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**MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH STUDENTS
IN AT-RISK SITUATIONS:
REFLECTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

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I declare that this is my original work. It has not been included in another thesis.

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This dissertation is dedicated
with love and gratitude
to my parents,
Guy and the late Classie Saint,
and to my aunt and uncle,
Muriel and Harry McKay.

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ABSTRACT

The students and teachers who provided data for this study were participants in school dropout prevention programs in the province of New Brunswick, Canada. The research was initiated to identify the strategies used by those teachers who are viewed to be effective in their work with students in at-risk situations. The study evolved as an interpretative account of the teachers' reflections.

The multiple roles of the researcher in the pursuit of action research were explored, and the reciprocal interaction of the researcher with the research was recognized. The processes used to formulate and examine themes in the teachers' stories were given detailed explanations. These approaches were compared with the methodologies reported in the literature on qualitative research. In addition to using the techniques of grounded theorizing, biographical readings were undertaken to present a holistic perspective of the stories given by individual teachers. An emphasis on the teachers' stories precluded extensive examination of the students' accounts, but illustrations were provided of the students' statements corroborating the teachers' reflections. As well as references to the substantive literature on students in at-risk situations, the data were considered in respect to psychological, sociological, anthropological and philosophical theories.

The theories that developed from this study were presented in relation to formal theories. The noted implications included actual classroom applications as well as suggestions for teacher preservice and inservice training and proposals for future research.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Research

This study was originally undertaken to identify the strategies used by effective teachers in their work with students in at-risk situations. It evolved into an interpretative account of the teachers' reflections. Applications for student-teacher interactions and for teacher preservice and inservice training were anticipated.

Participants in the Study

The information sources were students and teachers* in Youth Strategy and Stay-in-School programs in the province of New Brunswick, Canada. These programs were funded by federal and provincial government grants that were separate from the regular allocations for public education. The initiatives were designed for students who were considered to be at-risk of dropping out of school before meeting graduation requirements. These students were in grades six to twelve and their ages generally ranged from twelve years to eighteen years. Because some of the students had been retained in a grade for more than one year or had left school and returned, they could be older than the average age for their grade.

Over an eighteen-month period, fifteen groups of students were interviewed. Since each group usually consisted of six to eight students, approximately one hundred in total provided data. Some of these students were in short-term summer programs, and others were participants in programs that ran for the whole school year. All were identified as at-risk youth by school personnel.

*Pseudonyms have been used in this report.

The initial teacher interviews were held during the same period as the student interviews, but later interviews with teachers extended the data gathering to a duration of almost three years. (Data gathering and analysis were conducted conjointly.) The nineteen teachers who were selected for in-depth interviews had been involved with the programs for a minimum of two years and had been identified as effective by their school district supervisors. Most of them taught in alternative settings within the school or in off-site alternative settings. These programs had teacher-student ratios that were usually less than one to ten. The other teachers were called intervention workers. They, like the alternative program teachers, could be based within or outside the regular school. While the intervention workers sometimes provided small group sessions related to life skills, they spent most of their time counselling individual students, working with their families, and acting as student advocates. The teachers in the alternative programs also performed these functions, but their responsibilities included academic instruction. Throughout this dissertation, unless otherwise stated, the term program teacher refers to intervention workers as well as teachers in alternative settings.

This research was pursued while I was employed by the Department of Education as a provincial education consultant with principal responsibilities in the area of school dropout prevention. In an advisory capacity, I worked with school districts in the development, implementation and monitoring of Youth Strategy and Stay-In-School programs. Although I visited programs to meet with staff and students, I did not provide direct supervision. This was done by school principals and school district staff at the local level. I had a more distant function and my program reviews were of a general nature.

Approaches to Data Collection and Analysis

As a practitioner who was conducting research, I discovered that establishing a schedule to interview teachers and students in the same site was often problematic. Their availability seemed to be determined by a program's structure. Although some teachers could see me during the school day, those who were in self-contained classrooms usually were unavailable until their students had left. Furthermore, since students who worked with an alternative program teacher did not necessarily spend the whole day together, they could be in various classes when I arrived. Bringing them together for a group interview could be cumbersome. The research was a part-time undertaking and my responsibilities as a consultant frequently took precedence. After interviewing a group of students or a teacher, I did not have the flexibility to wait at the site for one more interview opportunity. I had to move on to another program or to return to my office. I took whatever opportunities I could for interviewing, but of the fifteen group interviews, only four were with students who described teachers that were also interviewed. Most of the interviews with teachers were conducted during visits to other alternative programs.

While the students related the qualities of teachers whom they liked and disliked, the teachers were able to more vividly describe the ways in which connections were made with students. Therefore, although I obtained student data, my data analyses focused on the teachers' interviews. Instead of comparing the information from teachers with the data from students, I gave the teachers' stories different kinds of readings. First, I analyzed each of their interviews to identify central themes. Then, I looked across the interviews to clarify and refine themes, categories and properties. Next, through holistic, biographical accounts, I explored ways in which individual teachers constructed themselves in relation to

others. Finally, I examined additional interviews with teachers to search for new data and to ascertain the theoretical saturation of categories.

I had initially considered using student data to triangulate the teachers' accounts. Triangulation is a technique that uses data collected in one way "to cross-check the accuracy of data gathered in another way." It involves a "multiplicity of data sources and means to collect and analyze information" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 11). As the research progressed, however, the student data were put aside while I focused on the data from interviews with teachers. I extended my collection of teacher data and varied the approaches to analyzing this data.

Because I did not conduct additional interviews with students to ask specific questions related to the teachers' stories, I did not expect to find extensive support in the student data for the categories and properties arising from the teachers' accounts. I did, nevertheless, uncover statements that corroborated some of the teachers' stories. This is illustrated in the Appendix which presents the students' stories in relation to connecting and understanding, a theme that evolved from an analysis of the teacher data.

I did not pursue triangulating the teacher data with the student data, but the research did involve a process of internal triangulation since my divergent selves, including the counsellor, teacher, and consultant, accompanied the researcher during the data collection and analysis. Furthermore, in an implicit manner, I was triangulating the teacher data with my own formal and informal knowledge of teaching as well as my familiarity with the formal and informal feedback from students.

The research became a methodological exploration of teachers' stories. I wanted to know how teachers who were perceived to be successful accounted for their success. In conjunction with reflections upon my own beliefs and practices, I used the techniques of grounded theorizing and holistic interpretation in order to develop theory and formulate applications.

Chapter II

THE RESEARCHER EMERGES

The Practitioner as Researcher

For more than two years prior to undertaking this research, I had been meeting with teachers and intervention workers to discuss their work with at-risk students. I had also talked with students to hear their perspectives about teachers and programs. During the summer of 1992, I added the researcher role to my full-time position as consultant for the provincial Department of Education.

The consultant's role certainly gave the researcher distinct advantages. There was ready access to informants - teachers and students - because that was part of the consultant's job. There was also a predetermined topic for study since the consultant was already involved in identifying effective strategies for the education of students who were considered to be at-risk. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) noted that "action research is a type of applied research in which the researcher is actively involved in the cause for which the research is conducted" (p. 223).

Having already done fieldwork as a consultant, I knew many of the teachers who qualified as potential interviewees, and I viewed this to be an asset. With rapport apparently established through previous encounters, it seemed easier to conduct interviews for research purposes.

Cassell (1991) claimed that unless anthropologists engage in long-term fieldwork where they return time and again to the same site and become, even marginally, a part of the social and kinship system, they will always put their research first. This research, she pointed out, may cause them to feel as though they are "using,

deceiving, manipulating people." She wrote that no matter how well-intentioned anthropologists are, the relationship with informants "facilitates the exchange of information for whatever it is they get from us; rather than the exchange facilitating the relationship" (p. 272).

By comparison, there was an advantage to my situation since I was already a part of the system within which I was carrying out research. It was the system of at-risk teachers and intervention workers who gathered each year for workshops under my coordination. I had met each of my informants at least once prior to the research interview. Sometimes, this was in a group setting, but most often, it was in a more private, one-to-one meeting. I believed that our relationship facilitated the research interview. There was an exchange between us in the form of a two-way information flow. They provided me with material for my research and I provided them with professional development opportunities and resources. I always let them know the purpose for the interview and I explained that I was in fact playing a dual function. In the dual role of consultant-researcher, and unlike Cassell, I also saw the exchange of information as facilitating the relationship. The teachers seemed pleased to be interviewed, possibly flattered, for having been selected. They were chosen because of the recognized high quality of their work, and I let them know that. In addition, I pointed out that the research interview gave me valuable information for my work as a consultant. If a teacher continued to work in an alternative education program in New Brunswick, it was quite probable that we would have future interactions. Actually, the interview enabled us to get better acquainted.

The form of familiarity that I had with the teachers did not exist with the students. I had not met any of them before the research interviews and they would not have

had the same understanding of my job as the teachers had. Although I held an administrative status, I was not the teachers' supervisor. While the teachers were aware of how my position related to theirs, the students sometimes made statements that indicated they suspected I had powers to hire and fire. Examples of students viewing me as having this kind of influence are provided in the next section - *hearing voices*. When these views were expressed, I attempted to correct the misunderstanding. I began my interviews by letting students know who I was and my purpose for meeting with them. My introductions were similar to the following quotation that was taken from one of the interviews with students.

Part of my work is meeting with students and talking with them about their school experiences and about the programs that they're in right now.

When one student requested that I not "fire" a teacher, I replied that I was not interviewing him "to get information about Miss...." After reviewing the transcript, I realized that I had not been honest with the student; I was very much interested in what he and his classmates had to say about this program teacher, and other teachers, for that matter. It had not been my intention to mislead, although the transcript indicated otherwise. It seemed that in order to get the students' cooperation, I did resort to some deception. Greenman (1991) wrote that "to some degree all relationships involve some manipulation in that they are managed in some way to serve one's purpose however altruistic that purpose may be and however unconscious the negotiation" (p. 257).

I wondered if I could be accused of being an opportunist - an adjective that has been given to other researchers (Cassell, 1991). I took advantage of research opportunities, but I did so with regard to principles. I always got permission from my informants before turning on the tape recorder and I assured them of anonymity. "Opportunism is not a binary phenomenon; it is probably closer to a

continuum" (p. 269). While the students and teachers were essential to my study, I believed that I viewed them to be, in Cassell's terms, an "end-in-themselves" and not just a "means-to-an-end" (p. 269). In my opinion, I did not have a reason to be uncomfortable about my behavior. On the opportunism continuum, I felt that I balanced my concern for people with my need to conduct research. If I did deceive, it was done unconsciously.

The meetings in which the researcher took the lead were always preceded by a telephone call to teachers in order to solicit their involvement or their students' involvement in my research. In these cases, a time was specified and we followed a pre-established schedule that generally allowed for a minimum of one hour per interview. At other times, when I knew that it would not be appropriate or convenient to conduct a research interview, I would arrange for a visit by the consultant.

Could there have been drawbacks to my combining the practitioner's role with the researcher's? Because my paid employment was that of consultant, this role often took precedence over the researcher. As a visiting consultant, I sometimes arrived at a school when my schedule or the students' schedules restricted us from meeting as a group in a private area for sufficient time to do an interview. On those occasions, I observed the students' interactions with each other as well as their interactions with the teacher while they worked on assigned tasks. I also moved among the students and spoke with them individually. From time to time, I would interrupt the lesson and hold a brief group discussion. I asked them questions about their assignments and heard their views about the program. In such instances, I considered a tape recorder to be intrusive. The within-class discussions were impromptu and not so formally set up as the research interviews.

For similar reasons, the meetings with teachers were not always held under circumstances conducive to doing a tape recording which required time and privacy. Teachers did not invariably have the flexibility to leave the classroom at a time that fitted my schedule. I once visited as many as eight schools in a two-day period. In view of the geographical spread of these programs, time was often limited. I could, therefore, have lunch in the school cafeteria with one teacher, meet with another between classes, and end the day with a third who had just come out of a staff meeting and was looking forward to going home.

The researcher, even though present during those types of visits, stayed in the background. In my notes on February 5, 1993, I commented on the importance of good note-taking and observations when getting information in this varied fashion since there could be some useful discoveries for the researcher.

This made me acutely aware of the value of good note-taking and observational skills. By fine-tuning these skills, I may be able to collect usable data even without a tape recorder. The following summaries are based upon notes made when conditions did not facilitate a taping. Although these notes do not capture the language of informants, they contain information which may prove of value for future reference.

When situations did not seem appropriate for a tape-recorded interview, I did not mention my research but took notes as the consultant. This act could be seen as containing a degree of deception although none of the material from these meetings was ever included in the data analysis. A later review of the notes taken when I was primarily in my consultant's role did provide some support for the researcher's findings. An example from these notes follows. It gives a description of a student who would be high on the at-risk spectrum.

One student tried to commit suicide by slitting his wrist in this teacher's class. This student's parents were described as not wanting him. He had done break-in's. Then he got involved with older guys who were smuggling. He was incarcerated in Kingclear, then Madawaska.

The next excerpt was taken from notes based on a meeting with an intervention worker on January 11, 1993. During the meeting, I discovered that this person was spending all of her time supervising the in-school suspension room. This did not leave any time for her to mentor and tutor students outside the suspension room, as was the original intent. When some of the teachers had heard that I would be visiting, they had asked the intervention worker to bring this to my attention. The consultant's voice is quite prominent in this report.

Before leaving the building, I speak with the principal again. I suggest that interventions require on-going assessment, and as a result, are sometimes modified. I plant the idea that the whole staff be consulted for feedback. I'm not convinced that the in-school suspension room will disappear, however. I decide to discuss the issue with the district supervisor.

The consultant had other reasons for keeping the researcher in abeyance. Some of the teachers and intervention workers were new in the alternative programs; we may not have had a previous meeting. Even though I did not supervise their work, I did come from the Department of Education. There was the chance that they could perceive me as someone checking up on them, and therefore, without knowing me, could be somewhat anxious about my presence. Spradley (1979) noted that tape recorders "are not always advisable, especially during the first few interviews when rapport is beginning to develop" (p. 74). I was using a tape recorder for data collection and did not feel that the rapport was present for its use in those cases. Furthermore, the staff often had their own agendas with specific issues that they looked forward to raising during our meetings. When this happened, it was difficult, and often inappropriate, to introduce questions pursuant to my research. To tape all that was said likely would have resulted in the recording of a tremendous amount of irrelevant information.

While I had at least one meeting with each teacher before asking them to assist me with my research, this was not the situation with the students, as mentioned

formerly. Interviews with students were slightly more difficult to arrange since they did not have the flexibility that teachers had to remain behind at the end of the school day. In addition, the students within a program usually changed from one term or one year to the next, and because of the number of programs and the distances between them, I rarely visited a program more frequently than once a year. The teachers, on the other hand, were often involved with alternative programs over a succession of years, and in the meantime, we could have telephone conversations or workshops. I did find, however, that not one student ever objected to being recorded. When doing taped interviews with students, I would be left alone with them for forty-five to sixty minutes. Having that privacy and time made it easier to create a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere. I, as an interviewer, did not feel rushed. Students, as informants, had no reason to fear that a teacher or administrator was listening to the discussion.

The practitioner as researcher needs to consider the issues that revolve around respecting informants and seizing opportunities to collect data. It is necessary to ensure that the research is undertaken with full regard for the people who are interviewed. It is also necessary to take advantage of the practitioner's position as a means to pursue research. At the same time, it is important to distinguish between the two roles of practitioner and researcher and to recognize when it is appropriate for one to take the lead. With these factors in balance, the practitioner can benefit from being a researcher and vice versa. If I had not combined these two roles, many occasions would have been missed to gather information related to the education of at-risk students.

I realized that my role as a consultant could affect my interactions with teachers and students as I conducted research. They could perceive me as someone in a

position of power and capable of influencing events that concerned them. I decided to examine our interactions in order to identify not only the presence of the consultant but also the presence of other selves contained in the person of the researcher.

Hearing Voices

The field worker brings a point of view and implicit questions with him to the field. His perspective and questions may change in the field, but he has an idea base from which to start. (Erickson, 1973, p. 10)

Over the years, I have acquired different roles; more recently, I assumed the role of researcher. Upon taking this newest title, I did not discard my other roles so that I could become a researcher in some purer form. If that were even possible, then I would have been attempting to undertake research in a vacuum. I would not have even known what I wanted to research since all of my prior experiences would have to have been erased from my knowledge base. At the start of this research, I was almost forty years old and had spent most of my working career as a counsellor, teacher, and consultant in the education field. To have attempted research in this field without drawing upon these experiences would not have been natural. I concur with Erickson (1973) that "part of my 'me' is my fundamental assumptions and prejudices. I cannot leave them home when I enter a site" (p. 15).

In searching for his own subjectivity in research, Peshkin (1988) wrote about uncovering his "subjective I's." He looked for himself in the "subjective underbrush of [his] own research experience" (p. 20). Peshkin advocated for the "enhanced awareness that should result from a formal, systematic monitoring of

self" (p. 20), but he recognized that owning up to subjectivity did not release him from being subjective.

By monitoring myself, I can create an illuminating, empowering personal statement that attunes me to where self and subject are intertwined. I do not thereby exorcise my subjectivity. I do...enable myself to manage it - to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome - as I progress through collecting, analyzing and writing up my data. (p. 20)

Peshkin (1988) sought to "tame" his subjectivity. He concluded his paper with the following declaration:

I can consciously attend to the orientations that will shape what I see and what I make of what I see. By this consciousness, I can possibly escape the thwarting biases that subjectivity engenders, while attaining the singular perspective its special persuasions promise. (p. 21)

Ricoeur (1981) discussed the interrelationship of self and text in an essay on the interpretation of text. The objective meaning of text may be something other than the subjective intentions of its author. "The problem of the right understanding can no longer be solved by a simple return to the alleged intention of the author" (p. 211). According to Ricoeur, during the act of reading, a new discourse is connected with the discourse of the text. This discloses the capacity for renewal in the constitution of the text and results in interpretation. Ricoeur saw appropriation as a feature of interpretation.

By 'appropriation,' I understand this: that the interpretation of a text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself. (p. 158)

This culmination of the understanding of text in the understanding of self was viewed by Ricoeur (1981) as characteristic of a kind of reflective philosophy that he called "concrete reflection" (p. 158). In this instance, he described reflective philosophy and hermeneutics as correlative and reciprocal. At the conclusion of his essay, he wrote:

The entire theory of hermeneutics consists in mediating this interpretation-appropriation by the series of interpretants which belong to the work of the text upon itself. Appropriation loses its arbitrariness insofar as it is the recovery of that which is at work, in labour, within the text. What the interpreter says is a re-saying which reactivates what is said by the text. (p. 164)

The processes of interpreting text and understanding self are fused. An interpretation is incorporated into the dynamics of the text and influences the next textual interpretation as well as self-understanding. This renewed interpretation of text and self affects future interpretations. The self is not isolated but seen as integral to an ongoing process of a chain of interpretations. For Ricoeur (1981), action may be regarded as text. He observed, "Our task therefore will be to show to what extent the paradigm of reading, which is the counterpart of the paradigm of writing, provides a solution for the methodological paradox of the human sciences" (p. 209).

In his discussion of hermeneutic phenomenological writing, van Manen (1992) stated that "writing was not just a mere moment in the intellectual life" of the phenomenologist Sartre; "writing was somehow at the center of this life" (p. 126). Van Manen presented a view of writing that appears to parallel Ricoeur's understanding of the interpretation of a text.

What is writing? How is writing research (thinking, reflecting)? Certainly, writing is a producing activity. The writer produces text, and he or she produces more than text. The writer produces himself or herself. As Sartre might say: the writer is the product of his own product. Writing is a kind of self-making or forming. To write is to measure the depth of things, as well to come to a sense of one's own depth. (van Manen, 1992, pp. 126-127)

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) sounded more like Ricoeur than Peshkin when they wrote, "instead of treating reactivity merely as a source of bias, we can exploit it" (p. 15). The researcher was seen as an active participant in the research process. According to these authors, it was important to recognize the "reflexive character of social research: that is: to recognize that we are part of the social world we study" (p. 14). Reflexivity was viewed as having "important methodological implications" (p. 17). They claimed that "it makes implausible attempts to found social research upon epistemological foundations independent of common-sense knowledge" (p. 17). Rather than attempting to eliminate the effects of the researcher, they advocated making efforts to understand them. The researcher was seen as the "research instrument par excellence. The fact that the behaviour and attitudes are often not stable across contexts and that the researcher may play an important part in shaping the context becomes central to the analysis" (p. 18). Furthermore, these researchers stated that the "theories we develop to explain the behaviour of the people we study should also, where relevant, be applied to our own activities as researchers and should aid the development of research strategies" (p. 19). They cautioned social scientists against becoming "straitjacketed by the beliefs that are typical of the social circles in which they move" (p. 21).

Schon (1987) distinguished two ways of reflecting: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. When we reflect on an action, we do so after the fact and without a direct connection to a present action. When reflecting in action, "our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it" (p. 26).

The term knowing-in-action was used by Schon (1987) to refer to the know-how that is tacit and spontaneous. When there is an unexpected outcome that does not fit the categories of our knowing-in-action, we may reflect-in-action to restructure strategies or understandings. This reflection-in-action may be barely distinct from the knowing-in-action. The unexpected may occur in such a way as to seem already interpreted and the "criticism and restructuring of knowing-in-action may be compressed into a single process" (p. 29).

Surprise leads to reflection within an action-present. Reflection is at least in some measure conscious, although it need not occur in the medium of words. We consider both the unexpected event and the knowing-in-action that led up to it, asking ourselves, as it were, "What is this?" and, at the same time, "How have I been thinking about it?" Our thought turns back on the surprising phenomenon and, at the same time, back on itself. (p. 28)

References to the practice of turning thought back on itself can be found in the psychological literature on metacognition; that is, cognition about cognitive processes (Bourne, Dominowski, Loftus, & Healy, 1986). Nevertheless, it may be argued that "it is not possible to experience something *while* reflecting on the experience (even if this experience is itself a reflective acting!)" (van Manen, 1992, p. 182). Schon (1987) noted:

Reflection-in-action is a process we can deliver without being able to say what we are doing....Clearly, it is one thing to be able to reflect-in-action

and quite another to be able to reflect on our reflection-in-action so as to produce a good verbal description of it; and it is still another thing to be able to reflect on the resulting description. (p. 31)

Schon's turning thought back on itself seems to share common ground with Ricoeur's working of the text upon itself. The significance for the researcher would appear to be in the renewed understanding of the self and the research as a result of these processes. While recognizing the value of reflection-in-action, however, it is likely that the researcher would benefit more from Schon's reflection-on-action since this would provide more time for interpretation.

Alderfer (1988) believed that the different selves of the researcher are "repressed and suppressed by the positivist approach to methodology...Although avoided and denied, the various aspects of our selves do not go away; instead they operate indirectly and covertly" (p. 37). He recommended a "theory-based and disciplined approach to self examination. Difficult and emotionally problematic features of methods are brought forward and examined; they are not denied, suppressed, or in other ways covered over" (p. 67). Alderfer suggested that the problems of different self-perspectives be "controlled in" rather than "controlled out" to allow for "conscious dialogue and dialectic" (p. 68). He pointed out that "effective dialogue and dialectic, however, does not assume that one or more contending viewpoints must be eliminated. New syntheses that incorporate valid elements of several apparently conflicting perspectives may emerge" (p. 68).

Advocating for a participatory mode of consciousness, Heshusius (1994) claimed that the call for procedural subjectivity is identical to procedural objectivity. She queried how researchers can identify their subjective parts without identifying

their non-subjective parts; and if there are non-subjective parts, she suggested these may then be objective. Possibly, there are two kinds of subjectivity: the tamed and the untamed. Supposing that is indeed the case, she wondered how we would "know if the unaccounted-for subjectivity is not far more important in determining one's influence on the research process than the accounted for" (p. 16).

While Heshusius (1994) was critical of researchers such as Peshkin (1988) who want to manage their subjectivity, she proposed a solution that goes beyond the liberation of the researchers' different selves. She wrote about a way of knowing that requires the letting go of "perceived boundaries that constitute 'self' - and that construct the perception of distance between self and other" (p. 16). Borrowing from Berman, she used "the word selfother to reflect participatory consciousness ...A participatory mode of consciousness, then, results from the ability to temporarily let go of all preoccupation with self and move into a state of complete attention" (p. 17). Heshusius claimed that this may happen when the researcher is able to imagine having the same life as the other.

To "dissolve" one's selves as proposed by Heshusius (1994, p. 19) is neither necessary nor realistic. These selves are vital to the research; their presence should be accepted. Besides, even if there were benefits from merging self and other, aspiring to achieve this comes closer to fantasy than "enchantment" (p. 16). On the other hand, attempting to manage one's subjectivity presents other dilemmas. The preoccupation with self, for example, can detract from the subject of the research. Taken to the extreme, the controlling of self becomes a form of objectivity that could actually interfere with the research.

While I did not believe that I could or should manage my subjectivity as proposed by Peshkin (1988), I did believe that an understanding of this subjectivity would contribute to an understanding of the research (Ricoeur, 1981). Since I was a participant in the research, I felt that it was necessary for me to examine my presence as a research question. This could be done through a retrospective look at my various selves that were embedded in the research texts.

In search of the different selves in my own research, I scrutinized pages and pages of interview transcripts from meetings with teachers and students. It seemed to be a fairly elementary task to uncover examples of my speaking with the voice of a researcher. Questioning techniques rang of echoes of Spradley or of attempts to echo Spradley (1979). There were, moreover, examples of times when I sounded more like a counsellor, teacher, or consultant. In addition to those voices, I was occasionally reminded of sounding like a friend. There were also instances when I appeared to speak from a combination of perspectives.

Upon reflection, I realized that I was not always conscious of these diverse roles or selves during an interview. [Reflection-on-action enabled me to consider my reflection-in-action (Schon, 1987).] If I had thought, for example, "Oh, now I must assume my teacher persona and respond as my best teacher-self," it probably would have interfered with the natural flow of the interaction. It was, nonetheless, possible for me to take transcripts of interviews and focus on my voice, the voice of the interviewer. By undertaking this exercise, during an interpretation of the texts of these interviews, I expected to develop a better understanding of the texts as well as a better understanding of the different selves exemplified by the various voices that I brought to the research. Engaging in an examination of the inquirer's

selves, I also expected to expose these selves as affecting the information elicited from the respondents.

The Researcher's Voice

When consciously taking a researcher's position in relation to the interviewee, I typically asked questions seeking examples or questions looking for verification as well as questions that used the interviewee's language and checked out potential themes from previous interviews. While analyzing the interviews, I selected excerpts to present as illustrations of these approaches.

A quotation from the first teacher interview shows that examples were sometimes unsolicited. About halfway through the interview, Carol said, "I learned more in my four months of my internship than I ever learned with my four years at university. I found it was unreal at university. It was unrealistic." Carol continued, without being prompted by me, to give examples of the "unreal."

They didn't teach you how to teach a student who just sat there and didn't want to do anything. Yes, it was great, all, you know, the academics that you needed. But there was never a course to say what do you do when a kid, you know, spits at you. Or what do you do when a kid gets up and just leaves your class, you know. Or I found out there wasn't anything, ah, if a child is showing these types of signs who might you be able to get in contact with. I found those things were things I had to kind of feel out and find out on my own.

I returned to this concept later in the interview and attempted to get examples from Carol of what was "real" by asking, "What were some of the kinds of things that you learned in the real classroom of your four-month internship that you can recall now?" Part of Carol's response follows:

What I found, having thirty students, how do you keep them all interested. You have to teach certain things, you have to teach certain curriculums, and to me, I find some things in the curriculum really boring and they must too, you know. Ah, and there are things that some people are interested in and some people aren't interested in...So you have to think about, okay, we're doing a unit in grade seven on the Vikings. Maybe, I could break the group up into left side, middle side, right side. You answer the questions for us. Middle

side, you draw a map of the Scandinavian Countries and how they came over; and right side, you design a title page for it...Something like that, so you keep everyone involved.

As we progressed through the interview, I asked another question to elicit examples. "It's interesting, also, you say that not everybody is cut out to work with at-risk students; yet, in every classroom, there are going to be some that are at-risk. What do you think are some of the qualities that make a teacher more effective with that population?" I expanded this question by adding, "I know you've already talked about them in many different ways and I can see them in you; but if you were to, you know, come out with some descriptors, what would you say makes a teacher more effective?"

I also asked Margaret for examples in the second teacher interview. Near the beginning of the interview, I responded, "You say it's the smaller group. Do you think there were some other things that were happening there - other than the smaller group?" A little later, I asked, "What is it that you did that was so great? What is it that you can remember that worked so well? It obviously had a tremendous impact on them."

The voice of the consultant could sometimes be heard when the researcher asked for examples. This voice will be examined more closely later. At this point, I acknowledge perceiving Margaret as having had "a tremendous impact" on her students. My observations were based upon a previous interview with them. If I had consciously endeavored to be a neutral researcher, I would have attempted to control this favorable impression. Similarly, I would not have revealed that I could see Carol's effective teacher qualities. As a consultant, I had known both Margaret and Carol for approximately three years prior to the interview. My

biases were present; I did view these teachers positively. That was the principal reason for my selecting them to be informants.

Students were encouraged to provide examples, as well. In the third student interview, I said, "So you don't agree with some things that you are told to do. Is that what it is? What are some things you don't agree with?"

Other example-seeking questions taken from student interviews include:

"What were things that she did that made you feel that way?"

"What other kinds of things would you like to be able to do in school?"

"What do teachers do to act young?"

In addition to asking example questions, I used native-language questions to encourage students and teachers to provide descriptions. According to Spradley (1979), "native-language questions ask informants to use the terms and phrases most commonly used in the cultural scene" (p. 89). Unlike Spradley, however, I was not interviewing tramps or cocktail waitresses. My informants were teachers and students whose language closely resembled my own. Nevertheless, I recognized that language is influenced by time and locale as well as individual perceptions; so there was the likelihood that some discrepancies would occur. Therefore, I attempted to get their descriptions of native terms.

The excerpts that follow show the exploring of the native term "nice teacher."

John: My homeroom teacher, he's nice, and Mr....

Glenda: So what is it about them that makes them nice?

John: Well, the other teachers, like, they don't even know what's going on, being so old. The younger ones know what's goin' on, like.

Scott: He's nice, though.

Glenda: Alright...What's nice about him?

Scott: Oh, I don't know. We were supposed to be workin' in the shop, takin' notes and he took me and a couple of other people out and he said, "You guys paint." He said, "You guys probably know all about this stuff, anyway."

In the following example, the concept of "tough teachers" emerged. It was linked with the descriptor "serious," but the two notions were not synonymous from at least one student's perspective.

Lynn: In regular school, I find they're tough and they expect a lot, but here you can take your time. That way you learn more.
 Cory: Take your time and if you're doin' something wrong then they show you how to do it right. Like, they'll show you everything and how you're to do it.
 Glenda: Uh-huh. Tough. Can you explain that? You see them as tough.
 Cory: Too serious.
 Glenda: Too serious. Would you describe it that way, too, Lynn?
 Lynn: ...tough with the work.
 Glenda: Tough with the work. And you guys say they're serious.
 Cory: Ah, they're ridiculous. It's true. Some of them, though, they expect you to be like some of the prep [university preparatory] classes that they teach or somethin'.

Students also described teachers in terms of being strict and this is illustrated by the next passage. Although I asked for meaning instead of use as proposed by Spradley (1979), the students did elaborate.

David: The way he'd explain somethin' to you. Not strict or anything.
 Glenda: mmm. What do you mean by not strict?
 David: Jumpin' around on your feet.
 Bill: Not bite your head off if you said somethin' to him. (laughs)

My questions became influenced by what I perceived to be paradoxical descriptions from previous interviews. For example, students spoke of teachers who were "weird but nice." One group described a teacher "who was easy to get along with" as someone who would "snap at ya alright...if you do somethin' bad."

I decided to explore these seemingly contradictory descriptions of teachers. Therefore, I asked students if a teacher could be both strict and good. Actually, "good" was my word; it possibly would have been better to have used their term "nice." Spradley (1979) recommended that the ethnographer "move from questions

that use his words to ones that incorporate native terms" (p. 63). Moreover, when the "serious teacher" concept appeared again, I responded with the word "strict." I wrote in my notes that I probably should have continued with the term "serious" since it was the word of that particular group. "Serious" and "strict" seem to have been interchanged by the researcher even if they were used in different ways by the students.

Shanna: He's way too serious.

Glenda: Can you have a teacher who is strict but still is a good teacher?

Voices: mmm

Jamie: I liked Miss...Everybody thought she was really, really strict but she could teach. I got my best marks in her class. Best marks I ever had. A good teacher...

Glenda: Yeah. This was a teacher though you said was strict but you also did well in her class.

Jamie: I got my best marks out of her.

Todd: She hollers a lot.

Jamie: She hollers but she had a kind of a sense of humor. You could get along with her.

Later, in this interview, I continued to seek more information on "strict teachers" by asking, "How would you see a strict teacher? How would you describe being strict? What makes a teacher strict?"

When I looked for native-language questions in teacher interviews, I discovered that they were very infrequent. I identified two possible reasons for this. It could be attributed to the practice of teachers to readily provide explanations for some terms. On the other hand, it is likely that neither they nor I saw a need for more information about certain native expressions, since I had not only been a teacher, but I had also continued to work in education, and basically used the same language.

The following excerpt serves to illustrate the first point. In this example, Carol used the term "care;" she then continued to describe ways in which she showed caring.

I think just letting the students know that you really care about them, you're really interested in them....getting to know at least one thing about each of your students, at least one thing. When I'm talking, I ask them about hobbies. I like to have that one little thing and that can really, ah, bond a teacher and a student together. Like with Josh, he's very interested in hockey, and with the Fredericton Canadians, they've arranged to meet and he's really excited about that now. And he would be a student that I would get tickets for to go to a Fredericton Canadians game....John does art work really well and I'm really proud of that. "Could you bring that in? I'd love to see your work, John." He brings them in.

There were instances when terms were used that would have likely prompted an ethnographer with a background different from mine to ask for more information. Even an ethnographer who had an education background but came from another specialized field in education or a different geographic area could have been stumped by such lingo as IEP (Individual Education Plan), WOW (Work Orientation Workshops), and STEP (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting). I did not ask questions when these native terms were used because they were also part of my language as a teacher, counsellor, and consultant. These other selves are given a more in-depth treatment later in this chapter.

I did, nevertheless, identify some examples of native-language questions in teacher interviews. In the dialogue that follows, I looked for a description of Dawn's term "fairness."

Glenda: You mentioned fairness - not fair to the student - when I was changing the tape. Were you thinking in terms of having that large homeroom class for those students? Was that what you were thinking because those kids really need the small group?

Dawn: mmm. The contact in the morning. I did a homeroom last term for one of the teachers who was on four and there were thirty-three students in there and there was no way that I could develop a rapport. I mean I did to a certain extent, but not to the extent that I'm use to...

When questioning Dawn, I implied that we both recognized the importance of having some students in smaller groups. There was an assumption of mutual understanding. It differed from my questioning techniques with students since I did not appear to be so familiar with the students' perspectives and language

usage. My questions to students took such forms as "Tough. Can you explain that?" and "What's nice about him?" My approach with Dawn suggested that we had more shared information.

Another example of shared knowledge from the previous quote is Dawn's reference to "teachers on four." These are senior high school teachers who are scheduled in one semester to teach four out of four classes a day. Those who teach three of the four classes have a period free for preparation. I was familiar with the native term "on four" and did not question Dawn about it. I still could have asked for her views on the practice of assigning teachers to four out of four classes.

The following section also shows the employment of native language. Helen used the term "power struggle" and I attempted to get an explanation of this term.

Helen: A lot of it's a power struggle. The problems that they have with the teachers are a direct power struggle.

Glenda: Who has more power?

Helen: Yeah.

Glenda: Who is more important?

Helen: Yeah. Who's gonna have the last word? And as it is, and the kids that come here a lot, "Nobody's gonna believe me anyway; they say the teacher is always right."..That's true. To an extent it's true.

In this dialogue, Helen assumed that I understood what she meant. Instead, I was trying to get her to expand on her use of the term "power struggle." Helen's assumption of shared understanding probably came from her awareness of my background in education. In this case, I seemed to be hindered as a researcher seeking information. Unlike the implicitly understood "teachers on four," the term "power struggle" was more likely to be given different interpretations by the researcher and the informant.

As the researcher, I worked on verifying what I thought I understood the interviewee to be saying. In a previously mentioned discussion with Carol about her university program, I restated her description by saying, "So it was somewhat unrealistic." I followed this with the statement, "And then you got into the real world of school." Carol replied, "Exactly." My statement was confirmed.

In the interview with Margaret, I used verification to corroborate one of the students' stories. As it turned out, Margaret had a different version. The students had given me the impression that they had been segregated and had encountered problems when trying to obtain student passes. Margaret informed me that the photographer had lost the students' pictures and this had caused the passes to be delayed. The students had interpreted the situation as an indication that they were not wanted in the school.

Glenda: They didn't like the segregation of it. They mentioned that when they came to the school that they couldn't sit with their friends and they were isolated. I think getting student passes wasn't easy for them. They were treated as...

Margaret: What happened with that was the photographer...lost their pictures. So then we had to wait and eventually they did come. There wasn't a problem with the student council...but they took that personally. Why does it always happen to us?

The following excerpts from student interviews also illustrate my efforts to employ verification questions. In the first excerpt, a student described the behavior of a teacher whom he viewed to be "nice" and "weird." Filling the role of researcher, I verified that the student interpreted this behavior as an attempt to "get on the basis with the kids." In the second excerpt, I, as researcher, wanted to verify whether or not the students thought that some teachers treated them fairly. I discovered that they were divided in their opinions.

Jim: I think it's just the teachers tryin' to get on the basis with the kids....Mr....was a nice guy in the classroom....He's weird, man....He'd open the door and he'd slam it into his foot or somethin'. He'd sit there talkin' to the door and we'd walk out.

Glenda: You say that they try to get on the basis with kids. Is that why you think he behaved the way he did?

Jim: Yeah. He tries to make us laugh, instead of going into a classroom. He tries to get us into a good sense of humor.

Glenda: Is it true then that some teachers treat all students fairly or equally?
(Some say "yes;" others, "no.")

Tanya: I don't think so. We all have different opinions about different people.

Brian: Mr....treats everyone fairly.

The researcher was on the alert for emerging themes. For example, in the first interview that I had with students, teachers were described with respect to their age, interests in music and manner of dress. Therefore, in subsequent interviews, I made a point of asking other students their opinions on these matters.

Glenda: Would there be some older teachers, though, that joke, and can you think of any that you've had?

Aaron: I can't think of any.

Glenda: You can't think of any older ones that have been okay.

Cory: 'Cause I think the younger teachers, like the younger ones, when they were goin' to school, like maybe when they were goin' to school to be a teacher, the people there taught them not to be so serious about everything, you know. There's a limit to bein' serious, on some things.

Glenda: When you talk of some teachers that you like, are some of those teachers people that know your music, know the music you listen to?

Cory: Well, some of them do. And some of them they just like they haven't heard it...

Glenda: It's not always the music.

Cory: No, no.

Glenda: So try to act younger. Could it have to do with the way they dress or is that important at all? What do you think?

Josh: No. Mr....wears, ah, sometimes BiWay [department store with low prices] shoes.

Voices: Oh! Ugh!

Danny:...right geeky...

Nicole: Yeah and glasses.

Danny: Man, he's so geeky lookin'.

The interviews with teachers also contained attempts on my part to check for potential themes. At one point in my interview with Carol, I had reason to recollect a possible theme arising from my previous interviews with students. I remarked that students had talked about teachers using humor.

Carol: You're an actress, too, when you get up there. I find that's really effective actually.

Glenda: It's interesting that you mention using the accent...A lot of the students I've talked with have spoken of teachers that use humor in the classroom and those are teachers that they really like to be with.

Carol: Yeah...and they're listening, too. That's what I find. 'Cause a lot of them are really good at just looking at their book or looking at you and they appear to be listening but they have no idea what you just said. But when you do that and act up and be a little bit silly and change your voice from an Irish to a, you know, Southerner, it really works...So I think that's really good that you can feel a little bit funny and can change things around, make your face go funny or whatever.

In another interview, Linda said, "So you have to be like a clown almost with a bag of tricks." Consequently, when interviewing Dawn, I asked questions that were formulated due to my consideration of entertainment as a possible theme.

Dawn:...because I'm there for them. I think they deserve my attention and that's what I'm there for. I'm not there to do my marking or my lesson planning or whatever. I'm there for them, so.

Glenda: Do you ever think of it as a performance?

Dawn: Ah, no, because if I did, I wouldn't be able to be as effective as I feel that I am.

Because if I was performing, I wouldn't be honest with myself. So everything that I do, I do it honestly.

Carol's language had included "actress," "accent," "silly," and "make your face go funny;" Linda had spoken about "clown" and "tricks;" but Dawn's response appeared to contradict the potential theme of teacher as performer. She claimed it was not a performance because of the value she placed on honesty. Afterwards, I realized that "performance" was my word and teacher as performer had negative connotations for Dawn. It is possible that if I had used Carol's or Linda's words, Dawn would have responded differently. Maybe, if I had returned to Carol and Linda with a question about performance, they would have reacted as Dawn had done. Instead of dismissing the entertainment/performance notion, I decided to consider the concept in future interviews.

While Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended "at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study" (p. 37), it is likely that my familiarity with the research literature affected my inquiries as a researcher. For example, during the time of my initial interviews with students in 1992, I received

an unpublished copy of a study by Damico and Roth (1993). In this study of the social and academic engagement of general track high school students, the researchers reported interviews with students who spoke of strict but nice teachers. In fact, the students "reserved their harshest criticism for teachers and administrators who did not maintain control" (p. 17). I also was aware of the research done by Measor and Woods (1984). They identified teachers who cultivated a middle-ground culture "which while insisting on control (specifying the boundaries), allowed a degree of latitude...and attempted to convey the fun and excitement of learning and the rewards of hard work, in a friendly and caring atmosphere" (p. 171). In addition, I knew about the more recent work of Phelan, Davidson and Cao (1992) who found that students appreciate teachers who "negotiate acceptable standards of behavior" (p. 704).

As the researcher, I was very much guided by the questioning strategies of Spradley (1979). I did, however, adapt those strategies to more appropriately match my research situation. Unlike a researcher entering a totally unfamiliar environment, I went into the field of teachers and students with a knowledge of teaching and learning that had developed during my years as a teacher, counsellor and consultant. My first-hand experiences along with my awareness of the research literature influenced the techniques that I employed in the role of researcher.

The Counsellor's Voice

At the start of each interview, I worked on the development of rapport with the interviewee(s). This seemed to be easily achieved because those being interviewed, whether teachers or students, appeared to welcome being asked their

opinions. I wrote in my notes after one of the student interviews that "they seemed pleased to be interviewed."

The development of rapport was facilitated by taking what, upon reflection, I consider to be a counsellor's approach to the interview. According to Spradley (1979), an informant's apprehension must be reduced during the process of rapport building. Spradley wrote, "When an informant talks, the ethnographer has an opportunity to listen, to show interest, and to respond in a nonjudgmental fashion" (p. 80). A counsellor should also have excellent listening skills, show a genuine interest in the client and be nonjudgmental (Brammer, 1985).

In order to achieve rapport, a counsellor's body language and tone of voice could be as important as the words that are used. As a researcher, I drew upon my counselling background and knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication. For example, I was aware of respecting an individual's personal space and attempted to stay at an appropriate distance from the interviewees so they would not feel threatened. I meant to maintain suitable eye contact without staring and was conscious of bending my body slightly forward, hands in my lap, instead of leaning back with my arms folded. I intended for my tone of voice to reveal acceptance and a desire to understand. It is not possible, of course, to disclose these features in the interview transcripts.

Once rapport was established, I endeavored to retain my rapport-building skills. It was necessary to utilize these skills throughout the interview; otherwise, the interviewee may have felt uncomfortable and have chosen to withdraw. The excerpts that follow illustrate the establishment and maintenance of rapport during the interviews.

In the first student interview, I began by asking the students what they had been doing for the past week. When John said that he thought it was boring, I tried to demonstrate acceptance by restating his opinion and encouraging him to continue.

John: I think it's boring. Kind of, yeah.

Glenda: Kind of boring?

John: Yeah, 'cause we barely do anything. We just sit there and do nothing. We're talkin' and stuff but nothin' much.

Glenda: You'd like to do more things than you're doing?

John: Not really but it's kind of boring.

Later, in that interview, another student described a teacher whom he did not like. I again showed that I was interested in what that student had to say. My empathic responses were intended to help the student to continue to tell his story.

Jim:...he gives me a textbook or a dictionary or somethin' and tells me to write out six or seven pages.

Glenda: Of the dictionary?

Jim: Yeah. And that's like writin' with a pen.

Glenda: So what was going through your mind as you did that?

Jim: Smuck

Glenda: Yeah.

Jim: That's not a teacher. That's the one that's there for the paycheck. He went to this school. He was here for about two months, I think. He had a grade nine class come in there once and they didn't like him either. And this big guy, I forget his name, Chuck...I think, Chuck is about six foot five. And made him go over and put a dot on the board and lean over and stick his nose to it and stand on one foot in front of the class.

Glenda: Made a student do that?

Jim: Yeah..That's not a teacher.

Glenda: mmm. That's right..And the rest of the class had to watch that.

Jim: Yep. He just said, "Class, be quiet." Sittin' there and stared at him..Anyway, I had to put up with that for about two or three months. He was on my case.

Glenda: You didn't have good feelings about him; that's for sure.

Jim: Nobody did.

In the preceding example, my own values appeared when I concurred with Jim on his view of the teacher who "is not a teacher." Conceivably, my "that's right" was an automatic response. If I had been concerned about the prospect of this supportive statement influencing Jim and consequently, affecting the data, I may have refrained from making it; and as a result, Jim may have been uncertain about

going ahead with his stories. Instead, he was given a sign of my empathy and this probably facilitated continued disclosure.

At the start of the first teacher interview, Carol and I settled into an old couch at the back of the room. I began by talking about the couch and asking if the students used it. My questions and responses were designed to transmit an interest in what Carol was doing with her students.

Glenda: Do the students use it much?

Carol: They come back and study and help each other...I found it worked well last year. I had a boy that was having problems with drugs and I had another girl who was having problems at home and often would just burst into tears and it was a nice change from desk, teacher behind the desk, student in front, because you were equal and I think they felt more reassured and I know I did....

Glenda: mmm. It is more relaxing. You don't have the barrier of the desks.

At times, the counsellor sounded like the researcher; or maybe, it was the other way around, as in the previous excerpt when the voices seemed to merge. The counsellor was cognizant of the barriers to communication and of the techniques to facilitate conversation. The researcher, or possibly the consultant, was interested in the students' activities and asked questions about those activities while taking advantage of the opportunity to do so in a comfortable, relaxed mode.

The counsellor in me agreed with the ethnographic researcher regarding the use of "why" questions (Spradley, 1979). Such questions should be avoided because they imply the passing of judgment and interfere with the building of rapport. As a counsellor, however, I did not favor restating over reinterpreting as recommended by Spradley.

Restating embodies the nonjudgmental attitude which contributes directly to rapport....Restatement must be distinguished from reinterpreting, a

process in which the interviewer states *in different words* what the other person said. Reinterpreting prompts informants to translate; restating prompts them to speak in their own ordinary, everyday language. (Spradley, 1979, p. 81)

Spradley's reinterpreting appears to correspond with the counselling technique of paraphrasing. "Paraphrasing is a method of restating the helpee's basic message in similar, but usually fewer, words. The main purpose of paraphrasing is for helpers to test their understanding of what the helpee has said" (Brammer, 1985, p. 65). When paraphrasing, the counsellor uses more precise wording but does not add any new ideas. The paraphrase becomes a summary of the helpee's statements. I think Spradley would consider paraphrasing to be more like reinterpreting and not restating as Brammer defined it.

In the example that follows, I did as Spradley purported and restated using the interviewee's language. The student's reaction is notable.

John: There are some good old teachers though. Like we have some nice teachers that could be real old but still kind a nice because like with other teachers they're just old-fashioned.

Glenda: You can be old and not be old-fashioned. Would you agree with that?

John: Yeah. I just said that. There's some good teachers that are old but they're still nice and not old-fashioned.

I recall this student appearing somewhat perplexed by my restatement. After all, he had already said it. Was I not listening? Although I used restatement at other times and never got that type of reaction, I believe that frequent use of restatement would make an interview unnatural. While not totally refuting Spradley's (1979) contention that stating in different words prompts the informants to translate, I think a compromise must be made or else the researcher risks encountering the skepticism of informants.

Therefore, I employed paraphrasing (reinterpreting) as well as restatement. The following excerpts from interviews serve as examples of the use of both.

Tabatha: He treats the students like they're nothin'. Like they're not doin' nothin'. You try to pass his class but he acts like you're not doin' nothin'.

Glenda: So you feel you're working but you don't get the same feeling from him. (paraphrasing)

Tabatha: He's mean.

Glenda: He seems mean? (restatement)

Tabatha: Yeah.

Linda: I demand, I expect, and the kids know that, but the way I demand and have expectations are not so harsh as somebody saying this is the way it is and this is the way it's going to be, no if's or but's about it. Where I think I would let somebody speak.

Glenda: Yeah.

Linda: You know that sort of thing.

Glenda: You'd listen to what the students had to say. (paraphrasing)

Linda: mmm. And in most cases I think that's all kids need is somebody to have an ear.

In the exchange with the student Tabatha, my paraphrasing appeared to encourage Tabatha to continue talking. She added the new descriptor "mean"; this was her language, not mine. I followed this with a restatement which she affirmed. Both approaches seemed to facilitate the development of rapport and the divulging of information.

My paraphrasing was acknowledged by Linda, in the second exchange, but she then proceeded to make a new generalization. Initially, Linda had qualified her statement about being demanding; I had paraphrased part of her qualification. This paraphrase seemed to stimulate her thinking of another concept. She still, however, used her own language.

Even though a paraphrase may result in a change of thought, it is possible for the interviewee to return to the original concept at another point in the interview. That is what did happen in the case with Linda. Later, she talked about having "to be able to bend."

If you can't bend, I think that's where the short fuses start erupting and that's where, you know, you can't go with the flow. These teachers are so hard core. Really. They're all opinionated. They're all very hard to please.

The counsellor was frequently checking for understanding and this assisted the researcher who was recording the information for future analysis. The following excerpts from the interviews could be mistaken for segments from a counselling session.

David: He takes the time to explain it before he makes us do it.

Glenda: Okay. He takes the time to explain it. So you don't feel you're trying to do something without having had the preparation for it. Is that correct, what I'm saying?

David: Yeah.

Jamie: But she's kind of won respect of all the people in the class. They treated her nice; she treated them nice. She'd let you do stuff so that's kind of the way that she got along. She wanted respect of you. You respected her; she respected you....Oh, sometimes she'd let a hoot out and she'd quiet you down pretty fast.

Glenda: Sounds like you really liked her though.

Jamie: Oh, yeah, I liked her....

Although I often used a counsellor's voice, I realized that the research interview was not meant for counselling. Different responses on my part could have taken us off the research track in an attempt to deal with other issues. This is illustrated by the next example which could be considered an attestation of the poor self-image many at-risk students are reported to have (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). It seemed that much more than one counselling session, either group or individual, would have been needed for these students to develop more positive views of themselves. My counsellor-self was aware of this and did not want the interview to turn into group counselling. I was not planning to return and follow up any work that may have been initiated, but the researcher was asking questions related to the students' perceptions of their abilities. I recall experiencing a sensation of relief when they admitted being truant. We could just attribute their school difficulties to that. Truancy was quite likely a symptom of

other problems, yet it did not have the debilitating connotations of limited innate ability. I no longer felt an obligation to be the counsellor.

Tanya: It's just easier. The work is like grade two work.

Adam: It's like two plus two. Six! Yeah!

Chris: It's boring.

Glenda: Okay. And how does that make you feel?

Tanya: Like they think we're stupid.

Chris: Some of us are.

Adam: That's why we're in here.

Glenda: Is that how you see yourselves?

Chris: Some people do.

Glenda: That's a good way of putting it. "Some people do." I asked, "Is that how you see yourselves?"

Chris: Probably.

Glenda: Probably..Do you think that's why you're here?

Chris: I don't know why I'm here.

Scott: I missed fifty school days so.

Adam: I missed thirty-nine.

Glenda: So that could certainly be a reason for having some trouble in school.

During that interaction, the counsellor was conscious of an ethical dilemma. If I had encouraged the students to continue their personal disclosures at this point in the interview, I would have felt obliged to respond as a counselling professional. Recognizing this, the counsellor prevented the researcher from asking the students additional questions related to their perceptions of themselves as "stupid."

As well as noting my use of counselling techniques in interviews, I observed that the content of my questions and responses could have been influenced by my counsellor's training and experience. I have selected one sample of dialogue to support this point. Prior to this exchange, Linda had expressed her interest in pursuing graduate studies in counselling.

Linda: I think I can develop myself as a person, you know, and I think I have things to offer to these students. And..it's there. Why not use it and why not make it available, you know, if you think you can make a difference. I think that's what it's all about.

Glenda: It's interesting, I think, and this is my opinion, that there are those that get their degrees in counselling and still cannot relate to students and are not accepting of students. Then, there are people who don't go that route at all, such as yourself, but end up, naturally.

Linda: That's right. That's right.

Glenda: That do relate very well.

This discussion with Linda occurred as we approached the end of the interview. I seem to have temporarily left the role of researcher as I revealed opinions based upon my observations of counsellors and teachers. It is most likely that these were formed before I had engaged in the current research. With an apparent tone of friendship, I exposed my favorable view of Linda. The excerpt serves as an illustration of the interviewer's uncontrolled biases.

The examples of the counsellor's voice that have been presented in this passage were retained from an earlier draft. When *The Counsellor's Voice* was initially written, however, it contained statements that carried a tone of almost absolute conviction. Sentences seemed to contradict a research attitude of openness to possibilities. This style of expression also suggested some of the biases that I brought to the research. Interestingly, I was not aware of writing with such positivity or of using a certain lingo until I had read the original piece several times. Definitive phrases were later modified as shown in the following selected revisions:

Earlier - "...a counsellor's body language and tone of voice **are** as important as the words that are used."

Later - "...a counsellor's body language and tone of voice **could be** as important as the words that are used."

Earlier - "When John said that he thought it was boring, I **demonstrated** acceptance by restating his opinion..."

Later - "When John said that he thought it was boring, I **tried to demonstrate** acceptance by restating his opinion..."

Earlier - "My empathic responses **helped** the student to continue to tell his story."

Later - "My empathic responses **were intended to help** the student to continue to tell his story."

Although I altered the confident tone of an earlier draft, I did keep the counsellor's vocabulary. I mentioned the "barrier of the desks" in one of the interview

excerpts and "barriers to communication" in the discussion of the interviews. As well as referring to the development of rapport, I used such terms as "disclose" and "facilitate." The self of the counsellor seemed to be very involved in the writing of this passage; after all, her voice was being scrutinized.

The Teacher's Voice

Journal - December 6, 1992

As I transcribe the interview with Carol, I note that I stay in the background. She does the talking. This is not a friendly conversation. It is an interview. Yet, there are times when I interject, almost as if I can't help myself. Statements are made when I seem to pass judgment, favorable judgment. Have I then crossed a boundary? I also, although rarely, see myself as the teacher. (I was one.) Maybe, when she says, "you know," it's because I should know.

The above entry was made after my first teacher interview. This was during the initial stage of the research and I was just beginning to recognize the influences of my different voices. The "boundary" was a reference to what I perceived, at that time, to be a division between my researcher and non-researcher selves. I appeared to have been wondering if, as the researcher, I should be exerting more control over my biases. In this instance, I noted my apparent expression of favorable judgments. These may have been emitted by the unidentified voice of the consultant. More specifically, I acknowledged my teacher-self.

Reviewing subsequent teacher interviews along with the student interviews, I continued to find my teacher's voice. For example, when I asked teachers about their teacher training programs in relation to preparing them for work with at-risk youth, I was prompted by a hunch that had its roots in my own teacher training program and teaching experiences. My hunch was that I would not hear laudatory comments about that preparation.

Glenda: Were there any kinds of courses in university to help you prepare for these kinds of situations that you've encountered?

Carol: When I went, absolutely none.

Glenda: If you think about your experience in teaching and your training, what would you say prepared you for that? I'm thinking of your university preparation as well as your teaching experience.

Margaret: Well, as far as university, I would say (laughs) I didn't find that from my B.Ed. that we were prepared...I don't think they teach enough practical types of things.

Another hunch I pursued was the concept that some students may work well with some teachers even though they may encounter difficulties with others. This hunch was based on my observations as a teacher and as a counsellor. It was one of those instances in which the identification of self was not so clear-cut and the two selves of counsellor and teacher merged.

Glenda: Do you think those kids have problems with all teachers or just with some teachers?

Helen: I don't think there are that many of them that have problems with every teacher.

I also asked questions founded on this hunch when I was interviewing students.

Glenda: Are there some classes where you find that you learn more than in other classes? ...Are there some teachers that their style or their approach seems to work more for you though?...What is it that they're doing?

Crystal: Well, like, there's a certain teacher, I won't name who it is, but it's a male. But he just, like, ignores us when we put our hands and stuff up....Like someone like Miss...in our Science classes, like, she sees our hand, she'll come over and she'll help us...But, like, Mr...., he just, like, he doesn't help us if we need help and I just like to have help once in awhile.

Because of my teaching experiences in the classroom, I could identify with some of the situations that the teachers described. Carol admitted discovering that "yelling and screaming at a student doesn't work at all." I, too, had made that discovery in my first year of teaching. When Helen told me that she "didn't get the target population" for her skills training program for parents, I responded, "Doesn't surprise me. I've heard that happen to others." Actually, it had happened to me when I had been a counsellor, but my teacher voice may have made the rather cynical remark. When Dawn said that a teacher should let "your personality come

out, don't be fake...be yourself," I replied, "I would think the kids appreciate that." Again, I agreed. My acceptance of what she said was based on more than intuition. I had interacted as a teacher with other teachers and with students.

During the interviews, the teachers and I sometimes resorted to teacher jargon. For example, Carol told me that they move quickly through a "grade 8 curriculum" that she had to "modify," and I remarked that she was "accelerating the program." After I had interviewed Margaret's students, Margaret asked me if Tim had said anything about the previous year. In my reply, I made reference to his not "functioning at quite the same level" as the others.

In interviews with students, the teacher's voice seemed to give encouraging comments. This also could have been the voice of the counsellor or the researcher, since either of them may have used praise to facilitate communication. I have chosen to regard the encouragement as coming from the teacher because this self was likely to have had more previous opportunities to give such reinforcement. The following quotes provide a glimpse of the statements that were intended to project approval.

Jim: If a teacher can listen to our music, then they can listen to us. Or if they can listen to us, they can listen to our music.

Glenda: Very well put.

Jeremy: I admitted I did something. Then, well, that's how I got push-ups yesterday.

Glenda: mmm. So you did admit. Well, that's quite honorable, actually.

John: She doesn't give us as much time as we want; she gives as much as it takes to get it done.

Glenda: That's a really good way of putting it, John.

There were occasions when my voice seemed to speak to the students with authority, and I have decided that this was my teacher's voice, as well. This authoritative voice was used when students talked at once, for example. The

following excerpts were taken from an interview in which I resorted to this voice to maintain order.

(Several students talk at the same time.)

Glenda: Alright, I think we're gonna have to do this [raises hand] which is a rule that I thought we might not have to follow. But I'm getting a feeling that we're gonna have to. Jeff, what were you going to say?

Later, in the same interview, the teacher spoke again.

(Voices can be heard in the background.)

Glenda: Karl and Josh and Kim, I'm gonna have real trouble hearing what's on this tape because I'm gonna get all these background noises. So, you know, it would really help if we just follow the pattern. I know it's hard sometimes because everybody wants to talk, but just one person at a time. So, now, we've heard from John about a teacher...

The teacher's voice spoke to this group again.

(Someone interrupts)

Glenda: One person at a time. John is talking about attitude.

Even though the counsellor and researcher wanted to create a nonjudgmental atmosphere, the teacher's voice of authority sometimes could be heard making value statements. In the following interactions, the teacher seemed to be suggesting the right thing to do and that this, therefore, should be accepted by the students. Nevertheless, although the message may have been authoritative, the use of the vernacular "gonna" in the second segment sounded like an attempt to be informal and on the students' level.

Glenda: Are those views shared by some other people?

John: Pardon me?

Glenda: That's why it's kind of good to listen to what people say...

Glenda: What I'd like to see is for you guys to be able to get back out there in the regular program, because, you know, John and Jeff, there are gonna be people that you're not gonna like and there are gonna be times in the other society of the work world when you're probably gonna feel like losing your cool but you learn to take control.

John: mmm

Todd: We had him last year and he's nice but I guess everyone says he's a pervert...

Glenda: You have to watch out for rumours though, Todd. It's what you think is important.

I also detected at least two situations when the students assigned me the role of teacher. I thought their remarks were quite complimentary.

David: We should have a lot more young teachers.

Glenda: Or people that act young.

David: Yeah.

Jeremy: Young teachers like you comin' in.

Glenda: Well, that's really nice to hear. Thank you.

Jim: You know, you got some small kid, if he wants to learn and he's on the level, you don't have to be big. But if he doesn't want to be on the level with ya, and he is big, what are you going to do about it?...

Glenda: If you've got a teacher that's my size...what is it that might make that teacher okay for you, because I'm not two hundred and fifty pounds.

Jim: You hold us in here, I guess. We're in here. You're outgoing. You want to know. You just don't sit back. (Moves back in chair and folds arms.)

The Consultant's Voice

While I was interviewing to gather research data, I was also visiting the programs in my position as a consultant in education. The consultant's role gave me the advantage of ready access to the programs, but I realized that the consultant's presence could interfere with the researcher's work. At least two factors, however, most likely exerted a positive influence for the researcher in this regard. Firstly, I was not a direct supervisor of the teachers and intervention workers. I was in the provincial office that awarded some of the grants to the local district offices for these special projects, but the local offices made the hiring decisions. Secondly, at the start of my research, I had been a consultant for more than two years and had met with these teachers on previous occasions, either when I visited a project or when they attended an annual workshop that I organized. As for the students, the transcripts indicated that they were quite willing to talk about schools and teachers. Therefore, I think that my visits were generally perceived to be innocuous.

I usually started each interview as the consultant. Sometimes, before the interview, I would observe students or look at the work they had produced. My initial questions were customarily about the program - how many participants, what kinds of activities, that sort of thing. The consultant wanted to get this information. It was also a good ice-breaker. My intent was to follow these beginning steps with a subtle move into the role of researcher, but in the following example, I was more overt and actually prepared the interviewee for that transition.

(Dawn and I are discussing the peer tutoring program that Dawn co-ordinates. We are reading and commenting on some of the students' written statements.)

Dawn:...That was really neat. They really enjoyed it. Yeah. And Julie's got her making a newspaper and they do all the captions and things.

Glenda: Yeah. Good. These are wonderful. Testimonials.

Dawn: I kept the originals because I thought these are gonna be valuable.

Glenda: mmm. [reading] "I think she's the right tutor for me..."

(The tape recorder is turned off; and after we sort through materials to be photocopied, it is turned on again.)

Glenda: I'm going to make a transition now to the other part of the interview.

Dawn: Sure. I'll close my book.

Glenda: Close your book 'cause I want to talk with you about what you've been doing as a teacher. I've known you for three, at least three years now. Have you always worked with youth at-risk, as a teacher?

In the previous instance, I seem to have been somewhat authoritative as well as candid when making the transition from consultant to researcher. Whether I was speaking in my researcher's voice or my consultant's voice at the time, I appear to have been assuming control of the interview. I continued to direct the interview by asking such questions as, "What kinds of qualities do you think you were able to bring to working with kids like that?" Nevertheless, Dawn's responses to my questions helped to give her some control; because as the interview progressed, my questions took the lead from her responses. While showing this shift of control, the excerpt that follows also serves to illustrate the friendly nature of our meeting.

Dawn: I had a lot of energy. (laughter) They demand a lot of energy and I think that's one of the keys, too...I was very flexible...understanding...I was very in touch with what they were dealing with.

Glenda:...You mentioned energy and I've always recognized that in you and other people have commented on that. Do you keep that up throughout the whole class? Do you find you can keep that energy level up?

Towards the end of the interview, I formally gave Dawn complete control over what was being recorded.

Glenda: Anything that you can think of that I haven't asked...any other things that you think would be connected with working with at-risk students that I haven't kind of directed us in any way.

Although the researcher's voice may have predominated when Dawn was asked about her interactions with students, the consultant was also interested in Dawn's perspective. Consultation implies the sharing of knowledge so the consultant may be the recipient as well as the provider of information. Furthermore, both the researcher and the consultant may at times find it necessary to be directive to get things moving, but more avenues are likely to be opened if they sometimes step aside and let their informants take the lead.

Filling the role of consultant and talking about the program seemed to be a natural way to start the student interviews. As the students went on to talk about their teachers, the roles of consultant and researcher seemed to merge. When the researcher took charge of an interview, however, the consultant did not remain hidden. There were times throughout the interviews when the consultant's voice could be heard. For instance, the consultant continued to interject with questions about the program after the interview had passed the ice-breaking stage. The interchange below presents the consultant showing an interest in the students' activities.

John: Yeah. We're writin' a book and we're paintin' a picture for...Park for the twelve days of Christmas.

Glenda: Oh!
 Nicole: We're doing something really big for that.
 Glenda: So where is the picture going? It's going up in the Park?
 Voices: Yeah. Yeah....
 Todd: She asks us what we want, what would we prefer...
 Glenda:...And you're also writing a novel or a story or something about the program.
 Voice: A book.
 Glenda: A book. What are you writing in the book?

The next dialogue begins with the consultant speaking rather officially about the students making a transition back to the regular program and concludes with the consultant sharing a joke and showing a very good-natured side. The more genial voice may have been the friend's that will be discussed later.

Glenda: Let's say you have to go back, because eventually you're gonna go back to the regular school. You roll your eyes. But I mean I don't think we can keep you guys here for the next three or four years, as much as you'd like it.
 Todd: I'll be goin' to ...
 Glenda: How can you make that work - going back into the regular program? Do you have plans to make that work?
 Todd: Valium!
 Glenda: What was that?
 Todd: Lots of valium.
 Glenda: Uh-huh. For you or the teachers?
 Todd: Both. (laughter)

In the following dialogue, the students told me about a student who had left school. The consultant whose portfolio included dropout prevention programs wanted to know more. I persisted with questions about this student's current status in relation to school attendance until someone revealed that he was back in school and "doing alright."

Jamie: Just a big hollering contest and the teacher usually wins. Except for... He was the worst that I've ever seen. You could not get him to go anywheres; he'd tell you. He said one day he didn't want to do his work, took the screen out of the window and chucked his books out the window and said, "I'm not workin'." He was somethin'.
 Veronica: He was an idiot anyway.
 Glenda: So where did he end up, this student?
 Jamie: He dropped out of school, in the Start program, then he went to ...
 Glenda: So was he with you last year?
 Jamie: Yeah.
 Crystal: Is he goin' into the WOW?
 Jamie: He just couldn't hack it.
 Glenda: Is he in school now, though?
 Jamie: Yeah.

Veronica: He went to ...

Glenda: Do you know how he's makin' out?

Shanna: Yeah. He's doing alright. He's in all Level Three program...

The consultant's voice sometimes seemed to speak to students in defense of teachers or with a tone of caution, as shown in the two transcript sections that follow. In the first illustration, I substituted the euphemism "let go" for a student's use of the term "fired" regarding the circumstances of two teachers.

Jim: Last year I had Miss...and Miss...this year. They're both being fired.

Glenda: Oh. Well, maybe let go.

In the second illustration, it was likely the consultant, not the counsellor, who chose to paraphrase by saying, "He was difficult." The students had identified the teacher by name before Danny used the derogatory descriptor of "prick," and the consultant appeared to be cautious. The paraphrasing did not prevent Danny from continuing, however, after getting encouragement from his peers.

Danny: I won't say the word, but he's a major you know.

Josh: He's weird like he'd..

Glenda: The same teacher that Josh is talking about, you didn't like.

Danny: Yeah...Tried to be, I don't know, a prick.

Glenda: He was difficult.

Voice: Just tell her.

Danny: Yeah. Givin' me detentions for all this stupid stuff...

Spradley (1979) wrote about the researcher's use of native language (p. 89) and identification of categories (p. 98). In the next exchange, the researcher used the native term "pricks" and seemed to be thinking out loud while attempting to form categories. However, the researcher did not ask questions to get more information about the teachers categorized by students as "pricks." The consultant may have prevented the researcher from going further because of an apprehension that individual teachers would be named.

Glenda: So what do you think about teachers that try to get along with the kids in that way?

John 2: Well, they're better than the pricks.

Glenda: Better than the pricks, so we have categories..Are there better teachers than those still?...A couple?

Jim: There's a few.

John 1: One teacher that's really nice.

Glenda: Okay, John, your turn.

The students sometimes spoke to me as if they saw me as a supervisor and these perceptions likely stemmed from my role as a consultant. I did not always respond purely in a consultant's voice, nevertheless, as the following excerpt shows.

Aaron: What are you doing here, anyway?

Glenda: Well, I'm trying to find out, as I said, about the summer programs. I want to find out what students think about it. I want to also talk with students such as yourselves about school. I'm doing a study on teachers and schools and I'd like to know what you think.

For example, all of you have had some difficulties in school.

Aaron: You don't pass us or anything. You just come to check up on us.

Glenda: I'm not even checkin' up on you. Don't put it like that. I'm not here to evaluate you, and believe me, what I say has nothing to do with your passing or going on. Nothing at all. It's a matter of finding some information. That's all..

In this example, I seem to have been balancing both roles of consultant and researcher. The researcher was conscious of getting information pertinent to the research; the consultant was conscious of getting information about the program. The student wondered if I was there to "pass" them; I attempted to diminish his uneasiness. Both researcher and consultant seem to have responded to the student. The researcher was probably concerned that a view of the consultant as student evaluator could negatively affect the research. The consultant may have also feared that such an image could interfere with her acquiring a good understanding of the effectiveness of the program.

At times, it was apparent that the students wanted me to leave with a favorable picture of the program teachers. In the next example, a student let me know that they did more than just have fun in the program. He seemed concerned about my getting the impression that they were not doing enough work. The voices of

consultant and researcher appear to have again merged. I was getting information about the program at the same time as I was hearing students' opinions about teachers.

Glenda: So if you're looking at an ideal school, you would think of teachers.

Cory: Yeah. Well, teachers that are not pushy...You should be able to have time to have a little bit of fun.

Glenda: mmm

Cory: To a certain extent, I guess.

Glenda: Mixing the fun with the work.

Cory: Yeah.

Glenda: Great. Which is what you get to do here?

Cory: Well, no, like you make a joke once in awhile. We work, as you can see.

Prior to interviewing one group of students, I was introduced as their teacher's "boss." Shortly after the interview started, a student interjected with, "Don't fire her." Trying to compensate for any detrimental influence the introduction may have had, I replied, "By the way, even though she introduced me as her boss, I'm not here interviewing you to get information about Miss...What you're saying doesn't surprise me. I know she's a good teacher."

Contrary to my assertions, however, I was interested in the students' stories about their teacher. These stories provided the consultant with an indication of the merits of the program and provided the researcher with the students' perspectives of good teaching. Although I do not think it was my intention to deceive students, the selves of the researcher and the consultant may have made these reassuring statements because of anxiety with regard to the students being reluctant to inform. The favorable opinion that I openly expressed about this teacher would seem to have developed during my interactions with her while in my consultant's role. These were some of the biases that I took into the field.

It looked as if this particular group of students continued to see me in a position of power. After we had talked for close to an hour, one of the students asked, "Can we be in here next year?" I responded in my consultant's voice.

Glenda: We don't even know, to be honest, if this program is even gonna be here next year. It's one of these, one year at a time, because it's expensive to run a program like this. You guys are worth it, believe me, but it takes a bit of money because you're looking at one teacher for ten students.

In the teacher interviews, as in the student interviews, the consultant did not make a total retreat after asking initial questions about the program but intermittently continued with specific inquiries. The next dialogue provides an example of this. I appear to have spoken as the consultant who believed that the teachers of the alternative programs should be involved in the selection of the students for these programs.

Glenda: Are you finding that you have more of a say now or do you have any say at all in the students that are selected for this program?

Carol:...The first couple of years, I really had absolutely no say. This year, I did...

Glenda: Did all the students that were referred, did they all stay, or did some get sent back?

Carol: All stayed.

Glenda: But you felt that you had a say.

Carol: Definitely.

Glenda: The final decision was yours.

Carol: Definitely. I did...

The consultant was interested in the successful transition of students from an alternative program to a regular school program. I asked, "How do you think they are adjusting?" The consultant was also interested in the involvement of parents. Regarding this, I remarked, "I wonder what their views are on what's happening this year."

In addition to showing interest in the program, the consultant did not refrain from occasionally making suggestions or stating opinions during the interviews with

teachers. The section that follows begins with the consultant's response after hearing about a teacher's approach to involving students by asking them for their ideas. The consultant implied that there could be value in typing up the students' recommendations and giving them a copy of this generated list.

Glenda: Do you give it back if they give you the ideas of what they'd like to cover? Do you type that up and give it back to them in your language or is that of importance?
 Carol: I don't know. I'm not sure if that would be of importance or not.

During the next exchange, the consultant was quite emphatic about approaches to student assessment. The researcher seems to have left the interview.

Margaret: Now, what I find this year, with some of those students that are on modified programs, they're not doing probably as well as they could if they were tested maybe more often; and I'm not sure if I'm supposed to say they're on modified so maybe we should test them more often or that would be my responsibility to give them a test or...
 Glenda: But modification can be modified assessment as well as modified curriculum.
 Margaret: mmm
 Glenda: If there is a student that needs more frequent testing or shorter tests and more time to write a test, that should be okay.

In another example, selected to depict the opinionated voice of the consultant, I implied already knowing the value of a program that I was planning to propose. Although I asked this teacher for her views, the near certainty of my voice seemed to differ from the voice of an exploring researcher.

Glenda: Do you think it would help in teacher preparation if some people, some students were mentors to at-risk kids? Do you think that would help them to better relate to and...
 Margaret: Well, that would be, you mean like students from university go out.
 Glenda: Yeah. And be matched. Because I'm exploring that. I know it's been done elsewhere. I haven't proposed it to the university here but I know it has been done and I think, to me, it's very...
 Margaret: Yes. I think it would be a really, really good idea...

The consultant's voice, blending with the voices of the teacher, counsellor and researcher, could sometimes be heard displaying familiarity with the research literature. For instance, the consultant, who had been influenced by the literature

on student empowerment, supported the teacher's involvement of students in decision-making.

Glenda: We never got to elaborate but they also showed me the models that you had purchased for them.

Carol: Yes.

Glenda: A very good idea and it's ownership. They thought that they had a choice.

Dialogues with teachers also revealed my familiarity with experiential learning and social skills development programs. In my consultant's role, I had read some of the relevant literature. Furthermore, it is likely that my views were also formulated by observations and experiences as a consultant, teacher and counsellor. Regarding experiential learning, I noted, the students "want the action; they want to be involved. This is why they haven't been motivated in the traditional school." When discussing social skills development, I remarked that students previously "didn't have the repertoire of approaches" for handling situations.

The interviewer was aware of the factors correlated with students being at-risk. Again, the consultant spoke from a familiarity with the research as well as from the experiences of a teacher and a counsellor.

Carol:...All of them [students' parents] had dropped out by grade seven except for one who dropped out in grade ten. And I thought, if ever there was a way to determine a higher risk student for dropping out, maybe, it might be to look back at the moms and dads.

Glenda: Oh, yeah. You're right.

Carol: I was really shocked.

Glenda: There is a lot of research that's been done to show that, too. Generally, well not always, but the majority.

The consultant did not allude to pedagogical theory and practice in the interviews with students, but there were a number of questions that could be connected with the research on learning styles. Both the consultant and the researcher were

interested in learning styles in relation to students' views on schools and teachers. The following segment illustrates the consultant's voice blending with the researcher's to inquire about the ways students "learn things." When formulating the questions, the researcher was influenced by previous experiences as a teacher and counsellor as well as the current role of consultant.

Glenda: Have you thought about the way that you learn best, how you like to learn?..What is the way that you like to learn?..You guys are eighteen right now, I mean, you've had twelve years of school. You mentioned shop. I would say that is probably one area that you do like. Am I right there?

Voice: Yeah.

Glenda: How could some other classes be made to be more interesting?...Bill, how do you like to learn things? Do you like to be in shop a lot?

Bill: Well, yeah, but another thing I don't like is listenin' to teachers like go over stuff. Like Mr....when he does it, I don't mind that, but like in other classes, they stand up and write on the board and tell ya all that stuff. I like to read it out of the book myself and go and do it.

On occasion, the consultant's voice seemed to intercept the researcher's voice, and sometimes, it seemed to blend with it. Even though it could take on a distinction all its own, this voice appeared to draw upon the knowledge of the teacher and the counsellor. As the research progressed, the experiences of the researcher were likely to influence the consultant.

The Friend's Voice

There were times in the interviews with teachers when the conversations were similar to that of two friends talking. Although I think the friend's voice was heard less frequently than the other four voices that I have identified, it was strong enough to be noticed.

At the beginning of the interview with Linda, I referred to using the tape recorder. The laughter and reference to prior shared experiences suggest a friendly atmosphere.

Glenda: It's probably a little harder, too, when you've known somebody in other ways and then you start having a [taped] conversation.

Linda: Exactly. Where to stop and..

Glenda: (laughs) Oh, well. (I proceed to ask questions about her program.)

During the interview, Linda expressed an interest in doing her Masters in Counselling. While I may have been speaking in my counsellor's voice or my consultant's voice, there was also a friendly interest in Linda's career plans. I could relate from the perspective of a graduate student who also had a family. When my daughter was just six years old, I had returned to full-time studies toward my Masters degree, and I was now working on my PhD. I took time from the research interview to talk with Linda about her aspirations.

Linda: It's a matter of finding the time, you know, to do something like that. With a small family, it's hard, you know, and I don't know if I have that energy.

Glenda: To put into a Masters.

Linda: Right now. And, 'cause this fall it's been, it's just been something that's been pressing on me I should do.

Glenda: You'd like to do it, eh?

Linda: Yeah! And so I don't know how I'd go about doing it right now, like mentally and, you know, just getting together, getting me together, you know, 'cause sacrifices and priorities and that.

Glenda: Financial.

Linda: Yeah. Just things like that so. I'm sure the day will come though.

Glenda: So you can start some exploring, anyway.

Linda, like most of the other program teachers, was on a ten-month contract and faced being laid off during the summer period. For three years, she had not known if she would have her intervention job the following school year, or if she would have a position within the school district at all, for that matter. At the end of our interview, she made reference to this. Although she knew I was not involved in the hiring of staff, she probably saw me as having some influence since she did make a quasi-serious request. Our exchange was a friendly one, however, when she said, "Get me a B contract, though;" and I replied, "I wish, Linda."

In the interview with Margaret, the researcher was taken a little off course as the friend attempted to fill in some information gaps regarding Margaret's recent career ventures.

Glenda: Now, where in the world did you fit that in with your bit in...and your coming to...for the WOW? When did you do your Masters?

Margaret: I did my Masters between..I was in...in 89/90 and I went back to the university that fall, that September. Like I was done in June; I could have gone to...for another year to teach the WOW program again.

Glenda: So that was the gap. You went back full time that year.

Margaret: That year. I came here last year.

Glenda: Because I knew you in...when you did the WOW. I was trying to place where you had been in that one year. That was a year at UNB.

Considering our age differences and our not having had previous meetings, it was a somewhat nebulous exercise to identify the friend's voice in discussions with students. Nevertheless, there were some examples as illustrated by the following dialogue.

Glenda: (turns on the tape recorder) So, who is going to start singing then?

Voice: Jeremy. He's pretty good.

Glenda: (laughs) What is it Jeremy was saying? He likes to drive a truck so he'll be the singing truck driver. How's that? (laughter)

The Voice of the Emerging Self

At the outset of this exercise, it was acknowledged that interpretations of text and self are intertwined. An understanding of the different selves of the interviewer within the texts can be developed through an interpretation of the texts of the interviews; an understanding of the texts of the interviews can grow from an interpretation of the interviewer's different selves.

In search of these different selves in the interview texts, I claim to have uncovered the researcher, counsellor, teacher, consultant and friend. There may have been other selves that went undetected; for example, the futurist. I had asked students to describe an ideal school. Even if there were other selves that had not been

identified, I concluded that the primary selves had been. At least, these were the selves with the loudest voices.

I introduced the voices individually to the reader in order to develop an understanding of the origin and significance of each. These voices did not operate in isolation from each other, however. For example, I discovered that the researcher's voice blended with the counsellor's voice when endeavoring to build rapport or with the consultant's voice when obtaining students' views of schools and teachers. The teacher's voice was probably as strong as the researcher's when inquiries were made about teacher preparation programs and teachers' interactions with students. As well as blending with the researcher's voice, the different voices also blended with each other; e.g., the counsellor's voice merging with the teacher's, the consultant's voice merging with the friend's. Furthermore, the different selves influenced each other, as when the teacher reminded the other selves of personal classroom experiences and the consultant considered the effectiveness of teaching strategies in the light of information received from the other selves.

The interviews seemed to have been led by the researcher who received a tremendous amount of help along the way. The consultant introduced the researcher to the informants and the friend helped the researcher to comfortably interact with them. The counsellor facilitated communication by building and maintaining rapport as well as frequently checking for understanding. The teacher, along with the consultant and counsellor, assisted the researcher with the formulation of questions by drawing upon the knowledge acquired through years of training and experience in the education field.

These various selves that accompanied the researcher were also found to be capable of blocking the researcher. There was potential for interference when either the consultant or the teacher became authoritative; and in the case of the consultant, a position of authority was sometimes assigned by the interviewees. This may have prevented the researcher from getting as much information as would have been offered otherwise. In addition, there was the possibility of interference during interpretations of interviews, as illustrated by the positivism of the counsellor in earlier drafts of interview analyses.

Should the researcher attempt to control for such potentially negative influences? An answer to this question requires taking a closer look at the researcher. It was the researcher who took me in search of these selves. Adopting the position of the researcher as the research instrument (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), it would seem that an understanding of the researcher is essential to an understanding of the research. Then, the question becomes, "Who is the researcher?" At the same time as exhibiting distinctive qualities, the researcher also embodies the other selves that find expression in varying forms during the course of the interviews. It could, moreover, be argued that the consultant embodies the other selves as does the teacher, and so on, resulting in just one voice, after all. The newest self, that of the researcher, would be manifested within the other selves in future discourses. Each new event - interview or interpretation - would result in a change in this one voice. This parallels Ricoeur's (1981) concept of the "work of the text upon itself" (p.164).

In seeking to determine if the researcher should attempt to control for possible interferences in the research, it would seem pertinent to recall that the interviewer made some apparently spontaneous comments. If the role of interviewer is

equated with that of researcher, then the interviewer as researcher becomes the research instrument. Continuing with the position of the researcher as the embodiment of all of the other selves, then the interviewer, the research instrument, could also be viewed as embodying the other selves and speaking with one voice. Impromptu remarks by the interviewer could be considered a natural part of the research and to endeavor to control these remarks could be perceived as artificially manipulating the research. If each interpretation is a renewal of the text and the self within the text, then, it is to be expected that subsequent interviews and analyses would result in a renewed understanding of the research. Therefore, while the researcher's influence in the research should not be "controlled out" (Alderfer, 1988, p.68), her growing awareness of this influence can likely take the form of natural control in the research with each new interpretation.

The divergent voices of the researcher produced a form of triangulation. Unlike traditional methodological triangulation that draws upon multiple external sources for information (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), this triangulation was within the researcher. The researcher's interacting selves were diverse sources of data as well as means to gather data and to cross-check and interpret the information that was received.

In Search of the Researcher's Values

Having acknowledged that I, as the researcher, had an effect on the research, I also chose not to attempt to eliminate those effects. Since I was part of the world that I studied, I wanted to understand the reflexive nature of my involvement. In search of my different selves within the texts of interviews with teachers and students, I discovered that the consultant, counsellor, teacher and friend accompanied the

researcher. These various selves influenced the data collection and analysis. Together, they brought a unique perspective that formed a value filter through which the research was viewed and sifted.

In an effort to more fully determine the composition of this value filter, I examined the texts of a short autobiography and an interview in which I was the person interviewed. These texts contained my recollections about teaching and counselling. Reflecting upon those experiences enabled me to further develop my self-understanding, and thus, my understanding of the researcher's influence.

The autobiography was written within the first year of beginning the research and the interview was conducted just over a year later. My interviewer was a university professor in teacher preparation and accustomed to qualitative methodology. Of course, as noted by van Manen (1992), "lived-experience descriptions are never identical to the lived experience itself. All recollections of experiences, reflections on experiences, descriptions of experiences, taped interviews about experiences, or transcribed conversations about experiences are already *transformations* of those experiences" (p.54).

By reflecting on my different selves in the research, I was transforming my interpretations of experiences during the collection and analysis of the data. Furthermore, each time I reflected on my reflections, there was another transformation. Consequently, my perspectives were altered with each reflection and description as well as with each new experience. Values held at a certain point in time affected my selection of reflections that were transformations. In a circular manner, these transformed reflections then affected my perceptions and influenced my values.

Flexibility and Autonomy

Within the texts of the autobiography and the interview, I described myself as a teacher who appreciated flexibility and autonomy. For example, I valued developing programs according to my students' needs; I did not want to be bound by established curriculum. In the following excerpt, I expressed my delight over having the position of dramatic arts teacher during my first year of teaching. There was freedom to create and adapt. Looking back upon this experience, I presented myself as a sort of trailblazer.

I was pleased, and still am, that I was given the role of dramatic arts teacher. I did not have an assigned curriculum; I basically had the flexibility to develop my own. Although that meant I had to spend an extensive amount of time on class preparation...it gave me the freedom to have fun with the students and to develop a program best suited to their needs, not that I recall anyone in the 1970's talking about adapting programs to meet the individual needs of students.

Responding to the students' needs in a flexible manner included changing a lesson when the students were not showing interest. This did not mean that I relinquished my leadership function since skillful balancing was required.

...if you really sense that they're not with you...that's okay. Let's just drop it for now; maybe we don't really want to discuss this poem today...maybe it's the end of the day and everybody's tired, including the teacher. Well, let's just relax a little bit. We can talk about something else. So I think it's okay to do that. I know these students will take you off topic. You have to watch out for that because you could end up spending the whole class talking about a ball game and never get any...academics done. But there needs to be some balance of that.

Harmony and Discord

Being comfortable within a classroom was important for me. Not only did I want to feel comfortable but also I wanted my students to feel that way, and I realized that these feelings were inextricably linked. I wanted classrooms in which students would "work together harmoniously" and "enjoy being there." Instead of a person who would "dictate," I looked for ways to "involve them" in making decisions. I believed, however, that I had not been prepared during my teacher

training to use instructional techniques such as cooperative learning or to recognize the merits of student ownership in project development. Yet, my intuition suggested that these strategies would catch the students' interests.

I knew nothing of cooperative learning, hadn't any training in that...but I did have students work in groups. We did do that kind of sharing, in my own way....it was stuff that they wanted to read and that they wanted to write about...wouldn't have used the term...student ownership....There was intuition on my part, without having been into the literature and all of that at that time, that obviously if they didn't want to, they're not going to learn. And how do you find what they want to do? You have to again find where their interests are, so that to me was very self-evident.

My reflections about teaching experiences were not all positive. While I remembered establishing a "very good rapport" with many of my students, I recalled difficult situations in my earlier years when I just "didn't know what else to do." There were times when "tension" developed in the classroom. I recollected exploding in one particular class during my first year because that was the approach my own secondary school teachers had taken. Being the dramatic arts teacher, I probably thought this display of histrionics would be appropriate. Instead of resolving the conflict, it only made matters worse and I was apprehensive about going into that class for the remainder of the year. On a positive note, I decided to never again attempt to manage a classroom by screaming.

But in this one class, there was tension. They did not behave as I expected so I resorted to the one strategy I had seen my own teachers use in secondary school. I blew up at them! ...Of course, I lost those students for the rest of the year. I believe they were reasonably civil to me under threat of the vice-principal but the tension was always there. I didn't think the students in that class liked me and I dreaded going in there. One positive outcome - I never screamed at another class of students, ever, for the rest of my teaching career.

As I wrote about these occurrences so many years later, I could see the contradictions in my own accounts. At one point, I claimed that I did not want to be a dictator in the classroom, and at another, I recalled becoming angry with

some students for not doing what I expected. Although reflections on my actions did not reveal the contradictions until much later, this firsthand knowledge contributed to the researcher's repertoire of personal teaching experiences. Moreover, my tacit knowledge of these discrepancies may have helped to improve my interactions with students. Schon (1987) wrote that "it is sometimes possible, by observing and reflecting on our actions, to make a description of the tacit knowing implicit in them" (p. 25). In later years, I described the paradoxes, but as a young teacher, I seemed to possess what Schon called "knowing-in-action" while I developed more effective strategies. These events helped to construct the value filter through which I would examine the data from teachers' and students' stories.

A Broadened Perspective

Although I "wanted to help people," I noted that my reasons for engaging in a teaching career did not seem to be "all so altruistic." Having grown up in a "comfortable family," I had not been exposed to "any of the horrors" that some children experience, and in my earlier years of teaching, seemed unaware of those horrors. I admitted selecting education because I did not know what else to do, and I chose secondary education "because I felt I could more easily relate to those students, having only recently left secondary school" myself. Upon further reflection, another reason for choosing secondary education was likely the advanced curriculum; I could have higher level discussions with my students than I would have had in the elementary grades. I am not certain, but it is possible that I focused more on curriculum delivery, in the beginning, than I did on knowing my students. Later, I viewed this particular trait with disdain when it was exhibited by other teachers. This was one indication of my changing perspective with regard to teaching.

During my initial years as a teacher, I did not seem to be conscious of factors that could be attributed to my students being at-risk. Firstly, *at-risk* was not a term that teachers would have been using in the seventies, but more importantly than that, I did not appear to consider my students' lives away from school. While I knew that some of them struggled with academics, I seemed to be unresponsive to their non-academic needs. Upon reflection, I do not think I was intentionally uncaring. My insulation may have resulted from a preoccupation with lesson plans and classroom management as well as an unfamiliarity with diverse backgrounds.

The reason I would identify them now as at-risk is because they were, certainly academically they were at-risk, they were struggling, and I was in my limited way attempting to make adaptations without ever having been trained in how to adapt curriculum...but knowing that was needed. And I think there were a lot of other at-risk factors that didn't...really come, to significance for me until later...

My very first year of teaching...I didn't realize it at the time, but there were at-risk students in my classroom. And I remember this one boy that would hang around my desk, you know, at recess time or after school time, or whatever, and he was very much overage for his grade, as well. I don't know if he ever did graduate. And I don't think I realized it at the time, but I do now; he was looking for someone to talk with. I think if I had my time back, if I knew then what I know now, I would have. I mean, I was cordial, but I really didn't maybe enable him by giving us a private opportunity to meet and talk as I would now.

Two events seem to have had a significant impact upon my future interactions with students. The first was my three-year immersion in a work environment away from the classroom. After encountering adults from a variety of backgrounds, I returned to teaching with a greater understanding and acceptance of diversity. I combined this knowledge with my previous enthusiasm and desire for students to enjoy learning.

I took a full-time position as a purchaser for a drink manufacturing company in Vancouver. It was certainly a different world from the school environment and I had the unique opportunity of working with adults who had a variety of skills and came from diversified backgrounds. School had not always been a positive experience for many of them, but after the initial joking about my having been a teacher, it was rarely even alluded to again. I think at times I even forgot about those years in education. I quickly came to value the strengths these people brought to the workplace. I think I really grew in my acceptance, appreciation and understanding of people during the three years that I spent with that company. When I returned to teaching in 1985, I was a different teacher,

even though I had not taken more courses in education....I now looked for and found strengths in each of my students.

The second event of great significance came immediately after the first, and I later called it a "critical point" in my teaching career. It was my assumption of the guidance counsellor role along with a teaching assignment. This was nine years after my first teaching job and at a time when I seemed to have broadened my perspective about individual potential. At first, I thought that I should have full-time guidance responsibilities because I did not see how I could maintain control within the classroom while being a friend to the students. Instead, I discovered that I became a better teacher by being conscious of my counselling function while in the classroom. I recalled being "comfortable" and "not feeling intimidated by the students."

I truly believed that I shouldn't be doing both roles. I thought I should just be the counsellor and what I realize now, and I think I learnt that year, I became a better teacher as a result because I made every effort...was relaxed with my classes, especially that year.

As a counsellor, I got to know more about the problems that my students had outside of the school. I realized that they were struggling with more than academics. They told me these things when I took the "time to talk" with them. I wanted them to feel that I was "approachable and could be trusted."

So that was the year that I learnt a lot more about some of the other things going on in these students' lives, because being the counsellor, I had some of my time that I could spend on one-on-one, talking with them. And that's when issues of abuse came out and difficult home situations or conflicts with other teachers. There were all kinds of things that would be raised, so I started to get to know them in another way; and then I realized it wasn't just the academics, of course, many other things that were going on in their lives.

My interviewer inquired about my parent-self, a role that I had not identified as influencing the researcher. I responded that becoming a parent had altered my outlook. As a result, I had developed a greater appreciation for the involvement of

parents in counselling situations with students. I also noted that many parents do not have the skills that I had acquired through my years of formal education. By admitting "we're not perfect," I was acknowledging that I, too, made mistakes, even with the information that I had. Therefore, my experiences as a parent could make me more tolerant of those parents who have not been taught good skills. As well as my parent-self influencing the counsellor-self and vice versa, the parent-self could affect the researcher's perspective. I now more fully understood the importance of providing parents with education and guidance if some students' home situations are to be improved.

And I guess if I were teaching again, maybe being a parent of a thirteen-year-old would be all the more reason why I would want to involve parents when I was working in counselling with young people....I don't think I appreciated that when I was younger, not being a parent of a child that age....We're not perfect and it's important that we have good skills so that we do communicate with our children. A lot of parents, I realize haven't been taught those skills....Anyway, if you've gone through good counsellor training, you should have those skills and draw upon that. So I do draw upon my skills that I've learnt in counselling to help me with parenting, and a lot of parents haven't had the benefit of that.

Building upon a Predisposition

During my interview, I remarked that I "fell into education." I also observed that I "usually had the lower of the streams so I probably had thirty at-risk students at one time." My interviewer suggested that I may have fallen into working with at-risk students because I had a "predisposition" for that. I agreed that this may have been the case.

Nonetheless, my recollections of the initial years in the classroom did not portray me as being so predisposed to teach as I appeared to be in later years. I valued rapport and harmony from the start. These values along with my flexibility and enthusiasm seemed to be my assets. However, I recalled having difficulty managing some classes. Through my experiences, I grew more tolerant and understanding of diversity, and the classroom tensions diminished. I described

myself as becoming more relaxed in the classroom, and this may have contributed to better relationships with the students. I no longer resorted to a dictatorial approach - a style I was never comfortable using, anyway. Furthermore, in my later role as counsellor, I worked harder than I had as a teacher to get to know the students. This was facilitated by my being allocated time away from regular teaching responsibilities "when students could come to see me." I did not limit my interactions with students to meetings in my office or sessions in the classroom. In order to show my interest in them, I would go "out walking the corridors and talking" with students during recess and lunch times. I made a point of being very visible in my displays of concern for the nonacademic in their lives as well as the academic. It was my opinion that "to be an effective teacher is really knowing something about their world, showing that you want to know."

Over time, I seemed to develop an interest in my students' "streetcorner state." When comparing this state with the "student state," McLaren (1986) defined the former to be more play-oriented, emotional and spontaneous. I considered such gestures as a touch on the shoulder or a hug to be acceptable providing discretion was exercised. The informality and intuition of streetcorner actions appeared to be balanced by my use of "good judgment" in observance of the hierarchical, institutionalized student state. This familiarity with both states may have enabled me to combine the flexibility with the structure.

I can see, spontaneously, talking with a girl for example and afterward she would, in a way of saying thank you...a little hug or something like that...And I realize today people are so careful because of the whole business of abuse and how could this be interpreted so you have to use your good judgment in those cases; but if it is spontaneous and it comes from them, I guess your intuition, you don't say "no hugs"...

I perceived myself as having a "big heart" and being more expressive of feelings than some of the staff whom I saw as "stoney faced." These descriptors suggested

that I, when making comparisons with certain teachers, viewed myself to be more accepting of the emotional streetcorner state, and thus, more prepared to cross the threshold that separated it from the cognitive student state. I conveyed my indignation over the actions of staff whose card games had become a noon hour ritual from which they refused to be drawn. It was as if they had retreated to a streetcorner state of their own except their behaviors seemed very predictable.

I remember this school where I was a full-time guidance counsellor. The teachers would sit in the staff room and play cards during lunch hour, and I was just so disgusted because a knock would come to the door and...nobody would want to answer it because they didn't want to be disturbed.

Assigning Blame

As I examined my recollections about being a teacher and a guidance counsellor, I wondered if I was assigning blame for the predicaments experienced by at-risk students. On a couple of occasions, I found fault with my teacher training program for inadequately preparing me in areas of classroom management and curriculum adaptation. At other times, I blamed the education system for having done those students "a great injustice." In my autobiographical account, I wrote, "Because these students did not fit the mold and learn the same fragments of information in the same way and at the same rate as other students, they were retained in grade and told that they would just have to try harder." I also acknowledged that a teacher with thirty students in a class could "not possibly get to know them the way that one does in a small group or one-on-one." My references to abuse within the home and the problems that students took to school implied that I thought families were responsible. I blamed those teachers who did not take time to get to know their students and to meet with them during recess or lunch hour. The descriptors "difficult" and "recalcitrant" suggested that I assigned some of the blame to students. Finally, I seemed to blame myself for not being more effective in my beginning years as a teacher. In the following account, I did

not assign blame to anyone specifically. It is likely that the responsibility for this tragedy is a shared one.

During that second year of teaching, I received a letter from a friend who taught in my previous school. She wrote about Marcel who had spearheaded those recalcitrant students in my class of nightmares. Marcel had pointed a gun to his head and pulled the trigger. I will never forget Marcel.

Confronting a Bias

When my interviewer asked me if any one of the university students entering the teacher preparation program that fall could make themselves effective for working with at-risk students, I replied, "I don't know if you can make someone empathetic, make someone caring." Yet, an examination of my own story revealed that I did become more understanding over time. Maybe, I was already predisposed, as suggested by my interviewer, but needed to enhance my awareness.

McLaren (1986) referred to the passage from the streetcorner state to the student state as "a move across a threshold into a qualitatively different cultural realm" (p. 99). My professed receptivity to crossing the threshold from the classroom to a student's outside world occurred with an increased appreciation for my own experiences away from the classroom. These learning opportunities gave me an insight that my university education had not. My broadened perspective affected the way I interacted with students. In my stories, I presented myself as an example of someone who had changed. It was my prediction that other teachers who worked with at-risk students outside the regular classroom would also change their interactions with them when they returned to a regular teaching assignment.

But after the experience of working one-on-one and small groups and really learning about them, I think going back to the regular classroom, that will have its benefits.

Turner (1969) described individuals who were passing through the liminal phase of transition as ambiguous, threshold people. "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (p.95). My years in business and the teachers' terms in programs for at-risk students could be viewed as a liminal phase. This phase of transition occurred between a phase of separation from the culture of the regular school and a phase of reaggregation or return to the norms of that culture. The program teachers would be different upon their return, because they would have been affected by the intervening liminal period.

I did not seem to hold an optimistic view for the teachers who appeared reluctant to make attempts at crossing the threshold. Whether or not "personality type" was a factor, I pointed out that "not everybody that applies for teacher training is going to be a top-notch teacher" and "there are things that cannot be taught." I remarked that teachers should make a career change when they realize that teaching is not the right choice for them. Reflecting upon those comments, I found they contained a degree of irony since I must have sometimes wondered, in my beginning years, if I had made the right choice. Nevertheless, it turned out to be "very rewarding" for me. I may have been too quick to judge other teachers, after all. As this hidden bias surfaced, I could not avoid the confrontation.

Teachers who did not seem interested in crossing the threshold may not have had the opportunities to do so in the ways that I and the teachers in the alternative programs had. During their beginning years, it is likely that they were preoccupied by lesson plans and classroom management as I had been. While I recognized that some regular classroom teachers, without special assignments in the areas of guidance or at-risk, seemed to know about a student's world away

from school, I had to admit that those who did not know may have benefited from an experience of liminality. If they had been given some time each day to talk with students in small groups or on an individual basis, or to visit homes, they, too, may have broadened their perspectives.

At one point in the interview, I was asked if I thought being a bureaucrat had an effect on my research. I equated this with the role of the consultant, but my interviewer was looking for something else. She believed that "as people make transitions, the organization they belong to and the environment... interacts with who they are." I really did not know how to respond. Although I believed that every experience was a learning one, I was not able to define how being a bureaucrat may have influenced my values with regard to teaching. Now, as I acknowledged my bias concerning teachers who did not make the effort to really get to know their students, I realized that the bureaucrat was even further removed from the classroom than either the counsellor or the consultant. The bureaucrat worked in an office away from the day-to-day student-teacher interactions. The consultant, while closely aligned with the bureaucrat, made occasional visits to schools and talked with students and teachers. The counsellor knew what it was like to move around a school every day and to work with students in a variety of settings. The teacher, on the other hand, knew what it was like to be in the classroom for most of the day, with the exception of a break for lunch, and not even that if on lunch duty. The bureaucrat was the most removed from the teacher and the realities of working with more than thirty students, each with unique strengths and weaknesses, at one time. While it may have been easier for the bureaucrat to ignore all of that, the bureaucrat also influenced the research.

After teaching in a regular classroom where a number of students could be at-risk, some teachers may not have the interest or energy to extend their interactions with students to the outside. The researcher could continue to judge them as uncaring individuals who should not be in the teaching profession, but now that the bias had surfaced, it was likely that the researcher would be open to discovering other explanations.

An Indefinitive Composite of Values

By examining my own stories about teaching and counselling, I was able to uncover the values that I held regarding the education of at-risk students. There were parallels between what I identified through self-interpretation and what I identified through analyzing the teachers' interviews. The concepts of flexibility, autonomy, harmony, and knowing the student would recur. These similarities provided support for the development of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Nevertheless, I realized that the themes from the teachers' stories had been influenced by my values. Recognizing that two researchers can render quite distinct accounts of the same interview (MacLure and Stronach, 1992), I observed that someone else could have given the data a different interpretation.

Every experience has an effect on a person's perspective and my value filter has been modified by my experiences both inside and outside the classroom. With each return to those experiences, the reflections alter my values. Something new is garnered from the text interpretation, and subsequently, the self-interpretation (Ricoeur, 1981). This influences my research which, in turn, affects my interpretations of experiences and interpretations of self.

An Invitation to the Reader

I have presented an analysis of my researcher self and recollections of my teaching and counselling experiences. The subsequent sections contain my analysis of the data. Ricoeur (1981) proposed that each reading of a text will alter the meaning of that text as well as the reader's self-understanding. With this in mind, I invite you, the reader, to form your own interpretation of these texts. You have information from various sources - the researcher examining self, the researcher recalling experiences, and the researcher analyzing data. Your perspective will differ from mine, and when you interpret this material, you may construct contradictions, anomalies, or another synthesis. Your involvement should lead to a new understanding of this work, and most likely, of your self.

Chapter III

DISCOVERING THEMES

Introducing Data Analysis

In the previous chapter, I focused on the role of the researcher and issues related to this role. While attempting to understand my effects on the research, I considered the methodological implications of reflexivity. The following sections move from a focus on the researcher to an analysis of the data. I begin with a discussion of methodological approaches to data analysis. This is followed by a close reading of the data from ten extended interviews that were selected for interpretation. These interviews are examined from a variety of theoretical perspectives - psychological, sociological, anthropological and philosophical - as well as from the perspective of the substantive literature on students in at-risk situations.

Reviewing Methodological Approaches to Data Analysis

At the beginning stage of analysis, I followed the suggestions of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who recommended identifying "units of information that will, sooner or later, serve as the basis for defining categories" (p. 344). I put data on index cards according to headings such as "teacher-student relationships," "teaching strategies," and "views of regular classroom teachers." I wrote in my journal on December 27, 1992, "I don't see these as categories or themes. I am just attempting to put some order to what already seems to be a mass of data."

Around this time, I read the discussion of typological analysis by Goetz and LeCompte (1984). "Typological analysis involves dividing everything observed into groups or categories on the basis of some canon for disaggregating a whole phenomenon" (p.183). Examples include the mundane categories developed by

Becker, Geer, and Hughes (1968). These are type of event, the time of occurrence, the participants involved, the reaction of participants, and the physical setting. Another typology was developed by Lofland (1971) who divided social phenomena into six categories: acts, activities, meanings, participation, relationships, and settings.

Although some of the categories seemed relevant to my data, I did not attempt to apply either Becker's or Lofland's typology. Glaser and Strauss (1967) pointed out the drawbacks to borrowing classification schemes.

Merely selecting data for a category that has been established by another theory tends to hinder the generation of new categories, because the major effort is not generation, but data selection. Also, emergent categories usually prove to be the most relevant and the best fitted to the data.... Working with borrowed categories is more difficult since they are harder to find, fewer in number, and not as rich; since in the long run they may not be relevant, and are not exactly designed for the purpose, they must be respecified (p. 37).

Over time, themes did emerge from the units of data that comprised such clusters as teacher-student relationships. In a report of February, 1993, I wrote that "it was not necessary to impose someone else's classification system on the data since typologies were evolving from the data." In that report, for instance, I identified data that formed one of the initial typologies - student empowerment. After I had analyzed subsequent interviews, this category evolved as part of the control/empowerment theme. Conversely, some of the original codes diminished in prominence through future interpretations. For example, the category labeled as praise became a part of the theme positive/negative, and the category of safety

was subsumed within the connecting/understanding theme. My research naivety was displayed by my failure to recognize the tentative nature of the early typologies. Strauss (1987) cautioned the analyst against becoming "too committed to the first codes" and becoming "selective too quickly, tempting as that is, since initial codes can seem highly relevant when they are actually not" (p. 32).

Attempting to learn an approach to data analysis, I studied the method of Developmental Research Sequence proposed by Spradley (1979). It consists of four kinds of ethnographic analysis. The first is domain analysis which uses semantic relationships to discover a culture's organization of symbols into domains or categories of thought. Finding the relationships among symbols leads to decoding the meaning of the symbols. Once domains are tentatively identified, the ethnographer tests them with informants by asking "structural questions" (p. 116).

After identifying and testing different domains in the cultural scene, the ethnographer following the method of Developmental Research Sequence moves on to taxonomic analysis. "A taxonomy differs from a domain in only one respect: it shows the relationships among *all* the folk terms in a domain" (Spradley, 1979, p. 137). With taxonomic analysis, the researcher focuses on the internal structure of domains. Spradley noted that domain and taxonomic analysis could be combined as a single process for the experienced ethnographer.

The third type of analysis proposed by Spradley is componential analysis. The focus is on "*multiple* relationships between a folk term and other symbols" (p. 175). This is the search for attributes that are associated with cultural symbols. Attributes are the pieces of information used to distinguish contrasts. A

componential analysis may be done of many domains or the ethnographer may select to do this detailed investigation with one or two central domains.

The last kind of analysis proposed by Spradley is the discovery of cultural themes. He believed that simply listing domains is not sufficient and that a more holistic view is required. The search for themes involves the discovery of relationships among domains and the relationships of all the various parts to the whole. Through comparisons and contrasts among domains, relationships can be found. Often, the themes are at the tacit level of knowledge and require the ethnographer to ask more questions of the informant.

Spradley's (1979) examples of his application of the Developmental Research Sequence aided my understanding of the process, but I did not welcome his cookbook approach. After all, Spradley was dealing with unfamiliar cultural scenes - cocktail waitresses and skid row men. The cultural scene that I was exploring was more familiar to me - teachers and students in special programs. Furthermore, Spradley presented domains and taxonomies by using treelike diagrams. He even used tree analogies to explain his analytic approach. Early in the research, I recognized that my data were too interwoven to be represented in this manner.

"What are all the different kinds of evergreens?" To which your informant replies with a long list of folk terms like pine, cedar, redwood, jack pine, white pine, norway pine, giant redwood, and douglas fir. Following the steps for doing a taxonomic analysis you begin to identify subsets such as pines and redwoods. Now you need to search for larger domains that might include kinds of evergreens (p. 146).

Deleuze and Guattari (1988) contrasted arborescent, hierarchical systems with the nonhierarchical systems of rhizomes. They noted that an imagery of trees represents elements in a relationship of power and subjectification. A system of rhizomes, on the other hand, is without a central agency and communication flows freely from one element to another. These two systems were not presented as opposite models, however, since "there are knots of arborescence in rhizomes and rhizomatic offshoots in roots" (p. 20). A rhizome differs from a tree in that it connects any point to any other point. It does not have a beginning or an end, but there is always a middle "from which it grows and which it overflows" (p. 21). Instead of signifying cause-and-effect relationships, rhizomes offer a global perspective of circulating states in perpetual change.

The question is directly one of perceptual semiotics. It's not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up at them from below, or from left to right or right to left: try it, you'll see that everything changes. (p. 23)

The rhizome appeared to be a more fitting metaphor than the tree for the assemblage of connections that I was finding in the data.

I did, nevertheless, apply some of Spradley's (1979) analytic techniques. For example, when examining one interview, I identified the category or domain of "the bottom line." Then, through my analysis of the interview, I uncovered examples of ways in which teachers enforce "the bottom line." This was a form of taxonomic analysis since I was showing relationships within a domain. The contrast created by "giving chances" was comparable to doing a componential analysis. Finally, when I considered the interrelatedness of themes, I was viewing the whole and the relationship of the parts to the whole as suggested by Spradley for the discovery of cultural themes.

Although my approach borrowed from Spradley's (1979) techniques, it did not attempt to duplicate those techniques. The presentation of contrasts and comparisons as treelike patterns did not befit the data. Spradley's explanation of analysis was presented in as logical and sequential a manner as he proposed the analysis itself to be done, but diagrams of lines and nodes misrepresented the story told by data that did not neatly fit into mutually exclusive categories. This can be illustrated by referring again to the category of "the bottom line." This category contained data that also belonged within the category of "flexibility and structure." The following remark by a teacher provides an instance of this overlap.

So although we teach differently, we maybe have different personalities, the bottom line is always the same. I may, like you [other teacher] said, be a little softer. I give them chances, you know.

In their discussion of the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis, Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended that each incident in the data be coded "into as many categories of analysis as possible" (p. 105). Their "basic, defining rule" for this method of analysis stated: "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (p. 106).

In subsequent publications, Glaser (1978) and Strauss (1987) presented a *concept-indicator* model as the foundation for grounded theory. Following this model, the data are viewed as "indicators of a concept the analyst derives from them, at first provisionally but later with more certainty" (Strauss, 1987, p. 25). The model is based on the constant comparison of indicator to indicator. The comparative examination of indicators results in a coded category. After "a conceptual code is generated, then indicators are compared to the emergent concept" (p. 25).

My approach to analysis drew upon the constant comparative method that was devised by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later advanced by them (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987). My approach also differed. For each of the interviews, I coded data according to categories that appeared to be emerging and I compared incidents within these categories. Nevertheless, in the earlier stages of analysis, I had some pieces of data that were not readily placed within a category. Furthermore, I did not impose the categories of one interview upon the data of another. In other words, I did not intentionally place the data of an interview into categories previously identified within other interviews. While I was conscious that parallel categories were being discovered, I attempted to analyze each interview separately from the others. My recall of earlier categories corresponded with the suggestion by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that the constant comparison "can often be based on memory" (p. 106). After doing an analysis of each of the interviews, I compared the data within the various categories that emerged from all of the interviews. By looking across the interviews after each had been analyzed, I did a comparative analysis but not in the form of constant comparison recommended by Glaser and Strauss.

From my perspective, modifying the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss resulted in a more manageable approach to analysis. Because my research was a part-time undertaking, there were lags in my data collection and subsequent examination. I did not have time to do an analytic comparison of cases each time new data were collected. Yet, I needed to know the data since this helped in the formulation of questions for future interviews (Spradley, 1979). By analyzing individual cases and continuing to collect data, I was able to progress with the research. The comparison across cases was put on hold until a time when data collection had temporarily ceased. In fact, Strauss (1987) wrote that his

"operational aids" could be modified. "Methods, after all, are developed and changed in response to changing work contexts" (p. 8).

An ability to analyze interviews developed as I acquainted myself with the techniques of other researchers and as I became more familiar with the data. My approach to the analysis was not solely based on one person's methodology. It was an adaptation of techniques reported in the literature. These adaptations were deemed necessary because of the data and the circumstances of the researcher.

Using a Computer for Analysis

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "While the existence of electronic computers has virtually revolutionized quantitative data analysis, its impact on qualitative data analysis, which is at the heart of the naturalistic data processing problem, has been much more modest" (p. 353). This observation had been made several years prior to my undertaking qualitative research. It was likely that the use of computers for qualitative data analysis had advanced at a tremendous pace during the interim. In 1992, Bogdan and Biklen noted that five years previously Brent, Scott, and Spencer had conducted a survey of qualitative researchers. The results of this survey showed seventy-seven percent of respondents saying they used computers in their research. Bogdan and Biklen believed this number to be "undoubtedly higher" in 1992 (p. 181).

As I was attempting to "make sense" of the data during the earlier stages of collection and analysis, I purchased a recently developed computer program that I thought would enable me to work with the data more efficiently. The software was named "NUDIST" - an acronym for "Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising" (Richards, Richards, McGalliard, Sharrock,

1992, p. 2). It certainly seemed to have all of the features that would enable me to sort, code and retrieve without the traditional cutting and pasting. Furthermore, according to the developers, it supported grounded theory research.

In NUDIST - as in the grounded theory model - analysis is a process of ongoing exploration of emerging ideas. The support for index construction and exploration and the node-building ability of NUDIST give you the power to keep interrogating data and thinking about data. (Richards et al., 1992, p.11)

After spending two weekends attempting to learn NUDIST, I decided my time could be better spent by studying my data. One of the difficulties I had with NUDIST was the emphasis on a tree-structured index system. As I had noted when studying Spradley's (1979) approach to analysis, my data did not readily fit treelike diagrams. I believed that applying this structure to the data would interfere with the interpretation.

My other principal difficulty with NUDIST was the amount of time that I was investing to learn its capabilities. While the developers purported that the program supported both "theory-construction and theory testing" (Richards et al., 1992, p. 11), I never progressed to the point where I could appreciate this feature. It appeared to be a data management system that enabled the researcher to record comments as ideas emerged about categories and theories developed. I decided I could do this with pen and paper and my microsoft word program faster than I could learn NUDIST. Furthermore, I needed to read and reread the data and I was afraid of missing linkages and meanings if I mechanized the process. Although my observations about computer analysis are based upon personal experiences

with only one program, I do not seem to be alone. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) had the following to say about the different views regarding computer analysis:

There are mixed opinions on whether novice qualitative researchers should use the specially designed computer software programs for the various mechanical aspects of data analysis. Some who have tried swear by them; others swear at them. The arguments about their use center around whether the time you spend learning how to do it is equal to the time you save. (p. 183)

Merriam (1988) discussed the advantages and limitations of using computers for qualitative analysis. She wrote, "The tedium of cutting, pasting, photocopying and hand sorting is alleviated, thus leaving more time and energy for substantive thinking and analysis" (p. 160). On the other hand, she noted that when a computer is introduced, the researcher's relationship with the data is changed. "This new relationship is more mechanical and impersonal, perhaps blocking insight that might otherwise emerge. Some of the richness of qualitative data may also be lost if one begins substituting technical language and quantification for description and metaphor" (p. 161). From my perspective, I decided to only use my computer as a word processor for text. The disadvantages appeared to outweigh the advantages when it came to data analysis by computer.

Recognizing a Researcher's Learning Style

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 340) declared it was insufficient to state that the "categories emerge" as was done by Glaser and Strauss (1967). They viewed this as "an enormous underestimate of the effort, ingenuity, and creativity that are involved," and they considered Spradley's systematic domain analysis to be "more helpful." I have already expressed my discomfort with Spradley's step-by-step

approach. I had no inclination to review my data while being guided by "X is a kind of Y" and "X is a place in Y" (Spradley, 1979, p. 111) and so on.

The influences of a researcher's biases and intuitions during the analysis of data have not been ignored by those who write about approaches to qualitative research. "Exactly how a researcher makes sense of data, sees patterns or relationships, or discovers theory cannot be explained as a logical process" (Merriam, p. 148). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) regarded analysis as arising from the perspectives of the researcher as well as from the data. "Different theoretical perspectives that researchers hold shape how they approach, consider, and make sense out of the data" (p.175).

At this point, I am going to suggest that a researcher's approach to analysis could also be influenced by that researcher's preferred learning style. Using qualitative research methods, Gregorc (1994) developed a Mediation Ability Theory regarding the ways in which the human mind receives and expresses information. "Data were gathered through taped interviews, written protocols, documents written by individuals about themselves, and documents written by the author [Gregorc] describing what happened in interviews, classrooms, offices, etc." (p. 45). An analysis of this data led to the development of the Gregorc Style Delineator which was "designed to reveal two types of mediation abilities: perception and ordering" (Gregorc, 1994, p. 5).

Peceptual abilities are the means through which you grasp information. These emerge as two qualities: abstractness and concreteness....Ordering abilities are the ways in which you authoritatively arrange, systematize, reference, and dispose of information. These emerge as two qualities: sequence and randomness. (p. 5)

Gregorc's research indicated that some people are more concretely oriented than they are abstract and vice versa. Furthermore, some individuals are more random and others more sequential. While recognizing the uniqueness of each individual, these qualities can be coupled to form four distinct styles: concrete sequential, abstract sequential, abstract random, and concrete random.

Although every person has all four qualities, "most individuals are predisposed strongly toward one, two, or even three. Few individuals are equally strong in all four" (Gregorc, 1994, p. 6). In order to illustrate that a predisposition stronger in one area than another could affect a researcher's approach to analysis, I have selected excerpts from Gregorc's descriptions of each of the four styles. Ordering ability has been chosen as a frame of reference and each of the four styles is considered in relation to this.

Abstract Sequential and Ordering Ability

The dominant Abstract Sequential's ordering pattern is sequential and can be represented in two-dimensional geometry. He orders in a tree-like manner starting with a common core and branching into parts derived from the base. (Gregorc, 1994, p. 23)

Concrete Sequential and Ordering Ability

The dominant Concrete Sequential views and approaches experiences in his world of reality in an ordered, sequential, rectilinear, and one-dimensional manner. He expresses concerns about "bottom lines," "crossing lines," and "deadlines." Events are conceived as being joined in a successive and continuous manner like links in a chain. Consequently, he thinks by using a

"train of thought" which has a clear beginning and a clear end. (Gregorc, 1994, p. 19)

Abstract Random and Ordering Ability

The dominant Abstract Random's ordering ability is non-linear and multi-dimensional. Events are not perceived as occurring in a point-by-point progression. Instead, events are experienced holistically by "tuning in" to them fully as a person would experience a wave on an entire sea. (Gregorc, 1994, p. 29)

Concrete Random and Ordering Ability

The dominant Concrete Random orders his world of reality in three-dimensional patterns. Agreeing that events occur in a linear fashion, he also acknowledges that an event can be affected by outside variables. ...[This] can result in a deviation from normal linear progressions to a series of events with interrupted or "skipped" links and the potential of a new, unpredicted event appearing from "out in left field." (Gregorc, 1994, p. 35)

A researcher could be predisposed to the use of intuition instead of seeking evidence through a logical process. The Abstract Random's "best barometers are his instincts and emotions which he expresses through terms like 'gut reaction' and 'when it's right, you'll know it'" (Gregorc, 1994, p. 30). For the Concrete Sequential,* in comparison, the "validity, proof, and clear-cut discernment of anything is decided by and through the physical senses" (p. 20). Some researchers

*Gregorc's attempt to describe learning styles according to typification suggests that he may be a Concrete Sequential. He expressed a desire to show "flowing, subtle, and potent invisible metaphysical forces through a static, hard-data based physical instrument" (Gregorc, 1994, p. 46).

may have difficulty producing categories intuitively or on a "feels right" basis and seek guidance through a review of the methods used by others (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 340).

Using Gregorc's Style Delineator some years prior to this writing, I had discovered my dominant learning style to be Abstract Random. I now mused that another researcher with a different style may take a more linear approach to my data and attempt to present it in the form of treelike diagrams or through links in a chain. Of course, another researcher may have collected the data differently, and consequently, produced different data for analysis.

By considering my learning style, I was again acknowledging the reflexive nature of the research. My earlier discussions about the researcher's selves had been based upon perspectives and experiences. The emphasis on the self as learner added another dimension that I believed affected the research, as well.

In their discussion of the evaluator as the research instrument in naturalistic inquiry, Guba and Lincoln (1981) recognized the influence of the researcher. Borrowing the methodological language of scientific research, they described the naturalistic inquirer as "both an independent variable and an interaction effect" (p. 128). While they appeared to contradict this statement later by claiming that "two document analysts ought to categorize the documents in about the same way," they also admitted that researchers have their own "filters and selective perceptions" (p. 147).

In order to build credibility for my suggestion that a researcher's preferred method of analysis may be dependent upon that individual's preferred learning style, I will

refer to two other areas in which significant research studies have been done. The first is the work of Carbo, Dunn and Dunn (1991) who reported successes when teaching poor readers to read through their preferred learning styles. Their examination of individual differences included a review of the brain research on left and right hemispheric preferences as well as other studies showing people to differ in the extent to which they were analytic or global learners. The second area is the work on psychological type done by Myers and Briggs and based upon Jung's theory of personality (Lawrence, 1987). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is an instrument that identifies a person's preference for processing information and making decisions. For example, it distinguishes between sensing types who attend to "step-by-step experience" and intuitive types who have "hunches" and "ideas out of nowhere" (p. 24).

Guba and Lincoln (1981) remarked that some individuals may have temperaments especially suited to naturalistic inquiry. They wrote, however, that without opportunities for formal training, "we have no idea whether or not there is a 'naturalistic' type." It was their belief that the skills of "observing, analyzing, categorizing," and "careful listening" could be "refined in anyone" (p. 151). Nevertheless, based upon the research related to learning styles, it could be contended that some researchers are more predisposed to naturalistic research than they are to scientific, and furthermore, that some naturalistic researchers are more inclined than others to act upon intuitions and to take nonlinear approaches to the analysis of data.

Analyzing Individual Interviews

Using my dominant learning style and adapting the techniques reported by other researchers, I analyzed each of ten interviews with teachers to uncover themes that seemed central to a particular interview.* The detailed analyses for two of those interviews are provided in this section. The "Linda" interview was the third that I had done; the "Joe and Susan" interview was done nearly a year later and it was the ninth interview. The three themes for Linda were *firm or flexible, give and take, and positive or negative*. These themes were present for Susan and Joe as well, but in this later interview, four new themes were identified - *the bottom line, fun, energy, and knowing the students*. By that stage of the analysis, I realized that data from the Linda interview also fitted within the more recently proposed themes.

As I engaged in the beginning stages of interview analysis, I struggled with the process of identifying themes and the properties of themes. Over time, I seemed to become more adept. A comparison of the categories identified during the original analysis of the Linda interview with the themes identified through the analyses presented here illustrate this point. My earlier work with the Linda interview produced the following rudimentary categories:

How Students Saw Linda (from Linda's perspective)

How Linda Saw Students

How Teachers Saw Students (from Linda's perspective)

How Teachers Saw Linda (from Linda's perspective)

How Linda Saw Teachers

How Students Saw Teachers (from Linda's perspective)

*While my learning style remained constant regardless of methodological approaches, my pedagogic preferences influenced my selection of research techniques.

How Students Saw Themselves (from Linda's perspective)

How Teachers Saw Themselves (from Linda's perspective)

How Linda Saw Herself

When analyzing earlier interviews, I began by sorting the data into categories based upon teachers' descriptions of themselves, students and other teachers. This enabled me to gain more familiarity with the data and to move on to a higher level of data analysis. I referred to the next level as an interpretation of the teacher's descriptions. During the analysis of later teacher interviews, I moved more quickly to the level of interpretation that identified themes "grounded" in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

My interpretations were presented in a manner that suggested the teachers' perceptions were the reality, but I was aware of the different postures regarding reality. According to Sperber (1985), a person's representation of things should not be confused with the way things actually are. Lincoln and Guba (1985) took the position that reality is constructed by an actor. This paralleled Glaser's (1990a) theory that each person's perceived world is their real world and unique to that individual. It was my intent to represent the teachers' perceptions; it was not my intent to declare the accounts to be of superior validity.

The following analyses of two separate interviews delineate the clustering of data for the production of themes. As I focused on the teachers' vivid descriptions which included the frequent use of metaphors, their relation of similarities and contrasts became apparent. Grouping and interpreting the data by themes, I recounted their anecdotes.

Analysis of Interview with Linda - An Interpretation of Linda's Descriptions

Firm or Flexible

Linda described teachers who are "so firm in their beliefs and so firm in the way they instruct and so firm that they're probably right." She described herself as someone looking for "flexibility within the structure." Examples of firm attitudes contrasted with flexible ones throughout the interview.

Teachers who were firm did not give students "a chance to speak." They told them to "do this, don't do that, do this, don't do that." There were teachers who said, "This is the way it is and this is the way it's going to be, no if's or but's about it... Do this and don't ask me why." On the other hand, Linda claimed that she "would let somebody speak." When students went to her, she would talk to them and they could "let loose." They could tell her. "In most cases," said Linda, "I think that's all kids need is somebody to have an ear."

Linda described herself as a "sounding board" for the students, but she thought that some teachers did not have "the time to do that." According to Linda, they had "massive responsibilities." They were "doing what they have to do with thirty kids in a class" whereas she was "working with just two or three." She observed, "They have classes and they have a structure and they have bells to go by." Although Linda recognized that she had "the opportunity of being with just a select few and doing [her] little thing with them," she did not think she would react the way some of the other teachers did.

Flexibility and time were linked again when Linda noted "that takes time and that takes effort" for teachers to have a "grab bag" and "be like a clown almost with a bag of tricks." She stated that "a lot of teachers don't have the know-how or the

creativity" that she had. Furthermore, she thought that they were not treating the students "as people" and were more concerned about the curriculum. "They're teaching the curriculum and not the student....They think just because curriculum is changing, they think that's a big battle. That's hard to handle when they've been set."

Linda recognized that she needed time to work with students in order to effect notable changes. This was the flexible Linda whose "expectations" were not "so harsh" as those of the firm teachers. She believed that a student's aggressive behavior would not be "cured" quickly. When talking generally about the students that were referred to her, she professed not to expect immediate changes in attitudes and behaviors. It required "practice...doing it over and over and over again."

As for the teachers, Linda wondered if they "have actually given up on these kids." She thought that "they probably have not found a way or haven't educated themselves or learned the technique to deal" with them. Linda's willingness to bend had enabled her to make a point of "befriending...the older firm" and she saw them "loosening up." She passed around books on "incentives and motivational things." Nevertheless, she seemed to recognize her limitations since it was "up to" the teachers if they wanted to use her suggestions.

Linda, who was not "set," claimed that "every time you turn around the needs of the students are changing." She believed that "everybody has a different learning and teaching style, so what goes for one may not necessarily work for another... They're all individuals." The "opinionated" teachers, however, were viewed as finding it "really difficult...if you try to impose anything new." Linda, on the other

hand, "wanted it to change" because she saw "a need" to change. While "a lot of teachers say you can't teach an old dog new tricks," Linda saw her own experiences as "challenging" and "diversified." She even talked about "finding the time" for graduate studies.

Linda described herself as "an alien walking in and trying to do something in an already structured and comfortable staff." She recognized that teachers "don't want to be judged..None of us do." Her words conveyed an awareness of the resistance to change. She acknowledged that as "sort of like an outsider" it seemed "so easy" for her "to sit on this side of the fence" and say what she would do. This expressed willingness to see the perspective of other teachers provided further evidence of Linda's capacity for flexibility.

By not grouping all of the teachers in the same category, Linda was also showing that she was aware of teachers' different perspectives. While she saw some teachers as "firm," she was flexible enough to realize that this descriptor was inappropriate for all teachers. She claimed, "Some teachers go the extra mile and they want to know...and want to get involved and...would do anything."

In opposition to the images connoted by the terms "disciplinarian," "witch" or "warden," Linda spoke of being a "liaison, like a mentor," talked of "compromise," and described herself as "very laid back." She wanted to be "approachable" and to have a "good rapport" with the students. She had a "way of asking, too, instead of demanding." As a result, she could "ask a hard-to-manage kid to do something where another teacher would ask them and they would refuse."

Linda believed that students don't want "authority just overpowering them all the time. They want somebody that they can respect." Instead of telling them what to do, she got them thinking and gave them "options and choices." This served as another example of Linda's flexible approach contrasting with the steadfastness of some teachers.

Another trait of firm teachers that was uncovered by Linda was a general reluctance to move beyond their classrooms. When discussing the resistance of teachers to do supervision in the in-school suspension room, Linda noted, "A lot of teachers...stay in their rooms and that's all they see. Whereas...it was more like a circulation, getting to know the kids and know the program...awareness."

"Those homeroom teachers won't go sit where I sit," observed Linda. Conversely, Linda was "able to bend." She did more than supervise in-school suspensions as illustrated by the next scenario. "Two girls met me this morning in the hall and they need to see me sometime today and I said, 'Okay, go set a time and you be there and I'll make sure that I'm available to you.'" As well as being available for the students, Linda helped the teachers. For example, she recalled that they came to her when "they all had to decorate the doors for Christmas."

When looking at teacher-student interactions, she thought that the students "find it really difficult to be that flexible" in order to adapt to the differing expectations of teachers. It was her opinion that they did "handle it quite well." Nevertheless, Linda saw many of the students as "short-fused...not even thinking...just reacting." Not wanting to be "told what to do," they believed that they were "not doing anything wrong." Linda remarked that "in their minds, they're not out of

line...which is probably justified." In this manner, she presented a picture of inflexible students as well as inflexible teachers.

Although Linda described some students as being "totally out of control" at times, she claimed to have "no fear...with these kids." She helped them regain "control or a certain amount of control" while recognizing "they thought that was the best way to handle it at the time." Ironically, she professed that she still hadn't "been able to understand the way these adolescents think," yet she seemed to be aware of the students' points of view. Just as Linda's flexibility appeared to enable her to see the teachers' perspectives, it also allowed her to be open to seeing the students' side. Her ability to bend seemed to facilitate her work with both unbending groups.

Combined with an ability to be flexible was Linda's expressed need for order and structure. She acknowledged looking for "guidelines within the give and take." Linda liked having a program that was not "so overwhelming...because of the way it's structured." When reflecting upon her four years of experience in a group home, she recalled that "with those kind [*sic*] of teenagers...you have to expect some sort of..order."

While Linda asserted that "the way" she demanded was not "so harsh," she did make demands. She stated, "I don't demand anything but politeness in my room. It's 'please' and 'thank you' and 'pardon.' It's not, you know, 'give me this, give me that.' If they learn anything else, they're gonna be polite...and it's 'yes, sir'...and even those little things count to those teachers." Linda also admitted that she could "be just as dictatorial as any other teacher in here and...can demand and ask

and...want results." Through her "way," she claimed to get "productivity out of" a student. For this, she credited her "state of mind" and "personality."

Give and Take

Linda's ability to bend along with her need for structure may have enabled her to realize value in the "give and take." Her accounts of her interactions with students and teachers sometimes served as examples of the reciprocity of the relationships. She talked about giving students "respect" so she could have "their respect." She believed that they wouldn't come to her "if there wasn't that." When students gave her a "scenario of what they did and how they handled it," she would give them "the praise that they need." Although she would "never turn a student" away from the "quiet sanctuary" of her room, she stated that "they do have to understand that...I'm doing them a favor...so you can do me a little favor by cooperating."

Reciprocity also appeared to be present in her relationships with teachers. Linda observed that "the staff are good; the administration are super. I know where I stand and they know where they stand." She saw the staff as wanting her to continue supervising the in-school suspension room, and to get this, "would do anything" for her.

Positive or Negative

Linda described firm teachers as "uptight," "hard core," "opinionated," and "very hard to please." When talking about herself, she claimed to be someone who took "one day at a time" and who did not "lash back." Other teachers were "exhausted" and "burnt out"; Linda was "always smiling." They were "negative"; she was "positive."

Teachers who were "strung so tight" said they "wouldn't put up with that. Look who you're dealing with...You're dealing with the bottom of the bottom of the bottom of the bottom." On the contrary, Linda claimed, "You have to be positive 'cause [sic] all these kids have good things about them...really good things."

According to Linda, certain teachers did not "want to spend time" on students that they thought did not "deserve it." They said, "I don't need that part of my day." As for Linda, she declared, "There really has not been a bad day." She actually made this comment a few days after she had been attacked by a student. When talking about the attack, she noted that "nothing made any sense...I'm sure it doesn't make any sense to him either." Instead of expressing anger about the incident, she was concerned about "what caused the attack in the first place" in order to "handle it" so it would not happen again.

While Linda saw in-school suspension as "negative" and wanted a "more positive view," she said that teachers "still want that room...They still want that out." Even though they "realize that these kids will not go away and that as the years go on there seem to be more and more troubled at-risk students...they're hoping that...they don't really have to deal with it." Linda talked about a more "positive" approach to in-school suspension through implementing a "mentor/tutor" program.

Although Linda made unfavorable comments about teachers throughout the interview, she was still able to say that "none of these teachers are bad." Later, taking another positive view, she quipped that the staff had "adjusted well" to her presence. Nevertheless, she surmised that "you might as well flush" some of the teachers. Her recommendation was that they "chill out!"

When reflecting on her own experiences, she remarked, "I can't say any of them have been really...bad. I've enjoyed all of them." Maintaining to take "one day a time," she had "no complaints." She saw herself as someone who had "things to offer...to these students...Why not use it and why not make it available...if you think you can make a difference."

Even though Linda provided negative descriptions of teachers, her general outlook appeared to be positive. This positive attitude seemed to be connected with her desire for flexibility.

I think if we are flexible to expand and take in the needs...I think if we're aware of that, I think it comes together. The teachers are happy, the students are happy and the administration's happy. It makes for a better learning and a positive experience for the kids. I'm sure it doesn't have to be so schoolish.

Summarizing the Interview with Linda

Flexibility and positive views contrasted with firmness and negativity. Linda's perceived need for structure differed from rigidity since she still looked for the flexibility within the structure that allowed for the give and take. However, she did not seem to bend so much that she was always giving. She knew when to take, as well; she had her expectations.

The factor of time appeared to facilitate flexibility. Unlike some of the teachers, Linda had the time or was prepared to find the time to listen to students and to creatively work with them.

Linda asserted that "students are the butt" of teachers who are "exhausted" and "burnt-out." Exhausted teachers were also portrayed as being "uptight" and "negative." Her perspective on teacher-student interactions led me to formulate certain questions. Which comes first - exhaustion, rigidity, or negativity? Are

these developed concurrently? Are exhaustion, burn-out, and negativity the symptoms of a refusal to bend? Linda declared, "If you can't bend, I think that's where the short fuses start erupting and that's where, you know, you can't go with the flow."

Analysis of Interview with Susan and Joe - An Interpretation of Susan and Joe's Descriptions

The Bottom Line

Susan and Joe described themselves as a "good team," but they agreed that "different teachers have different personalities," and they were quick to acknowledge that their personalities differed. In the following excerpt, Susan observed the difference in their use of humor as well as in their enforcement of discipline.

Susan: Joe's personality is different from mine, even though we click. He's more bubbly, fun lovey type; and in class...he's just a different type of..where I'm more the type that says I consider these children adults and I tell them that and these are the things I expect from you and that's the bottom line. Where with Joe that's not the bottom line. He's probably softer, maybe. I'm maybe harder.

Joe may have been "softer," but he still said "the rules are there." Yet, Susan suggested the bottom line was different for him. In the following quote, Joe disagreed that this was the case, but his concluding statement actually gave support to Susan's observations.

Joe: I may come around it differently, but when push comes to shove, if they don't do what they're supposed to do, and if they break a guideline in their classroom, then the consequences are there. And they know that...And the consequences are the same....I give them chances...depending on the situation.

Joe talked about the way he and Susan would respond if a student were to swear. "Listen," they would say, "we do not appreciate that language in class." Joe would add, "I know how to use them; I know how to say them; and when I'm up river

with the boys, I probably would say them." As Susan observed, "He tells a little story to go along with it." On the other hand, she would "just say 'look.'"

Susan described a student who was still in the program but seemed to have come close to the bottom line on more than one occasion.

Susan: He's missed seven and a half days here, as well, because on his job placement, he left...Went with a girl at lunch hour and didn't come back. Very irresponsible. He's been in this program. Really, he's here on a prayer, because he was already in the program and we took him back on the promise that he would work really hard.

While Joe gave the students "choices," he also told them that "this is what has to be done." When talking about students' privileges, he stated, "You abuse it, you lose it." He said that the students "have to be held accountable" for what they do.

Susan replied, "I know they do, but.."

Who was really softer? A clear-cut answer was not readily apparent. Both Susan and Joe spoke of bottom lines, and both of them also showed an openness to giving chances.

Fun

Although Susan described Joe as more "fun lovey," she also had fun with the students but in a different way. Whereas Joe used "humor in the classroom," Susan played board games during lunch hour and observed that "Joe won't do that." Susan said, "I joke around with them, like they're my buddies at lunch hour...But in class I tend to not be as bubbly fun. To me, when we're in class, this is what we have to get done and this is what we get done." Nevertheless, she remarked, "I think math should be fun."

Even though they claimed that their use of humor was not the same, they provided examples of when they had fun together in front of the students.

Susan: And the kids can joke with us...Last week when I was tired and grouchy and I said, "Oh, I'm so, this is gonna, when I'm pregnant, look out, because it's gonna...And Mr....was joking around, too. He said, "But she takes iron pills, and when she takes her iron pills, things are really good." So they came in the next day, "Mrs....., did you take your iron pills today?"...And we just laugh. "No, I've thrown them out. I think I'm just gonna come without them now." You know. So we have fun. We can have fun. And you have to have fun.

Susan observed that the students described the program as being "really fun."

When discussing the use of the video camera in his English classes, Joe remarked that "the kids love it." He acknowledged that it was important for the students to enjoy what they were doing.

Joe: If you don't like what you're reading, if you find it boring, put it down. You're not reading what you wanna read. Put it down...unless you're assigned to do it."

Energy

When talking about the energy of teachers, Joe made a connection with their compassion for teaching.

Joe: Teachers, any teacher has a lot of compassion for what they're doing. Any teacher has just as much energy as we do. It's just that we have a smaller number to deal with than they do. And that's the way it is...Like one of the veteran teachers told us, "It's unfortunate that we don't really get to know the students." This is coming from Miss ..., a very staunch, old school teacher...The compassion is still there. And that light is still there. And the energy's still there. She says, "It's unfortunate we don't get to know the students on the same level you guys do."

In the previous declaration, Joe seemed to be defending all teachers. Susan, on the other hand, when talking about compassion, claimed that teachers "have compassion for their level...They have compassion for the majority." She said that "automatically people perceive at-risk as trouble makers and they have to keep them under control and they have to yell and make sure that their point is made..." Joe observed that some teachers have "you're not gonna get the best out of me

attitude." This suggested he agreed with Susan and seemed to conflict with his earlier statement that all teachers have compassion.

Susan thought that the students saw energy in her "in a different way" than they saw it in Joe. When she spoke of the energy that she brought to teaching, she linked it with her love of the subject that she taught.

Susan: I have lots of energy because I like math and I think math should be fun and I think it's, even though it's not funny, it's..the kids do like it.

Although Susan credited her love of math for her high energy, she eagerly moved from talking about math to talking about students.

Susan: My energy contributes to them [sic] learning...They see that I care that they learn. And I do. And when I see them learning, I could just hug them.

Joe enthusiastically described Susan's use of energy in the classroom.

Joe: You saw her this morning....Her energy is like...Okay, you understand everything, and then she checks for understanding, she moves on to another level. So the energy is not so much, bang, it's out there now. It's controlled. I find your energy level is that controlled.

Whether their energy was derived primarily from love of subject or compassion for students, both Joe and Susan connected energy with the showing of care for their students. While they possessed energy in abundance, they remarked that "most at-risk students lack it." This was attributed to "lack of sleep, lack of nutrition and motivation. But sometimes [lack of] motivation is a result of a lack of sleep and nutrition."

Knowing the Students

In addition to linking caring with energy, Susan and Joe linked caring with knowing the students. It was unclear, however, whether caring inspired the knowing or vice versa.

Joe: We know the kids. For instance, Derrick, this morning, he was acting up. But I know why...She [Derrick's mother] wants him to move out of his house...He's tired of the "b s" from home...

Susan: Kids come in here and lay their cards on the table and tell you "this is my life," and so sometimes they're acting in ways that you don't agree with, but there's always a reason for the way they behave.

Susan: We find out every day new things about the students that we teach. And we had one boy who wears his hat in here. And the rule is no hats. Yesterday, I found out, talking to him in private, that he needs a haircut but his mom keeps borrowing money from him and he keeps telling her that he needs a haircut and there's no money so he's embarrassed to not wear his hat. Now, I feel like I want him to wear his hat..because I know how bad he feels. Another one who never never does homework, I find out yesterday that he lives in a trailer that's no bigger than this room practically, with four other people. And where are you gonna do homework? Who cares if you do?

Susan and Joe realized that these students needed an environment where they were not "judged or felt judged." They emphasized that they did not "yell and scream" at the students. They reported having to "watch" what they said because "you may say something...you might even forget you said it to them, but to them they'll never forget."

As Susan and Joe got to know their students, they discovered that first impressions may be misleading.

Joe: I found that the most..scariest lookin' person in the entire school..it is amazing when you get to know them. And you say, "Why was I afraid of this person? Why was I afraid to approach this person?"

Susan: Usually...the one that comes here and is a real pain in the neck, turns out to be the best in the end. Almost always.

Knowing the students meant knowing their activities outside the classroom and being familiar with their interests.

Susan: We've had them come here high after lunch.

Joe: You have to be up on what the kids are doing...I don't think I could do this because of the age if I don't keep up with music. If I don't keep up with the things that interest the students, I may not be able to do it.

They offered explanations for being able to get to know their students.

Joe: Have to build up trust. Because recently we've been in elementary and junior high, too, so a lot of these kids we've seen before or taught before or have been in the same school as them...so you know them a little bit or know a friend of theirs.

Susan: Yeah. That's where your tricks can come in because you know what they used to respond to or you can ring their bells by saying, "Remember when."

Joe and Susan seemed to go beyond student-teacher relationships with their students and to get to know them through other forms of relationships. These interactions could also help to explain their ability to maintain "that tie" with some students after they left the program.

Susan: Just yesterday, picking up some of the students from work placement, one of the girls said... "I'm so glad, you know, I can't jig [skip classes] this year." I said, "Well, why not?" And she said, "Well, it's hard for me to get caught." And I said, "Well, you can call in and tell me you were sick." "Yeah, but if you found out I was lying to you, I'd feel really bad because you're like my friends." ...They always say that, "You're not like teachers." They tell us that all the time.

They reminded themselves, however, that the student-teacher relationship had to be upheld because the students had "to go back to the high school." They observed that it would be "pie in the sky" for students to think that other teachers would want a different kind of relationship.

In addition to being a friend, Susan sometimes assumed the persona of a parent. When talking about a former student, she said, "He's my baby." At another time, she said, "I had a little girl who was also capable of doing that." Later, she stated, "They were like ours. We were like parents...They're just like your own."

While Susan referred to the students as "little kids" and her "buddies," she also claimed to "consider these children adults." This apparent oxymoron may have exemplified a degree of ambiguity with respect to her perception of the students. Joe told them they were "adults." He used a business analogy to explain the relationship. He informed the students, "We run the place like a company...You have your job to do and we have our job to do...The whole idea is for the benefit of the company or the program."

Joe: A lot of times we may set aside our curriculum and say this is needed. We have to sit down and talk as a company. We have to have an employer-staff meeting.

It was notable that Joe who was seen as "softer" took a business approach while Susan who was "harder" focused on the theme of family and friends. On the surface, this appeared contradictory. Nevertheless, Susan was businesslike when she was in the classroom. Joe, who ran the place like a company, admitted to giving the students "chances." They both seemed to possess an ability to merge the businesslike with the familial, and this ability may have helped them to work together as a team. Furthermore, even though their strategies seemed to sometimes differ, both of them valued knowing their students and both emanated concern for them.

Positive and Negative (Success and Failure)

"You feel good about what you're doing." This is the way Joe described teaching at-risk students. "I'm a better at-risk student teacher this year than I was the day I walked in here," he noted. Susan supported this by saying, "You learn. You have to learn." At another point, Susan resorted to hyperbole to express her positive regard for the teaching situation. She remarked, "I love teaching math...I just get so much enjoyment out of teaching math that I could teach math to at-risk students twenty-four hours a day."

Joe and Susan spoke positively when talking about their students' potential for learning. They had "high expectations." "Take pride in what you're doing 'cause [sic] you're doing a damn good job" is the message that Joe claimed he gave to the students. Susan said, "They know they are [learning]."

The positive talk was interspersed with the negatives. They spoke about working with students who were "not believing in themselves" and who required constant "pushin'." Susan admitted that she found it "frustrating" because she knew "a lot of these kids could do so much more." She blamed their current performances on having "missed things along the way...They've missed their basics and they're getting their basics now. It's too late."

Some of their students went back to regular classes but they were not successful. Joe explained, "Our idea of success is for them to maintain that high mark that they're doing right now."

Susan: I fear for these kids. I'm scared for them because I know that half of them are gonna go back and won't succeed...Because they're not succeeding and I know they can succeed, so we're failing somewhere along the way...They saw that they could and then all of a sudden they're not, and they're back into "I'm dumb." Unjust.

Susan and Joe also witnessed the negativity of other teachers when their students returned to the regular classes.

Susan: We often go through the halls and they say, "Was...with you last year? Well, he didn't learn much because my gosh." Well, we're sorry, but, you know, that's life.

Nevertheless, they saw some of their students experience success back in the regular program.

Susan: We have students do so well here that they wanted to go back and do academic. And we have one success story...because that's what he's doing. He went back. In fact, he was in grade 11 making three credits, or something, and just goofing off and doing some drugs and just being a real you know and went back and started in grade 10 all over

again...He is successfully achieving 70's in academic and he is just cruising through. He will be a university student, which is great.

Joe noted, "We're hard on ourselves...If we taught fifty students and one of them dropped out, we'd go - where did we go wrong?" He observed that having the students stay in school was "still not good enough." They wanted the students to "maintain the success they had" while in their program.

Sometimes, Susan and Joe were "hard" on themselves, but other times, they spoke with optimism. "There are always gonna be some that fail," declared Susan, "but they'll succeed somewhere down the road. Something will catch them. There's something for everyone." Joe remembered the influence of a former teacher and stated that his goal was "to affect...at least one student a year" in such a way. Susan remarked, "You don't realize how much you affect these kids. You'll never know, I guess."

As well as giving positives to their students, Susan and Joe received "strokes." Joe recalled attending graduation ceremonies. "What a great way to end the year. See a kid that you taught, regardless of what level it was, graduate. It was really nice." Susan remembered, "Every time I saw one on the stage I could have cried."

Flexibility

Susan and Joe saw their program as giving them the freedom to be flexible and they thought this situation differed from that of a regular classroom teacher.

Joe: You have to be open-minded and be able to adapt, monitor and adjust...."Oh, somebody had a problem at work...I've gotta run. I know I'm supposed to take the next period but I have, someone has to go."... It's not a stressful thing. Whereas, if I was in a classroom in junior or high school and all of a sudden I was on a prep but I said I had to cover for someone...It could be stressful. But here it's not.

Susan: I don't think it's necessarily the fault of the teacher, but we don't have to follow a curriculum per se. We can flip the book over and say, "Okay, we're changing this." The teacher in the classroom is often stuck with the "I've gotta finish this because they have CRTC's, CTBS's," or whatever. They have to because it's coming; and if they're not taught, they're gonna be accountable. And so you've got all that pressure. And that's unfortunate...

Susan connected this perceived pressure and absence of flexibility with the regular classroom teacher's approach to discipline.

Susan: Because of that pressure, then somebody's losing out. And if there's someone who's being a turkey in the back, it's only because they're not understanding. They get rid of them. You have to get rid of them because you have to get your work done so it's not the teacher's fault. It's just the fact. It's just whatever happens because of what pressure is given to them. Here we can throw it [curriculum] out.

Susan and Joe's ability to be flexible enabled them to work without a prescribed curriculum. Susan noted, "We don't even have a curriculum. We just sort of do what we do."

Their willingness to adjust was also revealed when they discussed adapting the strategies of other teachers. Joe remarked, "I think we learn that every teacher steals from any other teacher....Some of the greatest ideas were stolen from other teachers. And you just adapt it to your personality."

When a couple of their students came to class "high," Susan and Joe illustrated flexibility while dealing with the situation.

Joe: We dropped our lesson plan and said, "This afternoon we're goin' to talk about drug abuse." We brought in a video...Susan said that, "If someone came in here stoned, we probably wouldn't accuse them. Probably we'd haul out a video like this..."

Susan: I said, "I'd probably haul out this video on drugs; pop it in; we'd watch; talk about it." So I pulled the VCR out and I popped it in.

Because they worked with a small group, Susan and Joe could detect when a student was ready to explode, and they made adjustments.

Joe: You can say, "Go for a walk outside," or "Here's a dollar. I'm out of coffee. You wanna go get me a cup of coffee?" Or, "You want to go get me some milk for my lunch?" Or, "Listen...Bring this message over to the school board office," which is just down the way. "Give it to the secretary..." And the message will say, "Have a nice day..." Or something like that, you know. Anything just to get them out of the classroom and get some fresh air when they're ready to explode.

In addition to digressing from lesson plans, Joe gave the students "choices in the English class" with regard to the "materials they [the students] can bring in and the way they present it." He said, "I'm tryin' to get towards a place where every assignment can have a variety of different ways of presenting." This seemed to be a goal he had set for himself. His appreciation of flexibility seemed to connect with his own growth as a teacher.

Although Joe and Susan both valued flexibility, they also agreed that there was structure in the program. "A lot of these kids in need...don't have any structure at home." The program offered "a comfortable structure in that...they're comfortable with it. They're smiling...They're asked what to do, in a friendly sense. They're not rebellious of it..Sometimes, they can be...They can sometimes hate us for what we say."

When talking about the high school, Susan asserted that the students "perceive [it] as a place that's not flexible...for their needs." Viewing the high school to be "very flexible for certain groups," she did not "feel that the high school is flexible for at-risk students." She claimed not to fault the school, nonetheless, because an at-risk student could be "a pain in the neck to the education system."

Give and Take

When Joe told students "you have your job to do and we have our job to do," he was sending a message of reciprocity. By putting the "ball right back in their court," Susan and Joe were letting the students know that they expected them to take responsibility for their learning. It was a shared responsibility because the teachers were responsible, as well, for "showing them [students] that they're smart."

Joe pointed out that if the students were not responsible, he and Susan would "get on them." He told students, "If you don't like us hassling, then be responsible. We'll stop hassling you." Reduced hassling was exchanged for increased responsibility.

According to Joe and Susan, the students became "more responsible" when they were given more power. Joe recommended that "you share the power with the students." This was another form of reciprocity that seemed to facilitate the development of responsibility.

The building of trust was also a reciprocal undertaking. Joe remarked that they "have to build up trust." One way to do this was through getting to know the students. Another way was by showing the students that they trusted them. When making videos, Joe gave them "a thousand dollar piece of equipment." He said, "I do trust them."

The reciprocity that was inherent in the relationships was illustrated further through the rewards that both students and teachers received in exchange for their involvement in the program. Susan said, "We're stroked a lot by the kids. They

give us a lot." Joe reported, "When that light clicks on with math...the kid just beams."

Interrelatedness of Themes

While seven main themes were identified through an analysis of this interview, it would seem that these themes are not isolated but are related to each other. The same quotes could support different themes and this illustrated the interrelatedness. For example, fun and energy were connected when Susan said, "I have lots of energy because I like math and I think math should be fun." The connection between energy and positiveness was made when Susan stated that her energy contributed to the learning.

Caring was not identified as a separate theme, but its presence can be found throughout the interview. Susan and Joe made a point of knowing their students because they cared about what happened in their lives outside the classroom as well as within it. The fact that they spoke of bottom lines but were flexible enough to give chances may have been their way of showing that they cared. The fun and energy that they brought to their work with the students also sent this message.

Although a particular theme may not appear to be so directly linked with one theme as it is with another, it may still exert an influence. This can be illustrated by looking at the themes of fun and energy in relation to the bottom line. Fun and energy may not seem to be so immediately connected with the bottom line as are the themes of flexibility and knowing the student. Since getting to know a student is likely to be facilitated by the teacher's display of humor and enthusiasm, however, it is quite reasonable to propose that fun and energy affect the bottom line.

Summarizing the Interview with Joe and Susan

The following general conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the interview with Susan and Joe.

- While Susan and Joe noted their different personalities and sometimes seemed to employ different strategies, they also had much in common regarding their approaches to working with at-risk students.
- Seven themes were uncovered in the interview; i.e., the bottom line, fun, energy, knowing the students, positive and negative, flexibility, give and take.
- All seven themes appeared to be interrelated.
- Although caring for students was not identified as a theme, it seemed to be a common thread throughout the interview.

Looking Across the Interviews

The previous section outlined the detailed analyses of two interviews conducted with teachers. As a result of analyzing ten interviews in this manner, a total of thirteen themes were extracted. Some of these themes seemed to have a strong presence in all of the interviews; other themes seemed central to only some of the interviews. The thirteen themes were **control/freedom (control/empowerment), connecting, understanding, flexibility/structure, positive/negative, developing coping skills, energy, reciprocity, helping with academics, efficacy, fun, openness, and belonging**. "The bottom line" in Susan and Joe fitted within the "control/freedom" theme. The theme labelled as "knowing the students" seemed synonymous with "understanding" and the theme of "give and take" equated with "reciprocity." "Connecting" and "belonging" were quite strong themes in the tenth interview. I suspected that these had also been present in previous interviews, but the tenth interview had given me new insight. The other themes had received only minor consideration during the analyses of certain interviews; I was now

curious with regard to their weightiness when looking at the interviews as a whole.

When analyzing "broad themes," Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989) reported they "progressively re-sorted the evidence, refining the categories which appeared from it, looking for contradictions and negative instances and using these to help in the process of clarification" (p. 8). That was my challenge as I began to explore the thirteen themes.

In an attempt to explain the process of categorizing, I wrote that each of the thirteen themes had "a name capturing the features that intuitively led me to create the category in the first place" (December, 1994). This was the voice of someone predisposed toward an Abstract Random style (Gregorc, 1994). I was aware, however, that researchers have been criticized for not being explicit enough about their analytic processes when using qualitative methods (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Nevertheless, I viewed myself as a researcher who sometimes preferred to "reject systematizing procedures for analyzing qualitative data because such procedures might rigidify the process, resulting in a loss of the intuitive and creative qualities" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 166). According to Goetz and LeCompte, ethnographers "do use formal, systematic, and logical procedures to generate constructs and establish relationships among them" (p. 167). It is likely that they would have categorized me as a "neophyte" (p. 166) in need of guidance. I decided to attempt an explanation of that "feels right" process for the benefit of those readers who prefer a more systematic approach.

My growing familiarity with the data facilitated the creation of categories. I have already described my initial attempts to formulate categories for each of the

interviews. While using descriptive headings such as "teacher-student relationships," I was learning about the data. Over time, I was able to move beyond the grouping of facts presented by informants and to the identification of more abstract headings such as "control/empowerment" and "flexibility/structure." Some of the headings were the words of those who were interviewed; other headings were my summaries of concepts that I thought their stories were suggesting. For example, the heading of flexibility/structure was formed from the teachers' words. "You need to have flexibility within the structure, if there is such a thing." Efficacy, on the other hand, was the term that I chose for a concept that seemed to be present in the transcripts. "They're worth fighting for, most of them are worth fighting for. There's the odd child, like I say, it's just way out of my ball game."

My "intuitive" formulation of themes paralleled the two types of categories identified by Strauss (1987) - "sociological constructs and in vivo codes" (p. 33). Sociological constructs "are based on a combination of the researcher's scholarly knowledge and knowledge of the substantive field under study" (p. 34). In vivo codes "are taken from or derived directly from the language of the substantive field: essentially the terms used by actors in that field themselves" (p. 33).

In order to assess relationships within and across themes, I considered each piece of data in terms of the thirteen themes. I labelled blank pages of paper with each of the themes and spread the pages out in front of me. As I read the first interview, I took the phrases and sentences that were the pieces of data and wrote them on one or more of the blank pages. It was possible for a phrase to give support for two, three, or even more themes. That was not a surprise since quite some time prior to this, I had seen the interrelatedness of the themes. This method

did contradict Guba and Lincoln's (1981) recommendation that categories should be "mutually exclusive" (p. 243) so that a piece of datum does not fit into more than one category. On the other hand, they later developed the concept of mutual simultaneous shaping whereby "all elements in a situation are in mutual and continual interaction" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 155). Furthermore, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) wrote that "properties shared with units belonging to other categories may be used to develop the linkages and relationships" (p. 171).

When I placed a unit in more than one category, I was identifying potential links for future development. For example, the following quotation in relation to parent-teacher interviews was coded in three categories: connecting, belonging and understanding.

Ah, some students didn't have any parents to call in so that was always a difficult one. You sort of feel bad for students who don't have any parents. I would invite the students to come in if they wanted to, to talk, just to spend some time. Or if there was someone significant in their life, if there was a friend or a counsellor, or whatever, I'd ask them to come in, or their guardian, if that person is close to them.

This teacher described ways in which she showed understanding and made connections with students. When she was scheduling parent-teacher interviews, the students who did not have parents were also invited to meet with her. Someone "close to them" could be invited, as well. This provided an opportunity "to talk, just to spend some time," to connect. She did this because she understood their need to be included, to belong. Understanding, connecting and belonging were linked in this example. Additional illustrations across the interviews helped to forge this relationship more strongly. An elaboration of the process is provided in the analysis of the themes.

As suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967), I was now looking for as many categories as possible in which to fit every incident of data. When a piece did not seem to belong within one of the thirteen themes, I had an "other" category in which to place it. Items placed within a miscellaneous category could be placed under a refined heading or could form a new category as the analysis progressed (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

I continued this exercise with all of the ten interviews. If the importance of themes could be assessed by the quantity of data that filled the blank pages, then the significance of five themes was proclaimed. These five themes were control/freedom (control/empowerment), understanding, connecting, flexibility/structure, and positive/negative. There was evidence for the other eight themes, as well, and these eight themes had varying degrees of linkages with what were at present the dominant five. It was noted by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) that sorting data into like and unlike groups is a "prerequisite to establishing the frequency with which phenomena occur" (P. 171). This process provided support for some of my intuitions. There was, however, one surprise - the theme of fun had the least data of all. In my initial interviews with students, this theme had seemed strong. In subsequent interviews with most of the teachers, there was usually a reference to the use of humor and participation in fun activities. I had not realized how limited those references were until I had looked across the interviews.

Upon discovering the tenuousness of fun as a theme, I reflected upon my reasons for having thought otherwise. It may have been the earlier student data that had predisposed me to expecting the presence of this category in the teacher data. I may have believed that these teachers must have been meeting their students'

needs for fun in order to be effective; if not, the students would have seemed less inclined to stay in the program. Although the bias that favored the importance of fun came to the fore, it seemed that my reasons for carrying this view were more tacit. Furthermore, the data that I compiled did not support this bias.

Acknowledging that my biases affected what I expected to find in the data, I also had to acknowledge that the data did not always uphold my suppositions. This reflection did not happen while I was collecting information. It was not until I had sorted the data and had discovered the sparsity within the category of fun that I reflected upon the occurrence. This was a form of reflection-on-action instead of reflection-in-action (Schon, 1987).

The thirteen themes were actually tentative. Data within each of these themes needed to be examined more closely before the themes could be confirmed and defined. According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984), properties of a category are discovered through systematic content analysis. "Core properties are then used to develop an abstract definition of the category" (p. 170). At this stage, therefore, it would have been premature for me to have defined a theme.

With the data grouped by tentative themes and with cross references to signify interrelationships, I began to examine each of the thirteen themes. As these themes were assessed for relationships, they were sometimes combined or broken down into separate elements or subsumed under more generic headings. This process is illustrated by the detailed analyses of each of the themes in the sections that follow.

I endeavored to clearly delineate the steps that I took to categorize the data. Referring to the literature for assistance, I discovered a tendency to omit the

explicit outlining of procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Researchers who are concerned about stifling the creative process in others may be reluctant to prescribe techniques (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The reader or the novice researcher can be left somewhat mystified, however, by such terms as "grounded theory" and "emergence." Although I had become convinced that an experiential approach was necessary for learning qualitative methodology, I wanted to demystify the process for the benefit of the reader.

Control, Freedom and Empowerment

During the earlier stages of data collection, I reported control/empowerment as a theme that seemed to be emerging from the data. I wrote at that time, however, that "all of this theorizing was rather premature" (Report, February, 1993). In the same report, I noted, "As well as providing students with opportunities to exert power, these teachers spoke of their own autonomy....Although these teachers empowered their students, they still exercised control." As more data were collected, the label control/empowerment was changed to control/freedom. I wondered what would be disclosed by an analysis of that theme at this point in the research.

Freedom and empowerment are not synonymous terms. The replacement of "empowerment" with "freedom" in the category heading suggested that I was interpreting the data differently as the research progressed. "The categories describe the data, but to some extent they also interpret the data" (Merriam, 1988, p. 140).

In addition to interpreting new data, I needed to revisit data that had been previously categorized. Ricoeur (1981) espouses a view of hermeneutics as a

reciprocal understanding of self and text with each reading of the text resulting in a new understanding. From this perspective, each return to the data affected the interpretation. "To interpret is to follow the path of thought opened up by the text, to place oneself *en route* towards the *orient* of the text" (p. 162).

A reexamination of the data revealed that while there were instances of teachers sharing the control with students, there were far more examples of teachers being in charge. In previous clusterings of the data, I had placed phrases within one of three headings - teacher control, student control, and shared control. The total amount of data within the student control and shared control clusters approximately equaled the data within the teacher control cluster, but after I revisited the data, my earlier readings of the phrases appeared superficial. This latest review of the data within the student control and shared control groupings resulted in my asking new questions. For example, after reading the statement "authority's given to them," I asked, "Who does the giving?" Student control and shared control now seemed to be misnomers for these clusters. Previously, I had focused on such words as responsibility, freedom, choices and options. Now, I looked at the verbs - give, let, get, allow. These words suggested teacher control.

My return to the data led to my viewing the text differently. This reminded me of the powerful role of the researcher who continues as "research instrument" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 18) beyond the gathering of the data. Her omnipresent influence was there during the analysis. Upon reflection, I wondered if I had been wanting or expecting to find examples of students free from teacher control. Therefore, that is what I saw, at least originally. I had experienced the "concrete reflection" presented in Ricoeur's theory of hermeneutics (1981, p. 158). The reciprocity of understanding self and text were now apparent.

As an outcome of this changed perspective, I formed new clusters with the data. The teachers talked about expecting responsible behavior from students and about students complying with these expectations. They also observed that their strategies differed from those of other teachers. After identifying these three principal categories, I continued with the analysis.

Expecting Responsible Behavior

The teachers expressed expectations for their students to be responsible. They recognized that these students who exhibited irresponsible behaviors needed someone to "spend time with them on behavior, attitude." Three primary means were identified to actualize this expectation for responsibility. Paradoxically, one method focused on enforcement while the other two methods emphasized influence and facilitation.

Enforcing the Expectation of Responsibility

When talking about students assuming responsibility, teachers sometimes used verbs that signified they were controlling the students. They suggested that they would "make" students take responsibility, "get" students to cope, and "demand" students show respect. The following teacher's description of a new social skills program seemed to contain an ironic message. While she gave examples of encouraging the students to look at what they were doing and to develop more effective plans, her professed approach carried a tone of coercion. She talked about "exact lessons" with concepts to "pound" into students.

And it follows a very exact format, with exact lessons on what I have to do. And we talk about your needs, how do you meet your needs...That's where we start. And we work all the way through a wonderful problem solving method of 'win.' Whata ya want? Whata ya doing? It's not working. What are your new plans? So we pound that into them.

At times, the enforcement of responsible behavior was discussed in terms of the imposition of consequences. Students were seen as having "to be held accountable" for their actions. According to the teacher who offered the following observations, students needed to be equipped to deal with different teachers and to be prepared to do what was expected. If they broke classroom guidelines, there would be consequences.

We have to remind them, too, that when they return back to high school, they will have different teachers. Different teachers have different personalities and what you can do...But the bottom line is really is that the rules are there. I may come around it differently, but when push comes to shove, if they don't do what they're supposed to do and if they break a guideline in their classroom, then the consequences are there.

Another teacher remarked that it was difficult for students to adjust to the expectations of different teachers. She claimed that while "one teacher would not tolerate something, another teacher might laugh it off." This teacher provided an example of her own consistent enforcement of consequences. She thought the students accepted this when she explained to them that it was part of her job.

We have a discipline procedure that every teacher is expected to follow to have some sort of consistency within the school. So if a child doesn't show up for reporting, I will put a referral in to the homeroom teacher, failure to report, put a little blurb as to why.... And I'll say to them, "You know I have to do it. You know it's part of my job." And they say, "Yeah, we know."

In addition to exercising her control over the students, the teacher who provided the previous anecdote also presented herself as being within the control of the school regime. Because of her job, there were certain procedures that she had to follow. She let the students know that she was complying with these job expectations. In this way, she implied that the decision was not really hers. By confiding in the students, she seemed to transgress her responsibility to the regime. It was an ambivalent act, one in which she informed on the students while she informed them.

Other researchers have noted the ways in which successful teachers of at-risk students enforce the expectation of responsible behavior. These teachers have been described as valuing the concept of consistency and acknowledging the students' responsibilities for their education (Conant, 1992; Firestone, 1989).

Recognizing that consequences may need to be implemented when teaching "hard-to-reach youth," Mendler (1994) pointed out that this should be done "in a manner that teaches the child" instead of "in a manner that simply reinforces the belief that all adults are mean and hurtful" (p. 24). Curwin (1992) outlined the characteristics of effective consequences for discipline methods. According to Curwin, consequences should be clear and specific, related to the rule and natural or logical, and protect and maintain the dignity of the student. Firestone wrote, "In a consistent environment, order is maintained, roles are clear, and rules are enforced fairly and rigorously, but not harshly. In our study, the schools with a consistent environment generally had the highest teacher and student commitment" (p. 42).

My interviews with teachers contained references to consistency and consequences that paralleled the research literature. Nevertheless, statements about approaching discipline "differently" and enforcing certain rules because of the "job" suggested that in practice the enforcement may not be so clear as Firestone (1989), for example, reported.

Influencing Choices

Although the teachers spoke about the students having choices, their stories indicated that they attempted to exert influence over those choices. As well as controlling choices within their classrooms, the teachers wanted to have an effect on the decisions students made outside their classrooms.

The teachers talked about working with students to help them identify more effective ways to handle situations. Students did the choosing, but the teachers guided their selection of choices.

You know, what could you do differently? Why did this blow-up happen? Why did you fight in the first place? Ah, to get them thinking, to give them options and choices.

The next excerpt contains the phrase "allow them the freedom." While the teacher who is quoted showed an appreciation for a student's desire to have freedom of choice, he also expressed a need to control that freedom. He granted permission to make choices but he placed conditions on those choices. Students could choose the books they wanted to read providing they met certain criteria established by the teacher. Although students could be evaluated in different ways, he retained control of the evaluation by "allowing" these options and by virtue of being the evaluator.

Choices. Keeping choices open and trying to, you know, allow them the freedom in English to read what they want to read as long as it is age appropriate for them and that they can make..allowing them ways for them to be evaluated.

Another teacher talked about setting the tone so students would consider personal choices related to lifestyle and careers. She observed that she introduced these topics by telling them that they were responsible, young adults. She said that she was "really shifting the responsibility to them," but her story suggested that she took the lead, raised the issues, and told them that they "should be deciding."

And I think if you set that tone with them - that they are responsible, that they are young adults and that they should be deciding now how they dress, maybe what type of job they'd like to have, what kind of a house they would like to live in; and if they want to live in that kind of a house, what kind of education are they going to need to get that job that will pay for that house.

In some cases, the workplace outside of school was used as an incentive for students. One teacher said that she showed her students "other occupations" and

told them "if you work hard, it'll pay off." Another teacher saw work experience as a "positive thing" for her students. They had "a break from school" and were "out in the real world with real people with real jobs doing things that really matter."

There were instances when teachers acknowledged intentionally restricting the students' choices. For example, although students were encouraged to participate in forming the rules and expectations for their groups, teachers claimed that they influenced the students' final decisions. Either students did not have a choice about some things, if they wanted to stay in the program, or teachers manipulated the students' choices to match their own requirements.

I mean I had my rules and expectations, but we had decided on them as a group, and there were certain things that they had to do.

The teachers' discussions suggested that they placed values upon choices. There were appropriate and inappropriate choices and they wanted their students to make what they perceived to be the right ones. They seemed to recognize that without their influence, the decisions made by students "may not be all that constructive of a solution." Nevertheless, they were working with students who were "hateful of people who have control of them." They were aware that these students needed to "have a say." Therefore, as teachers, they offered the guidance while students made the choices. At the same time, they sent a message that there were "some things in life...you just have to do."

An example of restricted choice was offered by a teacher who handled a situation in which students were suspected of using drugs. The students had lost their right to be in class; their choice to stay was removed. This was a direct result of their decision to take drugs, a decision that was unacceptable to the teacher.

And so I said, "Go home...and come back tomorrow....Just go because you do not have the right to come in here like that....I find it very offensive that you mess up....I take it very, very personal that you're going to come in here like that because you're not going to pay attention in your class. And if that's the case, I don't want you here this afternoon. I'll see you tomorrow."

At the same time as he expressed disapproval, this teacher revealed his concern for the students and their education. After telling them to "go home," he invited them to "come back tomorrow." By mixing messages of inclusion with exclusion, it was possible for him to create an ambivalent state in which making the "right" choice about drugs was left to the students. Instead of telling them what to decide regarding drug usage, he could influence their choices by causing them to experience some uneasiness. As a result, they may have been more likely to behave responsibly.

According to the literature on educating at-risk students, teachers should provide opportunities for students to make their own choices. Lehr and Harris (1993) recommended that teachers permit at-risk students to choose from among alternatives. They noted that "low achievers' motivation increases when they can cooperate and actively participate in learning and in decisions about their learning" (p. 52). Conant (1992) suggested that we can "allow students to choose the subjects they will study and the materials they will use" (p. 15). Citing Klausmeier, he wrote that students should be helped to set effective goals and to attain those goals. Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990) observed that organizations with a mission to reclaim troubled youth should transmit clear values. They proposed the traditional Native American practices of "modeling, group influence, discussion and positive expectations" (p. 43) as alternatives for the contemporary school methods of rewards and punishments. While they did

not consider this approach to be of a "pedantic or preaching variety" (p. 42), they viewed the adult as being in charge.

The literature substantiates the teachers' references to "allowing" choices and "helping" students with those choices. The adult is discouraged from being directive, and at the same time, the adult is expected to be in charge. Ambivalence surrounds the issue of decision making. In an effort to relay clear values, the adult lets the youth know what is expected while leaving the decision to the youth. Within this atmosphere of ambiguities, the adult hopes the youth will make the choices that coincide with the adult's values. This ambivalence may be necessary for youth to make what are perceived to be appropriate decisions.

Facilitating the Development of Self-Control

A teacher who related being attacked by a student noted that "the psychologist was working with him on anger, aggression, that sort of thing." She added that it was "something that's not gonna be cured overnight, that's for sure." Prior to recounting the incident of the attack, she recalled telling students that they could not change the teacher but they did have control over their own attitudes and behaviors. Pointing out that these students could "take control upon themselves," she also observed that they needed "practice" to change their behaviors.

Also, I explain to them that really you're not gonna change the teacher. You know, that's impossible. But you can change your attitudes and your behaviors. But I don't expect it to happen just like that. You know, you work on it and you work on it.

Other examples were provided by teachers to illustrate ways in which they helped students to develop self-control. One teacher spoke about expecting students to return to the classroom without her having to tell them that the break had ended.

Another teacher talked about helping students find solutions to their own problems; she did not attempt to solve the problems for them.

If I gave them a fifteen minute break, then, you know, when fifteen minutes was up, I expected them to be in the classroom. I didn't have to go outside and say, "Okay, your break is over." You know, those types of behavior, responsible, and being able to handle that type of thing.

If they had a problem, no matter what it was, I listened and I didn't try to solve their problems for them but tried to facilitate them [sic] solving their own problems.

One of the teachers described an analogy that he used with his students to illustrate the significance of self-control. Each student sat in the driver's seat of a bus that the student drove through life. Students had choices about who could ride on this bus. They were in control; but if they wanted a lot of people to get off their bus, they could find themselves quite alone in future years.

And if you want me to get off the bus, it's pretty easy for you to say that. Just don't become involved with me at all, don't try at all.... You wanta go through your young life and get a lot of these people gettin' off your bus, when you get older, you're so much more alone. You gotta learn how to work with people. But I always say, you know, you're the boss.

The teacher used his analogy to show students that they had control over what happened to them. Nevertheless, he sent some contradictory messages. Although he told them that they were the "bosses" and the decisions were made by them, he claimed to "sit them all down" to tell them that they had to get along with people. While facilitating the development of self-control, he attempted to exert his influence over their decisions and resorted to the use of some "boss" tactics. Furthermore, he expressed the motto "if you don't control yourself, the world will." On one hand, the students were told that they were in control of what happened to them (the driver of the bus), but on the other hand, they were told that they could lose that control.

The emphasis that these teachers placed on the encouragement of self-discipline has been echoed in the literature describing the teaching strategies of alternative educators (Morley, 1991). The teachers whom I had interviewed expressed high expectations and offered psychological support. These factors were identified by McMillan and Reed (1994) as influencing students' growth in self-efficacy and personal responsibility. The program teachers also sounded like Brendtro et al. (1990) who referred to the importance of youth developing "controls from within" (p. 84). These researchers believed that adults should assert values while challenging destructive behaviors. They stressed that adults should not attach a negative label to the young person when making these challenges; only the behavior should be viewed as irresponsible. This position of accepting the person and not the behavior could be viewed as ambiguous and confusing for the youth, as argued previously with regard to influencing choices. Within such an ambivalent state, however, change could occur.

I referred to the theme of developing coping skills and noted the principal concepts of accepting responsibility and recognizing options. The data within this theme fitted within the category of expecting responsible behavior. Therefore, developing coping skills was subsumed within the larger theme of control and empowerment.

Complying with Teachers' Expectations

The teachers expected students to show responsibility; and if they did not comply with these expectations, there were consequences. Previous references were made to the enforcement of responsibility through the establishment of consequences. One teacher persisted with the consequence of "hassling" until a student acted responsibly.

I mean one thing we do, we do expect for them to be responsible to themselves and to this program. And if they're not, then we're gonna get on them. And hey, if you don't like us hassling, then be responsible. We'll stop hassling you, you know.

When talking about consequences, another teacher commented that it was difficult to fill the dual roles of classroom teacher and student advocate. She claimed to have attempted to perform the functions of both during the previous year and expressed a preference for her current role. At the time of the interview, this teacher still worked on social skills with classes of students, but she spent most of her time in a supportive function outside the regular classroom. She no longer portrayed herself as the authority figure. Instead, she saw herself as the students' "friend" all of the time.

I don't discipline. I don't give consequences....Last year when I came in here, I had to teach part-time and do this part-time. That was hard. Because I was the classroom teacher who had expectations of get your work done and I'm calling your parents because your projects aren't in. Versus the advocate, my friend, the person in the middle, okay. This year, for some reason, they gave me this, ah, full-time, and it's so nice.

Although this teacher seemed quite emphatic that she did not give consequences, she provided, nevertheless, an example that indicated otherwise. As part of her job, she called the homes of students who were absent from school. She would offer to go and get them, but the students did not like for her to do that. Her calling home "put a damper" on their "jigging" (truancy). Her actions influenced the students' choices regarding school attendance and the students complied.

They don't want me to go get them. It's embarrassing for most of them. Not very cool....Every Friday, I call every junior high student that isn't in school. So they know Mrs....is gonna get you if you jig on Friday, for sure. The rest of the week just my regular kids I would be calling. But Friday afternoon, I'm out to get them (laughs).

The program teachers talked about "high expectations" for their students, but they did not think that other teachers' expectations were always reasonable. The

following observations supported alternative approaches to the regular classroom setting and questioned the logic of expecting students "to still follow the center."

And I think, well, there's some kids though, too, I don't know if they can fit into the regular classroom every period of the day, all day. I don't know how realistic that is for some kids. And that's when all this alternative schooling comes in and alternative types of teaching. ...And we expect the kids to still follow the center all the time and I just don't know anymore how they can reasonably do that.

The teachers seemed to consider their expectations to be both high and reasonable. They provided examples of the requirements that students were expected to meet. For instance, one teacher who described herself as strict reached an agreement with her students regarding a reasonable amount of homework. If homework was not completed, she imposed the consequence of a detention. She did not, however, consider herself to be as authoritative as most of the teachers in the regular classes.

Well, I'm strict. I see myself as a strict teacher. What I expect is being on time, doing your homework. We agreed at the beginning of the year, once a week was a reasonable request for homework and so that's all I give....And so, when you don't do your homework, you have a detention, etc....So that way I'm authoritative but compared to most teachers I'm not because I'm, I'm able to be more on their level as a friend, too.

Complying with teachers' expectations included completing assigned academic work during class sessions. Students were told "this is what we have to get done and this is what we get done." Even if a teacher agreed that the work was uninteresting, the students were still expected to complete it.

If we're doing something and my kids are like, "Oh, this is boring," I'll say, "Yeah, I know it's a little dry but we've got to do it."

Students were also expected to show respect for others. They were required to be polite, use appropriate language and follow rules that stated they should not interrupt other people who are talking.

I guess I'm also real big on respect. If someone's talking, I don't like someone else interrupting and I hope those are things that are passed along to the others.

Researchers have reported on the methods used by teachers to achieve student compliance. Using a term synonymous with "hassling," Van Hoose (1989) provided descriptions of teachers who would "badger" students in an effective at-risk program. These teachers were considered to have high expectations that matched the students' capabilities. Furthermore, the alternative education teachers in Van Hoose's study interacted with other teachers in an advocacy role for their students, as did the teachers whom I had interviewed. These factors were presented as leading to a decline in discipline referrals and an improvement in academic performance. While the actions of hassling and advocating may seem to be incongruent, they actually blended to produce the desired results.

Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko and Fernandez (1989) observed that "programs for at-risk youths expect that students will listen to what their teachers have to say and entertain the possibility of personal change in order to conform more closely to educators' expectations" (p. 200). A distinction has been drawn, however, between subjective authority and objective authority in the response to at-risk students (Wehlage, 1986). The teachers in my interviews referred to "authority" versus "advocacy" and "following the center" versus "reasonable." These references seemed to align with "objective" versus "subjective" authority. Furthermore, this may have enabled them to hassle students as well as to advocate for them.

Objective authority is impersonal in that its exercise is for the good of the institution and does not accommodate the particular circumstances or special interests of the individual....Subjective authority refers to informal and particularistic application of rules and norms. Subjective authority can

be perceived as more equita [sic] than objective authority because it can take into account extenuating circumstances - social background, special needs and interests - as well as friendships and loyalties....Many at-risk youth will respond favorably to the face-to-face authority established by trusted adults even though they are hostile to the objective authority system of school.

(Wehlage, 1986, p. 23)

Empowerment or Freedom

After identifying methods used by the teachers to achieve control, I took another look at the data that had been previously clustered within the categories of shared control and student control. I had already discovered that much of this data actually supported the category of teacher control. For instance, to "let them choose" was a phrase that suggested the control of decision-making really resided with the teacher. Other examples of the teachers' control have already been noted.

As the analysis progressed, data within the earlier categories of shared control and student control **seemed to more appropriately fit the label of student empowerment than student freedom.** A dictionary definition for empower is "authorize; enable;" a definition for freedom is "liberty of action" (Coulson, 1975). The control that students did have was the control they were authorized by their teachers to have. Liberties were not apparent, after all.

Students were described by teachers as "adults," "friends," and "equal." The authority, however, was "given to them" by the teachers. For example, a teacher described the process of assigning students tasks for the writing of a short story. Although she talked about the students being in charge of the different tasks and supervising other students, she was the one who gave the authorization.

John would be in charge of the art department for this short story/children's book and he would say, "I'll need Jeff and Daniel to be my assistants. Jeff, you be in charge of colour. Dan you will be in charge"...So it gives them a position of authority plus they are working. I will have someone in the proof reading department....I will have someone in the dictionary department.

Other ways to empower students included "letting them help each other" and enabling them to reprimand each other. The former was a means "to divert a little bit of the teaching" from the teacher to the student. The latter resulted in students being "held accountable" by their peers and helped the teachers maintain control.

Johnny's a great fellow for this. He'll tell them "be quiet." You know. And I love that. I think it's great! I don't have to say it.

The research literature on the power of peers includes similar accounts about the fostering of social and academic development (Brendtro et al., 1990; Yennie-Donmoyer & Donmoyer, 1993).

Johnson (1991) reported that students become motivated when they are asked for their opinions. He pointed out that student voice was a resource that educators needed to manage carefully.

While it may seem as though administrators and teachers decide how much voice to allow, in fact students are the final arbiters. They alone make the most important of all educational decisions: whether or not to stay in school, and if they choose to stay, whether to learn. (p. 6)

It has been recognized that the alternative education teacher "must be a friend rather than a master" and pupils should participate in decision making (Morley, 1991, p. 15). It has also been noted that "the most common misunderstanding in discussions about autonomy is the notion that one is advocating complete freedom" (Brendtro et al., 1990, p. 81).

Adults who give freedom without guidance are sending youth on a journey without a map. Adults must set clear and consistent expectations so that the young person can successfully navigate life's challenges. Adults do not become preoccupied with control, but focus their efforts on mapping out the structure and values. The youth is thus given a safe environment in which to develop independence, while adults still exert a major influence. (p. 81)

The teachers' stories concurred with the research literature. Students were invited to express their opinions and to make decisions within an environment that was greatly influenced by the teacher. Influenced decision making implied that the students were guided as they developed skills. This ambiguous situation of students being "in charge" under a teacher's direction enabled the students to grow academically and socially.

Differing from Other Teachers in the Regular Classroom

Within the section complying with teachers' expectations, I noted that the expectations of other teachers were sometimes seen as unreasonable. In addition, some of these other teachers were reported to be in "power struggles" with the students. The program teachers admitted that the students took "a long time to get self-control" and exhibited a "pattern of resisting, resisting, resisting." Nevertheless, they continued to work with them on "ways to handle anger." They viewed their strategies as being different from those used by some teachers.

Although one of the program teachers suggested doing "anything that you can...as long as you have control," these teachers strongly disapproved of the tactics used by some of the teachers in regular classes to keep students "under control." The

list of things not to do included "blowing up," "yelling and screaming," "name calling," and "degrading." Teachers who resorted to such measures seemed to want "one-way respect" instead of "mutual respect." Students in these teachers' classes were expected to do as they were told without questioning the purpose.

We had a supply teacher in one day...and the next thing I know she's screaming and all hell has broken loose and I thought, "My God, what's going on?"

In comparison with certain teachers in the regular classroom, the program teachers described themselves to be more proactive with regard to classroom management. They worked with their students to prevent "blow-ups" from occurring. Treating the students with respect, they helped them to develop social skills and to manage anger. Ogden and Germinario (1988) distinguished between this kind of proactive management style which maintains a pleasant class climate and reactive management style which includes shouting and criticizing. They claimed that a teacher who uses a proactive style will choose to stop misbehavior by selecting an option that will detract as little as possible from instruction and the learning environment. According to Wehlage et al. (1989), teachers need to make "active efforts to create positive and respectful relations" (p. 120) with at-risk students if they want the students to behave in a respectful manner toward them.

As well as comparing their strategies, the program teachers also compared their situations with those of teachers in the regular classrooms. Program teachers either had small classes (usually between ten and twelve students) or they saw students on a one-to-one basis. They remarked that this was quite different from having a regular class and seemed to have a degree of empathy for the teachers who were "doing what they have to do with thirty kids."

In here with eleven, I find I can really monitor. I see everything in the classroom. But thirty-two, it's difficult to see what someone's writing on their book at the back.

In one interview, it was observed that it would take a "special teacher to challenge them all" in a class of thirty students. The teachers sometimes expressed doubt about their own potential for effectiveness if they had larger classes, and therefore, less time for each student. As one teacher remarked, it is hard to "take time out to listen" when there are "thirty other kids in the class." Nevertheless, even with larger classes, they believed that their strategies would differ from those of some of the regular teachers. Their assertions resembled a suggestion of Mitchell, Carson and Badarak (1989) who proposed the incorporation into regular classroom practice of the instructional techniques typically utilized in smaller classes.

Not everybody can work in an environment where there's thirty-three people and one person talking, whatever, and that's what frustrates me, I think, most about looking at going into a regular teaching class. And I think that I would have to incorporate some individual things to accommodate for those students.

There were reports of other differences between the situations of program teachers and regular classroom teachers. The program teachers provided examples of their license to make decisions about their programs. They appreciated not being "tied to a lesson plan" and the "freedom to take two to three hours on a lesson." They thought their situations were more favorable than that of regular classroom teachers who were seen as being restricted by a set curriculum and as having "all that pressure" to prepare students for standardized tests. Sometimes, a program changed because they "wanted it to change," even if this meant having to "put a foot down with the administration."

Well, in here, if I had a lesson, and to me it should take about forty minutes, and for some reason, we get on it and we...they're really interested and they're really, they're learning a lot of things and they're using their minds, things are really turning around up there. If I spend three hours on it, I feel okay to do that. That's one of the things I love about a program like this is that I have the freedom to, if I'm doing a unit and they are no more interested than anything, I can say, "Put it away and we'll take it out tomorrow when we're ready for this."

Teacher autonomy appears to be a significant characteristic of alternative programs reported in the research literature (Morley, 1991; Nauman, 1985). After studying fourteen alternative schools, Wehlage et al. (1989) found that freedom to establish a curriculum and to determine course context along with flexibility in scheduling and the use of resources were "crucial aspects" of successful programs for at-risk students. They wrote, "Such autonomy gives teachers some level of actual control over the school as a workplace" (p. 144). This observation is supported by Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) who reported that teachers' sense of control is enhanced when they help set a school's discipline code, have the leeway to try new things in the classroom and are permitted to work out their own schedules collectively within their department.

While the program teachers' stories suggested that they felt less restricted than regular classroom teachers and disagreed with some of their practices, they still seemed to apply certain approaches used in the regular classroom. Their expectations regarding the completion of academic work and the showing of respect for others have already been discussed. In some cases, they reported having the same rules.

You have to be here on time and you can't swear in class, etc.

They followed the same rule, you know, like there's no hats, okay, there's no hats at school.....We're gonna follow the same rules down here...maybe my rules weren't that different.

Nevertheless, both of the teachers who were quoted above expressed some concerns about having their classes conform entirely to the school's regulations. The first teacher thought that the "student-teacher authority stuff" may interfere with the "caring" and "rapport." She was also the only teacher who talked about "getting more worn out with dealing with these types of kids all the time." The

second teacher felt pressure when she brought her students in the alternative class to the school. She "didn't expect them to be really, really quiet" when they were in her program. The following is her description of the situation that seemed to cause some tension for her.

When they would come up here, they would get off the bus and they'd be noisy on the way in and that was like a big thing. Like you have to go in quietly and I always felt like I was under pressure to...

These two teachers seemed to feel pressure to conform to the expectations of the administration of the schools that were affiliated with their programs. When writing about successful programs for "marginal students," Nauman (1985) noted that "the teachers were relatively independent of administrative constraints" (p. 27). In view of the research emphasizing the importance of teacher autonomy in alternative programs (Firestone, 1988; Wehlage et al., 1989), these teachers may have benefited from having more control over their programs. School regulations seemed to contribute to their feeling some stress.

Another form of comparison occurred when the teachers compared their students with other students in the regular classroom. While some of them had students who still attended regular classes, others had students who, in their opinion, would have been out of school if it had not been for their program. One teacher talked about an experience in the regular classroom in which he saw students who were very different from the ones he usually had.

Well, they're just super kids. I'd ask them to do somethin'; they said "yes" before I'd asked them. I said, "These kids I didn't think even existed." You know, from all the kids I work with....I said, "My God, the kids I work with are so far away from this."

There was a common belief that the individual needs of the students could not be met if they remained in the regular classroom all of the time. One teacher

remarked that "all of the students" in her class were there "for different reasons." Therefore, different strategies were required. For example, some students benefited from an environment that was perceived to be less intimidating than the regular classroom. Furthermore, the smaller numbers meant that they got more attention from the teacher when experiencing either academic or personal difficulties.

A bigger class they're competing with, you know, a lot of different levels of students and sometimes they're afraid, you know, "my answer probably isn't correct, anyway." Or "it's not gonna sound as good as so and so's."

Just giving the help, going around saying, "Okay, you're having problems with this. All you have to do is ask."

If a student comes in, small group, you can notice when a kid is...about to burst.

A reduced teacher-pupil ratio along with a teacher's autonomy to make decisions facilitated an individualized, flexible approach to students' academic and emotional needs. This has been substantiated by other researchers (Cuban, 1989; Damico & Roth, 1994; Morley, 1991; Wehlage et al., 1989). Smaller classes and one-on-one experiences seemed to contribute to the empowerment of students and teachers. With more time for each student and more flexibility, teachers were enabled to empower students through skill development. Classroom management was more effective.

Summarizing The Theme of Control/Empowerment

The program teachers compared their strategies and situations with those of other teachers. While they noted some expectations that appeared to replicate those of the regular classroom, they disapproved of attempts by teachers to control students through humiliation and intimidation. Furthermore, their situations differed in that they had smaller teacher-pupil ratios. They also believed that they

had more autonomy. These factors were seen as enabling them to more readily meet the unique needs of their students.

The teachers' stories suggested that they enforced the expectation for students to be responsible. By using such verbs as "make" and "demand," they showed they could be forceful. They talked about imposing "consequences" and valuing "consistency." They wanted to influence the choices that students made both within and outside the classroom and to facilitate the students' development of self-control. Students were expected to comply with what the teachers perceived to be reasonable expectations. Ways in which students complied included attending classes, completing assignments and showing respect.

These teachers appeared to be controlling after all. It was not the "yelling and screaming" kind of control, but they declared their leadership. While freedom was sometimes implied, it appeared that the students were more empowered (enabled) than free. Students who had been disruptive in other teachers' classes were described as being more inclined to observe these teachers' expectations.

There were some ambiguities with regard to the enforcement of consequences, however, and these seemed to contribute to the effectiveness of the program teachers. While the teachers talked about consistency, they did not want regulations to sabotage their relationships with students. Sometimes, they spoke about acting in accordance with the expectations of the school regime; other times, they made references to taking different approaches. Furthermore, they created an ambivalent state in which students were still accepted even when their behaviors were not condoned. Within this environment, the teachers directed the students' choices as they told them that these choices were their own. This ambivalence

enabled them to provide guidance without engaging in power struggles. The youth did not feel that someone was attempting to control their lives. These inconsistencies seemed to create opportunities for students to consider their actions instead of continuing their self-defeating behaviors.

Kos (1993) proposed that students may perpetuate unacceptable behaviors in an effort to maintain a sense of control over their school experiences. They gain attention, although negative, and the learning experiences, although subverted, are within their control. Wehlage et al. (1989) observed, "To refuse engagement and to deny the legitimacy of school activities may be an attempt on the part of students to assert their control and superiority over the institution that would make them feel worthless" (p. 25).

In applying his control theory to the classroom, Glasser (1986) emphasized the significance of students and teachers having their need for power met. He wrote, "There is no greater work incentive than to be able to see that your effort has a power payoff" (p. 27). According to Glasser, school can be more need-fulfilling for both teachers and students when the learning-team model is implemented and the teacher assumes the role of the modern manager. He believed that power struggles would be eliminated as students were encouraged to offer their opinions and to assume responsibility for doing the work. The teachers as modern managers would gain more power than they previously had because students would want to learn. He observed, "It is hard to feel powerful if at least half your students are paying little or no attention to what you are trying to teach, whether you are working or managing" (p. 81).

Giddens (1982) wrote that "the dialectic of control is built into the very nature of social systems" (p. 39). This notion presented the weak as being capable of turning their weakness back against the powerful. According to his social theory, every participant in a social relationship maintains some control over the nature of that relationship. He saw power relations as relations of autonomy and dependence. Even when power is extremely imbalanced, those who are in "subordinate positions are never wholly dependent, and are often very adept at converting whatever resources they possess into some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system" (p. 199).

The theories of Glasser (1986) and Giddens (1982) offer an explanation for the improved behavior of students after they entered the alternative programs. Feeling they had more control and independence through empowerment, the students may no longer have had the same desire to counteract the power imbalance. Furthermore, the teachers talked about feeling more autonomous in the alternative programs. A need to gain more control over what happened within the system may have been more closely met for them than it was for the regular classroom teachers. Consequently, they did not describe resorting to tyrannical types of behavior within the classroom in an attempt to fulfill this need. They recognized that such an approach would be ineffective. On the contrary, by engaging in ambivalent acts that conveyed both disapproval and support, they facilitated changes in the students' behaviors and maintained control.

Instead of taking a cause-and-effect view of these teacher-student interactions, it would seem more appropriate to consider the concept of "mutual simultaneous shaping" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). If "everything influences everything else" (p. 151), the teachers' perceptions and behaviors influenced and were influenced by

the students' perceptions and behaviors. This would occur through a simultaneous process that included the influence of the alternative programs' features such as lower teacher-student ratios and relative autonomy for teachers with respect to administrative constraints.

Connecting and Understanding

Making Connections

The theme of connecting was comprised of examples of what the teachers reported doing to reach at-risk students and I suspected that these examples would at least provide a partial explanation for their success. As I studied the phrases that had been grouped within the theme of connecting, I was struck by the dynamic quality of the verbs. The following list is presented to illustrate this point:

fill them with positive thoughts
really look at them and **tell** them how well they're doing
show I love you
complaining and **ragging** and **bitching** at you...I care
get closer and **find** out their needs
battle to get you back*

These teachers professed actively demonstrating their concern for students by showing, telling, challenging, building. They let them know that they cared, worried, understood. The ways in which they expressed this concern appeared to take on degrees of intensity, from encouraging to battling, and they often spoke with ardor. As one teacher said, "I think that those actions, showing that I'm here to help you, speak the loudest really."

*Other examples from the data include: **letting** them know that I do worry, **deal** with it right now, **giving** the help, **made** my own relationship with them, **go** and **pick up**, **build up** self-esteem, **show** them they're smart, **challenging** them, **make** connections, borderline **pestering**, really **praise**, **build** comfort and feeling of success, **take** time to listen, **encourage** him to go, and **pushin'** and **pushin'** and **pushin'** and **pushin'**

The verbs could be clustered according to forcefulness. The less forceful or softer verbs included show, praise, give, and encourage while the more forceful or harder verbs included battle, challenge, push, and complain. Metaphorically, the teachers seemed to pull students along with praise and encouragement and push them with challenges and complaints. Nevertheless, these verbs did not appear to be oppositional strategies for the teachers who seemed to utilize the various approaches in a complementary manner. Their insistence and persistence appeared to be the principal notions.

According to researchers of alternative education programs, this kind of energetic and active commitment is required from staff if students are to become academically engaged and behave respectfully (Wehlage et al., 1989). Brendtro et al. (1990) stated that "relationship is an action, not a feeling" (p. 62). These writers referred to Fromm who saw relationship as a process of giving. With regard to empathy, Morgan (cited in Fecser, 1993, p. 19) similarly observed, "Teaching necessitates a more active and directive type of interaction than that which occurs in the classic therapy situation. Indications are that empathy in teaching is different, in that more is required than verbal communication of understanding."

The teachers had their particular stories to tell with regard to "letting the student know" that they did "really care." Their stories represented different kinds of connecting that I discovered could be related through the use of metaphors. According to Dickmeyer (1989), "a metaphor is a characterization of a phenomenon in familiar terms" (p. 151). Goetz and LeCompte (1984) commented upon the use of metaphor as "an analytic tool" that "requires greater divergence of thought and artistry than the other tools." These authors noted that metaphors are

"powerful ways to create linkages between seemingly unrelated topics" (p. 203-204).

Each of the following quotations describes a form of connecting and is introduced by a metaphor that characterizes the role played by the teacher. These metaphors are an encapsulation of meaning from the researcher's perspective and are not fully "grounded" constructs offered by respondents (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). At this stage of the interpretation, the metaphors depict a taxonomy that represents different aspects of the theme of connecting; they are not intended as a depiction of frequency.

Teacher as Coach

The teacher who is quoted in the following excerpt expresses her techniques in terms of a good coach who is building a team. She readily recognizes the contributions of each of the players on that team and she provides each with visible encouragement. Members of the class or team take pleasure in an individual classmate or player receiving praise. The careful distribution of rewards ("fair share") builds the solidarity of the group. It stresses the impartiality of the coach toward individual players as well as her partiality toward the team itself.

I see some of them smiling when I give someone a real pat on the back...I think it's really important to put your hand on their shoulder and give them a squeeze and really look at them and tell them how well they're doing and I think that's really helped. And, in here, in this class, they, I think they like it when it's, ah, something positive is coming to them whether it's to them personally or to someone else in the class. But I'm also very careful that I monitor myself, that I don't throw compliments to only John and Nicole all the time. I make sure that everyone has a fair share.

Teacher as Ally

When a student's expectation of confidentiality was betrayed by her doctor, the teacher in the next episode responded by coming to her assistance. As an ally, she helped the student deal with an upsetting experience. As well as standing by the student, she aided in practical ways.

Krista had an upset awhile ago. Her doctor told her mother she was pregnant and she told the doctor not to, so her doctor broke her confidence and she was really upset with that. I took her to the new doctor; then took her to the old doctor and to the lab to get them to send the tests to the new doctor...

Teacher as Parent

In the following extract, the teacher expressed concern for the safety of her students just as a parent might speak about her children. She wanted them to call if they were not coming to class because she would worry about where they were and what had happened to them. Her disclosure about being concerned for them when they were not with her suggested that she saw her professional role extending into the personal realm.

I always say when they leave here, generally almost every night, but for sure, I never fail on the week-ends, on Friday when they leave, I tell them to have a wonderful week-end and be really safe. You know, and "I'll see you on Monday" and I always tell them that. And I don't know if their parents say that when they go out. Be safe and be careful. And I say, "If you're not coming to school one morning, you're sick, please call me. I certainly don't want to think you're in a ditch somewhere...all morning long until I find out where you are."

Teacher as Recruiter

When recruiting students to join a group, the teacher who is quoted below believed in being very proactive. In order to bring the group together, he actually went to pick up its members from their houses. He knocked on doors and urged the recruits to go with him. His tactics, however, were low pressure; and when they declined his invitation, he would go on his way.

And I find a lot of the time I guess I'm a bit of a person that does a lot of things where other people probably wouldn't do. Some of these kids I go and pick up. I might, of the six kids that come, I might go pick up three of them in the morning. Sometimes, I go knock on the door and say, "Get out of bed; let's go." If they say, "Well, I don't wanna go," I just go on my way. Maybe, I shouldn't do that but to get it going I felt it was important to do that. So three of them, I go pick them up at the house and bring them to the group. Another three come by themselves.

Teacher as Champion

A teacher revealed his need to win when he talked about trying to reach students who were noncompliant, and he shared some of his strategic moves with the interviewer. Because he wanted to be successful, he did not give up easily. If his first contact did not produce the desired results, he would call again to encourage students to meet with him. Sometimes, they met in a neutral setting away from his office or a student's home. Meeting for a pop was one way to facilitate a comfortable atmosphere.

I find that I hate losing and it comes right down to with kids...if I go and make a contact at home, I don't like to be forgotten about. You know, like, I will come back. So I'll call again and say, "Well, you were to come in and see me on this day and you didn't come. Why not?" "Oh, I don't know. Overslept." Or, "I just didn't wanna..." "Well, look, why don't we go and I'll meet you at MacDonald's for a pop. How about that? We'll do that. Okay?" Sometimes, it's not my office and it's not their house. They'll go to some other place and we'll sit and we'll have a pop and get to know each other. I'll make the second attempt because, like I say, I don't like being just left like that.

Teacher as Therapeutic Cheerleader

The teacher's exuberant support for students ("hug," "love") is apparent at the beginning of the following passage. In a cheerleading fashion, she exclaimed reassuring phrases ("You did it!"). Her tone became more somber, however, as she discussed one student's poor view of himself. Nevertheless, she seemed to assume a therapeutic role when she optimistically predicted that he would improve as a result of her remediation efforts.

And when I see them learning, I could just hug them..."Alright! You did it! It's great!" I just love to tell them how good they are. And they don't know that. We still have a couple in here that I'm working on. One, I don't know if you noticed this morning, if you were here, when one boy said, "I don't know how to do that. I can't do it."...I knew he knew how

to do it but he has no self-esteem and he has no confidence in himself whatsoever. And it takes forever to haul anything out of him because he's "I'm dumb. I can't do that."...I want to keep him because I think by Christmas we'll be able to tell him, "You are smart. Now, use it."

Teacher as Tour Guide

In order to show students that they had choices, one teacher took them on tours of some of their future prospects. She wanted them to realize that they could choose to continue in the life they had known or they could choose options that were conceivable through an education. Her field trips provided opportunities to broaden the students' knowledge of different occupations. In addition, she offered tours ("skiing") that gave them a chance to experience success. Her strong belief in their potential to succeed contributed to her being an ardent guide.

I believe that we have to show students that there is another choice, that they can learn to survive in the life that they're in or they can choose to get an education and move on...So I think...that's why I had so many field trips in my programs, and showing them other things and showing them other occupations and that you can go out with a group of friends and go bowling and have a lot of fun. Or you can go out skiing. To go skiing you have to have money so if you want to choose something like this you're gonna have to, you know, work hard. If you work hard, it'll pay off. That was one of the best experiences I had, I think, was having the students go out skiing. And a lot of them didn't believe they could ski; they'd never skied before. And I just kept telling them, you know, "You can do it; you can do it; you can do it." And they did!

Teacher as Entertainer

The teacher who made the next observations realized that it was necessary to do some entertaining if she wanted to get the attention of her students. She thought that many of them pretended to listen; so in order to get them to really listen, she became an actress who performed for the class. Her repertoire included the use of accents and having fun (being "a little bit silly").

You're an actress, too, when you get up there. I find that's really effective actually...And they're listening, too. That's what I find. 'Cause a lot of them are really good at just looking at their book or looking at you and they appear to be listening but they have no idea what you just said. But when you do that and act up and be a little bit silly and change your voice from an Irish to a, you know, Southerner, it really works.

Teacher as Campaigner

One teacher's story revealed the importance she placed on getting the support of parents. She not only promoted her own work but she also campaigned for her organization - the school. She wanted the parents to become acquainted with her and the school's offerings ("computers," "programs"). By taking a very invitational approach, she aimed for parents to be comfortable talking with her and visiting the school. Her campaign strategies included phone calls to the home and invitations to parents and students to attend meetings at the school. Connections with parents were viewed as facilitating connections with students. For example, when a student was absent, the parents would call because they "weren't calling a stranger."

When parent-teacher interviews would come around or at the beginning of every program, I would call all the parents and the students and ask them to come in so that I could explain my expectations of the students...Gave them all phone numbers and explained what we were going to be doing. Brought them in to see the computers and the programs and things like that...and that made a big difference...If a student was out, they didn't hesitate to call 'cause they'd met me so they weren't calling a stranger....A lot of parents hadn't had positive school experiences themselves so I tried to ensure that the parents would come in...provide them with a positive experience in the school so that after this year or the following year they would feel comfortable coming into the school and they knew where I was going to be.

The previous stories were introduced by metaphors that represented the roles played by teachers as they strived to make connections with their students. The means for connecting included taking a student to the doctor, waking students up in the morning, and helping students experience success in the more traditional setting of the classroom or in the out-of-school environment of the ski slopes. Whether coach or entertainer, the teachers reported engaging in very visible, active forms of reaching out to students.

In the model of concept indicators presented by Strauss (1987), "concepts and their dimensions have *earned* their way into the theory by systematic generation from data" (p. 26). The generated conceptual codes represent the indicators of categories. These codes can be expressed in the form of metaphors to give meaning through imagery, or as noted by Goetz and LeCompte (1984), to "facilitate the creation of catchy titles" (p. 203).

In the section *Looking Across the Interviews*, I referred to the two types of codes distinguished by Strauss (1987). Codes based upon the researcher's scholarly knowledge and knowledge of the substantive field were called "sociological constructs." Codes derived from the terms used by people in the field were labelled "in vivo codes." Strauss wrote that in vivo codes have "a very vivid imagery...seldom forgotten by readers because their terms are colorful" (p. 34). By contrast, he noted that the sociological constructs have little imagery.

I observed that the metaphors used to depict the teachers' portrayals of their roles seemed to parallel in vivo codes. Even if teachers did not use such terms as *coach* or *ally* when providing self-descriptions, they related actions that indicated these concepts. As the researcher analyzing their anecdotes, I was looking for the concept indicators. The roles of *coach* and *parent* seemed representative of the traditional teacher image, but in the cases of *recruiter* and *therapeutic cheerleader*, the metaphors appeared to link unrelated areas as suggested by Goetz and LeCompte (1984).

The Value of Respect and Trust

The extent to which a teacher was able to reach a student could be ascertained by a student's proclivity to approach the teacher and talk about personal situations.

Examples were provided of occasions when students placed teachers in the role of counsellor. The following remarks were made by a teacher who talked about students disclosing abuse. The length of time that she had known a student was acknowledged as a potential factor affecting a student's preparedness to tell her.

When someone discloses, I tell the kids I have to report it..."I just wanta remind you that when we close the door, it's completely confidential...I'm not gonna tell anybody. But if you ever tell me anybody's hurting you, I have to report it." And sometimes it takes a while before someone will tell me. There's kids out there I know have been abused and they're not ready to tell yet. Maybe, they won't ever tell.

Generally, students were described as being very open about sharing parts of their lives. One teacher stated, "We created an environment where they'll say what's on their minds." They seemed to think that the students would not have been so open if the trust and respect had not been there. Although it is likely that trust and respect developed during the episodes previously related through metaphors, these elements also received separate treatment in the teachers' narratives. They identified the reciprocal nature of building trust and respect ("give them respect ...so I have their respect") and noted time ("takes a while") as a factor in this process.

Once you build that comfort and feeling of success and respect for the teacher, then the teacher can go a long ways. You know, can teach whatever she wants or he wants. And that's great. Until you get that trust and respect, you're not gonna go anywhere, not with at-risk kids or an alternate school system.

They can close the door; they can come in here and say whatever they need to say and they know that I'm not gonna..Takes a while to develop that relationship and that trust.

I want to be approachable and I want to have a good rapport with them, but I also want to give them respect, you know, so I have their respect. And I know the kids that I'm working with, they wouldn't come to me if there wasn't that.

Like the teachers in my interviews, Brendtro et al. (1990) considered the building of trust in terms of time and reciprocity. Recognizing that many at-risk youth make the assumption that adults cannot be trusted, these researchers noted that

trust can be developed over time. Furthermore, they pointed out that trust is a reciprocal process; one way to build trust is to extend it. Viewing trust to be essential for effective relationships, they delineated three predictable trust-building stages. They called the first stage "casing." During this time, the youth checks out the adult. The second stage was labelled "limit testing." This is the time when "a calm but firm manner is needed to avoid either capitulating to the child or confirming his view that this adult is like all the rest" (p. 64). The third stage "predictability" occurs when both adult and youth know what to expect from one another.

Brendtro et al. (1990) also saw respect as a reciprocal process and stated that "respect begets respect" (p. 66). They observed that adults who "confiscate harmless personal property, push students into lines, and ignore urgent requests for bathroom breaks" (p. 66) are not demonstrating respect for students. Nonetheless, these adults expect students to respect them. Although they command obedience, they win very little respect.

Linkage with Openness

The components of trust and respect were linked with the qualities of honesty and openness in the teachers. They spoke about not being "fake" or "going back on" their "word," and they were willing to let the students know something about their personal lives.

They knew I listened and they trusted me...I think if they confide in you about something...you maintain that trust...I guess because I'm honest with them and I confide in them about things...so they realize that I trust them, as well as just being myself around them.

Be more personal with that student. Let them into a little bit of your life. Tell them a little bit about yourself. Let them know things that you're doing, and often I ask them for their opinion. You know, "I want to do this at my house. I want to plant a garden and I'm terrible...I have all these different ideas." And that makes them feel like they're helping me, and in fact, they are helping me.

Rogers (1983) considered the facilitation of learning to be dependent upon the interpersonal relationship between the facilitator and the learner. He referred to the realness or genuineness in the facilitator as an essential attitude. "When the facilitator is a real person, being what she is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a facade, she is much more likely to be effective" (p. 121). Advocates for at-risk youth have also declared the importance of teachers being more personal with their students (Hamby, 1989; Nauman, 1985; Morley, 1991).

When I was forming grounds for the theme of openness, I identified only a few examples. The previous excerpts provide some illustrations of the teachers being open. For instance, to "tell them a little bit about yourself" and to "confide in them about things" are suggestive of openness. I had come to realize that most of the examples of openness fitted within the larger theme of connecting. There was little justification to retain openness as a theme and it was the second of the thirteen themes to be subsumed.

The Value of Belonging

As I read the references to respect and trust, I thought of the theme of belonging. I had previously noted that some of the examples within this theme could also be viewed as examples of connecting. I decided to take a closer look at belonging to determine if it should remain independent or merge with connecting.

The theme of belonging contained references that implied students felt comfortable and safe within the group which was a form of "sanctuary." Building the comfort level of the group could be thought of as another way in which the

teachers made connections with their students. In a noncompetitive, welcoming environment, the sense of belonging was nurtured.

It doesn't become a competition because the others are so proud, you know, of their classmates...They really push so that they'll all do well. It's almost like they're a group and as a class they want to have a high standing as far as academics go.

The most important thing that I want when those kids come into this room in the morning...I make a point of it and it's a sincere point...I'm happy that you're here. We're happy. And every morning that they come, myself or one of the volunteers says, "Yes, glad you're here...Great, keep comin'...Sit down; we love ya. Come on; join the group."

In view of its small size and apparent focus, the theme of belonging seemed more appropriately labelled as a component within the theme of connecting. It was, therefore, the third of the thirteen themes to be subsumed.

I referred again to Brendtro et al. (1990) who believed that teachers and other youth workers "must make a planned and concerted effort to nourish inviting relationships in a culture of belonging" (p. 69). The teachers whom I had interviewed seemed to agree with this. Their stories suggested that they strived to create an invitational atmosphere in order to combat the isolation that some students felt. Wehlage et al. (1989) found the isolation factor to correlate with students being at risk of dropping out of school. This isolation was countered when adults in the school expressed a belief that all of the students were important and worthy of attention. Recommending approaches to dropout prevention, Hamby (1989) made the following comments:

People avoid situations in which they feel physically or emotionally threatened. Therefore, it is essential that we make the school climate as secure as possible. Physical conditions must be safe and comfortable. The emotional atmosphere must be positive so that students will not fear a loss of self-esteem by being there. (p. 24)

Understanding - Getting to Know the Students

When teachers were making connections with students, they were getting to know them. It was possible that the theme of understanding with its emphasis on knowing students could also become a component of the theme of connecting. However, it was a much stronger theme than either openness or belonging, and it contained about the same amount of data as did connecting. I needed to examine understanding more closely to determine its association with connecting.

The theme of understanding included the following main categories:

1. knowing the family background
2. seeing the students' perspectives
3. identifying the students' strengths and weaknesses
4. recognizing the students' needs.

Knowing the Family Background

Making contact with families was one of the means used by teachers to connect with students. In their dialogues with me, they expressed a knowledge of family backgrounds that showed an understanding of the students' worlds outside of school. Often, the teachers' anecdotes were very specific, and this served to give credibility to their professed awareness. Students' families were viewed as a "reason" for the students' behaviors. The family portraits that they presented were overwhelmingly negative and could be categorized into four primary areas: absence of structure, absence of love and caring, presence of poverty, and presence of violence.

Absence of Structure

At times, the teachers made direct references to the lack of structure in the homes. This is illustrated by the following quote. Because of the absence of structure, academics were not a priority. The students had other needs.

Academics with some of these kids, I hate to say it as a teacher, but academics is almost secondary. A lot of these kids in need..they don't have any structure at home.

The teachers also described situations that depicted students living on their own without the influence of positive role models. The next passage presents a scene within an apartment that is rented by teenagers who are living without adult guidance and structure. They have chosen a life of drugs and alcohol and "total freedom." There appears to be irony in this description. While these girls may have a semblance of freedom, they seem to be enslaved within an environment that has taken another victim - "a little baby." Unlike the students who were described as exhibiting responsible behaviors when empowered, these students were viewed as being irresponsible when free.

I have three girls that live in an apartment and the oldest person in the apartment is eighteen years old. And, ah, there's drugs, there's alcohol. One girl has a little baby there and there's cigarette butts all over the apartment. The baby is living in a very poor environment but these teenagers live a life of total freedom with no real responsibility or guidance to one day help themselves.

Absence of Love and Caring

Some students were described as "less troubled" and having "more supportive parents," but others were said to have families who "don't care." "Not to have the support of your family" found expression when a mother wanted her son "to move out of his house" or when mothers "didn't really care" whether their children went to school or not.

There was one account of single moms who were striving to improve their own education while they were not attending to the education of their children. These moms were viewed as caring since they were "fighting hard" for their children, but paradoxically, the children appeared to be neglected and searching for love.

Some moms are very, very, you know, intelligent and they really are fighting for, to become more educated, but yet their children are just lost, you know. And there's a lot of people out there that are really fighting hard for their kids but they're gone all the time and they're not around for their children...It's just neglect, you know. The child grows up very lonely and unloved and they search...to get attention and that love.

Although dads were sometimes mentioned by the teachers, more references were made to moms. According to one of the teachers, "There's not many dads."

Another teacher talked about parents who "have just split up." Then, there were the students who "didn't have any parents." They either lived on "social assistance in an apartment or boarding home" or they were in group homes or foster homes. These were the "lost," "unloved" children who "don't have the greatest of homes or any home to come from at all."

Presence of Poverty

Students were sometimes described as coming from "very poor" families and living in "low rentals." The following scenario presents a brief picture of the poor quality housing endured by one student. The teacher suggested that under such circumstances there isn't anyone to care about homework being done.

Another one who never, never does homework, I find out yesterday that he lives in a trailer that's no bigger than this room practically, with four other people. And where are you gonna do homework? Who cares if you do?

In the next excerpt, poverty was seen as one of the reasons for students dropping out of school. Since they did not have the money to keep up with other students, they chose to "hang out" with the youth who had already left school.

Some kids don't have enough money, you know...kids that come from the trailer parks around here and I seem to get a lot of kids from trailer parks who drop out of school and I think monetary is one reason. They don't seem to have what other kids have so they tend to hang out with kids that are out of school.

Another glimpse of the poverty known by some of the students was provided through a criticism of the views held by certain teachers. Being poor could mean going hungry and wearing the same clothing every day. Teachers who had not experienced this poverty were believed to "look down" on the students who had.

I find that the teachers that are really well off, you know, probably never had to go hungry, or, you know, never had to wear the same pair of pants every day for two weeks 'cause they only had one pair of pants, I find more than not, they're the ones that really look down at those at-risk students.

Presence of Violence

"There's some kids out there that are very violent, very hateful and don't want to be in school." The teacher who made that statement thought that much of the hatred and violence was learned. He offered the following explanation:

But a lot of their hate comes from being taught to hate, you know, within your own environment, you know. I mean, if your father beats you or your mother beats ya, you know, you learn to hate, you learn to fight, or you've been brought up to always constantly run down other people.

The fighting could be either verbal or physical; the instigator could be either parent or child. A number of words and phrases contributed to the depiction of the disruption in homes where parents and children were aggressors and victims.

"abusive"

"anger"

"hitting her child"

"boys...almost to the point of being physical with their mother"

"girls...verbal battles"

"father telling him how awful he was"

*Referring to the Literature on
Families of Students in At-Risk Situations*

Baumrind (cited in National Research Council, 1993) identified four parenting styles - authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and disengaged. According to her typology, authoritative parents are highly demanding and controlling but also supportive and responsive. When compared with the other three parenting styles, this form of parenting has been associated with better psychosocial development and school performance as well as less delinquent behavior. By contrast, authoritarian parents project little warmth and are not responsive to their children while permissive parents are highly responsive and warm but do not have rules and regulations. "Disengaged parents (also referred to as rejecting-neglecting) are minimally demanding and for the most part unresponsive. Children are largely ignored except when they make demands, which are usually responded to with hostility and explosions" (p. 53). Applying Baumrind's typology to my interview data, it seemed that the disengaged parenting style was the one most frequently described by the teachers.

The National Research Council (1993) reported family income as possibly the single most important factor in shaping family settings. While there are mitigating factors such as positive social support, extended family networks and the resilience of the child, it has been recognized that "families living in poverty are subject to multiple stress and constraints that lead to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness and often reduce parents' ability to provide children with the emotional support and stimulation critical to healthy development" (p. 17). Pallas (1991) reported overwhelming evidence that children who live in poverty are at much greater risk of school failure than children from higher-income families. Frymier and Robertson (1991) observed that children can be placed at risk even

before birth by being subjected to the smoking, alcohol or drug abuse of the parents. Furthermore, they described poverty as a cyclical process.

Children born and brought up in poverty have so many obstacles to overcome that it is a wonder any manage to succeed. Poverty seems, for example, to escalate the rates of teenage pregnancy, often with devastating intergenerational consequences. Poor children give birth to poor children; and in the process, our society gives birth to a permanent underclass. (Frymier & Robertson, 1991, p. 29)

According to the National Research Council (1993), there is a strong correlation between poverty and single-parent families with most of these households being headed by women. Furthermore, even when studies control for socioeconomic status, there are indications that adolescents from single-parent families are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors than adolescents from two-parent families. The Council reported that children from one-parent or low-income families are at greater risk of abuse or neglect than children living with two parents or from more affluent families.

The research regarding the family circumstances of at-risk students was congruent with the teachers' anecdotes. The teachers described many of their students' situations in terms of poverty, abuse, neglect and single-parent families headed by females. Based upon the literature, these factors correlated with students being at-risk.

Viewing the Families with Hope or Despair

The teachers had specific stories to tell about families that were afflicted by poverty and violence and that lacked the necessary care and structure. Through

their accounts of the family backgrounds, these teachers seemed to reveal an understanding of the particular problems in the lives of their students, and consequently, an understanding of their students.

One of the teachers used the general term "dysfunctional families" to describe her students' home situations. She talked about being "just worn out that it's the same sort of problems." She did not seem to hold the level of optimism possessed by the other teachers regarding an ability to exert a positive influence.

I'm contributing something on the positive side of their life, but then on the discouraging side, it's like, you know, they come from such damaged homes, and they're so, you know, scarred now that you need a miracle for them to turn around and do a lot..for most of them.

This teacher's interest in working with the families of her students also seemed to be correspondingly lower than that of the other teachers. In contrast to one teacher who reported that she did provide "family counselling" and another who remarked that she did "talk to parents every day," the teacher who spoke about "dysfunction" did not seem to see any benefits in directing her energies toward helping the parents. It was as if she considered them to be so impaired that they were beyond assistance.

I talk to a few or whatever. But I don't feel that's where I can make the changes. Like, it's with the kids is where the change is gonna have to be made. The parents are pretty much set, you know. Like, I can't change the way they handle their anger, whereas I can work with the kids and teach them ways to handle their anger.

On the contrary, Wehlage, Rutter and Turnbaugh (1987) emphasized that teachers must be willing to work with the families of at-risk students in order to deal with certain problems within the home and to promote student success in school. "For example, the teacher may need to confront a substance abuse problem, whether a parent's or a student's, if a student is to learn and develop" (p. 71).

This position was supported by Palmo and Palmo's (1989) recommendation that counselling professionals who treat at-risk youth should always involve the parents. These researchers referred to dysfunction in families, but unlike the teacher who was quoted above, they saw levels of dysfunction. They observed that "the higher the level of difficulty with rules and boundaries, the greater the level of risk and dysfunction" (p. 51). The adults in severely dysfunctional families may have a history of at-risk behaviors or may continue to exhibit many of those behaviors. These could include alcohol and substance abuse, criminal records and poor work histories. There is an absence of rules and personal boundaries on the part of the adults as well as the youth. The children often act in the role of parent to their own parent. In such families, according to Palmo and Palmo, the prognosis for improving a youth's situation is not good unless the parents participate in changing the problematic family dynamics. The moderately dysfunctional family, on the other hand, appears stable to the outside world but there are problems below the surface. Palmo and Palmo believed that the prognosis for the youth in these cases is better because the parents can more easily change some of their own behaviors, including parenting skills.

Palmo and Palmo (1989) noted that counselling at-risk youth and their families can be stressful. Since burnout could result, these authors advised professionals to make a commitment to their own mental health in order to maintain the required energy. The only teacher in my interviews who talked about dwindling energy was also the only one who expressed feeling stress and predicted burnout.

I'm getting more worn out with dealing with these types of kids all the time. You know, they say only a few years and then you burn out if you keep doing these sort of things, but I think I'm probably reaching my maximum.

Seeing the Students' Perspectives

Knowing a student's family life could contribute to a teacher's seeing a student's perspective. Furthermore, the student's attitude was at times ascribed to the home environment. One teacher talked about understanding a student's reasons for not wanting to go to school when he discovered how "horrendous" the student's family experiences had been.

I found out that he has had a horrendous family life and there was some things that happened in the city here concerning his family and it was just..I felt really bad for the boy and I felt no wonder he doesn't want to go to school.

Sperber (1985) wrote that "to 'see things from someone else's point of view,' it is, actually, someone else's *representation of things* that one tries to represent to oneself" (p.20). He noted that to infer what things are from a knowledge of another's representation requires the supplementary assumption that the other's perspective is, in fact, the way things really are. The teachers saw the students' representations of situations and I recorded the teachers' representatons of those depictions. In order to make inferences based upon the data, I assumed that the perspectives were the reality. "When any of us talk about the 'real world,' what we are always talking about is our perceived world because we have no way of knowing what the real world is except as we are able to perceive it" (Glasser, 1990a, p. 10). Each person's perspective is that individual's reality. Since "no two perceived worlds can be exactly the same" (p.10), differing perspectives could be uncovered during an analysis of the data.

At times, "understanding where they're coming from" was attributed to a teacher's ability to recall what being a teenager had been like. One teacher identified with the students because only a short time had passed since she had been a teenager.

Another teacher identified because of the struggles he had had with school. He did not pretend that school had been a "fun and exciting" place for him.

Very in touch with that cause I wasn't very far out of that era myself so I was very in touch with what they were dealing with.

I like to identify with these kids because I had a horrendously hard time in school. I hated school...But I stuck it out. So I identify a lot with these kids and I never tell them that hey, it's time to get back to school because school's fun and exciting. They'd all tell me to...

Both of these teachers said they could identify with their students. Yet, as revealed in the next quotations, the first teacher had a family life that was very different from the life experienced by many at-risk students. The second teacher, however, grew up in a family that drew some parallels.

We're just a very close family and my mother's philosophy was that if you can't get along in your family, you'll never get along in the world. And so what went on at home was always fun, caring things.

My father was an extreme alcoholic and my mother she tried as best she could but she just didn't. She was a busy lady; she had to work. And I just had to learn to survive.

The teachers expressed an awareness of emotions and views that included positive as well as negative accounts. Sometimes, the negatives were discussed in relation to home experiences, and other times, to experiences in certain teachers' classes. Descriptions of positive feelings and thoughts were often presented as a result of the intervention of the interviewed teachers. Furthermore, whether positive or negative, both feeling and thinking were accompanied by specific behaviors.

In the following excerpt, the teacher noted that students who are feeling angry and who are thinking that they are unfairly punished are not going to do productive work. She described what can happen when a student is sent to an in-school suspension room.

If it is strictly an in-school suspension, too, kids arrive with a lot of anger and like "I'm not going to do any work to save my soul," you know. They might feel like a lot of them do. "I'm being unfairly punished, anyway. I don't get along with this teacher and now they're sticking me here and want me to work. Forget it." So you're not going to get constructive work out of them until, 'cause they're angry.

When feelings and thoughts are positive, accompanying behaviors may be different, as revealed in the next anecdote. Students who feel comfortable within a group and who think that they want to be with the group may change some of their ways of doing things in order to get what they want.

But once they get here, and actually more of those kids are becoming regular, because they're feeling more and more comfortable with each other...where they're wanting to come by themselves. They're saying, "Well, I wanna go so maybe I'll go to bed earlier tonight."

The teachers showed an understanding of their students' perspectives when they talked about their students' thoughts and feelings. These perspectives were linked with behaviors. According to one teacher, when students are not having success, they think "I'm dumb." She believed, however, that their thinking changes when they are successful. Another teacher spoke of students being "in a rotten mood" and "just ready to fight." Nevertheless, "their walls" came down when she let them know they were "safe" in her room. In order to change feelings and thoughts, opportunities were provided to change behaviors. There were reports about students, who had experienced failure, getting good marks, and students, who had carried a lot of anger, learning more appropriate ways of coping.

When expressing their empathy for students, the teachers sometimes spoke with a student's voice. The previous excerpts include examples of this; for instance, "I'm not going to do any work to save my soul." An awareness of a student's thoughts and feelings appeared to enable them to assume the student's role and look at the situation through the student's eyes. They identified with the student by briefly

assuming the student's identity. As quickly as they interjected with the student's voice, they returned to the teacher's role. This technique compares with Brammer's (1985) description of "helper empathy." During the helping relationship interview, helpers put themselves in the helpee's "internal frame of reference" while retaining their own identity.

Empathy is the principal route to understanding helpees and enabling them to feel understood. The helper sees the world the way helpees perceive it, that is, from their "internal frame of reference." Helpers make an active effort to put themselves in this internal perceptual frame without losing their own identity or objectivity. (p. 32)

Rogers (1983) believed that findings from the field of psychotherapy could be applied to the classroom. Accordingly, learning would be facilitated when the teacher possessed empathic understanding. He wrote, "When the teacher has the ability to understand the student's reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems *to the student*, then again the likelihood of significant learning is increased" (p. 125).

When presenting a case study about an at-risk student, Kos (1993) reported that her involvement made her feel emotions that her student was feeling. She claimed to have distanced herself from the teacher role and to have been able to see school in a way she had never done before, "through the eyes of a student for whom school made little sense" (p. 75). This enabled her to "more critically analyze" her responses to other students and "to more critically consider the role of student-teacher interactions in student performance" (p. 75).

Recognizing the Students' Strengths and Weaknesses

The students were described as "individuals" who had "good things about them" as well as "different types of problems." While some teachers were reported to only "see the bad and stress the bad," these teachers talked about their students' strengths and weaknesses.

One teacher explained the various reasons for students being in her class. She identified boredom accompanied by school avoidance, poor academic performance and unacceptable behavior.

Some are here, they were bored in school and so they just didn't go to school...Some are here because they were, you know, hell on wheels in the classroom and teachers just couldn't spend ninety-five percent of their time dealing with them...Others are here because their academics are really, really low...

Descriptors used to denote the weak qualities of individual students included the diametrical terms "short fused" and "quiet, withdrawn." Some students were thought to have low self-esteem and others to be using drugs. Sometimes, the low self-esteem and drug use were linked.

I would give it a percentage of eighty percent that are users in our classroom right now. That are users of drugs...It's a lack of self-esteem because they'll do what they have to do to get accepted.

Paradoxically, a perceived weakness (fighting) could also be interpreted as a strength. The following quotation suggests there was understanding for students who were unwilling to accept the authority of disrespectful adults. The teacher claimed that she would "really worry" if the students did not "fight it."

The kids know if the person is not showing any respect...And they don't like it. I mean, thank heavens they fight it. If they didn't fight it, then you'd really worry if they rolled over and played dead when the ego is being hit all of the time.

Another paradox was that of students who had difficulty in school but who had learned how to make the most of a life on welfare. These were lessons they received at home and they seemed to know them well. While the following comments contained a note of sarcasm, the teacher seemed to give credit to the students' abilities for mastering the art of system manipulation.

You've been brought up to actually learn how to manipulate the system. That's a great education for kids...How many kids could I introduce you to that would know the best way to get the most money out of social services, at a very young age?

A quality that would generally be considered a strength but actually turned out to be a liability at times for some students was their capacity to "never forget." The teachers realized that this meant "you really have to watch what you say." For the students, it could mean that they "end up the losers." According to one teacher, if these students were at a party and were welcomed by forty-nine people but not by the fiftieth, they would remember the fiftieth person. He applied this analogy to the school situation.

All of these kids would remember that one particular person out of the fifty and that would bother them the most...Like, how many kids do I work with, who say, "I like four out of the six teachers but two of them I hated and I couldn't stand bein' there so I didn't go."

Others have explored the concept of finding weaknesses in strengths and strengths in weaknesses. Burke (1984) wrote about observing "in the medium of communication simultaneously both the defects of its qualities and the qualities of its defects" (p. 49). He referred to Dewey's objection to ethnologists who had a tendency to discuss "savage" thinking in terms of a failure to follow Western thought-patterns. Instead of seeing failure, Dewey suggested that the thought-patterns should be viewed positively since these were developed to assist the people in the performance of their tasks. From this point of view, the Western person could be described as failing to think like the native. More recently,

Brendtro et al. (1990) referred to the German poet and educator Goethe who "observed that one must look past the fault to find the 'germ of virtue.' When 'stubbornness' can be recast as 'persistence,' then a liability becomes a potential asset" (p. 18).

Students were described as being "very, very smart" and it was noted that they "can learn it." Teachers spoke about forming their own opinions of students instead of reading what other teachers had documented in the cumulative files. One teacher observed that some students are "caught in the trap of their history and labelled." She did not look at students' records until she had spent six weeks with them.

And then I'd go back and look and when I'd fill out the back of the cum cards with the personality traits, I always had more pluses than minuses and for five or six years prior to that it was always negatives, zeros. If you expect from students to be, to work hard and to be good, they will. If you expect them not to be, then they won't be.

Individual students were mentioned for their talents. It was suggested that when a student is "really talented in art...a lot of his work" should be "centered around what he loves." Talents included the mechanical as well as the artistic. One student was "excellent at model making"; another wrote "poetry almost every day"; a third was "an incredible artist"; a fourth had "a wonderful talent for working on cars."

I considered the teachers' perceptions of their students' abilities in relation to Gardner's (1991) theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner challenged the education system with its heavy bias toward linguistic modes of instruction and assessment. In support of his theory, he pointed out that there are literate people who can read instructions perfectly but cannot assemble the machine while there are illiterate people who can quickly determine where every part fits. Gardner

posited that students learn and perform in different ways. Some take a linguistic approach; others favor a spatial or a quantitative tack. "Some students perform best when asked to manipulate symbols of various sorts, while others are better able to display their understanding through a hands-on demonstration or through interactions with other individuals" (pp. 11-12).

Miller (1993) borrowed from Gardner's work to describe how people are smart and how they learn through their strengths. For example, she noted that students with behavior disorders and strongest in spatial and bodily intelligences benefit from therapeutic programs that emphasize physical education and prevocational components as well as drawing and painting. The teachers in my interviews seemed to realize that they needed to concentrate on the strengths of their students in order to make progress.

Wehlage et al. (1989) found that teachers in alternative schools "repeatedly expressed their conviction that, despite many students' discouraging records of failure, the right kind of environment and opportunities could stimulate the innate potential buried within each individual" (p. 137). These researchers met teachers who were "building on students' strengths rather than focusing too often on their deficits and weaknesses" (pp. 137-138).

Recognizing the Students' Needs

The fourth area in which teachers indicated an understanding of their students was in the recognition of their needs. I had identified this component of understanding because of the frequency with which teachers used the word "need." The following list presents examples of this:

"need to have someone to scream and yell at"

"need to be really praised"

"need...somebody to have an ear"

"need clear what they need to do"

As I related what teachers said specifically about students' needs to the ways they made connections and showed understanding, it seemed that the needs of the students provided the principal direction for all else that occurred in the relationships between students and teachers. When students needed someone to listen, the teachers listened; when they needed praise, the teachers praised.

While needs could be divided into categories, a full exploration of this component would also require an examination of the ways in which teachers worked with students in attempting to have those needs met; e.g., through control/empowerment and flexibility/structure. That, after all, was the essence of the research. At this point in the interpretation, I noted the central importance of the recognition of needs.

Although teachers recognized that students were "individuals" with "different" needs, their references to these needs could be divided into two main areas:

need to vent frustration

need for recognition

Need to Vent Frustration

The students were described as needing to "display anger" and needing a place for "cooling off." They knew the teachers would listen and that "they could talk about it" with them. The teacher who is quoted below described what a group did to provide support when a student was upset. There was a mechanism ("big thermometer on the board") that gave each student an opportunity to let the other

group members know how she or he was feeling. Then, the rest of the group would show understanding by recognizing the student's mood and by helping if that is what the student wanted.

Everybody sort of get together in the morning and talk about a variety of things...just to get everybody kind of in a good, relaxed state...if we had somebody who was in a very upset mood have a way to identify that...I use to have a big thermometer on the board and you'd go up and you'd put your name by the thermometer just to get ideas of how you're feeling. And if John is in a really upset mood that day, then we kind of would help John if he wanted to be helped or we'd kind of recognize what kind of mood he's in.

Wehlage et al. (1989) observed alternative program teachers who "recognized in their students' undesirable behavior, not so much evidence of defective character but rather the expression of accumulated frustrations and disadvantaged backgrounds" (p. 137). Unlike teachers in traditional schools who might interpret student outbursts as a personal insult or a challenge to their authority, these teachers were understanding and provided guidance in appropriate behaviors.

Need for Recognition

When talking about his students, a teacher said, "They really wanna be successful." Teachers also remarked on students not having had this need met during previous school experiences. For some of them, working with the intervention teachers was the first time they had been successful. Their achievements were recognized and the recognition seemed to contribute to those achievements. This process was explained in the following way by a teacher who found "good things in every student."

You might have to dig a little harder to find (good things) in some but you can find them definitely. And then you focus, even if there is only one little part of good in the student when they come to you, you focus on it and really polish it up and bring it up. It's gonna expand and then you can start helping them pull in other..points that really, you know, improves their character and their self-esteem and how they fit in with the others.

Research supports the teachers' observations regarding the importance of recognition. For example, Hess (1989) reported that there is a greater tendency for middle-class children to receive teacher attention and praise and for low-income children to receive criticism. She also noted that the self-image and aspirations of low-income children were bolstered when students perceived their teachers to be encouraging. Her research seems to have special relevance for the teachers' stories since they reported that many of their students came from low-income families.

Morley (1991) emphasized that alternative programs must be planned to permit early and frequent success for students. This position was also taken by Cuthbertson and Taylor (1989) who stated that teachers of "disconnected" students must recognize the need to give praise and to have a variety of strategies for building self-concept levels.

Combining the Themes of Connecting and Understanding

How, then, are the themes of connecting and understanding related? An answer to this question may reside in the comments that were made by a teacher when talking about those teachers who don't want to spend time with at-risk students. Their not wanting to know about the students was seen as a means of protecting themselves from involvement.

I think that sometimes teachers don't want to really know too much. Because that makes you, ah, I guess maybe more aware or more involved. The less you know, it's safer. I can see some teachers being like that.

The teachers who were interviewed seemed to want to know their students and appeared to make a point of getting involved in their lives. Their stories suggested that they developed understanding and made connections by listening to their students and being "in touch" with them. While it could be argued that

understanding (knowing the student) was needed before connecting could occur, the reverse could also be postulated. Since the two themes are so intertwined, it is more probable that the two occurred simultaneously. This process, which replaces the concept of causality, is discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as "mutual simultaneous shaping" (p. 151).

The concept of mutual shaping recognizes that "all elements in a situation are in mutual and continual interaction" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.155). This concept applies to data analysis since evolving categories and properties are not exclusive to each other, but actually form a web of linkages. Because of the synergistic relationship, an interpretation of one category influences the interpretation of other categories. The interpreter needs to move back and forth along the strands of this evolving web while being open to the emergence of new patterns.

Understanding develops from the interpreter's interaction with the phenomenon under study. This simultaneous process was explained by Ricoeur (1981) as the "work of the text upon itself" (p. 164). Through the interaction with text, the interpreter renews knowledge of self and text at the same time.

It could be posited, then, that the teachers developed an understanding of their students in a manner corresponding to this simultaneous process of data interpretation. Over time, through interactions and connections, their knowledge of the students and themselves grew. These interactions were not limited to the students; contacts with parents, teachers and others helped them to expand this knowledge. Communication, for example, with a research interviewer also could be viewed as affecting their understanding and interpretation.

Summarizing Connecting/Understanding

The teachers' stories indicated that they made connections with students by actively showing their concern and understanding. Through the use of dynamic verbs and descriptions of the roles they filled, they expressed ways in which these connections were made. Respect and trust, considered important to the forming of connections, were viewed as taking time and requiring reciprocity. The teachers also talked about being honest and open and about nurturing a sense of belonging.

An understanding of the students was revealed when the teachers remarked upon students' family backgrounds, students' perspectives, students' strengths and weaknesses, and students' needs. They spoke about families without structure or love and caring and families affected by poverty and violence. References suggested an identification with students and a perception of students' feelings and thoughts. There were reports that students' ineffective thinking, feeling and behaving could become more effective. The students were seen as having strengths along with the weaknesses and sometimes perceived weaknesses were also viewed as indicative of strengths. Finally, the teachers displayed understanding by recognizing two principal needs of their students - the need to vent frustration and the need for recognition.

Flexibility and Structure

A close examination of the data grouped within the theme of flexibility/structure resulted in the identification of the following six main topics:

1. The Problems of Regular Classroom Teachers
2. Inflexible Teachers and Inflexible Students
3. Program Teachers as Liaisons
4. The Need for Flexibility

5. The Need for Structure

6. Balancing Structure and Flexibility

The Problems of Regular Classroom Teachers

The "massive responsibilities" of these teachers who could have as many as thirty-three students in a class did not go unrecognized. Managing increased noise levels, preparing multi-level lessons, and meeting the special needs of integrated students were all seen as the challenges of the regular classroom. Stress was associated with teaching under such conditions that were compounded by class size and affected by time.

And they are stressed, stressed, stressed. They're teaching seven classes a day. Thirty kids in every class. They've got integrated kids, they've got slow learners, emotionally disturbed, behavior problems. They've got the gamut in our school here.

It's very hard for a teacher with thirty-two to make two or three different lesson plans. They say you're suppose to do that with multi-level teaching but it is difficult in fifty minutes, or by the time you get them in and settled and, you know, have time for homework and maybe forty minutes, it's really difficult to do that multi-level teaching.

The elements of time and class size appeared to influence a regular classroom teacher's potential for flexibility. These teachers were seen as not having the time to be a "sounding board." After taking a regular homeroom class for ten minutes each morning during a term, one of the teachers realized "you can't develop a relationship with thirty-three people in that manner." At least, she believed she could not do this "to the extent" she was accustomed. As a result, she "understood how teachers would feel." She wondered how they could "know what these kids' problems are" because they "don't spend the time with them."

Certain circumstances were viewed to be out of the control of the regular classroom teachers. They were in an "enclosed environment" regulated by "structure" and "bells" and in schools with "lots of rules" and "no alternatives."

However, there was a perception that some of them would not have liked the flexibility experienced by the program teachers. While there may have been stressful situations in the regular classroom, there was also a degree of stress believed to be associated with not having to follow "strict guidelines."

And some people wouldn't like that flexibility. And a lot of things that I've done, I haven't been given strict guidelines. You know, the limit is my imagination, sort of thing. Which is great because that's what I like. It makes it a little stressful because you think, "Oh, my gosh, am I doin' the right things?" Or, you know, you question yourself. But I like that flexibility.

Although the regular classroom teachers were perceived to not have the same flexibility as the program teachers, they were still thought to have control over what they chose to do within the confines of the system. One teacher observed that those "who are really interested" would read literature on new techniques. They could also work on "environment building" by getting to know students even though there were obstacles. As well as illustrating an appreciation for flexibility within the structure, the following quotation is relevant to the theme of connecting/understanding. While the structure could limit a teacher's contact with a student, it was considered to be the teacher's responsibility to get to know that student.

You try to get to know Mary as the year goes along so that when there's a situation, hopefully you have some background and can talk. It's the teachers who take that extra effort and work.. 'cause you know homeroom teachers only see their kids for twenty minutes some mornings and off they go. And they might be back in to see them for a class and out again. Keeping track of how is so and so's day.

Inflexible Teachers and Inflexible Students

While the teachers who were interviewed talked about some of the difficulties faced by teachers in the regular classrooms, they were not always kind in their descriptions of these teachers. As noted during the analysis of the theme *Control/Empowerment*, some teachers expected students "to follow the center." The

inflexible teachers "were not willing to back down;" they would not "bend enough." Their low level of tolerance was summarized as a "teach the best and shoot the rest kind of philosophy."

There was a belief that "the short fuses" would "start erupting" when teachers did not bend. "Personality conflicts" and "power struggles" occurred as students also refused to bend.

One of the situations is just a matter of the teacher telling them what to do and they don't wanta be told what to do.

Program teachers reported that a student who was in conflict with a teacher may refuse to go to that teacher's class. They advised students in those situations "to deal with it" since other classes were not available for them. They could, after all, have the same teacher for more than one class and over a couple of years.

So what do you do with a kid in grade seven who's saying, "I'm not goin' back in there...I can't stand this person."...You're gonna have to deal with it because you've got another year and a half of it.

Program Teachers as Liaisons

The flexibility of program teachers was illustrated by their ability to be a "liaison" between inflexible regular classroom teachers and inflexible students. When there were conflicts, they would intercede.

Somebody gets sent out because they've gotten into a confrontation with the teacher and the teacher says, you know, "Out of here." Then, she will call down to...and ask if I can go up or... would go up. Whoever is available. And then try and find out what went on or, you know, deal with it somehow.

As the "person in the middle," the program teachers talked about befriending both teachers and students. They saw themselves as "mentors" and "advocates" for students. In their efforts to develop a "good working relationship" with other

teachers, they volunteered their assistance and tactfully offered suggestions on teaching strategies. It was noted that by providing students with a place to "cool off," they were giving teachers a "break."

Initially, a program teacher's role as student advocate seemed to be an unfamiliar one for the regular classroom teachers. According to one of the program teachers, in the beginning, it was, "Who is this person? How come she doesn't have to have a homeroom?" While "being on the outside," they worked at being accepted by the regular teachers. This meant getting the teacher's side of the story as well as the student's when there was disagreement.

I know that I wasn't there today. I didn't see what you saw. Can you give me your side of the story?

The following comments illustrate one teacher's approach when going between the teachers and students. After a student shared concerns with her, she would sometimes relay these feelings to a teacher. She claimed to do this in a manner that did not antagonize the teacher.

And so when these kids come to me, I'm talking to them and they can let loose, you know, they can tell me. And sometimes I go back to the teacher and say, ah, you know, I don't claim to be a know-it-all but just to inform them that this is how this student feels and maybe you could watch out for next time. And the teachers have appreciated that, too. So it's good.

The Need for Flexibility

The teachers offered examples that illustrated their appreciation for flexibility. Their self-descriptions suggested that they were inclined to bend, and they seemed pleased to have the "freedom" to allow for this within their programs. They also spoke about the students' need for flexibility.

Teachers - Inclined to Bend and Free to be Flexible

The self-descriptors used by the teachers included "laid back," "easy going," and "relaxed." Some of them claimed outrightly that they liked flexibility; others showed their willingness to bend by professing to take "one day at a time," to try "new things," and to be "open-minded." When one of the teachers was asked if she could still be flexible in the regular program, she expressed a preference to continue working in the alternative classes but identified her own personality traits that would motivate her to be innovative if given a regular teaching assignment.

Because I really enjoy the challenge of starting new things and working with these kids. And so I...try and envision myself teaching regular classes and think I'm gonna teach the same thing every year. Although I know myself and I know I'd be changing things to add to it or change it, whatever, just to keep it exciting for myself, so that when I teach it, it is still exciting. But I don't know....I guess I would have to make it fun and make it creative.

The teachers who were interviewed seemed to value the flexibility that they had within their programs. The sense of freedom to make decisions was noted earlier within the *Control/Empowerment* theme. Their stories suggested that plans for the day could be changed to deal with situations as they occurred. If a student was in "a rotten mood," a teacher could take time to talk with the student. Sometimes, a "bull session" or "talk time" was held for students to air feelings and deal with problems. Furthermore, these teachers did not always stay with a lesson plan; they felt free to "adapt, monitor and adjust." The flexibility seemed to contribute to classroom management.

But we knew there was [sic] a couple of people that came in high. So what did we do? We dropped our lesson plan and said, "This afternoon we're goin' to talk about drug abuse." ...And I wouldn't say that they didn't do it again but they didn't do it for a long time.

Students' Need for Flexibility

Although the teachers provided examples of students being inflexible, they acknowledged that these students benefited from a flexible approach. A "comfortable" atmosphere that was not "regimented" seemed to enable them to help students with personal problems. They had the flexibility to "go over very quietly" and ask, "Are you okay? Do you want to go and talk?" There was an expressed desire to "accommodate" the needs of individual students instead of using the same methods for everyone. The teachers seemed to believe in "accepting people for who they are...and working on their strengths in whatever area." A teacher, who saw his students' skills, was critical of the regular school system for putting students "in the same level" and expecting them "to do the same thing."

And we condemn them when they don't do their school work at a certain level but yet they haven't had that kind of skill training that maybe your children had or something like that. And we put them all in the same level and expect them all to be able to do the same thing. I have kids that have wonderful skills. They've just never been able to use them in what school is actually structured to do. A lot of kids are tremendous at art, you know, and they're condemned a lot in some of the schools for doing their art because it's not what they're supposed to be doing.

Teachers declared the importance of having variety within the lessons. According to one teacher, the use of "chalk talk and worksheets doesn't work with this group." Changing the tone of voice and being energetic were strategies that the teachers reported using to keep the attention of their students. They also identified a range of activities in which they engaged students. Sometimes, these extended beyond the classroom as presented by the following examples:

I didn't mention a whole lot about work experience. That's probably the key..a factor in making this program successful is that they have a break from school and out in the real world with real people with real jobs doing things that really matter....Like they really can do it and they feel they can do it and that's probably the biggest success thing.

We did different things like the field trips that they went on. And videos...and bringing guest speakers in...And I would bring them up here for regular phys. ed. program but I'd book the gym as well and...I'd take them in to dance. And that was exercise and they were doing things together and, you know, they enjoyed the flexibility.

The Need for Structure

As well as expressing an appreciation for flexibility, the teachers talked about the need for structure. They saw the students as needing structure and they pointed out that they also needed this.

Students' Need for Structure

The absence of structure and regulations at home was viewed as affecting what happened in school. For example, one of the teachers spoke about attendance being influenced by the late hours that his students were in the practice of keeping.

Most, all of them, stay up until one, two, two thirty, three o'clock in the morning and then to get out of bed the next morning is a major...because a lot of them don't have the structure at home that allows them to do something in a consistent manner.

Students with an unstructured home environment were seen as needing a structured school environment. Without structure, they were considered "lost" or out of "order." By enforcing the expectation of responsibility, the teachers were establishing a structure in which students were held "accountable" for their behaviors. This was examined more fully within the theme of *Control/ Empowerment*. The following quote may sound rather pointed, but it does serve to illustrate how seriously one teacher viewed the business of structuring assignments.

To me, when we're in class, this is what we have to get done and this is what we get done.

Teachers' Need for Structure

Structure that took the form of a "schedule" and "standards" appeared to be considered necessary. Even the teacher who worked with a very high risk group

and who seemed the most flexible in terms of attendance and punctuality had set a pattern for group meetings.

It starts at nine, okay, and it goes 'til eleven o'clock. It's not a lot of time; it's just Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. And I use to say, "Look, come along nine o'clock; try to make it at nine o'clock. If you're late, that's fine. I'd like you to come at nine."

Some of the teachers stressed having a need for organization. They claimed to want to know what they would be doing each day.

I like knowing what I'm going to do because I'm very organized and I guess I'm structured...

A little bit more structured this year, a little bit more organized, a little bit more focused on where we're going and what we want....My personality needs that.

These were the words of teachers who also talked about the need to be flexible while providing examples of ways in which they were able to adapt. Their stories suggested an attempt to have structure along with the flexibility.

Balancing Structure and Flexibility

I was very flexible, I guess. Ah, you know, I would plan my day and something would happen and I would have to change and I wasn't tied to my lesson plan. I could go with the flow of whatever happened or whatever.

The previous quotation implies that there was a structure; that is, the days were planned. However, the teacher was receptive to changing these plans as required. Having a receptivity to change while working on structure seemed to be aptly described by one teacher as having a "flexibility within the structure." This combination of structure and flexibility was also expressed in terms of "guidelines within the give and take."

The teachers provided illustrations of balancing the structure and flexibility. For example, a teacher, who portrayed herself as flexible enough to be a liaison

between teachers and students, seemed to apply structure as she helped students to develop plans.

"What did you do? Let's talk about it." And get them to focus on what they did. "Now, when you go in to see Mr...., I think you should tell him what you did and if you can think of some plans that you can tell him you are gonna work on next time."

Another teacher was flexible enough to think that students should have a place "where they could cool off for awhile." At the same time, she believed there should be structure in the form of regulations or the students might leave class to go to this place whenever they wanted.

I said it would have to be clearly set up 'cause I know kids, too. If they think they can leave every time they're going to explode, they'll be leaving all the time. So it has to be regulated.

Only one of the teachers seemed to struggle with balancing flexibility and structure. This teacher identified two roles - that of the "kind person" and that of the person who enforces "you have to take your hat off in school, period." For her, the "difficult part of the job" was on the one hand being "on their level ... compassionate" and on the other hand "making them take responsibility for their actions." Although she acknowledged the importance of bending, she admitted that she may not have been flexible enough. Nevertheless, she was unwilling to bend further.

I refuse to bend as much, maybe, as you need to bend with these kids. I bend a lot more than a lot of teachers but it's like you have not done your homework, you have a detention...That's the behavior and that's the consequence. And I refuse to bend on that.

In addition to being the only teacher who appeared to have a dilemma with balancing flexibility and structure, she was the only one who talked about "getting more frustrated" and "worn out." Her growing frustration may have been linked

with her inability to maintain a balance or what one teacher called a "comfortable structure."

Referring to the Literature on Flexibility within the Structure

Wehlage et al. (1989) reported that it was essential for educators of at-risk students to have sufficient control over the school environment so that they could carry out their work as they saw fit. This included control over the selection of students and the autonomy to dismiss students who did not fulfill their contracts. Within this structure, the teachers could visibly maintain program standards. At the same time, they could exercise flexibility regarding the use of time, space and resources.

According to Conrath (1988), students who are at-risk need structure and predictability as well as flexibility of means. Noting that many of these students come from homes with little guidance, Conrath realized that they sometimes think they need even more independence and freedom. On the contrary, "although they certainly don't need a mindless structure filled with rules and regulations that are ends in themselves, they do need a supportive structure" that "provides help with learning" (p. 16). Furthermore, Conrath found that they require the flexibility of different approaches to teaching and learning since the traditional ones have not worked. This enables them to achieve the same ends that are expected of successful students.

Lehr and Harris (1988) observed that effective teachers of low-achieving students are well organized. These teachers realize that "the time students are actively engaged in learning contributes to their achievement" (p. 25). In addition, Lehr and Harris reported that effective teachers identified flexibility as an important characteristic. For example, one teacher in a survey wrote, "Flexibility - to be able

to take a prepared lesson for the day and scrap it at a moment's notice to adapt to the needs of the students at that time" (p.57).

Summarizing the Theme of Flexibility/Structure

The flexibility of regular classroom teachers was viewed as being restricted by time, class size and an imposed structure; yet, teachers were seen as having choices when it came to their interactions with students within that structure. Inflexible teachers were described as clashing with inflexible students, and the program teachers reported intervening as mediators. There was an expressed appreciation for flexibility and the freedom to be flexible within the programs. The program teachers claimed that the students needed teachers who employed a variety of teaching strategies and responded to the students' emotional needs. While there was a perceived need for this flexibility, there was also a belief in establishing clear expectations. The teachers remarked that they and the students needed structure as well as flexibility.

Having both flexibility and structure seemed to help teachers with classroom management. They felt free to put aside lesson plans or to assume the role of mediator in order to address issues that were troubling students. They also believed in having a structure that provided organization and guidelines. For most of the teachers, balancing flexibility and structure was not presented as a problem. They appeared to recognize and appreciate the need for both.

In his treatment of action in social theory, Giddens (1982) wrote that "societies have no 'reasons' or 'needs' whatsoever; only the actors whose activities constantly constitute and reconstitute those societies do" (p. 32). Social systems contain structures and "exist in and through structuration, as the outcome of the

contingent acts of a multiplicity of human beings" (p. 35). Giddens explained the relation between action and structure in terms of a *duality of structure*; that is, "the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (pp. 36-37). Structure, therefore, was viewed as "both enabling and constraining" (p. 37).

Giddens' theory seemed to concur with the concept of flexibility within structure. It recognized that social change as well as social reproduction involves structuration. Social actors produce and reproduce institutions and have the capacity to exert influence. Instead of seeing the structure as entirely constraining, the teachers, whom I had interviewed, seemed to find ways for it to be enabling.

Positives and Negatives

Interrelatedness of the Positive/Negative Theme with Other Themes

Positive/negative was the last of the dominant themes to be analyzed. Many of the phrases that I had grouped within this theme were cross-referenced with the themes of understanding and connecting. When speaking of ways to make connections with students and showing their understanding of students, teachers recognized the value of positive interactions. They identified ways to give students the "praise that they need." Realizing that the students had experienced negatives, they understood that making connections required finding the "good things in every student."

The theme positive/negative was also related to the theme of flexibility/structure. The teachers spoke positively about the flexibility that they had within their programs, and they spoke negatively about unbending teachers in regular classes.

Expressing preferences for "relaxed" and "comfortable" learning environments, they favored their teaching positions over regular classroom assignments.

There were also linkages between the positive/negative theme and the control/empowerment theme. Teachers held the positive view that students could develop self-discipline. They held a negative view of teachers who resorted to "degrading" and "yelling and screaming."

An example of this association of themes is taken from an interview that was conducted with two teachers as I joined them for lunch in their office. In an adjacent room, the students were playing a ghetto blaster and the volume started to rise. The teachers responded in a manner that showed their belief in enforcing fair consequences and in giving students opportunities to discipline themselves.

They're about to lose that; they're about to lose that...machine because it's past the level two...volume two. That's responsible. You abuse it; you lose it. And they're about to lose that. And they know that so maybe there's one trying to go like this...Rather than stomping out and getting them. Let's see...Getting back to what I was saying about our expectations, we just want to get them to maintain the success they had. That comes with self-discipline.

After noting that the positive/negative theme had links with connecting/understanding, flexibility/structure, and control/empowerment, I moved on to examine this theme more closely. I identified three chief categories within the positive/negative theme:

- Students' capabilities were viewed positively, but their situations were viewed negatively.
- Teachers in regular classrooms were viewed negatively, but they were defended.
- Teachers in the programs viewed their own abilities positively, but they spoke about their limitations.

Each of the three categories represented individuals dealing with specific circumstances. The teachers' grounded theories about people and situations echoed elements of the formal theories of interactional psychologists who believe that all behaviors reflect both the person and the situation. Pervin (1984) observed that some behaviors may be more person determined for some people while other behaviors may be more situation determined for other people. According to Pervin, "the task of research becomes understanding the person and situation forces that account for the *pattern* of stability and change in behavior" (p. 27).

Viewing the teachers' stories in relation to this formal theory of the interactionalists, it is possible to find instances of behaviors that were described as resulting from the interaction of a person with a situation. For example, there were "wonderful" regular classroom teachers who were in similar classroom situations as "negative" teachers, yet their behaviors differed. Furthermore, there were students who changed their behaviors when their classroom situations changed.

In addition to having congruence with interactional psychology, the teachers' theories seemed to comply with Burke's (1945) theory regarding the interaction of actors or agents within scenes. Burke referred to dramatism for his philosophic interpretation of motivation. He presented the concept of a scene-agent ratio to explain the extent to which a situation affected the agent within it. Either the scene or the agent could be viewed as being responsible for the act. This implied that the motives of an act could be within the agent or an act could be seen as the result of a particular situation. Therefore, the agent or the situation could be credited or blamed for the act.

In the interviews with the program teachers, the situations of both students and teachers received criticism. Even though the students were depicted as having negative behaviors, however, the agents who seemed to receive the most blame were the regular classroom teachers and the parents. The students' situations (scene) seemed to be viewed as more responsible than the students (agents) for the students' negative behaviors (act). Conversely, the regular classroom teachers (agents) seemed to be viewed as more responsible than their situations (scenes) for their negative behaviors (act).

Positive Capabilities of Students/Negative Situations of Students

All of the examples within the category *positive capabilities of students/negative situations of students* could also be placed within the understanding/connecting theme. Nevertheless, to subsume this category solely within the understanding/connecting theme would detract from a full analysis of the positive/negative theme. While categories of the two themes overlapped, a comprehension of each theme would require that each category within it be considered in relation to that theme. Thus, although students' positive capabilities and negative situations were discussed within the theme of understanding/connecting, these elements also demanded consideration within the positive/negative theme. This observation supported my conjecture that categorization is not a two-dimensional, either-or phenomenon. I had previously noted that the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988) seemed an appropriate metaphor for the analysis since it represented the interconnectedness of the data. The nature of this semiotic state would be explored later from an overall perspective.

Positive Capabilities

A proclaimed ability to interact positively with students appeared to be linked with positive perceptions of students. The teachers expressed a belief in their students' potential to succeed; and according to their accounts, this belief seemed to affect their interactions with the students.

What you gotta do is you gotta build the success and also keep challenging them because a lot of them are very, very smart kids.

I think what I am giving to them is the positive comments and the positive interaction which is something new. Like a lot of them don't have positive relationships with people so that's a positive, a success...

Similarly, research has linked teachers' positive views of students with teachers' abilities to interact effectively with students. Wehlage et al. (1989) reported that teachers who were seen as effective with at-risk students consistently expressed an optimism about student potential. In an open-ended survey of classroom teachers who were identified as successful with low achievers, seventy-five percent of the respondents noted the need to be positive (Lehr & Harris, 1988). Instead of focusing on deficit and deviance, Brendtro and Ness (1995) advocated using proactive, strength-based alternatives when working with troubled youth. They wrote, "Optimism feeds a sense of efficacy and motivates coping and adaptive behavior, even in the face of difficult odds" (p. 3).

Negative Situations

While claiming that the students had potential to be successful, the teachers also described students who had negative behaviors and lived in negative environments. The following statements serve as illustrations of the negative activities and family situations that were experienced by the students. Teachers talked about families who did not provide "structure" and "caring" and about

students who had the "freedom" to stay out until the early morning hours and who were unprepared for classes.

Just the parents don't have any desire to really help their child through school...Maybe they're more concerned about themselves.

I got three kids that take drugs every night. They don't just take, you know, marijuana; they're on acid. I have kids that are pretty heavy into drugs.

The non-school experiences of at-risk youth have been documented by numerous researchers (Palmo & Palmo, 1989; McWhirter & McWhirter, 1989; Dryfoos, 1990). Within the theme of understanding, I referred to the literature on families of students in at-risk situations. In a review of research, Dryfoos (1990) illustrated the overlap in high-risk behaviors. She noted the role played by parents in the prediction of delinquency, substance use, teenage pregnancy, and school failure. "Having insufficient bonding to parents, having parents who do not monitor, supervise, offer guidance, or communicate with their children, and having parents who are either too authoritarian or too permissive are all strongly associated with the behaviors" (p. 95).

Negative Teachers/Defended Teachers

Negative Teachers

The teachers who were interviewed expressed negative views of the way some teachers within the regular classrooms treated at-risk students. The negative descriptions could be clustered into three main categories: not getting involved, finding fault, and being uptight.

•Not Getting Involved

Teachers were described as not wanting to get "involved" with at-risk students and not having a good understanding or wanting to understand the "family lives these kids have lived." This was contrary to the way program teachers presented themselves as discussed under the theme of connecting/understanding. During one interview, the noninvolvement was explained as a means used by some teachers to protect themselves.

Not really wanting to know the how come's and the why's...Or I have to have compassion ...If you don't know it and you can plead ignorance, basically, then, what's the harm?

Such reactions could have been a form of self-justification for these teachers. According to the theory of *cognitive dissonance* developed by Festinger (1957), an individual will experience discomfort when holding two cognitions that are psychologically inconsistent. The person strives to reduce the dissonance by changing one or both of the cognitions so that they are more consistent or by adding a third cognition so that the original cognitions are less inconsistent with each other. It is possible, for example, that the teachers may have wanted to get involved in their students' lives. At the same time, they may have been afraid because they did not know how to respond. In order to deal with this dissonance, they changed one of their cognitions by choosing to "plead ignorance" instead of getting to know their students.

•Finding Fault

Although "they could blow it by finding fault," some of the teachers in the regular classes were thought to "really look down at those at-risk students." They were quoted as claiming "the time and energy that is put into these students...is almost a crime." The perception was that they did not "deserve it." In terms of cognitive

dissonance theory, the teachers may have believed that they should be effective with all students and this may have been inconsistent with their experiences. They handled this dissonance by adding a third cognition - the students were undeserving.

This negative portrait of students was seen as influencing teacher-student interactions. The program teachers offered their perspectives on the ways in which students were treated by some of the regular classroom teachers.

I think sometimes it's almost easier for them to say, "Let's get them kicked out and then I won't have to deal with them at all."

They're not treating them as people. You know, "We've got to get this done."

There's some wonderful teachers out there in the district that I know can take thirty kids and make them all, well, most of them, feel pretty welcome, and really enjoy school. But they're a rarity, I think.

One program teacher remarked that a student could be "a real hellion in the classroom" or "really, really low" academically and there were "probably a lot of things that teachers could do by just giving a little bit more" to this student. Instead, some teachers were described as having negative views of the students and behaving in a negative manner toward them. The students' behaviors seemed to conform with the teachers' opinions and actions.

The teachers' tendency to elicit behaviors from students in accordance with their initial hypotheses could be explained as a *self-fulfilling prophecy*. This was illustrated in the famous study of elementary school students conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). In this study, teachers were informed that psychological tests had shown certain students to be due for a rapid advance in learning. These children had been selected instead by means of a table of random

numbers. Since the children did gain more than their peers, the researchers concluded that it was a result of the teachers' behavior toward them.

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) referred to studies that supported another concept, the *halo effect*. "When certain things are known or believed about a pupil, other things about him, true things or not, are implied" (p. 54). They observed that teachers sometimes recognize disadvantages and sometimes they create them. This concept was linked with the notion of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Halo effects could lower or raise an evaluation of a child and this could lead to a specific expectation for performance. When the expectation is communicated to the child, he or she may subsequently fulfill the teacher's prophecy.

Those teachers who seemed to "look down" upon certain students may have formed their opinions as a result of halo effects. If they communicated to their students that they did not think of them as being worthy of a teacher's time or capable of success, the students may have performed according to their expectations. By contrast, the program teachers expressed positive views of their students' potential.

In a study of at-risk elementary students, Richardson, Casanova, Placier and Guilfoyle (1989) illustrated that the at-risk category can be constructed by teachers based on their own preferences and expectations. While the teachers in this study seemed to be somewhat aware of the influence of context on a child's behavior, they did not appear to be aware of the way in which they affected that context through the enactment of their beliefs about students. Subsequently, those students who did not comply with specific classroom norms were labelled at-risk even though they may have behaved differently in another teacher's classroom.

The researchers were critical of using the epidemiological model to identify students who are at-risk since this model does not consider the degree to which the school contributes to the child's problems. They recommended a social constructivist model in which the perception of at-riskness is constructed within a particular social or cultural context.

The child brings to the classroom a certain number of characteristics that have been shaped by background and personal factors, and past experiences in school. This child interacts with a classroom context that includes other children, teacher (s) and materials. In addition, what happens in the classroom is shaped, in part, by school level factors that are often influenced by district level factors. The focus in this approach is not on the child alone, but on the interaction between the child and these nested contexts. (Richardson et al., 1989, p. 7)

The studies of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and more recently, the research of Richardson et al. (1989) showed that students can be more at-risk in certain teachers' classrooms than in the classrooms of others. This concurred with the data that I had obtained from the program teachers who recounted their positive interactions with students as well as the negative interactions that some teachers had with the same students. In addition to experiencing negative situations outside of school, their students had experienced negative situations within school. The remarks that follow illustrate that students' behaviors changed when the classroom environment changed. The faultfinding teachers were faulted.

Ah, but I wish there was some way that I could go back to those teachers and say, "Look, here are five students and you're teaching two of them. They were really rotten the year before when you had them and I'll be the first to admit it. They have done so much this year; they've really tried."...I see teachers who I personally think...are detrimental to students.

- Being Uptight

The "being uptight" category fits within the theme of flexibility/structure, as well as within the theme of positive/negative. It provides yet another example of the interrelationship of the themes.

Some teachers were given such negative descriptors as "hard core" "exhausted," and "burnt out." This "state of mind" was seen as affecting interactions with students.

The junior high teachers are caught in power struggles on a daily basis. And they never have been trained in their education degree how to deal with the kid that comes in lookin' for the fight. Oh, why don't you go F yourself, Mr. Smith. Well, Mr. Smith's back is up and boom, boom, boom, boom; he's gone...And they are stressed, stressed, stressed.

There was a perceived reluctance to change. One teacher explained this attitude from the point of view of teachers who were nearing retirement. They were portrayed as failing to get enthused about something new since they had been bombarded by so many ideas over the years.

Some of these teachers have been around for twenty years, have had new ideas and new ways to do things ten times thrown in their face. What's another. "I'm outta here in five years. I'm not changing anything. I'm the teacher. They're gonna respect me or they're outta here."

Veblen's concept of "trained incapacity" (cited in Merton, 1968) is relevant to the representation of teachers who refused to adapt with changing situations.

According to Veblen, inflexibility can lead to maladjustments. In the teachers' cases, maladjustments seemed to be evidenced by stress and negative attitudes.

Actions based upon training and skills which have been successfully applied in the past may result in inappropriate responses *under changed conditions*. An inadequate flexibility in the application of skills, will, in a changing milieu, result in more or less serious maladjustments. (p. 252)

The notion of "occupational psychosis" offered by Dewey (cited in Merton, 1968) could provide an explanation for teachers disfavoring certain students. While it is similar to Veblen's concept, the reference to the demands of the organization seems to place more responsibility on the structure than on the individual. A parallel with the category of *defended teachers* appears to be present.

As a result of their day to day routines, people develop special preferences, antipathies, discriminations and emphases. (The term psychosis is used by Dewey to denote a "pronounced character of the mind.") These psychoses develop through demands put upon the individual by the particular organization of his occupational role. (p. 252)

The literature on educating at-risk students contains reports paralleling the program teachers' observations regarding the unwillingness of some teachers to adapt with change and the accompanying stress that contributes to a student's at-risk status. Waxman (1992) noted teacher alienation as an issue that needed to be addressed, "because teacher disengagement feeds the alienation of students" (p. 5). Firestone (1989) had previously identified teacher alienation as a factor to be recognized if at-risk students are to be served well. He wrote, "Many teachers in urban high schools are trapped in positions they do not want but cannot afford to leave, complaining of burnout and, in the worst cases, retiring on the job" (p. 41).

Defended Teachers

Although teachers were described negatively, they were also defended. This ability of the program teachers to see the perspective of the regular classroom teachers was also treated within the theme of flexibility/structure. In the defense of teachers, the following factors were identified:

- insufficient time
- "massive responsibilities"
- high number of students

These factors were so closely connected that the identification of one was soon followed by reference to at least one other. The interrelationship of the three factors is illustrated by the following statement.

I think it seems the way the system is going with budget cuts and everything that teachers are being expected to do everything, to be everything to every child all the time, and they can't. Like I don't think I could be put in a room with twenty-eight kids, some of, maybe ten of them, like some of the classes we've had, maybe eight to ten kids, who are extremely difficult, and deal with them.

The factor of time was raised by one of the program teachers when she discussed the absence of consultation between her and the regular staff and amongst teachers generally. She compared this with the team approach she had experienced during a previous job.

The support was always there. When I worked with young offenders, I worked with four other people, and you know, if you came in and you had a bad day, somebody was there to say, "Well, don't worry about that. I'll do this for ya today." Or, you know, if you were having problems with a kid, you just didn't know what to do, you know, there was always somebody there to suggest, "Well, why don't you try this with him." And I find, you know, in teaching you don't get that, you know. People just don't seem to have the time. Everybody's busy, everybody. And although you're a big group, you're still not...And sometimes I think maybe you don't want to go and talk to somebody else because you feel that they have enough on their mind and they have enough to do...

While some teachers were defended because of factors over which they seemed to have little or no control, other teachers were praised for going "the extra mile." These were the ones who wanted to get "involved;" they were the "dynamite" teachers.

"Really good" was sometimes used to describe teachers who provided the program teachers with information about students who they thought would benefit from

special assistance. These teachers may have been prepared to "support in any way needed" so that they would not "really have to deal with it." Then, again, some of the teachers may have been "really interested" in the students' needs.

The teachers are good to let me know. They send me notes. Ah, so and so isn't here today. Johnny isn't feeling well. I think Mary might be headed for a crisis. And they pop them all in my mailbox in the morning.

The concerns raised by the program teachers with regard to class size have also been reported by others. According to Curwin (1992), increases in class size have a greater effect on high risk students than other students. He noted that when teachers do not have time to attend to these students' special needs, their performances may worsen and their behavior problems may increase. Researchers have pointed out, however, that reducing class size is not enough. The benefits of smaller classes are greater when teachers possess certain characteristics and use particular instructional styles (Pate-Bain, Achilles, Boyd-Zaharias and McKenna, 1992). While class size reduction could enable the teachers to get to know their students, the program teachers did not predict that this would guarantee the involvement of negative teachers. This is illustrated by the comments of a teacher who noted that some teachers would not work with her students even in a very small class.

You've always got the teachers that say, "Well, it must be nice. You have eight kids to work with." And then you have the other teachers who say, "I wouldn't touch that group with...I don't know how you do it."

The program teachers' observations are reinforced by the work of Ashton and Webb (1986) who referred to a number of studies that have provided insight into the situational factors influencing teachers' behaviors. They discovered that research has demonstrated the important role played by school and classroom contexts in relation to teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness. They wrote,

"Teachers' sense of efficacy is likely to be influenced significantly as a result of the context in which the teacher works" (p. 10-11). Nevertheless, these researchers also found that teachers in the same schools varied in their levels of efficacy. "In fact, many high sense-of-efficacy teachers took pride in their ability to teach the very students their colleagues defined as unteachable" (p. 72). Correspondingly, while insufficient time, "massive responsibilities," and class size were identified as situational factors that affected the regular classroom teachers' interactions with students, the program teachers saw "wonderful" teachers and "ineffective" teachers working in similar classroom contexts.

Positive Influences of Program Teachers/Limitations of Program Teachers

Positive Influences

The program teachers spoke positively about their abilities to work with at-risk students. In their opinion, they exerted a positive influence. They saw the students improve socially and academically and they considered this to be a result of their involvement. They liked the work and claimed to prefer it to teaching within a regular classroom setting. In addition to seeing their students progress, they also experienced their own professional growth.

• Benefits for the Students

This overall good feeling about their potential to positively influence their students seemed to provide justification for their efforts. Even if they did not see significant gains while a student was with them, there was a belief that ultimately the student would benefit. One teacher's reiterations ("truly believe," "have to believe") could have been an endeavor to convince himself that the students would eventually be successful. On the other hand, he could have been showing genuine conviction. In either case, this protestation seemed to enable him to cope with what could be

perceived as ineffectiveness. After all, it was not ineffectiveness if the success was deferred.

It may not sink in now. It may sink in five years. Somehow, I feel that anybody that spends a semester with us, I truly believe, and I have to believe this, and I have to believe in what I'm doing. I truly believe that what we're doing in here, somewhere down the line, if not, even if they go back to high school in the semester and they drop out, somewhere down the line, whether it's two, three, five years, whatever, something is gonna, it's gonna all come together. It's just not the right time.

Fortunately, there were the success stories. These appeared to contribute to the teachers taking a positive outlook. According to one teacher, "When they learn, we feel good."

I don't mind how they did before, because they start in September and they look at their marks, and as they go, their marks get better. And their marks really are getting better as they are going along.

Ashton and Webb (1986) postulated that "students' success has a positive effect on their teachers' sense of efficacy, and the process of reciprocal determinism continues in a mutually reinforcing cycle" (p. 13). Concluding that there is a relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement, they reported that this relationship is complex and situation-specific. The correlational nature of their study precluded these researchers from making any causal inferences or from discovering a reciprocal relationship. Although they found teachers with a strong sense of teaching efficacy to be more accepting and supportive of their students, they did not find that this high sense of efficacy depended upon student achievement. In a similar manner, the program teachers did not appear to have a need for all of their students to be successful in order to maintain a high sense of efficacy.

I prefer to work with those types of kids. I guess I've seen, you know, some of them be successful and all they need is somebody just to care about them and to let them know that you understand what they might be going through...

The teachers claimed that their influence extended beyond the realm of academics; time was spent with the students on behavior and developing responsibility. The positive effect of a program teacher's intervention was sometimes reported as being noted by the regular classroom teachers.

And the thing is that they come back and say, "I don't know what you did with that child, but wow, when they returned."

One of the program teachers spoke of the initial skepticism of other teachers. She believed that she had made the program credible as a result of her success with students who changed their irresponsible behaviors.

So I think I've done a fairly good job because I think they realize what I do is worthwhile. A lot of the kids that they have come from me have changed. Like they've had them before and there were bad attitudes and bad attendance and really difficult and a lot of them go on and are different people so that's a positive...that the program has done.

Conrath's (1988) views appeared to concur with the program teachers when he stated that adults involved with effective alternative programs see the importance of teaching discipline and responsibility since these cannot be automatically expected of at-risk students. "These adults understand the difference between teaching discipline and imposing obedience - and the ramifications if the two get confused in the classroom" (p. 15). Unlike the regular classroom teachers who did not expect certain students to do well and did not think these students were worthy of their time, the program teachers expressed positive views of their students' potential and worked with them to effect behavioral changes. Instead of having students "kicked out" of school, the program teachers helped them to discipline themselves. They seemed to understand that the angry youth who rages at authority figures is sending a desperate cry for someone to provide help through the storm and to teach self-control (Burger, 1994).

• Benefits for the Program Teachers

The teachers were very specific that they liked the work. Some claimed to actually "love" their job and helping "people be the best they can with the situation they're in."

I haven't had a day when I woke up in the morning and thought, ugh, another day, or I've got three more days left in the week. I'm excited about coming to work. I'm excited when they come through the door. I'm excited when they do well on their tests.

They expressed a preference for working in the program over having an assignment in the regular classroom. Reasons for this included the "challenge" and seeing "some of them be successful." Being able to "really get to know your students" and having the freedom to "expand" a lesson were other reasons. There was an overriding message that to enjoy the job you must "really like these kinds of kids."

As well as seeing their students learn and grow, the teachers talked about their own development. They wanted to try some things that were different. One teacher observed, "By dabbling in all these new things, I'm learning." Another saw himself "stepping towards" where he wanted to be as a teacher.

Researchers have recognized that it is important for teachers in alternative programs to like working with at-risk students and to feel rewarded by the experience. According to Morley (1991) these programs are more likely to be successful when staff want to be there. Wehlage et al. (1989) believed that good schools for at-risk students have to be good schools for teachers. They found that one-on-one relations and autonomy contributed to workplace satisfaction. The teachers in their study valued the opportunity to invest themselves in a program that they considered to be beneficial for them as well as the students.

The positive talk about making a difference in a student's life equated with the theme of efficacy - one of the thirteen original themes. All of the phrases within the efficacy theme were cross-referenced with the positive/negative theme. In view of the latter being a stronger theme, I decided that efficacy would be more appropriately labeled as a category within it.

Limitations of Program Teachers

While the teachers talked about putting "a lot of effort" into helping students have success, they realized that they could not "save them all." There were "some that might be too far gone." In the next passage, a teacher admits that there is a limit to his capabilities and this restricts the fighting he is prepared to do for certain children.

They're worth fighting for; most of them are worth fighting for. There's the odd child...just way out of my ball game.

• Limited by "Horrendous" Family Backgrounds

The following quotations describe some children who were perceived to be beyond the successful intervention of the program teachers. They carried the scars of "horrendous" family lives.

A lot of kids out there that are, you know, that are just so full of hate right now that it's hard to, really hard to grab.. bring them back. And if I don't have anything, if they can't come in this group and survive, then there's nothing in the schools that I can direct them into or nothing in the community that we can direct them into. Then, I'm at a loss.

It took her thirteen years to become the way she was and through, you know, the things that happened with her family and in one year, I hope I helped her a little bit but I know for a fact I certainly didn't, you know, save or put her back on the straight and narrow.

• Limited by Social Service and Education Systems

In addition to the limitations identified by the teachers as a result of the students' families, there were the limitations of the social service and education systems.

One teacher, who claimed to be "quite naive" in his first year with the program, discovered that social workers do not place children in protective care just because they do not go to school. He came to the realization that there have to be "a lot of difficulties where they are in danger."

Some kids wouldn't go to school and I would call social services and say, "Look, I got a thirteen-year-old child that's out of school...What can we do?" "We'll do an investigation." So they do an investigation and their home life is not too bad...So I stopped doin' that.

Another teacher described the wait before social workers intervened to follow-up reports of abuse at home.

Before Christmas, the week before Christmas, I made three [referrals]. I know they're not going to be following up on these so I wasn't setting the kids up for any great, wonderful miracles. Someone's gonna come in on a white horse and rescue you out of your home. That's not gonna happen. Screening was backed up six to eight weeks when I was making these calls. But doing my job. When someone discloses, I tell the kids I have to report it.

The teachers' efforts were limited by the school system, as well. Students who experienced success within the stay-in-school programs did not always continue to have the same degree of success when they returned to the regular classroom. The education system was seen as "failing" these students who were not "able to cope" with regular classes. Consequently, it was predicted that they could be "in crime and on social assistance the rest of their lives."

As presented previously, the program teachers spoke about the "negativity" of other teachers. They also talked about their own limitations in dealing with this attitude. One teacher remarked, "It's not my job to train junior high teachers." Another observed, "One thing that really bothers me with the whole system is that they can get away with a lot."

Davis and McCaul (1990) agreed that educators are often expected to deal with problems over which they have limited control. They pointed out that social and economic forces beyond the school impact upon the educational experiences and aspirations of at-risk children. At the same time, they proposed changes within schools in order to respond to the needs of students who are at-risk. Similarly, Waxman (1992) suggested that at-risk school environments contribute to students' failure. Instead of "blaming the victim," he also argued for changes to the places in which they learn.

Weighing the Positives and Negatives

The teachers' positive talk about having an impact seemed to outweigh the frustrations that came from knowing the students' family situations and the present education and social service systems. While they may have asked themselves, "Where did we go wrong?" even if one student dropped out, they also acknowledged that they gave "what we have."

Only one of the eleven teachers in the first phase of interviews appeared in danger of having the scale tip in such a way that the frustrations could outweigh the positive experiences. This was the only teacher who identified that she may be headed for burnout. She observed, "Some days I even just feel whipped."

For this teacher, sometimes there was still the feeling that she was "the only positive thing" the students had. She estimated that "seventy percent of the kids who go on" from her program "have much better attendance and much better marks and better attitudes and more focus that they want to get through school." Nevertheless, her story was one of dwindling patience and increasing frustration.

I had lots of patience at the beginning...but now I'm more discouraged by the homes and the dysfunction and it's like there's really no end to the cycle. These kids who are having babies...and the cycle is just continuing.

The biggest thing that I get frustrated [about] is a resistant attitude...I'm trying to help them, you know, do better in school and be successful in life and learn a few things and because probably their pattern is so resist, resist, resist, that's the most frustrating thing.

Although the other ten teachers revealed their frustrations, they spoke more often about the rewards. While they talked about teachers who preferred not to teach at-risk students, they claimed to really want to teach them. Generally, they believed that the students could succeed and that they could help them achieve success.

Summarizing the Theme of Positive/Negative

The teachers spoke positively about the students having potential for success. They also expressed awareness of the students' negative behaviors and negative environments. They saw the negativity of uptight teachers who did not want involvement with students and who found fault with students. Conversely, they defended teachers because they did not have enough time for the enormous responsibilities and the large numbers of students that they had. On a positive note, they acknowledged those teachers who really made the extra effort. They viewed themselves as exerting a positive influence that benefited the students academically and socially. In addition, they identified benefits for themselves. These included the rewards of seeing the students develop and their own development as a result of working with students in at-risk situations. They preferred their assignments to being in a regular classroom and claimed that they could make a difference. They recognized, however, that they were limited by the family backgrounds of the students and by the social service and education

systems. Overall, the positives seemed to outweigh the negatives, and only one of the teachers made reference to imminent burnout.

Burke's (1945) scene-agent ratio called for agents in keeping with scenes or scenes in keeping with agents. An agent could accept the scene or choose to alter it. Furthermore, the acts of an agent could change the agent as well as the scene. Burke described this as "mutual conformity" and "a state of unity" between the agent and his world (p. 19). While the students were agents in negative situations, their future scenes could change because of their positive capabilities. The teachers were also agents who could change scenes. Although they may not have been able to change certain factors about the regular classroom or the system, they could choose alternative actions to bring about some changes in themselves and the setting.

Helping with Academics

After analyzing the principal themes, I turned to the themes that contained less data. Helping with academics was the next theme selected for close examination. Of the eleven teachers who participated in the initial interviews, nine provided direct instruction in academics and all worked with students on social skills. The two teachers who did not give direct academic instruction still seemed to help with academics. They talked about working with students on being better organized and on coping with the expectations of the regular classroom teachers.

I have some very serious truants who do not function very well in school, don't bring their books or pencils and misbehave in all of their classes so I have them on a school performance chart where every class they go we look at how did they do, were they prepared, what homework do they have.

I can't change it. So I have to get them to cope, understand that they can cope with it. I do a lot...coping strategies than trying to change...the system.

Academics - "Almost Secondary"

A comparatively small amount of time was spent talking about academics during the interviews. This seemed to support the observation that academics were "almost secondary." A teacher expressed his understanding of the students' nonacademic needs when he declared that you have to "work on things like what's going on outside, too, in order to get their minds focused on going back to school."

Approaches to Helping

Students Help Students

Although the teachers concentrated on the nonacademic needs of their students during the interviews, they provided some examples of what they did to help the students with academics. Cooperation within the classroom was expected and students were encouraged to help other students. The noise level depended upon the method of instruction. When a teacher or a student was giving information to the whole group, the others were expected to be quiet. When students taught each other in small learning groups, an increase in the noise level was sanctioned.

But I'm strict; and when I teach, I want it quiet when I have the floor; and when another student has the floor, I want them to have the floor.

I guess, maybe, you know, I didn't expect them to be really, really quiet... If somebody needed help, well so and so you're doing okay. Well, you can help. You know, they could talk to each other.

Students Have a Voice

There was a belief that "if you have an active part of something, you try." The teachers claimed that they attempted to "keep up with the things that interest the students," and they referred to art and video projects. They would ask students about what they would "like to learn" and they would "listen to their point of view."

Students Can Handle the Work

There were accounts of students getting better marks and experiencing success. While there was recognition that the students "can learn and quickly," there was also awareness that they needed work that "they can handle." According to the teachers' expressed opinions, the curriculum should not be at a student's frustration level.

Like we may do very, very simple math and language arts to get going; and then, even though they don't realize that, they might be in grade nine and given grade five and six work...And they hand it in. I really praise them for that, for the work that they've done.

Some students were seen as needing "clear" instructions that were broken down into "small steps." Although the "structure and set guidelines" were considered to be important, value was also placed on "variety."

You do some seat work or whatever, and then you do some discussion, and then you do some, maybe audio-visual, and then some writing or whatever. You need to keep it varied in order to keep their attention.

Matching instruction to the students' needs included accelerating learning. The academic work was described as "intense" for one work experience group because they were "only in the classroom ten out of twenty weeks in the semester." The other ten weeks were spent on a job site. Another group moved "quickly." The teacher declared they could "really cover a lot of material" because of the small number.

Teachers Show Caring; Have Energy and Fun

The teachers' examples of helping with academics represented proactive efforts in this area. As noted when analyzing the connecting/understanding theme, the teachers used verbs with a dynamic quality when describing the ways in which they helped. Illustrations of this included:

push spelling
 keep everyone involved
 build the success
 get them to get caught up
 go around [from student to student]

The teachers portrayed themselves to be energetic when they helped students with academics. This seemed to be one of the ways for them to let the students know that they cared. As noted in the following quotation, they always took time to help.

But if someone doesn't understand something, there's always time either before school or at lunch or after school when I can help.

A teacher's energy appeared to contribute to an ability to make learning fun. For example, one teacher said that she would "do anything" that she could do in order to keep the students from being bored. Another teacher who described herself as having "a lot of energy" emphasized that she would "make" a class "fun" and "make it creative." Just one of the teachers declared that it was "draining" to maintain the energy level that seemed to be needed to keep the attention of the students. She admitted that "animation" did not come "naturally" to her. Unlike the other teachers, she talked about "getting more worn out." She acknowledged that she would consider a job change for the following year.

I mean you have to keep their attention. You have to be very quick moving and change your tone of voice a lot...I am much more animated teaching I think than I am in my personal life...That's why at the end of the day...it's so draining cause it's so much energy to keep them on task and keep on top of them and to handle, you know, their comments.

Since fun, energy, and helping with academics were linked, I decided to take a closer look at the data within the themes of fun and energy. I began with the theme of fun. In terms of the quantity of data, it was the smallest of the original thirteen themes. If most of the data within this theme also fitted within the theme

of helping with academics, there would no longer be justification for proposing fun as a separate theme. A study of the data confirmed that this was the case.

I had previously neglected to cross-reference all of the data that pertained to the themes of fun and helping with academics. I attributed this to my having missed the full meaning of some quotations when they were isolated from the context of the transcripts. For example, the phrase "it's all in a kind of a comical way" was coded under the theme of fun; it was not coded under the theme of helping with academics. When I referred to the transcript for the statements that surrounded this quote, I realized that the teacher had been talking about helping her students with academics.

And I really focus on her and on Jamie about their printing and their writing. "Are you gonna take my job over because that writing is nicer than mine, you know." And it's all in a kind of a comical way but they know that I'm really proud.

Because most of the references to fun could be placed within the theme of helping with academics, the theme of fun was subsumed and the number of themes was reduced to seven. Fun seemed to be a technique used to help students with academics.

There also were descriptions of fun activities that were more removed from the academic milieu. These instances were too few in number to stand alone as a theme, but they gave support to other themes. For example, when teachers talked about taking their students skiing or skating or playing board games with them, they described positive experiences and exhibited the propensity for flexibility. These nonacademic pursuits provided the means for them to make connections with students and to develop an understanding of students.

Some students were reported to have included the wish "to have fun" when they formulated their expectations for the program. Their teacher spoke about fun experiences that supported academics and offered breaks from academics. She said that the students "enjoyed the flexibility" since this enabled them to have such events as field trips, videos, guest speakers, and dances.

The *teacher as tour guide*, who was identified in the connecting/understanding theme, took her students skiing to show them "other things that they can do." She believed "that we have to show students that there is another choice." This choice was "to get an education and move on." She took them on field trips so they could discover their "potential to educate themselves." From this perspective, a seemingly nonacademic and fun activity such as skiing could influence the academic endeavors of students who "didn't believe they could ski" before they tried.

It was noted earlier that the teachers talked about the energy that they brought to their teaching. An analysis of the data within the theme of energy verified that many of the references could also be placed within the theme of helping with academics. It was not always clear, however, if the teachers were describing academic or nonacademic interactions with their students. For example, the teacher in the next quotation may have been identifying the effort required to listen to the students' personal problems or academic problems or both.

You take the time to listen to them and put a lot of effort into helping them find success, you'll have a wonderful experience.

Energy was a property within the theme of helping with academics, but the theme of energy also contained data that were cross-referenced with the themes of connecting/understanding, positive/negative, and flexibility/structure.

(Examples of this included: "fill them with positive thoughts," "excited about coming to work," "gotta keep changing things.") The teachers recognized that the students demanded energy and they saw themselves as being able to meet those demands.

I had a lot of energy. They demand a lot of energy and I think that's one of the keys, too, and that's why I went into working with at-risk students at this point in my career, because I know I have the energy and enthusiasm to do it...

Instead of viewing energy as a theme, it seemed to be more appropriately labeled as a property within other themes. Therefore, the number of themes was reduced to six.

Helping with Academics and Interrelated Themes

Most of the items of data within the theme of helping with academics were cross-referenced with one or more of the principal themes. For example, helping with academics seemed to be one way in which teachers made connections with students as well as showed their understanding. The importance placed upon the students having academic success belonged within both the positive/negative theme and the connecting/understanding theme. Taking a variety of approaches to academics while providing structure had a place within the theme of flexibility/structure. Giving students an opportunity to help each other and to have a say in their learning was part of the control/empowerment theme.

Summarizing the Theme of Helping with Academics

During the interviews, the teachers seemed to focus on the nonacademic needs of their students. Nevertheless, they did identify strategies that they used to help students with academics. According to the teachers' stories, students were encouraged to assist each other and to let the teachers know what they wanted to learn. The teachers gave students work that they could handle and they matched

the instruction to the students' needs. They showed students that they cared about their learning. Furthermore, the teachers talked about being energetic and having an appreciation for fun. While the theme of helping with academics had its own properties, it also had linkages with the four principal themes of connecting/ understanding, flexibility/structure, control/empowerment, and positive/negative.

Helping with Academics - Afterthought

After completing the analysis of helping with academics, it occurred to me that this theme could be treated as a category within the larger theme of control/empowerment. This would reduce the number of themes to five. Instead of rewriting the analysis of control/empowerment, I chose to add this separate section in order to more accurately illustrate the evolution of the analytical process. It had not been apparent that helping with academics could be subsumed within control/empowerment until both had undergone comprehensive analyses.

As discussed in the control/empowerment theme, teachers had an expectation that, with their help, students would be involved in academic work. This included the completion of in-class and homework assignments and the achievement of good marks. Helping with academics contained examples of students being empowered through helping other students, having choices about topics and experiencing academic success.

Reciprocity

As I examined the data that had been selected to substantiate the theme of reciprocity, I noted that all of the entries could be cross-referenced with the theme of connecting/understanding. Since the latter was a larger theme, I could conceivably place the theme of reciprocity within it. It was highly probable that a closer look at the references to reciprocity would lead to a better comprehension of the connecting/understanding theme.

The teachers' examples of "give and take" focused on two aspects of teacher-student relationships. The first aspect dealt with teachers giving to students what they wanted to receive from them and experiencing success in this regard. The second dealt with teachers and students exchanging negative messages. Thus, exchanges were both positive and negative. I had overlooked the significance of the linkage with the positive/negative theme prior to my grouping the data on reciprocity in this manner.

The Positive Give and Take

The teachers recognized that by interacting with the students in a "mutual way," they would have "success." As illustrated in the connecting and understanding theme, they talked about exchanging trust for trust and respect for respect. They were willing to share information about themselves with the students; they thought that students felt safe about confiding in them. Within a positive atmosphere of give and take, connections were made.

In addition to the references to building trust and respect, there were other examples of positive give and take. One teacher talked about managing classes by reaching a "compromise" with students so that the year would be "successful" for

everyone. Another teacher spoke about running the program like a company. When students were disruptive, he reminded them of their responsibilities. He had "a job to do" and so did they.

As illustrated by the examples in the previous paragraph, references to reciprocity also linked with the control/empowerment theme. The teachers managed classroom situations by doing something for their students and by expecting them to do something in return.

Other displays of positive give and take were the giving and receiving of rewards. In exchange for improved behaviors and academic performance, the students received "the reward of terrific job, you're doing wonderful, you've got a [sic] A on your test." The teachers reported that there were benefits for them as well as the students. (This concept was presented in the positive/negative theme.) The following excerpt shows a teacher's enthusiasm for introducing her students to new ideas and her anticipation of being rewarded by their positive response.

I keep a pad and a pen in my car and I'll be drivin', singin' along to Elton John or something, and it'll come. That's an excellent idea. This will be great; we could do this in class. And won't they be pleased and proud. And I write it down.

The Negative Give and Take

The program teachers provided examples of negative exchanges between the teachers who were in regular classes and the students. These manifestations of negative give and take related to the four principal themes. The student "who's being a turkey in the back" of the class could be asked to leave. Sometimes, students would "fight back" in visible defiance of the "insults" that were given to

them by teachers. At other times, the students and teachers had a covert agreement to not interfere with each other.

Make that silent pact with the teacher. I'll sit back and I won't bug you or disturb your class but don't come check my homework and don't..just give me a failing mark.

A Different Case

Only one of the program teachers spoke of the frustration that she experienced from dealing with the dogged resistance of the students. Unlike the positive examples of give and take that were presented by the others, her stories included instances of not getting the students' cooperation even though she was giving them help.

Their pattern is so resist, resist, resist. That's the most frustrating thing. "I'm trying to help you. Why are you bucking me or being uncooperative?"

While this teacher described ways in which she helped students, she also described the conflicts that she had with them. These conflicts were reminiscent of the "power struggles" that the other program teachers reported regular classroom teachers having with students. The following quotation illustrates one of her approaches to resistance. In this example, she threatened to send the students to the vice-principal. This method of classroom management was not chosen as a recourse by the other teachers who were interviewed.

Then, there's Todd and Ben who may be a little bit slower starting it. So, I say, "Come on, you guys, do that." So I give them a little time, a little freedom, to see if they're going to and then generally they will. And if not, it's like, "Well, you have a choice. You can stay and you can do it or you can go up to see Mr....and you will have to do this later."

The teacher in this case believed that she worked better with the students "one-on-one." During those times, she would be "responding in a caring way." This helped to make connections, and "quite a few" of her former students came back to "talk." She noted that her interactions with students within the classroom differed from

her one-on-one encounters. Within the classroom, she had "the student-teacher authority stuff," and she refused "to bend as much, maybe, as you need to bend with these kids." This information was coded within the themes of control/empowerment and flexibility/structure.

We have more problems in a class because I'm more constricted in my role as teacher that I can't just say, "Because you're tired, you don't have to do this." "We're all doing the math now and we have to do the math whether you feel like it or not," or whatever.

Nevertheless, the students "were very obliging" on the day that she shared her feelings of frustration with them. At another point in the interview, she gave a positive example of give and take when she made the following remarks:

Well, they give me, they do the things that they're expected to, all those things I talked about. I think what I am giving to them is the positive comments and the positive interaction...

She also said, "They know that I really do care and that I am trying to help them." This statement was offered as an explanation for their doing the things she expected. While she did not think that the students knew the reasons for their resistance, she had an explanation for their being "uncooperative." It was "a test" to see how much she cared.

This teacher's case differed from that of the other program teachers since she described both positive and negative reciprocity between her and the students. Her approach to classroom management may have affected the give and take of the relationships. Although she acknowledged a need for "some sort of middle road," she seemed to be struggling between establishing a "bottom line" and being able to "bend enough." While the other program teachers may have had their "headaches," they seemed to be having more rewards. In view of the complexity of this case, it was again apparent that the themes were intricately related to each other.

Summarizing Reciprocity

Examples were identified to show that reciprocity was linked with the themes of connecting/understanding and positive/negative. As the analysis progressed, links with the themes of control/empowerment and flexibility/structure were also uncovered. Although reciprocity contained a small amount of data, it was related to all of the principal themes. Instead of continuing to think about reciprocity as a theme, I decided to consider it as a property within themes.

Chapter IV

THE STORIES OF THREE TEACHERS: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

This section uses an alternative method for the analysis of texts. Rather than trying to identify the common meanings in categories and themes across all of the interviews, biographical readings of the stories told by individual teachers present a less fragmented approach to interview analysis. The approach offers a different perspective - one that is less atomistic than the grounded theory method of Glaser and Strauss (1967). This strategy interprets a person's reflections and renditions so that a portrait is created. By treating each story holistically, it is possible to uncover the implicit theories that seem to guide an individual's actions. In the accounts that follow, these discoveries are related to formal psychological and sociological theory.

Carol's Story

Constructing Harmony/Minimizing Conflict

I had a boy that was having problems with drugs and I had another girl who was having problems at home and often would just burst into tears, and it [the couch] was a nice change from desk, teacher behind the desk, student in front, because you were very equal, and I think they felt more reassured and I know I did.

Carol disclosed that she sometimes sat with students on an old couch at the back of the classroom. She saw this as providing a "nice change from...teacher behind the desk." Her acquisition of the couch sent a message that this was not a typical classroom. The couch was a symbol of reprieve. It stood for comfort and relief. Its presence attempted to break down the line of hierarchy; equality seemed to be sanctioned.

Carol noted that she felt more reassured to talk with students about problems when she moved away from the desks and sat on the couch. It was as if the couch gave her the license to change from the role of teacher to that of friend. Kennedy (1991) reported, "The power of their 'apprenticeship of observation,' and of the conventional images of teaching that derive from childhood experiences makes it very difficult to alter teaching practices" (p. 16). In Carol's case, she seemed to experience some dissonance in relation to being both an equal and a traditional authoritarian. The physical transition from desk to couch was offered as a means for her to deal with this discord. Festinger (1957) wrote that "two elements are dissonant if, for one reason or another, they do not fit together" (p. 12). He proposed that the presence of dissonance would lead to action to reduce it. One of the ways in which dissonance could be reduced was through changing an environmental cognitive element.

From Carol's perspective, the students wanted to be seen as her equal in the sense of having equal worth. At the same time, she seemed to recognize that they had special needs that could not be met by just any peer. It required someone with more advanced skills and mature qualities to help them deal with their problems. Therefore, in view of her students' particular needs, Carol presented herself as an equal and a mentor. Carr (1992) offered a model of mentorship in which both parties work together as equal partners; the relationship is egalitarian instead of hierarchical.

The following excerpt appears to contradict Carol's earlier presentation of self as the students' equal. While it does not refute the position that teacher and student have equal worth as human beings, it does rebuild the line of authority within the classroom. It shows Carol to experience some conflict as she considered the

integration of the dual roles of friend and teacher. Earlier, the couch was used to help her define and separate those roles. In this quote, she chose to refer to her relationship with students as being "almost like friends." It would seem that they could not be unequivocal friends because then she would risk losing the control inherent in her role as teacher. She wanted to "keep that...one step above them" and still be able to provide emotional support.

Ah, we're almost like friends. There's still, you still have to keep that, you know, one step above them that, you know, you can't call me Carol when I'm teaching you, but when you finish this program, and you see me in the mall or at the beach, certainly, we're friends, call me Carol.

While the classroom contained communication barriers that took the form of desks, the students could come to the classroom with their own barriers. Carol portrayed herself as a teacher who was alert to the signs that indicated the mood of individual students. By perceiving a student's needs, she could avert a fight and provide solace. Prompted by sensitivity, she would proceed quietly and with discretion. Her use of the qualifier "generally" in the next quotation suggested that she perceived occasions when a student would not be receptive to her approach. Goffman (1971) wrote about the territories of the self. He labelled one of these territories as the "information preserve." This was explained as "the set of facts about himself to which an individual expects to control access while in the presence of others" (p. 38-39). Another territory, the "conversational preserve," was defined as "the right of an individual to exert some control over who can summon him into talk and when he can be summoned" (p. 40). In terms of Goffman's theory, Carol showed respect for her students by not intruding upon their territories of the self.

A student might come in with a chip on their shoulder as big as the moon or in a rotten mood and homework not done and just ready to fight with you. And the reason why is maybe they fought with their father all night long, you know. Maybe their father beat them around the night before or..So it's important, I think, when a student comes in like that, what I generally do is I go over very quietly and not let anyone else hear what I'm

saying, and I say, "Are you okay? Do you want to go and talk?" And generally their walls will come right down if you show, you know, I love you. I think you're a great person; I really think you're gonna be okay. And I know by the looks of you, looks like you've had a real hard night, but you're safe now in here.

Carol did more than profess to love her students; she described ways in which she showed love. She observed that the "walls" would "generally" come down as a result of these displays of affection. In her descriptions, she helped to relieve her students' burden - the "chip" that they carried. This was a teacher who talked about letting her students know that she was aware of their world outside the classroom. She believed that some of them left her class for a home in which they experienced abuse. Through words and actions, she attempted to send the message that they were safe with her. Her story suggested that she also dignified them by telling them how good they were. Abusive situations can devalue a person's self-worth (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989; Doyle & Basiletti, 1992). While providing her students with a sanctuary, Carol helped them to regain their dignity.

...interaction with people is the strongest environmental determinant in the self concept...when the environment is basically unthreatening, the individual's own behavior toward elements in the environment is basically open, self-and-others-trusting, interactive, sympathetic and constructive...in this environment dignity and integrity emerge as characteristics of people.
(Combs, 1962, p. 214)

Carol related the construction of a classroom that was more of a refuge than the residences of some of her students. This metaphor of a homelike environment could be extended to include a teacher who assumed a mother-like image. Sinclair (1994) illustrated how a caring teacher can help to create a classroom

which fosters a sense of home for children. Feeling safe and secure, students learn the reciprocity of respect.

Acting like a mother, Carol let her students know that she did "worry about them." If they were not going to come to school one morning, she wanted them to call her so that she would not think they were "in a ditch somewhere." She thought that "a lot of at-risk students" may not have someone at home who "worries about them or cares if they do well." According to research, "family dynamics and patterns of interaction are a key reason for the development of at-risk status" (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989, p. 44). This knowledge seemed to provide Carol with further justification for behaving like a concerned parent.

The love of a caring parent was combined with the actions of a good coach in Carol's narrative. She talked about using the techniques of touch and praise to get her students (players) to perform at their best. A "real pat on the back" and a "hand on their shoulder" were some of her declared methods to build assurance. She proclaimed to "fill them full of positive thoughts and really boost their self-esteem" by saying "I'm so proud of you" and calling home "for those good things." Like a coach who needed to know her players' strengths in order to plan strategies, she avowed to find "at least one thing" that made a student "unique." She thought that this could "really bond a teacher and a student together." The roles of teacher, coach and parent were intertwined.

Carol actually referred to a strategy used by a former coach of hers. This coach was "always complaining" to her and claimed that this was a sign of her caring. Taking this approach, Carol told her students that when she stopped "complaining," then she would "no longer care" about what happened to them.

And she said, and I do this with my students all the time, she said, "As long as I'm complaining and ragging and bitching at you," she said, "you know I care about you and I want you to do well. When I stop saying things to you, that's when you should worry, 'cause that's when I no longer care what happens to you."

It was a very different strategy from Carol's use of positives. Nevertheless, it was a strategy that Carol professed to have adopted. She reconciled "complaining" with her other approaches because she, as her coach had ostensibly done, acted out of love and not malice. She asserted that she wanted her students to do their "very best," so she was persistent with her efforts. It was a form of "ragging" that was not considered to bring resentment from the students.

Like a coach who chose the team players, Carol related selecting the students for her class. She wanted people who "all gelled together" and she believed her students did "fit in together really well." She talked about working to "keep everyone involved" and seeing each of them "really push so that they'll all do well." Carol wanted harmony, not conflict, in the classroom.

Although Carol reported screening all of the students who were referred to her program, she said that only one of them was refused; and this was a girl who had been with her previously.

She's in a group home now...This year I want to give my time equally to all of them, and with that one student, I would be giving more time to her and I thought that that was unfair.

"Giving more time" to that one student was perceived to be "unfair" since it would take from her time for the others. Carol's concern with fairness indicated that she wanted to give her students equal attention, including their "fair share" of compliments. By having control over the selection of students who "would really

benefit from this program," she could attend to their needs more fairly and increase the likelihood of achieving positive results.

As well as espousing fairness, Carol expressed a feeling of limited efficacy in regard to her work with this girl. It was her belief that "you can't save them all" and "there are going to be some that might be too far gone" for her program. It is probable that this acceptance of her own limitations enabled her to continually take new students who were difficult to reach. After all, she could only give her best; and if her best was not enough, she could give no more than that. In a comparative study of high and low sense-of-efficacy teachers, Ashton and Webb (1986) wrote of the former, "the fact that they could not do enough did not become an excuse for doing nothing" (p. 73).

Not wanting to "upset the apple cart," Carol reported deferring to the administration and having "absolutely no say" regarding the students selected for the program during the first two years. Putting her "foot down" the third year, she "had a choice" about who was "acceptable." She pointed out that her program was not a "place to babysit." In her opinion, "the other teachers and administration" should not place "students who really don't care" in there. After having said this, she acknowledged that she had accepted all of the students who had been referred, except for the girl already mentioned.

Carol spoke about standards for her program, but she rarely refused admission to a student. By setting standards, she could make the program creditable. At the same time, by taking most referrals, she gave students an important opportunity. It was a critical time for those students who had the option of her program or no program at all. Her acceptance of them affirmed that she thought they did "care."

This was the start of her demonstrating that she believed in them. It was a positive start. Noddings (1992) argued that the first job of educators is to care for their students. She wrote that this caring will encourage a student to care for self, others and ideas.

Although Carol stated that she would refuse to accept students who could "jeopardize" her work with others, she recounted taking students who had demanded "ninety-five percent" of the regular classroom teacher's time. She believed it was "unfair" to other students in the regular classroom if they remained there. Nevertheless, she did not approve of students being "kicked out" of school. It was her view that the teachers should look at what they could do to resolve conflicts. She expressed strong disapproval of the ways in which some of them interacted with students.

I think sometimes it's almost easier for them to say, "Let's get them kicked out and then I won't have to deal with them at all."...Instead of facing the problem head on, saying this person's really giving me a problem and what can I do to solve it....Because I think that's the craziest thing to do is to send the student home.

Carol talked about encountering teachers who did not take the time to get to know their students or engage them in meaningful activities. She also frowned upon their poor classroom management. These were significant matters for her. Contrary to her perceptions of some of the other teachers, she presented herself as caring about her students and being able to maintain control. By describing herself "oppositionally" in relation to the teachers who did not want to deal with some students, she presented a "virtuous mirror image" of herself (MacLure, 1993, p. 316).

Sometimes I just feel like bootin' 'em out of that staff-room and sayin', "Get out there! Go do something. Go and talk to them outside. Get to know them." I see teachers who...are detrimental to students. I think I'm a pretty good teacher and I think I get along really well with the students. And I see a teacher who shows films all the time, not even on the subject that they're supposed to be teaching. And their classes are just climbing off the walls.

Carol's story indicated that she carried images of good and bad teachers and she constructed herself against those images. A good teacher was viewed as knowing her students, involving them in meaningful learning, and managing the class effectively. Against this image, Carol portrayed herself as a virtuous teacher who embodied the characteristics of a mother, a coach, a mentor, and a peer. While striving to build harmony, she worked at minimizing conflict. In order to do this, she acknowledged having to combine being "open and honest" with "tricky and mean."

Being "Open and Honest," "Tricky and Mean"

And he really helped the others out and the others really listened and learned from him, so yeah, I like to divert a little bit of the teaching from me to them. And I think it's really important that they have a say in what they're going to learn. At the first of the year, I always do something that's kind of tricky and mean, but nobody's figured it out yet. I sit down and I write down everything that I want to teach to them in the year. Then, I sit down and I really talk in a very open and "you're an adult" and "you decide." "If you want to get good grades and pass, you know that's up to you. I can't tell you to do that anymore. Neither can your moms or dads. You're young adults." But I tell them I want them to have a real say in their education 'cause that's their right to know what they're gonna be and what would interest them. And I ask them, "What would you like to learn about?" And the things they say, and you always do it. If they say one thing, you can work it and sway it so it meets exactly what's on your list. So they have chosen everything that they want to learn about. But everything is exactly what's on your list so you've covered your curriculum.

Carol recognized that her students learned from each other; she was not the only teacher in the classroom. Studies on peer tutoring have been identified as win-win situations with benefits for both the tutors and the students who are tutored. Enhanced self-concept along with improved academic performance and classroom behavior have been reported (King, R. T., 1982; Russell, T. & Ford, D. F., 1983). By "diverting" some of the teaching to the students, Carol was passing some of the power, and this could have meant a weakening of the authoritative structure. Instead, Carol's account suggested that she was entrenched in the omnipotent position of director. She ultimately determined who did the teaching and what was taught. As her students gained academically and socially, her power became

even more secure. These achievements could then be viewed as outcomes of her orchestrations. Through relinquishing some of the power that was inherent in her position, she was able to acquire power. Weber (1958) distinguished between bureaucratic or positional power and charismatic or personal authority. Possessing personal power, Carol did not need to rely solely upon her position.

Carol revealed that she asked her students what they wanted to learn. The inclusion of a student in decision-making has been reported as a way to raise the student's self-esteem and increase the student's interest in learning (Nave, 1990). It may have been intuition, experience, formal study or a combination of these that told Carol it was "really important" for her students to have "a say." She also thought it was important for her list to match their list of wants. In order to accomplish this, she admitted engaging in a bit of trickery.

Carol knew how to gain the confidence of her students. Since the students' histories indicated that they did not respond favorably to being told what to do, she acknowledged that it would be ineffective for anyone to attempt to tell them how to run their lives. In case she did not sufficiently convince them of her belief in their readiness for independence, she made a point of calling them adults. This form of regard accomplished its purpose. Based upon Carol's descriptions, the students responded with interest to someone who respected their right to make choices.

Professing to believe that her students really did want to do well, Carol explained how she let them know that success was something within their power. She acknowledged the students' general need to realize that they had choices and that they had control over their education. In other words, they were not helpless.

Their success was dependent upon their efforts. Attribution theory proposes that an individual's future achievement behavior is influenced by his or her interpretation of the causes of success and failure (Smey-Richman, 1988). Weiner (1979) claimed that effort and ability attributions have different behavioral implications because effort is a controllable cause of achievement. Since effort attribution suggests that the causes of a student's poor performance can be changed, it presents a more optimistic view for low-achieving students. According to Seligman (1990), optimism can be learned.

After working to convince students that they were not powerless, Carol would have likely lost some creditability if she had then neglected to ask them what they wanted to learn. It was not enough to catch their interest; she had to retain it. At the same time, she had a curriculum to cover. In order to achieve both, she admitted that it was necessary to "sway" some of their requests, and she could justify this stratagem. It may not have been so important for the students to have "a say" as it was for them to think that they had one. Goffman (1959) wrote about the misrepresentations that people make when performing or presenting themselves to others.

More important, we find that there is hardly a legitimate everyday vocation or relationship whose performers do not engage in concealed practices which are incompatible with fostered impressions. Although particular performances, and even particular parts or routines, may place a performer in a position of having nothing to hide, somewhere in the full round of his activities there will be something he cannot treat openly. (p. 64)

Although Carol did not describe herself as a performer all of the time, she did see herself as "an actress" when she was presenting a lesson. Acting and being "a little

bit silly" were methods that Carol used to get and maintain the attention of her students. For the students, it may have been apparent that she was acting, but her motive may not have been so apparent. Carol did not tell them that she was being funny in order to have control of the classroom situation. Humor was used as a strategy; it was another one of Carol's confessed tricks. Presumably, the students enjoyed the learning process. It is likely that they were not conscious of any manipulation. Phelan, Davidson, and Cao (1992) reported that students mentioned humor as an important quality in a teacher. It was identified as contributing to a student's engagement in learning.

The next excerpt shows another approach that Carol used to control events in the classroom and to get all of the students involved in the learning. Playing a role similar to that of an animal trainer, she rewarded the students with candy when they performed satisfactorily. She remarked that she "should probably be doing it with apples or oranges" but she only had "butterscotch candy" in her desk "at the time." This suggested that the strategy was introduced spontaneously. Since it seemed to work, she continued using that particular "trick."

I think always you have two or three that always answer questions, and the others might know the answers and might have a far better answer but whether they just don't want to give the effort, they don't want to look like a keener or what. So what I do now...I reach into my basket and I pull a butterscotch candy, and I say, "Who can tell me what democracy is?" And every hand goes up....And so they're listening all the time because they're waiting for a question to come up and I do it about once a day. And it's a terrible thing to do with candy and it's almost like trained animals. (laughs) Maybe, but it does, it makes them....I really try, too, to make sure that everybody gets a candy over the course of a week or two, and that it's not the same person who gets it.

In this illustration, Carol related introducing an external reward system. As a result, she obtained full participation from her students. A butterscotch candy was a sufficient motivator for obtaining their involvement. Previously, Carol talked about all of them helping each other and wanting each other to do well. Now,

there appeared to be an element of competition as they vied for the candy that became a symbol of triumph for the successful contender.

This account has Carol resorting to the use of a device that could be viewed as detracting from the development of internal motivation. Admitting, with a laugh, that it was a terrible thing, she may have sensed her own contradictions. The students were like begging animals, without the ability to withdraw from the influence of their trainer. They may have been able to provide a satisfactory answer to her question, "Who can tell me what democracy is?" Did they, however, see the weakening of democracy in their own situations? Carol selected the activity and they were depicted as eagerly playing along. Again, Carol seemed to be holding the power.

The students, nevertheless, still had a choice between answering or not answering. If they had seen themselves as "trained animals," it is likely that they would not have engaged in the game as they had done. In all probability, it was the change of pace and the form of entertainment rather than the actual candy that got them interested. One piece of candy for each student "over the course of a week or two" was a small reward indeed. They could have chosen not to respond, but it is quite probable that the activity was need-fulfilling for them. They were having fun.

So driven by the need for fun, we always have a powerful genetic incentive to keep trying to learn as much as we can. Without the relationship between fun and learning we would not learn nearly as much, especially when we are young and have so much to learn. (Glasser, 1986, p. 28)

Concluding Carol's Story

Carol presented herself as embodying a number of other roles along with her role as a teacher. She also portrayed herself as a mother, coach, mentor, and friend. Combining the roles of teacher and friend created some ambiguities for her, however. Since she viewed an effective teacher as always maintaining control of the classroom, she was careful not to extend the role of friend in a way that could lessen her power.

Carol had a number of "tricks" that she talked about using to construct a harmonious classroom. Along with providing both academic and emotional support to her students, she considered it important for them to feel that their ideas were valued. At the same time, she endeavored to ensure that what happened in the classroom was what she wanted to happen. While Carol worked to create the classroom environment that she wanted, students participated in learning because they wanted to get involved. The classroom that Carol constructed was need-fulfilling for them. It offered recognition, safety and fun.

Helen's Story

Working on the Fringes

On the fringes of most school environments gathers a shadow population of students whose motivation and achievement are stymied. These are the marginal students who are not being well served by our public schools. Precious little attention is given either to the needs of these young people or to their assets. They are viewed as deviants from the "regular" students, outsiders who are not productive members of the learning community. This persistent problem of increasing numbers of students who are not succeeding must be attacked because youth who fail on the margins are as deserving as those who thrive in the mainstream. (Sinclair & Ghory, 1992, p. 33)

Helen related a background in social work that included being a "probation officer with kids." She had worked in a "detention home" and with the "foster home system and group home system." Her experiences had been with youth who "were waiting court appearances or waiting placements with children's aid." These were youth on the fringes of society's mainstream.

When the interview occurred, Helen was an intervention worker in the public school system. In this role, she was the "home contact person" as well as the intermediary for students who got "into a confrontation with the teacher." The youth that she was seeing at this time were on the fringes of the school's mainstream. Although they may not have been awaiting court, they were often "on the verge of getting a suspension" from school.

Well, I am the home contact person for the school a lot of the time for kids that are having difficulties. I arrange a lot of meetings when the child is on the verge of getting a

suspension or there's been a lot of behavior problems. I arrange for them [parents] to come in quite often if they aren't the type that comes in a lot.

Working on the fringes within the school, Helen would "get called up to the classroom" when a teacher told a student to get "out of here." She would "then try and find out what went on" and to "deal with it somehow." As a go-between, she seemed to have a view of both sides. Sinclair and Ghory (1992) wrote that "differences in learning result from two-sided interactions between an individual and an environment" (p. 35). According to these authors, educators need ways of thinking and acting to help keep both ends of the individual-school equation in balance. By using the term *marginal* to explain student learning, they believed the perspective shifted from "deeply seated problems rooted in individuals to problematic relationships between individuals and school environments" (p. 35).

In recognition of the situations that teachers tried to handle, Helen admitted that she did not think she could "be put in a room with twenty-eight kids... maybe eight or ten kids who are extremely difficult and deal with them." She also wondered how "realistic" it was to expect some students to "fit into the regular classroom every period of the day, all day." Observing that "we expect the kids to still follow the center all the time," she wondered if they could "reasonably do that." She believed that students who were "on the edge of losing it" needed a place to go away from the classroom.

According to Helen, some of the students "on the edge" could be "sent down" to her "every day." Helen's words cast her as someone removed from the hub of school activities. She was either mediating outside another teacher's classroom door or counselling and negotiating in her office.

From this peripheral position, Helen formed her perspective of the students' points of view. She spoke of students arriving "with a lot of anger" to the in-school suspension room. They carried the attitude of "I'm not going to do any work to save my soul" and felt "unfairly punished." There were students who would go to some classes and behave with "I'm gonna fight this from the time I walk in the door until the time I leave." She also recalled that students "don't forget" times when they "get humiliated, or feel they have" been humiliated.

I've had kids come in and say, "One time last year he called me a so and so," and that's it. It can only be once..and they don't forget it.

Helen believed that students know if "the person is not showing any respect." It was her opinion that they should fight back when their "ego is being hit all of the time." She declared, "If they didn't fight back, they'd be totally apathetic and that's no good either."

The teachers' standpoints were also presented from Helen's perspective. She noted that teachers should not be "expected to put up with disrespect." There were occasions when Helen would leave her place on the periphery and enter the regular classroom teacher's world. Having "been in the classroom sometimes for a few periods," she acknowledged that she did not "know how some teachers put up with it." Viewing the students' "deplorable" manners as a "societal thing," she encountered parents who failed to "instill a responsibility factor," and she perceived "some of the control" to be "eroded away from school administration and teachers." She also blamed the education system and remarked that "the way the system is going with budget cuts...teachers are being expected to do everything ...to every child all the time and they can't." Within an environment affected by both macro- and micro-social issues, Helen saw teachers who felt that they did not

have the "time" to deal with situations without resorting to "power struggles" and "humiliation."

Brendtro and Long (1994) presented the "Conflict Cycle" as an explanation for the self-defeating cycle of aggression and counteraggression between a troubled youth and an adult during a crisis. The paradigm of the Conflict Cycle could be applied to the "power struggles" that Helen witnessed between teachers and students. An aggressive response by an adult who mirrors the youth's dysfunctional behavior leads to further outbursts by the youth. When a youth becomes caught up in a sequence of escalating events, the following occurs:

1. A situation of STRESS evokes in a youth irrational beliefs, such as "everyone is against me."
2. These biased beliefs trigger FEELINGS of distress, such as fear, or anger.
3. These feelings drive defensive BEHAVIOR, such as avoidance or aggression.
4. The youth's behavior provokes reciprocal REACTIONS from the adult, such as responding in kind with counteraggression. (Brendtro & Long, p. 4)

Teachers who experience stress in classroom situations and hold irrational beliefs about those situations can become caught in the Conflict Cycle outlined by Brendtro and Long (1994). Their beliefs trigger distressed feelings that drive their behaviors. Instead of resorting to rational thought, they shift to the lower brain survival mechanism of fight or flight. Being unable to escape from the source of stress, their likely response is anger and rage. They resort to punishing the student, but instead of being penitent, the student returns the anger.

Although Helen reported conflicts, she observed that few of her students had "problems with every teacher." Good classroom management skills, including clear expectations for student performance, were credited to some of them.

I don't think there are that many of them that have problems with every teacher. There might be a couple, but there are some that manage, some teachers can manage their classrooms in such a way that the kids know what the expectations are and they don't waiver from it.

In her intermediary function, Helen wavered between defending and criticizing teachers as well as students. At times, teachers were portrayed as the culprits who "name-called and degraded" students; at other times, they were the victims of an unfair system. The students, on the other hand, were sometimes presented as victims of the unreasonable expectation to not deviate from "the center." At other times, students were viewed as the instigators of problems. For example, in one class of twenty-eight, ten of them were described as being "really difficult." It was the class that Helen claimed "almost did the grade six teachers in at the elementary."

Helen seemed to realize that it was impossible for students to leave all of their problems in the fringes, "outside the door" of the classroom, every day when they went to school. She also recognized that the teachers did not know the fringes as she did because they spent their time in the "enclosed environment" of the classroom.

I don't think you can isolate kids in the school setting and that's a hard thing for people who only work in the school setting, I think, to understand, sometimes. And it's hard for teachers, too. They're in an enclosed environment with kids which is pretty hard, as opposed to being out and moving around, like for me, like when I use to be out moving around. But I don't think all kids can be expected to just leave everything, leave all the difficulties outside the door at quarter after eight and you behave in here because it's here. That doesn't work.

While presenting her perspectives of the teachers' and the students' viewpoints, she described her efforts to go between both sides. When there was a "problem" within the classroom that could not "get resolved," Helen, in her role as intermediary, would "arrange meetings" with the students and teachers. Regarding this intervention, she commented, "Sometimes that works and sometimes it doesn't."

Being on the fringes of the school may have facilitated Helen's acceptance by students who were also on the fringes. She was not one of the regular teachers; she was not a member of the mainstream. Helen's story indicated that students shared their perspectives with her. She remarked, "The kids that come here a lot [say], 'Nobody's gonna believe me anyway.'

As for the other teachers who were part of the mainstream, they likely valued her contributions since she could bring them "relief" from her position on the periphery. Helen talked about the importance of having "people that can give teachers a break when they need a break." She noted that sometimes she supervised in-school suspensions which she thought did "work with some kids." The students would also "just come in and work" in the area of her office.

And sometimes a lot of kids just come in and work down here for a period, or if, say it's impossible to get them to get caught up on their work, but the kid that's really behind, at least if we get them to the library and get a book, it's worthwhile. Get them to do that. And then get them back into class, into the regular class as quickly as possible.

Some of the students' families were described by Helen as "on the fringes of being involved with health and community services." There were times when Helen did "family counselling" with families who were not "hooked into social services." The parents worked during the day and did not have access to mental health workers who "finished at five o'clock" and were in the community only "once every two

weeks...for maybe two and a half hours." In order to provide counselling to these families, Helen had to commit hours that were peripheral to regular work schedules - "a Thursday night or a Saturday morning." It was work that she claimed to like. "I find it quite interesting," she remarked.

By counselling families on the fringes, Helen was in a situation to gain further insight into some of the students' lives during their non-school hours. She noted doing "some marriage stuff separate [sic] with the parents because usually...there's [sic] other difficulties there." In the next excerpt, she commented upon the "unbelievable" manner in which a student spoke to his mother. Her apparently rhetorical question at the end implied that she was faulting the family for allowing this situation to have occurred.

I had a student in here yesterday, a grade seven student and his mother. He was on the verge of being suspended and I mean I know it's a problem. The way he talks to his mother is unbelievable. And he's just turned twelve in November. So where does that come from?

Sinclair and Ghory (1992) pointed out that "students who are marginal often do not have people in their immediate circle who prize academic accomplishments or encourage attitudes and habits that are necessary to being successful in school" (p. 37). While believing "all parents want their children to do well in school," these authors noted that "many marginal students are subtly socialized to adopt behaviors that conflict with school expectations" (p. 37). They proposed that teachers, parents and students work together to develop educative communities. The starting point for these communities would be parents finding common ground with teachers in an effort to reduce the marginality of students.

Dealing with Multiple Realities

During her references to power struggles between teachers and students, Helen expressed the belief that neither side should be expected to tolerate disrespect. She saw a need for "mutual respect" which she described as a "symbiotic thing....If one goes off first, then the relationship's damaged." From her perspective, there would not be a reason for power struggles in a classroom where respect was two-way.

In order to achieve mutual respect, it is likely that each side would have needed to develop a better understanding of the other. Wehlage et al. (1989) found that school membership was promoted when students and teachers exchanged commitments. In supportive school communities, adults actively helped students meet standards of success and communicated their concern for students who reciprocated with positive, respectful behaviors. Helen, however, did not talk about working with the teachers to bring about changes; she focused on working with the students. She acknowledged that she was "not going to change somebody who has been teaching for thirty-three years." Instead, she believed in getting the students "to cope, understand that they can cope" with the "reality" that "the teacher is always right." Helen used the analogy of the work situation to support her stance that this reality, subjugation to authority, must be accepted.

I mean in any, even in a work situation, I might not agree with a lot of what my superiors say but that doesn't mean I can fight it every step of the way....I can't change it....the system.

Helen seemed to agree that "reality...is what people who have power, and whose power we accept, say it is" (Glasser, 1990a, pp.10-11). In a work situation, it is the boss; in the classroom, it is the teacher. Control theory purports that we cannot control the behavior of others; we can only control our own behavior (Glasser, 1984). Helen appeared to be teaching her students these concepts. She talked

about doing "a lot of coping strategies" with them and helping them to learn how "to deal with" conflicts.

In Helen's view, the system was the reality that had to be accepted. She expressed some contradictions, however. Although she talked about "the system" that "says they shouldn't fight back," she admitted that "you'd really worry if they rolled over and played dead." Helen did not fully agree with the system, but she had learned to go along with it. She recognized that there comes a time when fighting may not be very effective and this was a reality that students also needed to accept.

Who's gonna have the last word?...They say, "The teacher is always right." That's true. To an extent it's true....So they know that. And they feel that that's true. And really, in all likelihood, you have to get them to accept that that's reality.

According to Merton's (1968) typology for behaviors in specific kinds of situations, Helen encouraged her students to embrace one of two modes of adaptation - conformity or ritualism. If they were not ready to conform to both cultural goals and institutionalized means, they could abide by the rituals of the institution. For example, even if it was "impossible" for them "to get caught up on their work," Helen took them through the ritual of choosing a book in the library and returning to the regular class. The students, on the other hand, behaved in a mode of retreatism or rebellion. They were either outcasts who rejected the cultural goals and the institutional means or rebels who saw the system as the barrier to the satisfaction of legitimized goals.

Helping with the Transition

The theory of liminality, as presented by Turner (1969), has relevancy for Helen's story. Liminal individuals were described by Turner as "threshold people" (p. 95). The liminal period was viewed as a rites of passage or transition phase from one

cultural condition to another. Individuals in this state were expected to accept subjugation. This was their preparation for a future state in which they would behave according to social norms.

Their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life. (p. 95)

Helen talked about students who seemed to have had this state of transition imposed upon them. Teachers, by virtue of their authority, were seen as attempting to change them. Measures that included humiliation were used to reform them. As with others in liminality, they were being shown "that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society" (Turner, 1969, p. 103).

This submission to authority was not readily embraced by the students. While some teachers, the representatives of structured society, attempted to mold them, Helen, the teacher between the margins (Turner's "communitas") and structures of society, reminded them of where the power resided. Ultimately, Helen gave them the message to acquiesce, "to accept that that's reality." The liminal period was a time in which they were expected to develop coping skills as they made the transition. Helen offered help in this regard. Coping strategies could assist them with the more effective handling of their present circumstances on the threshold as well as the handling of future situations.

Turner (1969) contended that social life was a succession of high and low experiences and that individuals alternated between the unstructured and the structured and between states (cultural conditions) and transitions. The theory of "liminality implies that the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low" (p. 97). Based upon this theory, teachers could not be in high positions if they had not experienced the low and if students were not in low positions. It suggests that teachers also know what it is like to be "threshold people." Although their experiences of the threshold may be quite different from that of their students, they were students themselves at one time. Furthermore, as employees within the education system, they could still be viewed as being on the threshold of career advancement. An expression of authority over their students could enable them to feel they are in a high position while they are still on the lower rung of the career ladder. Hanson (1985) noted that teachers along with other public employees such as police officers and welfare workers have many of the characteristics of Lipsky's "street-level bureaucrats."

These individuals are normally at the lower levels of the hierarchy and in direct contact with clients or the public. Typically they are overworked, underpaid, assigned responsibilities that affect the lives of those they deal with, and provided inadequate resources for their jobs. (Hanson, 1985, p. 101)

Turner's theory of liminality offers an explanation for the existence of a hierarchical system that is present in the larger social structure as well as the smaller, structured society of the school. Those in the unstructured margins are expected to acquire higher status as they pass through the liminal periods of transition. This hierarchical system was accepted by Helen; she did not see a way to change it even though she did not fully endorse it. From this perspective, those

who did not accept the system would not make a successful transition to a structured society and "behave in accordance with certain customary norms" (Turner, 1969, p. 95). They would be destined to confine their experiences to the margins, to remain in Merton's (1968) mode of retreatism.

Developing a theoretical framework based upon Turner's concept of liminality, McLaren (1986) identified four states of interaction embedded in the dominant ritual system of classroom instruction. These states represented behavioral clusters or "lived practices" (p. 83) that he considered to be mutually inclusive; that is, to overlap. Three of these - the streetcorner state, the student state and the home state - seem especially relevant to Helen's story. The sanctity state with the Catholic theme does not appear pertinent.

The streetcorner state suggested behaviors that students exhibited on the street or in such areas as school playgrounds, parks, and video arcades. These behaviors had ad hoc and cathartic qualities. Students in the streetcorner state appeared to be "more unpredictable, boisterous and obstreperous" (McLaren, 1986, p.85) than in the student state which characterized most of the student behaviors inside the school building. McLaren observed that students, upon entering the school, readjusted their behaviors to conform to the teacher's master script.

McLaren (1986) regarded the students as experiencing two simultaneous forces - one that pulled them into the streetcorner state and another that pulled them into the student state. Students varied in the extent to which they were incorporated within either of these states, but the streetcorner state was viewed as being generally preferred by them. While students usually complied with teacher-sponsored rules, there were also resistances to the authoritative structure. Unlike

the organized resistances in the form of student unions that were considered by McLaren as the preserve of children of the ruling-class, the resistances among the "disaffected and disenfranchized" were viewed to be "often tacit, informal, unwitting, and unconscious" (p. 143). Not only were the students in this latter group seen as resisting the formal rules, they were also "resisting the distinction between the 'lived' informal culture of the streets and the formal, dominant culture of the classroom" (p. 143).

The teachers were described by McLaren (1986) as perceiving their role to be the transformation of student behavior. Instructional ceremonies attempted to elevate students from the status of the untamed, belligerent and illiterate to the civilized, well-mannered and literate middle-class. The teachers in Helen's story seemed to interact with their students in a similar manner. They attempted to "isolate kids in the school setting" and expected them to "leave all the difficulties outside the door." Requiring students to "follow the center all the time," these teachers demanded that students change their behaviors. Using McLaren's terminology, students were expected to behave in the student state while in school.

In order to transform students, the teachers in Helen's account sometimes resorted to inflicting punishment. This could take the form of a school suspension or it could be a more tacit method in the form of embarrassment, as also noted by McLaren (1986). Helen referred to teachers who degraded and humiliated students and who neglected to show them respect. The power struggles that ensued suggest that the students continued to rebel against the teachers' attempts to mould them into the obedience that would prepare them for their future roles as good citizens.

The students' academic failures could then be blamed upon their reluctance to conform. McLaren (1986) wrote, "The ideology of blaming the victim views student insolence and provocation as solely gratuitous - not as actions which are mediated by wider relations of class, authority and power" (p. 172). According to Helen, the other teachers did not see students outside the classroom environment, and consequently, they did not seem to have a perception of these "wider relations." From Helen's viewpoint, what happened within the school was linked with what occurred outside the school. She could see the larger sociocultural context inhabited by individual students. Being herself a marginal figure, she was in a better position than the other teachers to see students in the streetcorner state and the home state that McLaren identified.

In referring to the home state, McLaren (1986) was referring to the particular types of interactions between students and family members. He observed that the normative rules governing the home often appeared to be similar to those of the school. He also remarked that the rules "for some individual homes will, in many instances, be very different from those of the school" (p. 91). This latter situation was encountered by Helen. For example, she worked with children that she thought spoke to their parents in a reprehensible manner and she saw the parents as allowing this to occur. Nevertheless, while acknowledging the significance of the parents' behaviors, she considered parent-child interactions to be related to issues of the larger society.

It's such a societal thing. I mean it's such a big question. From the STEP [Systematic Training for Effective Parenting] parenting thing I did last spring, it's pretty painfully apparent that kids have very little responsibility outside of school. Most of the parents I know end up where they [students] don't have to do regular chores; they don't have to be responsible for doing the dishes, getting the wood in, cleaning, any of that stuff. It's more important that they get to their basketball practice, so mommy takes them there.... That's all well and good but it doesn't instill a responsibility factor. I think that comes right from home and people feeling they have to give their child everything. Sometimes it's from both people working... "I'm not here all day so it's not fair for me to ask them to do this." That's a problem.

From her peripheral position, Helen acquired a perspective of the students that differed from the views held by other teachers. The use of rejection and humiliation, for instance, whether or not employed by teachers to transform a student, as McLaren (1986) suggested, only aroused a student's fear in Helen's opinion. "That does it for them," she said, implying that the students had no intention of conforming to the expectations of a teacher who humiliated them.

I mean, one of the major fears I think a kid has is the fear of being humiliated..more than anything. Once they get humiliated, or feel they have, that does it for them.

At times, Helen appeared to possess certain characteristics that were similar to those of the teachers whom she viewed critically. She believed that regulation was needed; otherwise, the students would resort to the "robust and carnivalesque ethos of the streetcorner state" (McLaren, 1986, p. 91). On the other hand, she valued the "cathartic" streetcorner state in opposition to the "frustrating, tension-inducing" student state (p.92). The following excerpt illustrates Helen's appreciation for both of these states as she discussed the availability of a "cooling off period" for students.

I said it would have to be clearly set up 'cause I know kids, too. If they think they can leave every time they're going to explode, they'll be leaving all the time. So it has to be regulated. But I think sometimes we expect kids to never display anger..and that's not realistic.

Concluding Helen's Story

Not being in "the system" in the same way as the other teachers were, she had a different vantage point from which to make observations about the system. She saw students and teachers engaged in power struggles that erupted in the absence of mutual respect. Within the system, teachers were to be seen as right; students were not supposed to fight back. Yet, Helen could see justification in the students' responses. She could also see reasons for the teachers expressing frustrations. Her

solution was "alternative schooling" and "alternative types of teaching" since she questioned if it was "realistic" for some students to conform to the rigorous schedules of the regular classroom.

Without an alternative school, Helen provided an alternative form of transition for rebel students. She worked with them on "anger management and coping strategies" in order "to get them to accept" the teacher's authority as "reality." While she seemed to view the system differently from other teachers, she did not think that she could change the system or the teachers. She wanted students to "understand that they can cope" with the system; but at the same time, she recognized the inequities of the system.

McLaren (1986) believed that the failure of the disempowered was, "for the ruling class, a crucial factor in the maintenance and evolution of the social order" (p. 173). Helen talked about teachers who demanded respect from students even though they did not always show certain students respect. Were these teachers attempting to maintain the social order with themselves in the ruling class? Ostensibly perceiving some students as underlings, they were considered by Helen as unwilling to invest any more time into helping the students transform from this status.

On the contrary, Helen continued to work with the disempowered, although she admitted that she did not always see changes in their behaviors. She was similar to the other teachers in that she also attempted to transform the students. While acknowledging the power of "superiors," whether teachers or employers, she exercised her own power over students "to get them to cope." In her opinion, the irresponsible should become responsible and the disrespectful should become

respectful. She differed from other teachers by being more understanding about the students' streetcorner state. They could be cathartic with Helen. Afterwards, she would tell them to accept the student state and to maintain the status quo.

Recognizing that the system promoted compliancy, Helen chose to work within the system, even though she acknowledged its faults. She seemed to think that the students needed to do this, as well, if they were to emerge as successful from the transition ritual of school. At the same time, she expressed support for those students who fought the injustices of the hierarchical order. Both teachers and students were paradoxically cast as victims of the system and instigators of their own circumstances. As well as going between teachers and students, Helen seemed to continually fluctuate between an appreciation for the rigidity of the system and a regard for the flexibility of the margins. Her attempts to internally balance both paralleled her facilitation of the day-to-day interactions between students and teachers.

Larry's Story

Capturing the "Bandits"

Larry called his students the "bandits," and since they liked this name, they chose to use it as a title for their group. After selecting this title, they attempted to identify "what bandits stood for" and decided it was an acronym for "believe and nurture determination in trying school." While claiming that the "main goal" of the group was "to get back in school," Larry's descriptions suggested that these students were in many ways fugitives from the regular school system. He saw them as having traveled the road that led to dropping out of school.

I'm just gonna say, "You're all dropouts from school. You all have something in common for many reasons. You're out of school." And I tell them, "There is a road that has led you to become a dropout and whether it started at three years old or what, you know, it started."

According to Larry, these school dropouts were "lost" children. Attempting to "capture" them, he did not give up easily. If a youth was not responsive to his initial approach, he would try again. When he finally made a "connection," he refused to "let go of them." He had found "a lot of kids" to be "really hard to grab," but he persisted with his attempts to become involved in their lives.

I find that I hate losing....If I go and make contact at home, I don't like to be forgotten about....So I'll call again and say, "Well, you were to come in and see me on this day and you didn't come. Why not?"..."Well, look, why don't we go and I'll meet you at MacDonald's for a pop....Sometimes, it's not my office and it's not their house. They'll go to some other place, and we'll sit and we'll have a pop and get to know each other.

At one point, Larry referred to his repeated efforts to capture the students as "borderline pestering" and "harassing," but he was quick to qualify that this was done in "a fun way." For most of the students, his strategies seemed to get some of the results he wanted. At least they came to the group meetings even if not on a regular basis.

And I actually have..four, five kids that I think I'm borderline pestering them. Or I think I've begun harassing which is a horrible word to use. I don't mean harass in a way that, it's a fun way. They say, "Well, I know if I didn't come, you'd probably be up to my door today and wondering where I was so I thought I'd might as well come down."

Larry related having "kept on" one youth who refused to go to school or to attend the group meetings. Because his initial efforts had been unsuccessful, he felt that he had "lost a student." Nevertheless, at the start of the following school year, he "called him again," and this time was able to arrange for the student to attend school in another district. This was a place where the boy "felt comfortable." Larry remarked that he "didn't lose him" after all.

Winning seemed to be important for Larry. He talked about wanting to "gain" his students' feelings and to "gain" their respect and trust. He was prepared to "battle" to get the students back in school, but he identified obstacles to his achieving these goals. The greatest of these, in his opinion, was the absence of "structure at home."

Since the students did not go to Larry's group "on a regular basis," he wondered if they could "get up and go to school on a regular basis." He quipped that one would have to "dynamite" them out of bed. His scenarios of students who lived "such a different life" presented an existence of welfare, drugs, violence and "freedom without responsibility." Larry saw "very unhappy kids." These were the "bandits" who were "condemned" when they didn't "do their school work at a certain level." Larry seemed quite aware of the challenges that he faced as he undauntedly struggled to win these youth.

In terms of wins and losses, Larry confessed that there was the "odd child" who was "way out of" his "ball game." There were times when he just did not know what else to do. "I just can't go on," he said, "and beat my head against the wall."

He would "always leave the door open," however. For those students who were not "ready for the group," he sometimes continued to work with them individually.

And I have kids that do that, kids I don't feel are ready for the group. I have them come here on other times and just talk with me until I feel, myself and my volunteers, that they're ready for the group....I never push them away.

The "bandits" were "wanted" by Larry. These children that he endeavored to "capture" had experienced "neglect." He described them as having grown up "very lonely and unloved" and searching "to get attention and that love." After he made a "connection" with them and they started to come to the group that he led, he thought that they continued to come because they were "wanted." This seemed to explain his ability to at least "capture" them for spasmodic periods of time. Although he acknowledged that their attendance was not regular, that did not detract from the warm welcome that they received when they did come. Everyone has a basic human need for love and belonging, the satisfaction of which is essential for psychological well-being (Maslow, 1962; Glasser, 1990b). In his way, Larry seemed to be helping his students fulfill this need. By being a friend to them and showing an interest in their personal lives, he was trying to get into what Glasser called each student's quality world. This quality world contains the best or highest-quality pictures or perceptions of people, things and situations that are carried in an individual's memory.

I never close the door. They don't come to me three days in a row, I don't say, "Look, I'm not gonna come anymore if you guys aren't gonna show up." I just say, "Come if you want." There's been mornings I've come in here and I've had ten. And I said, "My goodness, what am I gonna do with ya? I love havin' ya all here. What are we gonna do?" But it's pretty easy. There's lots of things we can do once they're here. I get so excited when they all do show up.

Larry spoke about a "tool" that he could use when approaching youth who were out of school. He could invite them to talk with him in his office and to consider

joining the group that met three mornings a week. It would give them "somewhere to go." In order to entice them, he was quite flexible about the time. He thought that this flexibility was necessary if they were to feel "comfortable."

"And we have a group. You wanna go in it, that's fine; if you don't, you can just come on down somewhere...during the week, okay. Why don't you do that?" "Oh, yeah, man, I can do that. What time?" I say, "Well, what time do you get up in the morning? Can you get outta bed nine o'clock?" "Well, yeah, I can, sure, I get outta bed nine o'clock." I say, "Well, why don't you just come and see me?" So once they come and see me, then we can work on getting them feeling comfortable and maybe getting them back in school.

Larry recognized that "a lot of time" was needed for these youth. He also believed many of them would not "make it" until the time was right. While he did not sound very hopeful for the immediate present, he still possessed some optimism for the long term. He seemed to realize, however, that no matter what he did, the students' futures were ultimately determined by them.

Some kids that I know, I'll give what we have but we're not gonna make it right now. It's not their time. It has to be their time..I think. If that makes any sense to you. They're not ready to make any moves, then they're not goin' anywhere.

In what appeared to be a move to motivate his students to return to school, Larry posted a letter of recommendation that he had written on behalf of three of them. There seemed to be some irony in posting the names of three "bandits" on the wall. He was not confident that theirs would be a successful re-entry.

I've got their names up there. I even stuck a letter up there when they came into the group. It's got three names of students that I was gonna take to the high school but I don't think they're really gonna make it....They have a real difficulty makin' anything on a regular basis. But I put it up there and said, "Look, I'm takin' that letter to...this week. I just wanted you to see that letter.

Believing that he needed help with his efforts to "capture" students, Larry actively enlisted the support of volunteers. Recruiting adult friends to spend time with lonely students was also a strategy recommended by Glasser (1990b). Larry was encountering a lot of at-risk girls and he felt that most of them would rather talk

with a woman about some matters. By seeking volunteers, he was acknowledging his limitations and admitting the desirability for expanded human resources in order to be more effective. The pursuer of "bandits" decided to recruit a posse.

A lotta girls come through here. I don't know why it is, but this year seems to be a lotta girls. And there's a lot of things that girls will talk about but not talk about with a man. Some will talk to me about anything, but most would rather talk to somebody else, a woman.

When identifying assistants, he was clear on certain qualities that he thought they should possess. He was looking for volunteers who were "great" people and "liked" kids. Even though he could not attract them by offering a monetary reward, he seemed to obtain their interest by letting them know that they were indeed wanted and that their involvement would be appreciated. Since he realized that they had "other commitments," he was very flexible regarding the time that he expected them to give. Flexibility was part of Larry's style. Although he used military terms like "capture" and "survival," he wanted people to feel at ease in a place that was not "regimented."

And so I called up, oh, one lady, actually two ladies I knew who were both teachers' assistants at one time and I knew they liked kids, workin' with kids. And I said, "Would you like to come down? I know this is kind of a weird question. I can't pay you anything, but I'd love to have your personality and your outlook on life to work with these kids 'cause you're a great person." And they said, "Well, sure."...And I made it clear to them, you know, "any time you can give me. It's great, just great. Just give me a call when you're comin' down." And there's two that are quite committed. I can set them up with kids...

Building Survival Skills

Larry observed that a lot of the students he had "wouldn't survive regular school" since they did not have the "tools." They needed "to learn ways of surviving," and these were the skills that he attempted to "build." He thought that the students really wanted to be in school and to be successful, but they just did not know how. They needed to "learn how to work with people" and to recognize that they were in control of their lives. Glasser (1990b) offered his control theory as an

explanation for the "constant attempt to control both ourselves and others, even though in practice we can control only ourselves" (p. 44). Glasser referred to control in terms of steering a car; Larry referred to driving a bus. He observed, "I use the analogy...they each drive a bus when they start their life."

Larry wanted the students to "fight" for their survival. In order to do this, he believed that they needed to "be strong with themselves." By working to "build up the self-esteem" of the students, he was helping them to acquire this strength. He acknowledged how important it was for them to have successful experiences and he related ways in which he ensured that this would occur. From his perspective, building self-esteem was dependent upon building success. Larry's approach concurred with the literature on self-esteem (Nave, 1990).

I have to build a lot of success. They have to feel a constant amount of success all the time until they build a good self-esteem when they can tackle something else.

Larry's personal story was one of survival. Through perseverance, he acquired skills that enabled him to achieve his goals. As a child, his coping strategies were not very effective. School was a "nightmare" for him and he claimed to have learned how "to accept failure" in his earlier years. He described his father as "an extreme alcoholic" and his mother as "a busy lady" who "had to work."

I had to learn to survive and how to be a failure. And I didn't have the skills to say (bangs table), "I'm gonna start studying; I'm gonna start working because I'm worth it." You know. And I didn't have that because I felt this is my life.

In a poignant anecdote, he recalled how, as a boy, he had savoured every moment away from school. He wanted to postpone the hour when he would have to again experience the failure. Under his blankets, he found refuge late at night as he secretly delighted in eating sweets. His story provided an explanation for his

apparent ability to empathize with the "lost" children that he worked with in later years.

I remember I use to go into the store very, very late, more than nine o'clock at night, and I'd take enough money and I'd buy all these little treats, and I'd come home and I'd hide them under my blankets with my flashlight, and I'd eat all these sweets thinking that it was my last delight before I went back to school, 'cause I knew my homework wasn't done, I knew I couldn't do this and couldn't do that and no one really gave a damn, you know, in my house.

Larry recounted that as he got older, people in his life helped him to realize that he was not "dumb." Nevertheless, he revealed learning to be "successful through manipulation." His first degree in sociology was achieved by doing "half decently, never more than what it was supposed to be." Anyway, he got his "pass." He professed to have only done the degree to increase his chances of being accepted into the airforce as a pilot. When he still didn't get into the military, he took another route to getting a pilot's license. As it turned out, he flew for ten years, and three of those years were in the Middle East, "flying the Persian Gulf."

The former child whose self-esteem was "just stomped" when he had to repeat grades four and seven became the teacher who was determined to help other children survive. He reported having "stuck it out" because he saw school as "the only road" to getting what he really wanted. His persistence befitted an individual who admitted to "hate losing."

Before going to the Middle East, Larry was involved with a summer project for at-risk youth and he "really enjoyed it." The experience had a long-lasting impact. He eventually chose to return home and to pursue his desire to work with youth who were having "difficulty." Before obtaining his position as a teacher/intervention worker in the school system, he worked in a training school for

juvenile delinquents and a group home for youth in foster care. He expressed much enthusiasm and love for this work.

And I fell in love with workin' with kids like that, but I couldn't....Hey, I'm good with kids. I enjoyed it, you know. It's great, so what. I wanna be a pilot....And then I just, actually I was in the Middle East and I kept thinking of that job that I'd had with these at-risk kids...somethin' I really like to do. I don't want to go through my life without actually havin' the opportunity to work with kids that are havin' difficulty 'cause it was really a positive experience so I came back and applied to the training school...

Having had negative experiences as a child and possessing a strong desire to help children with problems, Larry worked to create a refuge in which at-risk youth could learn survival. Sinclair (1994) recalled the painful memories of her childhood as she told stories about creating a home in the classroom for her students.

The power of the influences of my home and school embedded within my childhood memories leaves its residual effect in how I treat my students. I reflect upon my pedagogical decisions, but I must become aware of the extent to which my pedagogical intents and actions are shaped by my past. (p. 27)

Although Larry was doggedly determined, he admitted that there were some students who were "not gonna make it right now." While he believed that "they're worth fighting for," he was looking for the children amongst the others who were starting "to fight for themselves." Larry seemed to understand that no matter what he did for students in "extreme situations," their circumstances would not significantly improve if they did not do something to help themselves. In terms of the *personal causation* theory of motivation, these students needed to be more like origins than pawns; that is, they needed to develop a stronger sense of originating their own actions (deCharms, 1984).

And there are kids out there, and that's the child I'm looking for is the one that, if we get twenty in this group, we can get a few of them that are actually startin' to fight for themselves.

Relating Personal Causation

deCharms (1968) defined personal causation as "the initiation by an individual of behavior intended to produce a change in his environment" (p. 6). deCharms' origin-pawn concept described an origin to be "a person who perceives his behavior as determined by his own choosing" and a pawn to be "a person who perceives his behavior as determined by external forces beyond his control" (p. 273-274). It is important to note that in later years, deCharms (1984) attempted to clarify two misunderstandings that were fostered by this concept. First, he expressed concern that the terminology had led to the classification of people as either one kind or the other. In response to this misinterpretation, he pointed out that "we are all origins some of the time and pawns some of the time" (p. 278). Although he noted that certain situations are more origin-enhancing than others, he acknowledged that even in a Nazi concentration camp there were those who maintained vestiges of originship. deCharms identified the second misconception to be the belief that people who are treated as origins are allowed to do as they please. This, he wrote, would have "devastating effects in the educational setting" (279).

Personal causation theory stressed "the feeling that one has determined his own action and goal and is realistic about his actions" (deCharms, 1976, p. 101).

Initially, deCharms (1968) considered personal causation in terms of attribution theory and the perception of internal locus of causality as applied to others. Over time, he went beyond "third-person attribution" to the "first-person experience of personal causation" (deCharms, 1984, p. 278). He observed, "The Origin-Pawn

concept may be seen as a specific application of attribution of internal causality to oneself. We like to distinguish, however, between the *perception* of motivation and the *experience* of it" (1976, p. 10). In a study of low-income black children, he demonstrated that personal causation training can significantly affect students' achievement, career planning and responsible behaviors. deCharms illustrated that origin behaviors can be enhanced.

Larry's view of the students' roles in determining their own destinies can be linked with deCharms' theory of personal causation. Even though Larry did not speak about his students as pawns and origins, he considered them to need more origin-type behaviors. Since they did not attend group meetings regularly and did not appear to be "ready to make any moves" to return to school, they were presented as failing to help themselves. Larry placed much importance on survival skills because he wanted them "to fight," to take charge of their experiences, to behave like origins.

Although they may have appeared to be in control because they had a "life of total freedom," they had this freedom "with no real responsibility" and with limited choices. Dependency upon the "welfare cheque" contributed to pawn-like experiences. These youth were described as growing up in families that expected social assistance; they saw it as a "right." Larry observed that they viewed this as "the normal life...almost like a training." They did not "have much money," however. The government controlled their income, and consequently, their purchasing power. This was a lifestyle to which they were accustomed; it was natural for them to see it as beyond their control. deCharms (1984) considered the origin-pawn concept in relation to choice, freedom, responsibility, and ownership of behavior.

In a nutshell, originating one's own actions implies choice; choice is experienced as freedom; choice imposes responsibility for choice-related actions and enhances the feeling the action is "mine" (ownership of action). Put in the negative, having actions imposed from without (pawn behaviors) abrogates choice; lack of choice is experienced as bondage, releases one from responsibility, and allows, even encourages, the feeling that the action is "not mine." (deCharms, 1984, p. 279)

While the youth in Larry's story seemed to be limiting their choices in terms of education and careers, they were viewed as wanting "to be free." In order to achieve their perception of freedom, they found sources of income to supplement cheques from the government. Their quest for independence was expressed through drug usage and licentious activities - pursuits that, over time, can become more like pawn experiences.

They don't just take, you know, marijuana; they're on acid. I have kids that are pretty heavy into drugs. I'd say half the group are heavy into drugs....We had another girl that, you know, very explicit on what she's done with her boyfriends and things like that, and you know, how free she is and how she gets money this way and that way.

According to Larry, these were youth who did not want to be told what to do. They did not want teachers and principals to have "control of them." They told Larry that they liked his group because he did not behave in that controlling manner. As previously recounted, Larry was flexible concerning their attendance. deCharms (1984) proposed a curvilinear hypothesis regarding the relationship between classroom structure and pupil motivation. He wrote, "A rigidly structured classroom should inhibit pupil motivation, just as an unstructured classroom should inhibit motivation. A classroom with the right amount of structure should enhance motivation" (p. 280).

Larry's flexibility about attendance indicated that he may have been a laissez-faire teacher, "literally a teacher who lets students do whatever they want" (deCharms, 1984, 279). There were examples, however, to show that he would not accept certain behaviors from members of the group. Nevertheless, because of his tenaciousness and commitment to helping children, he continued to work with them individually until they were "ready" to join the group.

We sort of have a lot of unspoken guidelines. There hasn't been any swearing or anything like that. Maybe, the odd bit of swearing, but there hasn't been any kind of rude behavior or anything like that, because kids are here because they want to be here. If they wanna act up and destroy the group, then I can ask them just to leave until they're ready to come back, or just come and see me at another time.

deCharms (1984) wrote, "In shaping origin-pawn dispositions in a child, teachers and parents can reinforce or counteract each other's efforts" (p. 293). Family structures, as well as classroom structures, were linked with student motivation. deCharms cited a study by Jackson that gave evidence of a curvilinear relationship between a mother's directive statements and the origin score of the child. deCharms concluded that the very directive mother is over-nurturing and provides the child with little opportunity to develop personal causation. On the other hand, the mother who neglects her child fosters a feeling of helplessness; the child behaves like a pawn. Linking Larry's descriptions of children who were neglected by their parents with deCharms' theory could provide a partial explanation for the presumable unwillingness of the children to help themselves. Furthermore, Larry's efforts to encourage origin experiences may have been counteracted by the pawn experiences within the homes.

Larry's story suggested that he had learned to become an origin and not a pawn. Having had unsuccessful school experiences and growing up with an alcoholic parent, he could have continued on a track of helplessness. Instead, Larry set

goals and achieved them. His story was about someone who recognized his own abilities and did something to help himself. Now, he wanted to help others, but one of the major barriers seemed to be their reluctance to help themselves. In deCharms' terms, they were behaving like pawns.

Relating Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement

Larry talked about students, including himself as a child, who had not experienced success within the regular school system. In his opinion, "they learn skills of how to be a failure rather than to be a success." After getting "so many F's," he would almost "train" himself "to be able to accept failure." His expectancy for good grades was lowered.

The theory of causality that was promulgated by Rotter (1954) placed an emphasis on the interrelatedness of behavior potential, expectancy and reinforcement value. Larry did not use the term reinforcement; yet, he described children who had received few rewards from school attendance. Applying Rotter's language, the behavior of going to school was a function of the expectancy of reinforcement and the value of that reinforcement. "Should a positive reinforcement not occur or should the event that follows that behavior be punishing to the subject, the potentiality of the behavior's occurring would decrease" (p. 114). Hence, the students chose to avoid school. Larry, on the other hand, stayed in school. He became involved in school sports and he saw this as "a very powerful tool." According to Rotter's theory, athletic recognition may have been the positive reinforcement for Larry.

Praise and caring were the positive reinforcements used by Larry when working with students. These reinforcements, however, were not enough to motivate all of

the students to attend his sessions on a regular basis. Furthermore, there were some for whom he thought "you can give everything but they never come."

I mean, I could have a party here every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and fabulous things to do, but still I would not have a great consistency of the kids because they just don't get out of bed. It's too hard for them. Like, I have three girls that live in an apartment and the oldest person in the apartment is eighteen years old. And, ah, there's drugs, there's alcohol.

Along a similar vein, Rotter (1954) wrote, "Their behavior would depend upon the value of these reinforcements (of adult affection) as compared with other needs such as, for example, status with a peer group" (p.145).

In addition to positive and negative reinforcements, Rotter (1954) considered "the degree to which any reinforcement is preferred by the individual or group" (p. 108). In Rotter's terms, Larry's students seemed to have had more negative than positive reinforcements during their regular school experiences. Moreover, the rewards of school may not have held the same value for them as for other students. Rotter wrote that the value of the reinforcement could be "predicted through a knowledge of the situation the organism is in and from a knowledge of his past learning experiences" (p. 116). The potentiality of occurrence of a particular kind of behavior was discriminated from the preference that an individual may have for reinforcements that he expects to follow. He illustrated this point by comparing the "so-called normal child" with the "rejected and neglected delinquent child." While both may have the same "need value" for hostile behavior, he viewed the normal child as having a "much lower need potential" (p. 193). Unlike the normal child, the delinquent has a higher expectancy of satisfaction for hostile behavior and frequently does not have an expectancy of satisfaction for other behaviors.

Larry described behaviors exhibited by "neglected" youth who had a lower expectancy of satisfaction for school attendance. Although he said that they really wanted to be in school, they did not seem to want this enough to conform to the obligations of school. Instead, they sought gratification from other kinds of activities. Their peer group shared the common characteristics of being school drop-outs, living on welfare, and having parents who had also dropped out of school. Their present situations and past learning experiences had set an expectation for rewards that were not provided by school.

...around lots of other kids that are out of school, that don't have very much money...They see it as the norm. You know, maybe half their life, maybe their parents were like that. A lot of their parents dropped out of school. Discipline problems. A lot of them hate teachers. They all kind of join together to kind of build a belief that, hey, this is the right way. "We're tired of people telling us what to do." You know. "We're tired of these teachers tellin' us we have to do our homework and do this and that....We want to be free. I have lots of friends. I love boys and boys wanta chase the girls. Hey, man, we're, we've got drugs."

Rotter (1982) was concerned with "the question of whether or not an individual believes that his own behavior, skills, or internal dispositions determine what reinforcements he receives" (p. 176). According to his social learning theory, having the perception that reinforcement is within one's control does affect a person's behavior in a situation. "If he sees the reinforcement as being outside his own control or not contingent, that is depending upon chance, fate, powerful others, or unpredictable, then the preceding behavior is less likely to be strengthened or weakened" (p. 177).

In his later years, Larry came to the understanding that he was not "stupid" and that he could "do this work," so he "started doing the work." He realized that he had internal control over his success in school. Based upon Larry's accounts, the students that he saw seemed to view the rewards of school as externally controlled. Larry believed that they did not know how to be successful. Instead of

doing their homework, they found other things to do with their time and then claimed, when behind with their work, that they did not want to be in school, anyway. Finding fault with the teachers, while denying their own responsibility for the absence of success, was considered to be a way of coping.

I mean, when they go up there, once they start, you know, not gettin' their homework done - somethin' we work on a lot is homework skills - but once they start feeling that there's no success, you know, they can't catch up or somethin' like that, they just look for other ways to send their attention and just say, "Ah, school is not cool." Not that they don't wanta be in school, just that that's their way of coping. Saying, "Ah, they're all a bunch of bone heads up there. Don't wanta be anywhere near them. It's not that I can't do the work, it's just that, you know, just don't like it. It's not cool so I'm not gonna be part of it." But really, it's just the opposite. They really wanta be in there. They really wanta be successful. But they just don't know how.

Larry believed that the students needed to conceive of themselves as being "important" and able to "find a way to be successful." He wanted to help them discover their abilities and to continue to develop these. Success was seen as incremental with one step leading to another. If students perceived the reward of success as within their control, it was more likely that their efforts to succeed would continue.

'Cause once they get the sense of being successful, doin' somethin', they can take another step and another step and another step and another step.

Defining Self

Burke (1945) analysed stories according to five components: act (what was done), scene (when or where it was done), agent (who did it), agency (how it was done), and purpose (why it was done). (Burke's concept of a scene-agent ratio was referred to previously within the positive/negative theme.) In telling his story, Larry depicted himself as an agent responsible for the act of rounding up students who were outlaws of the regular school system. The street was often the scene of the act, but other scenes included his office, students' homes, schools, and restaurants. His metaphorical language suggested the notion of Larry being in

pursuit of "bandits." Support for this notion can be found in his references to posting names on a wall, taking a road, condemning, harassing, losing, and surviving. He spoke of requiring such agencies as grabbing, capturing, battling, gaining, dynamiting, and fighting in order to achieve his purpose.

Referring again to Burke (1945), it is possible to view Larry as defining himself by the incidents that he describes. If "to define a thing in terms of its context, we must define it in terms of what it is not" (p.25), then Larry, through a process of negative dialectic, could be considered to be defining himself as the antithesis of the student outlaws. Larry also defined himself as having been like these fugitives. He seemed to hold first-hand knowledge of the experiences of failure and neglect. As a child, his coping strategy of eating sweets under his blankets at night may have provided temporary solace, but in later years, with the help of people who believed in his potential, he developed more effective behaviors. Now, presenting himself as a redeemed person, he battled for others who carried some resemblances of the loneliness and helplessness that he had known.

Finding little from his teacher training program that prepared him for the work, he remarked, "I can't really honestly say to you that there's any skills that I've learned from university that I brought down here, except my internship." How, then, did Larry formulate his approach to working with at-risk students? Peshkin (1985) asked, "Is social science reduced to mere personalistic wallow?" (p. 269). A similar question could be asked about teaching. To what extent do teachers' personal experiences affect their interactions with students? Peshkin pointed out that "fieldworkers each bring to their sites at least two selves - the human self that we generally are in everyday situations, and the research self that we fashion for our particular research situation" (p. 270). Teachers also bring at least two selves to

their sites - the human self and the pedagogic self. Having discovered how his human self influenced his research self, Peshkin acknowledged that this could be both enabling and disabling since it could encourage the development of some research possibilities and could restrain the development of others. If these observations about research were extended to teaching, it could be implied that the human self both supports and inhibits the pedagogic self.

Did Larry expose any inner conflicts and truces between his human self and pedagogic self? When defining his work, he described himself as doing "a lot of things where other people probably wouldn't." For example, this included picking up some of the students in the morning. He revealed a degree of uncertainty about this exercise when he said, "Maybe, I shouldn't do that, but to get it going, I felt it was important..." It may have been his pedagogic self, exposed to traditional teaching practice, that expressed doubt, while his human self acted according to first-hand understanding of at-risk students.

There were numerous instances in which Larry illustrated that he did not expect strict adherence to formal rules. He considered his group work to be "quite relaxing" with "unspoken guidelines." Furthermore, he did not view the academic needs of his students as taking precedence over their emotional needs. On the other hand, he did not want to give an impression of being too slack with the students. While Larry seemed to primarily base his decisions upon the human self's perception, he was still conscious of the pedagogic self's expectations and attempted to reconcile the differences.

Sort of get together in the morning and talk about a variety of things, of what happened on the weekend or what happened the night before or, and just get everybody kind of in a good, relaxed state in the morning, and then if we had somebody who was in a very upset mood, have a way to identify that.

This group is not just to sit around the table and discuss the problems at home, or if they're out of the home, a lot of the kids are not living home, not just sit around and let's have fun. The whole idea is direction toward going back to school.

Concluding Larry's Story

Larry constructed his story from the personal experiences of his childhood and the professional experiences of an intervention worker/teacher. He did not use the jargon of professional journals; his theories seemed to be based upon his own personally developed philosophy. For example, he spoke of students driving their own buses through life. While this concept may have been formed from his exposure to personal causation theory (deCharms, 1976) or control theory (Glaser, 1984) during the time he did his degrees in sociology and education, it is also possible that Larry could have developed this philosophy without having been presented with formal theories. When one's personal theories are congruent with professional theories, it may be difficult to determine if the latter influenced the development of the former. Internalized as perceived truths, they serve to guide a teacher's interactions with students.

As Peshkin (1985) remarked, if all researchers were alike, they would all tell the same story. This axiom also applies to teachers. Each story is unique because of the particular personal experiences as well as the individual interpretations of professional theory. In Larry's case, his own childhood seemed to have a weighty influence on his work with children. He may have seen his younger self in these children. Maybe, he was looking for another Larry when seeking the child who was ready to "fight" for himself.

Chapter V

CONTINUING THEORETICAL SAMPLING

New Discoveries within Themes

Eight additional interviews were conducted with teachers and the subsequent analyses disclosed numerous examples to support the themes and properties that had been formulated during the analyses of the earlier interviews. The data were closely examined in search of new themes as well as new properties to reveal different aspects of the previously identified themes. New discoveries were in fact made and these were determined to lend more insight into the four existing themes. In view of the interrelationship of the themes, it seemed reasonable to deduce that additional information about any one of the themes could also lead to a better understanding of the other three.

The recent findings suggested that theoretical saturation had not been achieved. It was highly probable that further sampling would yield more categories and properties.

The criterion for judging when to stop sampling the different groups pertinent to a category is the category's theoretical saturation. Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated. (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 61)

The new properties, according to the themes with which they were directly associated, follow:

- The theme of *connecting/understanding*

Within the category of *understanding - getting to know the students*, add the new property of *viewing at-risk on a spectrum*.

Within the category of *understanding - getting to know the students* and the property of *identifying the students' strengths and weaknesses*, include the notion of *Jekyll and Hyde personalities* and the attitude of *focusing on the present*.

Within the category of *understanding- getting to know the students* and the property of *knowing the family backgrounds*, include the aspects of *presence of support, presence of conflicting values, and absence of early intervention*.

Within the category of *making connections* and the property of *the value of respect and trust*, include the idea of *getting a student's permission*.

- The theme of *positive/negative*

Within the category of *limitations of program teachers*, add the property of *limited by not knowing what else to do*.

Within the category of *positive influences of program teachers* and the property of *benefits for program teachers*, include the aspect of *career change*.

- The theme of *control/empowerment*

Within the category of *differing from other teachers in the regular classroom*, include the concept that *students sense if a teacher is uncomfortable*.

- The theme of *flexibility/structure*

Within the category of the *need for flexibility* and the property of *teachers inclined to bend and free to be flexible*, include the concept of *jack-of-all-trades teachers*.

Understanding - Getting to Know the Students

Viewing At-Risk on a Spectrum

The students' at-risk situations were reported in the earlier interviews. These included poor academic performance, school avoidance, disruptive behavior, drug abuse and negative home environment. In the later interviews, these situations were again recounted, but this time I became more acutely aware of circumstances that were specific to individual cases such as teen parenting and living on one's own. Although I had noted that teachers in the initial interviews described their students as individuals, my reading of their stories had not focused on the range of characteristics and situations. My subsequent awareness of the students' idiosyncrasies as related by the teachers may have developed when I noticed that teachers in the later interviews expressed the at-risk quality in terms of degrees.

The specificity of at-risk characteristics and situations became clearer. Not all at-risk students struggled academically or disrupted classes or came from poor home environments. For example, there were students with "all kinds of potential," but because of pregnancy, were now at-risk. Some students were seen as being "supported strongly by their parents"; others were viewed as having backgrounds as different as "night and day." Some at-risk students were diagnosed to have attention deficit disorders; some were thought to need psychiatric help. There were students who exhibited extreme violence and students who considered

suicide. In order to illustrate the differences, individual cases have been selected from the teachers' stories.

Young girls and older men

In two of the interviews, references were made to young girls moving in with older men. The teacher in the first excerpt saw girls with low self-esteem in search of a place to belong. The alternative school setting was viewed as helping to meet this belonging need for one young girl, but when the school closed for the summer, she turned to an older man. Although she may have felt needed, he was perceived as taking advantage of her vulnerability.

Many of our girls will team up with older men, and in fact, one of our girls moved in over the summer with a man who was married and older, and she was just his baby-sitter really. But she actually moved in with him. Just because he made her feel like she was needed. Now since, she's back to school this year, she's gotten out of that relationship, and she's living back at home again....That's how much they need somebody to care, like when she wasn't in school, she looked for someone else. And it's, I think it's to feel more as if they belong someplace. I guess it's the whole idea of self-esteem. Just feeling a little bit good about yourself and most of our kids don't.

The next example presents a portrait of a "bright" young girl who had a baby fathered by an older man. Unlike the previous case, the girl's self-esteem was not offered as an explanation for her involvement with this man. Her mother and father, however, were presented as unsupportive figures. The girl chose to move in with her boyfriend and wanted to continue with school, but because of being under sixteen years of age, she was not eligible for subsidized daycare. The baby's father worked shifts as a janitor and was not always available during the day nor did he earn enough to afford baby-sitting costs. In order to assist this girl, the school staff had adjusted her program so that she could attend on a part-time basis; they were also deliberating a means to provide some financial support for child care. The teacher who related the situation believed that there should be a social program in place for girls in those types of situations.

The mother has abdicated any responsibility, and the father hasn't been around in a long time. And she's a bright kid. She's in the junior high setting...she's not 16 and unless her boyfriend is on income assistance, that's who she's living with, she is not eligible. Now there use to be a program that subsidized kids who were under sixteen....Since the demise of that program, there really isn't any assistance. So here is the situation where a student has all kinds of potential. The boyfriend is working as a janitor...very often it's during the day...so this poor girl now is in a situation where he's not going to be around during the day. She has to find a baby-sitter. So I located a baby-sitter, very high quality care... Problem is there is no source of funding, so the school is looking at taking it out of student council money and I don't think that's right....So she will have to go this whole term in grade nine with the school adjusting her program....The school has bent over backwards.

Assuming the Responsibilities of Parenthood - In Need of a Baby-Sitter

Other teachers mentioned the baby-sitting problems that were faced by parenting students. While one young girl lived with an older man and provided him with a baby-sitting service, a number of girls were having their own babies and in need of a baby-sitter themselves. Some were seen as having "planned" their babies and others were thought to be "not happy about their pregnancy." For those who "worked to get pregnant," the baby seemed to bestow them with a recognition they heretofore had not known. They did not seem to realize the seriousness of the responsibilities that accompanied the newly acquired parental status.

Babies are brought into this school many times and displayed as little dolls....Little babies passed around to everybody as you would pass a doll around. You know, look at it, isn't it cute. It's almost like a toy.

It was observed that the realities of looking after a baby soon became apparent. Even for those girls who were fortunate enough to have their own mothers as baby-sitters during the day, their lives seemed to be defined by school attendance and child care. According to one teacher, their opportunities for socialization were almost nil and they appeared to be depressed.

I see so many girls that are pregnant and they're bubbly, and I really think that they probably worked at these pregnancies....But the moms, I see a lot of them are really depressed. They have no breaks. They come to school, they go home from school; and if they're lucky enough that mom keeps the baby, mom hands baby over. You're home now; this is your baby. There's been a couple of girls that have negotiated and talked with their

parents about having a time out like every second or third Saturday to go out with friends because they need that. They're really missing all kinds of good times they should be having.

Often, the grandmothers did not take care of the babies, and in those cases, students were thought to "miss quite a bit of time." Sometimes their babies were ill and couldn't be taken to the daycare centre; sometimes daycare facilities were unavailable or unaffordable; and sometimes baby-sitters were unreliable. In the scenario that follows, an intervention worker reports that one girl was about to quit school because she was unable to attend classes when her baby was sick. He explained the steps that he took in order to provide her with the support that she needed to stay in school.

So I said, "Why are you quitting?" "Well, my child is ill so much that, and I don't have any baby-sitters, so whenever my baby can't come to the daycare I can't come to school and I've missed way too much time." So I said to her, "There might be another solution. What if we could find a solution to that problem? Would you want to stay?" "Well, sure, but I don't see what can be done." "Well, where do you live?...I think I can find you a baby-sitter. If I can, will you take advantage of using them when you need them?" "Absolutely." So I called a lady who's a member of a church...that I thought probably would want to undertake this because of its cause and indeed she did. She approached people in her church and what they ended up doing is they knew Mrs....who works with immigrants and they somehow knew that one of the ladies, one of the immigrants that she was working with, had been a nanny in England before coming to Canada. And this lady, I think was an African lady, was enlisted, was hired really to take care of this girl's daughter until she recuperated and the church paid for the baby-sitting.

Living on One's Own

Students who lived on their own, without parents or guardians and known as "independent livers" by one intervention worker, were also identified to be at-risk. One boy, it was later discovered, had lived on his own "since he was thirteen." Usually, these students were described as living with other teenagers and quite often moving in with their boyfriends or girlfriends. It was noted that they seemed to be "sick more often and for longer periods of time than somebody that's living home." Other reasons for missing time from school could be as simple as

needing clean clothes or as complicated as being on the run in fear of a gang wanted by the police.

They're on their own....I can remember having two young lads, we let them wash their clothes here at the school, washer and dryer, because they had no place to do their laundry. Weren't coming to school because their clothes were dirty. We can fix that.

He just evaporated....It ended up being a raid on his apartment by a gang of kids and then very quickly after that by the police, and he was running from this gang. He just got out of town and eventually this was confirmed by the local...police.

Locating these students when they did not show up for classes could be a difficult task. One intervention worker revealed having to do some investigative work to locate students when phone numbers no longer worked. This included going through cumulative records to obtain the names of relatives and friends as well as asking outside agencies and teachers for leads.

Sometimes it will be a kid who's left home and so the parents don't have knowledge of what's up. "Should be in school as far as we're concerned, but they don't live here anymore."...But even when it is the parents, sometimes it's phone numbers that are disconnected, no longer work, so then...I'll rummage through the cum cards to see if there is any old information on relatives or friends, ah, call names, get leads in whatever way I can. Sometimes it'll be a student that I know from another context, young offenders probation, so I'll call an agency who has a lead or a name...and eventually I'll find them that way. Or sometimes...the teacher comes to me with a situation like this, one of my first questions will be "Have you noticed who he or she hangs around with? Do you know the names of any friends that I can go to?" So I'll go to a friend of the student and ask them and quite often that will lead to information that will take me to where they are.

Moving from one place to another and taking time off from school to do so was noted as a common practice for these students. The transience and instability seemed to contribute to a lack of sleep and a lack of motivation to attend classes. In the following account, they were likened to "street people."

And they say, "Well, I didn't sleep good last night." Or they give..there's tons of excuses. ...They had a fight so they moved out to a friend's house or...I know a number of them there last year they would move, in say two semesters, six to eight different places during the year. They're just like street people; they just move from one place to another. They take days off to move...They can't do it on the weekends 'cause they get kicked out of their place so they have to go halfway through the week. They just can't come to school. They're so tired.

It seemed rather paradoxical to refer to these students as living independently when they were portrayed as being dependent upon the social service system and the goodwill of friends. Furthermore, their freedom without discipline enabled them to live for the present without preparing for the future. A life of dependence was predicted for many of them.

They don't have any order....What's stoppin' them from stayin' up 'til two o'clock halfway through the week, and like a lot of them do, get up at noontime. Start goin' back to school. There's no real, there's nothing there for them to be scared of, or you know to fear it a little bit, or to set some real discipline in their life at that age. ...Usually after eighteen or nineteen, if they don't have some sort of structure, then it just seems like their next forty or fifty years, they're on income assistance.

Pathological Behaviors

References were made to students who had attempted suicide or who had resorted to self-mutilation. There was acknowledgment that some were not receiving the counselling or psychiatric help that they needed. A small number of students were viewed to be so extremely disruptive and violent that they could not be retained in the alternative settings let alone in the regular schools. Other students were diagnosed as having attention deficit disorders or being oppositional defiant, and some of them were on medications for their disorders.

There were stories about students who talked about committing suicide or who actually attempted the act. The following anecdote was told by a teacher in order to illustrate ways in which teachers and students in the alternative school made connections. The girl in this scenario was not well known by this teacher, yet she turned to the teacher for comfort after a failed effort to hang herself. The teacher's tender response encouraged her to disclose the difficulties that she was experiencing.

I turned around. She was standing there and I said to her, I said, "Something wrong, Janey?" And she said, "I need to talk to you."...She pulled her collar down and I thought at first that somebody had choked her. And I said, "Janey, did somebody try to choke you?"

And she said, "No, I tried to hang myself on the weekend and my brother found me." So anyway, here I was and I started to cry and I just put my arms around her and I started to cry, and I said, "Dear, we love you so much that we just couldn't get along without you." ...So she started to tell me what was wrong and her boyfriend was in jail and her mother and her weren't getting along.

A teacher in one of the alternative settings claimed that ninety percent of her students, who were males from thirteen to eighteen years of age, had been diagnosed as having an attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity. About half of them were on medication; when they didn't take it, "what a difference," she said. The following was one of her stories related to students who sometimes went "just wild" and "lost it."

There's two students that live in the same foster home and one is bigger than the other and picking on him. The younger student is not as mentally capable, you know, of understanding things and the older guy picks on him sometimes, and the younger guy talks a lot incessantly, so the older guy doesn't like this, and you know, he ended up hitting him today and kicking him and he was cursin' and swearin' at us. Just wild; he just lost it...He just couldn't get himself calmed down either like, and violence isn't tolerated here.

Their pathological behaviors sometimes led to "trouble with the law." Teachers identified students who were on probation or in the open custody of group homes. Some had been in closed custody. One case was reported about a boy whose parents charged him with theft. The intervention worker saw this boy's problems as extending beyond the skills of the school staff and requiring the involvement of mental health workers. The details of the boy's problems were not revealed, but it looked as if he had resorted to the deviant act of stealing from his parents in order to get away from them. Although the homelife pertaining to this situation was not disclosed, the intervention worker preceded his relation of the case by stating that parents do not want their children "to come and go all hours of the day and night...and they don't know how to deal with it."

I think of one boy now who is in...a group home and this is a fellow I would see on a daily basis and when I say daily, I mean every day, couple times a day. Really serious problems and his parents charged him with theft and now he's in a group home...And he wanted out. He'd move out and stay at a friend's house for two or three weeks and then

stay at his girlfriend's house for two or three weeks and he'd be back home for two weeks....There was a much more serious problem than anyone here on this staff could deal with. We made referrals and he would see a psychologist one or two sessions, then he just wouldn't go back and then he'd see the mental health person one or two sessions. I don't know how many times I've taken him to see a doctor.

In very rare and extreme cases, students were asked to leave alternative settings. These were students who had been referred to the programs because staff in the regular schools could not handle their outbursts. As it turned out, the program staff could not handle them either. Not knowing what else to do, they saw themselves left with no other option but to suspend. Sometimes, the students were suspended with impending court charges.

One of the cases is one we have to go to court with....He threatened to kill me and the other teacher and he had a knife and kicked the door in and..extremely violent. And I guess this was the first year that I really believed that there's nothing we can do for those two kids. Nothing...For me to say that, they have to be pretty extreme because I can see all the other kids working out in some way...But when they're so violent and so hateful and so. I mean a lot of times, I guess, I think drugs are involved too, and their homelife, I mean that's just another story.

Achieving below and above grade level

While most of the stories were about students who were low achievers, there were also students who achieved at or above grade level. In the alternative setting with all boys, the majority of whom had attention deficit disorders, the teacher remarked that "three students in particular" could "probably be above grade level or could be accelerated if they wanted to or if they applied themselves." Another teacher described a girl to be "scoring grade twelve plus on most tests, standardized tests and achievement tests." She saw her as "very bright" but unable to "get her act together." A third teacher talked about a girl who "scored in the 94th percentile in the English PAE's" (Provincial Achievement Exams).

On the other hand, a teacher who worked solely with pregnant and parenting teens made the observation that they were "not students." In contrast with other

descriptions of pregnant teens who were "bright," she saw her girls as having "had a lot of trouble in school." She commented that it was a "rare one or two that do well."

A teacher who monitored the referrals to the in-school suspension room and who counselled the students who went there, remarked upon the high number of "nonachievers." They were seen as not feeling good about school or themselves. He considered their poor reading skills to be a major factor that put them at risk.

We seem to be teaching a generation of, I don't like to say illiterates, but like they watch more television and more nintendo by the time they're eight or ten years old than you would watch tv all your life probably....These people grew up watching television and... they're nonreaders. These one hundred and sixty-seven students that have been in the in-school suspension room, probably between a third and a half would be low achieving, nonachievers, poor readers having difficulty keeping up with their program.

The Degrass of At-Riskness

The multiplicity of cases suggested that there was not a stereotypical at-risk student. As one teacher remarked, we should not "paint them all with the same brush." Furthermore, there were references to the intensity of a student's at-risk situation. The extremely critical cases were students at "highest risk" or "most on the brink." One teacher presented these degrees of at-riskness in terms of "a spectrum from something that can be resolved in one day to someone that needs to be referred for psychiatry or counselling." While it did not seem that any of the cases could be resolved in a day, the student who needed tutoring, for example, could be classified at a lower risk than the student who was feeling worthless and talking about suicide. At times, individual students could be affected by a combination of low and high risk factors.

For one teacher, the students who could be most at-risk were the ones who hadn't learnt the "skills to be able to, in a calm fashion, sit down and talk with the teacher

about something in their life that needs help." When approaching such a student, a teacher would get an "unwelcoming response back" and a "wall thrown up." The student would "convey anger or what business is it of yours." Another teacher also saw the students who "don't know how to communicate" as being on the "far end of the spectrum."

They have difficulty communicating their ideas without using vulgar language and without getting upset, violently upset...aggressive type of thing.

She preferred to work with students at an earlier age before they were so at-risk.

I always hate it when everything gets to a crisis situation, so we tried to identify some of the kids who were at-risk, but not this far end of the spectrum, to be able to give them some support so they don't get to the far end of the spectrum. And these kids are already at the far end of the spectrum. So we at the middle school purposefully identified those kids, younger and who we could have more success with and who could benefit longer from the type of program that we offered there.

Identifying the Students' Strengths and Weaknesses

Jekyll-and-Hyde Personalities

The teachers in the initial interviews recognized that their students had strengths and weaknesses. While they seemed to be able to identify both the good and bad qualities within their students, they rarely talked about "dramatic mood swings." Those kinds of references surfaced more often in some of the later interviews. In describing the sudden personality changes, one teacher used the analogy of Robert Louis Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the fictional character with a split personality. (This links with the pathological behaviors discussed within *Viewing At-Risk on a Spectrum*.)

Sometimes if the kid comes in cranky in the morning, you can anticipate something, but when a kid comes in and he's fine and all of a sudden he's not...The kids have dramatic mood swings. That's what I call them. I tell them they're Jekyll and Hyde because they go from one to the other and there's no way to tell.

Teachers seemed to be at a loss when attempting to offer an explanation for these behaviors. There appeared to be "no rhyme or reason" and "no cues." Without any forewarning, an outburst could occur. They tried to analyze the course of events in order to develop a better understanding of possible contributing factors.

Like today we were reading along in a story and a kid laughed and one kid got up and said, "I'm gonna f-ing punch you in the mouth"...and we were in the middle of readin' a novel. We try to look at that; we talk about that after school. "Did you see anything?" Or, "Was there anything?"

One teacher attempted to explain the students' "off the wall" behaviors by the "instabilities" in their lives. She said that they had been "shoved around from one family to another, from one school to another." While they could be good one day, this could change the next. Their emotions and behaviors were unpredictable and it was felt that their emotional needs took precedence over their academic needs since they could do little with academics if the emotional needs were not addressed. Because of their severe emotional problems and extreme insecurities, they could behave in an aberrant manner.

Most of our kids that come through that door, first of all, have emotional problems, severe emotional problems and totally insecure, totally, totally, unstable, not dependable at all, not, you can't predict how they're going to be at any given time. Their emotions are just so mixed up that one day they're good, the next day they're off the wall...could be angry, could just be sort of not caring about anything, like just not normal, just not the way most kids are.

Along with anecdotes about sudden mood swings, teachers told stories about tough kids who had a gentler side. In the following excerpt, a teacher talks about the community service that the students did for senior citizens. While helping others, the Jekyll personality seemed to acquire and sustain control.

We also do community service...help the seniors at the senior citizens' complex down the street. Set up for bingo, help them either call the bingo out, take them back and forth to their rooms, are their eyes and ears for the game. And the seniors just think they're wonderful, and the toughest kid in the country can waltz in there and just as gentle ...They're very, very respectful with seniors which is the whole purpose of setting up community service for them.

There was another example of students who dropped their street vernacular when in the company of volunteers who came to the school to assist them with the preparation of a nutrition break.

They come in and take two or three of our students, prepare a nutrition break...I mean the kids enjoy them....What sort of amazes me is that they are not rude, they are not vulgar... with these people. But if you heard them out in the streets, you'd think that they're a longshoreman, sometimes.

The happy child within the tough adolescent came to the surface upon the receipt of "little valentines" and the "cutest sticker," according to one teacher. Instead of scoffing at these rewards, they "just loved them," she said. One adolescent boy even took his good tests home to post on the refrigerator. He had not been able to do this as a child.

The lady who was just here, her son takes all his good tests home and puts them on the fridge 'cause he's so pleased that, 'cause he's never been in school long enough to get tests before, you know, let alone to do well on them, so that is positive.

The teachers claimed that they did not "carry grudges" when it came to students with Jekyll-and-Hyde personalities. They saw tomorrow as a "fresh day" and considered it important to "wipe one slate clean." They also felt it was important for the students to know this to be their philosophy. At times, it was necessary to ask a student to leave, but they were told that the door would be opened for their return. It was very rare that a student would not be welcomed back. These rare cases are left for discussion within the property of *limited by not knowing what else to do* (positive/negative theme). In these instances, the Jekyll personality seemed to be less dominant than the Hyde.

Focusing on the Present

In the later interviews, references were made to students who did not seem to look beyond the present. While it was acknowledged that many young people have difficulty seeing beyond the next day, there was a feeling that these students just had "no idea" about what they wanted to do in the future. More concern was expressed for the at-risk students' failure to set goals, however, because, unlike successful students, they were not doing well in the present.

Probably the vast majority of youth in...will emphasis friends and today more than anything else, but the ones who are able to work through expectations that are upon them to achieve in school and to be involved in some activities...they don't have a lot of people around them who are anxious about them. The ones who don't achieve and aren't involved in what might be described as constructive things, are involved in things that set off alarms, then they've got messages of anxiety and concern coming to them. "What about your future?" "What are you thinking about?" "Set some goals." And, of course, they're not oriented towards the future and that tension starts to build.

Knowing the Family Backgrounds

Presence of Support

As well as talking about families that did not provide love, caring and structure, the teachers in the later interviews reported that there were supportive families. The earlier interviews had also contained references to familial support, but the negative accounts of abuse and neglect may have clouded my receptivity to any positive reports. The following excerpt is from an initial interview and illustrates a favorable view of parental involvement.

Actually, I had a lot of support from most parents and I kept in touch with them. I didn't just call when there was a problem. I'd call them and say, you know, so and so has been doing really well and I just wanted to let you know that.

While the teachers in the later interviews repeatedly found fault with the homelives of their students, they seemed to more frequently relate their efforts to contact and work with the parents. As a result of these contacts, they appeared to have discovered that there were parents who did want to help their children.

And all of us at one time or another have darkened someone's door to find out what's going on...and how things are. We've always met with, we're always welcome.

The parents are very cooperative and supportive for the most part here with these kids because we call for good things and we call for bad things. And on the average, a parent would hear from us at least once a week.

Presence of Conflicting Values

Teachers who claimed that they generally found "cooperative" parents also discovered different "value systems." They reported that many of their students were in homes with "verbal and physical abuse" and families who "don't think education is important." Some boys were thought to be missing "a positive male role model" in their lives. There were reports of "broken homes and alcoholism." These were the kinds of descriptors that had been repeated in the earlier interviews, as well. More evident in the later interviews, however, seemed to be the recognition that an awareness of these different values could be gained by visiting the students' homes to meet with the parents.

One teacher who reported doing "a lot of home visitations" found that each student's situation was different. Factors that contributed to these differences included the extent to which the family valued education and the family's financial position. He did discover that the parents could benefit from some guidance regarding ways to support their children. Just the fact that he showed enough concern to come to their house was thought to have an impact, at least for a short term. In addition to changing the traditional paradigm of parent-teacher conferencing with the parent going to the teacher, the meeting times appeared to be flexible and to be established according to the parent's convenience. By entering a parent's territory, the teacher was showing a willingness to break down barriers to understanding. Furthermore, having taught in the community for a

number of years, he was known by many, and this may have facilitated his welcome.

They want their children to do well but they don't know what to do or how to proceed....Sit down at the table. They make a cup of tea sometimes. They're friendly and I suppose a lot of people know me, having taught here so long. Some of these may even be parents that I taught....When the student sees how concerned their parents, and someone is concerned enough from the school to come to their house in the middle of the morning, in the middle of the afternoon, whatever time of the day, that has an impact on them....It works for awhile....Every case is different....It depends how important education is at home, the kind of support they have at home, the family situation, financial, the economical situation there is important.

In the next interview excerpt, the teacher presented the discoveries that he made through "going into the homes." He believed that children who grow up with a value system that differs from that espoused by schools could experience "conflict." From this teacher's perspective, if children have not been shown kindness and trust, then it is difficult for them to accept kindness and to trust people. For example, he observed that some of them doubted his sincerity. He felt that they thought he was showing an interest only because he had a job to do. According to this teacher, if children learn that lying, cheating and stealing are acceptable pursuits, providing one is not caught, then they are inclined to engage in these activities. Since schools do not condone these behaviors or such tactics as hitting and swearing, and teachers, in his opinion, are not prepared to deal with students who exhibit them, the children encounter a clash in value systems. They experience discord and "strike out."

I think they're missing a value system in the homes. Some of them when they come to school, there's conflict there. A lot of these homes, where there's single parents or not, there's a lot of verbal and physical abuse, and they don't know how to take kindness and they don't trust people....I must have another alternative motive, you know, where I'm just doing, this is my job, I don't really mean it....I say their value system, things like lying, cheating, stealing, ah, in some respects with some of the worse kids is acceptable if you can get away with it. Then, they come into a different environment where these things are not acceptable.

It was noted that some children have difficulty coping with positive feedback. The teachers who made this observation believed that those who have known only negatives sometimes do not know how to respond to positives. They were seen as being "uncomfortable" with compliments. One teacher believed it was a direct result of the abuse that they experienced at home. The second teacher quoted below emphasized that she saw this reaction in only a couple of her students, but nonetheless, she found it to be mind boggling.

Now, they're hit, they're beat, they're abused at home, and if you just say to them "nice sweater" or nice, you know, whatever it may be, or "you did a good job" on something, any kind of compliment, they just seem to, ah, they feel uncomfortable.

What's interesting is that some of these kids have coped with negative so long they can't cope with positive feedback....Just boggles my mind. And when you say positive things to them, they can't cope. They're just the worst for the two or three days later....Some of those kids just lap up the positive feedback, don't get me wrong, but we have a couple of cases of kids that..

Teachers sometimes revealed their suspicions about the validity of the students' stories, and this served to illustrate their perceptions of the students' values. An intervention worker who monitored students living without the supervision of parents or guardians expressed doubt about the legitimacy of their professions to miss school due to sickness. While conscious of retaining the special bond she had with her students, an intervention worker for pregnant and parenting teens admitted that she sometimes did a follow-up to determine if the girls told the truth.

And even if you meet them the next day in class or two days later when they do come to school, and I ask them why they haven't been coming to school, they say they're sick. So if you ask to bring in a doctor's excuse, they'll say yes, but they won't be brought, in the majority of cases.

I check and I try not to lose that special communication I have with the girls. You know, I don't want them to think that I'm just here to check up on them. I'm supposed to be a help. But sometimes I check just so I'll know that the things they tell me are true.

Examples were provided of the investigative work that was sometimes pursued in order to solve a mystery or uncover the truth. In the following account, an intervention worker talked about his search for a missing student. When the student was finally located, he gave a story of questionable validity. The intervention worker, assuming the role of a detective, asked a series of questions. The school's attendance policy required that students present a "valid written excuse" for missed time, and the intervention worker was prepared to advocate for the student, providing he was frank with him. Later, with the aid of the police department, he discovered that the tale about a friend's death had been a fabrication. The name of the alleged deceased was actually someone wanted by the police. Not only had the student lied but also it looked as if he had been associating with a fugitive from the law.

Well, if it's a mystery about extenuating circumstances that are being claimed by the student but there's reason to possibly doubt their claim, then I start by finding the student and interviewing them, get them to tell me their story and I'll tell them if it sounds fishy to me. I could illustrate it with a young man who just disappeared....I went to his apartment, wasn't there. I called, no answer....And eventually I reached him in...by just calling leads that I got from friends, and he said he'd be back on Monday of the next week which he was, and he came to see me as I had requested, and he said he had gone to a funeral of a friend, a very close friend. "Well, what's the friend's name?"..."Why did it take all week?"..."Where was the funeral held?"..."What funeral parlor was involved?"..."I have to tell you that this isn't believable so if you want to change your story, do so now. I will check it out, whatever you tell me, and if it all proves to be true, then I'll become an advocate for you to stay, but if I find out you've lied to me, then I won't be what you would call a help to you." ..I just got on the phone to the...police department and gave them the name of the supposed deceased and they called me back within a half hour saying that...the person by that name was very much alive and very much wanted by them.

Absence of Early Intervention

In view of their experiences with at-risk students, some of the teachers expressed the opinion that the difficulties witnessed in later years could have been averted if interventions had been made earlier with the families. Having discovered support out there from the parents, they seemed to think that more could be done with them, but the impact would be greatest if done earlier. They placed blame on the parents, not the children; yet, these children were likely to be the recipients of

blame in later years when they became parents and their values conflicted with those of the school. If, as one teacher remarked, students have "their ideas formulated" by the time they are seventeen, early intervention with parents who were themselves child victims of poverty and abuse could be crucial.

Early intervention. Real early. I think that's happening more and more, isn't it? Teachers in primary schools spot these things, and at the time, it's the parents that need to do something in the home. It's not the student's fault, not the child's fault. That's where you could make some changes that could benefit a child that you can see is going to have problems...Develop skills in bringing up children...behavior management or even budgeting.

We're not doing enough earlier. We have to do it earlier and the problems sometimes lie with the parents. We have to do more work with the parents....These kids don't start out this way and I feel really bad about that because they all started out as good, you know, little people.

Making Connections

The Value of Respect and Trust

Getting a Student's Permission

The teachers provided examples of times when they asked students for their permission to share their stories with other teachers or to make a referral for counselling. As well as developing a student's trust, this also kept the other teachers "on side" and encouraged the involvement of other professionals who were considered more qualified to deal with certain problems.

The teacher in the next excerpt believed that it was important for other teachers to know when a student was experiencing difficulties. He would ensure that the student consented before he disclosed any information that was given in confidence. "Very seldom" did he find that a student would object to such a disclosure. As a result of this intermediary work, the student generally expressed some relief and the teachers felt included in the intervention to assist the student.

"Somebody has to know about what you're experiencing and I recommend your advisor but any of your teachers. In fact, I would like all of your teachers to know about this. Can I

write a memo to them, or can I go to talk to them, or can we at least go now and talk to your advisor about this?" More often than not, in fact very seldom does the student say, "Oh no, no, nobody's going to know about this." ...In fact, quite often they seem to be relieved to get someone aware of this and perhaps to have someone help them explain it in a way that makes it less awkward for them. But then the teacher or teachers become part of the team.

In the following quotation, a teacher talked about referring a girl to the reproductive health clinic. She provided the girl with the counsellor's name and phone number; thus, the final decision was left up to the student. However, she also offered to make an appointment for the girl and asked her if she would like that. While her story revealed that she let the students know her concern for them and she listened to their problems, she did not see herself as a counsellor and she acknowledged that she had not been trained as a counsellor. Therefore, she felt it was necessary to refer students to other professionals.

Like I did this with a little girl last week. She was having a problem and I really felt like she needed more help than I could give her. And I said to her, "You know, you need to talk to," and I mentioned the girl at the reproductive health clinic, and I said, "She's a wonderful person." And so I gave her her name and I gave her her phone number and I said, "Would you like me to call her and ask her if she'd take time to talk with you?" Because I felt that it was a problem that person could handle better than I could. And so I don't hesitate to refer them to somebody I know that could help them....Because I'm not a counsellor, and I don't even have a background in counselling and I don't want to be a counsellor.

Positive/Negative

Limitations of Program Teachers

Limited by Not Knowing What Else To Do

During the earlier interviews, teachers had admitted that they did not know what else to do for a small number of students. This message was so strong in the later interviews that it was identified as a property within the category *limitations of program teachers*. In addition to being limited by the students' family backgrounds and the social service and education systems, it became apparent that their greatest limitation may have been the students themselves. At times, behaviors

were considered to be so extreme that they decided some students "may never change." Nevertheless, they would "give them every benefit" before acknowledging that there were those who were just "not willing to give any effort." The most extreme cases were the reports of violence. After repeated efforts to work with very aggressive students, the teachers decided that for the safety of staff and other students, the consistently violent students would have to leave.

In the following excerpts, teachers relate violent incidents. In the first scenario, the teachers thought that they could handle a student's first death threat "in house." After a second threat, they realized that they needed to involve the legal system. In the second case, a principal recalled bending the rules for a student, only to be accosted by vulgarities and to have his car window smashed.

The second death threat was...the same one that kicked the door in. I had the students locked in the room with the teacher because he was threatening to kill somebody or beat somebody up, so we locked Sue and the kids in one room and Bill and I stayed with him, and he kicked the door in to get to them.

We had one young chap who was very, very angry young fellow who we saw, for a week or so, was tense, using vulgar language, and we bent the rules a fair amount for him. Then, we finally had enough. I phoned his foster mother and said I want...sent home for five days. And then have...call me and make an appointment if he wishes to return to school....And he was back for about a week and a half and it started to fall apart on him again. Walked into one class, told one of my teachers, called him a ...idiot, behind my back called me a ...Before the noon hour was around, he had put a large boulder through the windshield of my car.

Positive Influences of Program Teachers

Benefits for program Teachers - Career Change

As with the teachers in the earlier interviews, the teachers who were interviewed later also identified personal benefits. A new aspect surfaced, however, and this was the reference to changes within their teaching careers. The first group of teachers were in the earlier stages of their teaching careers, although a couple of

them had entered while in their thirties and after having other work experiences that included social work. Certainly, none of them had been teaching for more than ten years. Of the eight teachers in the second group, five were in a later stage of their teaching careers, and one would have been if he had not interrupted his teaching career for chaplancy work. In other words, six of the eight had all begun teaching more than twenty years prior to the interviews. All six seemed to appreciate career changes. They either mentioned what they brought to their intervention work from their years of experience in the regular classroom or what they could take back to the regular classroom. One of the two younger teachers also talked about the knowledge gained from her work with at-risk students that could be transferred to regular classes.

A teacher who could retire in a couple of years remarked that working with at-risk students was "the best thing" that had happened to him. He was able to do the social work that he had a desire to do and he was still able to continue in the teaching profession.

And I think you need changes. Like now, the best thing that's ever happened to me was this change....I think I would be happier if I was a social worker, but I really enjoy this because I got the best of two worlds. I'm working with kids and I'm able to do some creative things which I like. I'm still in the teaching profession...

Another teacher who was in his "twenty-seventh year" believed that "people should change jobs or...even work in different schools every few years." He listed the various teaching positions that he had held before becoming an intervention worker. These included teaching French, math and language arts and working as an administrator and a resource teacher. He said that the experience as an intervention worker would affect how he interacted with students if he returned to

the regular classroom setting. He felt that he had become "a lot more sympathetic." Ideally, he believed that every teacher should have such an experience.

I'd make time for people. That would be more important than a lot of the things that teachers do. I don't know how you'd tell teachers that. I would like to see every teacher do what I've done for six months, but I know that's not possible but it would be a great eye opener. I didn't mean to sound like I wasn't a caring teacher. As caring as I thought I was, I'm a lot more sympathetic now.

A teacher who had taught for twenty years recalled how his experiences in the regular classroom had prepared him for the alternative program. He believed that his caring and understanding for struggling students had increased over the years. These were the qualities that he took to the alternative school.

As you gain more experience in the teaching profession and if you're dedicated, then you start to care more for these individuals....As I gradually taught more and more, I got to identify with the less fortunate kids, the kids who were struggling, remedial problems or what have you and that's why I'm probably doing this job now. I remember when I was interviewed...my bottom line to them was I have a place somewhere in here for those type of kids.

By contrast, a young teacher saw her experiences with at-risk students as preparing her for future work in the regular classroom. After two years as an intervention worker and a year teaching in an alternative setting, it was as if she had seen everything and was now invincible to whatever would come her way as a teacher.

I don't think there's anything I couldn't deal with. Not that I didn't deal with it before, but I've had so many experiences like the last two years as a mentor...and here I really have confidence in that there is nothing that I couldn't handle. 'Cause I really feel that we've seen it all in the types of disorders that we have here, like mentally and physically and socially, and I think we have the whole gamut.

Control/Empowerment

Differing from Other Teachers in the Regular Classroom

Students Sense if a Teacher is Uncomfortable

In the initial interviews, teachers and students were reported to engage in power struggles. The program teachers frowned upon certain tactics used by some of the regular classroom teachers because they saw these as contributing to the struggles. In the later interviews, a new concept related to the conflicts between teachers and students was identified. This was the notion that students can sense when they are not liked by a teacher or when a teacher is uncomfortable or even afraid.

There was one description of a teacher who seemed to change personalities from the staffroom to the classroom. Parallels could be drawn with the Jekyll-and-Hyde personalities of students. In the staffroom, the teacher behaved in what was perceived to be a normal manner. In the classroom, she was described as a "different person" who did not treat her students courteously.

She'd come into the staffroom and she'd talk to me like you and I are talkin' and she'd go into the classroom and she was a different person. I couldn't believe it...When I go into the classroom, I'm the same person. I don't change my tone of voice or the way I treat these people. They're still human beings. I treat them like people.

The teacher in this interview went on to provide what seemed to be his explanation for this change of personality. He thought that some teachers are "uncomfortable or scared." Therefore, they attempt to protect themselves by putting up a "guard." They behave unnaturally and the students can sense their uneasiness. Although the strategies that they employ are ineffective to bring about control, they do not reflect on their practice with a view to improve. While he admitted there were times when he also felt fear in the classroom, this was not

perceived to be so bad as the failure to analyze a situation and to recognize what should change.

In fact, you don't have to put your guard up in the first place. You don't have to be somebody you're not to be a teacher. You're just you. You go into a classroom. You don't have to put up a front....They sense if you're scared. It's like an animal. They sense if the teacher is uncomfortable or scared. And when I go down the halls and I see these teachers are raisin' their voice more and more and they're tryin' to control these students, if they could only realize that the more they yell, the harder it is. They're so afraid. They're afraid of something happening. We've all had that fear as teachers. I'm no different. But the thing is a lot of them don't go back and analyze and say why isn't this working.

The experience of being in a disturbing classroom situation was described by one program teacher who avowed the importance of liking all students, the "good kids and not so good kids." She admitted, however, that there was one student she had not wanted to teach when she was in the regular classroom. She was not sure if it was a "personality conflict" since the student clashed with other teachers. The situation was described as the first time in her teaching career that a student had "made" her "defensive." She felt that he was taking control from her and it became a struggle for power. When she had the same student in the alternative program, she found that she had more time to talk with him and their relationship improved. Before telling her story about this student, she stated that students "know that that particular person doesn't like them. That's why they're behaving like that. You're not going to behave well in an uncaring environment." She did not attempt to transfer this philosophy to her encounter with the student that she saw as making her "whole year miserable." While she was focusing on maintaining control, the student may have been sensing that she did not care. Later, in the alternative setting, she "had more time" for him.

It made my whole year miserable. Every time that class came in, I felt like I'd like to go home...because of one student. Other teachers were also having problems with him so maybe it was not a personality conflict just with me....Now, we got along better in this environment than we did in the regular school and possibly we got along better because I had more time to really sit...and talk to him....It was the first time in my whole teaching career that I'd ever met a kid that made me defensive. Like usually I go into the classroom very relaxed. I only become defensive when I think somebody is out to take control over situations...and that's where that kid had me. I want to control your class; you want to

control you class. And so it was a real power battle. Who is going to lead the way, and I had a real problem with it.

Flexibility/Structure

Need for Flexibility

Teachers Inclined to Bend and Free to be Flexible - Jack-of-All-Trades Teachers

The teachers in the alternative programs reported possessing a range of skills that they thought contributed to their flexibility. Sometimes they talked about their experiences teaching in various subject areas. One teacher who is quoted below said he was "a jack-of-all-trades and master of none." He worked with students in the shop, took them cross-country skiing and was able to move from math to language arts. In fact, he seemed to enjoy being a generalist.

They have to be open-minded. Flexible is probably the best term and flexible in the sense that you can cross from math to social science to language arts....Sort of the reason I took on this job...is that I was sort of a jack-of-all-trades. I'd taught phys. ed., I'd taught math and I'd taught science at the junior high level, and social studies, and when they advertised for this particular program, they wanted a specialized teacher who had interests in shop, who had interests in cross-country skiing, outdoor ed., and what have you, and those all cover the way I felt toward education.

Although this teacher could boast about a variety of skills in academic areas, he thought that academics did not make a good school teacher. He believed that effectiveness depended upon the teachers' "social skills" and these would enable them to reach students.

Depends on what kind of social skills they have. If they can get down to their level, get down and see what's happening with the student ...knowing the situation involved around that student, how to find the right button.

When listing a range of skills, another teacher did not make any direct references to academics. Yet, it seemed that the academics would not have happened if she did not hone her nonacademic skills. Because of the varied problems that were

presented by her students, she saw her teaching role as requiring her to be a mother, a first aid attendant, a conciliator, a counsellor and a detective.

I think you almost have to have a little bit of everything. Like you have to be understanding and patient and you have to be the mother, and you have to, like we've had kids that had to go for stitches, and...you have to have the first aid and the nonviolent crisis intervention, and you have to have counselling because so and so is threatening suicide, and you have to know about drugs because we've got kids involved in drugs, and, you know, bringin' them to school....You have to be a detective here, like you have to have good solving skills, without, you know, lettin' on who told you.

Concluding Data Collection

Through an examination of the more recent teacher interviews, I identified new properties and concepts for the development of the four principal themes. This was achieved by following the conceptual coding method outlined by Strauss (1987). New data were compared with the concepts that had emerged from the analyses of the initial interviews. During the process, additional properties and notions were generated from the data until no more new concepts were formulated.

In view of the small sample, however, I could not pronounce that theoretical saturation had been achieved. This would require further data gathering and analysis. Quoting from Glaser (1978), Strauss described theoretical saturation.

So the more the researcher "finds indicators that work similarly regarding their meaning for the concept, the more the analyst saturates the properties of the concept for the emerging theory. Nothing new happens as he or she reviews the data. The category and its properties exhaust the data." (p. 26)

With the saturation of core categories, Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed the discontinuation of data collection. They observed that the "collection of additional data can be a waste of time for categories already saturated or for categories not of

core value to the theory" (p. 73). In his later work, however, Strauss (1987) noted, "Data collection never entirely ceases because coding and memoing continue to raise fresh questions that can only be addressed by the gathering of new data or the examining of previous data" (p. 27).

Although I had not attained theoretical saturation, I recognized that it was necessary to bring some closure to the present research by integrating my findings. Future data gathering and analysis as well as reexamination of data could build upon the theory that was generated through the undertaking of this dissertation.

Chapter VI

RESEARCH INTEGRATION AND INTERPRETATION

Developing Theory

Merriam (1988), noting the different levels of data analysis, wrote that "at the most basic level, data are organized chronologically or sometimes topically and presented in a narrative that is largely, if not wholly, descriptive." A move from the concrete description to a more abstract level "involves using concepts to describe phenomena" (p. 140). Through this latter process, I had identified themes, categories within themes, and properties of categories. The third level of data analysis is theory development. This requires advancing "from the empirical trenches to a more conceptual overview of the landscape. We are no longer dealing just with observables but also with unobservables, and are connecting the two with successive layers of inferential glue" (Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 228).

I had reached a stage in my research where I understood the difficulty in responding to the question, "So what?" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 197). In other words, I needed to reflect upon the meaning of my work as a whole. This necessitated a synthesis of the analyses, a level of interpretation different from that already undertaken.

At this stage, I was able to relate to the problems that were identified by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) regarding the interpretation of results. The three problems noted by these authors follow:

1. The researcher may not see "the implications of a study until sufficient time and distance permit data to be reexamined in less-immediate, more-dispassionate ways" (p. 196).

2. Interpretation does "require researchers to shift gears and think in new ways" and "it forces them to take a stand on the significance of their activities of the past months or years." The combination of "ambiguity" and "daring" makes "many researchers uncomfortable with going beyond the data" (p. 197).

3. "Interpretation demands a shift into different, more creative, and divergent thinking styles - especially that most complex theorizing process, speculation" (p. 198).

In terms of the first problem, I was eager to move forward with my doctoral dissertation, and I did not wish to take weeks away from the data and the analyses. Furthermore, the teachers and students in this study were participants in programs that were marked as having a limited term. Grant moneys were not guaranteed to extend beyond one fiscal year at a time. The research could lose its effectiveness if I delayed the work and the results were released long after the programs had ended. Throughout the research process, however, I recognized the importance of reflection. This seemed to be facilitated when breaks were taken from the study, and I expected this principle also applied to this stage of theory development.

As for the second problem, I believed that I would not be afraid to take a stand on the significance of my work, once I had formulated a synthesis of it. Nevertheless, I was hesitant about going beyond the data, into the realm of the unobservable, since I was uncertain about how to proceed. Moreover, in relation to the third problem, I acknowledged feeling some discomfort with speculating because I was not clear about ways to speculate while maintaining the integrity of the research.

I referred to Sperber (1985) who wrote that "no teachable technique replaces the work of intuitive understanding" (p. 33). Although I had reached a stage where I would have at times welcomed a "cookbook" to aid the analysis, I appreciated Sperber's observations. He noted that the researcher's "largely intuitive knowledge" is "grounded in a unique experience," and for this reason, "the problem is each time a new one" (p. 33). Because of my data's specificity and my personal involvement, "an all-purpose solution" was not feasible.

Sperber (1985) did not offer a recipe, but he did present an argument for an approach to interpretation. In his essay on ethnographic interpretations and anthropological theories, Sperber stated that "all interpretations in the cultural sciences are representations of conceptual representations. An interpretation is adequate to its object when it is faithful to it, that is when it shares its relevant conceptual properties" (p. 22). Nevertheless, he claimed that only quotations can be strictly faithful and any interpretation is a distortion and is unfaithful to some degree. Sperber cautioned against the risk of standardizing interpretations so that they are "too much modeled on one another, and too far removed from their object" (p. 33). He saw this behavior as an "institutionalized form of self-protection" (p. 34) for ethnographers. On the contrary, he proposed making an interpretation relevant by its depth and not by its generality.

Sociologists differ with respect to the development of theory based upon micro- and macro-social phenomena (Knorr-Cetina, 1981). Micro-sociologies emphasize "the analysis of small-scale social situations" (p. 7). These analyses are considered the prerequisites for any relevant understanding of social life and the building blocks for macro-sociological conceptions. "Macro-sociology is commonly understood as the study of society, of social institutions and of socio-cultural

change on an aggregate level" (p. 1-2). Sperber's (1985) approach certainly seemed closer to micro- than macro-analysis.

Giddens (1981) presented the micro-macro problem as one that results from the gap between the theories of human agency or action and structural or institutional analysis. The former emphasizes the knower of the experience and the latter emphasizes the social or natural world that shapes the experience. Giddens proposed the concept of duality of structure to overcome this gap. He suggested that "the concept of action presumes that of structure and vice versa...structure is both the medium and outcome of the social practices it recursively organizes" (p. 171). Thus, the personal encounters of day-to-day life cannot be conceptually separated from the long-term institutional development of society. Knorr-Cetina (1981) identified this as the hypothesis of unintended consequences. The macro becomes an "emergent phenomenon composed of the sum or the unintended effects of micro-events" (p. 40).

Knorr-Cetina (1981) also promoted a representation hypothesis that is supported by Cicourel's (1981) work. This hypothesis views the macro as "actively construed and pursued within micro-social action...Pushed to its extreme, the representation hypothesis would have to deny the existence of a macro-order apart from the macro-representations which are routinely accomplished in micro-social action" (p. 40-41). Cicourel argued that macro-social structures emerge from the routine practices of everyday life. As well as supporting the study of the context of single interactions, he claimed that social phenomena should be studied systematically over different contexts. According to Cicourel, social organizations create their own accounting systems whereby micro-events are transformed into macro- or aggregated information. He proposed identifying those processes and inferences

that enabled this to happen. The subsequent understanding of this tacit integration of micro- and macro-events would lead to the development of the integration of micro- and macro-theory. For Cicourel, micro- and macro-levels of analysis should be integrated.

The issue is not simply one of dismissing one level of analysis or another, but showing how they must be integrated if we are not to be convinced about one level to the exclusion of the other by conveniently ignoring competing frameworks for research and theorizing. (p. 76)

Cicourel (1981) noted that the researcher may be inclined to ignore macro-issues when focusing on tapes and transcripts. On the other hand, when individual responses are aggregated, he claimed that it is possible to obscure "our thinking of the way local context and individual responses contributed to the larger picture" (p. 64). Nevertheless, an immersion in the specifics of the different transcripts results in the researcher's expanded knowledge about each transcript as well as the research as a whole. Subtleties and nuances provide the researcher with background knowledge to facilitate and enhance the analysis. Since the reader is given only a small part of the information, the researcher may rely on the reader having experiences with the kind of research being recounted. "The results being reported seem rather obvious and clear to the researcher because of the many unstated details and general experiences that contribute to the analysis" (p. 63). From this perspective, the integration of the different levels of analysis would be necessary "to generate plausible substantive findings with theories and methods that reflect the structure of everyday life" (p. 79).

In their discussion of the generation of theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) considered substantive and formal theories as falling between the "minor working

hypotheses' of everyday life and the 'all-inclusive' grand theories" (p. 33). These phrases appeared analogous to extreme versions of micro- and macro-theories with substantive and formal theories forming the "middle-range" (p. 32). They noted that the theories differed in terms of the degree of generality.

The approach to theory development that was espoused by Glaser and Strauss stressed faithfulness to the empirical situation and the avoidance of the application of ideas from an established theory. Rather than forcing data to fit a theory, the researcher should allow substantive concepts and hypotheses to emerge first. Then, existing formal theories could be considered for the generation of substantive theories. New grounded formal theories could also be generated from the data.

According to Strauss (1987), three aspects of inquiry - induction, deduction and verification - are absolutely essential for the grounded theory of analysis. These three processes continue throughout a research project; they do not have a sequential relationship.

Induction refers to the actions that lead to discovery of an hypothesis - that is, having a hunch or an idea, then converting it into an hypothesis and assessing whether it might provisionally work as at least a partial condition for a type of event, act, relationship, strategy, etc....Deduction consists of the drawing of implications from hypotheses or larger systems of them for purposes of verification. The latter term refers to the procedures of verifying, whether that turns out to be total or a partial qualification or negation. (p. 11 - 12).

Strauss (1987) also discussed the issue of integration; that is, bringing it all together. This involves determining the most important and salient dimensions, categories and linkages. It begins with the linking up of categories and becomes more certain as the research continues. The core categories are those that best hold together all of the other categories. These are the core of the evolving theory.

During data collection and analysis, I had utilized the processes of induction, deduction and verification. The identification of categories, properties and their linkages, the formulation of interview questions and the application of theoretical saturation illustrated this. I had also recognized that some themes were stronger than others; these seemed to be the core of the developing theory.

Three different kinds of theorizing - grounded, holistic, and formal - had actually been employed. Initially, I adapted the strategies of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to formulate the categories and properties of themes that were grounded in the data across several interviews. Later, I analyzed individual interviews holistically in order to present biographical accounts. Throughout these processes, I utilized formal theories such as Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, Glasser's (1984) control theory, and deCharms' (1968) theory of personal causation. Although these formal theories do not depend upon my data, they are relevant and therefore, implicitly grounded.

As I reviewed the work of several theorists, I noted their concern for validity. They discussed data interpretation by using such terms as faithfulness and fit. The emergence of theory was preferred to the forcing of data. There appeared to be contradictions and elisions, however. While Sperber (1985), for example, emphasized that an interpretation should be faithful to the data, he also

acknowledged that interpretations were distortions to a certain extent. More generally, the presentation of macro-events as reflective of everyday events appeared to ignore these distortions which contribute to the gap between micro- and macro-theories. Each interpretation affects the gap, but Cicourel's (1981) suggestion to integrate the micro- and macro-levels seemed to disregard this influence.

Taking a poststructuralist stance, Lenzo (1995) favored the view that "our practices arise from the specificities of our situations and cannot be prescribed ahead of time" (p. 17). She referred to Lather's term "situated methodologies," which suggests different ways of doing social science research. Furthermore, unlike structuralists such as Guba and Lincoln (1981) who were concerned about "valid observation" (p. 212) and "fittingness" (p. 213) with reality, Lenzo wrote that ethnographic accounts cannot be seen as reflective of the real. Instead, she observed that they should be considered as representations. Although I had expressed an interest in maintaining the integrity of my research, I had also acknowledged that other researchers would have treated the data differently. The informants' stories were affected by my personal filters and could not be offered as actuality.

My next step - the integration of the research - appeared to be the most difficult of all, as noted by Atkinson (cited in Strauss, 1987). I had read Sperber (1985), considered the theories of micro- and macro-sociologies (Knorr-Cetina (1981) and poststructuralism (Lenzo, 1995), and revisited Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss (1987). Although I could not see the whole of my work any more clearly than before I had launched into this exploration of the theorizing strategies of the "masters," I felt reassured that I was progressing toward theory development.

Through a continual analysis of the data, the emerging perspectives aided the generation of theory. To go beyond the data prematurely could only inhibit my understanding of the whole. "It is through micro-social approaches that we will learn most about the macro-order" (Knorr-Cetina, p. 41).

Simultaneous Influences

Throughout the process of grounded theorizing, I noted and illustrated the interrelatedness of the themes. At one point in the research, I offered the rhizome as a metaphor to represent the web of linkages that were unfolding. Inevitably, an interpretation of one theme affected the interpretations of other themes. Now, as I viewed the principal concepts of these themes in a holistic manner, I endeavored to interpret this synergistic state in terms of its influences on student-teacher interactions.

Making connections with students required the teachers to be persistent and insistent. Relationship was presented as an action; teachers actively demonstrated their concern and expectations. In order to "get" their students to change their irresponsible behaviors, the teachers seemed to realize the importance of their own behaviors. While sending the message that each person's behavior was determined by that individual, they endeavored to create an environment in which their students would make what they, the teachers, perceived to be the right choices. Although they spoke of making and demanding students to do certain things, they also realized that these students resented being told what to do and therefore, would only do what they wanted to do. Through specific simultaneous strategies, they managed the classroom environment and thus influenced the students' decisions to behave in particular ways.

Their strategies created an ambivalent state in which the teachers revealed their disapproval of particular behaviors as well as expressed their concern and support for the students. They offered suggestions for appropriate behaviors, but told the students that ultimately the decisions were their own. At the same time as they provided a structure with rules and expectations, they were flexible enough to consider individual circumstances. They blended hassling a student with advocating for the student. In most cases, these inconsistencies seemed to result in positive changes.

The teachers' flexibility appeared to be linked with their abilities to see their students' perspectives. They expressed an awareness of their students' home situations and nonacademic activities as well as their students' experiences in other teachers' classes. Realizing the effect of negative situations on a student's perception of self and a student's performance, they related focusing on their students' strengths and ensuring recognition. Because they seemed to see situations through their students' eyes, they seemed to know when a student needed to vent frustration. Not feeling confined by a structure, they were able to respond to their students' needs.

Simultaneously, the teachers pushed and challenged while they praised and supported their students. In conjunction with providing academic help, they assisted with emotional and social dilemmas. They did not present a fragmented view of their students. Instead, they seemed to have a whole picture of a student and that student's interactions with situations. They appeared to be cognizant of the interrelatedness of the students' streetcorner state, student state and home state (McLaren, 1986). Furthermore, they seemed capable of moving with the student from one state to another. This was illustrated by their ability to display the

qualities of a friend and a parent and by their willingness to meet with students and their families away from the school setting.

In a manner resembling their accounts about the development of mutual respect and trust, the teachers' predominate strategies did not appear to operate independently from each other. Along with giving credit to their own personalities, they also recognized that their special circumstances contributed to their effectiveness. All of these factors exerted simultaneous influences upon their connections with students.

The Interaction of Agents and Scenes

In terms of interactional psychology (Pervin, 1984), the teachers seemed to view behavior as a reflection of individuals interacting with situations. Consequently, even in similar situations, they did not think that certain teachers would behave as they did. Although they recognized that they had the benefits of reduced teacher-student ratios, and therefore, more time to spend with each of their students, they did not believe that all teachers in those circumstances would be as effective as they were. Furthermore, they did not believe that they would behave as some teachers did if they were back in the regular classroom.

The different scene of the alternative program enabled the teachers to get to know their students and this was considered to be essential. While they realized that larger classes inhibited the development of one-on-one relationships, they felt that in the regular classroom, they would make an effort to show more of an interest in their students' lives than they saw many teachers do. The experiences in the alternative program had provided them with learning opportunities. They seemed to have developed an understanding of students' individual needs as well

as formulated strategies for dealing with students who normally do not conform to the expectations of the traditional classroom setting. This understanding of students and formulation of strategies appeared to evolve concurrently instead of in a cause-and-effect fashion. Furthermore, their experiences seemed to contribute to their self-understanding as revealed through their disclosed perceptions of self in relation to others and contexts.

Their stories paralleled my recollections about becoming a better teacher as a result of having crossed the threshold from the classroom to a student's outside world. I had experienced a phase of transition after leaving the regular classroom. Because of their experiences, it is likely that the program teachers would behave differently upon returning to the norms of the regular classroom culture.

The teachers who were judged because of their apparent disinterest in their students' particular needs had not crossed this threshold. Providing them with such opportunities may have altered their perspectives and behaviors. Some of the program teachers, however, claimed that certain teachers in the regular classes would refuse to work in the alternative programs. They were portrayed as either viewing the students to be undeserving of such time and attention or believing the job to be too demanding for them.

In addition to having more time to get to know their students, the program teachers perceived themselves as having more autonomy than the teachers in regular classes. They felt that this enabled them to be more flexible regarding their curriculum choices and the enforcement of consequences. A need to exert control within the system may have been more closely met for them than it was for other teachers who sometimes resorted to tyrannical means in an effort to gain control.

The teachers' beliefs seemed to have an effect on their relationships with the students. Analogous with the self-fulfilling prophecy of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), the program teachers provided descriptions of regular classroom teachers who elicited negative behaviors according to their presuppositions about students. In contrast, the program teachers spoke with optimism about their students' potential. They seemed to possess a strong sense of efficacy and to persevere even when facing the limitations of the students' family backgrounds and the social service and education systems. They rarely acknowledged not knowing what else to do to help students change inappropriate behaviors.

One of the program teachers seemed to be more frustrated and less optimistic than the others. She predicted imminent burnout if she continued to work in the alternative program. When compared with the other cases, there seemed to be more examples of negative interactions with the students. It may have been her apparent struggle to blend flexibility with the enforcement of reasonable expectations. There could have been other potential factors that were not discussed during her interview, however. For example, her program was within the regular school and regulated by the school administration. Therefore, she may not have had the same degree of autonomy that the other program teachers appeared to have.

As well as providing descriptions of teachers interacting with situations, the program teachers considered the interaction of students with situations. Their interaction with the regular classroom scene differed from their interaction with the scene of the alternative programs. Teachers' personalities and techniques in conjunction with class sizes have already been identified as factors contributing to the different behaviors exhibited by students in these different scenes. There were,

however, a small number of students who did not seem to change their self-defeating behaviors even in the scene of the alternative programs. In the most extreme cases where there was consistent violence, the students were asked to leave these scenes.

The family scene was the other most frequently mentioned situation for students. Accounts of families ranged from descriptions of those who were either abusive or disengaged to descriptions of those who were supportive. Most of the students' families were portrayed as fitting within the first two categories; and when this occurred, the situations of those families were viewed as contributing to the students' behaviors.

The degree to which a student was at-risk appeared to be related to the at-riskness of a student's situation. While recognizing the idiosyncrasies of their students' personalities, the teachers were aware of the influence of environmental factors. The students' problems seemed to be viewed as originating more often from particular situations than from the students themselves. Therefore, the phrase "students in at-risk situations" seemed more appropriate than the term "at-risk students." The former indicated that the situation should be blamed; the latter suggested that the students were at fault.

The program teachers discussed the behaviors of teachers and students in terms of their situations as well as their personalities. They seemed to perceive an individual's actions to be reflecting an interaction with a particular situation. Glasser (1990a) proposed that our behaviors are our best attempt at a particular time to take better control of a situation. The student or teacher who experiences frustration in certain situations would act according to that frustration signal.

According to Glasser, those who choose ineffective responses need to learn more effective behaviors. Sometimes, it may be necessary for the individual to leave the situation.

Application of Formal Theories

An analysis of the interviews with teachers revealed that many of their beliefs paralleled the concepts of formal theories. Illustrations of this are outlined below:

Teachers' Informal Theories

Teachers need to be flexible within a structure.

Students drive their own bus through life.

Teachers look down at students who do not conform.

If teachers don't know about the students' lives, they can plead ignorance. Then, they perceive that they have done no harm.

Teachers refuse to change and retire on the job.

Students may not be receptive to sharing personal information with the teacher.

If students exert effort, success is within their power.

Teachers sometimes resort to trickery in order to convince students that they have a say in what they are going to learn.

Formal Theories

Giddens' (1982) duality of structure
Structure as both enabling and
constraining

Glasser's (1984) control theory
deCharms' (1968) personal
causation theory

Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968)
self-fulfilling prophecy

Festinger's (1957) cognitive
dissonance theory

Veblen's (cited in Merton, 1968)
trained incapacity

Goffman's (1971) information
preserve, a territory of the self

Weiner's (1979) attribution theory
Seligman's (1990) learned
optimism

Goffman's (1959) concealed
practices in everyday vocations
and relationships

Students must accept the reality that the teacher is always right. They should not fight back.

Turner's (1969) liminal period of subjugation

When students are not rewarded for school attendance, they seek gratification from other kinds of activities.

Rotter's (1954) theory of causality

Although formal theories seemed to validate the teachers' informal theories, the teachers' pragmatic responses did not include explicit references to the formal. The extent to which their theories were based upon formal study compared with practical experiences is, therefore, not known. Some of them observed that their teacher training programs had not prepared them for the reality of the classroom and that they had to learn on the job. However, it is possible that they were not conscious of the significance of their training. If they had reflected on their actions in relation to formal theories, they may have recognized some linkages.

In addition to the prospect of teacher training programs affecting theory development, it is likely that the teachers' theories were influenced by other life experiences. The teachers talked about getting to know their students and their families. They believed that the students' experiences away from school affected what happened in school. Furthermore, some of them recalled their own childhood experiences as well as their personal and professional growth through other occupations. Their stories always focused on people. Similarly, a concern for students instead of curriculum seemed to be the essence of their theories.

The teachers appeared to actually advance formal theories by presenting specific applications. Their being recognized as effective teachers with at-risk students provided further validation for these theories. Since, as previously noted, the

formal theories offered a type of validity for the informal theories, there seemed to be a form of mutual validation.

Implications of the Research

All of the teachers in the study were working as intervention workers or teaching in alternative education programs for at-risk students. Although only nineteen teachers were interviewed, they represented one-quarter of the total number of teachers in intervention and alternative programs in the province of New Brunswick during the three-year period of the research. Instead of choosing to involve a large number of information sources, I placed an emphasis on conducting in-depth interviews and on giving the data detailed and different kinds of readings. It is recognized, however, that the research is limited by the small number of the sample.

Because the research is a methodological exploration and not a finished substantive inquiry into the teaching of at-risk students, the extent to which the results are applicable for actual practice must be questioned. In addition, the research focused on students in at-risk situations, and therefore, the findings are especially significant for the teaching of those students. The parallels with formal theories help to offset these limitations and suggest the probability of application across a variety of situations that involve all students.

Although the limitations of the research have been acknowledged, the following implications for teachers working with at-risk students have been derived from the findings:

- The apparently commonsense theories of effective teachers can be validated by and can help to validate formal theories. These informal theories may be tacit or explicit. In either case, the teacher who holds them may not realize their sophistication. Other teachers who want to become more effective in their work with at-risk students would benefit from learning and applying these practical theories. Talking about teaching with those who are considered to be good teachers and observing these teachers' classes should facilitate the transference of this information. Furthermore, by phrasing formal theories in the teachers' commonsense language, those who prepare beginning teachers could propel this transfer.

- Making connections with at-risk students requires teachers to employ a variety of strategies simultaneously. While providing structure and showing disapproval for inappropriate behaviors, they offer support, teach students more appropriate conduct, and adapt their methods to the needs of individual students. At the same time as they present the students with choices, they direct those choices. The direction is not resented when genuine concern for the students is expressed and the students feel the decisions are their own. The effective utilization of these strategies means that the teachers need to see the world through their students' eyes.

These findings suggest that competent teachers of at-risk students possess special skills. These skills could be formally developed through preservice and inservice training programs that include components related to the education of at-risk students. In order to really know at-risk students, however, teachers need to spend time with them and to become familiar with their lives beyond the school. This is more easily accomplished by teachers in alternative settings because of the

reduced teacher-student ratios. Nonetheless, teachers in regular classes have at-risk students, as well. Consideration should be given to developing their awareness of these students' needs by providing them with opportunities to work in alternative education classes or to participate in intervention programs. Furthermore, teachers-in-training could benefit in the same way from these experiences.

Within our present education structures, regular classroom teachers do not have the time to really get to know all of their students in the way that alternative program teachers and intervention workers can. Therefore, these intervention professionals are needed. It is also essential to consider other configurations that will enable teachers to develop a better understanding of their students. These could include advisory groups and teachers-as-mentors programs.

- Working with at-risk students necessitates working with their families. While regular classroom teachers should be in contact with these families, they cannot be expected to have the time or the skills to provide the counselling that may be required. This form of support can be more readily given by intervention workers who link schools, families, and social service agencies. The intervention could be of a more preventative nature if there was involvement with the families of young children. Early intervention, nevertheless, should not be viewed as a substitute for intervening in the adolescent years. Without intervention for adolescents in at-risk situations, it is probable that the cycle of at-risk behaviors will be perpetuated.

- Individual teachers interact differently with similar situations, and changing a teacher's situation may not ensure that the teacher will change his or her behaviors. Regardless of the training programs and opportunities for getting to

know students, some teachers may not be effective with those who are at-risk. Since there are at-risk students in regular classes, these teachers may experience stress and require counselling. If these measures do not enable them to more effectively cope, they should be guided in the exploration of other career options. Furthermore, as a preventative measure, teacher training institutes should consider the suitability of their applicants for working with all students, not just those students who come to school eager to learn. This would require selecting people who choose teaching for their love of students and not solely for their love of a particular subject.

Future research could attempt to determine the extent to which teachers' theories are derived from formal study or first-hand experiences. This could be done by inviting teachers to reflect upon their practices in relation to formal theories. As a result, they may recall having been exposed to these formal theories during their training. This could have significance for teacher training programs which are sometimes criticized for inadequately preparing teachers for the real classroom. The benefits of phrasing formal theories in practical terms could be an extension of such a study.

Additional interviews with effective teachers could be conducted to determine the pervasiveness of the findings from this study. The sources of information could be expanded to include teachers in regular classrooms. Carefully constructed questions based upon the results of this research could guide the interviews. In a similar manner, interviews with students could be designed to determine the extent to which the teachers' perceptions match those of the students.

Teachers with regular teaching assignments could be invited to spend some time in alternative programs or to become mentors for at-risk students. Observations regarding their interactions with students before and after the experience could be recorded and compared. A similar study could be done with teachers-in-training. Their observations about teaching could be compared with the observations of beginning teachers who went through the regular preparation program.

In conclusion, this research illustrated different methodological approaches to data analysis. My interpretations of reflections on teaching students in at-risk situations culminated in pragmatic applications as well as suggestions for future research. "The published word is not the final one, but only a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 40). At the outset, you, the reader, were invited to form your own interpretations. I now invite you to reflect upon those interpretations in relation to your own classroom and research practices.

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APPENDIX**THE STUDENTS' STORIES:
TRIANGULATING THE TEACHERS' ACCOUNTS**

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Connecting and Understanding

Making Connections

Teachers as Comrades, Parents, and Entertainers

Students talked about "special" teachers who "made" them "feel special." These teachers were reported to engage in activities that distinguished them from other teachers. According to one student, her alternative education teacher was "not a teacher really." Metaphors depicting teachers as comrades, parents or entertainers help to portray some of the students' descriptions of the ways that teachers made connections.

Students seemed to think that their teachers were not like teachers when they behaved in a manner that could be associated with camaraderie. One group of boys talked about being invited to their teacher's camp for the weekend. Other groups recounted going on field trips. In the following excerpt, a student recalled mountain climbing with some teachers. He seemed to be relating an adventure with his buddies.

There's two or three teachers...We get together, like we go about a week before school is over with. We go to...nine thousand foot climb or somethin' straight up....Yep! Me and Mr.... and Mr....the idiot...He made it about halfway up and sat on a rock and waited for the rest of us. We went down the other side and left him there....You play practical jokes on them on the way up.

Admired teachers were sometimes described as performing the functions connected with parenthood. For example, one student remembered a grade three teacher who would go to watch him speed skate and who gave him a Christmas present. Another student talked about her alternative education teacher who recognized birthdays.

...and every time one of us had a birthday, we'd celebrate that in the afternoon. She'd buy us a cake and so on and so on and it kind of made us feel good.

A teacher's ability to entertain also seemed to be important for the students. They wanted teachers who had "some enthusiasm" and who made classes "more interesting" and "more fun." In the following quotation, a student noted the difference between two teachers with regard to their use of humor. The student's preference was apparent.

Mr...., if you laugh in class, he acts like it's against the law or somethin'....Mr...., he's always tellin' five or six jokes every period, but you get more work done that way because you're in a good sense of humor. And you can talk to him!...That's the kind of teacher I like to have.

In a similar manner, Damico and Roth (1994) reported at-risk students' perceptions of their relationships with teachers. These researchers noted that "students liked teachers who talked to them as though they were adults" and who treated the class "like a family" (p. 33). Furthermore, they wanted teachers who "involved" them and who "made learning fun" (p. 35).

The Value of Respect and Trust

Students, like the teachers, discussed respect and trust in terms of reciprocity. In other words, respect exchanged for respect and trust for trust. Some students saw themselves as having to initiate this show of respect or trust in order to get the same from a teacher. Other students believed that the teacher had to win their respect or trust.

I think teachers are fair. As long as you respect them, they respect you. If you follow their rules, you'll be okay.

...I had to test him [the teacher] out first....I did the royal trust test!

There were disclosures of ways in which teachers appeared to show their trust. For example, students could be entrusted to take something that they were "not supposed to look at" to the office. Teachers were also considered to show trust when they displayed openness by sharing personal information.

John: Our teacher tells us everything, what he does.

Tabatha: He trusts us....

John: He says what he did on the weekend and what he feels like.

Students revealed that they would talk with trusted teachers about their problems. They would approach them for advice.

He knows how to talk to us and he knows how to get us to talk to him. We trust him and like him and he gives us good advice.

The value that students place on trust and respect has been noted by others. Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) found that students want "respect, the knowledge that they are being treated with decency and fairness by the adults in the school" (p. 18). Phelan et al. (1992) also reported that students, like teachers, want to be respected. The students in their study generally mentioned "humor, openness, and consideration as important qualities in a teacher." These researchers observed that "humor and openness, in particular, serve to bridge age and status barriers and help connect students with adults" (p. 699).

The Value of Belonging

The students' stories indicated that their need for belonging was met more often by some teachers than by others. The student who expressed the following observations seemed to feel that nobody really missed him when he did not attend classes in the regular school program.

At the end of the year, I skipped school like three days a week, one day a week, something like that, just depended..if they were doin' somethin' I wanted to do....Well, they didn't

start buggin' me until I started giggin' at the end of last year. They didn't say a word to me. I could have gigged the whole week and went back for one half day at the end of the week and they would have said, "Oh, hi, how are you?"

Another student, who had been asked to leave the regular school, stated his reasons for attending an alternative program. It seemed to offer an inviting atmosphere for him.

Just keeps you busy, eh, so you're not sittin' at home watchin' tv all day. It's a part of your day....I just like to come, see everybody, talk to everybody.

Students who struggled with the academic content did not always feel welcome in regular classes. The following comments relate a student's feelings regarding her French class. The pace was too fast for her and the teacher seemed to lack empathy. Instead of assistance, she received a "lecture" for not understanding.

...just assumes that we know French, right, like nothing. He'll ask us a question and we'll sit there and we'll go, ah. He'll go anyways on to the next person. It's like sorry...Then, he gives us a lecture, saying, "Well, you guys have had me since grade six" ...So I mean how are we supposed to know what he's sayin'?

On the contrary, students felt that the teachers in the alternative programs cared and wanted to help.

Like if we didn't understand, she'd take us individually and show us how to do it. I think that's partially why we did so well last year. We knew that there was someone that will definitely help us.

Students' expressions of a need to belong have been identified by other researchers. Phelan et al. (1992) reported that students preferred classrooms where they feel they know the teacher and the other students. Emotional safety was recognized as an important feature of classroom climate. Students did not want to be put down or made to feel stupid by either the teacher or their peers. Wehlage et al. (1989) interviewed at-risk students who saw their alternative schools as

"friendlier and more caring places than their previous schools had been" (p. 114). They wanted to belong; the approval of adults and peers was important.

Understanding - Getting to Know the Students

Knowing the Family Background

While the teachers provided glimpses into the students' families, the students had very little to say about their home situations. Although there were isolated references to having "split parents," residing in a "group home" and being "punched," the students did not elaborate. The disclosures about "sleeping in" and "jigging" or "skipping" classes suggested that some of them lived in unstructured environments.

Seeing the Students' Perspectives

Students wanted teachers who could "relate" to them and could "get on the basis with" them. They talked about ways in which teachers did this. Being aware of the students' preferences for music, putting modern posters on the classroom walls, and speaking in a language the students could understand were some of those ways.

It's better when they fill their classrooms, like, with, like, modern posters. You just hate, like, lookin' at *Learn to Read*. There's all those reading ones all across the walls....Like, in my homeroom class, like, he's, like, younger, ah, and he's more active....He has hockey posters and basketball posters.

Students stated that they preferred a teacher "who knows what kids do." While they wanted teachers who could "act like kids," they did not expect teachers to be just like them. Teachers who could act like them appeared to be those who could joke and "get along" with them.

They're not gonna go and speak to you in some great big dictionary language....She speaks in big words, trying to confuse us sometimes...Not exactly..."Oh, babe...What are you doin' Saturday night?"

He's not like the other teachers. Like, other teachers, you can't joke around with 'em, but him, he jokes around. He's like us.

Descriptions were provided of teachers who would "understand" and "listen to" students. These teachers would display "patience" and "take time" with them. In the following excerpt, some students talked about a teacher who showed that she cared by listening to their problems.

Veronica: She understands us.

Jamie: Yeah, a lot more.

Shanna: She cares about how we feel.

Todd: Yeah.

Shanna: And she knows, like, if I'm smilin', by the way I smile, she can tell that I'm depressed or something. And she talks it over with us and whatever until the problem is solved.

In addition, there were stories about teachers who did not know "how to talk to" students. These teachers were perceived to be sending negative messages to certain students regarding their abilities. According to one student, these messages did not seem to be forgotten and could lead students to believe that they are actually "dumb."

It's not a physical effect. It's more emotional, mental effect, and before you know it, you'll start believing it....Like our math teacher last year, he, "Oh you can't do this." You're, like, really dumb. "You should go back to grade one and learn math."

Similar to the program teachers in this research, the teachers in the alternative schools studied by Wehlage et al. (1989) seemed to be aware of their students' perspectives. The students in those schools talked about being able to "joke around" with the teachers. They also seemed to appreciate having teachers who would "'explain a little more' than other teachers do" (p. 115). In the research of Phelan et al. (1992), low-achieving students identified patience, tolerance and an ability to listen as personality traits of effective teachers. They saw caring as an expression of interest and concern that went beyond assistance with academics;

they wanted teachers to like them personally. Damico & Roth (1994) found that students worked for teachers who they felt understood and valued them.

Recognizing the Students' Strengths and Weaknesses

Students talked about teachers who could "like all students" and who could "get use to" them. They also referred to teachers who appeared to be "prejudiced" and to favor some students more than others. These examples suggested that they wanted teachers to look beyond their weaknesses and to see their strengths. A student in an alternative program described his teacher as having a "good attitude towards the students and what they do." By contrast, another student made the following observations about the attitudes of teachers in the regular program.

They treat us different....If you go to somebody's class, they have a attitude problem with you as soon as you get in there....It's like it could be your appearance. It could be the way you talk. It could be anything, and they just have their own attitude about you.

Recognizing the Students' Needs

Need to Vent Frustration

Students recognized that they sometimes needed to "get rid of frustrations." One student proposed leaving class and working out in the gym when feeling frustrated. Other students talked about going to a teacher who would listen to them. This is illustrated by the next example from a female student who was suspended from school. In this case, the teacher was also portrayed as the student's advocate.

You could sit down and talk to her, tell her your problems....We were really good friends....When I got kicked out of school, she tried all she could to get me back.

Need for Recognition

According to the students' accounts, "preppies" seemed to get all of the positive recognition in the regular classes. The preppies were seen as "sucking up" to teachers. They got high marks and participated in extracurricular activities. A student's resentment was expressed when he commented upon the favoritism shown towards students who were involved with drama.

If you're in drama and all that, you're his little jewel, you're his pride. You're in drama, you're somethin'. Anything you want to do, you could do it. That's what everybody says.

These statements contrasted with students' observations about alternative program teachers. One student noted, "Even if you're not an A student, he'll still be friends with you." Students reported doing well in their alternative classes and being recognized for their achievements.

They reward you here....If you get a test at regular school, they just go, "Here's your test." They don't compliment you and say, "Good work. You got a higher mark than the last test. You're improving."...On your test, they write *excellent...very good*.

Other studies have noted students' views regarding recognition. Phelan et al. (1992) reported that students praised teachers who demonstrated respect for all class participants and who encouraged every student to take an active role. Based upon their interviews with at-risk students, Damico and Roth (1994) discovered that the teachers who clearly indicated their belief in the students' capabilities "appeared to have made a deep impact on the educational lives of these students" (p. 34).

Viewing At-Risk on a Spectrum

Although many of the interviewed students talked about dropping out of school, being suspended, and skipping classes, some students claimed that they rarely

missed classes and never got into trouble or considered leaving. The diversity of their opinions supported the category of *viewing at-risk on a spectrum*.

Jaimie: I wouldn't have dropped out. I would have failed.

Crystal: I would have.

Jaimie: I never would have dropped out.

Jeremy: Why I left, I got kicked out four times last two years now.

Bill: I didn't get kicked out; I quit.

While some students described themselves in ways that suggested they exhibited aggressive behaviors, other students seemed to be more passive. In the following excerpts, one student related his hostile response to a teacher's request. The other student talked about learning to "stand up" for herself.

Can't say what I said but I just walked out. I just told him off; then I walked out.

And I wouldn't say anything at the first of it when it first started....I was like as Miss...said the passive person, but she said, as the year ended, she said it was really, it was so that I'd stand up for myself and that instead of just sayin' okay or I'll do it or somethin' like that.

The reasons given by students for being in the alternative program were sometimes indicative of the degrees to which they behaved responsibly. An interesting comparison could be made between two students who were in the same program. One was suspended for setting a fire in his classroom; the other quit school to earn money by working on a fishing boat. The behaviors of one seemed far more irrational.

Well, I'm supposed to be doin' it [fishing] now, but I had to take a month off so I could come to school. Rather go fishing than come to school but I guess I have to come, anyway....Two months before school finished I went fishing.

You know those graters [heat grates] there....There was a ball of paper in there and I lit it on fire. And all of it caught. Whew!....Not what I told the court, though.

Summarizing The Students' Stories of Connecting/Understanding

An analysis of the student data produced support for connecting and understanding, a theme that had resulted from the teacher data. Furthermore, parallels to the students' perspectives were found in previous research reporting the opinions of other students in at-risk situations.

The students seemed to connect with teachers who treated them in a friendly and familial manner. Along with an expressed need to belong and to be recognized, they revealed an appreciation for respect and trust. They wanted teachers to be aware of their needs and to see their perspectives. Although they disclosed very little about their family backgrounds during the interviews, the information that they provided about their conduct in school did allude to the idiosyncratic nature of their behaviors.