Memories and Reflections as Sources for Understanding Teacher Identity

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the potential of using both image-based and text-based activities as a process for teachers to reflect on their memories of being students in an academic environment, and how they may have utilized these memories to construct their teacher identities. In my roles as teacher-researcher, I conducted the activities and follow-up discussion sessions by applying a reflective practice approach grounded in the research of Mitchell and Weber (1999). The findings present relationships and themes among the participants as well as the positive and negative consequences of the reflective practice. Concerning the construction of teacher identity, ideas of performance, the treatment of students, and clothing were common themes among the three participants. Particular methodology issues that arose during this study included: the participants' dislike of drawing; limited time for reflection; and my role as teacher-researcher conducting a study of my teacher colleagues. The most striking findings were that the participants showed resistance to the drawing and writing activities and that the participants only constructed connections between their memories and with their present teaching practices when I proposed various connections. Furthermore, the teachers never perceived themselves as researchers even though they were examining their own memories.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

The Context of the Research

Introduction

A.   Background

During the 2001-2002 academic year, I was intrigued by the research work of

Claudia Mitchell and Sandra Weber (1996). Mitchell and Weber are qualitative

educational researchers who use various visual arts medias, such as drawing, as part of

their research process. An example of their research is a study that included pre-service

student teacher participants producing drawings of themselves as future teachers. After

completing the drawings, the participants were encouraged to examine and to reflect

upon their own drawings. Through the process of reflection the participants discovered

unconscious desires and/or hidden characteristics within the drawings. These drawings

were then compared with images found within the media such as movies. Mitchell and

Weber concluded that there is a correlation between a pre-service student teacher's

desires concerning identity and media images.

After reviewing some of Mitchell and Weber's research (1995 1996, 1999), I

conducted an image-based research study for a graduate course at Concordia University

focusing upon teacher identity at the high school where I teach. The study, quite similar

to the one described above, investigated how teachers perceived themselves in relation to

contemporary media representations of teachers. I selected and slightly altered a memory

activity associated with teacher identity that Mitchell and Weber (1996) had employed in their research. My participants drew an image of themselves as teachers and wrote five sentences about their individual drawings. When the memo was handed out for that study, teachers inquired about what type of images were *allowed?* Several teachers apologized for not participating, as they lacked the ability to 'draw stick people.' I did not interview the participants for this study. While examining the data, the accompanying sentences were not useful as they merely described the drawings. I struggled to construct meaning and forge connections between the participants' drawings and the selected media images. Each participant received a copy of the final paper. I received several comments including: 1) an enjoyment for helping me with my university studies; 2) inquired into the grade that I had received for the study. In reflecting upon the data and the participants' comments, I concluded that it was evident that the participants had not gained any meaningful insights into their teacher identities' from this experience or they chose not to share them. It was also evident that the process of drawing was not an effective tool to collect data for certain participants as they found it a difficult method to express themselves. Essentially the study was impersonal and ineffective and only explored teacher identity on a superficial level.

What was interesting during this first study, was that several participants in the staff-room recounted memories of their former elementary and high school teachers. The participants described traits that they had appropriated from these teachers. This motivated my research interest towards applying teacher's memories as a method for exploring teacher identity. (Mitchell and Weber claim that there is a strong relationship between memories and the construction of identity). I was curious in further investigating

Mitchell and Weber's (1996) premise that it is beneficial for teachers to revisit their memories. Supposedly, through the process of revisiting memories, the teacher can identify traits in her teacher identity that will allow for her to transform her present practice.

Concerning the research methodology for the first study, I experienced disappointment as my participants simply handed me the drawings to examine instead of them actually examining the drawings to creating meanings. I also had not anticipated that the act of drawing would hamper the data collection since Mitchell and Weber (1996) claim that their participants displayed great enthusiasm for creating drawings. My participants displayed shame and embarrassment for lacking the ability to draw. Some teachers did not participate because they believed that they could not draw. Therefore I was interested in further investigating Mitchell and Weber's research activities that include drawing, photography, and writing. A second interest developed concerning teachers as researchers. My participants had not reflected upon the drawings or were hesitant to share their insights. Perhaps the teachers lacked the vocabulary, felt intimidated, or ashamed of the reflective process. Therefore, how can teachers utilize research and data collection for their own personal goals? As mentioned, Mitchell and Weber believe that teachers should engage in reflection, as it will enable them to become more competent teachers. Furthermore, by researching my own colleagues, I may have created obstacles such as my colleagues not wanting to share information. Therefore, through the thesis study, I anticipated becoming more familiar with the relationships that develops between the participants and the researcher who is studying her colleagues.

B.   Purpose of the Study

I had two aims in this thesis study. The first involved investigating how past experiences shape a teacher's identity (1996). From childhood to college, teachers have spent countless hours observing their teachers. Within all these encounters, there is a data bank of experiences, expectations, and interpretations (Rothenberg, 1994). According to Mitchell and Weber (1999), teachers are predisposed to withdraw from their memories in constructing their professional identities. Mitchell and Weber claim that there are two distinctive types of memories that teachers apply when developing their teacher identities: meditated and forgetting.   Meditated memories are memories that are recounted most often as they have a particular meaning for the individual. The second set of memories form part of the process of forgetting. Mitchell and Weber do not elaborate upon this process. They do not explore the idea of what is forgotten and why is it forgotten. Nor do Mitchell and Weber discuss any dangers of retrieving memories that have been forgotten. These omissions will be further developed in Chapter Two in the Review of Relevant Literature.

The second aim of this study was to investigate methods for accessing memories and for self-reflection on teacher identity. Mitchell and Weber (1999) applied qualitative research strategies, which included participants drawing, writing, or examining photographs for self-reflection. I explored whether or not these methodologies for examining memories are useful research practices in the field of educational research. Mitchell and Weber's memory work is based upon their research of hundreds of pre-service teachers. They conclude that the process of revisiting a single memory can yield

an awareness of the self. Such insights are capable of "illuminating and transforming the present," allowing the teacher to recognize how to rehearse for future situations (1996). The teachers in Mitchell and Weber's studies confirm that these experiences gave them greater insights about their memories; however, the teachers did not express how they would use these insights to transform the present or the future nor what 'transformation' referred to. Furthermore, Mitchell and Weber briefly state that dwelling upon the past can be self-destructive. What are the hazards in reinventing the past as Mitchell and Weber encourage teachers to do? Mitchell and Weber do not investigate in depth the problems of memory work, primarily the emotional content, which arrived unexpectedly in regards with two of the participants in my thesis study.

C.   Research Question

As stated above, my thesis study was guided by two aims: 1) to investigate how teacher identity is shaped by past experiences; and 2) to explore some specific methods for teachers to explore and to reflect upon their past life experiences.

The principle question was concerned with investigating teacher identity and how it is possibly shaped through memories. As previously stated, Mitchell and Weber (1996) maintain that there is a relationship between a teacher's memories of her schooling and her teacher identity. Though the process of reflecting upon memories, the relationship will become evident for the teacher. I was concerned with how the experience of retelling memories presents new insight for the teacher and the connection between a teacher's

own schooling memories and her personal pedagogy. The primary question thus became:

how does a teacher's own schooling experiences shape her identity as a teacher?

The secondary question concerned itself with Mitchell and Weber's (1996) various memory activities. Mitchell and Weber claim that drawing and writing allows for finer reflection as the images or ideas are inscribed on a concrete surface that can be reviewed numerous times. During the process of review of the activities, teachers apparently developed a greater insight in themselves as teacher and in their personal pedagogy. I was skeptical, as there is little indication that Mitchell and Weber tracked the participants after the activities had been completed to confirm that the teachers indeed modified their pedagogy once completing the memory activities. Ultimately Mitchell and Weber maintain that the process of completing these memory activities, will enable teachers to "fix" problems that lie within their classrooms. I did not readily accept nor refute this argument, as Mitchell and Weber do not offer substantiating evidence in support of their claim. Accurate data can only be formulated based on actual accounts from teachers who have utilized memory work to solve problems with their classrooms. Concerning the activities, what happens when a teacher is intimidated by the act of drawing or writing? Unfortunately, Mitchell and Weber do not present incidents of teachers refusing to carry out activities or feelings of discomfort after completing an activity. Nor do Mitchell and Weber discuss incidents in which teachers overcame obstacles associated with the actual process of drawing or writing. It would be interesting to know why a teacher chose a particular activity or why certain activities are more favorable than others and how this may affect the research process. Therefore, the

secondary question became: **how useful will the teacher participants find the various memory activities proposed by Mitchell and Weber?**

In Chapter Two I review specific literature concerning the need for qualitative research and the reflective practice in educational research. In addition, I review the literature of various theorists concerning teachers as researchers, as well as the implications of exploring memories within relation to a teacher's practice. In Chapter Three, I outline the research design. In Chapter Four I present the data gathered during the memory work and discussion sessions with the three participants. Chapter Five, contains my analysis of the data using emerging themes of teacher identity. Chapter Six, contains my critical reflections of the methodologies used in this study, and Chapter Seven includes my final conclusions concerning this study.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

In section A, I first investigate literature concerning educational research and arguments supporting the need for alternative methods of research when studying teachers. In section B, I review various theories pertaining to the teacher as a reflective researcher. In section C, I explore critiques regarding researching teachers' lived histories through memories. Then in section D, I examine specific elements of teacher identity, such as the psychological ideal teacher, associations with subject matter, and physical appearance. Finally, in section E, I summarize the selected readings in relation to my research questions: How does a teacher's own schooling experiences shape her identity as a teacher? and how useful will the teacher participants find the various memory activities proposed by Mitchell and Weber?

A.   Rationale for Studying Teacher Lives

According to the Critical Dictionary of Educational Concepts (1990) educational research has focused upon student success rates and the relationship to teacher performance. A student's failure or success is predominately determined by numerical testing. If the student fails, it is looked upon as the failure of the teacher. Thus a misconception has developed within the public that poor test scores equate with poor teaching abilities (Barrow and Milburn, 1990). Since educational research has focused upon quantitative methodologies to create a correlation between teachers and student test

achievements, educational research has diluted the role of teachers in the public's perception as merely technicians of a trade (Feiman-Nemers, Floden, 1986 and Kincheloe, 2003). It has been noticed that teachers experience burnout in trying to meet social and institutional expectations.[1] Educational research should not emphasize student success rates and test scores; instead, it needs to focus upon gaining an understanding of the work of teachers. Therefore, quantitative methods are insufficient, as the data only presents a narrow scope of the reality of teaching. Current educational research highlights the development of alternative research methods that are expanding upon the knowledge of teachers.

Unfortunately, educational researcher Ivor Goodson (1992, 2000) notes that the gathering of quantitative data of the earlier portion of the 20th century reduced the teachers to "shadowy figures" in the 1960's and in the 1970's, teachers were represented as "villains" in research journals. Only in the 1980's were there attempts to study the actual life histories of teachers. Researchers have recently discovered that teachers' lives are deeply embedded within the environment of schools. Qualitative research that focuses upon the exploration of life stories can validate teachers' work and address issues within the school's environment (Goodson, 1992, Fieman-Nemers and Floden, 1986).[2]

Max Van Manen (2001) also agrees that educational research has crushed the life of teachers into "abstract fragments that are of little use to practitioners" (p.22). Van

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[1] Feiman-Nemeser, S., & Floden, R. (1986). The Cultures of Teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of Research on Teaching. (3rd American ed.). (pp.505-526). New York: Mac Millan Publishing Company. Their research has shown that teachers experience pressure to maintain high class averages.

[2] Ibid. The movement towards qualitative research methods is also due to the difficulty of attempting to control humans in experimental situations.

Manen suggests that by exploring the everyday experience, the data collected will have

greater meaning because the experience will not be diminished to a piece of numerical

data. Van Manen concludes:

> "To borrow other people's experiences and their reflections on their
> experience…is to be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or
> significance of an aspect of the human experience"(p.62).

A reaction to the depersonalization of quantitative research has been the

development of phenomenology. As defined by A Critical Dictionary of Educational

Concepts (1990), phenomenologists are concerned not with generalizations; rather they

strive to reveal meaning from the every day experience. Phenomenology is distinguished

by a tendency to take out the neutralizing frameworks thereby inherently analyzing the

nature of dominate ideologies and institutions. Phenomenology is not concerned with

research problems, rather, with creating a discourse that reveals the source of the

problems. Utilizing quantitative methodologies that include surveys or traditional

experimental techniques are perceived as ineffective compared with qualitative

methodologies that include interpretative descriptions and case studies. The main

criticism of phenomenology is the lack of consistency within the field. Conclusions

remain descriptive and lack explanatory power. Furthermore, there is strong criticism

concerning the lack of a distinct methodology, objective standards, and ambiguous

language. Barrow and Milburn (1990) state that:

> "Phenomenologists claim that their method is to have no method… but to rely
> only on insightful interpretation is inadequate…To teachers, the talk of
> phenomenology at times appears difficult, inaccessible and even mystical"
> (p.241).

However the insights into the human condition gained from a phenomenolgocial approach cannot be achieved from other sources.

Art educator Elliot Eisner (1981, 1993, 1997) continuously addresses the urgency for alternative educational research methods that focus upon qualitative methodologies. The aim of quantitative research is to predict or control situations. Applying a standardized method of representing data is considered appropriate in educational research. Eisner asserts that this neutralizes the uniqueness of the individual. Furthermore, standardization may distort the results of a study due to the exclusion of qualitative data such as emotional reactions. Case studies that examine the everyday life of teachers are not considered useful because quantitative researchers have viewed teacher's emotions as unscientific. However, case studies are useful as a researcher can develop an understanding from a particular situation and this knowledge may be applied to other situations or research. The ability to generalize from particulars is a method that humans apply to understand their world. Eisner (1993) insists that research and data may be derived from a variety of sources; it simply depends upon the researcher's concept of research. Eisner states that alternative forms of data create a discourse and thus generate interpretative insights. He concludes that if alternative forms of research increase, it will result in a variety of new directions to examine issues in education. Eisner is aware of the potential backlash towards alternative forms of data presentation and acknowledges that without a form of standardization; researchers will develop inappropriate or absurd methodologies.

Mitchell and Weber (1995, 1996, 1999) apply various media such as writing, drawing, photography, and video as alternative research methods for their research on

teachers. In examining writing as a research process, they suggest that the participants write various drafts of a personal memory and review each draft for deeper meanings. The process of writing may be liberating for those who may not be able to express themselves proficiently through speech. Mitchell and Weber claim that drawings as research have been applied in research as "markers and mirrors of personal identity" such as the Rorshach Ink Blots, Draw-A-Person, and Kinetic Family Drawing tests (Mitchell and Weber, 1996). Mitchell and Weber maintain that drawings are more expressive than words and that aspects of the unconscious can be seen within the drawings. In their studies of children drawing images of their teachers, the children would replicate consciously or unconsciously stereotypical images such as the smiling teacher wearing a long floral dress (Mitchell and Weber, 1995). In regards to educational research of teachers, drawings can be applied as a "spring board for reflection" on identity (Mitchell and Weber, 1996, p. 303). The drawings may expose unidentifiable emotions, contain hidden meanings, or display what is censored from speech. (It is interesting that Mitchell and Weber compare their research to that of art therapists who use drawing to understand their clients' thoughts or feelings). Mitchell and Weber (1995) do acknowledge that few adults in Western society have developed a visual vocabulary or drawing skills much beyond that of elementary school. Another medium to collect data that Mitchell and Weber use are photographs. The participant explores the photograph of herself from various angles such as how she has changed or remained the same since the date of the photograph to develop a greater understanding of herself (Mitchell and Weber, 1999).

Both researchers Van Manen(2001) and Orla Cronin(1998) promote the use of the qualitative methods that Mitchell and Weber suggest. Van Manen (2001) recommends the process of writing. Writing, for some individuals, may be more agreeable than talking

about an experience. As a person writes, she avoids explaining situations to an audience. The act of writing forces the person to be reflective. Cronin (1998) notes that photographs are used in research and in therapy as they contain information related with societal elements and can demonstrate a link between the "individual and culture" (p.71). Photographs can trigger emotions and or memories that have been forgotten. Cronin notes that individuals take photographs during periods of rapid change in their lives as it is a means to gain control. Croinin claims that since there is no specific research methodology for using photographs, it could be a risky means for data collection due to the positive or negative emotions produced by viewing photographs.

B.   Teachers as Researchers and Critiques of the Reflective Practice

In Stephan Brookfield's, "Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher", (1995) the concept of the reflective teacher is examined. Brookfield outlines the profile of a critically reflective teacher as one who explores her practice and attempts to understand why she employs particular teaching strategies or reacts in certain ways. All types of reflections, even if not critical, are valid. The purpose of the reflective practice is not for teachers to recognize "good teaching;" [3] rather it is to understand their most inner beliefs, values, and assumptions, thus allowing the teachers to avoid self-blame for problems within the classroom or school. Brookfield concludes that if teachers do not engage in critical reflection, they will continuously blame themselves for problems that are not theirs. He does not provide suggestions concerning how teachers should approach

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[3] Brookfield, S. (1995). Becoming a Critical Reflective Teacher. California: Jossey-Bass. Brookfield outlines various types of reflection that teachers should avoid such as the "Perfect Ten Syndrome" in which the teacher only focuses upon the positive evaluations of her teaching. This only promotes desires of popularity or encourages a type of teaching style.

assumptions or how to avoid self-blame, nor does he elaborate upon what exactly are the problems that do not belong to teachers. Brookfield assumes that for teachers who are not critically reflective are to "live in the present as a prisoner of the past" (p. 265). He states that critical reflection can cause teachers in a school to be perceived as troublemakers for questioning the school system.[4] Brookfield acknowledges that confrontation with other teachers who are not critical reflectors may arise; however, the critically reflective teachers should continue to reflect even though other teachers are not questioning their pedagogy. Brookfield notes that critical reflection through distant memories has political and professional risks due to "facing the exorcism of personal demons" (p.228). The realization that assumptions about teaching are rooted in 'poor or ugly' practices may humiliate, evoke feelings of being an impostor or damage a reputation of a teacher.

Researchers Terry Wildman and Jerome Niles (1987) claim that teachers are only capable of gaining control of their profession through reflection; however, Wildman and Niles have several criticisms of the use of critical reflection in educational research. Critical reflection once was viewed as an alternative research method to quantitative methodologies that transformed teachers into technicians. This is because critical reflection has been applied as a method to uncover specific teaching 'recipes'. Wildman and Niles claim that it will only disable teachers to doubt their own intelligence. Wildman and Niles critique various critical reflection methodologies because they maintain that reflective practice is complicated and should not be simplified to writing descriptive journals (Brookfield, 1995, Mitchell and Weber, 1999, Hobson, 2001, Van Manen, 2001). Through descriptive journals, teachers will simply explore technical

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[4] Ibid. Teachers who engage in critical reflection develop a loss of innocence and "actually feel worse, at least temporarily; more doubt-ridden, puzzled, sadder perhaps" (p.239). However, these feelings are the start of developing a new type of wisdom.

aspects of teaching instead of social or political issues. In their research, Wildman and Niles discovered that the language teachers used in the descriptive journals was highly judgmental and the teachers primarily commented on what was thought to be good or poor teaching. These types of accounts, not termed reflections, did not lead to or open serious discussions. The teachers in their study enjoyed reflecting and having the opportunity to discuss their classroom practices.[5] However, Wildman and Niles question whether it was critical reflection since the participants only discussed classroom practices.

John Smyth (1992) and Kay Martinez (1990) further develop arguments that critical reflection has been diluted to comment upon technical aspects of teaching. Smyth (1992) states that there are numerous approaches to reflection; however, most lose their credibility as they mask problems. If reflection is only descriptive, it will unveil little about the profession. Smyth noticed in his research that through written descriptive analysis, teachers falsely assume guilt for problems that in fact relate to greater outside social, political, and economical problems. Smyth states that:

> "Critical reflection runs into the risk of being of educational fashion. Everyone climbs aboard ...the term is used to describe anything at all that goes into teaching. What it does not reveal is the theoretical, political and epistemological baggage people bring with them" (p.286).

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[5] Wildman, T. & Niles, J. (1987). Reflective Teachers: Tensions between Abstractions and Realities. Journal of Teacher Education, 25-3. In their study, teachers found the reflective process frustrating and expressed guilt. Teachers discussed problems in their personal lives or problems concerning the school. Some teachers expressed embarrassment due to discovering negative elements of their practices. Wildman and Niles concluded that teachers need a strong support system in order to share and to cope with their feelings and thoughts.

Smyth believes that a false illusion has been created that critical reflection is meant to empower teachers. He believes that since educational policymakers and governments have promoted it, the original intent of critical reflection is being altered. Educational policymakers and governments are not interested in bestowing power to teachers but rather are preoccupied with retaining it (Martinez, 1990, Smyth, 1992 and Kincheloe, 2003). Teachers are constantly submitted to forms of surveillance and appraisal. Teachers should question why policymakers and governments are encouraging critical reflection. According to Smyth, reflection has transformed into something that teachers use to become the ideal teacher. Smyth's premise is that reflection is a step-by-step process that will lead towards a linear way of thinking to solving problems without upsetting the systems that created the problems. The teacher remains a passive researcher (Smyth, 1992 and Klinchoe, 2003). When teachers reflect only upon the instruments of teaching, it links the solution to the incompetence of the teacher and not to the incompetence of the school or to any social, economical or political issues. The reflective practice needs to link personal experiences with the social, political and economical structural problems to avoid teachers developing feelings of guilt.[6] Teachers cannot dwell in self-blame as their classroom problems are located in greater social injustices (Martinez, 1990 and Smyth, 1992).[7]

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[6] Feinman-Nemeser, S. & Floden, R. (1986). The Cultures of Teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of Researching on Teaching (3rd American ed.). (pp.505-526). New York: MacMillan Publishing Company. Teachers develop inner conflicts between their desires for the perfect classroom and what is actually achieved. This may lead to burnout that is defined as the anger and frustrations that teachers experience in trying to meet the demands of the institution and societal expectations.

[7] Martinez, K. (1990). Critical Reflections on Critical Reflection in Teacher Education. Journal of Teaching Practice, 10 (pp.20-28). Martinez claims that critical reflection has become a 'flavor of the month" type of research method. Strategies for reflection have included diaries, journals, and autobiographies, which simply reveal emotions. When teachers chose to video record themselves, the footage is applied to exemplify teaching styles. She argues that these strategies are inappropriate and remove the empowering potential of reflection. To be a critical reflector, a teacher must not just describe and annualize social practices but must interrupt these practices beyond superficial judgements. The teacher is not an isolated individual, yet, is located within an institution. Her actions in the classroom mirror the institution that she works within.

Joe Kincheloe, author of, "Teachers as Researchers" (2003), claims that:

> "teachers who are researchers are much more likely to recognize the socially deleterious effect of certain educational strategies than non-researching teachers" (p. 27).

However, Kincheloe is apprehensive that teachers will engage in critical reflection because administration, governments, parents and mass marketing are controlling the teaching profession. Kincheloe claims that:

> "the task of teaching becomes more technical and less autonomous, that is, more de-skilled. Such hierarchical domination can occur only when teachers are viewed as low-status executors, members of a craft culture, not a profession" (p.35).

Furthermore in terms of educational research, Kincheloe believes that teachers continue to be 'studied down' by outside researchers (Eisner, 1993, 1997, Goodson, 1992, and Kincheloe, 2003). Educational research is still concerned with control and conformity and understanding how variables relate to each other. Connections to the actual realities of the classroom or school culture are limited (Kincheloe, 2003, Feiman-Nemers and Floden, 1986, Eisner, 1981 and Hobson, 2001). The goal of reflective practice is to understand the variables not simply to make connections. Step-by-step methods to critical research must be avoided as that again characterizes the teachers as passive researchers. Through critical reflection, teachers will begin to question and understand how historical events have affected their practices and identities. Teachers that are critical researchers "are more than voyeurs, they are agents, participants in the praxis of the research act" (Kincheloe, 2003, p.225). Kincheloe contends that if proper reflective practices are not introduced, teachers will remain subordinate and rely upon the knowledge of pre-made textbooks. Teachers who engage in teacher research are:

"better prepared to become higher-order thinkers who tie classroom activities to profound pedagogical, social, historical, and philosophical purposes" (p.183).

Kincheloe believes that if teachers do not attempt to understand how their morals or values were shaped by historical events or by society; then reflective practice is irrelevant and can only be applied for making technical improvements to pedagogical practices.

C.   Exploring Lived Histories through Memories

Researcher John Kotre (1996) states that memories are sites of significant events. He claims that phenomenologists who study memory speak of the body as a memorial container. To understand a memory that has significance, the participant needs to experience it though gestures and the senses. Memories that are recounted are dependent upon the emotional state of the participant. Sometimes the authenticity of a memory is determined by its vividness. The researcher needs to take into account that there is the process of editing a memory to make it more appealing. The participant may recreate it to make herself more appealing or ignore certain details as it contradicts with her interpretation of the memory. In Kotre's research, he noticed that events that are novel or shocking are imprinted in the participant's memory. Concerning negative memories that are extremely emotional, the participant usually creates a distance from the memory. When revisiting a memory, there usually is a type of judgement assigned such as having changed 'for the better' or 'for the worst.' When examining issues of identity, memories should not be seen as myths, but as a means to investigate distortions and to discover deeper meanings.

In order for teachers to seek deeper meanings from their memories, Naomi Norquay (1993) believes that memory work should be used as a means to locate issues of identity within the schools' culture. In memory work, teachers choose what to recall and sometimes may lead to recalling elements in a memory that are contradictory. By confronting contradictions in the memories, emotional pain can result from certain realizations. This could lead to the teachers wishing to ignore or forget the contradictions. By avoiding contradictions or negativity, this leads to a form of "narrow-mindedness that conflicts at every turn with the level of knowledge we have actually attained (p.245)." If the teachers wish to address issues of their identities, they must be willing to confront the memories. Norquay argues that memory work:

"often reveals discrepancy between our perceptions of our current identity... and our spontaneous judgements and feelings on the events of our childhood (p.245)."

Concerning negative memories, researcher Julia Rothenberg (1994) noticed that in memories of humiliation in the classroom, her teacher participant generally believed herself responsible and deserving of the humiliation. Due to these experiences, Rothenberg believes that teacher's fuse together their own experiences with emotions without giving much insight into why. Therefore practices that teachers apply are based upon personal experience instead of pedagogical merit. These memories become the core of their beliefs or are applied to lay theories about what is good practice.

Elaborating upon the premise that teachers use their memories to create their pedagogy, Nancy Jacobs and Bobbie Jo Eskridges (1999) declare that the memories that teachers have of their childhood and school, have an impact on their motivation, expectations, and values in their present day classroom. Teachers' personal recollections

may be a "support or hindrance as it overrides their knowledge and training (p.64)."

Teachers who remember their own learning can heighten their perceptions and increase

their understanding of children's behaviors. However, Jacobs and Eskridge state that

memories are blurred and distorted which may lead to inappropriate pedagogy.

Chase and Shaw (1989) and John Mason (2002) explore the dangers of nostalgia.

Mason (2002) claims that memories are:

> "notoriously unreliable...we interpret what we see and hear, and use that
> interpretation to access the memory, but we confuse the seen and heard with the
> imagined...memory proves to be selective over time" (p.246).

Furthermore, out of memories nostalgia may develop (Chase and Shaw, 1989, Mason,

2002). Chase and Shaw (1989) claim that nostalgia develops primarily when there is

dissatisfaction with the present. Chase and Shaw state that it is due to a loss of faith in

changing the present and a desire to return to the past. Nostalgia creates a utopia in the

person's mind as the memories are 'powerful talismans of how things used to be' (p.9).

A photograph displays only how lives have changed or have not changed since the

moment when the photograph was taken. Therefore, the viewer may develop negative

feelings such as frustration or sadness.

In contrast to this negative view of nostalgia, Mitchell and Weber (1999) emphasize

how "nostalgia can be a liberating force" for teachers (p.221). Nostalgia can be a form of

knowledge that the teacher reviews and reconstructs in order to reach a type of utopia.

Mitchell and Weber affirm that creating utopias from memories are not dangerous since

there is truth that lies within these ideals and the goal is to examine where these ideals

have evolved from. Memories can inform the present and should not simply evoke

tensions from the past. Memories can be used to understand dissatisfactions with the present.

Measor and Sikes (1992) claim memory work, namely life history, has turned into a fashionable form of research (p.209). The subject of a life history donates her memories for the reader to gain a voyeurism into her experiences. This entrance allows for the reader to understand and experience someone else's experiences, whether positive or negative. The researcher's role is to 'observe and record things that (*could be*) potentially damaging to individuals'. When conducting life history research, there is the penetration of many layers of emotions. During the discussions, the participant should be in command of the discussion instead of the researcher trying to 'coax' stories from the participant. Measer and Sikes suggest the act of reciprocity in sharing memories as the research transforms into a shared act, with roles of 'researcher' and 'participant' disappear into ones of 'friend'. Furthermore, to develop a sense of ownership of the research, participants need to see the transcripts from the interviews. The participants should be invited to change wording or ideas if they are not representative of their life histories. Measor and Sikes address the issue that participants may want to forget certain memories. Even though painful and intimate memories may be filled with interesting issues, these may raise traumas in the participant. Measor and Sikes compare this type of research with the Rogerian style of counseling, in that the researcher listens, reflects and encourages the participants to reflect on their actions without passing judgements.

Using data from memories as sources for research within the qualitative field is still viewed as controversial (Butt, Mccue, and Yamagishi, 1992). Controversy remains in that the memories could be biased, selective, and exemplify certain ideologies. The teacher

may edit stories to display herself in a positive light. In order to gain consistency within the data researchers should request participants to write several drafts from which the participants cross check for consistency (Butt, Mccue, and Yamagishi,1992). Another criticism of working with memories is the sense of "practicing therapy without a license (1992, p.93)." Some reflective practice that utilizes memory-work may seem therapeutic, however that is not the goal of the researcher. These stories will become public, and the memories are for academic scholarship and not for the sole benefit of the participant. [8]

D. Elements of Teacher Identity

On reviewing research on teacher identity, The Handbook of Educational Psychology claims teacher identity is grounded in the methods of instruction and in the ability to promote order and learning (1996). To promote learning, the teacher is required to have the knowledge and expertise of a particular subject as it reflects how the subject is taught and organized. Teachers' roles and identity change due to positive and negative experiences. New teachers view their identity as one of being nurturing and establishing relationships with the students. Images such as the nurturing teacher form lenses that teachers apply to help determine their identity and classroom practice. The images are helpful as it allows teachers to understand themselves as teachers' (p.692). Expert teachers, in comparison with novices, demonstrate strengths in classroom management and subject matter becomes intuitive.

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[8]Hobson, D. (2001). Action and Reflection: Narrative and Journaling In Teacher Research, In G. Burnaford, J. Fischer, & D. Hobson (eds.), Teachers Doing Research (pp.7-27). New Jersey: Lawarence Erlbaum Associate Publishers. Hobson also concludes that critical reflection allows for the teacher to examine her memories. Memories that are revealed in critical reflection are usually ones that have considerable emotional or intellectual significance.

Deborah Bitzman (1988) describes identity as an invention. It is:

"how the self is produced and reproduced through social interactions, daily negotiations, and within particulars contexts that are already overburdened with the meanings of others" (p. 23).

Bitzman claims that teacher identity has been synonymous with a teacher's role and function. A role can be assigned; however, an identity is in constant social negotiation with conflicts and desires. Identities are not static and are constantly transformed by experiences and societal teacher ideals. Identity is applied to understand who a teacher is, who she is not, and who she can become. Bitzman argues that it is impossible to discuss identity without exploring the various meanings associated with a teacher's experience. Without reflection on identity, teachers tumble into self-blame due to societal expectations of predetermined roles. Struggles with identity are not simply related with the present societal expectations but also within past societal expectations. By examining identity through memories, it allows teachers to rethink who they are and who they want to become.

Bitzman (1986) also explores cultural myths that shape a teacher's identity. A cultural myth, defined by Bitzman, provides a set of ideals and definitions. Myths are applied to validate the teacher's identity. These myths are related to subject knowledge and classroom management. Due to these myths, teachers generally express feelings of guilt, of not knowing enough to teach, and not being able to control the students. Teachers tend to judge themselves and others on the basis of controlling the students. Furthermore, guilt can develop from the myth that a teacher is "born" into the profession. This myth simply reinforces the concept of the natural teacher. The natural teacher is one who can think on her feet, has outstanding intuition, and common sense. Essentially, a

teacher is supposed to be a rugged, yet caring individual, who sacrifices herself for the good of society and for children. These are high expectations of a person who is supposed to be human (Bitzman, 1986, Hansen, 1995, Bernard and Huckins, 1974).

A teacher's identity is also associated with the subject matter taught (Ball and Goodson, 1985). Teachers tend to view themselves as depersonalized and interchangeable with subjects because one year they could be teaching visual arts and the next year home economics. The identity role assigned to the subject is always under constant negotiation. The subject matter allocates a type of identity to the individual that becomes a label such as 'the math teacher' or 'the art teacher.' Teachers who have had negative experiences with a subject matter maintain a certain identity with that subject matter. Furthermore, within the subject matter, there is the hidden curriculum that the teacher teaches. This hidden curriculum is associated with morals and values that reflect the teacher's own morals and values. The teacher's practice may cultivate desirable habits related to being an immoral or moral person. Discussions of morals are predominately found in English and history subjects where the moral problems are usually the main focus (Barrow and Milbrun, 1990).

Another element of teacher identity is physical appearance according to Mitchell and Weber (1995). Clothing is a language of symbols that declare a person's gender, social class, and age. Dress is a socially determined activity. Teachers find themselves purchasing 'teacher clothes', as there is a silent rule behind clothing that suggests respect and power. Clothing is used as a pedagogical strategy. Romantic images and memories of

teachers are constructed of what they are supposed to look like. A teacher is not supposed to be attractive or seductive or dress provocatively as they are representatives of society.[9]

Despite the above explanations of how the identity of a teacher is created through cultural myths, subject matter, and clothing, David Hansen (1995) writes in, "The Call to Teach", that teaching is a vocation. To teach means "to lead others to what they did not know before" (p.1). A feeling of service inspires those who go into teaching (Hansen, 1995, Bernard and Huckins, 1974).[10] Teachers sacrifice their own desires or needs for the teaching profession. Hansen claims that a person is not 'born to teach' but that idea of it as a vocation develops within the individual. There are personal motivations for becoming a teacher; however, the desire for contributing to the world is more important. The 'call to teach' comes from experiences as Hansen writes:

> "Many are drawn to teaching because of teachers they have had, because of subjects they have studied and enjoyed...the call to teach comes from what they have seen and experienced in the world" (p. 6).

Hansen believes that the desire to teach is linked with memories or past experiences and that the teacher's identity should resemble one that is bound to society.

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[9] Mitchell, C., & Weber, S. (1995). Drawing Ourselves Into Teaching: Studying The Images That Shape and Distort Teacher Education. Teaching and Teacher Education, 12, 303-313. In their research, they discovered that teachers remember the clothing such as a silly tie or high heels of their former teachers and apply these memories as a model towardes how they should dress.

[10] Bernard, H. & Huckins, W. (1974). Humanism in The Classroom. Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc. Bernard and Huckins claim that a teacher who "does not seek personal satisfaction and growth from his relationships with his students may be doing less than his best job of teaching (p. 54)."

E.   Summary

The process of reviewing literature for this thesis study was cumbersome, as there are numerous theorists who have contradicting opinions concerning qualitative research methods, reflective practice, using memories as a form of data, and teacher identity. The selected readings were intended to illuminate various issues concerning my research questions of how does a teacher's own schooling experiences shape her identity as a teacher? and how useful will the teacher participants find the various memory activities proposed by Mitchell and Weber?

Prior to exploring these questions, I chose to examine how educational research has approached the subject matter of teachers. As noted by Goodson (1992, 2000) and Van Manen (2001) educational research that focused primarily upon quantitative research methods shaped the public's perception of teachers by correlating students' test scores with teacher competency. In reaction to this reduction of teacher integrity, researchers turned towards qualitative research methods to understand and to validate the lives of teachers. Thus, alternative research methods, such as phenomenology have been applied to educational research. These alternative search methods include case studies, the use of photography, writing, or drawing (Mitchell and Weber, 1995, 1996, 1999, Cronin, 1998, and Van Manen, 2001). Nevertheless, even with dramatic, and perhaps exciting, developments of alternative research methods in the field of educational research, Eisner (1981, 1993, 1997) remarked that without a form of standardization; researchers may develop inappropriate or absurd research methodologies.

Due to my interest in exploring the lived experiences of teachers, I chose to examine literature concerning reflective practice, which is a research practice that aims to avoid reducing the lives of participants into statistical tables. While reviewing the literature, it became apparent that numerous practitioners have devised their own methods for guiding teachers in the process of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995; Weber and Mitchell, 1999, Hobson, 2001, Mason, 2002, and Kincheloe, 2003). All the authors assumed that a good teacher is one who engages in reflection. The diversity of these approaches was overwhelming as each author professed that her or his process was the secret key to understanding teaching praxis. The diversity stems from deciding exactly how to engage in reflection as well as exactly what to reflect upon. Some critiques of reflective practice are derived from its simplified form of writing descriptive journals (Wildman and Niles, 1987) and that teachers have used reflection only as a means to develop stronger teaching tools. If reflective practice is utilized to demonstrate that the solution to problems lies within the incompetence of the teacher, it will not expose problems that are within the social, economical, or political areas of the school system (Martinez, 1990 and Smyth, 1992). When these are exposed, the goal is not to discourage the teacher to think that they are unable to create change. The goal is for teacher to understand problems and create solutions. These solutions may include developing a stronger tie with the parental community or seeking stronger support from administration. Only when teachers question how historical events have affected their practices and identities, will reflective practice be an empowering tool for teachers and not simply a technical one (Kincheloe, 2003). As previously mentioned, for this thesis study the reflective activities of Mitchell and Weber (1999) were to be used due to a previous interest in their research work.

Considering memories as sites of significant events for individuals has become an interesting area to research in order to understand teacher's identity (Norquay, 1993 and Kotre 1996). As observed by Kotre (1996) in his search pertaining to memories, a researcher must be sensitive to what is revealed by the participant. Certain memories are highly emotional; certain memories may have been altered in order to create or maintain a positive self-image of the participant. Measor and Sikes (1992) have critiqued the use of memories in educational research as being a fashionable form of research in which stories are coaxed out of the participant. They compare this type of research with the Rogerian style of counseling. Teachers who examine their own memories may be confronted with contradictions or memories of humiliation, which may lead to feelings of embarrassment (Norquay 1993). Or teachers will use their memories to create their own pedagogy even though it may be inappropriate for their students (Jacobs and Eskridges, 1999). Continuous examination of memories may lead a teacher to feelings of nostalgia (Shaw and Chase, 1989, Mason 2002). Feelings of nostalgia are derived when one is dissatisfied with her present situation and there is a desire to return to the past. Nostalgia creates a type of utopia within the person's mind. However, Mitchell and Weber (1999) argue that creating utopias from memories is not dangerous, as the individual is able to examine why she has certain ideals. Memories can inform the present through understanding why there is dissatisfaction with the present.

Concerning the question of how memories shape a teacher's identity, I chose to focus on Bitzman's (1988) definition that identity is a social invention that is constantly changing due to new experiences. Teachers must reflect upon their identity and

understand the social factors that have shaped it. Without doing so, Bitzman believes that

teachers will compare themselves to mythical images of what a teacher should be (1986).

For this thesis, I will focus the scope of the investigation of teacher identity upon 1) the

subject matter that is taught (Ball and Goodson, 1985) and 2) as suggested by Mitchell

and Weber (1995), physical appearance. I chose to include Hansen (1995) as his

arguments contain ideas that teachers should be self-sacrificing, which appeared in the

discussions with two of my participants concerning their memories.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design

As previously stated, for this study I have chosen to examine Mitchell and Weber's (1999) use of applying drawing, photography, and writing as tools for reflection and as a means for understanding teacher identity. From among their activities, I have selected four specific activities that focus on critically reflecting upon memories of the distant past.

A.   Procedure

Building upon what I have learned from my first study of teacher identity and contemporary media images, I made several changes for this thesis study. The first study included just one drawing activity. I noticed that the drawing activity was intimidating for certain participants as they lacked the confidence to draw even stick figures. For this thesis study, I selected four distinct activities (Appendix C), and asked the participants to complete any three of the four activities. The participants decided the order in which to complete the activities. This enabled them to direct some of the research process. I conducted a tape-recorded discussion session with each participant after the completion of each activity. I chose this procedure as a way to overcome obstacles I encountered in my first study, namely participants simply completing an activity without any further discussion or exploration.

I selected only four activities from the numerous activities proposed by Mitchell and Weber as these activities were relevant to my thesis concerns of teacher identity. The selected activities were based upon either writing or drawing. I did not include the other mediums of video or collage as it was too complicated to introduce to my participants who had no visual arts background. I shortened Mitchell and Weber's (1999) activities, which are extensive and include numerous questions and steps to prompt reflection. I did not want to overwhelm my participants with meticulous procedures. However, I was concerned with altering the wording of the four activities because I was examining the effectiveness of the tools of drawing and writing that Mitchell and Weber proposed. Mitchell and Weber (1999) devised specific wording for the activities based upon research with hundreds of pre-service teachers. Specific words evoke certain images and thought processes. By condensing the activities and altering the wording, I was concerned that my changes could undermine the specific instructions, which may have been crucial components of the activities.

The Activities:

For **Activity A**, the participant was asked to reflect on a school memory of her choice by utilizing her senses. The response could be created through either writing or drawing. According to Mitchell and Weber, writing focuses on "what is remembered and what is being remembered" (1999, p.48). They claim that the participant should examine the first draft for emerging themes and then write a second draft of the memory. This process enables the participant to sift through the "lies and half-truths" and challenge her interpretations (p.50). The act of drawing may reveal unconscious imagery that is coupled

with cultural and personal experiences. The open-ended topic of the activity, reflecting upon a school memory, allows for the participant to discuss any memory and to create connections with her teacher identity. This activity was also selected to observe and discuss with the participant why she chose one form of expression (writing or drawing) over the other. The questions for discussion were intended to aid the participant in creating connections between the memory and herself as a teacher.

Activity B consisted of the participant creating a written text in the third person, focusing on a specific memory that occurred when she was a student. Mitchell and Weber (1999) invite participants to write in the third person as it encourages the participant to be more "descriptive and discourages interpretation" of the events (p. 62). The participant was then to remove herself from the situation and examine the memory. The activity focused on a specific past event that had occurred inside the classroom. Moreover the participant was to focus upon a particular subject matter. I was curious if the participant would consciously create connections between her present day classroom pedagogy and the memory and if she would write in the third person. The questions for discussion were intended to assist the participant in forming connections between the memory of the subject matter and her own pedagogy.

Activity C, drawing a former teacher, was based on Mitchell and Weber's (1999) claim that:

> "the very act of drawing directs attention to teachers' bodies, and requires decisions regarding adornment, appearance, clothing , and accessories. Drawings often reveal more than we intend to and point to things we may not yet be able to put into words…Drawings may also point to contradictions or tensions in teacher identity and practice" (p. 131).

For this activity, the participant drew a former favorite or least favorite teacher from her past experiences. I altered the wording from the original activity because I wanted the participant to consider both positive and negative experiences and thus open up wider possibilities for reflection. I was curious to see what type of characteristics, such as physical appearance the drawings would reveal. Since this activity involved drawing, would the issue of drawing be problematic for some participants? The questions for the discussion were intended to aid the participant in uncovering any hidden images that she may have unconsciously applied.

Activity D, the participant had to select and write about a photograph related to her academic past. According to Mitchell and Weber, a photograph contains elements such as body positions that can be used for self-study. Furthermore, photographs can be stimuli to release strong emotions as they encapsulate a specific experience. The act of writing while revisiting the photograph allows the participant to critically examine the photograph (Mitchell and Weber, 1998). As previously mentioned, individuals take photographs during periods of rapid change in their lives in order to hold onto fleeting moments. I was curious what types of photographs would be revisited and if there were connections to the participant's present experience as a teacher. I was also interested in how they would examine the photographs through writing. Would the writing be merely descriptive or would there be reflective insights? The questions for discussion were meant to guide the participant through the memories associated with the photograph and to reflect upon how their self-image they may have changed since the moment when the photograph was taken.

B.   The Study Site and the Participants

The high school is a small academic school situated in the Greater Montreal area with 34 teachers on faculty. The majority of the staff are younger than 35 years of age. There are more male than female teachers. I am the only visual arts teacher. I was in my second year at the high school when this study was conducted. My relations with the staff, as I perceive it, are amicable yet professional. I state this because I believe that it was a factor in who chose to participate in my thesis study, as well as my relationship with them as 'researcher.' Being a member of the staff, I am aware of the internal political and social dynamics of the school. An outside researcher would be unaware of this school's culture but an outside researcher would perhaps be more objective than I am. For example, when the participants discussed certain issues that related to their present teaching experiences, I had the option to shift from my researcher role to my identity as a colleague who is part of this school's culture (Erikson, 1986; Hitchcock & Huges, 1989; Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1992). In addition, the participants were aware that I was conducting this study in order to complete my graduate studies and they were aware that the focus was upon teacher identity. This, I believe, affected the course of this study, which will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

To recruit participants, I sent a memo to all of the teachers in early October of 2002 (Appendix A). Only one teacher, Natalie, responded. I became concerned that none of the teachers were interested in engaging in self-reflection. In desperation, I nearly accepted a male teacher's bargain: if I chaperoned the next dance, he would participate in my study. I opted not to include him, as self-reflection should be a process that a teacher

voluntarily engages in for professional growth (Brookfield, 1995; Mason, 2002; Kincheloe, 2003). A few days later, I wrote my 'plea' for participants on the staff-room chalkboard and at that moment, two teachers, Nancy and Erin, enthusiastically agreed to participate. They were under the impression that the study had already been completed. This made me wonder if my memo had been clear or whether the teachers had actually read the first memo. Interestingly, Natalie and Erin had both participated in my first study concerning drawing their teacher identity.

My three participants were female and taught various subjects. Erin had been at the high school for four years. It was her second teaching post. She has been teaching for five or six years, (the exact number she could not recall), and was in her early thirties. Natalie has been teaching for four years, all of which have been at this high school. She was in her late twenties. Nancy was in her second year of teaching, both of which have been at this high school. She was in her mid twenties. Teaching load for each teacher varied. Nancy had a full course load (five classes per day), while Erin and Natalie taught four courses per day. Natalie and Erin were good friends. As the study progressed, they discussed and compared their activities with each other in the staff room.

Ethical concerns were brought up when I recruited the participants. Since my participants were also my colleagues, I was cautious in how I proceeded. In the role of a researcher, all of a sudden, these colleagues were sharing emotionally charged memories. I was wary of "practicing therapy without a license" (Butt, Raymond, McCue &Yamagishi,1992, p.93). Each participant was asked to sign a letter of consent to participate in this study, which permitted them to withdraw their participation at anytime (Appendix B). To maintain confidentiality, the names of the participants and

distinguishing information, i.e. the subjects they teach, have been disguised (Erikson, 1986).

C.   Procedure

The participants completed three activities (Appendix C) and met with me for four different tape-recorded discussions over a period of five months. In the first brief meeting, the participants were given a copy of all four activities and the questions for the discussions. The participants selected one of the four activities to complete for the following week. I instructed the participants to allocate as much time as they deemed necessary for the activities. In the second meeting, the individual participant presented the completed activity. The completed activity was employed as a starting point for the tape-recorded discussion. I adopted the word 'discussion' to avoid a question and answer format where the participant only answered the researcher's questions instead of engaging in self-reflection (Hitchcock & Huges, 1989). The length of the interviews varied for each participant and for each discussion. At the end of the session, the participant selected a second activity to complete for the following week. This pattern continued until the participant had completed three activities. The tape-discussions were transcribed. Each participant received a transcript from her individual discussion sessions. Over the period of one month, each reviewed the transcripts and then met with me individually for review. The participant was given the opportunity to clarify any ambiguities or to address further reflections.

D.   Evaluation of the Data

The data I collected consisted of three components. The first component was the drawings and written texts the participants produced during their reflection activities. The second component included the tape-recorded follow-up discussions and review of their transcripts. The final component was my field notes, which included descriptions of what occurred in the discussions, as well as descriptions of my reactions to the research experience itself.

The process of analyzing the data encompassed three stages. In the first stage, I identified related patterns or themes among the data gathered from the three participants. In the second stage, I made connections between these patterns or themes and the literature concerning teacher identity. Finally, I reviewed and critiqued the effectiveness of the methods of drawing and writing I chose for collecting the data. I also analyzed how the participants interacted with me as a researcher and my own identity as a researcher (Measer & Sikes, 1992; Shaw & Chase, 1989; Weiler, 1992).

CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 is an overview of specific excepts from the data collected and will be given a more detailed examination as the data is interpreted in Chapter 5. The participants written comments have been typed to ensure legibility.

A.   Erin's Memories

1ˢᵗ Activity and follow-up discussion:

Erin selected Activity A (Figure 1). When we sat down in my classroom in the morning, she immediately apologized for her drawing skills. She considered them embarrassing. She expressed her memory through a line drawing of a boy lying in a casket with three names scrawled on it. Around the boy there were stick figures of people who appeared to be crying. Erin claimed that she had placed a smile on the boy lying in the coffin (even though it is not evident that he is smiling).

During the tape-recorded session, Erin claimed that this memory of the multiple funeral of three classmates tainted her high school years. She compared this memory with how she viewed her present students who seem more carefree than the students during her high school years. She viewed high school as a period when adolescents endure numerous difficulties. She compared her memory of her small rural community with her present situation. In her memories, her high school community was very close. Erin expressed a longing for a closer relationship with her students and claimed that her goal was to develop connections with her students. She stated that she was emotionally

dissatisfied and frustrated with her present teaching post. The discussion drifted towards memories of her first teaching assignment overseas. In her opinion, the teachers overseas were more dedicated than those at her present teaching placement. The teachers would arrive at seven in the morning and leave at seven at night. She enjoyed teaching during that period of her career. When prompted about identity and labels, she applied the metaphor of cotton candy to describe herself. She felt that teachers at the present high school were pecking away at her. The discussion continued to focus upon her present teaching situation and never drifted back to her distant memories.

In terms of the discussion and the act of reflection, the usually relaxed relationship of two colleagues transformed into a more formal relationship between Erin and myself at the start of the tape-recorded discussion. The questions developed during the conversation as I had misplaced the pre-assigned questions for the discussion. During the discussion, Erin continually referred to and reflected upon situations at her present work place and appreciated that I could relate or share in the discussion of the school's internal politics. When asked if she engages in reflection, she stated that she engaged in reflection concerning poor test scores while driving from or to work. There was minimal exploration of the actual drawing due to it containing few objects. Essentially, the drawing was applied to initiate the discussion and was not referred to very often once Erin had described the memory and began to reflect upon it.

2nd Activity and follow-up discussion:

For the second activity, Erin selected Activity D, to reflect upon a photograph of her skating partner hoisting her up at their final skating performance inside an arena. The

photograph was taken during her final year of high school. It was a head-to-toe shot of the two figures who filled the entire frame of the photograph. Behind the skaters, there was a grey wall. (A copy of the photograph has not been included due to issues of confidentiality for both the participant and of her former skating partner). She stated that the smile was genuine on her face and compared the long length of her hair in the photograph with her present cropped hairdo. Along with the photograph, Erin had written a few descriptive paragraphs concerning her feelings when the photograph was taken (Figure 2).

For Erin, the photograph brought back several negative memories: the competitive atmosphere; completing homework at 10:00 o'clock at night after a skating practice; and not being able to participate in other extracurricular activities because skating dominated her life. On the other hand, the photograph brought back a strong positive memory of freedom. The final performance symbolized a freedom from the competitive atmosphere of skating. The photograph represented a pivotal moment where she decided to forego a professional career in skating to attend university. Erin stated numerous times that she never envisioned herself becoming a teacher. Erin saw many parallels between her memories of skating and teaching: both include a crowd that judges the performance. Due to this awareness of her students' expectations, she accommodates her "judges" by making her subject matter exciting. She was thankful for her memories of skating as it had made her able to accept failure.

She commented that while she was selecting a photograph for the activity, she was "self-psychoanalyzing" to explore why she choose a particular photograph. The

photograph that she selected was dependent upon what she had available. For this discussion, the pre-assigned questions for the activity were used as a checklist and the discussion never strayed away from the questions. The atmosphere between us felt tense due to continuously returning to the questions and because there seemed to be very little to examine in the photograph. When Erin was asked to describe the sounds or smells of the arena or the face of the person taking the photograph, the discussion became livelier.

This discussion with Erin occurred three weeks after the first follow-up discussion on a "pedagogical day"[11]. The lapse in time was due to conflicts in our teaching schedules. The discussion was held in another teacher's classroom for the sake of convenience. The discussion was interrupted several times due to announcements on the public address system from the principal and the ringing of the school's bells. There was also a sense of rushing through the discussion as we both had to prepare student's marks for the end of term report cards. At the end of the discussion, Erin expressed feelings of guilt for talking so much as she acknowledged that I would be typing transcripts from all the follow-up discussions.

3rd Activity and follow-up discussion:

In the previous discussion, Erin had explained that she was incapable of drawing and preferred to write. Therefore for Activity C (Figure 3), she wrote a descriptive text about a former teacher. We met in my art classroom, where she discussed the text. The memory of Mr. Hugh arrived from a present day frustration: her students had been

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[11] In Quebec, a pedagogical day is a day in which the students do not attend class; however, teachers report to the school for personal work or attend school board workshops.

inquiring about the laws of physics. She linked her frustration with physics to her memory of Mr. Hugh, her high school physics teacher. She remembered his teaching consisted of his writing assignments on the blackboard and reading his newspaper for the remainder of the class. He was intimidating physically and was unapproachable. In her memory, he humiliated her before her classmates over an incomplete homework assignment concerning vectors. Due to this experience, she cannot teach vectors without feelings of anxiety.

Even while Erin recounted this memory of humiliation, she excused Mr. Hugh's behavior. She expressed pity for him because he was the physical education teacher who unfortunately was obliged to teach physics. As we explored phrases used to describe Mr. Hugh, such as 'hiding behind his desk' and 'large frame'; Erin developed a startling new insight of this man: he hid behind his frame and desk. Erin commented that due to this negative memory, she strives to become a humanistic teacher. Instead of hiding behind a desk, she walks around the classroom or sits with her students to assist them. She viewed herself as available and approachable. Mr. Hugh's unprofessional attitude was unacceptable to Erin. She further explored the topic of teachers' methods for creating a presence in the classroom. She recalled that during her first year of teaching, she wore suits to create the impression that she was an authoritative figure. She no longer wears suits as a suit represents someone who is either highly professional or hiding.

During this discussion, Erin inquired about my memories of a particular high school teacher that I had encountered. At this moment I experienced a role reversal with Erin as she was listening, questioning, and evaluating my memory while I recounted the

memory. I felt guilty recounting a story of a positive teacher who tutored me during her supervision of yearbook meetings as Erin had shared a negative memory. Furthermore, I was not prepared for Erin's shocked response to my story. Erin scolded my positive teacher for tutoring me in front of senior students. It seemed that I should have given a negative story to create a bond with Erin. At the end of the discussion, Erin offered an apology for not completing the final activity for *me* sooner.

4th Activity and follow-up discussion:

Erin and I had met for the final discussion in my classroom. For the fourth activity, she had been asked to review the typed transcripts and to write down new insights. Instead of writing new insights, she had corrected the grammatical errors she found in the transcripts. When asked what she had gained from reviewing the transcripts, she commented that she did not talk in completed sentences. For the remainder of the discussion, we examined ideas that I suggested some themes that I had seen in her activities. She believed that her memories of her tightly knit community affected her teacher identity both positively and negatively. The cotton candy metaphor stood out as the strongest reflective element for her; however, it had little relation with her memories. Erin chose the particular memories for the activities, as they were the ones that first came to mind. She believed that looking at memories could force a teacher to think of what she does; however, there are dangers in dwelling in the past. In terms of the activities, she enjoyed writing instead of drawing, as it is difficult for her to draw. She preferred that I was the researcher instead of an outside researcher from a university. In her opinion, she would have been skeptical of an outsider because the researcher would not have

understood the realities of a teacher's life. And finally, she took pleasure in knowing that

she was helping me with my university studies.
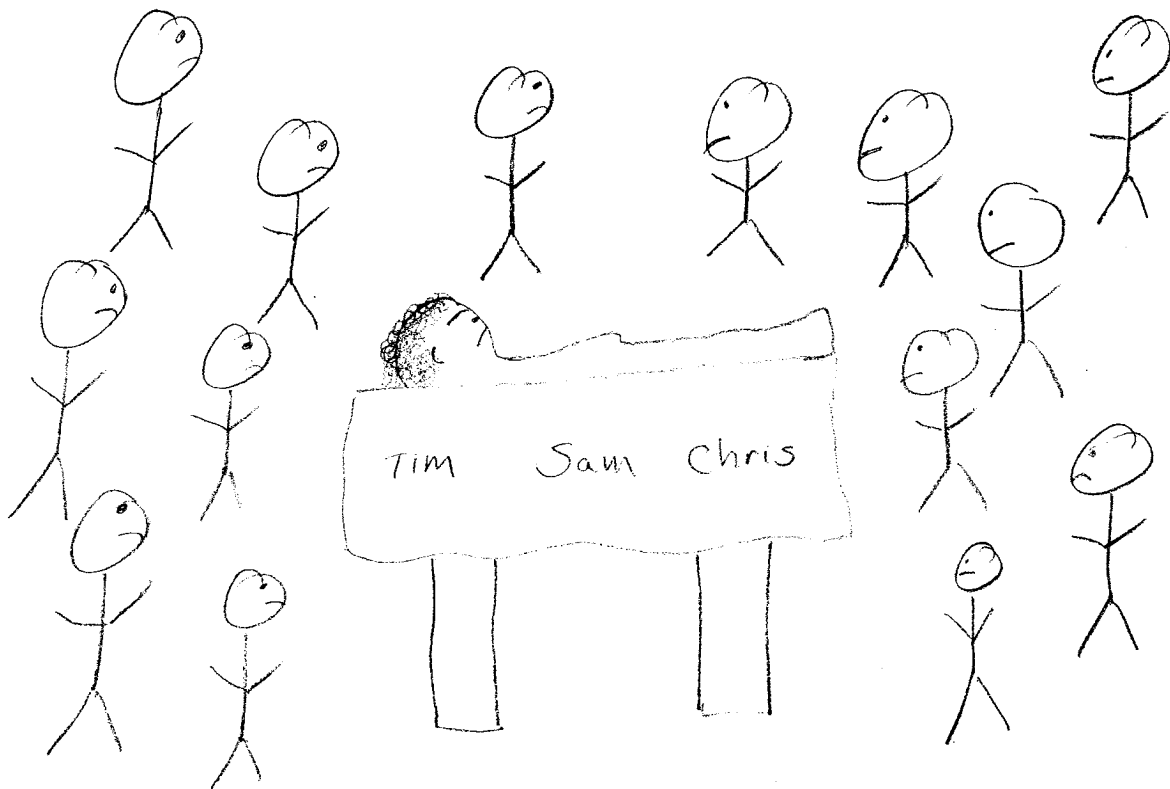
Figure 1. Erin's Activity A

Figure 2. Erin's Activity D

The photograph was taken March 1991.

This photograph was taken when I was seventeen years old. You may be wondering what this has to do with my "academic past"? Well, from the age of four years old until my late teens, I was involved in figure skating, specifically ice dancing. This picture represents the day that my "academic" past actually began. Until the age of fourteen, I was part of the competitive stream of ice dancing with my partner Sam. Skating consumed my evenings, weekends, summers and most of my energy! Going to school was something I enjoyed but despite achieving well, never made it a priority. I can remember so many evenings of doing homework in the change-room at the arena while the ice was being resurfaced. My involvement in skating taught me time management, stress management, and many other intangibles. Yet, there came a point as my high school career was finishing where I had to choose school or skating.

To answer the questions you provided, I had to define what I deemed my "academic past." The word "academic" suggest to me serious study, subjects in detail, and I suppose higher learning. When this photograph was taken, I was in grade twelve with one year left to complete before moving to university. Sam and I had decided as of 1990 not to compete anymore. However, at our clubs' 1991 Carnival on Ice, Sam and I came back together for probably the best performance of our lives. The smile in the photograph is authentic. (Paul never really smiled much in photographs, plus he was trying to hold me up. The choice to leave skating behind and pursue my studies was a relief and that resulted in a great program with little regret about the decision. The photograph was taken to mark our last skate together. I remember feeling sad that it was officially over, even though we had stopped skating the year before, Yet somehow it was also a new beginning- no more frozen toes or missed classes!

Figure 3. Erin's Activity C

> Mr. Hugh was a football coach and a physics and economics teacher. I can still see Mr. Hugh (with) his 6' 3" frame, whistle around his neck, and newspaper in (his) hand. Looking back, I don't remember his voice or anything he said; but I remember the newspaper.
>
> Mr. Hugh was my grade eleven physics teacher. He would enter the class late, write the required page numbers and questions on the board, open his textbook on the desk and proceed to sit down with his feet sometimes on the desk and read his paper. It is a wonder I don't remember the name of the newspaper! Now that I am a teacher, I realize that perhaps he wasn't qualified to teach physics and got stuck with the post against his will. HOWEVER, he could have at least pretended that he cared.
>
> I distinctly remember one class where out of the blue he actually corrected the homework and called upon me for a response. I did not have my work done simply because I was really struggling with "vectors" and was embarrassed beyond belief in his response to me. I can still feel the anger and resentment I felt at that moment and from then on physics and I have never been friends. In fact, I have a mental block toward succeeding in physics that is rooted in the negative influence he had on my life.

B.   Natalie's Memories and Activities

1ˢᵗ Activity and follow-up discussion:

For the first activity, Natalie completed Activity D in which she wrote a descriptive paragraph (Figure 4) about a photograph that was taken the day of her last undergraduate class in education, April 1999. In the photograph, she is sitting with six of her peers from that education class on a sofa in the graduate students' lounge. She is in the middle with a smile on her face. Her hair is much shorter in the photograph and she is physically larger (A copy of the photograph has not been included due to issues of confidentiality for the participant and for the other students present in the photograph).

While looking at the photograph, she recounted the triumph of completing university because it had been a test of endurance. She repeatedly applied the word "survival" to describe her experiences and memories relating to the transition from high school to university. She continuously compared her memories of her university professors with her own teaching. She claimed that she does not have the same "crazy expectations" as those professors. Furthermore, Natalie validated her pedagogy with her memories as a student. The photograph brought back memories of loneliness as she presently misses socializing with these university friends. She concluded that teaching simply does not permit time for socializing due to the schedules and heavy workloads.

Natalie compared her memory of her student teaching with the student teachers at the high school. She viewed student teachers' inappropriate behaviors, clothing, and their naïve attitude towards the realities of teaching, such as the long hours needed for grading

students' papers. She believed that her students perceive student teachers as exciting and that they dreaded returning to their "boring old teacher" (making reference to herself).

This first discussion with Natalie occurred in the cafeteria while the janitor mopped the floor. His presence was an annoyance for Natalie and myself; however, coordinating our schedules for another discussion was impossible. Since she had placed her completed activity in my mailbox prior to the discussion, I was able to construct specific questions for the discussion. The questions became what I would call, "a defective accessory," as we did not stray away from them. Because we had the questions, Natalie and myself kept referring to them. It would have been more beneficial to discard them in order to have had a more candid dialogue. Natalie concluded that the photograph represented closure and entry into the unknown. She continuously spoke of the present and I kept referring her back to her memories. Natalie did not examine the photograph for body positions, clothing, or hidden messages. I refrained from commenting on her fluctuating body size because, as a colleague, I knew that she was sensitive about it. She would make references to body size in future discussions.

2nd Activity and follow-up discussion:

Natalie completed Activity A. She created a drawing of a professional performance of a musical in which she had participated during her high school years (Figure 5). The drawing consists of two nuns singing while standing on a stage. When I asked about the lack of an audience, she gave an apologetic smile and stated that she can not draw people. Her drawing represented a critical moment of decision: to pursue

musical theatre professionally or to go to university. She had not sung in public since the last performance of that production.

This memory represented many realizations for Natalie. Firstly, she admitted that she was not "born to be a teacher." Even during her first year of university, she had enrolled in various courses until she decided to enroll in education. Secondly, the memory also represented for Natalie "rejection and a period of maturing", as she had not been awarded the lead role in the performance. And thirdly, she chose this memory because of feelings of nostalgia that she had been experiencing due to an extracurricular activity that she was presently supervising at the high school. Furthermore, the nostalgia was linked to desires for a social life outside of teaching. Natalie explained that she would like to join a community theatre; but that she does not have the time. She applied this memory to justify why she tells her own students to pursue extracurricular activities. Natalie continually encourages her own students to join teams or clubs instead of solely focusing on academics. For Natalie, extracurricular activities built character and taught her time management skills. She believed that since she enjoyed and benefited from extra curricular activities that the same will occur for her students. In addition, she remembered classes as being "bland and a place where you just took notes."

This discussion had taken place again in the cafeteria while the janitor swept the floor. The conversation again drifted repeatedly to the present. The drawing provided little insight and my misinterpretation of there not being an audience heightened Natalie's embarrassment with her lack of drawing skills. Not once during the discussion did Natalie question her memories or herself. The idea of her teacher identity as

interchangeable with teachable subject matters was discussed only because I posed the question. She continuously commented upon the positive aspects of her present practice and emphasized her humanistic approach. The day after this discussion, Natalie informed me with great excitement that she had sung at the bar that night after our discussion. Natalie had not sung in public since the closing night of the musical performance seven years before. She believed that her ability to sing in the bar came from our discussion.

3rd Activity and follow-up discussion:

For this discussion, Natalie and I met in my classroom after school. Prior to starting, she requested to hear her voice on the tape-recorder. Once she heard a fragment, she immediately demanded that the tape-recorder to be turned off. Natalie altered Activity C (Figure 6) because she could not draw and decided that a drawing could not express simply what words could. The text described a teacher, Mrs. Taylor, from her memories as a high school student. This teacher was strict, frumpy in dress, and showed dedication by correcting papers for long hours after the final bell. In addition, Natalie admired how Mrs. Taylor would employ games in her classroom as a strategy to make the subject matter interesting. Natalie claimed that for several years she has had a yearning to write a "thank you letter" to this teacher; however, she has never had the opportunity to reflect upon the specific wording for the letter. The text was not in a letter format and it was a first draft that Natalie had written while her students were writing a test.

This memory evoked a discussion that revolved around issues of self-perception and teacher identity. Natalie continuously expressed a desire for her students to see her as

"humanistic." Natalie defined humanistic as a teacher who shares aspects of her personal life with her students; can laugh with the students in class; and is approachable. She disapproved of those teachers who do not apply a "humanistic" teaching approach similar to hers. Her belief is that teaching is primarily a means to educate students to become better persons and this goal is more important than the content of the subject, which she teaches. She compared herself with Mrs. Taylor who "was not mean once you got to know her." Natalie described Ms. Taylor as "personality-challenged", as she appeared to not have a life outside of the school. Natalie respected Mrs. Taylor because she demonstrated dedication to her job and students by always correcting work at night. There was no reflection on why this teacher had substantial corrections to complete or why a teacher is compelled to prove herself with extensive work beyond the regular school hours. According to Natalie's memory, Mrs. Taylor was not considered the "cool teacher" but rather the "frumpy teacher." Natalie discussed the importance of appearing professional. Even though she disliked the idea of being judged by her appearance, she realized that students respond to the teacher's attire. She made reference to a shirt she wore that the students thought was cool and made them more attentive during that days lesson. She did not further reflect upon how it made her feel to be perceived as cool and not as frumpy. When asked if she viewed herself as "just a teacher", Natalie responded that she was "more than a teacher." She readily applied the label of a 'hero' to express her identity. She expressed pride in recounting that students in another teacher's class had written essays stating that Natalie was an inspirational teacher. This positive feedback justified for her the amount of marking and long hours. Natalie claimed that she applies technical skills learned from her favorite teacher in her classes. She continuously stressed positive aspects of her pedagogy and wished for me to acknowledge them as well.

While conducting this discussion, there was always the noise of students in the hall. This was a distraction at times and it made us both aware that we were conducting the interview in the school.

As a researcher and as a colleague, I was in an awkward situation as Natalie constructed comparisons between her memories and experiences to particular faculty at our high school. She frequently created comparisons between her and myself as though we were allies. When I did not agree with some of her degrading comments concerning staff, she became agitated. She created many positive comparisons between her memory of Mrs. Taylor and herself; however, she refrained from forming negative conclusions concerning herself or her role model. It was difficult to remain objective as I began to negatively judge her behavior and attitude towards our faculty. I refrained from asking questions related to insecurities, body image, and her hidden desires, which I was interpreting from her memories, even though she continuously expressed an interest into what *I* would uncover from the sessions. She did not perceive her role as a critical reflector and mine as a guide. Later when she saw me in the staff room, she expressed guilt for not completing an activity for *me*.

4th Activity and follow-up discussion:

Natalie and I met for the final discussion in my classroom. For the fourth activity, she was to have reviewed the typed transcripts from the previous session and have added any new insights. Instead of writing new insights, she had corrected the grammatical errors that she found in the transcripts. She also stated, similar to Erin, that she

discovered that she does not always speak in complete sentences and needs to work on that ability.

When asked if she had gained any new insight through the process of reviewing the transcripts, she focused upon the positive aspects such as her humanistic approach to teaching. When asked if critical reflection had benefits, she believed that it could be a catalyst for changes (these were not specified) or for examining regrets. Natalie took the opportunity to reflect upon her own situation as a teacher. She stated that completing the memory activities and reflecting upon them and her present-day experiences had resulted in her understanding better her place within the high school. The greatest realization was that she was an "adult" and a professional teacher while her colleagues resembled university students. In terms of the activities, she enjoyed most the writing activity. Natalie stated that she would love for students to write to her in ten years to tell her what they had learned from her.

Concerning the various activities and discussions, she would have enjoyed the drawing activities if she drew better. By completing the drawing activity and examining the memory, she claims to have developed a better understanding of the experience and how it affected her. She enjoyed looking at the photograph and compared the experience with her own practice of taking pictures of her students to remember them. The questions were useful to guide her through the various memories. There was enough time to complete the activities; however, she felt guilty for never completing them within the suggested four weeks. She preferred that I was the researcher instead of someone from a university. Natalie believed that an outside researcher from a university would not have

understood the experiences of teachers nor the culture of the high school. Furthermore,

she knew that I would not tell another teacher her memories. And she stated that she

participated in the study primarily to help me to complete my graduate studies and

expressed concern if the reflections contained the elements that I was looking for.

Figure 4. Natalie's Activity D

The photograph was taken April 1999.

I chose this particular photograph because on the day it was taken, I was experiencing a great number of things such as exhilaration, exhaustion, pride, and fear. The photograph was taken on my very last day at university. The particular semester, our last, I did not have any final exams. The teaching assistant for the course brought us to the graduate students' lounge to celebrate our final class, really I was leaving my final class.

This group of fellow students represents my "education buddies." These are people who suffered along side me through a variety of bizarre professors and dull courses. These are the people who supported me in class when my opinions suffered, who made me laugh and cry. You can see from the look on everyone's face that we were all pretty happy. And this photograph was taken to commemorate the four years we had spent together.

I'd like to back up a bit and just quickly refer to the emotions I listed at the onset of this makeshift reflection.

Exhilaration: Five years at university and four years in education had finally come to an end. Finally I would be ready to put my knowledge to practice.

Exhaustion: Let's face it, being a student is not always easy! Combine this with working seven days a week for eight of the previous two years during all but one year while in school. Well, let's say I was tired of having to work to stay there!

Pride: On my father's side, only my cousin went to university. (Not even my brother went to college or university). I felt a sense of pride that I had accomplished something so meaningful. Believe me I treasure that diploma.

Fear: April 1999 I had finished school without a job prospect in sight with bills and loans to pay. In fact, I was not hired until August 23, 1999. Trust me, the anxiety had moved to fear!

(Julie, I hope that this is Ok. See you period 6!)
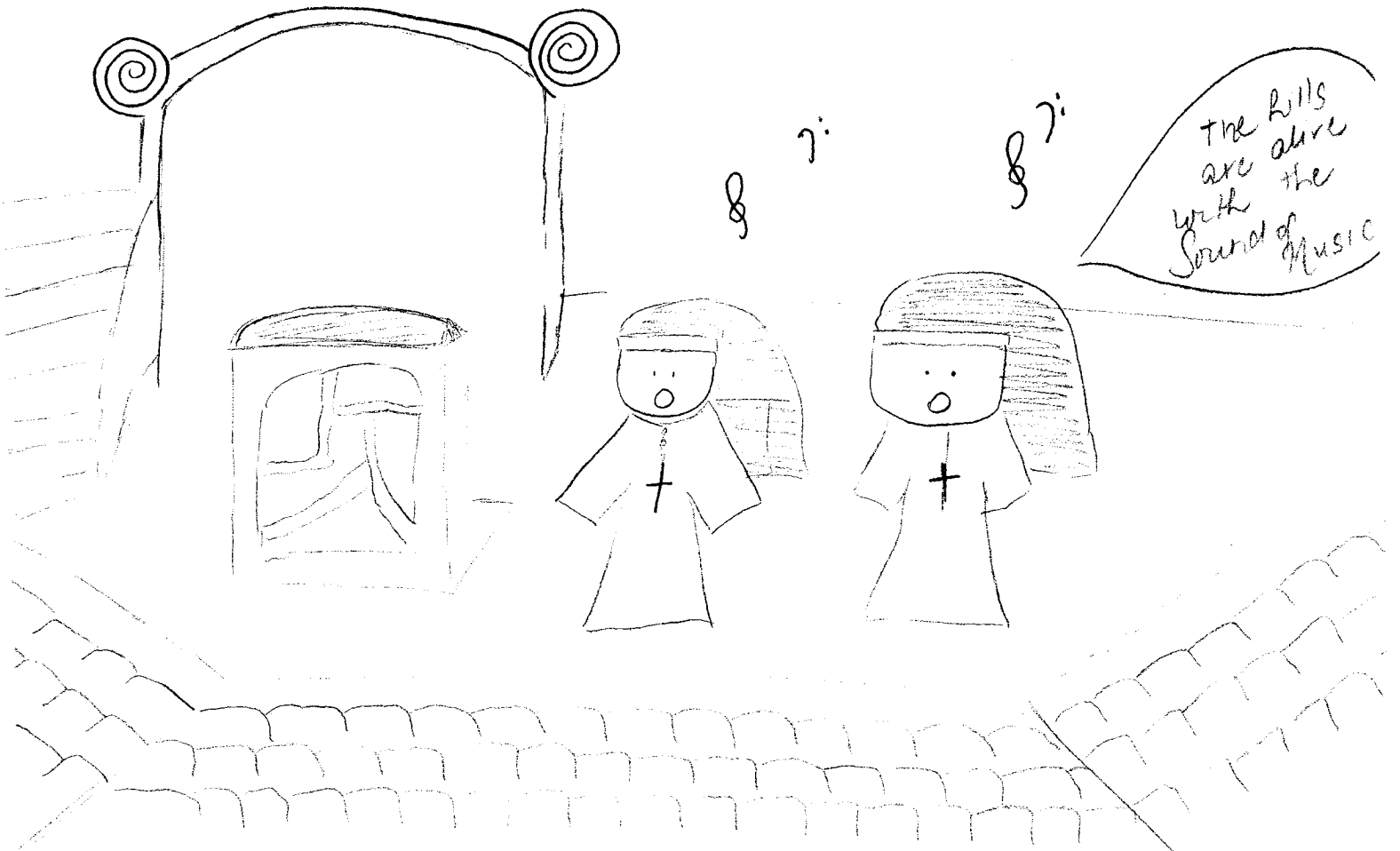
Figure 5. Natalie's Activity A

Figure 6. Natalie's Activity C

One of my favorite teachers was Mrs. Taylor. I was privileged enough to have Mrs. Taylor twice in high school. In grade ten, she taught me introduction to business and in grade thirteen, Economics. Both classes were among my favorite and most memorable.

Mrs. Taylor was neither young (mid to late thirties) nor "cool" according to my current understanding of the term as associated to teachers. Her [clothing] style was frumpy. She never wore make-up, had plan short blond hair, large rimmed glasses (not as all stylish), and wore what I call old lady clothes from Sears [department store]. In short, she wouldn't have been hitting any runways anytime in the near future.

Mrs. Taylor, however, was a phenomenal teacher and kind-hearted human although most [students] saw her was a strict and personality challenged educator. She was strict no doubt. But she was fair and that is what I respected most about her. Wanting to ensure that we were prepared for university, she taught us like a professor and we were assigned numbers instead of names [to demonstrate the impersonality that occurs at university]. It was a strange idea to us at first but I quickly saw the value in her ideology. I appreciate it more so now that I am a teacher myself. She was the only teacher who I felt worked hard at guaranteeing [that] we would be prepared to enter university. Her number system was just one of the ways she helped us to see what we were about to get into.

In grade ten, Mrs. Taylor found a variety of teaching techniques that would be most valuable to us. She lectured [and] we listened. We learned [and] taught our peers [and] she listened. We learned by doing and boy did we learn. One of my favorite school memories is learning about the stock market and insider trading. Mrs. Taylor set up a fictional arrest of herself (our broker) and my group (law breakers) in order to teacher the class that what was once though of as a brilliant scheme to take over another company was really illegal. It was a phenomenal learning experience, one that I treasure today when seeing creative ways to engage my own students.

If I had to say that I became a teacher because of someone, I would say that Mrs. Taylor had a definite impact on my decision. She was strict, yet fair, creative, dedicated, and most of all, human. This is a trait that I learned first hand when on January 13th, 1994 (my birthday) I was sick and she called to wish me happy birthday at recess having seen that I was absent.

C. Nancy's Memories and Activities

1st Activity and follow-up discussion:

It had taken several weeks to secure a time to meet with Nancy due to her busy schedule. When we spoke in the hallway, I realized that she had not comprehended the purpose of the study or the act of reflection. With her Activity C (Figure 7) in-hand, she affirmed that if I had any questions to simply ask her at a later time. She was unaware of the tape-recorded sessions that occurred after each activity. Perhaps she had forgotten when I had explained the process for collecting the data. And once she was aware of the process, she suggested that we conduct the discussion in her classroom while her students completed seatwork. I was agitated because she was not following the research process as my other two participants had. Therefore I quickly suggested that we find time during a lunch period in my classroom.

Nancy created a drawing of Mr. Smith, her high school English teacher. She perceived him as a positive role model even though he instructed his students not to become teachers due to the poor salary of teachers. The drawing consisted of a bald man standing before a large desk with a smile on his face. Nancy wrote a few descriptive words concerning his teaching tools and personality (Figure 7).

He was influential in her decision to become a teacher as she "liked the way that he lived his life" inside and outside of school. She enjoyed the talks about life that he gave during his English classes; however, she could not remember anything from the course curriculum. When I questioned her about her subject's curriculum and if she would ignore the curriculum to speak more about life as her teacher did, Nancy laughed.

Instead of reflecting upon the issue of a teacher's responsibility for the curriculum, she spoke about how she wove the issue of life into her classes, such as discussing college choices to her students (since she was a student not so long ago). Nancy explored the issue of life and teaching, pondering whether Mr. Smith actually enjoyed his life. He had died early of a heart attack. She questioned whether he "did everything that he wanted to do." This comment inspired ideas about teaching as a career. She is aware and fearful of becoming bored with the monotony of teaching the same subject each year.

She enjoyed the interaction that he had with his students and she attempts to recreate a similar relationship with her own students. She named "approachability" and "humanism" as two of the most important aspects of a teacher's identity. She chooses to sit on the teachers desk instead of behind it to demonstrate her approachability. She claimed that teachers who walk around are nervous and the students can sense it. In terms of physical presence, she commented on his clothing and how he wore the same black shirt and pants and always a smile. When asked if she dressed similar to Mr. Smith, she laughed and said no. She was conscious that clothing affects how the students perceive her. She explained that since her attire is casual, it invites students to approach her. Nancy stressed that her smile was a more valuable tool for controlling the class than demonstrating artificial power through clothing. She commented that students were "a lot easier on him" because he was approachable. Nancy acknowledged that students have the power to be nice or to intimidate a teacher.

When asked if whether drawing was an obstacle, she declared no. She always "had an image in my head that I would like to draw it." The drawing, as straightforward as it was, sparked discussions concerning who this teacher was and how he had affected

Nancy's own teacher identity. When looking over the drawing, he was the only one present in the image. When asked if the students sat closer or if he walked around the classroom during his talks, she stated no. I commented that he had a lot of space in front suggesting that he was not as approachable as she had remembered. Nancy became very defensive with my suggestion that her role model created a division between himself and the students. Due to Nancy's defensiveness, I refrained from asking if she demonstrated a pleasant disposition in hopes that her students would also be a lot easier on her. The discussion took place inside my classroom during a lunch period. There were constant interrupts from students yelling in the halls.

2nd Activity and follow-up discussion:

Nancy had arranged to meet me during a lunch period. While getting my lunch, I encountered her completing the activity, surrounded by other teachers, in the staff room. She was writing her reflections on the back of a memo that had been sent out that morning to all the teachers. It seemed to me that the activities and any accompanying reflection for this study was not of interest for this participant.

When we sat down inside my classroom, she announced that she had completed two activities, Activity A and Activity B (Figure 8) and that we could discuss them both at the same time. Again, the notion that this study had become a chore was strengthened by her desire to combine two activities together. The inspiration to complete Activity A came from an experience that had happened in her classroom. She was handing back graded tests and she recalled that one of her high school teachers had commented on the results of a test that she had completed. He stated that she could have done better which caused her to work harder to get about 80%. In her own class, her perception is that, "if

they want to get that higher grade; they must be responsible for their own thing." Nancy discovered that at times in her own classroom, she tells the students the same phrase that this teacher had told her. She believes that it is a means to let the students know that they can achieve higher grades. Nancy did not reflect upon why grades are used as the prime measure for achievement in a school environment or what a numerical grade represents. Nancy associated good teaching with the classes' grade point average. She creates complex tests in order to challenge her students. She was proud that her students were successful on the tests and that some complained that the final exam was too easy. For her, this demonstrated that she was a good and successful teacher. The goal of her teaching is for students to acquire a solid base of the curriculum in order to move onto the next secondary level.

Nancy had completed Activity B; however, I chose to exclude it. She had written in the third person five sentences concerning a memory of being lost in a playground. The writing was completely descriptive. When Nancy began to recount the memory, she simply regurgitated the sentences that she had written. She did not try to think of any underlying issues that were represented in this memory of being lost. The discussion for the activity only lasted three minutes and then the bell rang signaling that we both had to go teach a class. Her Activity B was not representative of the reflective process as there was no reflection.

3rd Activity and follow-up discussion:

Nancy and I had met in my classroom for the final discussion. We were distracted by the noise of the students in the hall. She believed that she had not gained any new insights from reviewing the transcripts, only that it "reaffirmed her memories" (it is

unclear what she meant by this). Similar to the other participants, she discovered that she did not speak in complete sentences. When asked why she selected the particular memories, she claimed that they were the ones that influenced her to become a teacher or how to be a teacher. She believed that her present day teaching is not affected by these memories although she believed that she has transformed the pedagogy from her former teachers into her own. She enjoyed completing the activities as it helped her to think of memories that she had not thought of for awhile. Nancy did not find the taped-discussions rushed. She enjoyed that I was the researcher as she could say anything to me, as she would never tell her colleagues her hopes or problems. And she expressed concern that her memories were adequate for the research that I was conducting.

Figure 7. Nancy's Activity C

Mr. Smith was a great teacher. He was the type of teacher who wanted to get involved in his students' lives. I remember one day a student had committed suicide and he cried and comforted everyone. He always told us not to become teachers because they got paid the same amount as bus drivers. He taught us so much more than the curriculum demanded. He talked about life a lot. He wasn't my favorite teacher at high school; but he definitely is in the top three. He died of a heart attack a few years after I graduated. Sometimes I find myself thinking of him and wondering if he thought [that] his life was fulfilling.

MR. Smith
English Teacher

Figure 8. Nancy's Activity A

A memory of school that I cannot forget is my math teacher telling me that I can do better when I got an 80% on an exam. That made me feel very good. This teacher was very patient and sometimes sarcastic. His sarcasm would control the classroom.

CHAPTER 5

Emerging Themes and Connections

After collecting the data and reviewing it for elements concerned with identity amongst the three participants, four themes emerged. The dominant themes included teacher as nurturer, teaching as a performance, the physical appearance of a teacher, and how teacher identity was or was not connected with the teacher's subject matter.

A.   Issues of Identity

As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers' identity is shaped by both positive and negative experiences (Bitzman, 1988). The participants in this study were encouraged to recount memories that included both positive and negative experiences such as in Activity C. All three participants viewed their teacher identity as one that must include a sense of approachability, caring, and compassion (Bitzman, 1988). Nancy and Natalie described memories of teachers whom were both nurturing and encouraging. Both participants declared that they model these traits in their own teaching personas. Erin recounted a memory of Mr. Hugh, a domineering and distant teacher, who became a model of what Erin wished not to become (Bitzman, 1988). The positive traits previously described by the participants are precisely the cultural myths that create a distorted set of unattainable ideals of a 'good' teacher (Bitzman, 1986). Both Bernard and Huckins (1974) and Bitzman (1986) suggested that if a teacher does not satisfy these expectations, feelings of guilt would grow within the teacher. As noticed with Erin, she continuously expressed guilt for not having a positive connection with her students. She associated this desire with her own memories of the strong community within her high school and the

tragic deaths of her peers. Nancy and Natalie expressed a longing to be admired by their students and to be their role models. Natalie displayed excitement when a student had written a flattering essay about her. Nancy explained her enjoyment of her role as an impromptu college mentor for her students. Both participants expressed a need to speak to the students outside the realms of the curriculum.

While the participants stressed their needs to be liked and accepted by their students, none of the participants questioned why they needed this acceptance. Nor did they question why they found it necessary to demonstrate a nurturing attitude towards their students (Bitzman, 1986, Hansen, 1995, and, Bernard and Huckins, 1974). As novice teachers, the participants viewed establishing relationships with the students a priority whereas expert teachers would be more confident in their teacher identities (Burko and Putman, 1996). It was interesting that each of the participants believed that if they showed compassion towards their students, that the students would reciprocate it. This suggests, as Nancy had demonstrated in her memory of Mr. Smith that practicing a caring nature is a method to persuade the students not to misbehave.

In view of the role of the teacher as a hard worker, all three participants stressed that they worked hard or even should work harder for the benefit of their students (Bernard and Huckins, 1974, Bitzman, 1986, and Hansen, 1995). This idea of sacrificing one's self was most strongly witnessed in Natalie. Natalie expressed that she would sacrifice her own personal time in order for her students to receive their test marks the next day. She justified this desire with her memories of Mrs. Taylor who was known for her dedication. Because of Natalie's dedication, she feels lonely due to limited time for

socializing or for pursuing other interests outside of the school environment. Natalie's idea of dedication coincides with Hansen's (1995) notion that a teacher should sacrifice her own desires for her students, however, to what extent should a person sacrifice her own needs? Teachers need to establish limits to their dedication to their profession in order for it not to become all encompassing of their lives.

Interestingly, the participants assumed that a hard working attitude resulted in high student test results. As proposed by Barrow and Milbrun (1990), poor test scores are not linked with poor teaching abilities. Erin concluded that if her students achieved poor test results, the responsibility was hers for not being a better teacher. Nancy had recounted a memory of the dissatisfaction expressed by her former teachers for receiving a poor mark on a test. In her present classroom, Nancy employs this tactic with her own students to encourage them to study harder. It is not surprising that Nancy associated good teaching with her classes' grade point average. Due to the pressures to maintain high class averages, it would not be surprising if Nancy or Erin experienced burnout from trying to live up to the societal expectations (Feiman-Nemers, and Floden, 1986).

The participants' belief that a teacher needs to be a hard worker arrived from comparing memories with present teaching placements. Erin compared her present colleagues with her colleagues from a past teaching post in which she viewed the teachers to be more dedicated. All the teachers worked hard and it was a time in her teaching career that she enjoyed most. This only emphasized for her that a teacher must be dedicated to her profession (Hansen, 1990). Natalie created comparisons between the student teachers and her memories of student teaching. She viewed the present-day

student teachers at the high school as displaying unrealistic expectations of the teaching profession and that they should be more prepared for the hard work of teaching. She recalled her own student teaching days as difficult and challenging, It was interesting that none of the participants reflected upon what would be the consequences if they chose not to work hard or if their students performed poorly on a test. Perhaps the teachers are fearful of experiencing disappointment and shame from the greater school community as suggested by Burko and Putman (1996) or believe that it is simply their duty as a teacher to work hard and that failure is not part of the equation (Hansen, 1995).

B.   Teaching as Performance

Each of the participants associated their identity with performance and how it has affected their teaching practice. For instance, Erin compared her memories of skating competitions with her classroom experiences. She viewed her students as the critical judges watching her while she teaches them. As mentioned previously, she believed that if her students did poorly on a test it reflected her teaching abilities. She changes her performance in order to create an interest in the subject matter that she teaches. She did not suggest that the students or the greater school community should change; however, that the responsibility of what occurred in the classroom was hers alone.

Both Natalie and Erin viewed performance as a method to produce a classroom experience that was more interesting and exciting. Natalie recounted a memory of a teacher who designed activities such as games to stimulate the students. Natalie also incorporates games into her teaching as she suggested that her students, along with

herself, could easily become bored with the subjects that she teaches. She had suggested that the students prefer student teachers over their boring old teacher as student teachers are more exciting and provide more entertaining teaching activities. During the third discussion with Natalie, she even suggested that if an article of clothing caused an interest in her students, it was justifiable to make use of it as it added to her performance. She did not question the practice of games or clothing as gimmicks to interest the students. Nancy claimed that her physical stance in the classroom aided her performance. By sitting on the desk, she demonstrates to her students a level of ease and control. In addition, Nancy suggested that by applying a smile while she taught, a similar tactic of her former teachers, displayed her enjoyment for teaching.

All three participants gave suggestions that teaching is a performance. They gave various methods that they apply to enhance their performance in the classroom. None of the participants questioned why they relied upon games or clothing. Issues of performance were intertwined with feelings of discomfort due to judgement, boredom, and the need to control.

C.   Physical Appearance

When the participants reflected upon memories of teachers physical appearance, it was recalled through body type and clothing. In terms of body type, Erin recounted a teacher, Mr. Hugh who used his large body frame as a means to intimidate and control his students. She made references to her small body and how she is not intimidating. Similar to the ideas proposed by Mitchell and Weber (1995), Erin believed that there is a silent rule behind clothing that suggests respect and power. Erin asserted that teachers who

wear suits are either highly professional or trying to hide in them to create a false authority. Early in her teaching career, Erin purchased suits to fit into the school's culture and to appear professional; however, now being more comfortable with herself, she wears more casual clothing. Her preference for casual attire suggests another type of teacher: one who is approachable. Natalie recalled Mrs. Taylor who was considered frumpy; however, she believed that the students were too judgmental of this teacher's appearance. Yet, during her discussion concerning clothing, Natalie maintained that there is appropriate teacher clothing. She asserted that teachers should dress professionally and not provocatively, as they are role models for the students (Mitchell and Weber, 1996). Nancy maintained that her choice of casual clothing makes her more approachable to the students. As previously mentioned, she wears a smile to show her friendly personality. She applies clothing and her facial expression, as what Mitchell and Weber (1996) suggest is a pedagogical strategy.

D.   Identity and Subject Matter

As reviewed in Chapter 2, teaching is grounded in the methods of instruction and in the ability to promote order and learning. A teacher is required to be knowledgeable in a particular subject and the level of the expertise of the subject reflects how it is taught (Borko and Putman, 1996). Therefore, it could be assumed that the participants would all assert the importance of their areas of expertise as it is presumed to be at the essence of teaching. However, it appeared that for these three participants, the subject matter or curriculum was secondary to the need of helping their students to embrace proper morals

and values. This is the hidden curriculum that Barrow and Milbrun (1990) identify in which the teacher teaches morals and values that reflect her own belief system. For instance, regarding Nancy's memories of Mr. Smith, she could not recall what was taught; however, believed that his social and approachable nature were more valuable than the curriculum. Taking from this memory, she discusses life issues in her classes when she is able. Due to forming comparisons with her memories and with her students, Erin concluded that high school is a "brutal time" for adolescents. She chooses to be sympathetic and believes that there are more significant obstacles in her students' lives than the subject matter that she teaches. Natalie claimed that if her students did not recall the subject matter that she taught yet were better people from being in her class, it was more rewarding for her. Each of the participants strove to model behaviors such as kindness and understanding that they perhaps wished their students would embrace.

According to Ball and Goodson (1985), teacher identity is intertwined with the subject matter that teachers teach. The subject becomes an identifying label that the teacher wears (Barrow and Milburn, 1990). The three participants did not perceive their identities to be attachment to their subject matters that they taught. Yet, when the participants discussed their memories, the topic of subject matter was intertwined with the teachers that they spoke about. Natalie labeled Ms Taylor as her economics teacher even though Ms. Taylor has moved on to becoming a principal at a high school. Nancy labeled Mr. Smith with the subject matter that he taught. As suggested by Barrow and Milbrun (1990), teachers who have a negative experience with a subject matter tend to create a certain identity with that subject matter. This can be witnessed with Erin who characterized her physics teacher as the football coach who disliked teaching physics.

She associated her displeasure of teaching vectors with him. The participants naturally recalled the subject that their teachers taught and created associations with it without me asking or making suggestions. This suggests that teachers are labeled with their various subject matters that they teach (Ball and Goodson, 1985).

The examination of teacher identity uncovered four elements that affected the identity of the participants in this thesis study. The first element was teacher as nurturer. The participants displayed a need to be accepted by their students and a need to demonstrate dedication to their profession. As a consequence, the participants experienced guilt and stress. Teaching as a performance was observed in how the participants altered their teaching styles to include games in order for the students to be interested in the subject matter. Another element of teacher identity was the importance of physical appearance. Clothing played a significant role in how the participants wanted to be perceived by their students and peers. All the participants selected clothing that expressed their approachable personalities. The final theme was the association of teaching subject with identity. None of the participants viewed their teacher identity intertwined with the subject matter that they taught. Providing a moral education was more important.

CHAPTER 6

Reflections on Methodology

Four significant factors in this thesis study affected the data collection. These
factors included 1) teacher as researcher; 2) researcher relationship with the participants;
3) the particular activities that the participants chose; and 4) the tools of drawing and
writing taken from Mitchell and Weber's research methodology.

A.   Teacher As Researcher

In this study, the purpose of the participants investigating their own memories
was to avoid the process of being 'studied down' by outside researchers (Eisner, 1993,
1997, Goodson, 1993, and Kincheloe, 2003). I assumed that the participants would view
themselves as researchers since they were investigating their own memories. Instead, the
participants took the role of passive researchers and did not recognize themselves as
'researchers' (Kincheloe, 2003). Even though the participants chose three of the four
activities, selected their own memories to investigate, and were encouraged to take
charge of the discussion sessions; it was not enough. I believe that the participants did not
view themselves as researchers because they did not choose to engage in critical
reflection with their own personal agendas. The topic of teacher identity and memories
were not of real concern to the participants since all the discussions tended to drift to
present classroom frustrations. This image of the participants as passive researchers was
witnessed when all three participants expressed an indifference and guilt throughout the

data collection for not completing the activities on time for me, *the researcher*. Furthermore, Erin articulated feelings of guilt during the second discussion for her talkative nature because I would be typing transcripts from all the follow-up discussions. Natalie expressed apprehension concerning the "appropriateness" of her memories as interpreted in "I hope that this is Ok, Julie" from her Activity D. This suggested that she had completed the activity for me and not for herself. Even during the final discussion sessions with each of the participants, it was *I* who suggested connections, themes, and requested further reflection about statements they had voiced. When the participants were given their transcripts, they corrected the grammatical errors. The participants' greatest realization from the research process was that they did not speak in complete sentences. Thus, discovering the need to improve upon a technical skill proved more necessary than understanding social, political or economical issues linked with their teaching identities. The extent of self-awareness due to critical reflection upon memories was not as illuminating or transforming as suggested by Mitchell and Weber (1996). I noticed the only instance of a participant considering herself a researcher was when Erin suggested that she was "self-psychoanalyzing" to explore why she chose a particular photograph for Activity D. Outside of this minor example, the participants clearly viewed themselves only as participants.

Through the process of critical reflection, the participants did not all succeed in recognizing issues associated with their memories. As suggested by several theorists, a teacher must not simply describe her practice. The teacher-researcher must interpret her practice beyond superficial judgements otherwise she will only examine the technical components of her practice (Wildman and Niles, 1987, Martinez, 1990, Hobson, 2001,

Van Manen, 2001 and Smyth, 1992). As observed with Nancy's reflections, she merely described the technical and personal attributes that she had appropriated form her former teachers. Similarly, Natalie described traits and technical skills that she had observed from her former teacher, Mrs. Taylor. When Erin engaged in critical reflection, she expressed frustrations and created some connections; however, she repeatedly viewed herself as the source of the problems. There were instances when the participants could have critically reflected upon their memories but refrained from doing so.. It seemed that the participants were not prepared to "face the exorcism of personal demons (Brookfield, 1995 p.228)." Even though Brookfield (1995) claims that all types of reflection are valid, what good is reflection if the participant refuses to critically reflect or only reflects upon classroom practices (Wildman and Niles (1987)? Ideally, I would have liked to have seen the participants come to some meaningful conclusions after engaging in critical reflection. But lacking even this, I believe that if the participants do not achieve some sense of critical understanding, those who read their stories here will. It is easier to examine memories and discover themes when they are not your own.

Another result that I would have liked seen is that, through the process of critical reflection, participants will discover how to avoid self-blame for problems that are not their own (Brookfield, 1995). I actually observed in this study that the participants continuously blamed themselves for things beyond this control. Both Erin and Nancy expressed guilt and stress if their students did poorly on tests and Natalie expressed guilt if she did not correct her students' tests promptly. The participants did not question their feelings of stress or guilt or consider other sources of the problem. Natalie discussed her disappointment with her limited personal time to pursue extra-curricular activities;

however, she did not establish the origin of the problem. Erin continuously made connections between her memories and problems that she was facing within her classroom. Instead of suggesting that her classroom problems originated from the greater school community, she held that they were her problems to solve (Smyth, 2003 and Martinez, 1990). The process of critical reflection did not help the participants to understand how to examine memories and how to shift the blame away from themselves when it was warranted.

B.   Researcher Relationship with the Participants

In the pilot study of drawing and teacher identity, my interaction with the participants was limited. They simply handed me the completed activities. Comparing it with this study, the interaction was more extensive as the teachers were verbally sharing their memories along with the completed activities. However, this more personal approach to the data collection created frustrations for myself. The most notable instance was the anxiety of offending both Nancy and Natalie during discussion periods and writing unflattering views of them in my analysis of the data; for example my observations that the participants were reluctant or that the critical reflections were superficial are not favorable. This caused me to question my own objectivity and whether to self-censor my interpretations of the data.

Having a shared history with the participants at the high school created an understanding between the participants and myself involved in the study. All three participants stated that they would have been skeptical of the intentions of an outside

researcher. For Erin, an "outsider" would not have understood the realities of working in a school. This was noticed on several occasions when Erin and Natalie referred to inner school politics and I was able to understand them. I could relate to Erin's desire for a tight-knit school community. I sympathized with Natalie's frustrations concerning teaching and Nancy's fears of teaching as a career. An outside researcher might not have had these emotional connections with the participants if the researcher were not a colleague or even a teacher. My empathy even extended to the data collection. When the participants were unable to meet for a discussion session due to stresses over grading student papers, I was relieved as I was experiencing the same stress. If they had a question concerning an activity that could not wait for the next discussion session, I would discover a note in my teacher's mailbox or the participants would stop me at the photocopier machine to discuss the activities. Several times the participants would step into my classroom while I was teaching to arrange a time for a discussion session. Because the participants knew who I was as a teacher, they were not intimidated by my presence in my role as a researcher.

As the study progressed, my role as researcher became quite hazy for me, especially when I was simply a vehicle for listening to their problems. I felt that I was engaging in a type of Rogerian counseling as I, 'the researcher', listened, reflected, and encouraged the participants to reflect upon their actions. At the same time I tried not to pass judgement (Measor and Sikes, 1992). During the discussion sessions I strove to avoid coaxing stories from the participants (Measor and Sikes, 1992). Erin spoke freely of her memories while both Natalie and Nancy waited for me to initiate the discussion with questions. At times, the participants discussed their present day frustrations instead

of focusing upon the memory activities. As a result, a large portion of the data collected was discarded, as it did not refer to the research topics of memories and teacher identity. A major question that emerged for me from this research is, Should a researcher be dabbling in what Measor and Sikes (1992) describe as "practicing therapy without a license" in hopes of uncovering some noteworthy data (1992, p.93)?

There were several moments of frustration that I experienced concerning my participants and the environment in which I conducted the research. It was disappointing that the participants completed the activities in the staff-room or while supervising their students during a test. For myself, it implied an indifference to the research and that it had become a chore for them. It was difficult to address my frustrations with the participants, as I knew that they were taking part in this study on top of their teaching workloads. In addition, I did not want any conflicts to develop during the data collection that could spill over into my professional relationship with the participants. Another frustration was conducting the discussion sessions within the school day. Trying to coordinate schedules for the discussion periods was tiresome as we all had different timetables. The choice to conduct two of the discussions with Natalie in the cafeteria while the janitor swept the floor was due to the unavailability of an empty classroom. I believe that by conducting the discussion sessions in the participants' teaching environment inhibited their abilities to be honest, candid, and critical with their memories. One instance stands out in my memory as an example: Natalie and I were discussing feelings of nostalgia attached to a memory of a theatrical performance. Ironically, our discussion took place as we sat on the school's stage. As Nancy discussed her relationship with her students, we could hear them running in the hallways.

C.   Reflections on the Activities

When selecting from Mitchell and Weber's (1999) bank of image-based and text-based research activities, my goal was to include a variety that used different types of media. Drawing had been problematic in the first study. To accommodate the expected different personalities and preferences, the participants were asked to complete any of the suggested four activities. All three participants completed Activities A, C, and D. Concerning Activity A, the drawings from the participants were limited in details as noticed with Erin's drawing of the funeral and with Natalie's drawing of a theatrical performance. Nancy created a drawing and included a short descriptive text, which did not contain writings about the "smells or sounds" as indicated in the instructions. With regards to Activity B, Natalie and Nancy did not complete it. Writing in the third person is more difficult than suggested by Mitchell and Weber (1999). Only Nancy had completed Activity B; however, as previously stated, this activity was discarded as the discussion session was cut short and thereby did not represent the process of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995, Hobson, 2001, Van Manen, 2001). All the participants completed activity C. Instead of drawing, Natalie and Erin both chose to write texts about their former teachers. Nancy included a descriptive text with her drawing. Only Natalie and Erin completed Activity D, revisiting a photograph. The accompanying written texts were descriptive and followed the activity's outline.

As anticipated, the activities were used as a springboard for the discussion sessions. The discussion sessions evolved into what Mitchell and Weber (1999) claim to be a 'second draft.' Erin's realization that she avoids a certain type of behavior due to a

negative memory came through in the discussion and not simply by doing the activity. Similarly with Natalie, her drawing of a theatrical performance did not reveal her feelings of nostalgia; however, these evolved from the discussion session. Both Natalie and Erin looked forward to the discussion sessions. The sessions enabled them to confirm their memories in greater detail or depth that they were unable to through their writings and drawings. They also took advantage of the confidential discussion sessions to voice opportunity to discuss their present day frustrations with teaching. Could the participants have engaged in critical reflection without doing the drawing or writing activities? Were the discussion sessions actually more valuable to the overall research process? I believe that the activities allowed for the participants to begin thinking about their memories. However, due to the design of this thesis study, the importance of the discussion sessions became more meaningful than completing the activities.

Perhaps the disappointing level of critical reflection obtained from the activities is due to shortening the activities and the instructions. The activities had been shortened to avoid overwhelming the participants with lengthy procedures. By shortening the activities, I had not included instructions to write a second draft which,according to Mitchell and Weber (1999), is when participants become involved in critical reflection. Since my instructions were vague, it is perhaps not surprising that the participants, who had minimal background in critical reflection, produced journal style writings that examined the emotional and the technical (Wildman and Niles, 1987, Martinez, 1990, Smyth, 1992, Hobson, 2001, and Van Manen, 2001). Another indication of being 'stuck' at the technical level of reflection is reflected in how the participants reviewed the transcripts of the discussion sessions. When the participants were given the opportunity

to review the transcripts of their own discussion sessions to examine for significant themes; all three participants fixed the grammatical errors in the transcripts and commented on how they did not speak in full-sentences. It was easier to fix grammatical errors than to search for themes (Brookfield, 1995).

D.   Reflections on Mitchell and Weber's Research Methodology

As discussed in Chapter 2, Mitchell and Weber are qualitative researchers who apply various visual arts media as part of their research process. Their goal in using alternative research methods is to investigate the lives of teachers. By applying Mitchell and Weber's (1996) image-based and text-based activities, I expected to gain an insight into teacher identity and into alternative educational research methods that focus upon qualitative methodologies. Their alternative research methods are precisely what Eisner (1993) established as being necessary to avoid neutralizing the uniqueness of the individual. Furthermore data that is derived from a variety of sources would create a greater discourse and expand the field of educational research (Eisner, 1993). Concerning the three participants involved in this study, the research process allowed for their voices to be heard even though the research tools of writing and drawing were problematic.

Mitchell and Weber (1995, 1996, 1999) claim that the process of writing is a liberating force for participants as they can examine the written texts for deeper meanings. The process of writing did not reveal deeper meanings because Natalie, Erin, and Nancy all wrote descriptive journal entries. The writings illustrated the memory instead of critically investigating it. Natalie's memory of Mrs. Taylor included specific

personality traits such as how she interacted with students and teaching 'recipes' that she admired. As implied by Wildman and Niles (1987), this type of descriptive writing is not effective or useful as it only examines the technical aspect of teaching. According to Smyth (1992) and Martinez (1990), descriptive journals only lead teachers to experiencing feelings of guilt for problems that are not their own, as I observed with Erin. The instructions for the writing activities, A and B, implied reflecting on emotions and technical skills. Since the writing activities lacked prompts for the participants to critically reflect upon social or political issues, it is no wonder that the writings remained at a descriptive level. It was interesting that the participants did not readily apply the prompts from the writing activities; instead they used the questions for the discussions as the guidelines for their writings. In retrospect, I think that the prompts for the activities were too vague. Therefore it is doubtful that given the opportunity to write a second draft of their initial writing activities, whether or not the participants would have reached a deeper level of critical reflection.

The tool of drawing was not as accommodating, enjoyable, or as revealing as proposed by Mitchell and Weber (1995, 1996,1999). [12] Erin established that she could not express herself through drawing, and apologized and laughed at her attempt at drawing stick people. Similarly, Natalie expressed embarrassment when she had to declare that she could not draw. Only Nancy was comfortable with drawing. However, Nancy also included a descriptive text along with the drawing. This suggests that the drawing itself was unable to express what words could express. The extent of the aversion to drawing was evident when both Natalie and Erin chose to modify a drawing activity to include

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[12] I believe that my position as the art teacher at the high school may have hindered the participants comfort level with drawing.

writing. If adults in Western society have limited visual vocabulary or drawing skills as stated by Mitchell and Weber (1995), why would drawing be an appropriate research method? The participants need to be comfortable with drawing in order for drawing to be an effective research tool. Interestingly, Mitchell and Weber (1995, 1996, 1999) did not provide accounts of a participant's reluctance to use of drawing as a reflective tool.

On account of the simplicity of the participants' drawings, it was difficult to observe unconscious images, symbols, or hidden meanings (Mitchell and Weber, 1995). Because the drawings were limited to one image, it is exhausting to continuously explore this one image for some hidden meaning. In addition, the participants had difficulty examining their own drawings. They did not readily question why a smile was drawn on a face or why a particular teacher was situated behind a desk. The participants did not possess the knowledge of how to examine their drawings. The knowledge required for examining drawings includes art specific vocabulary terms such as composition, scale, proportion, variation of lines, etc. Again, if most adults in Western society have a limited background in the visual arts, it is not surprising that the participants had difficulty examining their drawings on their own. Probably this is the reason why during the discussion sessions the participants waited for *me* to analyze their drawings. I noticed that once the participants had described their memory associated with the drawing, the discussions would come to an abrupt end. There was always a waiting period for me to discover something from what they had created. However, on one occasion, a participant questioned my interpretation. This leads me to wonder, to what extent should the researcher be interpreting the participants' drawings or providing suggestions? If I

continuously gave my own interpretations, it would influence the participants' critical reflections and it would make them dependent upon me to provide suggestions.

The purpose of using a photograph as a research tool was to explore how the participant had changed or remained the same since the date of the photograph, thereby prompting a greater understanding of herself (Mitchell and Weber, 1999; Chase and Shaw 1989). Erin wrote about her feelings of frustration with balancing skating and academics. Her photograph was symbolic of a career decision, a physical transformation, and magnified her insecurities with her present-day students. Natalie's photograph demonstrated a moment of rapid change from university student to teacher, her desires, and loneliness. She wrote about her feelings of happiness, sadness, anxiety, and of her feelings of nostalgia. Both participants created comparisons with the photograph and with their present identities. According to Cronin (1988), photographs can trigger both positive and negative emotions. Therefore, it is understandable that the participants primarily spoke of the emotional quality of their memories. Again, the participants' written data revealed descriptive accounts. It is not surprising that the participants did not delve into deeper reflections, as the Activity D did not require it of them. How valuable are the emotional reactions of the participants in a research study? Since the participants described the emotional content of their memories, they were able to understand how they had changed from the moment when the photograph had been taken. In addition, as an observer, I was able to understand and be sympathetic to their difficulties because of the emotional content of the memories. If I were to do this again, I would not eliminate the emotional quality of the responses; however, I would have somehow encouraged the participants to take these responses and examine them for additional content.

E.   Modifications

Various factors affected the findings of this study with regards to the potential of using both text-based and image-based activities as a process for teachers to reflect upon their memories of being students in school and how they may have utilized these memories to construct their teacher identities. I would make modifications to 1) the research design, 2) the study site, and 3) to the activities. Concerning the research design, the timeline for collecting the data during one and a half months should have been enforced, instead of taking four months. This would have strengthened continuity between the discussions sessions. Furthermore, it would have avoided the opinion that the activities had become a burden. (The participants never vocally stated that the activities were a burden; however, I concluded this from evidence such as completing the activities while supervising tests). Concerning the study site, the discussion sessions should have taken place outside of the high school in order to allow the participants to freely discuss their memories without interruptions from students or fear of being overheard. A set time for the discussion session would have avoided the frustrations of trying to secure a time during the school day. Researching my own colleagues was problematic at times; however, it created interesting results. If I were to ask my colleagues again to participate in a research study, I would clearly defined their role in the research process as a teacher-research. Finally, the main weakness of the study was due to shortening the selected activities from their original format (Mitchell and Weber, 1999). If the activities had included more specific instructions pertaining to critical reflection, the data would have revealed more about the lives of the teachers involved in the study. Furthermore, I would have supplied the participants with literature to inform them of the critical reflection

process, to avoid the descriptive form of writing. Familiarity with the vocabulary may have encouraged the participants to be more daring or open with their reflections. To expect teachers to examine themselves, their practices, and the educational system through critical reflection without any conceptual background is too difficult a task for beginning teacher-researchers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A. Conclusions

This study's purpose was to examine alternative research methods and how these search methods could be utilized by teachers in order for them to gain an understanding of their teacher identity (Goodson, 1993, Fieman-Nemers and Floden, 1986). Two research questions were applied to guide this study 1) how does a teacher's own schooling experiences shape her identity as a teacher? and 2) how useful will the teacher participants find the various memory activities proposed by Mitchell and Weber?

The findings for this study show that a teacher's identity is shaped by her own schooling experiences. The three participants discussed how they have created their teacher identities in relation to remembered characteristics, both positive and negative, of former teachers. Teacher identity was also concerned with developing a connection with students, and in being 'hard working.' Factors such as style of clothing and subject matter were also present but not as significant. Even though the participants reflected upon their teacher identity, there was little understanding of the social factors that had shaped it. The participants focused upon personality traits and teaching methods of their former teachers. Since the participants did not realize the social factors that have shaped their identities (Bitzman,1986), I would expect them to continue comparing themselves to idealized images of what a teacher should be (Hansen, 1995).

My adaptations of Mitchell and Weber's (1999) text-based and image-based activities were not as successful as anticipated. The writing activities only produced

descriptive accounts of the memories and the drawing activities proved daunting for two of the participants. Due to the descriptive written accounts from the participants, only the technical aspect of teaching was highlighted. If the activities had not been shortened and if the participants had more knowledge of critical reflection, the data collected probably would have displayed different results. The efficacy of drawing as a research tool was highly dependent upon the participants' comfort level with drawing and with discussing art. In this thesis study, drawing was not an effective tool for understanding teacher identity.

The depth of critical reflection on identity through memories was dependent upon the willingness and knowledge of the participants. The participants engaged in the critical reflection activities; however, they did not confront issues or even suggest issues when given the opportunity. Without any prior knowledge or training, the participants created descriptive accounts that focused upon the technical aspects of teaching. If critical reflection is only used to uncover the technical aspect of teaching, teachers will believe that the source to their classroom problems lies within their incompetence. It will not expose problems that are within the social, economical, or political dynamics of the school system (Wildman and Niles, 1987, Martinez, 1990, Smyth, 1992, and Kincheloe, 2003). These dynamics could be the parental involvement in the school that causes these teachers to work so hard to avoid confrontation with parents. In general, my data lead me to conclude that critical reflection on teacher identity was not a concern for the participants unlike discussing present-day frustrations with teaching.

Even though memory work is viewed as controversial in educational research (Butt, Mccue and Yamagishi's, 1992), in this study, it enabled the participants to understand some of the sources of their teacher identities. By reviewing their school memories, the participants were able to gain some new insights into their past histories. The controversy of memory work is associated with participants editing their memories; however, I believe it is beneficial to understand why this editing process exists and occurs.

The application of the text-based and image-based activities as a method for data collection in the educational field provided an insight into the lives of the teachers in this study. Those who will read this thesis study will gain a greater understanding of the lives of three teachers and of how teachers may-or–may-not adopt critical reflect. For myself, I gained insights into my own teacher identity by researching these participants. I reflected upon influential teachers and teaching as a career. By acting as a teacher-researcher, it opened my eyes to problems that were associated with the greater school community. I realized that teachers might work within a bustling school; yet still find that work to be an isolating experience. It was apparent that we all struggle with similar issues; yet refrain from speaking openly about them, perhaps due to appearing weak in comparison with our idealized notions of a 'good' teacher. The realities of teaching can seem too overwhelming for one teacher to challenge alone. However, if teachers do join together, within their own school, they can create change whether it be small such as creating a stronger teacher community. I believe that there needs to be different types of research in schools that will allow teachers to create a discourse. Without this discourse, teachers will never uncover the true source of the problems that they encounter everyday.

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Appendix A

October 5, 2002

Dear Staff,

As some of you may be aware, I am in the process of completing my graduate studies at Concordia University. I am requesting your help with my thesis study.

My thesis is on teachers and their memories from when they were students and how these memories can be a source for understanding teacher identity. Essentially, you would complete three activities that include either creating a drawing or a text. You would decide how much time you would spend on each activity. After each activity, you would meet with my individually to discuss the activity and your memory. The discussions would be tape-recorded. The collection of data would be during the months of November and January.

If you are interested or have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak with me.

Thank you,

Julie

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Julie Etheridge as part of her Master's thesis under the supervision of Professor Cathy Mullen, Department of Art Education at Concordia University.

A. Purpose:

I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to investigate the lived experiences of teachers through drawing and writing.

B. Procedure:

I will complete three of the four activities for three consecutive weeks. After each completed activity, I will engage in a tape-recorded discussion with Ms. Etheridge (a total of three). Once the transcripts of the discussions have been transcribed, I will review them with Ms. Etheridge.

C. Conditions of Participation:

- I understand that I can withdraw from participating at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that the participation in this study is confidential- the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity.
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I understand the purpose of this study and know that there is no hidden motive of which I have not been informed.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH.

NAME (please print):_____

SIGNATURE_____

WITENSS
SIGNATURE_____

DATE_____

Appendix C

Activities and Questions for the Discussions

Activity	Questions for the Discussion
A) Think about a school memory. What do you see, smell, and hear? What was happening? Create a drawing or write about this memory. Provide as much detail as possible (Mitchell & Weber, 1999).	1- What significance does this memory have for you? 2- How did the incident affect you as a student? 3- How does this memory affect you as a teacher?
B) Visualize yourself inside a classroom. What are you learning about? What does the classroom look like? Are you taking notes or listening to the teacher? Write about this memory of the school subject in the third person. Provide as much detail as possible (Mitchell & Weber, 1999).	1- Explain if taking this school subject was a positive or negative experience. 2- What was particular about the subject i.e. the material covered, the teacher, the class environment, etc.? 3- Describe the method of instruction for that subject and has it influenced your own method?
C) Draw a former teacher (a favorite or least favorite) with as much detail as possible. What is the teacher wearing? Where is the teacher situated (Mitchell & Weber, 1999)?	1- Why did you select this particular teacher? 2- Explain if this teacher was an influence in your life. 3- Comment on the teacher's age, clothes, expression, and physical setting. 4- Are there any symbols in the drawing that can also be applied to yourself?
D) Select a photograph that is related with your academic past and write about it. Provide as much detail as possible to when the photograph was being taken. What are you thinking; what did you see; and why was it taken (Mitchell & Weber, 1999)?	1- Why did you choose this photograph? 2- What memories did it evoke when you revisited? 3- Have your memories changed or remained the same? 4- If someone else saw the photograph, what would they say?