I re-enter the building I had just been in, but now at the bottom level:

I'm going in what I think is the music room. Whatever it is, it's underneath the room usually used by Mary Ann. The only thing that signals music room to me is a covered up electronic keyboard, and I see an xylophone on top of a bookshelf, and a large portable CD and tape player. The first thing I saw coming in was a magazine rack, so I didn't know it was a music room. It may have multi-uses. There's also a

small restroom off that room. (Fieldnotes Transcription)

I decide now to walk around to the back of the house and look to see what is in the third building, which I have not yet been in today. I arrive at the third building and pull a creaking screen door open on the first floor:

Barb to tape recorder: It doesn't look like many people in this building. Oh, this is the art room I guess.

Student: Si!

Barb: Si! You're learning Spanish, too?

Student: (Mumble jumble, I think, then): Me no speak English at all. (I laugh a little.)

Barb: You say "English" awfully well then. I'm Barb, what are your names?

Student(s): This John, Tim and (can't hear, 2 or 3 speaking at once).

Barb: Nice to meet you. I'll be visiting for about the next seven days just seeing what's at your school. I'm enjoying it. (inaudible comment) Nope, I'm not the newspaper, I'm doing a research study actually.

Student: Ooh (like impressed).

I leave the downstairs and go upstairs to Betty's room, and remember Carol bringing me here in December when I get up there. After greeting the teacher and seeing the class continue with their work, I begin describing the room to my recorder, with a considerably loud noise level of children's

voices in the background:

At the top of the stairs what would usually be two bedrooms in the house, there's one small room with a lot of books in it, and in the hallway around the top of the stairs is a clock and a corkboard and a little office area below that. A window makes up half of the wall and a world map is mounted at the top of it. It's a neat alternate "window shade." (Fieldnotes Transcription)

I talk with the teacher and a student a little bit, which is difficult to hear because of classroom noise. I leave to go back to the main house to see Joan.

There was one student, a teenager, like senior high student, sitting at the computer in Joan's office working. I assume Joan is gone, taking her Mexican students to the airport. It looks like a perfect day for some photographs in order to show what I've been trying to verbally describe. I think I'll get my camera and snap some pictures. I'll have to run home which is about three miles from here to get my camera. From my car I can see the sports teacher using a large piece of a tree as a seesaw [1/18/93: not being able to re-visualize this, I looked Friday to see what this was; it's a large piece of a left over tree trunk from a tree that had previously been cut down.]

As I travel in my car back to Connection after going home to get my camera, I reflect aloud to my tape recorder mention-

ing that I am bringing an Adelaide Inn brochure for Sandi since she was interested in it. This causes me to remember that I have not yet recorded a physical description of her, or the sports teacher, so I now attempt this:

A physical description of Sandi is that she, as well as the sports teacher, look something like the employees in Gilly's Restaurant in Blacksburg, which our ethnography class described as "European" in environment one semester that we each analyzed its environment for an hour. The main thing that probably gave that impression to me was the ring in her nose that looks like my thin gold loop earrings only a smaller circle and she has that in her nose in her left nostril. She also had on a necklace that had about an inch and half tall skeleton of a cow's head with black horns. It was hung around her neck by rawhide, and she had some other necklace with that on a black turtleneck. She had on what some would call army boots (and what my sisters and I used to call Li'l Abner boots) under her floral skirt which came almost to her ankles.

I'm not sure why I would classify the sports teacher as European-Gilly style. I think he may have had wire-rimmed glasses. He had a sterling silver wedding band and I can't remember what was different about him [except he had] a different type of ring on his right hand [yin yan symbol].

Both [Sandi and Tom] were very approachable and conversant, which I appreciated. I'm not familiar with their

discourse, and am not sure whether they are of mine, but that is more likely in America, that they would be of mine, I would think, more than I would tend to be of theirs. I am becoming more familiar [with theirs] by this opportunity to know them.

I just pulled back into [the driveway of] Connectionist School.... A parent just looked to see who I was and waved. Friendliness seems to be the norm here. (Fieldnotes Transcription)

I take the pitcher of lemonade in the kitchen thinking teachers may come here to get a snack of some sort to take to faculty meeting. I get there and don't recognize anyone except Tom who is cutting up fairly large and dirty looking [earthy, unpeeled] carrots for the kids to eat for snack. (Fieldnotes Summary)

On my way to the faculty meeting, I go through Joan's office to offer her some lemonade. It has been heavy on my mind throughout the day that she seems inaccessible. I understand the busy-ness, but am concerned to confirm or disconfirm if busy-ness is the only reason she has seemed more distant. I notice Joan standing alone in her office, and think I finally have my chance to see her and make contact. She doesn't appear to be busy; she is standing at her desk reading some document. I enter her room and ask if I can pour her some lemonade. Without looking up from the document, she says, "No thank you," with no warmth of tone in her voice,

which I was hoping for. My reflections spoken to the tape recorder later in the day as I drive home reveal my feelings about not making progress confirming or disconfirming how Joan felt about my presence:

The heaviest thing on my mind right now [as I drive home] is the inaccessibility to Joan.... I don't know how to read that. I hope it does not mean that I'm unwelcome. I think it must at least mean the timing of my arrival today was bad timing as far as she is concerned. I hope she is able to think positively about my entry.... [My uneasy feelings are] probably a reflection of my background [as an elementary principal].. that I'm as interested as I am in meeting the director on the first day or making a connection--a psychological one like the kind McDonald talks about in his book, Teaching, Making Sense of an Uncertain Craft. That psychological connection is very important to me, and.. it's important especially with the director of the school for me. I remember when Dr. Dill read my research proposal, and I mentioned in a series in a sentence that I would have interviews with the principals, teachers, parents, and students, and her question in the margin was, "Why privilege the principal?" [or director] the way I had. That would suggest that some might think it's an advantage to me not to have her in the picture, but I'm not comfortable with that idea. I wasn't seeking to privilege her, but I am trying to [understand her and her

role] and follow the cultural protocol that I'm accustomed to.

(Fieldnotes Transcription)

I think, furthermore, that directors are important people in schools precisely because they do have an effect on the daily lives of the teachers, and, therefore, the students. They can help or hinder, encourage or discourage. I would like to see how this director functions, presumably without the restraints of bureaucracy since this school has claimed to be non-traditional. I would locate a great deal of the systemic differences of a school in the kind of person occupying this position. (Campbell, Corbally, & Nystrand, 1983)

I take the pitcher to the front classroom on the first floor by the terrace since that is where the meeting will be and set the pitcher and some glasses near the circle of chairs for the meeting, so they can be seen by anyone who wants some. I sit down, turn the tape recorder on, and feel like I already "fit in" with the faculty. The meeting begins with Mary Ann's question of whether they are starting, though I should warn readers that meetings at Connectionist School do not follow a traditional pattern. It may cause readers to wonder if the meeting ever began after a page or two (or indeed by the end). The meeting does begin with Mary Ann's question of whether they are starting and is typical of their meeting style, which I would characterize as loosely related conversations between

two or three people at a time that the whole group listens to. These conversations eventually end up creating the schedules that will be necessary for the next few days (or accomplishing a decision that is needed). During the actual school year, this is probably as far as planning can go with a less formal style of curriculum planning. This style of "indirectness" in conducting business, by having conversations, would be characterized by some scholars as a feminine style (Harding, 1990/1933). And now, the faculty meeting:

Mary Ann: Oh, are we starting, Connie? Okay, let me close the door.

Tom: Good idea. I don't have too much time before I gotta go make snacks.

Mary Ann: Yeah.

Margaret: Ahh, I didn't hear, I knew something was going on.

Connie: Yeah, she had her appendix out. Well, Carla [the Spanish teacher] was down [on the agenda] so we'll mark that one off [speaking of Carla's item on the agenda Connie was looking at].

Mary Ann: What did she have down?

Connie: She wanted to talk about going to El Rodeo with someone.

Mary Ann: Huh?

Betty: With a different class?

Mary Ann: She went with yours, right?.

Connie: She went with Peg's.

Mary Ann: Oh.

Connie: But she'll have to do that later.

Bob: (laugh in agreement sort of, to do later)

Margaret: And she wanted to take mine but it was going to mess up somebody else's... so she wanted to talk about it.

Connie: We had the same problem; she couldn't take Brenda's and my class because of art and music, and our class keeps hearing everyone's going somewhere and wants to know "when are we going to go somewhere?" (Bob under breath pleasantly: Oh gosh.)

Mary Ann (with mock authoritative tone): Well, when they get older... (then she laughs and the group gets some comic relief from this, but still no one knows what to do). Several humorous remarks are made and laughter. One of the intelligible remarks was):

Bob: When they get a car.

Barb (laughing) to Bob: That's safe. Aren't they out of here by then?

(Someone notices the lemonade and asks about it apparently.)

Barb: I just brought that.

Mary Ann: Well that was nice!

Barb: It seemed like with the sunlight outside that maybe... (voices cover up the ending; a lot of talking at once continues).

A teacher: Hey, the lemonade looks great.

Mary Ann to Barb: That's nice. Do you all.. do you know everybody? (there's still a lot of talking going on).

Barb: No, I just..

Mary Ann: Oh, well you all go ahead (I think she said this to Connie and Betty who were the facilitators of this meeting.)

Mary Ann: Why don't we introduce you? Do you know Margaret?

Barb: Yes.

Mary Ann: And Bob?

Barb: I haven't met Bob. (to Bob:) I've seen everyone else here, but you were gone on a field trip.

Bob: Oh (pleasant voice).

Barb: I'm Barb Smith.

Bob: Oh, nice to meet you (also said with pleasant tone).

Mary Ann: And Barbara is doing her dissertation at Tech on.. um.. democratic schools.

Bob: Ohh! (with great interest) Ohh.

Mary Ann: She thought this one was one and the kids told her "No, this is not a [democratic]..

Bob: (parenthetical) Oh yeah, that's right (agreeing that the kids would say this).

Mary Ann: (finishing sentence) ..this is a communist totalitarian school.. (I laugh as she tells Bob; Bob laughs after being told, too).

Mary Ann (to Barb): So, um, I guess you'll be coming.. will

you be coming back when the kids are here or will you just be getting in touch with us?

Barb: I'm going to try to get a feel for what's going on in the next seven days.

Mary Ann: Oh, so you will be coming.. every day?

Barb: If I'm not in class at Tech (I now have a seminar with Dr. Niles to attend Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and reading to do).

Connie: (unintelligible, then) ..frog dissection in the morning.

Mary Ann: Oh good!

Bob: Yeah, good smell, too (laughs). (A lot of chit chat going on now among faculty members.)

Connie: Well, the other thing.. next thing we think should be later is a workday in November. We're not sure we can work it out without Joan and Peg..

Mary Ann: Yeah, right..

Connie: ..a workday to put on the calendar for November.

Mary Ann: Is Joan not able to be here now?

Bob: Joan is gone to the airport I think. (Other comments are being made at this same time which I couldn't hear. Obviously, faculty feels free to engage in conversation any time.)

Connie: Yeah, so I'll just put "later" for that. And then that lunch on the Thursday workday, do we want to order out or

do we want to do our own cooking? (1/18/93: mumbling going on in the background to the extent I can't tell how many even heard Connie.)

Mary Ann: Are we doing something for Brandi that day?

Connie: Yeah (simultaneously with next person).

Margaret: Yeah, we need to talk about that.

Connie: Well, what we're talking about is that on Monday the classes are supposed to do something for her and we're just supposed to decide among ourselves while she's not here, or at.. sometime when she's not around, decide what our class can do to honor her next Monday.. at some hour that we will pick later in the week. Like we've done before, like cake or..

Mary Ann: We probably ought to go ahead and do all that today, plan when, and everything (Bob: Yeah) because we won't get together.

Connie: Yeah.

A teacher: Well, ah, we could do cards..

Tom: Okay does anybody need anything from me at this point? (said softly, which his voice tends to be, and deep).

Bob (to Tom): I needed to know.. did you, did you find out from Miller College what.. (asking in a "non-bossy," not wanting to embarrass fashion, in my assessment).

Tom: Miller is on. Okay, Tuesday Notes will be going out with requests for them to bring suits, towels, and something to carry them in (Bob: Okay) and something to carry them in

(Bob: Great) and no toys other than balls (Bob: Okay) for the pool (Bob: Great!).

Connie: Do you want to ask Mary Ann about Wednesday before she.. so Ginger can think about it?

Tom: Wednesday we have schedule problems with the pool, the only time they have available for Connie's and Brandi's classes is 2:00-3:00 on Wednesday. I need time to take Connie and Brandi's class. (Some talking was going on while Tom was saying this, concluding with Mary Ann's background comment: "I won't remember if I don't write it down.")

Mary Ann: Well, that's only 15 minutes. She's free. Ginger doesn't even have a class.

Connie: Of course, if there is middle school art, I think Betty was thinking.

Mary Ann: Ginger's free from 2:15 to 3.

Teacher: But what about?

Mary Ann: Oh, you all are switching you mean?

Tom: Thursday middle school will be going from, ah, 1:30 to 3, if possible.

Mary Ann: Thursday?

Tom: Yeah.

Mary Ann: She doesn't have them Thursday.

Bob: Oh, so 1:30-3:00 when we're going?

Tom: Right.

Bob: Okay, 1:30 to ?

Tom: 3 Wednesday.

Bob: To the pool?

Tom: Yes.

Bob: All right.

Tom: 'cuz their usual sports... (mumbles on here).

Bob: Okay, all right.

Mary Ann: So Wednesday from 2 to 3 but they'll need to leave at quarter of, or so.

Connie: Well, the problem was that if we go any time at 1:00, see, there wouldn't be time for middle school students to do community time [a time when the total school would meet in the back yard for an activity] and you would have to do art the last thing of the day instead of, you know..

Mary Ann: Ohhh, okay, all right (inserted among Connie's explanation above) like she, (writing note to Ginger saying aloud as she writes:) "Could you do what you did (Bob laughing at all this folderol, I assume) last Wednesday."

Tom (mimicking playfully about the note by sing-songing): Could you do... (Bob laughs lightly some more at this.)

Mary Ann: Actually it's probably just as easy if you ask her this tomorrow.

Connie: We'll ask her.

Tom: We'll also ask her tomorrow. Redundancy, you know, is a..

Mary Ann: At least some of us, some way she'll get the

message. Okay.

Tom: Okay.

Connie: All right, so on Monday then we need to decide without writing it in the book what we want to individually do for Brandi.

Mary Ann: and when.

Connie: Yeah, and when.

Mary Ann: Well, what if we did it.. Mmm.. (she pauses to think) well, go ahead. I.. You were going to do cards. Well I was thinking if we did it at lunch time, but like everybody meet at 12:30 (Connie: Mm Hmm) and do something, because it doesn't need to be a long thing probably. (Longer pause) Well, unless we wanna do..

Connie: Well, that would probably work. I know we have sports.

Mary Ann: If we, I mean, what are you.., you're thinking of presenting her with something, right?

Connie: Well, it was just up to us whatever we wanted to do....

Mary Ann: She's getting presented something for Celebration Night. (Teacher: Yeah.) See, there are kids like Hope who wanted to read something at Celebration Night for Brandi. (Connie: Un Huh) and I don't know if she checked with Joan, but it might be more appropriate to do it at something like that.

Connie: Margaret, well, we were talking about.. Mary Ann was saying after lunch. Margaret: Oh, that will be fine.. well see my kids are going to be at the zoo on Monday. We were going to eat lunch up there.

Mary Ann: Oh. Joan said we'd probably do it about 2:15 to 3. Okay.

Margaret: Which would be great for me (laughs).

Mary Ann: Well that gives us something to work with.

Another teacher: Yeah, the only problem is...

Margaret: I could come back at 1:30.

A lot of people are talking aloud, almost to themselves, about what's on their schedule for the latest proposed time. I hear myself sort of guffaw aloud as if to say nothing is simple around here, maybe after reading some cues from others.

Connie: Well we have sports but we'll work something out.

Mary Ann: But do you all think it's something that's gonna take 45 minutes?

Connie: I think it will probably take about 10 or 15...

Mary Ann (says this tentatively like asking if group agrees on this): I think 15 minutes would be better.. (a few "Mm Hmm's") and maybe just do it like 2:45 to 3.

Connie: That would be good! (Others agreeing) Yeah!

Mary Ann: Yeah. (A bunch of talking and confirming of plans, hard to sort out who says what, then:)

Connie: I think that note's on the board there, I'm not sure,

I'll have to go look again. Okay, 2:45-3:00, just meet outside?

Mary Ann: Yeah.

Connie: We can always change the 15 minutes even if it doesn't work out for somebody.

Mary Ann: Right. Some group could make a bouquet of tissue paper flowers or something like that.

Margaret: ..(mumbling, then:) that isn't the easiest thing for them to make (with a little laugh of emphasis)!

Betty: Well why don't I have my kids just do flowers or something? Mary Ann: Okay.

Betty: I have a lot of kids who were in her class so they might want to write a poem or something.

Mary Ann: Okay.

Teacher: (something about pictures)

Mary Ann: That photograph?

Teacher: Yeah.

Mary Ann: That's a good idea!

I put in at this point that I was going to offer them some lemonade but that since it has cooled off now, I will leave it in the refrigerator for them to get tomorrow when they may want more. Then I go on to say that I would like to tell them briefly why I'm here, and get their suggestions for me.

Barb: ..and I'm trying as best I can not to get in the way of

your work, especially the last seven days of school. I can understand that would be important but, um, I've gotten to meet most of you today, except was it Bob? (Bob: Mm Hm) I just got to meet now. (Can hear a lot of cubes and pouring noise.) I'm doing a dissertation study at VA Tech for my doctorate. I have my eyes and ears.. via my camera and tape recorder. I can't remember things that I don't write down either, so I'm going around recording notes or conversations. It's to help me get an accurate essence of what was being said or to get names down correctly. And with it being the last seven days of school, I wondered if any of you had suggestions for me.. as to how I might best participate in getting a feel for what this school's essence is? (Can hear kids screaming on front porch or somewhere.) It was really neat today to float in and out of classrooms! I have class at Tech Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, but other than that I would pretty much like to be here, but not be in the way.

Margaret: Morning time is better for me.

Barb: Okay.

Margaret: We're more organized (said with a gasp ending in light laugh).

(Bob laughs, and then I think Margaret laughs real loud after his cue.)

Barb: And, please, I don't care if I see spilled soup or help clean it up or whatever, (Margaret laughs more) I've been a

real teacher and in real education myself for 13 years so I'm not looking for any noise level or pattern.. Please don't ever think that there's a given in my mind that is being looked for. I'm not "observing classrooms," I'm trying to get the feel of what is it about Connectionist School that makes it unique? (Mary Ann: I, I think..) And I'm, to give away some of my bias, I'm thinking in the future as much of an investment as much as personally when you commit yourself to education. "Is this more like what I would like to be a participant in in the future?" I haven't ever seen a democratic [free school] previously. I'm more familiar with bureaucracy than democracy. (They laugh lightly, pleasantly.) And I've had courses on that. I do see characteristics of democracy here as textbooks would say, but I'm interested in reality and what kind of experience it is for you all, and.. I'll probably want to talk to you this summer if you can make yourselves available to tell me what it is you value about working here and what's it's like, and so on. But anything other than thinking about mornings for you?

Margaret: Oh no, that's fine (laughs).

Mary Ann: I think it would be good for you to ask the kids what they're doing, and.. you know, try to.. get information from them (B: Mm Hmm) cuz I think they'll (a whisper).

Bob: Yeah, (Margaret laughs) that's been my experience is that we can talk a lot about what we do here but I don't think

people really get a lot out of it until they start talking with the kids.

Barb: Hmm. Okay. I would enjoy that. I was wondering if I should be out there playing softball with them at one point today (M.A.: Mm Hmm) to get to know some of their names (Bob-light laugh of acknowledgement) and hear what they're interested in and have them get used to me being around. One of them asked me if I was with the newspaper. (I laughed as I said newspaper, and Bob and others can be heard laughing.) Then I used that ambiguous word, actually I'm doing some research. I thought, "Why did I use a word like that?" but maybe that would de-mystify it, too. (Longer pause than usual). That's helpful to steer me the direction of the kids. (Can't hear next comment well. I think it's a tease about what they do after naps.)

Barb: Do ya? Where's my mat? (We laugh.)

(Can't hear the next sentence or two from somebody. May not have been said to me.)

Mary Ann: The other thing that might be helpful for you if you're around is to come on the day.. it will probably Thursday of next week, when we do our evaluation.. of what we've done. Because, I think one of the things you realize when you start to teach in a place like this is there are a lot of rough edges.. (a lot of agreement on this interrupts her speaking) and they're, I mean I've been here a long time.

(B. parenthetically: There are everywhere.) and there are everywhere, but, um, there are particular ones.. in an environment like this that we continue to struggle.. with. But and I guess, that, I mean, there are just different ones in a more structured environment, but..

Barb: Mm Hmm. So, will you share those at a meeting type format?

Mary Ann: Yeah, we try to do an evaluation.

Connie: Yeah, that's what we were talking about that Thursday lunch. (M.A.: Right.) We're going to meet in the morning, right? Mary Ann: Thursday, I thought we were meeting all day..

Connie: All day, okay, I wasn't sure.

Mary Ann: I think.

Connie: Anyway, that was one of our decisions was.. when we were going to bring our potluck or.. then we went off on Brandi I think for a minute, but.. we didn't finish that one either..

Mary Ann: I know... (a lot of laughs). We haven't finished anything, have we?

Connie: Well, first we decided we want to order lunch and to have it sent in, or have potluck..

Barb: I'm going to slip on out.

I exit the room by going out the front door of the house and onto the terrace. As I'm leaving I meet a 10- or 11-year

old boy who is not playing with the other younger children, but standing alone by a telephone pole by the driveway, seeming to wait and watch for his ride. He sees me and approaches me, and seems eager to talk. He shows me what is left of a bird's nest on the ground that some other boys had knocked out of the tree in the front lawn, and exhibits sadness over it. He also verbally disapproved of their actions. Since he wants to talk and it is not taking him away from school work obviously, I ask him to let me get my tape recorder on. We talk for several minutes. After finding out that it is his first year, that he likes being at the school, that it is "pretty different" than his other schools yet "some ways the same," he tells me several specific reasons he likes it at Connection. He says the teachers are nice, you get more art than you would at regular schools, and that swimming is available for sports.

A man, possibly a school father, walks out of the school and across the lawn past James and me. He seems very friendly, or in a good mood about something, or maybe both:

Passerby to Barb: How are you doing?

Barb: Good, how about you?

Passerby: Oh, it's a good day!

Barb: It's a beautiful day (laughs).

Man (with lilt in voice): A beautiful day and a good day.

Barb: Yeah, (laughs) good! (Sound of an engine starting and

vehicle leaving.)

I leave soon after this, and am tired from a very full first day. (Fieldnotes)

Preliminary Analysis of Day One

As we consider all the events of day one, there are a number of topics that could be pursued in addition to the ones I mentioned for the reader at the outset of the last chapter. With so many rich possibilities, we will need, nonetheless, to have only a few remain in prominence at the end of this analysis. Therefore, I will now touch upon the four themes I raised at the beginning of this chapter, and then I will move on to the funneling down to the main section of analysis in the next chapter.

Eagerness to Share. The first theme I said I would cover before I began describing the events of day one was that the staff and people associated with Connectionist School were consistently eager to share their experiences in and perceptions of the school with me, an outsider. Along with this eagerness is their consistently welcoming, informal, and trusting style. Carol was friendly and welcoming on the phone, giving me the information pertinent to the day; Mary Ann was also welcoming and helpful as I pulled into the driveway and began my day on campus; Sandi, though quiet, seemed to enjoy talking to me about her school experiences; Tom was "ready for interviews," and did one on the spot,

giving me his unique approach to teaching sports. Margaret, without being asked, gave me a run down of the basic schedule for each day, which I needed; Martha "lit up" about my study as soon as she met me and shared information about other alternative school she was aware of and some of her roles at Connection over the years. Connie revealed a great deal to me about why she came to Connection, and why she likes it. She and others also showed a personal interest in me by asking if I was enjoying my work, and by inquiring what I hoped to do in the future. The faculty at their afternoon meeting welcomed me to be "one of them" and sought to help me locate what I said I came to study.

What does all of this say to me, just from the first theme of the first day? It points dramatically to an ethic of care among the school family, an ethic that seems almost entirely unimpeded by busy-ness or structure, from the very first "reading" of the school. It also reveals a unusual degree of openness, including to me an outsider. This is one of Habermas' criteria of an "ideal speech situation"--openness and freedom in conversation.

These open conversations of day one also reveal ambiguity on the part of Connectionist School staff in their descriptions of how well they like their work there. For instance, when Martha was talking about her years at the school and a passerby told me Martha was one of the founding mothers,

Martha replied by saying, "I've been around for too long actually, but ha! but, it's been a, it's been a trip I'll tell ya!" Later when she said she was rotating off the chairmanship of the board this year, she explained, "We think the rotation is healthy, plus I'm also exhausted" (emphasis mine). I got the idea that while her years had been fulfilling and she was not complaining, in order to be honest with me, she had to say that at times situations had been more difficult than could be considered normally or desirably challenging. This revelation fits in with the level of exhaustion and degree of work Dewey observed in the Lab School (Mayhew & Edwards, 1966), and that Rothschild and Whitt (1986) observed in their five case studies of collective, democratic organizations.

I thought it was also interesting what Connie said when she was talking to me about how she came to Connectionist School. I asked her if she had any desire to go back to public school, and she said, "Well, I like the freedom here pretty well...." For her to say she liked it **pretty well** is not the same as to say she likes it without reservation. It would seem from her statement that there are complexities involved in the freedoms she has at Connectionist School that are not present at traditional schools. She also said, "I just came here for the short-term, like three or four months [as a substitute teacher], and then, stayed, and I've really

learned to like it a lot. It's, you know, it's different from a more structured school that I did teach in, but I, I really like it a lot." Here it is obvious that, for her at least, liking it at Connectionist School is something you learn to do. When teachers first enter Connectionist School, and have been accustomed to a more traditional setting, there is a major adjustment that takes place. But, as Connie indicated, once the adjustment or transition is made, you can "really like it a lot."

Along these same lines, Mary Ann's comment to me at faculty meeting makes the same point about getting used to the way things are at Connectionist School when you first arrive: "I think one of the things you realize when you start to work in a place like this is there are a lot of rough edges, and they're, I mean, I've been here a long time." When I respond parenthetically that there are rough edges everywhere, she quickly goes on to say, "and there are everywhere, but, um, there are particular ones in an environment like this that we continue to struggle with." The rest of the staff at the faculty meeting were so greatly in accord with what Mary Ann is saying that they interrupt with statements and vocalizations of agreement. Mary Ann goes on to say that I can learn what these are by coming to their all day evaluation meetings next week. (Here, again, there is openness about the struggle, as well as an invitation to pursue the study of it, with

a cue as to where they suggest I may look and listen.)

Discomfiting Moments for the Researcher. The second theme I want to show is that being set on my own by Connectionist School to go about meeting people and negotiating meanings was very freeing and exciting in its promise of a rich opportunity for research. At the same time this arrangement was less comfortable for me, initially, but not so much so that I would wish that it had been different. While the script from day one does not reveal all of the struggle I felt, for my part, I was very interested and concerned with making a connection with the director on day one. I was trying to go in the house to see her when I first arrived and ended up coming in the school and talking with Mary Ann and Sandi instead. I tried several other times to see her also, to no avail. I did see Joan when she came out at lunch, but Mary Ann's signals were such that I could tell that Joan would not be likely to have a "few minutes" to hear from me until considerably later. This was potentially fine with me, but I was not comfortable because I could not tell if it was "fine" with Joan. She did not make me feel unwelcome in any way, but until I had some reason to think I was welcome, I would not assume that I was. I realize my assumptions are at least partially, if not largely, a commentary on my own "operating style" when I was in a position such as Joan's myself, as an elementary principal.

This position of uncertainty over my status with Joan is what I most have in mind when I say it was freeing, but discomfiting at times to be on my own. After school was out, there was never another day that she did not stop and make some connection with me whenever I came on campus (and I had never indicated my wish for this to her). She often spent five or ten minutes, or more if she could, so the worry subsided. One day in June, Joan and I had extended interview times, and we talked about the daily pressures of her job and maintaining relationships. It came out in one of the conversations that the very day I began my fieldwork was probably one of the worst of the whole year for her though she never specifically says this was the day of my arrival. I came to understand that on my first day, she had an upcoming end of the year board meeting on her mind and preparation for it needed, Celebration Night with the total school family just days away and practices still needing her attention and coordination, evaluations were due (like report cards, only narrative), a newspaper reporter was coming, a Mexican student had an emergency appendectomy, and she was not really well enough physically to be at school. As she talks to me in June as I mentioned, I figure out that this terrible day was the day of my arrival:

I think a lot of times we've said, "When I'm stepping on your toes, you tell me, and when you're stepping on my toes,

I'll tell you." We do pretty well with that most of the time, but we know that things are going bad if we're yelling at each other or snapping at each other. We know, oh boy.... One day, right at the end of school, I did. It must have been Monday before Tuesday. It was awful, and I was awful, and I called Mary Ann and apologized the next day, and I apologized to Carol the next day. The kids even went home and told their parents I was a little testy.

When Joan revealed the feelings and experiences she was having that first day, I felt completely comfortable from that point on that both I and my study were welcome to her. I knew at this point, also, that there was some basis for my having had difficulty trying to read her. I had anticipated the ending of the school year as a pressure point; I just had not known how very much more of one it could be in an alternative school where work assignments loom larger and there is less support staff to accomplish them. It is a wonder I was only puzzled about whether she wanted me at the school. Many administrators would have snapped.

A few other discomfiting experiences for me are apparent the first day. One is trying to decide where to park. Another is when I work on coming to the full realization that it is up to me to introduce myself, explain my tape recorder, and establish rapport, if I can, totally on my own. Although I decide to ignore the discomfort/uneasiness, and begin to

accept the invitation Carol extended, this is not the way I am accustomed to operating in a school setting, and it therefore takes a while to get accustomed to it.

Later, I am puzzled when I reflect upon all the women having dresses on (even if with tennis shoes), and the men being dressed up somewhat also. I had expected to see more of the women in slacks, and the men more casually dressed, maybe because of impressions I retained from my visit in December. What I didn't realize was that they had dressed up because they were expecting the newspaper; instead, I assumed there must be an informal dress code that I had inadvertently missed. The next day, following their "cues," I wore a dress. They, in contrast, were dressed casually as I had expected, but not seen, the first day. As an aside, in addition to revealing some of the adjustments I was making to fit in, this situation also reveals the concern of those at Connectionist School to be interpreted positively to outsiders.

Another example of my seeking a comfort level is when I didn't know what to make of Sandi and Tom's personal appearance: their nontraditional jewelry, and to some extent their hippie-like clothing. I liked both Sandi and Tom as individuals immediately, and viewed them as free-spirited people, yet while I talked with them, I was conscious of the surprise I felt to be talking "comfortably" with individuals who looked like they were from the hippie culture of the 60s. I had

never talked on a personal level with people of this discourse, even in my three years of classes at Tech. The closest I had come was occasionally paying people of this description at the cash register in Gilly's Restaurant in Blacksburg. This new awareness of my lack of familiarity caused me to realize I had led quite a sheltered existence growing up in a rural area, and living mainly within closed institutions after moving to cities. I don't think my inner reticence showed as I initially talked with either Sandi or Tom, and after the second day, there was no more inner reservation on my part. These "California-looking" people were just as "people-like" as the hundreds of other types I had met, only they seemed possibly to be more laid back and more receptive to other people.

The adjustment it takes for "mainstream" people, such as I have been as revealed here, may be one reason the "dominant paradigm"/culture does not find a comfort level for themselves at Connectionist School when they visit. Their own comfort level, rather than their acceptance by the people at Connectionist School would be the issue if getting comfortable happens for most visitors as it did for me. It takes some assimilating of difference. Without a study to pursue, I may not have pushed through my reticence to make the effort to know people, and the school, more than on the surface, which was not immediately comfortable, as I have said.

Alternative Uses of Physical Objects. The third theme I presented at the outset of the telling of day one was the alternative uses the school made of various physical objects and spaces, examples representative of material breaks with tradition. As I drove in to the school in the morning, I observed students playing a game of softball using a green tennis ball as a softball. Later, as I was looking out of a window, some students were playing catch with it, using baseball gloves. These incidents struck me as mildly unusual, and upon inquiring of myself why I thought so, I came to the awareness that students I have been associated with in the past would generally not think it "cool" to be using the "wrong" ball for a particular sport. Many of them wouldn't be "caught dead" using it, therefore, if it was in front of their peers. They also, typically, would not only want to have the right equipment, but have it be of the latest fashion of some sort, if possible. At Connectionist School, there seemed to be no "show" of fashion, or mild pretentiousness like this about appearances that I could see. This is not to say that they may not exhibit pride over some other area, however, such as creative endeavor of some sort with their minds. The values of students in relation to material things seemed different in this alternative school than they would be of students in more traditional schools.

In connection with the use of sport's equipment, it was

amusing to me when Sandi told me students use equipment any way they want to. She explained this to me following my telling Danny which hand the ball glove he had selected was for. The point she was making, I think, was that students are told how to use the equipment when they want to know how to use it. Then is the appropriate time for them to receive such instruction from an adult, and then with no pressure to continue using it that way. (My explanation to Danny did follow his question in this case. She just explained the way of thinking by the adults at Connectionist School in case I would not know that, and I didn't.) This is a thoroughly non-traditional school. Most school personnel in traditional schools would, in fact, consider it their duty to explain the proper use of equipment, whether the students had genuine interest to know at the particular time or not. It is hard to imagine that this could be expected to be otherwise in traditional schools where the larger numbers of students for adults to deal with at a time is at least twice as many, and often more. With larger numbers of students, it is impossible to gear instruction as thoroughly to the time when they are interested, though much can be done in that vein. Numbers limit the extent to which this is possible, even if a great desire existed on the part of the teacher.

This is a good example of students being allowed to hear what they do or do not wish to hear in conversations, includ-

ing instruction which is usually accepted as an acceptable time for soliloquy rather than dialogue. The fact that students are participants in the conversation, and have a level of control over what they are presented, reveals that at least some of Habermas' ideal speech situation, which is thought to be democracy in action, is at least to this extent (and quite probably more) part of their reality.

Other examples of alternative uses of something material are as follows: the conversion of a closet into a darkroom, now a nook for the bookkeeper and a sort of "phone booth" for others; one of my favorites-- Betty's use of a world map as a window shade for her classroom; and the left-over tree stump that two children perched on to use as a see-saw (see Photo 5).

When I saw the children, I immediately thought how much fun they were having with their childlike creativity, and I also realized that when I was a principal, I probably would have asked the maintenance personnel to remove the stump so that no one would get splinters or be hurt by falling from it. There is a more closely defined safety consciousness in traditional schools that is necessary with large numbers of children for teachers to supervise at one time and a continual awareness of the possibility of lawsuits, particularly in matters of safety. Still, I was glad as I saw these children



Photo 5. Left over tree stump used as see-saw.

playing on the stump that I had grown up on a farm where I could play with tree stumps or anything else I found in nature with the same abandon (not reckless, but natural) that these children seemed to be enjoying.

On the second day of school, as I looked out of an upstairs window into the back yard area, I noticed a 9- or 10-year-old boy asleep in the shade on the asphalt sidewalk with his friend sitting nearby. Other children played freely all around him, causing no disturbance to his mid-day rest (Fieldnotes, June 2, 1992).

Before leaving this section, I must mention another break with a traditional school setting: a dog running up the hallway of the first floor of the house during lunch time, with no one jumping up to get him/her out. This fits in with a label that came to be applied frequently to Connectionist School by the people I spoke with there who attempted to generalize a description for me: "It's a laid back kind of place."

Where We Will Go From Here

Now we will continue our journey by examining the main themes, as I see them, in the study. From the adults' and students' perspectives, we will discover what it is like for students to experience an education at Connectionist School. Next, we will pursue the topic of what kind of director it takes to remain at Connectionist School. Third, we will examine the nature of faculty interaction with one another, and last of the major themes, we will analyze the factors in place that seem to sustain Connectionist School.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis

Having funneled the discussion down as I said I would do for this ethnographic study, we will continue now with four main themes. It is tempting to "write the story" even more fully, as I have seen it, at Connectionist School. To do the story justice would take an underwritten project, with the provision of more time. I must, unfortunately, tell much less of the story than I could, or I do not address the task at hand--a doctoral dissertation. Better to tell as much as I can than to delay and not tell it at all. So, as I said at the closing of the last chapter, we will now examine what it is like for the students to experience an education at Connectionist School. Second, we will look at what kind of directors have thrived, as well as those who have not, and the effect they have had on the school. Third, we will examine the nature of interaction the faculty has with one another, and to what end. Last, we will analyze the factors that have sustained a thoroughly non-traditional school such as Connectionist.

Being a Student at Connectionist School

Based upon several conversations with students who are willing and eager to share their views, and based upon several observations of student life, both in and out of the classroom, a number of things can be said about what it is like to

be a student at Connectionist School. Another basis for describing the experience of students at Connectionist School is by talking to the adults who work with them. We will first address some viewpoints of the students, and then of the adults.

From the Students' Perspectives. I talked with students of various ages about their experiences at Connectionist School, and what they particularly liked or did not like. I talked with six students in the 6- through 8-year-old class, two 10-year-olds, and five middle school students. Additionally, I talked at length with Sandi, now in college, who reflected back on her years at Connection with consciousness and clarity.

Over the entire range of ages of students, past and present, there are a number of qualities that all of them seem to value about the school. The most commonly cited reason students like Connectionist School is its teachers. Five of the students named a specific teacher that they especially liked (not the same teacher), but all ten of the ones who gave this reason meant the teachers in general was what was good about Connectionist School. Four students specified that it was the way the teachers teach that caused them to like their teachers. Two students mentioned what the teachers taught as the distinguishing factor.

The second most commonly cited reason students said they

liked Connection is related to the first; they can call their teachers by their first names. When I asked why they liked that so much, three different students articulated that it makes the teachers seem more like real people to them, and I got the impression that they thought it affected their learning also. Scott, a seventh grader who has been at the school all the way through said the following as he was describing to me what it was like to be at Connectionist School.

Scott: Everything, everyone, is like very open. Like everyone is called by their first names, even our director. See, we call everyone, Joan or Bob, or the teachers or anyone, by their first names.

Barb: Is that kind of an important thing?

Scott: I think so. It gets you more involved with your teacher, more close with your teacher, and also since we have such small classes, you get more attention directly from the teacher. That is probably better for the student to learn stuff. You get more time. (Interview, June 3, 1992)

Even seven years after having attended Connectionist School, Sandi remembered the importance of using first names, and listed it among the things she thought other students, as well as she, would value over the years:

I think they would be glad that they could call their teachers by their first names, because it creates more of a

rapport between student and teacher and more of a level of understanding.... You know, because it makes it seem like, not only is the student a real person, but so is the teacher.

(Interview, March 24, 1993)

The realization of Habermas' ideal of democracy as open communication is very apparent in these revelations by students.

The next most often mentioned category of the students was that they like field trips, several naming specific ones, or other activities of the school: backpacking, coal mining trip, going to the Everglades, going to the farm twice a week, Renaissance studies, trip to Charlottesville, swimming, and the trip to Washington, D.C. One boy said that the teachers "make learning fun."

Having established that students think the teachers are what is best about the school, we will now consider some other factors they find to be positive. I would like to note that those students who mention the public schools have come to Connection from various public schools in the last year or two. I will relate verbatim what they said:

"It's a lot nicer than public school and there's not as much homework." - John, 8-year-old.

"You're allowed to talk here while you work." - Susan, 9-year-old.

"We get more art than you would in a public school." -

James, 11-year-old.

- "You can talk in class sometimes, and you don't have to be quiet when you're talking. In public school you can't; you just get to do what you have to do." - Emily, 10-year-old.

- "There's not as much homework as public school." - James, 11-year-old.

During the first day when Sandi and I had talked, she mentioned two favorite things about Connection for her: calling teachers by their first names and the smallness of the school. She also had mentioned liking evaluations instead of grades because "it tells you what else you need to do, what you've done that's good, and what's not so good. When you just get an A or B, you don't know what that means."

It is always inspiring to hear what students like about their school experience, or even to hear that they like their school experience. Yet we need to turn to a less inspiring, yet still interesting topic: What is it that students don't like at Connectionist School?

One thing 8-year-old Joel (who has attended only Connection) told me what he does not like is "all the work that you get." He went on to explain, "Like in public school, I like a lot that they give you grades. This [school], if it's wrong, they give it back. That's the only thing I don't like about it." To be sure I heard these unique remarks correctly, I asked, "Oh, you wish you got grades?" He said "Yes, then I

would be in 4th grade," and he clarified that he thought once he turned his work in, right or wrong, he wouldn't "get it back" to correct it. He would "just get a grade," he assumed. I thought his comments to be rather remarkable. One thing they mean, at least in his case, is that you have to demonstrate learning at Connectionist School (if this multifarious proposition of "demonstrating learning" is possible; for our purposes here, I assume it is).

Joel's teacher, as well as the others I observed, were available and interested in helping make sure all students understood what they were doing. Teachers at Connectionist School are not dependent on grades to know how children are doing; their work with the children is more direct than that. With eleven children in the classroom, it is fairly easy to know who is understanding and to help students individually. (I say "easy" when comparing the same task for teachers with classes of two and three times the size.) I never did quite understand how an 8-year-old thought he would be in fourth grade since most of them are 9 and 10. I did not pursue that question with him, however.

In the younger grades, three to five of the boys (who seemed also to influence others of their peers) do not like it that they are not allowed to play "war." War is their name for picking up pods from the magnolia trees and "firing" at fellow warriors. They derive a lot of pleasure in seeing if

they can make a "hit," or whether the person they are firing upon will duck into the safety of the ample boxwoods (See Photo 6). (The same boys "fired" pillows from an upper reading bunk onto classmates below while the teacher read aloud to the class; that is, until she stopped them, which she did not hesitate to do.)



Photo 6. Magnolias and boxwoods where younger boys play "war."

I noticed only a certain small group to be repeaters of the war game in the boxwoods. I observed the game before teachers arrived in the mornings, and after school when the

supervising adult was in the back lawn area, out of sight of the front terrace, or their "war zone."

These 6- through 8-year-old boys watched carefully for teachers who may be coming or going, and could instantaneously abandon any appearance of playing the forbidden game, only to resume as quickly as the teacher was out of view. I thought it interesting also, and to an extent rewarding, that though I was an adult, they did not hide their game from me. They may think their game has escaped notice, but it has not. During their end of the year evaluation meetings, three of the faculty discussed concern for these particular young boys, and their persistent interest in this kind of activity. While there are not many students involved in being forbidden a game they seem to love, I list it as one of the complaints of the younger children because it is one of the very few complaints I heard.

Another complaint I heard from some of the younger girls was that they did not like it that the middle school students do not have to play with them, or include them in their games at recess, every day. (Concurrently, the middle school students don't particularly like it that they have to make a concerted effort to include the younger children in their recess activities on two days a week.)

In the middle school, one of the most often heard complaints of the students is that "competition" is not allowed.

This is a fairly widespread complaint, in contrast to the younger children's non-widespread complaints. It is more accurate, I think, to say competition is down-played, but middle school students express it as disallowed. The section I am about to provide from a June 3, 1992 group interview of three middle school girls is about competition, but it also touches on the subject of the current director (only two of the girls speak in this section). For now, we will retain our focus on the competition aspect rather than the director.

Barb: How has the school changed since Joan came here?

Tricia: Mmm, it's different..

Hope: A whole lot! (Hard time speaking with food in mouth but eager to say this anyway.) It's more of a friendly school now (all giggle in agreement at the playful way Hope drew out the word "friendly" to emphasize it).

Tricia: Yeah, not like it used to be. Now, it's more like a peace convention.

Hope: I know! (laughing). I think everybody is starting to like each other more than they hate each other.

Tricia: Right! It's more like (high-pitched, playful voice) "Be friends" (pause and giggles).

Barb: Is it more of a community?

Hope: Yeah!

Tricia: Yes! More like (high-pitched, playful voice again) "big ole family." I think it's okay.

Barb: So you like that?

Hope: Not really.

Tricia: Not really (giggling loudly).

Barb: You don't want to have to like each other? (They giggle at the question.)

Hope: Well, a lot of people in the middle school want more competitive stuff, but we can't have competitive stuff.

Tricia: Right, and we can't have competitive.. that's my personal opinion, too, is that we can't, it's like, "No competitiveness" (ching, ching noise with her mouth, the sounds that would accompany the "No No" gesture with your hands).

Hope: I know!

Barb: Why do you think that is..? So that you'll get along better?

Tricia: I guess, but I mean.. when we go off to high school and college and all, it's just gonna be so much competitiveness--competing--I think we need some.

Hope: I think the only thing that we have competitive is OM [Odyssey of the Mind].

Tricia: Right, and she wants to change that to non-competitive.

Barb: What is it that you want to be able to do competitively the most? (They are so eager to say these answers loudly that they are interspersed within the question as I ask it.)

Tricia: Basketball!

Hope: Volleyball!

Barb: Well, how do you play basketball without competing?

Tricia: Well, we have to play, but she doesn't like us to play (said somewhat wistfully as if she wishes Joan could like what they do).

Hope: Yeah.

Tricia: Basketball, baseball, football, volleyball, all major sports.

Barb: So you don't play it as often, or..

Tricia: Well, we play basketball a lot (Hope: Not really) but it's really more like a..

Hope: A friendly game of basketball.

Tricia: Yeah, like, "Sorry, I didn't mean to hit you."

Hope (giggling): I know (laughing by all the girls).

Another middle school student's wish for more competition is evident in a poem entered in the school newspaper (January 1993).

I Love Competition

It is what the country is built on. Joan,

Let me compete
Out here in the
Very competitive world,
Every day,

Competition
Overtakes
Millions of

People
Even some
That were raised
In
The
Idealistic rooms
Of the
Naturalistic Connectionist School.

By Josh Baker-Adams, Age 13

I think it worthy of attention not only that Josh wrote a poem on the topic of competition, but also that the school allows his and others' opinions to be expressed freely, even in areas of disagreement with the school's position, without any repression. The students do develop their own voices in this way. As was pointed out earlier, they are sometimes more developed in the expression of their own voices than they are in showing respect or affirming care for adults, at least so far as I could determine. The respect that I would advocate for adults is not of a hierarchical nature, but even if students considered teachers as equals, it seems to me more consideration is shown to peers than to adults oftentimes. It is a fun sort of sport for several students to be able to "talk down" playfully to the adults without restraint. While not all, or maybe even most, students engage in this playful and sometimes rude behavior, it sets a tone in the school that does end up affecting everyone. It seems to me that the students generally need to understand more than they do that teachers need support and care to do good work just as

students do. It is not an easy situation for teachers to articulate this to their students well, however, and therefore they put up with a lot of tiresome, uncontributive conversation. Further study is needed to help address this dilemma so students better understand their role in an ethic of care that includes everyone, even while they are the special target of care in schools.

It is amazing, I think, that the list of what students don't like can be boiled down to basically one thing: "We have to make peace, not war" (no playing war; competition minimized). This approach to competition suggests to me that the students are being provided an atmosphere in which an affinity for democracy is being developed more than an affinity for dominance (through competition, and spoils going to winners). Such an environment of social construction is one I listed previously as desirable.

The list of characteristics of the school that students like goes on and on, literally. And, as I have said, students cite that they like the teachers and the way they are taught more than anything else. What more could be said of a school than that?! The students are indeed learning to love learning! For all the questions or negatives that can be raised about the education of students at Connectionist School, the benefits entailed in students liking their teachers and their learning deserves a long and hard look compared to other

"down" sides that are raised.

From the Adults' Perspectives. The teachers would describe the experience of their students as one in which they are treated as "special." By this they seem to mean that the students know they must be very important to their parents because the parents are paying tuition when they could send their children to other schools "free." Instead, the parents have opted to send their child to a school for a special type of education, an education where the teachers treat the child's natural, inborn curiosity as something to be respected and nourished. As I was talking to Mary Ann this aspect came out.

Barb: Is there a set of core values that you can think of? Things that pull the staff together and are commonly held?

Mary Ann: Well, I think love of learning.... There's the belief that kids come into the world with the love of learning, and that schools should foster that, and that means that the kids are active participants in the learning process....

One of the things that influenced me the most, in terms of getting to Connectionist School was a class I attended [in college].... [We learned that] you start with the knowledge that students bring to the class. It's not the idea that they come as empty vessels and you're supposed to fill them. It's starting with what they already know and then building on that. (Interview, September 1, 1992)

In other words, the students are treated as "special." There is a double-meaning to the word "special," however, when the faculty uses it as a descriptor.

Peg: Of course I think that's a benefit that the children are here. It means that they are special. Because their parents are paying a lot of money for something they could get for free, so obviously their parents have a lot of interest in them that they're even sending them, so I think we get a higher percentage of special children....

Mary Ann: And if you've got.. I guess that's what made me think if you've got lots of individuals who see themselves as "special," it may be they haven't spent time working on that consciously, recognizing the needs of others. (Faculty Meeting, January 19, 1993)

Not only do the parents treat their children as special, the teachers at Connectionist School treat the children, their thinking and feelings, and their creations, as treasured resources to be cultivated, as "special." Because of this context for their school life, students' creativity is unleashed, and they come to literally celebrate who they are, if the desire of the adults is realized in their lives.

The adults at Connectionist School readily recognize a resulting problem that stems from this kind of upbringing of the children, and not seeming to know what to do about it, some of them write it off as one of the costs of a superior

education that will even out later. Others don't write it off, but seek ways to admonish the children, usually not coming up even with anything to try that they haven't already tried. In either case, life just goes on, and the adults (mostly) just have to "deal with it" or "live with it" as a given.

To be clear about one of the "down sides" of an education such as can be had in an unusual and rare school such as Connection, I am saying that the students seem to easily succumb to seeing themselves as "center of the universe" (i.e. "special"). To put it more bluntly, they can be rude and ungrateful to adults and others in their lives as a result of not being asked regularly and significantly to sacrifice their own personal interests for the interests of the other students, or for the teachers, in order to realize their own unique potential. The effect is the possibility of students becoming selfish, or "spoiled," rather than as "other-oriented" as their teachers, and in some cases, their parents tend to be. In many cases, when the children seem selfish, the teachers do not feel it is a reflection on the school as much as it is on the home, although they do seem to think their program is conducive to seeing selfishness acted out more.

I discussed this issue of spoiling the children with Carol Tripp, a school parent of two, and a staff member.

After we had discussed many other issues, I inquired whether she thought the result of treating children with such individuality and nourishment, and helping their personalities to flourish, would be that the children would develop appreciation for others in a similar way, as they have been shown. (This may be recognizable as Rousseau's amour de soi, or self-love, blossoming into appropriate amour propre, or compassion for others.)

Carol replied that kids are kids, and that this concept is one aspect of her learning as a parent to let go and to realize that the kind of development they seek for the children at Connection is the continuation of a very long process. She said another one of the school parents had helped her to understand this. She commented further.

*A lot of things that even my kids have been exposed to here maybe won't click for years to come. You know, children are children. Now, we say we don't allow this or that or the other to happen. Well, it happens. You're all the time having to deal with consequences, and you'd like to think that children are going to be **more loving** and **more tolerant**.*

(Interview, June 22, 1992)

I went on to ask Carol if she thought the children at Connectionist School are more selfish initially, and have to get over that by learning to transfer their self-absorption into concern for others, or did she think selfishness was not a by-

product at all of their education at Connection. Carol replied that she considered selfishness to be an innate human trait, with a few exceptions of children who are just particularly loving. Not only is the human nature self-centered, she said it suppresses a knowing and learning that there are others in the world with needs of their own.

Carol, who has her master's degree in family counseling, considers it an important opportunity to talk with children at times when they are frustrated about their own needs not being met. She feels if children are humiliated, they are not helped. Of all the years Carol has been at Connectionist School, and in many capacities, she says she has never seen a child humiliated. This is one of her highest compliments to the kind of school that it is, and how different it is (Summary of Interview, June 22, 1992). When there is a problem with a student's behavior, she explains what she thinks should be done: "What is needed is someone to sit down and talk with them about what they would do differently in the situation if they had it to do over again." She gets many opportunities to deal with children at such times because students are often sent to her office for a time-out if they have not been tolerant of someone else or if they have broken one of the school's rules known as "The Big Six" (see Appendix D).

So the question remains, "Does the over all special

treatment children get at Connectionist School spoil them?" This is hard to say. One local professional who sees a number of Connectionist School families as clients told me he thinks the kids lack a knowledge of how to act in public, and tend to flaunt the degree of latitude their parents give them in making their own decisions. He summed it up as saying he viewed the children as rebellious.

As I listened to the faculty discuss their own concerns about the children's manners and level of respect and cooperation, it seemed to me that they thought the problem stemmed from a lack of consistency of parents at home more than a problem that could be addressed at school. I asked them about this after they finished a discussion of student cooperation, communication, respect, and sharing.

Barb: Do you all think you have a consensus about what you want, but you're recognizing you don't have all of the influence in their lives? (silence) Well, like you're mentioning their homes. Do you feel like you are pretty unified in what you want to expect [from students] in cooperation and acting responsibly when the teacher has to [leave the room to] go make a phone call or something, but those values aren't necessarily valued [or taught] at home, so that you can't "overcome everything?" (silence) Is that fair to say?

Joan: I think that's true, because, you can look at an extreme example of just like, hitting and fighting are

unacceptable behaviors, and then a student's father says, "Well, if somebody hits you, just haul off and hit back."

Bob: Mm hm. That's right. That's right. That was a big trouble last year.

Connie: You know, Barbara, when you hear a student over and over say, "I can say this because it's my opinion," then you know that you're probably.. the home situation is, "You can say that, yes, because it's your opinion."

Mary Ann: Yeah.

Connie: So if that's the come back for every statement I want to make even though it may not be a nice one, "But that's my opinion!" (Bob: Mm hm) I have to say, "Well, it may be your opinion but we can't express it here...." (Faculty Meeting, January 19, 1993)

At their end of the year evaluation days, the faculty still noted as one of the main issues they would make a united and concerted effort toward improving, was students being more respectful. It is obviously a fairly continuous and pervasive issue to be dealt with (Conversation, June 22, 1993).

So, the education of students at Connectionist School is one in which the students and their experiences are prized as special by the adults, but the adults, more so than most children, are aware of a resulting need that arises: for students to have a more rounded out education in that they learn to treat others with the respect that they are shown.

The questions I have heard outsiders raise about the school, are just that--questions that cannot be understood in one visit. Not knowing what an education is like at the school, or not knowing whether to like or trust what they see when they visit, their questions remain. In a context of rampant bureaucracy such as the United States is, an education at Connectionist School is quite a contrast to typical schools and unfortunately, also to typical workplaces. Indeed, one of the political theorists of democracy considered it dangerous to have schools be too genuinely democratic because such schooling would develop the taste for it in children, and students would grow up thinking they could expect genuine democracy in their workplaces (Epstein in Pateman, 1972)!

There is value, then, for an "outsider" like myself to report what I see after an even more extended look at Connectionist School. The question that needs to be answered in the final analysis may be whether parents want children to learn genuine participation for genuine (or critical) democracy, or whether they think children should learn more to do as they are told with submissive attitudes, and only with as much creativity as can be kept alive within the bounds of bureaucracy.

The Transition Issue. The most widely held concern for parents, and probably school personnel as well, with reference to having children at Connectionist School is that of the

impending transition the students will have to make to another school after eighth grade. Because of this, there is talk of getting the high school back in place that was discontinued several years ago due to lack of finances and numbers of students. Finances are still a major challenge, and probably always will be, but the numbers of students is less of a challenge than it was back then. But even if the high school program were resumed, what then of the transition issue into the purported "real world"? There is still life after twelfth grade. This transition issue is the most perplexing question Connectionist School faces, both from within and without. The issue becomes, "What is the 'real' world?"

Even if Connection is not like the majority of public schools, are they creating a reality for their young that is better than the status quo? They say a resounding, "Yes!" They say that is exactly what they are doing--preparing young people to be better stewards of a better world. That is what the alternative is all about for them, and why they do not wish to be traditional. Traditional may be the majority, but what the majority do is not a sufficient way of defining reality for Connectionist School.

They seek what Nel Noddings (1984, 1992) does in her proposed alternative approach to education. She seeks, and Connection seeks, an ethic of care, an ethic that is not centered around individualism and competition, but around

caring for people and for the planet. They seek a responsible and cooperative society, and if that makes them "different," they are accomplishing what the "alternative" is all about.

That Connectionist students are different is not to say that they will not or do not compete well when they do enter the "real" world. Students from Connection have gone to Yale, among other prestigious schools. One of their students had the choice this fall between a full scholarship to Harvard or a full scholarship to Yale. She will attend Yale. There is also a file of newspaper articles which cite the many honors, academic as well as others, that Connectionist School students have attained in their immediate futures after leaving Connection.

But academic honors are not the primary goal of Connectionist School; though it is one that is achieved, in addition to their primary mission; being conscious, responsible, caring participants in their communities (school, city, nation). Part of being responsible, is being educated. The school tries to remind the world that we are humans working toward educational goals on this planet. I think the major lessons we seek in reforming education in the United States may be found in these values. It is noteworthy that both cultivation of the individual and of community are accomplished better at Connectionist School than traditional schools. The values of being conscious, responsible, caring

participants in our communities is not likely to become top priority in our next set of national goals for education, however. We have had such a strong societal ethic of individuality (Goodman, 1992; Wexler, 1990) reinforced through our systems of evaluation and other cultural traditions for so long that such genuine reform will not come about through a few changes, but only through transformation (Goodlad, 1990; Sarason, 1990).

As Goodman (1992) has noted in Elementary Schooling For Critical Democracy, the ethic of individuality, which can be appropriate, must be balanced by an ethic of community. Schools such as Connection find it necessary to go "overboard" to a degree, to downplay individualism (competition) in order to sufficiently influence students toward a more balanced ethic of care, which includes the community. Their students may be feeling the "over"-emphasis, and thus they complain.

Barb (to middle school girls): Do you think you all will do well when you end up going to public school?

Tricia: (loudly and with excitement) It's going to be a big change!

Hope: (complaining tone) I know! We don't get grades here, and it's kind of hard to go to a school that gets grades.

Tricia: But see, this year, when you're in 7th and 8th grade, then you start to get grades in a couple of classes, which I think helps a lot, and I think that in the middle school they

should have grades [which Connection does do to an extent] and make it more like public school because when you leave, you have more.. You [would] just feel... [like you] just don't know what you're doing.

See, my brother goes to a public school now. He goes to Winston High School and he, now a days, he has to have an hour for studying and doing homework and all that type of stuff every night.. because he gets so much homework. (Interview, June 3, 1992)

I asked one of the boys in middle school how his sister liked the transition to public school since she was a few years older than he, and she had gone on to public school two years previous to our talk.

Barb: I guess your parents think it's important to have you here cuz you've been here seven whole years.

Scott: Yeah, my sister was here for nine years. She went here through the 8th grade. Now she's at Winston High.

Barb: How did she like the transition?

Scott: She liked it. I mean, she didn't like going to a public school. It's just, it was fine. (Interview, June 3, 1992)

Now we will see what the transition issue meant for Sandi who attended Connection for seven years, then South Crest, then a public middle school, then two alternative boarding high schools, and now attends an alternative college. I asked

Sandi to imagine a group of students who had attended Connection and had now gone on to other schools. Then I asked her to imagine what regrets, if any, she thought this group would say they had about attending Connection. I asked her to include herself.

Sandi: Um, the transition from Connection to another school is hard. That's about the only regret I can think of (little laugh). I mean it is one of the main issues about whether or not to send your kid there.

Barb: Do you think any of them would regret it to the extent that they wish that they hadn't gone to Connection?

Sandi: No (without hesitation). I don't think so.

Barb: A lot of parents are concerned in sending their children to Connectionist School that there will be a difficult transition when they go to another more "normal" school, such as.. when you went to South Crest, it was difficult.

Sandi: Yeah.

Barb: Do you think that's..? (Sandi can't wait to answer.)

Sandi: That's not a good enough reason to keep your kids from Connection! It's.. whew, that's.. it's definitely a drawback. Um, but it's the price you have to pay, I think, to have a decent education, at least once in your life! I mean it is really hard for students, especially at that age. But now they have middle school so at least they can get to be older. But who knows, maybe if they're insulated their whole life, you

know, by that age they will have even ~~more~~ more of a problem adjusting. I don't know, but I think around the middle school age, students have a need to be around lots of people their own age and the whole culture like what you see in the movies, you know?

Barb: Mm Hm.

Sandi: I mean that was one thing that was just *not* an experience of mine. Seeing movies like "Sixteen Candles" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" and stuff like that. It's just so outside of my experience. Just cuz, well, I continued going to alternative schools and everything, but.. (B: Mm Hm.) So, I mean there is that alternative that you.. you know you have to leave Connection eventually, but you can go to places like Happy Valley and Antioch and schools like that. And then, once you do finally get out in the real world, maybe it will be a total shock to your system, and maybe you'll get completely disillusioned, but hopefully by that age you'll know what's out there (both laugh a little)....

A lot of students that have left Connection and gone to other places, have said that it was hard, but they got through it, and a lot of people ended up liking Winston High, or wherever they went (B: Mm Hm) so that's good. I mean it is *hard*, but..

Barb: But you think it's better, the hardness is worth enduring because you understand more?

Sandi: Yeah! and it gives you that whole perspective that.. that life doesn't have to be like Winston High. It can be like Connection (Interview, March 24, 1993).

Sandi has gained what Connection intended her to from their alternative--the perspective that "things" (i.e. reality) can be better than they are in what is commonly called the real world. Maxine Greene (1988) has said, "My focal interest is in human freedom, in the capacity to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise" (p. 280). The work of Connectionist School is to make just such a contribution to a better reality: to surpass the given and look at things as if they could be otherwise. Just because most of the schools and workplaces of our culture support a uni-dimensional reality does not mean Connectionist School and other places cannot or should not have a different one. Had my own "reality" on our small farm growing up not been as different as it was from the workplaces I entered later, I would still be captive to them, not knowing better than to think dehumanizing structures are a necessary down side of life that you have to take with the good in our society.

So, while students will complain about "no competition" while they are at the school, they at the same time are also are deeply devoted to the school, and to the ethic of care they have lived and learned there. And they do seem to come

out of the school in hopes of helping to build a better reality. Having gained some insight into what it is like to be a student at Connection, we will now examine some other issues that are problematic about being a student at Connection.

Some Other Dilemmas. Other than the transition issue there are some other concerns about being a student at Connectionist School. I wondered what to think about whether there was some danger in having what seemed to be such free-spirited kids when I remembered the boys, who, without supervision, were ostensibly working on the school newspaper. Instead, what they seemed to be doing was banging on a computer keyboard quite roughly and seemingly without worry for its "proper use" or length of life. However, such a material consideration, as well it being based upon a somewhat uninformed observation on my part, may be less legitimate than it seems at face value.

Furthermore at Connection, consideration of materials would not be important enough to take precedence over and thereby limit most of the positive possibilities now available to the people at Connectionist School. Yet, what about the people, particularly the students? Are there instances where the students' safety or "best" interests are compromised by this style of freedom? This depends largely on one's definition of "best," and for whom? We could at least say that an

ethic of care should extend to materials as well as to other people and ideas in a conception of freedom that is a responsible one.

Nel Noddings (1992) suggests an ethic of care that is organized around various centers of care; she would put these centers in the following order of priority: care for self, for intimate others, for associates and acquaintances, for distant others, for nonhuman animals, for plants and the physical environment, for the human-made world of objects and instruments, and for ideas (p. xiii). The boys' treatment of a "human-made object," the computer, is seventh in a list of eight centers of care. I would assert that in a bureaucratic setting, where rules take precedence over people, that materials would be placed in a much higher priority, thinking about "efficiency," and "things," before human considerations (even if only because of sheer numbers of people rather than choosing to do so). Things and materials are important at Connectionist School, but they are not what the staff orients their whole day around, precluding any chance for students to "mess up."

Another dilemma is that some parents of younger children have been concerned that the school may be presenting their child with a world view that they feel is too negative (which is somewhat related to the transition issue). For instance, when I was visiting in Brandi's classroom, she was reading to

what would be second and third graders in other schools from My Teacher Flunked the Planet. In the story she read aloud, an alien from another planet was talking of his view of earthlings and how dangerous he saw them to be. He said they were smart enough to make it to the moon but so stupid that they still had wars. The stupidity of most human beings' taken for granted ideas was the main theme throughout the book. As Brandi read and I was listening, I was trying to imagine what degree of difference it would make for an 8- or 9-year-old to hear these views as "truth" from "the ground up" as opposed to being exposed to the ideas in a high school or college setting. The difference would be considerable. It puzzled and worried me to an extent. I wasn't **that** committed or certain of the total view of things that was being taken for granted. Over a three-day period when I heard several chapters read aloud, starting from the beginning of the book, I don't remember hearing any comments from the teacher such as, "This is how one author views our situation as human beings, and I think it's pretty interesting, but we'll discuss how others may feel about the book."

For a young person to grow up with such a different set of taken for granted values from the rest of their culture has to make a tremendous difference in their present experience of life as well as their future experience of it, it seems to me. I felt a bit defensive at times as I listened, thinking that

there needed to be an understanding that issues that seem to be so simple, rarely are; they are indeed complex. I grew up with simplistic explanations of another nature, and discussions that are too unilateral and taken for granted may not be as "democratic" as they seem to be at face value. Brandi was free to teach her views, and they are strongly supported by the culture of the school. This does not mean they are as simple or even as "right" as they sound in this particular classroom at the particular time that I heard them. It seems important to keep clarity of purpose (for existing as a school) separate from clarity of conviction (for certainty about world views).

Dewey cautions that an education that **limits** rather than **promotes** associations with others may be considered to be partial and distorted. This can happen on either end of the continuum (conservative or liberal, for lack of a better way of describing the continuum succinctly at this point) in my present view of the situation. A group that is concerned mainly, or only, for those within its own group, which cultivates a near-sightedness in societal perspective, and a selfishness, and sometimes bigotry in disposition is not the type of democracy Dewey (1916) sought to promote.

Also, in some cases children end up living with fear that the planet is going to be destroyed by man's foolish behavior. (And indeed it may be, but we need not be so certain of this

that we live with a dread and fear rather than purpose and happiness in my opinion.) This concern is one some parents have raised about such approaches taken with their children.

Joan has some views on this subject (probably more than she expressed here) that she mentioned while we talked one day:

I think we do attract staff members and families who share those values, and one of the things that we think is important and is sort of a missionary function of making more people aware of the school and its values. But we have some parents who are worried that we not present too negative a view. They don't want us to scare their children into thinking that the world will end, and I don't think we pursue it that way, but for young children, any time you give them an issue they have a tendency to "Oh no!" it. That's usually the initial reaction.

I inserted at this point that I noticed Brandi's reading from My Teacher Flunked the Planet when I visited in her classroom.

Joan continues.

And that's something that I think makes the transition from here a little harder and that's something that we really do work with the parents on because they do want us, Connectionist School, to do everything that it does, but they want their kids to be ready, to fit in. Well, I don't necessarily want them to be able to fit in; I want them to be able to make

changes, and that's a hard place for the kids a lot of times. But that really depends, too. Some parents chose Connectionist School knowing that right out front and decided they shared those values and they wanted their children to, too. We have parents that work with refugee programs, and who work for Army programs, or religious programs, or something [social workers], so they chose Connectionist School because of their affiliations there. And [then] there are people who chose the school for its [smallness].... (Interview, June 19, 1992)

Being a student at Connectionist School is clearly different from being a student at other traditional schools. It is not an easy exercise to seek to portray this fully, but having raised the more salient issues, we will now move on to look at the director of such a school.

Being An Administrator at Connectionist School

In my graduate studies in school administration, one of my professors explained that the average tenure of principals in schools was three years. The professor explained that he felt three years to be far too short a time for a principal to make a substantive contribution, and encouraged us to consider how much greater our contribution could be in education if we went to a school and considered ourselves to be there "for the long haul." He gave as his reasoning that real understandings of the real needs in a school take time to develop, and depend upon well-developed

relationships with people.

This quality of contribution was my desire, so I made a commitment to myself to stay at least three years at any school where I accepted a principalship. (I say I made the commitment to myself, because it was unspoken.) Even if the situation in a school would not turn out to feel like a good situation, I had determined to stay, and learn from the experience, realizing that especially as a newcomer, many of the needed adjustments could quite likely be needed on my part. My contribution would be that I would not abandon my philosophy of "teacher as professional" and that schools are first and foremost places for students. They are adult workplaces secondarily, with the teachers having the next place of importance to students, not the administrators.

If an individual does not, or cannot, "make it," then, in an administrative position he or she desired to accept for at least three years, I have had an unspoken assumption (that I am now making explicit) that either the individual, or the school, or both, did not sufficiently understand the needs and expectations, quite possibly through no fault of their own.

There is much more that could be said about my assumptions, but since my assumptions are not the focal point of the discussion at hand, we will proceed. I want us to see

which kinds of directors have had relatively short tenures at Connectionist School, and which have been longer, and what this says to me about the kind of director that finds Connectionist School a desirable place to stay, and whom the school finds desirable enough to keep. When the governing body of a school finds a director/principal to be desirable to keep, the principal, under normal circumstances, receives enough material and psychological support to be able to continue.

One last point before launching into the discussion I have outlined, is one made by Allison Carlton, one of the founding people at Connection who has held staff positions, board positions, and now has children of her own in the school and teaches middle school at her farm part-time. She told me clearly and emphatically at the beginning of our interview that she did not think it made any difference who the directors were at Connectionist School as to the kind of school it was (and she had been one of them as interim for one year). She said this in response to my asking her to give a sketch of the school's history using the various tenures of the directors over the years as a framework. She clearly did not think I could gain a sense of the school by gaining a sense of who the directors were over the years. I believe I have reconciled my question and her caveat by saying that I do not assume that the

"directors are the school" either, but what the school does with directors and what directors do with the school does largely illuminate a school's history, and even more so, the school's values.

The School's Directors. There have been a number of directors who did not stay at Connection for the three years I have somewhat arbitrarily established as a guide. Without seeking to make this overview of directors an historical ethnography, we will simply review who the directors have been, their length of tenure, and how they are remembered by some students, parents, and staff members. We are looking at the school's lore as much as its history by this approach, which is also a valuable pursuit.

The first director of Connectionist School stayed for one year. He burned out in this short time according to two "founding people" of the school, interviewed separately, due to the enormous complexity of seeking to deal with a dramatically diverse school board and clientele. Additionally, there seemed to be an understanding with this director as he departed (according to both interviewees) that his talents were more in the area of teaching than administration. As a result of the immense complexity of the first year and his lack of affinity for administration, he was "really blown away, and he was totally wiped out, and he left."

I am led to conclude from these statements that the burn-out was a result of the particular difficulties in opening a private school, as well as it being an alternative school of the 1970s that attracted a lot of "fringe people," according to Allison. She described the original student population as "people on drugs, low achievers, academically disinterested humans.. just the whole ball of wax.. very, very liberal." Because of this clientele, she reports that it took ten to twelve years for Connectionist School to lose the original reputation of being "just a play school: nuts and screws, and problems...." (Interview, January 21, 1993)

After the opening of the second year, the interim director, Martha Schmidt, yielded her position to make way for another director, Pauline Turner. "By a stroke of true genius and happenstance," Pauline came in as the "salvation of the school" (so named by two separate interviewees). Pauline was able to land the school on solid footing in heroic strides. She herself had been educated in a one-room schoolhouse on the campus of Miller College, with her parents as one of the founding families of the college. So she had an "instinctive" knowledge of and appreciation for alternative education, and the value such an approach places on multi-age grouping. Further, she had several years of experience as an elementary principal at St.

Catherine's in a nearby city, after which she was a missionary-teacher in Africa. She eventually returned from Africa to care for her aging mother, and simultaneously took a position with Total Action Against Poverty in River City. It was at this point in Pauline's life that Connectionist School was desperately looking for a director, hoping the school could even survive.

Pauline had deep and genuine values in place, that she had exercised prior to the challenge of directing a profoundly non-traditional school. As a result, Pauline's influence was up to the task of helping move Connectionist School toward a deepening of its understanding and commitments to alternative education. For Pauline, this included appreciation for diverse ethnicities and social classes in addition to the rest of the alternative tradition. (I insert my belief here that this influence is very much like the current director, Joan's, impact on the school.)

Pauline was a "truly gifted educator and human being," Allison explains (echoing what Martha Schmidt had told me earlier). "It was everybody of all ages" that belonged in Pauline's conception of schooling (multi-age grouping). "She always loved it; she thought it was the best way to go." Allison continues.

By the end of one year she was able to arrange a vast amount of money to have this site renovated; it was about \$40 or

50,000 at the time. [So], first she got Miller College to rent to us, then got the money to have it renovated, then made it okay for everybody, and started a scholarship program.

In near disbelief I asked Allison if this was all in her first year, to which Allison affirmed, "All in a year. There about.. Well, certainly within two years."

I thought, "No wonder they call her the 'salvation of the school'!" The school was out of money when she came and the facilities were considered "dreadful," not to mention the reputation we have already touched upon. And "that's not all," Allison was eager to say.

Pauline was also able to make arrangements with a state university whereby teachers at Connectionist School could take course work there toward their master's degrees and be paid for doing so, in conjunction with their teaching at Connectionist School. This arrangement meant the teachers' salaries were being underwritten by their taking coursework. "I mean, it was unbelievable; it was a most bizarre thing!" Allison continued (Interview, January 21, 1993). I was thinking a more common word (to me) for such an amazing sequence of "pure happenstance and genius" would be that it was a miracle. I say this as I realize how very few free schools of the 60s and 70s are still in existence today. Connectionist School in Virginia, and Harmony School in Indiana (See Goodman, 1992) are the two largest in the United States according to the

figures listed in the 1992-93 National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools directory. This turning point in Connectionist School's history, brought about largely by Pauline, was no small victory.

By her fifth year, Pauline had reportedly "weeded out most of the drug problems, greatly improved the quality of the staff [by firing and hiring], and next tackled the problem of the high school."

...We just couldn't offer all the things that high school students needed and you didn't have enough [students] to make a good alternative approach; it was kind of ingrown and very expensive, so we closed it about the fifth year. (Interview, January 21, 1993)

I asked if this had been a tough decision and Allison said, "No. We all thought it was important, largely because the numbers were bad, and we couldn't offer the programs." (Interview, January 21, 1993)

How would any future director follow this act? Not very easily, I thought. Pauline was at Connection for six years. There are administrative theorists who would predict certain "failure" for the next administrator, just for not being "Pauline." This was not the case, however. The next administrator, Joanna, had been schooled under Pauline, and she stayed five years. She was described as...

...a very bright woman, and very able to come to a theoretical

understanding [of alternative education] intuitively since she had children here. She could come down fairly correctly [in alternative school philosophy], most always. But in some ways, one of Joanna's main jobs was to continue building our reputation as a positive place to be, and to bring in reputable human beings to the school.... We didn't have to change the internal working very much at all; we just had to be a little more elegant and persuasive in presenting this sort of form [alternative education]. (Interview, January 21, 1993)

The next director, Misty Ogden, was a graduate of Sunnybrook School in New York, an alternative school. She stayed three years, and was described by Allison as "pretty good" in alternative school philosophy. Sandi, a student during Misty's tenure, did not consider her to be a good director, however.

I think it's really important how the students see the director, and the relationship between the director and the students. I mean it's probably more important than a lot of adults probably realize, and maybe I only realize it because I'm closer to that time in my life.... I just remember being a student at Connection, and Misty Ogden. Ah! She was awful! She was horrible! I could not stand her. And a lot of the students really didn't like her; and she taught, too. I mean, it's really important for the students to like the director! Otherwise, they're just gonna be.. well, upset or whatever.

[Barb wondered aloud here how Sandi thought Misty was with the teachers.] I have a feeling that maybe [Misty] wasn't always nice to everybody, and it seems like Joan, [the current director], is pretty nice to everyone. I mean, she is very nice to me.... And it's weird that even though Misty taught a class and everything she was pretty much removed from the students. And all the students seem to know and like Joan, and I think that's important. (Interview, March 24, 1993)

After Misty Ogden, Allison Carlton became interim director for a year because Allison was chairman of the board and the board didn't know at the time whether the school would make it financially. Allison told the board she would take the directorship for a period and "try to come up with what they were going to do to improve the situation." This is Allison's very modest way of explaining what someone in an earlier interview had told me was one of her tremendously important "behind the scenes" roles, that of garnering financial support at what would have been a time of crisis for the school. As interim director she may have "saved the school" by getting money for it, but what she openly relates to me is what she thinks she did not do well for the school.

After a year, Allison hired Kirk Buchanan as director. He was there for almost six months, and then he chose to leave, Allison says wisely so. Allison describes the hiring of Kirk as "her mistake."

...I mean I hired him. He said all the right things, and I was suspicious, but he just.. the only.. I mean he looked as good as I could get, you know. He was "great".. He said he was an alternative educator and repressed and oppressed by the system, and it was bull.. He just wasn't. He just knew how to say the right things. What he wanted was a school of his own. The classic example [of what was wrong with him] was when he came in here and insisted everybody call him by his full name; I mean to call him "Mr. Buchanan" instead of Kirk]--students, faculty, everybody! Everybody went bananas. And we couldn't get him to first base; I mean he wouldn't budge. (Interview, January 21, 1993)

I heard this same commentary of displeasure and disbelief over Mr. Buchanan's insistence on using his formal name by others who remembered him. It seems to be what he is most noted for, and not positively. Mr. Buchanan either did not understand the importance of this action in the culture he had chosen to enter, or else he considered it fundamental to the contribution he wanted to make while director at the school. (Possibly he thought this was "first base" in teaching "more respect." If so, he couldn't have been more wrong.) Allison is right to say that the "directors aren't the school," particularly in this case. There was mutual rejection in just half a year; then Mr. Buchanan was gone.

This also significantly reveals a part of Connectionist

School's history and values: formality and "respect" for positions or titles are not tolerated over the value of being connected in real ways with people, no matter who it was or what position. One of the school's philosophy statements that I have already quoted says, "Human beings learn best when we can develop personal relationships with our teacher(s)" (NCACS Statement). Connectionist School does not place its director on a pedestal above its teachers. If students feel better calling teachers by their first names, the same is considered to be true for the director. This philosophy statement is not just words on a page as is often the case in schools. Obviously, the "ideal speech situation" Habermas (1976) described is more realized in such an environment, which is also to say that it is more democratic. Students may talk in real conversation with their teachers and director, signified by using "real" names. This causes communication to be more free and undistorted.

Martha Schmidt, a former and long-time parent and board member, was the interim director for the remainder of that year. This is a significant example of how she has freely given of her time and effort over the years to "keep the school alive," also. One interviewee (June 22, 1992) told me the school would not be here today had Allison and Martha not "been there," giving it all they had behind the scenes

during these years.

During the next summer, Joan Martin, the current director was hired. At this writing, she has just completed her seventh year. Allison describes her as like Pauline, in at least one characteristic; there may be more.

She [Joan] would definitely like us to [go back to] doing it all by consensus [the way Pauline did], and we won't let her because we like her to decide how much toilet paper to order (with a typical good-natured laugh). If the whole faculty has to meet to decide that, then you're wasting a lot of people's time, and we've done that.. We won't even let her have the same salary as teachers (another good-natured tease).

On this last statement, Allison is referring to the position Joan took with the board in the spring of 1992 that she did not want the \$2,000 raise they were proposing and working hard to give her. Joan plainly and kindly told the board that she didn't want any raise until the teachers' salaries were brought up closer to her level.

Allison continues talking about Joan.

...She is the greatest purist that we've had as a director, a true martyr.... She would have it to be much more liberal than, or experiential than, or alternative than, it already is. She has the best grasp of all the directors of the theory [of alternative education]. And she, in fact, lives

it out more completely. (January 21, 1993)

At least partially, I can see how and why this is so after getting to know Joan myself. I would like to share some of her biography here.

Connectionist School's Current Director. Joan never attended a public school, but went to one that she describes as similar to Connectionist School, at least at the time when she attended it. "It's thirty years old now," she explains, "and more preppie and expensive" than it was when she went there. "Everybody knew everybody in the school.. and everybody cared about everybody," Joan says of the school she grew up in. It is interesting that when she says, "everybody knew everybody," that she doesn't stop there. The kind of "knowing" she was talking about engendered caring as well, so after her pause, she went on to say that "everybody cared about everybody."

In a somewhat "small town" county seat in Maryland, Joan's mother was a teacher; her father was a juvenile judge, and later a public defender. Joan says she "came by care-taking honestly," as did her two brothers and one sister. Joan is the oldest of the siblings of this care-taking family, which only furthers her distinction as a care-taker since the oldest child is often depended upon to care for the younger siblings.

We were always having stray children at our house and we

always had different foster kids in and out. We were always raising money, for adopting families in the community. So I grew up with that. (Interview, June 17, 1992)

She inadvertently explained her job description at Connection in sum form for me later as "mother to the world." I assume having observed her that "mother" means provider and supporter of the teachers, students, and parents when they face particularly difficult challenges in life or in school, either of which affect children's school experiences. If "mother to the world" is her main job at Connectionist School, and it seems largely that it is, then she certainly has the background for it!

In elementary school, Joan wanted to be a teacher; when she was in high school, she wanted to become a research scientist in chemistry; then, toward the end of high school, she developed the desire to become a minister. She chose Miller College and majored in religion with the intention of going to seminary after three years. She explains she had it "all worked out" until "something" changed her plans, she seems happy to say; she married a Catholic, who likewise has a tremendously big heart for social work and being involved in "things that matter" (chit chat of school mothers talking to his mother as I cleaned strawberries with them for the festival; April 29, 1993).

Joan ended up being at Miller College for only one

year, then moved closer to Blacksburg with her husband Mark. She and her husband became substitute house parents at a shelter there, and Joan went on to complete her master's degree in Child Development Counseling at Virginia Tech. Having a liking for numbers and considering it "fun" to tutor students in the computer lab, Joan also took several statistics courses along the way, becoming a specialist in this area commensurately with child development. Joan enjoys being a student, and she says it is one of the things she does best.

Meanwhile, Mark finished his master's degree in forestry and became the Regional Field Coordinator for the Appalachian Trail Conference, a position he has now held for twelve years. Mark and Joan bought a 171-year-old house in Giles County, which they have made major repairs on together for the last twelve years. Because of this, it would be a difficult decision for them to move closer to Joan's work, even though she drives an hour one-way each day to work.

Occupationally, Joan was working with Head Start while serving part-time on a curriculum committee of a small community school in Giles County. The curriculum committee job turned into an offer for employment as director of the school, so Joan felt she should go back to school in order to best help the small school with the direction and credentials they needed through her degrees; so she applied to the

doctoral program in educational administration at Virginia Tech. While in that program, she was offered an opportunity to work on a national study with the American Educational Finance Association, which would pay her a salary as she went to graduate school. She accepted the offer at the same time that the small community school in Giles County was finding itself in need of disbanding. The school had been located in the basement of a home, and the owners were moving out of state. Further, there were not enough students to continue a school. Joan was teaching in it three days a week up until it closed, while she attended graduate school full time. The few students who were still there when it closed were either home-schooled by their parents or sent to Blacksburg New School.

In Joan's final semester of her doctoral work, Connectionist School learned of her through one of the school parents who lived in her community. Connectionist School contacted Joan and she decided to apply for the director's position. Joan joined the staff at Connectionist School July 1, 1987 and had her final defense July 2. After six years, her own statements sum her experience best:

The part I probably like best about the job is that you do get to know everybody, and you do establish individual relationships. The part that is most draining is that you become "mother to the world," partly because it's part

of the position and partly because it's the way I tend to be. (Interview, June 17, 1992)

She also enjoys the freedom in directing, much as the teachers do in their teaching, to make decisions that she would not be able to make if she were a principal in a public school (Interview, June 17, 1992).

How Joan Makes It. I asked Joan about her sources of personal support which make it possible for her to be able to continue in such demanding work. I would summarize her first two answers as pointing to the value she places on relationships with certain people. She said she still connects with and talks to professors she had at Virginia Tech, particularly the woman who was her undergraduate adviser, her master's chairperson, and her doctoral cognate professor. Also, she knows the chair of the education department at Miller College personally, and enjoys having her across the street to talk to from time to time. Her answers also led me to believe that she thinks her educational views, or ideals, have fueled and compelled her personally.

Joan went on to explain another source of support.

But as far as Connectionist School, in itself, it really does become a community. It's mostly staff in general [who help me make it], like Allison Carlton, Carol Tripp, Mary Ann, Hopper, and I have formed a support group, and we [used to] get together once a week or.. if we couldn't

meet.. as often as we could, as many of us as could [would meet]--just to talk....

We did let go a couple of times, but Allison, Carol and Mary Ann, and I, still, as many Fridays as we can, we'll just run over to the deli, just to get away, and sit, and just touch base with each other, and check on each other as people and not just staff members. (Interview, June 17, 19-92)

When I asked Joan if she "knew what she was getting into" when she accepted the position, she said she thought so, and continued.

The match-up was really good, because I did have a relatively realistic picture of the kinds of things that were involved because when I was director at one of the child care centers, I didn't have any support [staff]. There were teachers [obviously not viewed as her support, but she is theirs] and there was a cook. But there wasn't a bookkeeper or secretary or anything else. I was it. (Interview, June 17, 1992)

This speaks to the issue of Joan being a "good fit" in that she was accustomed to having fewer resources, particularly support personnel. She goes on to admit a time when the match between her and Connectionist School was tested, however, during her first year.

Probably.. the only thing Connectionist School probably

didn't realize was that I'm as radical as I am (we laugh together). And most of the time... it's probably because I'm a little more realistic than some people have been about the viability of the school and how you market it to a certain clientele in order to make the school a functional unit.

But when I first came to Connectionist School, I caused a lot of trouble in the first year because I re-arranged all the classes. Even though [the school] said it was multi-age grouped and non-graded, if you walked in, [you] could pick out a first grade classroom.

*So I just re-arranged everything, and.. we lost a few people--parents. We didn't lose any staff members, but the whole staff was having a pretty hard time with it at first. And probably, I.. it might have been a little hasty because I wouldn't save [all the students], and probably a couple of students were misplaced. The next year was easier because I **knew** who the kids were. (Interview, June 17, 1992)*

This speaks to the importance of knowing people before you can make good decisions as a director about some aspects of their school experience, or at least the importance of knowing them as "thoroughly well" as Joan desired in this instance.

Joan explained that the teachers had a wider range of ages than they had worked with in a long time because of her

decision, and it was upsetting at first. The parents and students were not used to it any more either, although this was more how the school used to be when Pauline directed it.

I asked Joan what values she had that caused her to think that such a change was necessary in her first year as opposed to waiting a year. (Mr. Buchanan had thought formal names important enough to push as an issue; Joan was willing to push multi-age grouping. It is important to know why.)

She said that multi-age grouping is a very important part of the alternative education tradition. But what she really thought to be substantially important about educating this way is that the education is more realistic.

When you are in the world, you don't deal with your age peers [only], you deal with people of all different backgrounds, all different ages, all different experiences. You learn from some people, and you teach some people, and so why shouldn't school be like that? The younger kids can learn from the older kids. The older kids reinforce a lot of their knowledge by helping the younger kids in a range of classes or ages. (Interview, June 17, 1992)

Joan tries to help the continuity of experience for students to be a positive feature of their education by assigning them to the same teacher for two or three years at a time.

I try to keep the kids with the teachers over time so the

teachers and the students don't have to reinvent their relationships every year, because it takes a while for a teacher and a kid to establish who the other person is, what the expectations are, what the strengths and weaknesses are, what's the best way to work with a particular child. Why not maintain [this relationship for more than one year]?

(Interview, June 17, 1992)

Relationships are indeed an important part of an alternative education in Joan's conception of it. Good relationships are characterized by free, open, and creative communication (Conversation, Garrison, 1993). So is "good" democracy. There are some other observations I would like to make.

What This Narrative Says to Me. The observations I make about the overview of the school's directors and the way they are remembered by current staff and board members, are several. I notice that the man who was the first director of the school, and the man who was the fifth director both stayed the shortest terms of all the directors. Women have typically run the school over its history both as directors, as chairmen (sic) of the board, and as teachers. Only in the last three years have there been any men teaching in the school. There have always been men on the board, and a couple of times men have chaired the board, but most of the time, women have chaired the board.

I also notice that the two most noteworthy women, Pauline and Joan, have many things in common. They both had high ideals oriented around serving people, Pauline as a missionary, Joan training to be a minister, and later doing social work. These ideals were in place in both women's lives before they were the school's directors. Both women grew up in homes with parents who were involved in education. They both attended multi-age grouped, private schools as they grew up. They both had affiliations with Miller college. They both had experience living with people of other ethnicities and backgrounds. They both are willing to make tough decisions, and have the administrative knowledge to decide which ones are worth making, and when. They both understood the importance of financial resources and worked diligently in this area. They both knew that the school could not be "all things to all people," so they helped sharpen the school's focus during their years. And, last, they are both highly talented and creative individuals.

The current faculty is fortunate to have a capable, caring, and sacrificial leader who is eager to support them in being the real leaders in the school. Joan is not perfect, nor are the teachers, but their special relatedness (Joan's and the teachers) in their work helps them overcome the challenges that they face together. This ethic of care

is one of the most important features. We will talk somewhat about that aspect next.

Interaction of Faculty With One Another

There are, of course, a number of times and ways that the faculty have interaction with one another. No matter when it is, it has been characterized well by the new janitor, Ovid, who made these comments about his first impressions of the group to Carol Tripp after his first week of work: "You know, you all laugh a lot and you care a lot for each other. I really feel like I am just with family and that people really like me" (Fieldnotes, September 2, 1992). As a newcomer researcher, I felt this same way from the first day. Wherever you find groups of the faculty together, you find good-natured laughing and a great sense of joy and pleasure that they derive by being together. It does feel like a family, as Ovid said. Once I noticed that the background noise of the social aspect of the gathering sounded more like a joyful wedding reception than the beginning of a faculty meeting. There was cake and ice cream for Tomico's 40th birthday the next day, but still I was surprised at the level of merriment after working at school all day (January 21, 1993).

One of the most common times of faculty interaction is on a daily basis as they go about the work of teaching; the few moments that they get are times that they seem to prize.

Because of their busy involvement with their own curriculum planning and working closely with students, they have many "unfinished conversations" during the school year.

Interaction is also observable at the faculty meetings each week. At two times of the year there are other meetings of the faculty for special purposes. For two or three days in the fall before school opens, there is inservice; and for a few days after students are gone in June, there are planning and evaluation days.

Other planned times together for the faculty are the socials held two or three times a year, often at one of the faculty member's homes, for the purpose of just being together. There is always food and laughter, and frequently there is enough time to indulge in more lengthy philosophical discussions such as the difference between schooling and education, what it means to be a true alternative school, and so on. Such discussions are referred to in general by the staff as "The Great Conversation."

I will now discuss the weekly faculty meetings, the planning and evaluation meetings, and the inservice meetings, relating the special purposes of each and the nature of interaction involved. As an overview observation of all meetings, it is not unusual for them to begin 15 or 20 minutes later than the time they are scheduled. Also, the usual custom is to be seated in a circle or an ellipsis if a

circle is not possible.

Faculty Meetings. The procedure for faculty meetings is for the person who is the assigned facilitator to bring the agenda notebook to the meeting and read off the items. The faculty discusses each item as it is raised by the facilitator. The topics are typically covered in the order that they are entered into the book, without prioritizing. The agenda notebook is kept on a specific kitchen counter during the week so that staff members may enter an item whenever they think of it or have a convenient time to register it.

The facilitator who brings the notebook to the meeting has another assigned duty: washing the dishes each day after school. This dual role of facilitator and dishwasher is assigned for one month at a time. Bob playfully dubbed this duty as "Drudge of the Month" as Joan explained the procedure to Tomico and John when they were new on staff (Inservice, August 31, 1992).

The last week of school in June 1992, Peg does not realize it had been her turn to be doing the dishes after school when she comes to faculty meeting on Thursday afternoon. As she enters the meeting she teases Mary Ann, whom she seems to think is the facilitator, saying, "Is there anything we can put off until next week?" Mary Ann laughs and replies, "No, I don't think so, Peg. Put off until Sep-

tember maybe." After a pause, Mary Ann continues gently, "I think you're in charge aren't you, Peg?" At this, Peg gasps loudly, "Oh my gosh! Am I supposed to be doing dishes?" Her comment didn't make sense to me at the time, but when I eventually knew that the meeting facilitator and dishwashing assignment went together, it became clear.

Mary Ann responds gently again, "Well, I just found out cuz I was doing them and Joan said, "Why are you doing them?" [and I said], "because I thought Carol and [you] had to do them and were too busy." Mary Ann says kindly to Peg, "It's all right, you've only missed a few days" (Faculty Meeting, June 8, 1992). The preceding interaction illustrates one of many examples of how staff members pitch in without being asked by anybody, just to help get everything done. If a person is not of this disposition toward work, they will not make it at Connectionist School, Carol had told me during an interview. In Mary Ann's situation just noted, it also is a disposition of thoughtfulness or care. She was trying to help Joan and Carol whom she knew were overburdened at this point in the year.

In a previous chapter, when I related the events of day one, I provided the transcription of the fifteen minutes or so of the faculty meeting I attended at the end of that day. I noted that the faculty went on without Joan, undisturbed by her not being there, although in hindsight I would say

they did not accomplish as much or move through things as quickly as when she is there. One example is that they did not go ahead and choose a November workday for teachers that she had placed on the agenda. They reasoned that they did not want to choose a date without knowing her thinking, and Peg's, who was also absent that day. While they missed Joan as a participant, she was not missed as a "necessary leader" to get anything accomplished. But since she and Peg were both important participants in choosing a date, they decided to wait until the next meeting.

Also strikingly noticeable to me at the first faculty meeting I attended was the faculty's congeniality, not just with one another, but to me as an outsider. My past experience once again tells me that faculty generally are not interested in outsiders who come to meetings unless they have been prepared in advance for the outsider's coming and have a vested interest in hearing from this person. These same faculties of the past that I speak of would, of course, be cordial and polite to an outsider; the distinction I make is that the Connectionist School faculty collectively showed genuine interest and sought to be helpful, in such a way as to say "this is our school, and we're interested in the people who come here." It is unusual for this to be the tone of a whole group, and not just a few individuals. The reason for the difference is systemic in nature, not the quali-

ty or calibre of the people or even the group. The structure within which the faculty is framed changes the nature of interaction. In traditional schools, faculty "do the best they can within the system" if they are of high quality as the ones I have been associated with, especially at River City Christian. At Connection, the faculty is the "system."

The faculty's congeniality with one another I have noted also. They are more openly affirming of one another than is customary in traditionally-oriented schools. Usually, faculty members are too tired to have a desire to attend after school meetings, and are not helped to overcome, or at least balance, this feeling by the payoff of being able make connections with peers at meetings. Since Connectionist faculty own their own meetings (i.e. develop their own agenda and pursue topics any way they wish), they are free to be themselves with one another. This allows for the possibility of connecting in real ways as they go about accomplishing the business at hand. Often when someone explains a frustration they are having with a particular class or issue, others sympathetically echo, "It's the same way with me," or "I know what you mean," and so on.

Also when someone makes a valid point that may not have been easy to state aloud in a group situation, others will respond with immediate affirmation such as, "That's an important point," "I think that's true," and "You're exactly

right!" These comments are not made by the same individuals all the time, but spontaneously and sincerely. Immediately after the supportive comment is made, other viewpoints are often offered that may be differing from the original speaker's view, but the differing opinions are offered politely, with respect, and as if there is a duty to be honest. There is room for both positions to be "right" by the end of many discussions when issues are more fully understood.

The group may then take time out to brainstorm ways to approach the situation at hand, or even philosophize about it if that seems appropriate. As I have said, these are regular participation styles engaged in by everyone, not a select few. To a very large degree, the faculty is the "administration," and they act responsibly with being treated as such. It is what I always wanted as an elementary principal in the "teacher as professional" model I sought to employ, but I never achieved the depth that was immediately visible at Connectionist School's faculty meetings. I do not fault the faculty or myself, but the structure within which we operated, the same one in most traditional schools: overly "steep" bureaucracy.

The role I observed Joan to play as director in the majority of the faculty meetings was an important one. She prepared the faculty to think ahead about what was coming in the school year, not just for the next few days, but more

long-term; and she diligently sought input from the faculty about how they would like to see things done, reminding them in case they had forgotten what they had talked about "last year" as needing to be changed "next year." She also provided invaluable insights during the mid-year faculty meeting as "instructional leader."

The faculty does not seem to feel "led" or steered by her unduly by being in this role because everyone participates freely in giving their views. Joan's help is to summarize and give an "expert" opinion, without acting like an expert, when discussions are becoming repetitious, one-sided, or when there seems to be "no answer" forthcoming after passage of time and discussion. When I say she performed this role without acting like an expert, I mean the faculty is free to disagree with what she is saying, and it is obvious that what she says is well-reasoned and worth considering many times. Forcing an issue would be anathema to Joan, I think, unless it would touch on a core value (such as multi-age grouping).

During two of the faculty meetings I found it exhausting even to think about the practice of building weekly schedules the way the group was going about it. Just to plan how and when to say good-bye to Brandi, fit in the swimming schedule, and leave room for Celebration Night practice took fifteen minutes of hearing details that were

not going to matter at all to most individuals present once someone knew enough information to make intelligent schedule decisions (Faculty Meeting, June 1, 1992).

The other noticeable tedious, and I felt inefficient, group process was when everyone was trying to decide whether to sign up for the planetarium program at the Science Museum, and if so, which program, and for how much of it. Each teacher decided individually for his/her own class (Inservice, August 31, 1992). I wondered if they all really needed to hear each other's detailed thinking aloud about this, and even if they should decide this individually, based possibly as much on their own personal taste as whether it was "time" for the students to have this exposure.

I decided there were some possible benefits to the tedious procedure, one being that it provided an opportunity for the two new faculty members hearing all of this to be able to more comprehensively decide what to do with their own classes. Another is that the procedure brings to bear the individual choices of the teachers, which is one of the perks of teaching at Connection. There is no structured curriculum guide, and the teachers do not seem prone to be guided by selfishness in their curricular choices, though it is possible for this to be the case. Teachers listen to the other opportunities students will have to learn about a topic with other teachers as they decide what they will do

themselves. And they do state their preferences to each other. When it all comes down, though it is a messy process, it works out to benefit the students in at least one way; they will go with, or study with, a teacher who is interested in the exhibit or material at hand.

Another possible benefit is that the teachers are thoroughly "in connection" with each other as John Dewey may have had his faculty in the way he conducted meetings at the Lab School (Mayhew and Edwards, 1966). I do not feel convinced this process is a better way to go necessarily, but it is no worse than the way these decisions are typically made in schools, except for the waste of group time. One trade-off for the "waste" of group time would be that there would be no complaints or questions from the teachers once the schedules have been decided since they would make them up themselves. Most teachers in traditional schools have little or no basis for understanding how complex it is for one administrator to arrange schedules and try to "think of everything" for a faculty of 15, or even 9. Such is not the case at Connection.

Planning and Evaluation Meetings. The day after the students are out of school, the faculty begins their meetings that will continue for two or three days to evaluate the activities of the school year gone by, and to make plans for the upcoming year. The topics that were covered on June

11, 1992, were the ones developed at an agenda-setting meeting the previous afternoon, the first meeting of the planning and evaluation times. The first topic of interest for the group was deciding the theme for the upcoming year. Following that discussion the faculty evaluated several of their major events of the year by saying what they thought could have been done better and was needed in the plans to make them better for 1993-94. The events were Mountain Day; the school camping trip, which is the annual "back to school" camp-out; the Strawberry Festival, the major annual fundraiser; Odyssey of the Mind, an activity in which students compete against students from other schools for the purpose of developing and enhancing students' creativity; and the after school program, the school's daycare. Joan also wanted to set dates for the staff retreat, discuss student placement with teachers, and decide whether to allow a student from Miller College who had been teaching Latin on Friday afternoons to continue.

The whole first morning was spent brainstorming and discussing what the theme would be for the next school year. The choice of the theme is a major curricular decision, so a lot of time, care, and fun go into thinking about it. Joan read off the various ideas teachers had written into a separate notebook as possible themes. They were Mexico, ecology, rain forests, Western Europe, Israel, human bodies, di-

nosaurus, molecules, wind, and earth. Peg said she hadn't written it down but was interested in studying sheep because she had been to a sheep farm in Harper's Ferry where she wanted to go with her class. She had noted that the farm taught visitors about weaving, dying wool, and the various kinds of sheep. Another teacher suggested astronomy and space while the brainstorming continued. Joan mentioned that since it was an election year, she had wondered about government. Another suggestion was mythology tied into astronomy, or just the sky. Tom wisecracked that they could teach fortune-telling this way. Another teacher mentioned explorers and exploring, or possibly "Around the World in 180 Days" (rather than 80).

Some possibilities for study under the various themes were discussed, some at more length than others, and with varying enthusiasm as well. By the end of the morning, the group finally settled on mythology after mapping out the ideas on the markerboard together with Joan as their recorder. The consensus of the group was largely due to Ginger's enthusiasm about art projects she could tie to the theme of mythology. The excitement of the theme grew even more as the possibilities for dramatizing mythological stories became clear. The group finished the morning in high spirits having accomplished the decision on a theme.

For the afternoon there was mostly discussion of what

didn't go so well and why for Mountain Day, camping, and other events. Apparently some of the same school families had decided not to go to Mountain Day did not attend the camping trip either. These parents seem to "get out of going" by planning family trips at the same times as the school outings. This practice is not particularly liked by the faculty because these people never become "family" as the others do at Connectionist School.

For the "back to school" camping trip the faculty agree that better planning was needed, such as an appointed back up leader, and at least two adults with each group that goes out. There was a special difficulty this year, too, because some parents who said they had tents were reporting the ones they were borrowing from the school, so there was a shortage because the school had counted their own tents twice in these cases.

The Strawberry Festival had been a smashing success with the greatest profit return ever. This positive aspect was brought up first by Joan. Bob teased with a reply about the profits, "There's that raise I was going to ask for!" and Carol quipped, "Hunh! That just means your job won't be cut!" The group burst into laughter as usual. There were several faculty who didn't like the way student participation for the festival was handled. There was too much running around, and not enough accountability with parents let-

ting students do one thing and teachers expecting another. The cause of the difficulty as the faculty perceived it was that parents didn't follow the procedures they were given for student participation. The resolution was to publicize the procedures sooner, more clearly, and have sign up forms with parents signatures on them for any student who would participate next year. (The student participation I observed at the festival in 1993 was impressive; they were proud to be part of it, and had specific stations they were working.)

Having Latin class as an elective was an extra-curricular offering that came about because parent(s) brought it in. The faculty already experiences scheduling difficulties without having violin, piano, Latin, or any other extras. There was also the problem of the school being responsible for the quality of the offering when they had not arranged it or interviewed the "teacher" who was a college student. The faculty decided not to continue Latin because it complicated their schedules unduly, and the offering was not enough under the jurisdiction of the school for them to be willing to be held accountable for it. Students could continue with the Latin if they wanted, just not during school time.

The next major topic was after school, the school's daycare program that had been under Tom's direction (instead

of Joan's) for the first time. The discussion began with the complaint that too much play equipment was being lost (maybe that's why children were playing baseball with a green tennis ball). A bigger problem was that the after school rules were not similar enough to the in-school rule boundaries, and even if the rules were in place, they were not being enforced. The faculty expected Tom to address these issues. Joan helped, and suggested that the whole staff walk together around the perimeter of the play area and woods and discuss together which rules would apply for recess and which ones for after school. I walked with them and the rule discussion was greatly helped and clarified by actually walking the grounds together. It also provided a pleasant change of pace from sitting. The meeting reconvened to discuss middle schoolers being in Joan's office before school, communication with parents, which day to have faculty meeting in the fall, whether to have a yearbook, and the scheduling of a retreat for the staff. This last topic of the day, scheduling a staff retreat, is a great example of how the faculty frames the issue they are about to discuss, how they care to know what each other thinks, how they affirm each other in the process yet say what they honestly think, and how they express that they care about each other as friends. To take the readers to the meeting, I will describe as often as I can, but I will much of the time wish

for the speakers own words to be given from the transcripts.

Joan begins the retreat discussion by saying for right now she wants everyone to have their calendars and in the room together to do this. She goes on to say that Ginger had brought up an interesting issue to her: when is a retreat really a retreat? Ginger had also told Joan that retreats are nice, but they are also very difficult to schedule. Joan also said Carla had made a good point to her earlier when she said that it depends on what the overall goals are for the retreat as to how the group should go about planning one. Joan offered her opinion that a retreat should be a different kind of experience than a general workday tends to be. Then she asked, "But how do you make sure that it is different and special?"

Mary Ann: Well, I wonder if we're all clear in our own minds about what we want to do.

Joan: Yeah, that's the question.

Ginger: I think that needs to be determined. I think that needs to be clear whatever it is, because it's too important. People will say, you know, "Well, I really wish I could have been there, but.."

This is an apparent sore spot that Ginger raises, but she raises it anyway because it is important to her, and she may end up bothered if these plans are not carefully made by everyone present. The person that the quasi-complaint most

recently applies to felt the need to speak up also.

Peg: Well, I'm going to speak up on that. That's really hard to know with our spouses what the schedule is going to be for the rest of the summer.

Ginger: I know (said as a sincere listener, with no defensive tone).

Peg (mildly animated): And this.. last year.. if I had.. I had gotten those tickets for Wolf Trap long before we scheduled the [retreat].

Ginger: No, I know.. (still back pedaling).

Peg: I didn't know Dave's work schedule. That would have meant we would have had to drive all the way to River City to Washington and back to River City, and Dave get up early in the morning and get to Richmond by 9:00 the next day. I have no control over this.

Ginger: I know. And that happens for everybody.

Peg: That's what I'm talking about when I'm saying that sometimes we start these things and they become commitments and we just..

Joan: Yeah..

Ginger: Well.. then.. if we do a summer thing then.. I think we run into that.

Joan: Well maybe we don't need to do it [in the summer].

Thus far we have two colleagues who could either "bury their questions" that border on differences and somewhat begrudge

what they don't understand of the other person, and what other of the colleagues may questions too, or they can set up a context where it is safe to express real questions, and get real answers without overly embarrassing one another or distrusting answers once they are given. (This presupposes it is not embarrassing to them to raise such issues in public.) Ginger lets Peg off all the while Peg explains why she did not come to last year's retreat, but we should notice another meaning of such a question being raised and someone being bothered or caring enough to answer it--the raising of this sort of question of faculty attendance by a fellow faculty member at a faculty meeting, and getting an answer, is a form of social control of the faculty. Joan is not heard saying something like, "Let's just talk about this year for right now" when Ginger raises it either. The faculty may not answer to Joan any more than they do to each other on this type of thing it seems to me.

It is also, more than social control, an expression that people are missed when they don't come to the big annual social event of the faculty, and an absence is not forgotten or "dropped" even a year later. The issue is partly that people don't want to go to more trouble to be somewhere than others do (fairness), but it is also that they don't want to end up not really being all together when most have sacrificed precious time to do so (feeling cheated).

Ginger and Mary Ann bring up some things that have been done in the past for retreats that have not taken away days in the summer when teachers are with their families, and need to be.

Mary Ann: Well, the other thing would be--this year's work week starts August 31. Maybe we could do something closer to that, but not that week.

Carol: But I do agree with Peg that there are unforeseen things that come up..

*Ginger: And that always happens. (Peg says something in the background.) Oh, I know! Peg, I certainly didn't mean to say that.. but I think it takes something away from the group (Peg: Right), especially if there's team-building or specific decisions where we could have had everybody's input. And if we are going to schedule a summer thing, we've got to recognize what Peg's saying, because **certainly** things do happen. But if we could schedule it at an already scheduled time that we're working....*

Mary Ann: Well.. could we go around and each just say what we feel would be needed out of a [retreat] day...? You know, it may become more apparent what the groups wants.

Joan: Let's start with Bob (groups laughs; he was new last year and apparently some pranks were pulled on him).

Carol: Yeah, he was blindfolded.

Mary Ann (to Bob): You know what we're talking about?

Bob: Un huh (laughing).

Tom (to Bob): If you do, you're ahead of me..

Joan (to Tom): You weren't hired yet.

Bob: So.. my vision of what [would make a good retreat day]? (playfully said).

Joan: Well yeah, especially as somebody new coming in, what part..?

Mary Ann: Was what we did helpful, or what could have been more helpful?

Bob: Well.. it was helpful. I think that there's one thing I would have added..... Some people I feel like I know really well here, [but] there's still a lot of people I feel like I don't really know well at all yet, not because I don't want to. It's just because my mind is so preoccupied (he begins laughing).

Carol: Let me tell you something. Some of us.. the reason we say why we've stayed longer is to have a conversation, and finish it (uproarious laughter by group, especially Bob.) I think I finished one [a conversation] my fourth year (laughter peals again), you know, so I know what you're saying.

Joan: One year we did those kind of life lines talking about why we ended up at Connectionist School. That was kind of neat.

Bob: ...I would just like a little time to hang out, be-

cause really, you know, it's been an emotionally tumultuous year for me.. (Joan bursts into loud laughter here), and especially like in late winter, and I was walking around like in a fog.

Joan: Maybe if we scheduled a workday somewhere during the year.

Mary Ann: We used to do it in October.

(Inaudible few sentences, then another burst of laughter.)

Bob: Yeah, send the kids camping with the parents (more laughing).

Mary Ann: We'll go check in a hotel.. (louder laughing).

Bob: Yeah, we'll go to Mountain Lake Hotel (continuous laughing).

Carol: Did you hear that Joan? We can even go to the Homestead and spend the \$25,000 that we made in the Strawberry Festival (uproarious laughing by group).

Joan: I quit (laughing continues).

Carol: Put that in the first Tuesday Notes.. (laughing continues).

Joan: Here, Carol, just take my head.. (laughing subsides).

Mary Ann (to Bob): Okay, so for you the need is to get to know each other (B: Yeah) and some team-building..

Bob: Well, not even that, you know..

Joan: Just really knowing who you work with?

Bob: Yeah!

Joan: I think that really is important for new people, because the more we're here, we do kind of tend to forget that part.

Bob: Yeah.

Bob goes on to say how preoccupied he is during school days, even during lunch. He can't seem to help anticipating what is coming next with the students, and mentally preparing for it. He is regretful of this because he doesn't connect well with people at work as a result, saying, "I know I'm not much of a conversationalist when I'm here.." Some of the other teachers say in reply that the very reason they enjoy recess duty is so they can stand around outside together and have a few minutes to talk.

Mary Ann: How about you, Betty, what do you need out of a workday?

Betty: I don't know, I think in the same vein, it would be kind of nice to catch up and have that time to see what's been going on with people. Cuz that's something we all want to do and we don't have time to do that.. (inaudible).

Carol: You know I talked to my sister a few days ago, and it felt like I hadn't talked to her for years.. (Joan and Bob laugh loudly). We need, you know, uninterrupted.. really finishing type of talking. It does carry you for a long time [once you get it], but if you never have it and you think you want to have it, it's frustrating (group silence).

Betty breaks the near reverie by remembering aloud a time that was special to her when the whole group got together and made dinner together and talked while they cooked. Then Connie mentions that this was the time they all went away over night together, but then she says she thinks an over-nighter is too much concentrated time for new people on staff like there will be in the fall. To have that much time on your hands the very first time you are on a staff retreat she thinks would be scary. She emphasizes her belief that she thinks the staff needs to just be together socially by making a parallel she has noticed about the students' patterns.

I think about the kids, when they come back after a three or four day break, if you don't allow them time to talk when they first hit each other, for about the first thirty minutes, they're not happy because they have so much to say, and I guess we're the same way.. (group silence). Well, I think we need that time because we try to get it anyway when we can, and you know, I think that makes you feel better about going to work (M.A.: Yeah) because you've had that time to have a little support from your friends, and then you can go and get settled in, where if you haven't, you're still sort of, I think, distant from the whole situation. You know, you're there to do your work, but you really haven't connected with people (M.A.: Mm Hm), so I think you need

to connect with the people first, and then just.. then you can do something else.

What a commentary! We're here to do our work, but we're not happy or supported until we've had time to connect with each other! The ethic of care is very strong at Connectionist School, most notably among the faculty.

Peg: I think we should just take the first day, and say, "Let's party." And I think that it's true, we always have a lot of work to get done and so forth, but we also use the time we allot for things. Like, we're getting done much faster at the end of the year than we used to. (M.A.: Yes!) ..I think the more time we allow ourselves, the more time it takes.

The group gets closer to consensus about having a Sunday afternoon time together right before the week of insertive. Then Joan remembers that Sunday afternoons are often family time, and the school already takes the faculty away from their families a lot, and asks, "Is that a fair thing to you?" This is as astounding as Connie's statements about being connected. Here we have an administrator bypassing closure because she wants to be sure what is being asked is fair, even to people not present in the room, but whom this decision will bear upon, the families. The ethic of care is thoroughly extended in this school where leaders are more interested in fairness than taking advantage.

More options of weekends and dates are discussed, with no direct answer to Joan's question. She pursues alternatives to Sunday afternoon without being asked to. Someone mentions going out to breakfast together, then Carol offers the pool at her house, to which Mary Ann protests saying, "The problem with anybody having anything at their house is they're the one who.." She doesn't finish before Carol reminds her why the situation at her house the previous year had been challenging--she had been out of town and was just coming in the door when the group arrived.

The interaction continues to reveal a lot of consideration of each other's needs that the other people may not be remembering for themselves very well.

Joan gets excited when she thinks about the extra house out at the Carlton's farm that is available and wouldn't be "anybody's house" to get ready and that the staff could clean up the kitchen themselves when they were finished. She mentions the porch and beautiful view, the fireplace, the beautiful raised ceilings.. The group gets excited, with Carol saying that anybody who wants to could stay for the night, too, and those who don't want to could go home. Carol says that would be a way to insure that people could finish conversations if they wanted to, adding that "it [just] doesn't happen when you get back here and get into the routine of it." Bob next says seriously and without

embarrassment something that was touching and important to the entire group.

I think that's important that we [finish our conversations] because one of the things that's so precious here is the support network. I've never seen a place quite like it where everybody is so supportive of one another and I think that's something we ought to really take care of. Because no matter how bad I screwed up this year (little laugh), I always felt like there was a safety net. There was somebody to.. I [could] go "hunhh" (noise like "going crazy").

Betty: I wrote one of my papers on that this year and the person who graded it wrote down at the bottom, "How lucky you are to work in such a warm, caring environment!"

Bob: It really is.

The group has not yet heard from Joan on what she wants out of a retreat day, so they ask her. She is a little surprised to be asked what she needs, or maybe caught off guard to know how to answer. She begins with something like she's here all summer anyway, and she'll be here whenever they want to have a day together. This is not sufficient to the group as an answer, so she tells them she would value both plenty of time to talk together and also some time to be philosophical about some stuff, though she's not sure the two are a good mix. The group agrees that it's hard to be philosophical at that time, but that it is important to have

that time, too. The main drift of conversation had been pleas for social time, and Peg brings the group back to what was becoming a consensus on that.

Peg: Don't we just need time for some spontaneous talking?

Bob: I think any time we get together, we're going to have pleasant conversations, but I think at some point we're going to get around to these [philosophical] kinds of things. Because that's something we have in common.

Peg: I don't know, I just wondered if we should plan a day and say, "This is the day we are going to talk philosophical."

Bob: Ugh. Ugh. (Tom laughs with him.)

On this note, the group settles on going to the Carlton farm for the Sunday afternoon before inservice in the fall just to be together, and is happy about all they have covered today (Planning and Evaluation Meeting Transcriptions and Summaries, June 11, 1992).

Remembering Mary Ann. Mary Ann had mentioned at the first faculty meeting I attended on day one that the evaluation meetings would be a good opportunity for me to learn about the unique struggles the faculty experiences at Connectionist School. She had said: I think one of the things you realize when you start to teach in a place like this [where there is a lot of freedom], is that there are a lot of rough edges... that we continue to struggle with" (Facul-

ty Meeting, June 1, 1992).

I never heard any direct comments saying exactly what these rough edges were in the planning and evaluation meetings, but implicit in their evaluation meeting discussions and in many conversations I had with them, I was able to see what they thought the rough edges to be. That is, though they are not impeded by curriculum guides, subject area supervisors, or textbooks, they are impeded by continuously living on the edge of burn-out. This is so because the freedom to build their own curriculum and to be creative increases the work load tremendously. Not only is there more to do, there is much more that they want to do when there is such freedom and support as teachers have at Connection. Mary Ann was one who talked to me about this.

It's not an easy place to work because you have so many more responsibilities, so it's very easy to get burned out. It is really demanding and.. working part-time is wonderful, and I really do like that, and I'm glad the school makes use of part-time people, but... [like the new teachers], I know they're being thrown a lot of information, and I think that's true anywhere, but it's particularly true here when your responsibilities and the demands on you are greater. Um, and you've got more freedom, but with that comes more responsibility and you create, you have to create a lot more than you do if you've got a textbook or a supervisor saying

you have to do this or you have to do that. (B: Mm hm) There's a trade-off and the trade-off for most of us is much greater [desire] to, you know, it makes you want to, I mean it, it's why we're here, you know. (Interview, September 1, 1992)

The teachers also live with cycles of uncertainty about their teaching and work. Carla expressed this cycle well at a mid-year faculty meeting. "Sometimes I wonder if the insecurities I have are **my** insecurities." She would find out she was not at all alone in her feelings. She continued.

...so many times I come [to teach Spanish] and for months and months and months I don't really know if I am doing the right thing or not. ...Then I sit down and analyze it, and all these things come up and then I kind of sort them or I talk to someone and they give me feedback. Then I think, "It's not that bad!" Then, you know, I go into this "it's not that bad" [routine] for two or three weeks (now the group breaks into uproarious, knowing laughter) and then I go home driving and thinking. It is really hard because there are no papers, no grades, there are no books. There we are in front of the class, and sometimes it just goes wonderful, and sometimes it just goes (gasping aloud), "What am I doing here?!" you know? ...I can rationalize it for so long in my car (more bursts of laughter from the group and nodding). I think our own insecurities are part of the

problem, because we want to try to do so much! (Faculty Meeting, January 19, 1993)

Mary Ann and Bob quickly agree with Carla, and Peg puts in that the multiple ages in each classroom needs to be considered as challenging also.

Bob had said the same thing Carla was saying when he talked to me one afternoon at the kitchen table.

You know what? The worst thing about teaching [at Connection] is that you're in there by yourself. I mean you're basically, you know, you've got them all day, and you have this feeling like, "God, is what I'm doing okay?" And then you sit around in staff meeting and you find that other people are having the same problems you're having, with the same kids, or whatever. And you say, "Well, maybe I'm not screwing up so much after all!" (Conversation, November 6, 1992)

Bob also had said that it would sound weird, but he enjoys going to faculty meetings. He always feels too busy, but once he gets there, he enjoys it. He especially likes that they are not "told" things, but are listened to. This is different than the way he felt about faculty meetings in previous schools.

Mary Ann, who had come to the kitchen table and joined in the conversation with Bob and me at this point, said that the last few years had been especially good at faculty meet-

ings because the staff members had all gotten along together as individuals. (Joan and Carol had each similarly told me in their interviews how enjoyable the last few years had been for them compared to previous ones because of the agreeable make-up of the faculty.) Mary Ann went on to say, "You know, everybody likes and respects each other, and everybody feels pretty comfortable about saying what needs to be said." (Conversations, November 6, 1992)

This special interaction and connection that the staff has with one another at weekly faculty meetings, in daily contact, and even when they are evaluating honestly at the end of the year is what keeps them from burning-out, it seems to me.

Another major contributor to the stress level of staff, in addition to the already mentioned freedom to create and the resulting workload is the issue of student respect, or the lack thereof; and concurrently a problem which will not be elaborated on more here: the students' lack of carefulness in their work, or their lack of attention to detail which shows up in penmanship, spelling, and in other areas the faculty discussed together (Faculty Meeting, January 19, 1993).

Also contributing to the stress level of faculty members is the flip side of one of the positive aspects of their operating style. While Bob, and others, enjoy faculty

meetings for the chance to be together with colleagues, I would not say that he or anyone else enjoys the seemingly endless task of developing schedules for the week at these meetings, especially since schedules, once they are developed, are always "subject to change." This aspect of faculty meetings and life as a teacher at Connection can be exasperating and exhausting, but the staff works hard to patiently accept this part of their work, because being flexible is part of what makes the rich learning opportunities available. I imagine they have to often wonder, however, how much flexibility they can deal with.

Another difficulty arising from the necessary flexibility to make the style of curriculum design possible, is that parents get impatient at times about knowing what is going on. If things are so flexible that parents cannot keep up with what their child is studying at school, they do not feel as though they are as much a participant as they have developed expectations of being. Joan and I talked about this dilemma as well:

Barb: In the Long-Range Report, somewhere it said clear lines of communication had been an issue.... Can you elaborate some on that?

Joan: Well, there's always so much going on that lots of times things get lost or somebody thinks they may have communicated something to somebody, and they haven't, or the

communication hasn't been clear, and their understanding hasn't been clear. And that can happen with the staff and it's one of the reasons we put the board in the kitchen. An example would be that one of the part-time staff, like Carla, say Carla comes in the afternoon. Okay, Carla calls and can't come, and some of the teachers would be right there so they would hear that, or know that, or you'd put a message in somebody's box, but they wouldn't necessarily get the message before it's time for Spanish. They wouldn't know. Whereas, everybody knows to keep checking the board; it's right there....

Tuesday Notes is a regular communication thing between school and home, and we usually, especially at the beginning of the year, we put reminders, "Please read it," "Please ask your children for it," "Please expect it to come." Because it's always been amazing to us that we put some stuff in Tuesday Notes frequently, and then a parent will call and have no idea at all about it.... Now the middle school would be an example in that. Because there are so many teachers and so many different things that the children have to do, that the parents and the children (and organization is such a hard thing for children of that age anyway) that the parents have a tendency to feel that their children didn't really. And they didn't have a clear picture of what was due when or who is expecting what, so the middle school

staff sends home a weekly letter, too. It goes with the Tuesday notes, but again, it's whether it gets home or not....

Barb: Does this communication issue have anything to do with the middle school boy's parents who said they wanted more [communication]? There's not anything set in concrete?

Joan: That's part of it because there's so much change and flexibility. It's great to be flexible, but if you're so flexible that people don't know what you're going to do next, it makes it very difficult.. for parents especially who want to be invested and have been invested in their children's education and lives. They want more information, and the older the kids get, the less likely they are to tell them about regular stuff that's going on, although they might be inclined to tell them about things that they want....

Barb: So parents may be frustrated if they want to be involved but don't know how necessarily.. It's not that there isn't provision; it's just that it gets more and more difficult.

Joan: It's harder to keep those lines open when a child gets older, and when the organization itself gets bigger.

Inservice. One of the most fun times I had during the research process was the faculty inservice meeting on September 2, 1993. The faculty had each participated in a tem-

perament inventory analysis from their meeting the day before and came in with their "results" for this Wednesday morning meeting, the last day of their inservice. Two new staff members, Tomico and John, were getting acclimated. I had not been able to attend the previous day, but Allison Carlton, who was leading the discussion had told me the book she was using, and I had read it and taken the temperament sorter myself that the faculty had done overnight.

When I entered the meeting, the sight and sound of it was the biggest thrill for me. I heard laughter and meaningful conversations like would be heard at a slumber party. I saw eleven staff members fairly sprawled around the room on the floor in their shorts, sandals, or whatever was comfortable. They were in their usual circle/ellipsis, yes, but they were enjoying the comfort of the newly purchased bean bags which provided semi-reclined positions in addition to the usual informality.

I sat down just in time to hear Allison ask the group to share one at a time, around the circle, what their temperament types were according to the scale. She had already explained what Keirsey and Bates (1984) had to say about the seventy question temperament sorter, and what she thought the implications were. The scale has four dimensions, the first being Extroversion/Introversion (E/I), the second being Intuition/Sensation (N/S), the third Thinking/Feeling

(T/F), and fourth Judging/Perceiving (J/P).

As each person revealed their type, it became clear that there were only three "Js" in the group from the Judging/Perceiving dimension out of a group of fifteen. Js are those who prefer to have closure and the settling of things rather than keeping options open and fluid. The book explains that no one is all one or all the other, but usually there is a preference. Mary Ann, Valerie, and Carol were the only Js, at least on staff; I was one, too.

There was a lot of laughter, as well as thought when Allison explained that Connection tends to be an INFP school, and attracts those kinds of people. This characterization fits in with the school's self-description as "more laid back," with introversion (I), intuition (N), feelings (F), and perception (P) being the preferred styles. I was fascinated as I read the "temperament portraits" written by the authors in the back of their book. They had thoroughly characterized sixteen possible temperament/character types. (They leave room for more possibilities than the sixteen because a person may be "tied" between two dimensions.) The "portrait" of Joan described her especially well. As she identified her type to the group, she had said, "I'm not moderate on anything." In the four dimensions she scored 1 and 9, 6 and 17, 4 and 17, and 5 and 15, making her an INFP. Some of her portrait description is as follows:

INFPs present a calm, pleasant face to the world and are seen as reticent and even shy. Although they demonstrate a cool reserve toward others, inside they are anything but distant. They have a capacity for caring which is not always found in other types. They care deeply.... One word that captures this type is idealistic.... INFPs have a profound sense of honor derived from internal values. The INFP is the Prince or Princess of mythology, the King's Champion, Defender of the Faith, and guardian of the castle. Sir Galahad and Joan of Arc are male and female prototypes. To understand INFP's, their cause must be understood, for they are willing to make unusual sacrifices for someone or something believed in....

(1984, p. 176)

It was a delight for me to be "in the know" when the faculty would tease Mary Ann as their "J" person at subsequent meetings in the year, asking her, "How should we close this discussion?" with a laugh. The general awareness of the school's being basically an INFP school in a basically ESTJ education world also seemed to comfort the faculty about the way they are "different." They realized that even if the values of our society's culture is to steer individuals toward the ESTJ as the "ideal," there was nothing infe-

rior about being an INFP. An ESTJ is one who is more extroverted than introverted; prefers decisions based on senses, or what you can see more than on intuition; is more inclined toward thinking than feeling; and prefers closure to open-endedness or uncertainty. That type of person probably wouldn't "make it" forever at Connectionist School, or at least not very happily, was one of the group's comments.

There seemed to be an appreciation for Js and a perceived need of more of that quality with a recognition that such a person has an "uphill climb" among an overwhelmingly "P" group at Connection. I wondered if it was more wearing on Mary Ann than the others for her to be counted on heavily as their "J" even before I heard a label for what it was I noticed her providing, that is closure without cutting anyone off. I also thought as an INTJ, I may be "half" happy as an "IN" and half struggling as a "TJ" if I were on the staff at Connection. Concurrently, I would only be "half happy" (TJ) and "half struggling" (IN) in a traditional school setting. Since I was borderline in my four dimensions, it would be guessed that my degree of happiness or frustration would not be as great as for some other people in either setting. Such guesses would be the gist of what the faculty was making of the Keirsey and Bates temperament sorter.

Conversations around how the staff got along with each

other and sometimes their mates, as well as conflicts that had happened with students of certain types were held for the next hour. Everyone almost hated to stop the discussion for lunch. I heard several individuals heartily thanking Allison (an ENTP) for this valuable exercise as they left the meeting.

The purpose of the exercise was for the faculty to better understand themselves and each other. They made important discoveries that morning that, even if they were fluid discoveries, were a valuable basis for conversations that promoted understanding. They would talk from time to time for the remainder of the year about their temperaments.

We will now move on to our final topic of the themes section.

Resources That Are Sustaining Connectionist School

I have mentioned that Connectionist School is one of the two largest alternative schools listed in the 1992-93 directory of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools. While increased size is not what Connection strives for, or even necessarily desires, I mention it because it is an important contrast to the scenario of the same school that was barely surviving in its second year and then again its fourteenth year when Allison directed it for a year. It is an important example of an alternative school growing while maintaining a distinctively alternative phi-

losophy.

Why has an alternative school survived, and not only survived, but now thrives, with nearly as many on the waiting list last year and this year as there are enrolled students? Why is it, that in River City, one of the most conservative areas in the state of Virginia, a liberal-minded school can thrive as it does? And why, with the "Back to the Basics" movement of the late 70s and through the 80s did the school continue? Why is the faculty there among the highest calibre to be found anywhere in a K through 8 program? Why are the students so complimentary of the teachers, and the staff so close-knit? This section will address some of the answers to these questions as I present what it takes to sustain Connectionist School.

Clarity of Purpose. Many would say that the reason Connectionist School is unique is because it is "a small school with a heart." The fact that it is small and is caring are very significant factors, but the long-term staff and board members are clear about it when they say that to view that slogan as the essence of the school is to underestimate and misunderstand what really makes the school different. It is true that in comparison to either public or private schools, Connectionist School has smaller classes (usually half the size). Also, Connection is more caring than even traditional schools most highly noted for that

quality. Both these commendations are largely attributable to size. But in addition to size and more important than size to the founders and perpetuators of Connection is the philosophy it holds as a truly alternative school as opposed to a traditional philosophy.

What does this alternative philosophy entail? In chapter 3, I gave the National Coalition of Alternative School's statement of philosophy, which clarifies the difference in orientation of alternative and traditional education (See also Appendix E). Part of this statement, which is also part of Connectionist School's philosophy, reads "[We are] dedicated to providing children (and adults) with the kind of personalized and yet globally-oriented education we all need to successfully with, and change for the better, the society in which we live.... We are a national coalition of schools, groups and individuals committed to creating an egalitarian society by actively working against racism, sexism, ageism, and all forms of social, political, and economic oppression."

The point is, Connectionist School is part of a broader movement committed to changing "the way things are" as opposed to reproducing the status quo in social, political, or economic relations. Traditional schools are involved in reproducing the status quo in social structure, whether they do so consciously or not. Connectionist School is inten-

tional about change. They have looked at "what is" and determined the system doesn't need a few adjustments here and there, but a complete overhaul. Many educational reformers agree, and work not so much for educational reform as for educational transformation. To have the best possible society, they believe all individuals in it need to be consciously informed and genuinely invited to participate.

It is not just for self-actualization that schools like Connection exist, which they are highly interested in; it is because actualized individuals are more actively and knowingly involved in the total life of the society. This is precisely what was at the heart of Dewey's Democracy In Education.

Such talk of change seems to be frightening or at least disconcerting to the greater population of the United States, even though the ideas espoused in educational transformation literature are lauded as noble. The general population seem to fear that change means lack of stability, as they have been led to believe by the "scholars," political leaders, and conservative elites. For those who have been treated well by our representative or political democracy, that degree of democracy is enough without striving for critical or genuine democracy. Those who have benefitted by the status quo want the same ladder that they climbed to remain in place (i.e. "stability") for the remainder of

their own careers, and in place for their children to climb after them. It is often even treated as "morally right" to leave this sacred structure of society alone. That the ladder is not truly available to all does not seem real to the people who hold such views, at least the ones I have talked to. However, it is to their advantage to feel comfortable believing that what we have is a just system; and it is not within their vested interests to think otherwise. It is to their advantage to believe we are a "meritocracy" of which they are the ones of merit. For those who have attained some acceptable (or better) station in our culture, there is no real desire to "open up the contest" to all in a fairly conducted competition. Why would they want to test who really "deserves" to be where they are, when such people are satisfied and feel "lucky" to have risen themselves? My answer would be, because it is just and fair, and therefore morally right.

Talking of changing the system and "the way things are" is not frightening to the staff at Connectionist School, however. It is what they live and teach for. It is why they are willing to be paid 60% of what they could make in other schools with their credentials. They have hope of a more just and caring society. If they can't have one, they will at least live trying to construct the beginnings.

Not all Connectionist School parents or their children

necessarily understand what the school is about, although they do seem to catch on over time. It is not that the purpose is hidden from anyone; it is that it takes time to assimilate it; and it is promoted gently, not forcefully. It took me time as a researcher to assimilate the school's purpose, even though I was looking diligently. It was approximately a year before it really clicked for me what they were saying.

When a parent comes to that point of understanding that societal change is the school's desire, as I came to understand as a researcher, they have a few choices if they do not fully agree with the position. They can remain and "leave it alone" if they don't fully agree with the school's purpose. They may also choose to leave the school if they don't agree and feel their young person needs more help than Connection will provide for them to be ready for "the way things are." Sometimes parents have chosen a third route; they have remained when they differed with the school's purpose, and have tried their best to change the school. This has been a futile effort on the part of those who have attempted it thus far, and probably always would be.

There are parents who, when they come to understand what the school is about, also come to understand better their own inclinations and desires for their child and society. They want change, so they stay and embrace the ideolo-

gy of the school. Some are inspired with this ideal for years to come, even after their own children leave. Of course the latter is the desire of the school, but as I have said, is not always the case. Mary Ann explained this to me (as did others).

We have had people come here because it's a small school....

Not everybody has come because they really like the values or even are aware of them. (Interview, September 1, 1992)

She went on to explain that there are at least three things designed to help insure parent's understanding of the school's mission: the parent handbook (eight stapled pages); a picnic in the fall with each new family being adopted by an "old" one (a parent idea); and a parent orientation where students who have graduated from Connection and teachers and former families talk about the school and the value of their experiences there. Mary Ann continues.

So I think we [have made a real attempt] to say, "If you don't share these values, we want to lay them out for you, and we also want to accept you where you are, to the extent we can without losing who we are." (Interview, September 1, 1992)

Therein is the primary reason Connectionist School has made it for as long as it has and for as many as it has: they haven't lost "who they are." They know they are more than "a small school with a heart;" they are a "small school

with a heart and a distinctive philosophy." That distinctive philosophy is an ideal that a handful of people over the years have been willing to live or die for, it seems to me; and that is why the school survived. I have labeled this as clarity of purpose, and the purpose is critical democracy as seen in their open communication and returning control to individuals.

I asked Allison if the school was founded on any certain philosophy. She said there was no coherent vision except that it would be an alternative, and that what "alternative" means has evolved over the 22 years. I said, "Do you see that as having anything to do with democracy?" to which she replied, "No, I wouldn't want to put it in a political party or [give it a] political cast." I explained that I was talking about John Dewey's sense of the word "democracy" which wouldn't be political either, but considerate of the people being taught and of those doing the teaching. Allison continued her explanation.

No, I definitely say it was much more of a republic in that sense. In the sense that your director, I mean your teachers.. It has often been said, and to some extent it's always been true, and it's probably very good, is that the school has been run for its teachers. The teachers have a whole lot of direction in terms of how the school is cast. They are the ones that take into consideration the child-

ren's perspectives. (Interview, January 21, 1993)

"How wonderful!" I thought. A school where "the teachers are the professionals for the benefit of the students," my old and favorite philosophy again. I have run into difficulty with people understanding that to be my philosophy, however, when I use the word "democracy" to describe it, even to Allison who has a master's degree in education and is helping to operate one of the most democratic examples of education anywhere. Sometimes when I say "democratic education" people envision the "lowest" person in a shallower hierarchy as the person with the most influence. In other words, they are afraid that it means the school is run by children who do not have the maturity to be given so much power or responsibility. They also sometimes mistakenly think I may mean "no authority" (Graduate Sociology Class, March 3, 1993). Jesse Goodman (1992) addresses these concerns well, and proposes and clarifies a responsible position on authority and decision-making in education for critical democracy. I fully agree with his positions and have observed them to be largely in place at Connection.

I see Connectionist School with their clarity of purpose as an alternative school to be a near ideal of what Dewey had in mind, though I understand there are no perfect or "pure" representations of any person's philosophy. "Democracy" is the most common title given to these two men's

philosophies in both political and educational literature. That Connectionist school is very Deweyan, and therefore very "democratic" as he saw democracy, is without question to me.

So, one reason Connectionist School has been sustained over the years is because they have not experienced "displaced values" (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986), although they have had periods when these values have been more fully in place than at other times. The times the school has had its heydays in my opinion are when Pauline and Joan have been the directors, along with board members like Allison and Martha who have supported (and sometimes been) the directors. These two directors were able, more so than others, to translate the school's philosophy into its daily operation.

There are many other people and reasons that a school such as Connection has been sustained. These will not be covered in the same depth as clarity of purpose because, while they are important, they are all secondary to this main consideration in my view. I will mention ethic of care also as their greatest source of sustenance. I am able to do so, I think, because it is a vital part of their clarity of purpose.

Many Other Factors. I will list other wellsprings I have observed at Connectionist School that have sustained it

and do sustain it, and then I will elaborate on a few of them. Some of the other wellsprings are high ideals; sacrificial individuals and families; successful fundraising activities; people of incredible talent and qualification in key positions (such as teachers, board members, directors, and parents); important connections with other supportive and stable institutions (such as Miller College); and a pervasive ethic of care.

Sacrificial Individuals. I don't know anyone at Connectionist School who is not sacrificing or giving something for the benefit of the school. There are some who have done so since its beginning, and some who have only more recently joined the school family. There are also some who have given of more depth than others when they have given, as is true anywhere.

The teachers are obviously sacrificing at least financially, and most of them are sacrificing in other ways, too, especially with their time. The parents are also sacrificing financially since they are paying tuition in addition to taxes for public education which they are not availing themselves of.

Allison Carlton and Martha Schmidt are known as key individuals in the school's history for keeping the school alive, as was mentioned in the section about the school's directors.

There have been some anonymous benefactors in the past whose contributions were sizeable, and were it not for them, the school would not have made it in the past. One of the benefactors is still living, and there is some worry about what will happen if/when that support is lost. That such a sizeable amount has been/is given by so few, is considered by the board and administration to be the school's greatest weakness in the area of sustenance. There is a great need for more broad-based financial support.

Successful Fundraising Activities. The most talked about and widely participated in fund-raiser of the school is its annual Strawberry Festival the first week in May. It is much more than a fund-raising activity. It is a near rite of passage in being considered "one of them" at Connectionist School. I can see why after cleaning strawberries in preparation (April 29) and then attending (May 1) the festival in 1993. My guess is that there is at least 90% participation of the total school family. Anyone familiar with school fundraising knows this is a phenomenal level of participation for such an activity.

Additionally, I saw and talked with people cleaning strawberries that I had not met at any other time over the course of the two years. These are people who are in support of the school who are no longer (or never were) officially involved in it, but like to come to a sort of "home-

coming" at the work sessions in preparation of the "big event." Everyone seems tremendously proud of the Strawberry Festival from youngest student to oldest grandmother who is there. With such a large turnout of help, I think I need to add that all of the helpers seemed cheerful and very willing to be participating. I didn't hear one complaint or see any "strained nerves" the whole afternoon and early evening I was there. Helping in some way at the Strawberry Festival is the one thing Joan tries to remember to tell incoming parents is expected of them. They seem willing without coercion to help once this has been made known to them.

The 1992 the Strawberry Festival raised over \$25,000 for the school, and made it possible for the board to give the director and teachers sizable raises. (Getting salaries up from 60% to 67% of what they would make in public schools would not seem sizable to some, but especially to those who have been operating with 60%, it is sizable.) In 1993, they also had a tremendous success in raising over \$28,000. For 80 school families to accomplish this feat annually is amazing!

Other fundraisers include summer camp, expeditions, Bread for Books Sales, and some other varied activities conducted by individual classes. Some of the money students raise is to pay for trips they are taking, but they also are being taught to donate money to causes such as Mill Mountain

Zoo, the Ram House, Total Action Against Poverty, and other community service organizations.

A Responsible, Knowledgeable School Board. I have touched upon the fact that in May 1992, Joan asked the school board not to give her the raise they were working toward for her until they had raised the teachers' salaries closer to an acceptable level. I was fascinated at the meeting with the way the board went about addressing her request.

After excusing Joan from the meeting for a time, the board's discussion first centered around, "What does Joan really want?" Next, they addressed, "What do we think is really needed for a director doing as good a job as she is doing with the qualifications she has?"

What Joan really wanted, they decided, was no more responsibility; she was already doing more than she could continue to do and be able to last at the job. They also knew she wanted the teachers supported and encouraged by their salaries. The board discussed taking away some of Joan's more minor responsibilities and paying for help to get these tasks accomplished as opposed to giving her the raise.

They resolved that whether she wanted the raise or not, as a board, they needed to give it to her in hopes she would not work harder, and burn herself out, but that she would use it to go on a vacation or do something for herself.

Someone said she had not taken a vacation in six years even though it was part of her benefits. This was a concern to the group, so they were relieved to hear from one of the other members that she was planning an out of town, month-long vacation with her husband for that summer.

The board clearly did not want Joan to burn herself out, but one of the members, I thought wisely stated, that if worst case scenario for them, she did burn herself out, they would especially then need to have the director's salary closer to a level necessary to search for someone "decent." I marvelled at the insight this school board had and their understanding of their responsibility to both Joan and the school. They did not and would not put one ahead of the other. They knew they had a director who was putting the school ahead of her own interests. This was not thought of in some sentimental way as desirable in every way, furthermore.

I also marvelled at the board's way of openly talking about what they really thought, their willingness to listen to one another (whatever the speaker's gender or position), and their lack of argumentativeness--even about finances. This meeting was one of the most rewarding moments of the year-and-a-half research experience. The board clearly was not trying to "get the best bargain they could" on the backs of the teachers or the administration; what they themselves

sought was responsible caretaking of the staff, just as they wanted the staff to do on behalf of the children (Summary of Board of Trustees Meeting, June 11, 1992).

The board went on to vote for the teachers' raises, but not until they had settled on Joan's. One board member, after the fact, told me they would have given the teachers the raises with or without Joan's influence because the board wanted the teachers to have their raises, too. I inquired of this member why the substantial raise was given to teachers this year, then, and not previously if it was not Joan's influence. The reply was, "This year we had the money." This may be so. Even if it is, I still consider Joan's influence to be a major factor in the money "being there." After all, her support and interest in fundraising events, such as the Strawberry Festival, makes a tremendous difference. To say so does not underestimate or deprive the hundreds of others of the credit due them for their heroic and unselfish efforts in pulling this off. I say Joan is to be commended in addition to that commendation. With Joan's background, she is accustomed to and appreciative of the need to garner support, and does so with energy and purpose, but not with greedy or materialistic ambition. Her motivation for working hard to garner support is for precisely the result that was gained--raises for the teachers.

I think it highly commendable that the board supported

a director such as Joan first, and teachers second, because supporting such a director is tantamount to substantially supporting all of the teachers. I do not say that she is more important than the teachers; it is precisely because she has the teachers' interests at heart that I say she should be given this priority. Then, on a daily basis, she supports and provides a thriving context for the school's "most important commodity"--its teachers.

I want to say, further, that I believe teacher salaries, are just as necessary to have at a fair level as Joan's. If the board strives to pay Joan "what she is worth" and does not work as hard to do the same for the teachers, the situation is undesirable. That was exactly Joan's point in requesting that she be paid no more until the teachers salaries were brought up. However, if the teachers would eventually lose Joan or even fail to encourage her over money, but get their raises, the long-term benefit for teachers and thereby the school would have been undercut also, in my opinion.

On the other hand, if Joan had gotten her raise in the instance at hand, and the teachers had not, the situation wouldn't have been improved. Joan believed she could do no more work for the school than she had already done to earn her current salary; therefore, why pay her more? If all the hard work she had done, which was mostly efforts to get the

teachers' salaries up only served to increase her own salary, she would not have been encouraged by these "results." She had plainly told me one time "the teachers make the school"; the action she was calling for was a demonstration of her complete belief in and support them. The board's responsible decision to take care of both Joan and the teachers insured, as much as a board can insure, keeping good people once they had them.

Pervasive Ethic of Care. The greatest source of sustenance the school enjoys, I think, is that their philosophy is rooted in a very noble ethic, what Nel Noddings (1984, 1992) has called an ethic of care. Further, their chosen organizational structure, as democratic, allows this ethic to thrive. I have sensed this ethic every time I have been on campus or at one of the school's gatherings. It is highly motivating, and is necessary to sustain such a devoted and hard working staff. It is thoroughly seen in the actions of the teachers, of the director, and of the board. It is also observable in the students, but not as much as could be more rewarding to see than it is.

I will posit now that one of the uniquenesses of Connectionist School is not just that it is democratic, but that with its ethic of care being in place more so than in many schools, it is more loving of mankind in general. A school that is more democratic, I think, will also end up

being seen to be more loving. The reasons for my belief are the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Democracy and Loving

Democracy is based on the premise of equal concern for others as one has for oneself. Loving is at its best when it, too, is based on the premise of equality (Aristotle in "Perfect Friendship," Soble, 1989). Since equality is at the heart of genuine democracy and is also at the heart of agape love, I wish to connect the two, democracy and loving, together.

I am speaking of agape love when I refer to the kind of love that seems appropriate and good in all relationships: teaching students, working with colleagues, playing with friends, or living with life partners. Its presence enriches democratic relations as well as educational ones. Further, agape love (giving, creating value; Soble, 1989) is a welcome presence in all relationships.

The only one of the three kinds of love that I find entirely appropriate for the way teachers relate to students is agape. Philia love (collegial, brotherly good will; Soble, 1989) is for friends and colleagues, unless the colleague is disagreeable or untrustworthy, and then such a colleague needs to be in the agape framework. Eros love (love of desire, acquisition; Soble, 1989) is for life partners and some would say for consenting adults in equal power relations. Eros is often thought of in sexual love, but is

not necessarily so. Soble (1989) shows how it can actually be considered as a derivative of "philia."

Philia love is often inappropriate in the relationship of teacher to student because such friendship creates obligations outside the teaching learning role which becomes problematic to others even if not between the teacher and student. I think Hugh Sockett (1993) is speaking of philia when he says friendship can be problematic for teachers and students:

The closer the relationship, the greater the opportunity for it to turn into a friendship, as opposed to friendly relationships. But friendship creates obligations that go beyond the rights and obligations of a role relationship, for friends have privileged access to each other.... [It] is complicated by the need to sustain a professional accountability relationship. Friendships have a measure of exclusivity about them and those outside the friendship relationship (e.g., other students) may see it as a threat to the ordinary role relation they have. (p. 116)

"Philia democracy," if there were such a thing, would be problematic on the same basis; it may privilege certain favored people, and therefore would not be equalizing in its effect. Eros, or erotic love (love of desire, acquisition;

Soble, 1989), is also not appropriate between a teacher and student in almost all cases, or for a model of democracy.

Agape love is a relational ideal as is democracy. I say this because agape is desirable even in philia and eros associations. It is the love that is commonly referred to in our culture as Christian love, and as with democracy, it is more widely talked about than practiced.

Since love and democracy are closely related, we can say that democracy is conceived and nurtured through conversation just as love is (Tannen, 1986). Habermas may agree. He has conceived of democracy as an "ideal speech community" (in Strike, 1993, p. 263).

In it he lists democracy as the normative foundation with freedom and equality of expression. He would have all practical arguments be made, then all relevant considerations offered, and then all competent speakers heard. Such speech is open (free) and undominated (equal). There is no coercion. In this way power does not supersede better arguments. Because human beings don't reach consensus easily, however, these dialogues can become unmanageably long, and are then criticized as impractical.

Strike (1993) suggests that to make this vision of democracy more feasible in schooling, teachers should be placed high in the ranking of competent speakers, not dominating or precluding the speech of others, but honored. He

problematizes his proposition when he admits that most teachers, given their current complex working conditions, will not in most cases welcome an additional responsibility to convince parents and publics of the veracity of their educational choices and values through free and open discourse. The problem could be alleviated somewhat by limiting the size of the speech communities and honoring teachers collectively.

Strike (1993) also thinks there is room for administrative leadership and delegation of routines in his vision because...

...the ideal of deliberative communities is not endless talk. It is one in which decisions are seen as properties of the community more than as the province of experts or the authority of the appointees of legislatures. (p. 269)

If nothing else, deliberative communities such as Strike would have, call for decentralization of decision making and debureaucratization. Then, he says we can change the question from "Who is in charge?" to "What kinds of communities do we wish schools to be?" Strike has raised the same question I have attempted to raise throughout my entire research study. Only until we are asking the right (moral) question will we begin to discover right (moral) answers in school reform debates. Only when we design reforms by the guide-

lines we would want drawn for ourselves, no matter where we are situated in the social structure, will our reform efforts be loving, fair, or lasting (i.e. democratic, in my view).

We want reform efforts that will last. This is what Aristotle said is desired of the best friendships also. To achieve lasting results in either democracy or friendship, what we need is love, or authenticity of motive and virtue.

Now since friendship depends more on loving, and it is those who love their friends that are praised; loving seems to be the characteristic virtue of friends, so that it is only those in whom this is found in due measure that are lasting friends, and only their friendship that endures. It is in this way more than any other that even unequals can be friends; they can be equalized. Now equality and likeness are friendship, and especially the likeness of those who are like in virtue. (Aristotle in Soble, 1989)

It seems to me that communities of individuals who are "like in commitment to democracy" are also "like in virtue" in the Aristotelian sense of virtue. Rousseau would call this quality "amour propre." Dewey (1937) said:

Belief in equality is an element of the democratic credo.... [E]ach one is equally an individual and

entitled to an equal opportunity of development of his own capacities, be they large or small.... The very fact of natural and psychological inequality is all the more reason for establishment by law of equality of opportunity, since otherwise the former becomes a means of oppression of the less gifted.... (pp. 219-20)

Here Dewey is calling for "equalization," as Aristotle called it, of a whole society, by its commitment to genuine democracy, not just political democracy, as an ideal (pp. 224-5). This equalization is a commitment to the well-being of others rather than living an egocentric existence. Concern for others that is equal to the concern one has for oneself is our civilization's most basic definition of love (Fromm, 1956, p. 105). There is more which Dewey has to say that ties democracy to love:

...it is the democratic faith that is sufficiently general so that each individual has something to contribute whose value can only be assessed as it enters into the final pooled intelligence constituted by the contributions of all.... The democratic faith in equality is that faith that each individual shall have the chance and opportunity to contribute whatever he is capable of contributing.... (1937, p. 220, emphasis mine)

This "faith" is what Erich Fromm (1956, p. 102-12) has equated with "loving." He unequivocally states that the practice of the art of loving is the practice of faith. Here he is not referring to any sectarian creed, but what he calls a "rational faith." For Fromm, having "faith in people" is to believe in the potentialities of others; he said "the presence of this faith makes the difference between education and manipulation" (p. 104). The distinction between the two, education and manipulation, has been of prime importance to our discussion of democracy.

On this momentary digression about manipulation, Fromm goes on to say that manipulation is based on the absence of faith in the growth of potentialities...." (1956, p. 104). He also says that faith in others has its culmination in faith in mankind, thereby fulfilling "The Golden Rule" (p. 109), but he appeals for adherence to the Golden Rule only after inserting a caution about a common misuse of it:

Fairness ethics lend themselves to confusion with the ethics of the Golden Rule. The maxim "to do unto others as you would like them to do unto you" can be interpreted as meaning "be fair in your exchange with others." But originally it was formulated as a more popular version of the Biblical, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Indeed, the Jewish-Christian norm of brotherly love is entire-

ly different from fairness ethics. It means to love your neighbor, that is, to feel responsible for and one with him, while fairness ethics means not to feel responsible, and one, but distant and separate; it means to respect the rights of your neighbor, but not to love him. It is no accident that the Golden Rule has become the most popular religious maxim today; because it can be interpreted in terms of fairness ethics it is the one religious maxim which everybody understands and is willing to practice. (1956, p. 109)

I agree with Fromm when he says that "the practice of love must begin with recognizing the difference between fairness and love." Genuine democracy, as opposed to mere political tokens of democracy, can be distinguished the same way. My work, and the work of other scholars is intent upon advancing genuine democracy, the kind premised on faith in the potentialities of others.

In sum, since "love is an act of faith, and whoever is of little faith is also of little love" (Fromm, 1956, p. 107), we can also now declare the reverse maxim, that "democracy is an act of love, and whoever is of little love is also of little democracy."

It seems to me that the deficit in genuine democracy is rooted in a deficit of love and is the most serious of the

national "deficits" we are currently facing. It is nowhere more obvious to me than the way we have constrained education within bureaucracy.

As is often the case, Dewey's words from decades past are as applicable as if written today:

The fundamental beliefs and practices of democracy are now challenged as they never have been before.... Of one thing I think we can be sure. Wherever [democracy] has fallen it was too exclusively political in nature. It had not become part of the bone and blood of the people in daily conduct of its life. ...Unless democratic habits of thought and action [and love requires both also] are part of the fiber of a people, political democracy is insecure. It can not stand in isolation. It must be buttressed by the presence of democratic methods in all social relationships. ...I can think of nothing so important in this country at present as a rethinking of the whole problem of democracy and its implications. ...The democratic idea itself demands that the thinking and activity proceed cooperatively. (1937, p. 225)

The premise upon which the "idea itself" demands cooperation, I have suggested, is love. It is based on the admoni-

tion "love thy neighbor as thyself," rather than upon "be fair in your exchange with others." Unfortunately, in the final analysis, "fairness ethics" do not even end up being more "fair," or just, when used as an excuse to forego offering equal opportunities for all. When love is emulated above all, fairness is taken care of; when justice is emulated supremely, love is diminished. By this reasoning, we could say love is superior, because by emulating it, both love and fairness are completely fulfilled.

In contrast, the only thing that gets "justified" in a totalizing application of "fairness ethics" is the selfishness of the applier. Further, the applier of this selfishness ethic ends up alienated from his fellow man, and worse, from himself. I believe we can do better, in education and American life in general, if we corporately, as a people and nation, begin to do as we would sincerely wish to have done unto us.

"It is a fair estimate that the absence of democratic methods is the greatest single cause of educational waste," Dewey (1937, p. 224) admonished. I believe this study has examined a one representation of a democratic vision being practiced in daily school life, in the "bones and blood of its daily conduct" that could be otherwise than the institutionalized practices of the majority of our public and private schools, noting both potentials and dilemmas. I have

advocated the presence of democratic methods, in the richest sense they can be applied, through the art of loving, in all of our social relationships, which includes the ones at school.

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Appendix A

Barbara S. Smith
Roanoke, VA 24019
(703)362-4262

PARTICIPATION REQUEST / AGREEMENT FORM

To: _____

From: Barb Smith, Doctoral Candidate, Division of Curriculum & Instruction
College of Education, Virginia Tech

Spring, Summer, Fall 1992, and Spring 1993

I would like to request your participation in a study which will be the focus of my doctoral dissertation in education, in curriculum and instruction. It involves my consideration of the organizational design of a school and the effect of that design on the nature of participation of the school members (students, faculty, parents, and support personnel).

If you are willing to participate in the study, it may involve some observations in your classroom(s)/on your grounds, tape recorded interviews, videotaping, and/or general observations at various school meetings. Signing this agreement will also mean that you are willing for me to use the information I gather in articles or reports I may wish to write after my dissertation is completed. Pseudo-names will be used for the school and individuals quoted in my work. This is in an effort to provide anonymity, which I will do all I can to provide. I should make you aware that I cannot personally guarantee anonymity, because it is beyond my control. I will make every effort I can, however, and wish for your participation. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this study, please feel free to call me (above), or you may call my dissertation advisor:

Dr. Rosary Lalik, Elementary Education, Program Leader
Curriculum and Instruction, War Memorial Hall, Rm. 314, (703) 231-5558

Signing below means you have accepted my request and read the above. You will be offered a copy of the form to keep. It is understood that if you wish, you may discontinue your participation at any time for any reason. I will very much appreciate the time and involvement your school allows me in this pursuit. It is my hope to be of benefit to you in the process if there is any way I can be. Please let me know your suggestions in this regard.

Your Signature

Date

Your Position(s)

Your School's Name

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix B

Barbara S. Smith

5505 Daytona Road NW - Roanoke, VA 24019
(703) 362-4262

February 15, 1993

Dear _____,

I am now in the process of writing up my analysis for the study I have been doing at Connectionist School since last June. At some point I had an interview with you. If I did not get a signed permission from you at the time of the interview, I have enclosed one for you to sign and one to keep. Would you please return the signed one in the enclosed return envelope? If you are a student at Connectionist School, would you also have your parents sign one and include it with the form you return to me? I would appreciate it very much!

I would also like to offer you the opportunity to read over the transcripts that have been typed up from our tape recorded conversations to see if you feel what you said at that time accurately reflected your views at that time you gave them. (Views can change over time; I am not looking for the changes in anyone's views at this point.) If you would like me to provide these pages for you, simply indicate your interest on the permission form, and I will get them to you.

Please return the enclosed permission form at your earliest convenience. I hope to have all rough drafts written by March 1, and it would be helpful if you could mail this back within a few days, or at least within a week.

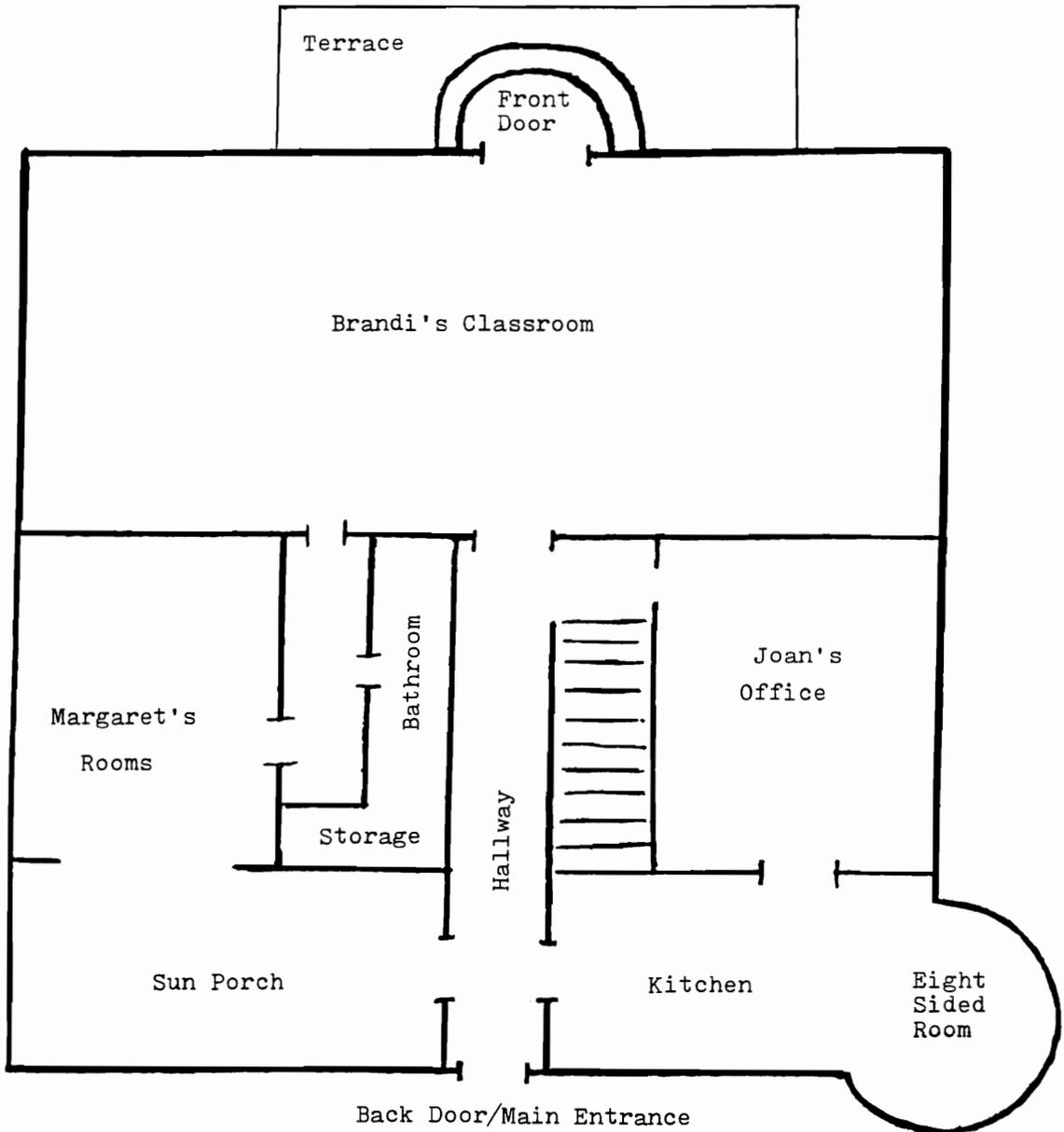
I have enjoyed the study at Connectionist School very much, and have learned a great deal that will be of help to me in my future work. Thank you so much for your participation!

Sincerely,

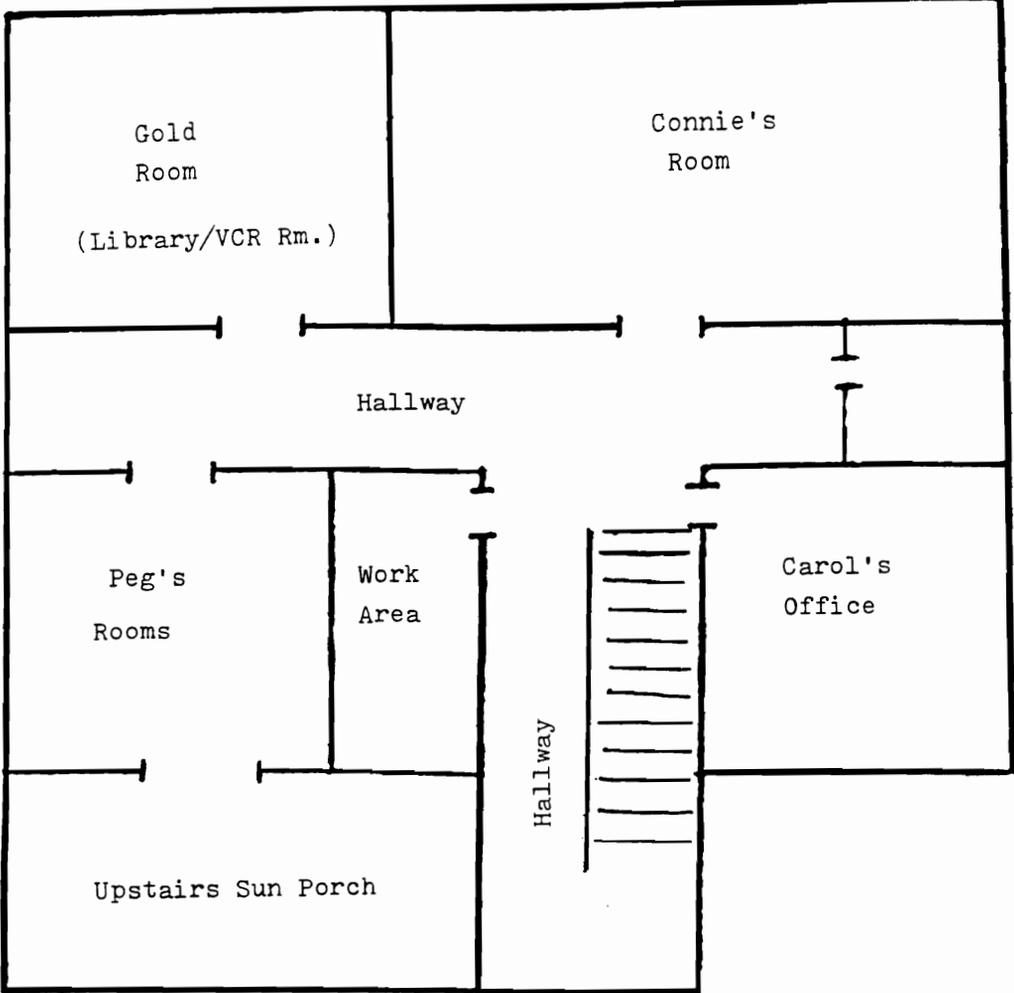
Barbara S. Smith
Graduate Student, VA TECH

Appendix C

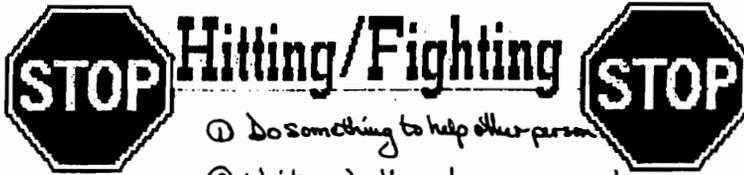
Main Floor



Second Floor



Consequences for Big Six



- ① Do something to help other person
- ② Write a letter to your parent

Offensive Language

- ① In-class consequences for
- ② Write a letter to teacher and have a conference

Damaging Property

- ① Replace it
- ② Pay for it

Leaving School Property

- ① Limited boundaries
- ② Restricted to hall

Defying Adult Requests

- ① Do a job for the adult
- ② Write a letter

Dangerous Behavior

- ① Limited play areas

Appendix E

The NCACS — National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools — is a nonprofit, national coalition of schools, groups, and individuals dedicated to providing children (and adults) with the kind of personalized and yet globally-oriented education we all need to successfully cope with, and change for the better, the society in which we live. Though our hundreds of member schools represent many different approaches to this challenge, there are certain basic ideas about which most of us agree:

Human beings learn best when we are self-motivated;
We learn best when we feel free to explore our own interests;
We learn best when we take responsibility for our education;
We learn best when we can develop a personal relationship with our teacher (s);
We learn best when we feel comfortable in our environment;
We learn best when we get to make important decisions about things that directly affect us;
Learning and life are basically the same thing.

Following these tenets, members of the Coalition have developed many different environments for learning: large schools, small schools, and home schools; day schools and boarding schools; independent schools, community schools, and public schools; stationary schools and traveling schools; kindergarten through college. Most of them have low student/teacher ratios (individual attention is important), and a good deal of freedom for the student, balanced by responsibility. They tend to emphasize field trips and apprenticeships, the world as school, living as education. Some of them are new, and others have been operating successfully for a long time.

The NCACS is set up to support and promote these educational experiments, to knit us together and give us strength, encouragement, new ideas and experiences, and a sense of community in our common endeavors. It also serves as an advocate for alternative ideas in education, distributing information to interested parties and the general public.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

In May, 1976, several hundred representatives of alternative education programs met in Chicago at the "Education for Change" conference. They drafted a statement of objectives which was adopted by the NCACS upon its formation in June 1978. This statement has served as the Preamble and Statement of Objects and Purposes for the Bylaws of the NCACS ever since:

"We are a national coalition of schools, groups and individuals committed to creating an egalitarian society by actively working against racism, sexism, ageism, and all forms of social, political, and economic oppression.

The objectives of the Coalition are to support an educational process which is alternative -

1. in intention, working to empower people to actively and collectively direct their lives;
2. in form, requiring the active control of education by students, parents, teachers, and community members who are most directly affected;
3. in content, developing tools and skills to work for social change."

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

What is it...? WINTER '90-91 WALA NEWS

Each alternative program represented by WALA (Washington Alternative Learning Association) will have most of these elements, but not necessarily all of them. No two programs are alike. Each will stress different characteristics to a greater or lesser degree depending upon the needs of the population it is serving.

DEFINITION

Alternative education can be defined as education that has student centered curriculum, varied instructional methods, a flexible environment that can respond to the needs of student and staff activities, and provide an educational choice different from traditional education in the local community.

Curriculum

*Encourage dialogue with individual students to design an educational program meeting district requirements, state guidelines and the specific needs of the student.

*Discuss curriculum with the student body to determine how their educational programs will fit their needs and the state guidelines.

*Develop a flexible curriculum to allow for the individual needs of the student and/or family.

Instruction

*Provide variations in the teaching that can include, but are not restricted to, lecture, experiential learning, stimulation, team learning, and independent study.

*Respect individual student's learning and personality style.

*Work to help students understand themselves, their limits, their strengths, and their responsibilities.

Environment

*Provide an environment that changes to meet the needs of the group at a given time, extending beyond the classroom whenever possible.

*Develop a system whereby each student feels that a staff member understands the student's needs.

*Stress positive interactions and validation of the student's strengths to build his or her self esteem.

*Work with small enough groups that adequate attention can be given to the learning of each student in the group.

VITA

Barbara S. Smith

5505 Daytona Road NW - Roanoke, VA 24019

(703) 362-4262

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Anticipated Completion, August 1993, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Virginia Tech.

Fellowship to the Southwest Virginia Writing Project, 1991.

M.A. School Administration, 1985, Grace Theological Seminary, with coursework from University of Alabama at Birmingham.

B.S. English Education 7-12 and Music Education K-12, 1977, Tennessee Temple University, with coursework from Mansfield State University.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Graduate Assistant, Virginia Tech, August 1990 - May 1993

Supervision of sixty-one student teachers in Roanoke County and City Schools, three years.

Instructor of nineteen sophomores and juniors in Elementary and Middle School Perspectives course, one semester.

Supervision of forty-one teacher aides for their junior clinical experience in Montgomery County Schools, one semester.

Instructor in Graduate Teaching Assistant Workshop conducting microteaching workshops sponsored by the graduate school, and designed to increase teaching effectiveness of graduate teaching assistants of university departments outside of curriculum and instruction.

Elementary Principal, Roanoke Valley Christian Schools,
August 1984 - June 1990

Supervision of fifteen elementary faculty and 325 K-6 students, oversight of instructional program, develop-

ment of curriculum with the elementary faculty, coordination of student programs (Christmas and Spring) and activities (Grandparent's Day, Field Day, etc.), coordination of K-12 volunteer program, newsletters, weekly faculty meetings including reading and language arts inservice over the course of one year, school accreditation, teacher certification, and scope and sequence.

K-12 Assistant Principal, Shades Mountain Christian Schools, August 1981 - May 1984

Supervision of twenty-five K-12 faculty under the direction of K-12 principal, responsibility for 510 students K-12 in the areas of programs and activities, newsletters, yearbook, student counseling, and discipline.

Classroom Teacher, Shades Mountain Christian Schools, August 1977 - July 1981

One year self-contained 5th grade classroom, one year self-contained 6th grade classroom, three years 6th through 9th grade English.

Two years advisory capacity for fellow faculty, and two years junior high coordinator.

PUBLICATIONS

Smith, B. (1992). Review of *Responses to Literature*, SIGNAL, (16) 2, 5.

Smith, B. (1991). *Daphne's Book*, A Read-Aloud Hit, SIGNAL, (16) 1, 9-10.

THESIS AND DISSERTATION

Smith, B. (1993). *Democracy and Education, A Philosophical Analysis and Ethnographic Case Study*, Virginia Tech.

Smith, B. (1985). *The Role of Women in Christian School Administration*. Master's Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary.

PRESENTATIONS

Smith, B. and J. Goodman. (1993). The Democratic Ethos of Connectionist and Harmony Schools: How Can Public Schools Benefit? Journal of Curriculum Studies Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, Bergamo Conference Center, Dayton, Ohio, October 20-24.

Smith, B. (1993). Educating for Democracy. Guest Lecturer to Graduate Sociology Class of Joyce Rothschild, Virginia Tech, March 3.

Smith, B. (1992). Teacher Candidates: The Ones Principals Notice; and Working Effectively With Your New Principal. Guest Lecturer to Middle School Perspectives Class of Kathleen Carico, Virginia Tech, December 2.

Smith, B. (1989). Conference speaker at ACSI Teacher's Convention, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Smith, B. (1987). Conference speaker at ACSI Teacher's Convention, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Smith, B. (1986). Eight presentations at the International Institute of Christian School Teachers, Winona Lake, Indiana, July 20-25:

The Classroom Teacher as Living Curriculum
Foundations of Classroom Discipline: Caring
Firmness

Can I Survive Another Year of Teaching?
Volunteers--An Overlooked Goldmine (for Teachers)
Getting Along With Your Administrator
Should I Be Considering A Move?
How Am I Doing As A Professional?
Should I Be Considering Administration?

Smith, B. (1986). Seven presentations at the International Institute of Christian School Administrators, Winona Lake, Indiana, July 28-August 1:

Giving Yourself Away Without "Losing It"
Playing Second Fiddle: Becoming An Effective
Assistant
Working With the Women on Your Staff
Meeting the Need of Your Teachers
The Woman Administrator
Issues Facing Single Women

Volunteers--An Overlooked Goldmine (for Administrators)

Smith, B. (1986). Conference speaker at ACSI Teacher's Convention, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Smith, B. (1985). ACSI Student Leadership Conference Speaker.

HONORS

Representative to Graduate Student Assembly for Division of Curriculum and Instruction, 1992-93.

Graduate Student Representative to NCATE for Division of Curriculum and Instruction, May 1992.

Instructional Fee Scholarship Recipient, Virginia Tech 1991, 1992, 1993.

Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi appointment and membership, April 1992.

AFFILIATIONS

American Educational Research Association member since 1991.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development member 1988-1990.

The Friends of The Center for Mark Twain Studies at Quarry Farm, Elmira College, New York, member since 1991.

Member of Outstanding Young Women of America, 1984.

SERVICE

ACSI Teacher's Convention Planning Committee for Williamsburg Convention, responsibility for program planning and speaker invitations for four elementary language arts sessions and three content area reading K-12 sessions, 1989.

Accreditation Team Co-Chair for Norfolk Christian Lower and Middle Schools, 1987.

Accreditation Team for Fredericksburg Christian Elementary and Junior High Schools, Instructional Program responsibility, 1986.

ACSI Teacher's Convention Planning Committee for Atlanta Convention, responsibility for elementary program planning and speaker invitations for 15 sessions, 1983.

Barbara S. Smith

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Date of Birth: January 3, 1955