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Voice, identity, and knowledge: Teaching and learning in an urban classroom

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DePaul University

School of Education

VOICE, IDENTITY, AND KNOWLEDGE:

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN URBAN CLASSROOM

A Thesis in

Curriculum Studies

By

Colleen M. Reardon

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the dynamics that impact opportunity for students to share knowledge, and express beliefs, values, and opinions in the context of an eighth grade classroom. A multi-methods approach was used to examine factors that contributed to the enhancement or diminishment of possibilities for student voice. The role of the teacher's voice in this dynamic became an unexpectedly powerful factor in opportunities for students to share their knowledge and ideas. Findings suggested that the ways in which students were encouraged or discouraged from participating impacted their learning and identities. The intricate and fundamental ways in which voice was tied to knowledge construction, identity, and agency was an unexpected but central finding. Discourses regarding schooling, its role and purposes, adolescents, teaching and learning, and the role of adults in society were particularly relevant to this study as they related to teacher and student construction of their identities, knowledge and voice. The significant role of teachers' ideologies shaped by sociocultural, economic, and historical context in informing the pedagogical choices, content of the formal and informal curriculum, and interactions with students is highlighted. The ways in which students variously accepted, resisted, rejected, and negotiated messages conveyed about their experiences, academic performance, and identities is explored, as are themes of care and responsibility as defined by teacher and students. Finally implications for teachers, administrators, policy makers, teacher educators, and further research are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

VOICE: IDENTITY AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Voice in Context

During the last twenty years social, economic, and cultural changes have impacted schools and communities in the United States. Factors such as globalization, a strong economy, and changes in immigration and demographics have challenged the relevance and wisdom of long-term educational practices and structures (Luke, 1999). In addition, increasing recognition has been given to the issue of diversity as central to the culture of the United States. Within this overall socio-historical context has come increasing awareness of the diversity of experiences of children and youth within their schools (Cushman, 1998).

At the same time schools have come under increased criticism and scrutiny (Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Lee and Smith, 1999). Reform efforts have been implemented at the national, state, and local levels. Most of these have focused on increasing accountability through the development of standards, and the implementation of high stakes testing has become an established practice (Roderick and Engel, 2001; Sanders, 1998; Wiggins, 1993). Many states are implementing testing programs that have become part of the teacher certification process (Blair, 2001). In some cities schools that fail to demonstrate student growth as measured by the designated test are put on probation or reconstituted (Erickson, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, and Elliot, 1998). Students who do not meet established testing criteria are retained (Roderick et al., 2001; White, 1999).

While the concept of site-based management has increased participation of teachers in developing or implementing reform efforts, many reform efforts, particularly with regard to accountability, are generated by policy makers and district administrators. While teachers have often not been given much say in this process, student input is rarely sought.

The work of Stevenson and Ellsworth (1993) in exploring the experiences of diverse groups of drop-outs and that of Nieto (1994) with a diverse group of academically successful students would suggest that students can provide an understanding of their experiences that would illuminate a path for improving educational practices. The students' responses and interactions with these change efforts are a crucial factor in the outcomes (Ruddick, 1991).

While student voice has become the focus of a larger number of studies in recent years, many have focused on the experiences of students at the college or high school level. There are several reasons, however, why an increased emphasis on student voice at the middle school level is important. Middle schools are a late twentieth century phenomenon in the United States. While the National Middle School Association is conducting research and publishing findings that speak to the effectiveness of this approach (National Middle School Association, 1995), it would be important to understand the middle school experience from the students' perspectives. Furthermore, increased recognition has been placed on dropping out as a dynamic in schooling (Finn, 1989; Mullen, Katz, and Dance, 1999; Skinner, Wellborn, and Connell, 1990, Brantlinger, 1993; Murdock, 1999; Morrison, Storino, and Anthony, 2000). The middle school years can be the last

critical time to reverse the process of disengagement (Murdock, 1999). The perspectives of students have the potential for greater understanding of this process as well.

During the last several decades, advances in cognitive psychology (Moll, 1990; Wersch, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978; Wolfe, 2001) partially facilitated by a greater understanding of the brain and its functioning have changed the view of the learner. With increasing recognition of the active role of the learner it is important to understand the ways in which students actively participate in their classes and the impact of this participation.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to gain a greater understanding of the classroom experience of middle school students particularly as it related to their participation in the classroom setting. Of particular emphasis were the opportunities students had to share knowledge and express beliefs, values, and opinions in both oral and written discourse and in formal and informal situations. The responses of the teacher to these expressions of voice were also explored. More specifically the study addressed the following questions:

Do students see themselves as having a voice?

How do students view their use of voice?

In what ways are teachers responsive to the voices of youth?

What factors lead to differences in students' expression of voice?

In what manners, situations, and contexts do students have an opportunity to express themselves?

Does the teacher differ in her responsiveness in different contexts?

How do gender, race, ethnicity, class, and ability intersect and impact

voice?

What is the role of the teacher when some student voices silence others?

As the study evolved, it became apparent that student voice could not be

considered without examining teacher voice as well as the ways in which schools

as organizations add to the discourse on teaching through the ways they

enculturate both teachers and students. Additional questions that arose during

the initial months of the study are described further in Chapter Three, "Feminist

Methodology: Dilemmas and Possibilities".

The metaphor of voice

The use of the metaphors[1] of "voice" and "silence" are common to the

literature that explores student participation in the educational process (Ellsworth,

1989; Fine, 1992; Giroux, 1997; Hynds, 1997; Alton-Lee, Nuthall, & Patrick 1993;

McElroy-Johnson, 1993). Although seemingly simple these metaphors suggested

multiple meanings. For the purposes of this study "voice" referred to students'

experiences of talking or writing with confidence or authority that elicit a response

indicating meaningful consideration. "Silence" referred to not talking, not writing,

not being present, or not otherwise participating. In addition "silence" referred to

experiences in which students communicated but identified responses of not

being heard, of being ignored, or of being ridiculed, censored, suppressed,

marginalized, or otherwise excluded. In other cases, more subtle effects of

silencing were experienced as students spoke or wrote without confidence or

authority (DeVault, 1999) or expressed perspectives inconsistent with their true beliefs but that were consistent with the perceived views of the teacher.

Participation, or voice, in and of itself may not be a desired or sufficient outcome. DeVault (1999) spoke of the consequences of some who have spoken out. "...[B]attered women have lost their lives, earlier feminists have disappeared from the historical record" (DeVault, 1999, p.182). Anderson (1998) suggested that the response of students to spaces for participation will depend on the degree of risk perceived and the degree of authenticity of the process (p. 592). The content and consequences of voicing one's perspectives require considerations beyond mere opportunities for expression of voice or of remaining silent.

Anderson (1998) addressed the issue of the authenticity of participation, suggesting as did DeVault (1999), that the act of participation cannot be separated from its outcomes. He stated,

...the ultimate ends of participation should be the constitution of a democratic citizenry and redistributive justice for disenfranchised groups, or in educational terms, more equal levels of student achievement and improved social and academic outcomes for *all* students. This view, while acknowledging the value and importance of other associated outcomes of participation, retains a view of participatory reform as linked to broader democratic concerns (p. 575).

In other words, authentic participation should lead to greater equity in learning outcomes, social justice, and a strengthening of the habits of democratic participation.

Authentic voice in the classroom

This study explored the participation of students and the opportunities they had to express beliefs, values, and opinions in the authentic sense as described above. In so doing the questions Anderson (1998) raised regarding authentic participation were relevant: "Who participates? Participation in which spheres? What conditions and process should be present locally? Participation toward what end? What conditions and processes should be present at broader institutional and societal levels?" (p. 587).

As suggested by the last question, the concept of authentic participation requires consideration of both micro- and macro-political circumstances. The structure, policies, and practices of education exist within a broader historical and socio-cultural context (Anderson, 1998; Sklar, 1995). "If we understand school policies and practices as being enmeshed in societal values, we can better understand the manifestations of these values in schools as well" (Nieto, 1994, p. 395).

Beyond the improvement of student outcomes related to achievement in school, student voice has important consequences for participation in a democratic society. Students who lack experiences in voicing their opinions and views, facing divergent views, hearing and understanding views of others, recognizing and understanding reasonable choices, negotiating, participating in

decision making, seeing the results that stem from their input or decisions, and exploring moral issues such as equality and justice as they relate to their lives (Levin, 1998), will be negatively impacted as they seek to work for the betterment of their communities as adults. The increasingly diverse, multicultural nature of our schools and society combined with the inequities in school experience and outcomes add to the need to consider and more thoroughly understand students' experience of voice.

Given these considerations and seeking to address the questions defined above, a multi-method study of a middle school classroom, relying on case study, ethnographic, and quantitative data collection strategies, was undertaken. This study sought to contribute to the research that explores student voice in the context of a classroom setting by adding to and expanding the body of literature and research available to the larger educational and research community. The understandings gained could be useful to teachers, administrators, and policy-makers as they engage in educational practices and decision making at the micro- and macro-level. The study assumed that decisions informed by the perspectives of students have the potential to impact positively on their growth and academic experiences as well as their future lives.

<u>Perspectives on Voice Related to Process, Development, and Empowerment</u>

Voice as a construct appears in the literature crossing multiple theoretical perspectives. An in-depth review of the literature on voice provides a more comprehensive understanding of its importance to this study. For the purposes of this study literature from critical theory, cultural psychology, cognitive psychology,

postmodernism, and feminist theory are considered as are the writings of those theorists whose perspectives cross these theoretical boundaries. Theoretical understandings of voice that are relevant to this study are reviewed specifically as they relate to voice as a process; voice, cognitive growth, and identity; and voice and empowerment.

<u>Voice as a process</u>

The construct of voice as process has received extensive coverage in feminist literature (Ellsworth, 1989; Goldberger, 1996; Hurtado, 1996; Tarule, 1996; Brown, 1998; Britzman, 1989). The term "coming to voice" (Gannett, 1992 in Tarule, 1996) captured the understading of voice as an ongoing process rather than a fixed event. Adding to the complexity of this perspective of voice, is recognition of the multiplicity of authentic voices, each contextualized by one's own gender, race, abilities, prejudices, and subjectivities and the social, historical, and political context (Ellsworth, 1989). In that each of these multiple voices, or multiple *lenguas* [tongues] (Hurtado, 1996), denotes one of multiple positions from which an individual might speak, "each of these voices is partial, unfinished and limited; [therefore] they must be made problematic" (Ellsworth, 1989, p.305). The discourses that inform these partial voices and the ways in which they can be problematic are discussed later in the chapter.

The process of "coming to voice" takes place in the context of relations with others.

> Voice is meaning that resides in the individual and enables that
>
> individual to participate in community.... The struggle for voice

begins when a person attempts to communicate meaning to someone else. Finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all part of this process... Voice suggests relationships: the individual's relationship to the meaning of his/her experience, and hence, to language, and the individual's relationship to the other, since understanding is a social process (Britzman, 1989, cited in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, Taubman,1995, pp.524-525).

Britzman's articulation spoke to the centrality of language in relationship in an understanding of voice. It is in the context of community that individuals "join with voices in dialogue" (Tarule, 1996). The term "dialogue" suggests consideration of the voices of others in community. According to this conceptualization, "having someone to listen to us, someone who believes that we have something worthwhile to say is fundamental...[to finding one's voice]" (Ada and Smith, 1998, p. 58). Considerations needs to be given not only to speaking up but to the outcome of that participation if an authentic sense of voice is to be realized (Anderson, 1998).

Within the context of relationship exists possibility for development of an authentic sense of voice. At the same time possibilities for cognitive and personal growth are realized.

Voice, cognitive growth, and identity

Not only does the term "coming to voice" suggest that voice is a process, it is recognized as essential for intellectual development (Tarule, 1996). Vygotsky

(1978) also emphasized the relationship between voice, or language, and cognitive development. The interdependent nature of relationships between teachers and students is central to learning (Sheppard, 2000; Nelson, Nararrete, and Martinez, 1998; Sosa, 1998) and incumbent to Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (Moll, 1990).

> Humans use cultural signs and tools (i.e. speech, literacy, mathematics) to mediate their interactions with each other and their surroundings. A fundamental property of these artifacts, Vygotsky observed is that they are social in origin; they are used first to communicate to others, to mediate contact with our social worlds; later with practice much of it occurring in schools, these artifacts come to mediate our interactions with self; help us to think, we internalize their use (Moll, 1990, p. 11-12).

Like Moll (1990), Eisner (1985) and Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) spoke to a central tenet of Vygotskian and Neo-Vygotskian thought; that being the fluid nature of cognitive development. Knowledge rather than being an external body of information to be internalized in its unadulterated form is created as individuals and groups interact with their environments. The emphasis is on knowledge construction.

> It is impossible to consider any form of education--or even human existence--without first considering the impact of language on our lives.... Language constitutes one of the most powerful media for transmitting our personal histories and social realities, as well as for

thinking and shaping the world (Cole and Scribner, 1974).
Language is essential to the process of dialogue, to the
development of meaning, and to the production of knowledge
(Darder, 1997, p. 333).

Cognitive development is facilitated through various mechanisms that
might be called ways of knowing. Eisner (1985) spoke of the aesthetic mode of
knowing, one he acknowledged is generally de-emphasized in Western society in
that "knowledge is considered by most in our culture as something one
discovers, not something one makes" (p.32). Yet he suggested that the "...roads
to knowing are many" (p. 24). The ways one comes to know and the mechanisms
through which one comes to know are culturally influenced (Bruner, 1996;
Goldberger, 1996; Eisner, 1985). While there has been increased recognition of
the role of culture in mediating learning, the socio-cultural knowledge students
bring to school is often not recognized or valued in the school; nor are the
different ways of knowing given credence in the school when they differ from the
primary way of knowing privileged in schools (Wersch,1990; Brantlinger,1993;
Phelan, Davidson, and Yu,1998; Huerta-Marcias,1998; Gee, 1996; Wiburg,1998;
Hurtado,1996).

Post-formalism, as a socio-cognitive theory, suggests ways of knowing
that are as follows: etymology, "the exploration of the forces that produce what
the culture validates as knowledge; pattern, "the understanding of the connecting
patterns and relationships that undergrid the lived world; and conceptualization,
"the appreciation that knowledge can never stand alone or be complete in and of

itself" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 174). Highlighted here is an

understandings that culture plays an active role in determining what knowledge is

legitimate and that knowledge is always partial. Goldberger (1996) described

constructed knowing as a way of knowing that recognizes knowledge as

contextual:

> Such knowing also entails a *flexibility* in approaches to knowing and
>
> *ability to assess the appropriateness and utility* of a particular way
>
> of knowing given the moment, cultural and political imperatives, and
>
> the relational and ethical ramifications (p. 357).

Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, and Belensky (1986) drawing on a feminist

perspective elaborated on the experiences of women, their way of knowing, and

their voices. Their original work was both highly praised and highly criticized,

particularly for the ways in which they differentiated between masculine and

feminine ways of knowing and the ways in which they inferred a universal

feminine experience. Their later work (1996), that is enhanced by the additional

considerations of culture, race, and class and a reformulation of their original,

more rigid conceptualization, added to the literature on voice. Voice was seen as

an indispensable aspect of knowing and thinking. They focused on ways of

knowing through mechanisms that include silence, received knowing, connected

knowing, and constructed knowing. They spoke of the interconnections of a

sense of voice, self, and, mind, a theme that was further developed in the works

of such postmodernists as Sumara and Davis (1998) who wrote,

...there is no clear boundary between the epistemological and the ontological: who we are is necessarily caught up in what we know; and conversely, our knowing—that is, how we perceive and act toward the world—cannot be extricated from our senses of who we are (p.78).

Voice, as described above, highlights the relationship between knowing and being. The process of developing authentic voice thus becomes an essential component for cognitive growth. Similarly, voice serves as a mechanism for personal empowerment.

Voice and empowerment

The development of voice as a mechanism for cognitive growth and personal empowerment takes place within a participatory climate. Participation has been seen as "a door to empowerment" (Shor, 1992). Shor saw active involvement as central to the development of intelligence and the acquisition of knowledge. Like Sumara and Davis (1998), Shor (1992) emphasized the link between the etymological and the ontological. He viewed participatory education as beginning with students' subjectivities—their life experiences, feelings, language, and understandings. It draws forth their "...knowledge, literacy, and affect toward academic work" (Shor 1992, p. 29). In a similar manner, Darder (1997) supported this position by arguing that participatory and empowering education is based on the recognition that students "...bring to the school situation, knowledge about their culture, community, and educational needs" (p. 341). As teachers become more knowledgeable about the experiences and

communities in which their students reside, there are increased opportunities for

dialogue about cultural differences "...which assists the bicultural[2] student to

affirm, challenge, and transform the many conflicts and contradictions they face

as members of an oppressed group" (Darder 1992, p. 341).

For Shor (1992), too, dialogic pedagogy was at the heart of emancipatory

or empowering education. He defined dialogue as

> ...a capacity and inclination of human beings to reflect together on
>
> the meaning of their experience and their knowledge. Dialogue,
>
> then, can be thought of as the threads of communication that bind
>
> people together and prepare them for reflective action. Dialogue
>
> links people together through discourse and links their moments of
>
> reflection to their moments of action (p. 86).

Dialogue can occur when individuals operate on horizontal planes rather

than in hierarchical positions (Patton, 2000; Shor, 1992). It is differentiated from

discussion, arguing that lacks a commitment to seeking truth, or a simple

exchange of ideas. It is an act of creation that is based in mutual commitment

that cannot exist in a relationship marked by domination (Friere, 1994). In the

classroom it is "...situated in the conditions and cultures of the students so that

their language, themes, understandings, levels of development, and needs are

the starting points..." (Shor 1992, p. 88).

Dialogue as a mechanism for personal growth is widely recognized.

Bakhtin spoke to it in his notions of dialogism and ventrilocation[3] (Brown, 1998;

Holoquist, 1990; Wersch, 1990). This process of growth, termed "ideological

becoming", is one in which one takes the words and ideas of others and uses them. However, over time, "one's own discourse and one's own voice although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 348).

Like Bakhtin (1981), Steward (1994) recognized the power of dialogue to impact the possibilities for personal development. In elaborating on Buber's notion of dialogue, he concluded, "How we communicate, in other words, directly affects who we are and who we become. Communication is not just instrumental and expressive; it is also, and most importantly, person building (and can be person destroying)" (p. xvi). Brown and Keller (1994) explicitly raised dialogue to the realm of the ethical. As implied by Steward (1994), Friere (1994), Shor (1992), and Patton (2000), at issue is the responsibility to the person with whom one is engaged in dialogue.

Given the nature of many classrooms, facilitating active participation of students is a complex venture with sometimes seemingly contradictory responses on the part of the students. While many children enter school eager to learn and curious about their world, their natural curiosity seems stifled due to the ironic fostering of passive involvement in some classrooms. School for them is seen as dull and unrelated to their lives (Shor, 1992; Phelan, Davidson, and Yu, 1998). In a sense students are acculturated into a passive stance as it relates to learning and to school. They are thus prepared to participate as adult citizens and workers primarily in a passive manner. Though they may not like their

current situation, either their work situation or the condition of the society in which they live, they do not see themselves as active agents who might take an active role as a participant in change.

When faced with a teacher, who does foster active participation in the classroom, they may resist. Their seeming lack of interest in such a setting or active resistance to it may be reflective of the degree to which their intellects have been dulled and disabled (Shor, 1992). They may have lost confidence in their thoughts or see no value in their participation (Muller, et al., 1999). It may take the form of "playing dumb" or "getting by", remaining silent, or dropping out (Fine, 1991; McNeil, 1986; Stevenson and Ellsworth, 1993). Students may lack the skills necessary for such participation or be unsettled by the disjuncture between the current demands and the roles they have come to expect for teachers and students (Muller, et al., 1999; Hynds, 1997; Hildebrand, 1999). Through their experiences in school they may have come to see the role of a good student as one who is quiet (Brown, 1998). Disagreeing or questioning the teacher would be inconsistent with this role. Yet this stance becomes a vicious circle, as lack of participation leads to continued boredom and alienation from academics and further diminishes the potential for further serious learning.

In addition, bicultural students may demonstrate an attitude of resistance that is

> ...rooted in legitimate fears and subsequent responses to support
>
> community survival. In addition, these fears and subsequent
>
> responses are strongly fostered by a *legacy of resistance*, which is

reinforced daily through their personal and institutional relationships. These relationships included interactions with their parents who often harbor unspoken fears that they may lose their child[ren] forever if they should become educated (Darder 1997, p. 335).

This resistance may appear to be evidence of a lack of interest in schooling and of understanding of the value of education.

The risk is that the teacher will give up the dialogic approach in discouragement or judge students to be less capable academically than they are (Muller, et al, 1999). The teacher may see refusal to participate, be it through disruption or passive resistance, as a classroom management issue (McNeil, 1986). They may view the problem as being within the nature of the student, labeling them "troubled rather than seeing this behavior as a response to cultural subordination or social hostility" (Darder, 1997). Underlying participation dynamics in the classroom are powerful discourses that shape the nature of dialogue and learning.

Perspectives on Voice Related to Discourse, the Political Nature of Education, Power and Authority, Agency and Empowerment

Examining conditions and processes present at the classroom, school, and societal levels that impact the development of authentic voice are important to this study. As discussed previously, micro- and macro- political circumstances need to be explored.

Consideration needs to be given not only to the socializing power of discourses but also to the political nature of education. Interwoven with the

political aspects of education are ways in which power and authority are manifested in the school setting and the ways in which these manifestations have the power to support or diminish the development of agency, empowerment, and ultimately, a sense of voice. These issues will be addressed in the next four sections of this chapter.

Language and discourse

While voice as manifest in language is central to knowing, language itself is not neutral (Hurtado, 1996). Gallimore and Tharp (1990) and Bruner (1996) emphasized the role of language in establishing and maintaining the values and norms of a particular institution. It is through language that the rituals and norms become established. In this way institutions such as schools become powerful socializing agents. For Ruiz (1997), a "major dimension of the power of language is the power to define, to decide the nature of lived experience. In social relations, the power to define determines domination and subordination..." (p. 320). He differentiated between language and voice: "*Language* is general, abstract, subject to somewhat arbitrary normalization; *voice* is particular and concrete. *Language* has a life of its own—it exists even when it is suppressed; when voice is suppressed, it is not heard—it does not exist" (Ruiz, 1997, p. 321).

The power of language to define lies in the ideologies through which beliefs and values are expressed. Ideologies relate to systems of meaning that for critical theorists are intimately related to issues related to power and class (Giroux, 1997; Gee, 1996). Embedded in ideologies are various discourses. "A Discourse[4], then, is composed of ways of talking, listening, (often, too, reading

and writing), acting, interacting, believing, valuing, and using tools and objects, in particular settings at specific times, so as to display and recognize a particular social identity" (Gee, 1996, p. 128). Given the multiplicity of group memberships and hence multiplicity of social identities, each individual is a member of multiple discursive communities or discourses. The beliefs and values embedded in these "Discourses" may be contradictory (Gee, 1996). Bakhtin used the term "multiple consciousness" (Emerson, 1994) to speak to the outcome of interactions with various individuals. The values and ways of believing may not and often are not consistent across "Discourses" (Gee, 1996). "...[T]he argument that ideology exists as part of the unconscious, common sense, and critical consciousness points to an ideological universe in which contradictions exist both in and outside of the individual" (Giroux, 1997, p. 77). While assumptions and beliefs that are inherent in various discourses may exist at an unconscious level, they serve as a lens when engaging others in the world.

"Classrooms hold certain expectations that are rarely made explicit and rarely called into question" (Finders, 1997, p. 117). These expectations are tied to assumptions and beliefs inherent in the various discursive communities to which educators belong. They exist in the form of tacitly accepted theories (Gee, 1996; Kincheloe and Steinberg,1993; Schieurich and Imber, 1991; Cannella,1998). The foundations on which generalizations are made if not rendered overt or explicit are more difficult to deal with and make discussion, debate or dialogue difficult. With unconscious claims of knowing, unexamined generalizations or naïve social beliefs become ethical matters. This is the case,

particularly when their meaning has significant implications for individuals, depending on how they are defined (Gee, 1996; Brendtro, Brokenleg, and VanBrockem, 1996).

Important in understanding the complexity of the power of discourses is recognition that each individual is involved in multiple discursive communities. Hurtado (1996) used the expression "shifting consciousness" to refer to the ability of Women of Color to shift from one group's perception of reality, as embedded in a particular discourse, to another. Gee (1996) differentiated between primary "Discourses", those acquired through membership in a family and community of origin, and secondary "Discourses", those acquired in the more public world, such as school. The ways in which these "Discourses" inform or provide a filter, through which an individual views the world and others in it, are often at a level of unconsciousness. Brantlinger (1993) spoke of the ways in which such discourses serve to communicate messages to students about themselves and society. "Social interactions within the context of school, then are important not only in developing views of school, but also in socializing more generalized conceptualizations of self and of the nature of the world" (p. 5). While not using the word "discourse", Eisner (1985) suggested that the assumptions about valid ways of knowing have led to a privileging of some and a lack of inclusion of others. He was particularly speaking of the general dismissal of "aesthetic modes of knowing" in schools. Like Brantlinger (1993) he spoke to the messages communicated through school, not just verbally, but by the rituals (Brantlinger,

1993) that communicate norms or the amount of time (Eisner, 1985) devoted to various types of learning activities.

Bakhtin (1981) described the process of "ideological becoming." He wrote, "One's own discourse is gradually and slowly wrought out of others' words" (p. 345); one's own discourse becomes differentiated from the words of others and the boundaries between the two distinguishable. Like Gee (1996) he had acknowledged that the various discourses may not be compatible and that the process of "ideological becoming" results from an "intense struggle within us for hegemony of various available and ideological points of view, approaches, directions, and values"(in Brown, 1998, p. 106). Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) draw on Bakhtin's work and elaborate on the process of "ideological disembedding" through which individuals become aware of the culturally or socially created discourses that shape their views of themselves and the world. Through understanding the factors that influence development of such beliefs and through engaging in a process of "ideological disembedding," individuals "...bring to consciousness views ...[that are] culturally created and therefore limited concepts of both self and reality" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 177). This self-conscious awareness of values, ideologies, assumptions, and beliefs can then be explicitly brought to the table as the needs of adolescents in schools are discussed. The development of a "critical consciousness" is only possible when these tacit views are brought to a level of awareness. Friere (1998) used the term "conscientization" to refer to a process of deepening awareness of critical consciousness. This process becomes the challenge of education.

Education as political

Education, like language, is not neutral (Gee, 1996). Shor (1992) began his discussion of empowering education with an acknowledgement of both the social and political nature of education. Recognizing the role schools play in socializing children, he acknowledged that education is not neutral. It is a political process in which decisions are made about the curriculum, teacher and student relationships, the role of the student in the classroom, and pedagogical considerations. These are not neutral but are tied either to consciously considered or unexamined viewpoints. Whether students are presented knowledge as authoritative and fixed or as evolving and partial is a political decision. Whether to foster critical thought and autonomous habits of mind or dependence on formal authority and a passive relationship with the learning process is also a political decision. Recognizing the relationship between voice and empowerment, and viewing educational decisions within a political context, decisions about the role of students and their participation in the classroom also become political decisions. Included in the consideration of student voice or participation in the classroom are such issues as the way students and teachers speak to each other, the degree to which open discussion is encouraged, the directionality of talk (whether as a transfer of information from teacher to students or a mutual dialogue), the teachers talk about subject matter, the degree to which students feel they can disagree with the teacher or their peers, the level of competition involved in communicative exchanges, the relationship between

students and knowledge, and the role of the student as involved and engaged or as passive observers (Shor, 1992).

Bruner (1996) placed education in the realm of the political as well. He wrote, "...education is never neutral, never without social and economic consequences. However much it may be claimed to the contrary, education is always political in this broader sense" (p. 25). He used the expression "cultural tool box" to refer to the fact that symbols, signs, and tools used in the process of education are culturally specific. The lack of these tools, especially those valued by the mainstream society, results in an uneven playing field for students who enter school without them (Hynds, 1997). This limit speaks to the privileging of certain discourses or belief systems over others.

> Schools often do not ask students to reflect on or seek information on the resources they have through their experience. By virtue of the privileging of certain kinds of knowledge and learning, students learn that only certain kinds of knowledge is considered valid by schools and by extension, mainstream society. As a result, these students (and their families and communities) will come to devalue their own knowledge and perhaps even their own language (Ada and Smith, 1998, p. 48).

Scheurich and Imber (1991) spoke of norms, rituals, and "behavioral regularities" that are part of the culture of any school or organization. These norms specify what behaviors and attitudes are acceptable within that setting and are maintained by those who participate in it. The structural and ideological

features of organizations and relationships in them create power differentials representative of the inequities of power and resources that exist in the larger society of which the organization or school is a part. Included in any school setting are issues related to the type and ways of knowing that are emphasized or prioritized in schools and the ways of being that are acceptable in schools. The socio-political dynamics of the school are negotiated at both the verbal and nonverbal levels and impact the ways in which teachers and students participate in schooling and the ways in which their identities and knoweldge are honored or denied.

Power and authority in schools

The centrality of communication through dialogue or discourse is prevalent throughout the literature on voice. The ways in which power and authority are exercised in such communicative processes play a significant role in whether the individual, particularly the one(s) who is in a lesser position of authority, experiences the outcome. The meaning one attaches to power and authority is one factor affecting the outcome.

. Darder, speaking to this issue, wrote,

> ...the manner in which we conceptualize authority truly represents a necessary precondition for the manner in which we define ourselves, our work, and our very lives-so much so that it is impossible to discuss cultural democracy in the classroom without addressing the issues that directly stem from this question" (1997, p. 336).

Power, generally implied to be implicit in the exercise of authority is viewed in contradictory ways. The way it is understood will impact how it is exercised. One perspective on power defines it in absolute terms as either "good" or "bad". Darder (1997) suggested that this position is at the heart of the helplessness many educators feel. A conservative view of authority places authority in the context of a hierarchical relationship. Lee (1999) found that the "adult governed structures" of schooling left students with a sense of powerlessness that further strained teacher-student relationships (p. 230). Phelan, Yu, and Davison (1994) found that students they described as Type II experienced a sense of powerlessness. These are students who experienced cultural differences between school and home lives. They write, " ...for these students...pressures they feel and their resulting fear of speaking up also emanates from their perception of differential power relations within their classroom contexts as well as suspicion or knowledge of their classmates prejudices" (p. 426). Practices emanating from this perspective leave little room for student voice. In contrast, a liberal view of authority often tends to disengage with the issue. Teaching practices relative to student voice would, based on this perspective, suggest that all ideas deserve equal time. This leads to the type of dilemma Hynds (1997) spoke of in describing situations in which the teacher did not respond to the racist perspectives of students.

Darder (1997) contrasted both of these positions to what she calls an emancipatory or liberatory view.

A teacher operating from this perspective, would, through critical reflection and examination of the issues of power and authority, have an understanding of the constructs and her use of them to construct relationships, define truth, and create social conditions that can potentially either subordinate or empower bicultural students (p. 337).

If teachers hold negative assumptions or distorted views about power or authority, these will affect their practices in the classroom. If teachers are uncritical in their understanding of authority as it impacts on them personally and if they are unaware of the contradictions and conflicting attitudes they may have about power as it is involved in organizations such as schools, they will be unable to foster a critical view of these issues in students (Darder, 1997). Similarly, teachers' assumptions and biases about culture and socioeconomic class will impact on their classroom practices. Seeing cultural diversity as a "melting pot" or espousing the view that students need merely to "pull themselves up by the bootstrap" deny the possibility of examining cultural issues related to dominance and power as they impact on bicultural students. Brantlinger (1993) found that the low income adolescents she studied granted the school "moral authority" over their lives as evidenced by the ways they accepted "unflattering" definitions of themselves, placed blame on themselves for their failures, and spoke of school as having a correctional role in their lives. Her analysis of factors leading to successful domination included legitimation and dissimulation. Legitmation refers to a view of school as "eminently" just or worthy of respect as

it provides a way out of poverty. In dissimulation the relations of domination remain unspoken and speak to equal opportunity, obscuring the existence of an uneven playing field. This phenomena of legitimation and dissimulation was noted in Stevenson and Ellsworth's (1993) study. They too found that students internalized blame because they could not reconcile school as a place that is "eminently good" and their own failure.

Agency and empowerment

Closely related, both linguistically and relationally to the notions of authority and power are those of empowerment and agency. The term "empowerment" is referred to regularly in the writings of critical theorists (Giroux, 1997; Ruiz, 1997; Ellsworth, 1989, Shor, 1992). The use of this term needs to be examined, for it has been used in ways that support a sense of agency but also used unreflectively to support practices that are disempowering.

Ruiz (1997) addresses this concern. He speaks of the use of the word "empowerment" as a transitive verb to suggest something that is done by someone to others, on behalf of others, or for others. Often this action is conducted on behalf of individuals considered "subjugated" or "disempowered", for example, the disabled, or language minority students. While those who seek to "empower" others may do so with good intentions, the process in actuality denies both voice and agency. Without voice and agency there is no such thing as empowerment. Ruiz is not suggesting that teachers are irrelevant to student agency. He disagrees with Cummins (1993) use of the term empowerment as it conveys a passive image of minority communities receiving empowerment as

one would a gift. Rather, Ruiz conceptualized the role of the teacher as creating conditions in which individuals, their students, can (or cannot) empower themselves. Ruiz maintained, "Empowerment comes when schools are inclusionary, when their pedagogy encourages critical, independent thinking and when they aim to find and build on a child's strengths rather than identified weaknesses" (1997, p. 322).

Through the medium of discourse, the possibility of an experience of human agency may be facilitated through the structure of the school. Schools that affirm and critically engage the polyphonic voices of students provide a sense of human agency. In contrast when student voices, particularly those of resistance are responded through mechanisms of control, their "sense of lived reality is dissolved under the ideology of control" (Giroux, 1997). Ruiz addressed this issue as well. He wrote, "To have a voice implies not just that people can say things, but that they are heard, this is, their words have status, influence (1997, p. 321). Implied here is the role of the teacher, or other adults. To allow the expression of voice without giving credence to the message denies the possibility of agency.

Darder (1997), in endorsing a critical bicultural pedagogy, suggested that the moral and political agency of the student both in and out of school be recognized and stressed recognition of the role of historical and cultural context as they impact a student's experiences of agency. She defined a key goal of such a pedagogy as "....creating the conditions for the voices of difference to find their way in to the center of the dialogical process, rather than to remain forever

silent or at the fringes of American classroom life" (Darder 1997, p. 336). Only

through such a central position in the classroom setting can these students

> ...come together to speak out about their lives and engage in
>
> dialogues that permit them to examine their cultural values and
>
> social realities. In this way students can learn to make problematic
>
> their views of life; search for different ways to think about
>
> themselves; challenge their self imposed as well as institutionally
>
> defined limitations; affirm their cultural and individual strengths; and
>
> embrace the possibilities for a better world through a growing sense
>
> of solidarity built on love, respect, and compassion for one another
>
> and a commitment to the liberation of all people (Gramsci, 1971, in
>
> Shor 1992, p. 342).

Shor (1992) took a similar view regarding a curriculum or pedagogy that

creates conditions for empowerment. He explained, "the goals of this pedagogy

are to relate personal growth to public life, by developing strong skills, academic

knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power,

inequality, and change..." (Shor 1992, p.15). Such an education recognizes the

need to engage both the affect and mind of the students; both feelings and

thoughts (Brown, 1998; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993). The basis for such an

education is a view of the students as individuals "...whose voices are worth

listening to, whose minds can carry the weight of serious intellectual work, whose

thought and feeling can entertain transforming self and society (Shor 1992, p.

26). To do so requires identifying and building on student strengths rather than

focusing on deficits (Ruiz, 1997; Fine, 1991). The developing cognitive capabilities of adolescents provide increasing opportunities for a strengthened sense of agency.

<u>The Construct of Adolescence</u>

Stanley Hall's (1904) book titled *Adolescence* was published at a time when the years between childhood and adulthood were beginning to be constructed as a clearly defined period in one's life. It evolved, in part, because of the changing economic structures and realities and the advent of compulsory education (Galatzer-Levy and Cohler, 1993; Hynds, 1997). As is true of the discourse of any construct, there are dangers in the failure to explicitly and critically examine it. It is often "rendered transparent by our own familiarity with it" (Finders 1997, p. 117).

In an attempt to define this stage of life, there is risk of constructing it in such a way as to overlook the complexities of the experiences of youth at this stage of their lives. Historical, cultural, economic, and social factors contribute to the complexity and diversity of the lives of these students (Finders, 1997; Tatum, 1997; Cannella, 1998). Galatzer-Levy and Cohler (1993) explained,

> Adolescence alters meanings and social relationships more than
> any other developmental epoch. Puberty, societal understandings
> of adolescence, and an increasingly complex role intertwine with
> cognitive changes and a changing sense of futurity to transform the
> adolescent's experience of self in relation to others (p. 189).

Erikson (1968) identified the task of developing a sense of identity as the primary developmental challenge of adolescents. He stressed the importance of continuity of character and solidarity with the ideals of groups, as well as a congruence between personal experience and external events Others recognize the existence of personal and socially constructed identities that develop through multiple group membership (Hurtado, 1996; Steinitz and Solomon, 1986; Giroux, 1997).

This period of time is often described as one of "stress and storm"[5] in which adolescents have universal needs for greater autonomy, increased contact with and influence by the peer group, and distance from adults (Galazer-Levy, 1993; Finders, 1997). The increased development of their cognitive capacities provides students an increased capacity to reflect on themselves in an abstract way (Finders, 1997; Hynds, 1997; Galatzer-Levy and Cohler, 1993; Erikson, 1968). "The adolescent capacity for self-reflection (and resulting self-consciousness) allows one to ask, "Who am I now? 'Who was I before?' 'Who will I become?'" (Tatum, 1997, p. 20). Galatzer-Levy and Cohler (1993) made a similar observation.

> Within the context of intense societal fantasy about adolescents,
> the youngster, newly aware of future possibilities and more
> concerned with the developmental narrative than ever before,
> confronts the challenge of organizing talents, skills, attitudes,
> values, and family traditions into a story that guides attempts at
> achievement and meets needs for a sense of personal continuity,

integrating the presently experienced past, present, and future into

a cohesive, comprehensible life narrative (p. 186).

While there seems to be support for a developmental path that supports

these characteristics as intrinsic to this time period, failure to take into account

differences due to gender, race, culture, class, and other factors, risks an

oversimplified accounting of students at this age and constrains the way that

teachers and others view their students and potentially limits decisions regarding

the curriculum and student teacher relationships (Benjamin, 1998; Cohen, 1993;

Phelan, et al., 1998; Zavala, 2000).

Cannella (1998) suggested that unexamined generalizations regarding the

discourse related to young people and their development results in denial of

voice, power, agency, and the reality of their current existence. If adults are

viewed as the epitome of full development, then it is easier to dismiss the voices

of youth as they are not yet fully developed.

"Adolescents assess their 'social location' and form ideas about their

future including the definition of success, conceptions of maturity, and standards

to judge their progress along the way" (Lane in Steinitz and Solomon, 1986, p.

134). Demographic differences such as socioeconomic variations within a

population, the size of the community, type of community (e.g.. urban), emotional

supports, educational resources, adult models, degree of consensus or conflict

within the community about what children should value and how they should

behave as well as the insularity or openness of the community affect youth and

the range of power and privilege encountered in each place. "Ethnic, economic,

and political history of a particular place is a critical mediator of demographic facts as they are experienced" (Steinitz and Solomon, 1986, p. 145).

Adolescent's opportunities for development of a sense of agency relate to opportunities for authentic participation. The response of teachers to their expression of voice is a factor in such development.

Student Voice and Teacher Voice in the Classroom

Student voice has been studied in both college classrooms (Tarule, 1996; Fisher, 2001; Shor, 1992; Ellsworth, 1989; Monarchy, 1996) and middle and secondary level classrooms. Numerous studies at the high school level and a smaller number at the middle school level shed light on the factors affecting student voice and on the complexities of this concept. In some of these studies, adolescents themselves have taken on the role of the co-researcher (Bechtel and Reed, 1998; SooHoo, 1993). Some spoke to the existence of an "uneven playing field", noting that access to cultural capital varies among students due to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, and ability (Hynds, 1997; Finders, 1997; McNeil, 1986; Fine, 1992). As a result, student experiences of the official curriculum as they interact with it varies. Students make sense of learning through a cultural process. New learning may or may not link with prior knowledge and experiences to form a coherent whole.

The learning process has consequences for students who do not find themselves reflected in the curriculum, or who find learning which is inconsistent with lived experiences (Brown, 1998). Students may deny their own identity or dismiss their own experiences in an attempt to master the official curriculum.

Others may reject it as alien (Alton-Lee. et. al, 1993). As a result of the lack of validation or legitimization of their lived experiences, students may respond with silence, resistance transfer from the school or drop out (Stevenson and Ellsworth, 1993; Fine, 1994; Brown, 1998). For some, uneven access to cultural capital, may interfere with the development of knowledge if prior knowledge of the topic or general fund of information is different from that of the "norm." McElroy-Johnson (1993) saw her African-American students as having little security in speaking in class discussions and a fear of writing as a consequence of the "historical muting and stifling" they have experienced.

Hynds (1997), Alton-Lee, et al., (1993), and Fine (1993) maintained that the teacher plays a critical role in facilitating opportunities for students to express themselves or mediating situations when their voices are disrespected. Hynds (1997) observed that in a classroom based on a constructivist approach to literacy with middle school adolescents that

> the places of greatest interest, tension, and contradiction were not openly articulated by the participants, but seemed to lie in the nonverbal negotiations beneath the "official" classroom text of writing or speech. These negotiations seemed to point to *sociopolitical* forces that seldom surfaced in the *words* of the teacher and students, but seemed to permeate every aspect of the classroom *world* (p. 74).

Based on her findings, she suggested that the teacher, in the learner-centered classroom she had created needed to "step in" and "set parameters for what kind

of talk is acceptable and what is damaging to others" (p.263). The teacher with her concern for valuing personal choice and the "sanctity" of the students' authentic voices, was in actuality, through her hands-off approach, creating a situation where some voices were silenced as others were privileged.

In discussing her findings based on a study of a junior high social studies unit on the holocaust, Melinda Fine (1993) asked, "How should beliefs that some regard as "wrong" be handled in the classroom?" and "What are the repercussions of silencing these viewpoints or, alternatively, allowing then to be voiced freely?"(p.418). These questions were raised as a result of her observation of certain voices being privileged.

Alton-Lee (1993) noted that the ways in which cultural issues are navigated, will influence the likelihood of private or public participation. The degree to which students perceive the risk of expressing a divergent view, or responding incorrectly will be a factor in the extent of their participation. The role the teacher played in reinforcing a particular, privileged view impacted the degree to which students participated and either fostered or diminished their identities.

McElroy-Johnson (1993) saw the teacher as playing an active role in expanding students view of themselves and others through experiences in the English curriculum. She saw the teacher as fostering in the students an inner understanding of their identity, culture, responsibility, and self, allowing them to live in the larger world effectively despite the limitations placed on them. She saw knowledge as power; power to have a voice in the development of their own

lives. For McElroy-Johnson, the teacher's role encompassed dealing with the historical, social, political context in which her student's lived and learned.

Hynds (1997), too, saw the role of the teacher as having a political dimension. While recognizing the hesitancy of the teacher to avoid this role, due perhaps to personal discomfort, or lack of sanctioning of this role of teachers by society at large, she recognized that to avoid this role, to avoid acknowledging the complex social realities in the classroom, was to create a climate where some students were silenced.

Michelle Fine (1992) addressed the experiences of high school students and their experiences of voice. She concluded that silencing was pervasive in the school experiences of low-income students. Their passions, concerns, and biographies were rendered irrelevant. In response to finding their voices devalued, some students developed "academic voices" to use at school that were incongruent with their personal voices. She found that while there were "whispers of resistance", the voices of students who dissented were banished through administrative practices such as formal expulsion or encouragement to drop out.

Teacher Voice

The ways in which student voice and teacher voice are inextricably linked is suggested by the role of the teacher in supporting or discouraging student voice in each of the studies described in the preceding section. This research suggests that teacher voice can result in students experiencing a sense of agency or disempowerment displayed through silence, resistance, or dropping

out (Alton-Lee et al, 1993; Fine, 1993; Hynds, 1997; Fine, 1994). The role of power and authority as it relates to teacher voice has previously been discussed.

Ellsworth (1989) spoke to factors constraining and expanding legitimate expression of teacher voice. She gave recognition to the ways in which the voice of the teacher can marginalize others particularly when the teacher speaks with authority about issues they lack knowledge or experience while discrediting the experiential knowledge of students. At the same time, the process she undertook to negotiate the place for her voice and the voices of students presents possibilities for genuine dialogue.

While not speaking directly about discursive communities, she made note of the fluid and multiple identities of teachers. Her understanding of identity as multiple is compatible with an understanding of the multiple discourse communities in which all individuals participate (Gee, 1996; Biklin, 1995; Putman and Borko, 2000). So, for example, in schools, teachers bring with them a set of assumptions and beliefs regarding particular types of children or families, the meaning of particular styles of communication, and particular ways of being (Brantlinger, 1993; Muller et al., 1999; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993). These discourses shape the ways "they make their teaching their own and represent teaching to themselves and others" (Biklin, 1995, p. 19). She spoke to the power of discourses to shape teachers' understandings of their experiences and to serve as the lens through which they see the daily interactions and events in school. Based on a frame of reference much like Gee (1996) she wrote, "People working in an institution can be disciplined by the discourse with out directly

intending to be and without having the rules of practice directly articulated to them...(Biklin, 1995, p. 81). While Bilkin recognized the individual agency of the teacher in interpreting, shaping, negotiating, or resisting these shared meanings represented in discourses, they can have a powerful effect at both the conscious and unconscious level. Putman and Borko (2000) also addressed the power of discourse communities to "...enculturate participation into traditional activities and ways of thinking" (p. 10). Practical conflicts and issues that arise in the process of teaching are embedded in the epistemological base that teachers bring with them to the classroom. Such epistemological dimensions include: the complex relation between teacher knowledge and values, assumptions about knowing, conception of the teacher, herself, and the students as "knowers," perceptions of the context of the school, relationships within the school setting, the teacher's pedagogical skills, the teachers subject knowledge, and a sense of what students need (Lyons, 1990).

<u>Looking Forward</u>

Each of the themes in this chapter, the metaphor of voice, the power of language, the political nature of education, authority and power, and agency have relevance to the findings of this study. The perspectives of these theorists and researchers provide a framework for understanding the experiences of the students, teachers, and their interactions at Community Middle School.

Chapter Two provides a broader framework for understanding the dynamics that existed in the classroom at Community Middle School. It identifies aspects of the political, economic, social, and educational context that directly

and indirectly impact schooling as it exists in the classroom. It concludes with a description of central aspects of the classroom setting that are significant to the study. The teacher's philosophy and orientation to teaching are described as is the curriculum, and participation structures she created for implementing the curriculum. Following a broader description of the student population, a sketch of the students who were key participants in the study is provided.

Chapter Three focuses on methodological considerations, particularly the dilemmas involved in conducting research based on a feminist methodology. Building on Chapter Two, specific information is provided relating to the site and the processes of obtaining informed consent, data collection and analysis. The remainder of the chapter explores the role of the researcher in a study that is based on a feminist methodology.

Chapter Four focuses on notions of care and responsibility as defined and actualized by the teacher and students. Imbedded in these notions are issues related to power and authority. The impact of the teacher's interactions as she implemented the curriculum illustrate the sometimes subtle but powerful ways in which classroom dynamics contribute to students' sense of agency, the teacher's sense of agency, and the students' tendency to blame themselves for their perceived failures. Finally, alternative perspectives on care, responsibility, pedagogy, and agency are explored with the chapter ending with a reconceptualization of care and responsibility particularly as it relates to pedagogy.

Chapter Five focuses on knowledge. Issues related to the definition of knowledge and learning: what is considered to be legitimate knowledge, how it is conceptualized within the context of the curriculum, and how it is taught and organized are examined in the context of this specific classroom. The ways in which teacher and students accommodated to and at times resisted the organized curriculum are explored as are the tensions and contradictions between the goal of educating and controlling students. The ways in which these definitions and decisions impacted what and how students learned (content and form of knowledge) and the meaning they made of their learning experiences are explored. As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) suggested, "...the way we define thinking exerts a profound impact on the nature of our schools, the role that teachers play in the world, and the shape that society will ultimately take" (p. 174).

Chapter Six explores in more depth the ways in which their experiences in school impact the identity of both the teacher and students. Aspects of identity including age, gender, race, ethnicity, and social class membership impacted interactions among them and in a reciprocal fashion impacted their on-going identity development. For the students, questions related to what it means to be an adolescent at this school, how that identity can be expressed and how messages from the teacher, curriculum, and peers affect that expression are explored. For the teacher, who continues to question her competence, the issues are similar. How do the messages she receives from school officials, parents, and students affect her identity? In what ways might her own awareness or lack

thereof of the norms and values embedded in her ideology and way of thinking about the world as well as the ways of viewing the world that her students bring to the classroom impact her identity and experiences in the classroom.

Chapter Seven revisits the original research questions. Implications for both individuals and schools are suggested based on the findings of the study. Questions that arose during the course of this research are presented as they suggest further paths for on-going research.

The Appendices contain copies of forms and the questionnaire. Appendix B focuses on an analysis of the quantitative data as it relates to the research questions.

<u>Endnotes</u>

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[1] The literature is replete with reference to the term "voice". Both feminist authors and critical theorists use it metaphorically. What is common to its various meanings is the notion that voice suggests the use of language to articulate that which is important whether its importance is of a personal or political dimension. It has been used to speak of ethical and moral development, in relation to cognitive and personal development, and as a component of emancipatory pedagogy. As used in this manuscript it includes thoughtful consideration by others of that which is articulated.

[2] Bicultural students are those who by virtue of their membership in racial and/or ethnic minority groups are members of two cultures; the mainstream, dominant culture and that of their subculture. As such they experience the traditions, values, beliefs, language and ways of being consistent with each culture. These ways may conflict or be contradictory. Those who support these students in maintaining their bicultural identity generally use this term.

[3] Dialogism is a term that emphasizes the interactive nature of knowledge. Meanings and understandings are gleaned in the broader social and historical context and through interactions with others in that particular time and place. Meanings communicated affect others to various degrees and in various ways as there is constant interaction between meanings. Ventrilocation refers to the process individuals go through in which they appropriate words and meanings

from other. The process entail taking the words of others and punctuating them with one's own personal meaning.

[4] Gee uses the term "Discourses" with the "D" capitalized to refer to ways of being in the world that are inclusive of language but go beyond language to include values, attitudes, beliefs, and ways of interacting that are associated with social identity, position, or being a "certain kind of person". When referring to and discussing his work specifically, the term will be capitalized to remain consistent with his intent.

[5] The conceptualization of adolescence as a period of "stress and storm" has been critiqued by many as it sets in place a set of expectations regarding adolescent behavior and contributes to the notion of the universal adolescent. While it may have been intended to point to the many changes that happen during this time, its use suggests a negative quality to this time of growth.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATING THE SCHOOL

Introduction

In order to more fully understand the dynamics in the classroom at Community Middle School, historical, political, economic, social, and educational factors at the local level are considered. These impacted on the experiences of the students and their teacher and provided a broader framework for understanding the dynamics in the classroom.

Community and School

Community Middle School[i] is located in a large urban city in the Midwest. In contrast to many of the schools in the large public school district that is responsible for educating all students of school age residing in this city, Community Middle School was newly constructed within the last three years. This three story light brick building, the parking lot, and the large grassy playing field encompass a city block. The spaciousness of the school and surrounding land is particularly marked, given the congestion and small parcels of land on which the surrounding houses and businesses are built. Its new construction stands out among all of the older buildings in the area. The heavily traveled street on the north end of the school property is home to many small businesses. Occupying space in buildings constructed up to eighty years ago are bakeries, grocery stores, and restaurants reflecting the largely Latino population of the immediate area. The juxtaposition of signs advertising traditional breads and

pastries with the sign in the window of one bakery announcing the availability of "cappuccino" is a metaphor for the competing demands felt by residents of this community, between maintaining their cultural identity and being assimilated into the larger society. The WIC[ii] office occupies the same building as a large chain drug store. Liquor stores, laundromats, an adult video store, auto repair shop, and small warehouses are interspersed along the stretch of road a mile or two on either direction from the school.

Single and multiple family homes, many of which were built in the 1930's, span the side streets. Typical to this area, they are built closely together. Some of the homes are owned by families of students in the school; however, most are rented. A process of gentrification of many neighborhoods in this district has impacted the families and schools. Within the neighborhood of the school there are neighborhood preservation groups documenting the historic significance of the area, with one web site warning to avoid the "seedy side" of the area. The school is located in this "seedy area". Within a several mile radius there are historic mansions and turn-of the-century greystones selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars as well as a school in which 96.2% of the children are considered "low-income". Nearly 90% of the students in the school are of Latino heritage (School Report Card, 1999)[iii].

Students speaking about their experiences at Community Middle School nearly all initially spoke of the physical characteristics of the building – its newness, the wide hallways, the courtyard, the absence of vandalism, and the large though rarely used playing fields. As is true of all schools in this district, one

walks through metal detectors and signs in before proceeding to any other area of the school. These metal detectors serve as a daily reminder that the school--with the pastoral quality of its landscaped courtyard in the center of the building, the large classrooms with new furnishings, and the large windows providing for the infusion of natural light--exists in an area and during a time when violence is on the minds of both students and school officials.

The significance of the social, historical, cultural, and political context became increasing apparent during the days, weeks, and months that followed the first walk through the metal detectors. This district, like many across the country, is heavily influenced by the national focus on accountability and standards. The fact that the achievement levels of students in this district, like those of many other urban districts, were far below national standards had led to district wide reform efforts that impacted students and teachers alike.

In addition to state standards the district had developed its own standards and aligned them with those of the state. Students in this district take the state-mandated tests, but the Iowa Test of Basic Skills[iv], which is given on a yearly basis, was the one that became the focus of the teachers' and students' emotional energy during this study. The significance of the tests was magnified in this middle school, as the seventh grade scores were used by the high schools as a criteria to determine admission for students seeking to attend a school outside their immediate neighborhood school[v]. The eighth grade scores were used to determine eligibility for graduation. Of the 120 students on the team that was part of this research less than half were to meet the cut off scores necessary

for graduation. The fact that only approximately 24% of the students were achieving at grade level was a major concern to the school and the district. School-wide scores were indicative of the cause of this concern as well. The results of the 1999 standardized achievement tests indicated that only 23.5% of the students in this school were performing at or above national levels in reading comprehension. This compared to a district wide percentage of 35.9%. A similar discrepancy was noted in math (School Report Card, 1999).

In order to foster an environment in which students and teachers developed relationships that were conducive to many adolescents' social and academic needs, the organizational structure of this school, like that of most middle schools, consists of grade level groups called houses, which are subdivided into teams. While the entire school population is approximately 800, students interact in classrooms only with those on their particular team. Students were assigned randomly to these teams, with the exception of one group of students on the transitional bilingual team and one group of students who were repeating eighth grade in an attempt to raise their achievement to the level required for graduation to high school.

Each team is made up of four homeroom teachers and a special education teacher. Students remain with this team of teachers for the two years they are in this middle school. When sixth graders are eventually added to the school, students will stay with their teams for three years. While the students are on the same team for two years, their homeroom teacher may change. The teachers on the team determine homeroom composition. There is no tracking,

although one of the homerooms on the team that was part of this research was placed together because the teachers saw them as less outspoken and with lower level skill development. The teachers believed that these students would have a better chance of developing their abilities if they were placed together. Academic instruction is organized around an AB block schedule. Students received reading instruction each day for 90 minutes in their homerooms and on alternate days had math and social studies or science and language arts for 90-minute periods. Students on this particular team attended exploratory (music, computer, or physical education) following their short morning homeroom period.

In addition to the standard school day there is an after school program in operation through the beginning of the fourth quarter of a ten month academic year. Students who need additional support in reading or math are able to participate in this program three days a week, immediately after school. There is also a smaller program for students who excel in academics to receive enrichment during this after-school time.

The Teacher

"The feminist pedagogue ... [is] the individual who introduces caring into home, classroom, and curriculum, encouraging children to learn and providing them with the tools and skills they need to become successful life long learners" (Helen, 1994, p. 41). Those concluding words, taken from her master's thesis and written during her first year of teaching, capture Helen's approach to teaching. At the time of this research, she was in her fifth year of teaching. During these years she had changed schools three times and had for the first

time found a school in which she as teacher felt heard by the administration. Despite the passion she feels for teaching, prior to her arrival at this school the previous year she was ready to leave the field.

In an initial meeting in her home several months before the study began she spoke passionately about her love for teaching, equating being unable to teach with having a limb cut off. She indicated this day and on numerous occasions over the next eight months that, after five years of teaching, the beliefs and values articulated in her master's thesis were consistent with her current beliefs and were held as strongly as in 1994[vi].

In her thesis she spoke of the contradictory views of knowledge and the roles teachers were to play. She said,

> I believe that teachers are currently caught in the worst of double binds. We talk about nurturing and caring in college. We learn about Dewey's 'whole child'. We discuss the need of urban school children and then we are sent into classrooms where the product and the competition to achieve is everything. We place value and reward on teacher to student relationship, based solely on test scores (Helen, 1994, p. 28).

Despite having found a school where she felt valued and empowered to implement her beliefs to a greater degree than she had at any other school, the tension articulated in her thesis continued to haunt her.

She clearly saw her role as more inclusive than teaching academic skills. In 1994 she wrote that her job as feminist teacher was to

...encourage cooperation, interaction, critical thinking, and

creativity...It is the recognition of care, nurturance, cooperation and

empathy into the classroom and valuing those traits, not as

feminine but as a way of teaching and learning that will enable

students to succeed in life, not just pass a Constitution test (Helen,

1994, p. 26, 41).

The joys and many frustrations she experienced as her students entered the last

semester of their eighth grade year centered around the contradictions in what

knowledge was important and what seemed to her like a lack of recognition on

the students' part, of the importance of successfully navigating the requirements

for graduation.

Combined with the concern for their academic success was one for their

personal development. In her thesis she wrote that she tried to get students

"...to think about who and what they are everyday...and to see themselves and

value themselves in relation to the world around them "(Helen, 1994, p. 29). She

experienced extreme frustration when she perceived that students made

decisions or acted in ways that would adversely affect their futures or when they

seemed not to understand the need to do well in school, especially given what

she saw as their disadvantaged position as minority students living in poverty. In

her dedication to the "Community Anthology" developed by her class she wrote,

"May they [students] continue to seek creative outlets for their many fine

capabilities. I hope they will look back and remember 1999-2000 as a good year,

and remember me as a teacher who cared deeply for their futures."

The challenge of balancing her personal life and professional life, balancing her role as a teacher for whom caring for her students was an underlying value with her role as parent was one with which Helen struggled. In her thesis she wrote, "None of the literature addresses the frustration and guilt that teachers feel when they spend so much time caring for other peoples' children" (Helen, 1994, p. 32). While sitting in her living room in November, with her family periodically adding to the conversation, Helen explained that this balance was still a struggle. She spoke of one of her daughter's drawings, in which the pizza deliveryman was included in a portrait she drew of her family. This balancing act continued to be a challenge, and at times the conflict she experienced regarding it complicated her relationships with her students.

It was on this November day, while talking over coffee surrounded by the sights and sounds of home remodeling and her children going about their Saturday activities, that she indicated an interest in participating in this study. She found the topic of the research to be one that resonated with her values and philosophy. She also hoped that through her participation, she would receive feedback on her teaching and confirmation that, as she put it, "she walked the talk". The themes--introduced that day, the balancing of the personal and the professional; the relationships among the administration, teachers, students, and parents; the value of students' voices, her specific ways of nurturing students and their growth; and her passion for teaching--were woven through her experiences and those of her students as they lived out the remainder of the year. The complexities and complications of trying to negotiate a space in which

both her voice and that of her students could be heard played itself out on a daily basis in the classroom. The tensions revolving around the spring testing, the students' responses to it, and her conflicted views of it, combined with the ways it impacted her identity as a teacher, were reflected in her sometimes contradictory practices.

Helen taught four eighth grade social studies classes and a reading class. Given her focus on an interdisciplinary approach to social studies that emphasized reading, writing, and oral expression, it was thought that ample opportunity would be available in this context to study student voice. Due to the use of block scheduling, two of these social studies classes were held each day. The classes met for approximately 90 minutes. The reading class met daily for 90 minutes each day as well.

The Curriculum

The curriculum reflected the contradictions of current school reform initiatives. In part, these contractions focused on the tensions between implementation of current trends in the area of teaching reading and the skill based approach of standardized testing initiatives. Helen used a "literature circle" approach as the foundation of her reading curriculum. A paper chain, each link containing the name of a book read by one of the students in the homeroom, encircled the room. Many of the links were faded from exposure over the months to sunlight.

The entire back of the room was lined with rubber baskets of paperback books that Helen had either purchased with her own money or purchased

through a grant. The books were grouped according to categories that included mystery, historical fiction, and adventure. For most of the year students were given a choice of books to read. During the last three months of the school year the students read historical fiction that related to their studies in social studies class, thus providing an interdisciplinary approach to the curriculum. The focus on interdisciplinary teaching was central to the curriculum of the final quarter of the school year. In reading, English, social studies, and some math classes, students studied the Holocaust over a nine-week period.

During the preceding nine-week grading period, the social studies curriculum had focused on the first forty years of the twentieth century. While they were studying the Depression of 1929, they read several historical novels reflecting that time period.

Throughout the semester classroom activities in social studies included reading from the textbook as well as handouts from the "*Facing History, Facing Ourselves*" Curriculum[vii], discussions and worksheets related to these readings, movies, speakers, field trips, and a timeline project. Student learning was not assessed through paper and pencil tests. At times students were expected to read independently, and at other times Helen read the material to them. Despite Helen's invitation to participate in whole class oral discussion, students rarely participated. This reticence was a source of significant frustration for her. Students worked in groups of four to complete the timeline project over a several-week period. Students often talked among themselves as they completed worksheets in class.

The Participation Structures Used in the Classroom

Within the classroom the participation structures of learning activities themselves were largely of two types: whole group activities and small group activities. Whole group activities, as referred to in this chapter and those that follow, are those in which the teacher asked questions of the class as a whole. These questions were often related to a handout or reading that she had read to the class or in some cases the class had read independently. Both the teacher and students expressed frustration with their experiences in whole group activities. Small group activities were those in which the students worked collaboratively in groups of three to four to complete academic tasks. In some cases these involved writing answers to questions and in other cases responses to projects. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, within the context of this classroom the teacher's voice, the voices of other students, and the curriculum itself at different points facilitated expression of student voice and at other times blocked it. At times the students' responses to the teacher's invitations to participate seemed contradictory even to themselves.

The role of the students in each of these learning structures was markedly different. While a sense of cooperation and mutual support marked descriptions students provided of their interactions in small groups, fear of a negative response from others contributed heavily in their explanations of the limited amount of participation in whole class activities. With the exception of two or three students any student who did participate did so in a voice that was barely audible. In addition, their answers were brief, generally no more than a few

words. While other factors added to the complexity of the different contexts, interactions with Helen and their peers were seen as significant to some students in both whole class and small group learning experiences.

The role of the teacher differed in these two types of activities as well. While leading the class in whole group lessons, Helen was generally animated, used humor that was at times sarcastic, cajoled, and lectured about the importance of an education. These lessons often ended in frustration for Helen over the lack of responsiveness to her questions. Students often spent the remainder of the class period on an independent assignment.

<u>The Students</u>

Students enter the middle school from five feeder elementary schools. Of the students who participated in this study 6% identified themselves as African-American, 2% as Ecuadorian, 40% as Mexican, 32% as Puerto Rican, and 17% as members of two or more cultural groups. Of these, 4% identified as African-American and Latino; 6% specifically identified as Latino and White, and 7% as Mexican and Puerto Rican. Of the total group 75% of those who indicated that they were of Latino heritage, said that they spoke both English and Spanish.

The parents of those students who identified as Puerto Rican were the first generation to attend school in this city. This was during a time when bilingual services were largely unavailable. Many of them experienced difficult school years. They attended schools when the drop out rate for Puerto Rican students in this city was 71% (Nieto, 2000). One of the social service professionals at the school, who himself had lived some of his life in Puerto Rico and some on the

continent, reported that while many of these parents want their children to do well, they have lost hope and their dreams for what their lives would be like in the United States have largely been dashed. They are often at odds with school personnel regarding the education of their children; their own negative experiences with the public schools are felt to be a significant factor in their lack of trust and confidence that the schools have the best interest of their children in mind (Interview PR).

While many of the students in this study consider themselves bilingual, some spoke of the difficulty they had communicating in Spanish with family members. The loss of the richness and complexity of their native language has impacted families from the Puerto Rican community in this area. The students were often reluctant to take material home to their parents that was written in Spanish. While it was expected, based on information from the teacher, that larger proportions of consent forms in Spanish would be required, the majority of the students requested forms in English.

The second largest ethnic group of students at the school was Mexican-American. For many of them either they or older siblings were the first to attend school in the United States. Other students have ethnic links to Colombia, Guatemala, and Belize. Two indicated Hispanic and African-American heritage and three others Hispanic and White heritage.

Key Participants

The students described in the following pages were key participants in this research. While data from all students was incorporated into the findings, the voices of these particular students and their experiences and interactions in the classroom played a significant role in advancing an understanding of students' perspectives and experiences. The following descriptions provide a glimpse into the lives of these students. Pseudonyms are used here and throughout the following chapters.

Maria Victoria, as she asked to be called, was born to parents who had moved from Mexico at the age of nineteen. She was born in Chicago and is the second of two children. Her father works in a factory in the suburbs, and her mother cares for their home. Unlike many of the families in this area her family owns their home, and had the financial resources to send her older brother to a private high school. Maria Victoria herself will attend a private religious school in the fall. Maria's brother attends a local state university and is studying computers. While her father is bilingual, Maria's mother cannot speak or understand enough English to communicate with others in any language other than Spanish.

Maria Victoria began school at the age of four. She remained in the same school until seventh grade, when she enrolled in the Community Middle School. Although she was placed in English-speaking classes throughout her pre-school and elementary grade years, she was placed in a bilingual class at the beginning of seventh grade. She does not know why this decision was made but attributes it to the fact that her mother does not speak English. An assumption was made

that she too lacked skills in English. She was very troubled by this placement and after intervention on the part of her mother was placed mid-year on the team that was part of this study. Nuclear and extended family responses to school success impact significantly on her school experiences. She was one of the first students to return her permission slip.

Elisa, who is Puerto Rican, was born in California and attended pre-school and kindergarten there. She attended one of the feeder elementary schools to Community Middle School from first grade through sixth grade. She, like several of the other students interviewed, looked wistfully back at her previous school as a place where she was more successful. This is not to say that she idealized that time. She recounted a period of bullying in fourth grade and a difficult teacher in sixth. It was not until seventh grade that she was required to attend the summer program due to receiving low test scores. She lives with her mom, step-dad, and brothers and is close to her extended family. She performed a gymnastics routine for the student talent show held in the spring of her eighth grade year. She wanted to do well in class, was sensitive to the opinion of her teacher and other adults, and was eager to please. She struggled with balancing friendships and doing her schoolwork in class. In the hallway, she would often engage in sometimes playful and sometimes angry encounters with male students. While she did not talk about them in interviews, she seemed to be involved in some gang-related disputes in the community that took place at the neighborhood park one spring afternoon.

Martha is Puerto Rican. She was one of the few students who participated in whole class discussions with any degree of regularity. At least among several groups of girls she was respected for her knowledge. She has goals of becoming an attorney some day and does not see any obstacles to reaching this goal other than economic ones. Her test scores, which were at the ninth and tenth grade level, were among the highest of her team in both reading and math, and she was selected to attend a high school out of her immediate attendance area. Although Martha was initially concerned about the presence of the researcher, she was one of the few students who seemed to know what a doctoral degree was and was a willing and forthcoming participant in interviews.

Gloria, a Puerto Rican student, was the focus of much of her teacher's anger and frustration. She was often the student who would answer questions when visitors came into the room to ask about what the class was studying. Unlike most students in the class, she was willing to speak her mind without apparent concern about the teacher's response. On one of the last few days of the school year she engaged in a lengthy conversation with Helen in which she expressed her concern that Helen had many months ago given up on her. She was initially hesitant about being interviewed, but during the last three weeks of the school year she indicated that she would like to participate in the study and be interviewed. It was not until the last week of the summer program that she returned a signed permission slip from her mother. Despite the value she placed on speaking her mind, she often did it in such a way as to anger her teachers. Her teachers would often ask the researcher if Gloria could be interviewed in the

last few weeks of the year, as her presence in the room was disruptive and they wished for her to leave class. She was aware of this situation and wanted to go with the researcher on numerous occasions. Gloria lived with her mother, older brother, and younger siblings.

Sonia lives with her mother, cousins, and grandmother. She has attended five different schools in two states but was born in Chicago. She expresses pride in her Puerto Rican heritage and travels back and forth to Puerto Rico, visiting various family members there. Unlike the other students who participated in the study Sonia had a job outside of school. Several days a week during the summer, she helped with the children at a daycare center. She was a cooperative student during the year but had a strong reaction to not graduating with her class in June. She expressed frustration at always being good but not receiving recognition from teachers. During the summer she regularly violated school rules regarding attendance and dress code and verbally challenged her teacher.

Eric is an African-American student who entered Community Middle School during the first semester of his eighth grade year. He has lived all of his life in Chicago and has attended several schools. He underwent significant changes in his school performance during the course of the study. Early in the study he was a source of frustration to his teacher for his lack of work completion and his disruptive behavior. By March he had begun to focus more seriously on his work, and his relationship with Helen changed. After he was told that he would be attending the summer program because he did not meet the cut-off

score on the standardized test, he rarely completed any work and became disruptive in class again. He was reticent to elaborate on responses to interview question in both one-on-one interviews and small group interviews. In addition, he did not speak at length to anyone during the school day. He was one of three students from the team who did not graduate in August, even though the cut off scores were lowered by half of a point. On the last day of the summer session he sat with his hand on the graduation gown that had been ordered for him, with the recognition that he would not be joining the other students for summer graduation. He was scheduled to attend a transitional high school program while repeating eighth grade.

Carlos, a student of Mexican heritage, was a frequent contributor to class discussions. Although he had a learning disability that affected his reading ability, he took his studies very seriously and displayed pride in his studiousness. While he was not able to comprehend the eighth grade text, he was very attentive and benefited greatly from listening to his teachers. He had significant concerns about high school, as his older brother had been injured when a fellow student, whom Carlos described as a gangbanger, threw a brick at his head on school property. Until the last few weeks of class Carlos was unsure of his high school plans, as he had not been accepted at any high school and was unwilling to attend the neighborhood high school because of his fear of violence. During the last week of school he received the news that he had been accepted into a small dual-language college-preparatory charter school that focused on "community leadership and integrating Latino culture".

Cecelia's was born in Chicago to parents of Mexican descent. Her grades and test scores enabled her to graduate in June. She occasionally participated in class but regularly assisted her classmates who sat near her desk. At times she became the voice for others who wanted to participate in discussion but felt that the risk was too great. These students would tell her what they wanted to say, and she would say it aloud. She too, was accepted into a charter high school.

Finally, there was Michael. There was significant conflict between Michael and Helen, the teacher. Michael, an African-American student entered the school in the middle of the last semester of eighth grade after having attending several other schools in the district on the south side of town. He did not comply with the norms that defined the culture of the classroom. He was not shy about criticizing Helen or asking direct questions and spoke articulately about the significant differences between the school he previously had attended and the current school. His experience was similar to what was described by other students who were not the "good students".

The interactions between these students and Helen as they relate to issues of student and teacher voice are explored in Chapters Four through Six of this manuscript. Methodological considerations, including the process of data collection and analysis and the role of the researcher are discussed in Chapter Three.

ENDNOTES

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[i] Community Middle School is a pseudonym as is the name of the teacher and her students.

[ii] WIC is the acronym commonly used for the Women, Infant, and Children program. It is a federal program providing resources to women who are living in poverty.

[iii] Because pseudonyms are used to protect the privacy of the actual school, its teacher and students, the school report card, Helen's thesis, and the name of the website mentioned in this paragraph are not listed in the reference pages that follow this manuscript.

[iv] Hereafter, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills will be referred to as the ITBS. Students and teachers however, generally used the term "IOWAS" to refer to this test. When quoting students or teacher, the term they use to refer to the test is used. For consistency sake, when referring to their comments in the context of a particular segment of an interview, references to the test will be based on the term they used as well.

[v] In this particular district, students attend their neighborhood high schools unless they are accepted into another high school outside of their immediate attendance area. Results of the seventh grade scores on the ITBS are used as one criteria for determining acceptance into a school of their choice. In general students at Community Middle School applied to other high schools because the two neighborhood high schools are known as sites of gang conflict and are not considered to be high schools most would chose to attend. When students chose

to apply to a high school outside their immediate attendance area, they can apply to either a charter school that is part of the public system, a private religious school, or another typically organized high school with a better record of achievement and safety.

[vi] As is discussed in the following chapters, Helen's actual practice and her beliefs were not always consistent. An understanding of the values and beliefs she brings to the classroom are important for understanding the dynamics that existed in her classroom. As is true in all classrooms, the various discursive communities that have influenced teachers influence classroom practices and interactions.

[vii] The *Facing History, Facing Ourselves* Curriculum was designed for use in middle and secondary schools. As used in this classroom, it focused heavily on the Holocaust. It is also designed to explore with students the moral, social, and political issues in the present day and to give them an opportunity to explore the causes of racism, prejudice, and intolerance as they exist today.

CHAPTER 3

FEMINIST METHODOLOGY: DILEMMAS AND POSSIBILITIES

Introduction

Acknowledging the importance of understanding the complex ways in which students experience voice, this study was intended to explore and elaborate on the manifestation of voice in an eighth grade, urban public school classroom. In order to understand how students and their teacher experience voice in the classroom, an in-depth understanding of classroom context was essential. For purposes of this study it was important to understand not merely what students had to say about their experiences in school but how it was that they constructed meaning from their experiences. The descriptive data necessary to achieve such goals was best conducted in a naturalistic way, drawing on both ethnographic and qualitative traditions as well as quantitative traditions, in the setting or context in which the students spent their time. In this way it was possible to gain an understanding of the students' experiences and perspectives.

Utilizing critical elements of a feminist methodology (Reinharz, 1992; Carabine, 1996; DeVault, 1999; Fine, 1994; Weis, 1992), a multi-methods approach was used to develop an understanding of the multiple experiences and perspectives of the students. The influences and emphases of critical theory (Giroux, 1997; Freire, 1994; Brantlinger, 1993) and postmodernism (Brady, 2001; LeComte, 1993) as they related to voice further informed the processes of data

collection, analysis, and interpretation. This chapter details the process of data collection and analysis as well as methodological dilemmas, particularly those related to the role of the researcher.

<u>Data Collection</u>

The study began early in the second semester of the school year. Prior to beginning interviews, parent permission was secured. Versions of this form were made available in Spanish and English (see Appendix C). The classroom teacher and researcher collaboratively developed the text of the parent permission form. A primary consideration in developing this letter was the literacy level of the parents of the students in the classes. The study was explained to the students on several occasions, assuring that they had given informed assent and to clarifying any questions that their parents might have had. Parents and students were given the phone number of the researcher, the classroom teacher, and the institutional review board in the event they wanted additional information. Participation was voluntary. Fifty-three students participated. Two agreed only to complete the questionnaire. Three students were unavailable to complete the questionnaire due to absences from school. Confidentiality of students' responses was maintained, and pseudonyms were developed. In some cases students chose their own pseudonyms.

Many students agreed to participate in the study during the first week the permission forms were available, by signing the student assent form (see Appendix D). It was the parent consent forms that came in more slowly. In a few cases the delay in return of the parent consents seemed to be due to uncertainty

about participation; however, most delays appeared to be due to students forgetting either to take the consent forms home or to bring the signed consent back to school. Many students asked for an additional copy of the form because they had lost theirs. More than 15 additional parent consent forms were distributed to replace those that had been lost or misplaced. Interviews began in the later part of the semester and continued throughout the summer session. While the original plan had been to ask students to complete the questionnaire early in the study, the slow rate at which consent forms were returned, delayed the use of the questionnaire until it was felt that most parent consents had been returned. While the impact of standardized testing on the learning and school experiences was not intended to be a major focus of the study, it became an ongoing theme in the interviews. The timing of the study and its proximity to the testing and graduation certainly were factors in the prevalence of this theme.

Twenty-three group interviews were conducted and eight students were interviewed individually. Of the forty-eight students who were interviewed, eleven were interviewed multiple times either individually, in pairs, or in small groups of up to four students. The use of small group interviews seemed to promote a more comfortable situation for the students and proved to be helpful in gaining rapport, trust, and a more accurate understanding of their perspectives. Additionally, group interviews were helpful in decreasing misunderstandings due to language differences and in diminishing the impact of the researcher. A limitation at times was that it became difficult to determine if differences in perceptions within groups were hidden by an apparent sense of group

cohesiveness in response to interview questions. Classroom observations, examination of data from the survey, use of multiple interviews, and individual interviews with key participants who had also participated in group interviews provided a greater assurance that perceptions were genuine as was the researcher's understanding of them. While the teacher suggested those students who would most likely be comfortable being interviewed together, each student was asked about their comfort with the grouping before students were gathered for the interview. At other times students asked to be interviewed with a particular student or group of students. These requests were honored.

Most interviews were semi-structured with a set of guiding questions (See Appendix E) used for the first interview with each student or group of students. The use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews provided a means to understand the complexities of the students' perspectives without preconceived categories that might limit the inquiry (Fontana and Frey, 1994). As the study progressed, the number of students interviewed was narrowed down to gain a more complete understanding of the complexity of a few students' thoughts, interpretations, and perspectives and the meaning these students attached to their experiences of voice. For those students who were interviewed more than once interview questions served to examine "hunches" of the researcher over the course of data collection (Phelan, et. al., 1996), to clarify understanding of students' perceptions, and to explore themes suggested by review of previous interviews and observations.

Students seemed eager to be interviewed, although some were able to articulate their ideas in more depth than others. Rapport seemed to be easily established. However, in some cases, students were hesitant to talk about their experiences in their social studies class and seemed to open up more when "teachers" was used as a topic of interview questions. As Brantlinger (1993) found, almost all students began the interviews with positive "glib" comments about their school experiences that became more "reality-based" and complete as the interviews progressed.

All student interviews were tape recorded to assist in preserving the students' language so that the integrity of their ideas could be maintained (DeVault, 1999). Interviews were transcribed to allow for more careful listening. Through replaying tapes and reading transcriptions of both the students' words and paralanguage, it was possible for the researcher to be more aware of unexpected meanings or points of view that were missed in the face-to-face interview. This "polyphonic interviewing" (Fontana & Frey, 1994) approach also served to minimize the possibility of misinterpreting or misunderstanding due to filtering what was heard through theoretical frameworks, personal knowledge, or social position differences between students and researcher (DeVault 1999). Hesitations, periods of silence, variations in rate, volume, and emphasis were noted. These aspects of speech "signal the realm of not-quite-articulated experience, where standard vocabulary is inadequate, and where a respondent tries to speak from experience and finds language wanting....They are hints toward concerns that are generally unacknowledged" (DeVault, 1999, p. 69).

While the influence of the researcher could not be completely eliminated, it was hoped that by working to gain rapport; being cognizant of the impact of gender, racial, ethnic, or class differences between the students and researcher; taking careful notes; using the tape recorder; analyzing notes and interview transcripts frequently; and taking into account social, political, economic, and historical realities, complete and accurate data resulted. It had been hoped that all interviews could be transcribed prior to the students leaving for their summer break. Many students wanted to be interviewed, however, due to the delays in returning parent consent forms, a larger number were interviewed in the last few weeks prior to the end of the school year than had been previously planned. In some cases the delay in transcription diminished the richness of the data available due to unintelligible sections of the tapes.

Students completed the survey instrument, the "What's Happening in this Classroom?" Questionnaire (Fraser, McRobbie, and Fisher, 1996), at the end of May in their social studies classes. The teacher was present when they took the survey but remained at her desk. The questionnaire was distributed to students prior to reviewing instructions for completing it. Students were given an opportunity to ask questions regarding completion of the questionnaire. During the process the researcher answered individual students' questions regarding the mechanics of completing the instrument.

The instrument looked at seven dimensions of classroom environment: student cohesiveness, teacher support, involvement, investigation, task orientation, cooperation, and equity (see Appendix A). It was chosen because it

addressed elements of classroom climate that support the active involvement of students, consistent with a classroom in which student voice was valued. The items included in the dimensions of involvement and equity seemed particularly relevant to student voice. This questionnaire has been used in cross-national studies involving multiple research methods. More complete information about this instrument can be found in Appendix B.

Helen was interviewed formally several times during the study, and less formal communication was ongoing. Observations took place primarily in Helen's classroom. In addition, the researcher was in the other three classrooms for brief periods of times on multiple occasions. Students and their teachers were also observed as they interacted in the hallways, the lunchroom, a talent show, an awards assembly, and presentations by guest speakers. Also, while officially serving in the capacity of "chaperone", the researcher joined the students and teachers on several trips and later assisted with the August graduation practice and ceremony. Some field notes were taken during observations. These were re-written in a more complete form following observations, interactions, and interviews. Students' records including test scores were reviewed. As time went on, the researcher came to know many of the adults who worked in the school. Teachers from several teams, as well as individuals from the administrative, secretarial, security, and social service support staffs, shared their perspectives on the students and the school, often informally. Also observed were team meetings, a discipline committee meeting, and a tribunal[1].

Data Analysis

Field notes and interview notes were reviewed throughout the study, as were notes regarding tentative interpretations. The initial coding was based on Huberman and Miles (1994) use of general domains with codes suggested through a review of Bogdan and Biklen (1998). The following domains were used: activities, events, meanings or perspectives, language, strategies, and methods. Each of these codes was clearly defined, and the first several interviews were coded several times to check for consistency. Strategies suggested by Becker (1998) were used to conceptualize the data. The themes evolving from these processes led to the conceptual categories that became the focus of the remainder of the analysis. These categories became the focus of specific chapters in this manuscript and centered on knowing, identity, caring, agency, and power. It was these concepts and themes that contributed to the understanding of the different experiences and opportunities for student voice.

The quantitative data was analyzed in several ways. A more detailed description of the analysis and findings gleaned from this data can be found in Appendix B.

Methodological Considerations

The preceding, relatively straightforward description of the process of data collection and analysis belies complexities and dilemmas that existed in this study. An important consideration at the development stage of this study was that of representing the voices of others, both teacher and students. The complexities and responsibilities incumbent in this task seemed ones not to be

taken lightly. The researcher's beliefs about ontology, epistemology, and methodology shape how the researcher views the world and acts in it. Beliefs, about the nature of reality and humans, about the relationship between "the inquirer and the known", and about the ways in which individuals come to know the world, all influence the researcher. According to Bateson, the researcher is "bound within the net of epistemological and ontological premises" that become the lens through which the researcher interprets her findings and influence the choice of inquiry strategies, collection and analysis of data, and the interpretation provided in the final document (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 12). Theorists from critical theory, feminist, critical discourse, and postmodern traditions give recognition to the role of socio-cultural and historical context in the understanding of the dynamics within a given setting. This context and the position of both the participants and the researcher needed to be considered.

While the complexities of examining student voice from the perspective of adolescents who differed from the researcher in age, ethnicity, and in some cases gender and race were evident, a significant research dilemma in this particular study revolved around the role of the researcher and the classroom teacher. The works of Maria Mies (1999), Michelle Fine (1994), Marjorie DeVault (1999), Leslie Bloom (1999), Blythe Clinchy (1996) and others addressed the complexity of the role of the researcher.

A central tenet of much feminist research is the importance of a collaborative relationship with key participants (DeVault, 1999; Haig, 1999; Olesen, 1994, 1999; Bloom, 1999). Mies (in Haig, 1999, p. 224) suggested that

the researcher approaches the responsibility with "conscious partiality" rather than taking the view of spectator. In this sense the researcher partly identifies with the researched but not so much as to impair the process of mutual correction of errors.

Michelle Fine (1994) referred to the boundary between the Self and Other as the "hyphen". From her perspective the examination of these relationships becomes an ethical imperative. She wrote, "Even with self-conscious effort to work the hyphens, all texts are contradictory, both inscribing and resisting othering" (p. 75).

In a similar vein McCracken acknowledged the need for the researcher to listen to the self in order to listen to the respondent (in Clinchy, 1991 p. 219). Clinchy spoke of the need to "hear the other in the other's own terms". This suggests the importance of recognizing a base of knowledge that might be different from that of the researcher and thus overlooked or missed. Equally important is the recognition that differences in racial, ethnic, age, and gender positions may affect interactions with others, and that knowledge may be facilitated or limited based on these differences (DeVault, 1999).

Olesen (1994, 1999) stressed the need for the researcher to be aware of her philosophies, location, and nature of her knowledge. If the researcher takes a reflexive approach, her subjectivities can be used as a resource to guiding the data gathering and to understanding her own interpretation and behavior in the research. This reflexivity involves both an awareness and articulation of the process of producing knowledge. The personal knowledge of the researcher

becomes a starting point for the study. However, the limitations and implications of this approach need to be analyzed.

Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) spoke to the need of the researcher to examine the discourses that shape her subjective formation as revealed in routine actions, unconscious knowledge, and cultural memories. While they did not speak from a specifically feminist perspective, they addressed similar priorities. They suggested that these subjectivities privilege certain interpretations of experience and need to be drawn to consciousness to accurately reflect the experiences and perspectives of the students and teacher whose classroom the researcher has joined.

The words and ideas of these researchers became more significant as I^2 attempted to work through the practical dilemmas of the role of the researcher in a study that purportedly valued a feminist, postmodern perspective. In writing my representation of the school experiences of Helen and her students, issues of difference, power, accountability, and responsibility brought with them human, political, and ethical dilemmas. Given this recognition, the taxonomy developed by Wilkinson and Kitzberger (1996) became a useful tool in looking at these issues and dilemmas. They suggested: 1). Seeking feedback from those represented regarding the validity of how they are represented; 2). Listening to the ways in which the Other speaks of the researcher as a way of exposing the process of Othering; 3). Recognizing the ways in which those from dominant groups construct the Other [related to awareness of multiple perspectives]; and

4). Engaging in dialogue between researcher and participants, recognizing the "polyphony authority" that privileges neither the researcher or researched.

<u>The Role of the Researcher</u>

Three methodological issues, the role of the researcher in relationship with participants, the role of the researcher and integrity of the study and the participants' response to the research process, became relevant to conducting this research. Each arose during the data collection and analysis phase and brought to bear questions about the researcher and her presence and influence on the research process. The first issue concerned the role of the researcher in relationship with participants. The complexity of this issue challenged assumptions about the expertise of the researcher and the intricate ways in which the teacher, the students, and the researcher interact.

Finding a teacher who was specifically concerned with voice, and supported the notion that students do have a voice in the classroom was of particular interest. It seemed most consistent with the goals of feminist research methodology to find someone who was invested in collaborating on this project. Hence, Helen's interest and willingness was exciting. Our mutual consideration of feminism as it relates to education was another plus and added to what seemed to be a good match. Helen's desire to gain another perspective on whether her interactions and practices supported her feminist beliefs also provided an opportunity to produce knowledge that was of interest to a significant participant. Not only was Helen interested in student voice, she was also seeking feedback

and knowledge of herself as a teacher. Being able to be a resource for this goal added to the desirability of this relationship.

The complexities and tensions incumbent in this relationship would become clearer in the weeks and months to follow the initial meeting. These arose in part due to the differences in the ways we understood terms such as "caring". They also arose as I struggled to understand that the ways one understands research methodologies, or ways of knowing, impacts the research itself. Drawing on the work of Clark and Holquist, Gitlin (1990) spoke to the assumptions

> ...that knowledge is something that researchers extract from those studied; it is a one-way process that researchers use to put together a convincing story about the way things are or should be in school. Lost in this process is the notion that knowledge can also arise from dialogue involving the interaction between speaker and listener within a particular context " (p.447).

Gitlin's view of research was consistent with the "inside/outside" view of research described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993). They, too, suggested that university researchers often conduct research with the belief that as "outsiders" they possess legitimate knowledge and overlook the knowledge of teachers. The impact of previously unexamined epistemological assumptions added complexity to my understanding of the role of the researcher. These challenges began to become evident early in the study.

In retrospect several comments Helen made during our first meetings together foreshadowed the complexities that lay ahead. During my first visit to the school and her classroom Helen said that, not only was she interested in knowing if she "walked the talk", but also that she wanted to hear that she was a good teacher. She indicated that she did not get enough positive feedback about her teaching. Only later, when she spoke passionately about her challenges with her field supervisor during her student teaching semester, did the significance of wanting positive feedback become clearer. It seemed that she wanted validation that she was a good teacher, and if she were student teaching again today, she would receive a grade of "A".

Another tension that was clear during the first visit to the school was what seemed to be a discrepancy between the way she wrote about a feminist teacher as caring and the ways in which she interacted with students that day. While she indicated that this interaction was consistent with a caring, feminist teacher, it did not match my view of a caring teacher. The complexity that these two tensions would introduce into the relationship between researcher and research participant challenged my emerging conception of the role of researcher. As the study continued there were instances in which different manifestations of caring created ethical dilemmas, particularly when the dignity of students was at issue.

Participants' relations: A shifting emphasis

Not long into the study it became apparent that not only were the ways the researcher and teacher, as participant, "knottily entwined" (Fine, 1994) but so too were the voices of the students entwined in seemingly complex ways with the

voice of the teacher. The power of the teacher's voice resulted in a shift in emphasis in the research. While continuing to be interested in student voice, the necessity of considering the impact of the teacher's voice became evident.

Each of the original research questions continued to be relevant to the study, but those that related to the relationship between teacher voice and student voice took on increased importance. While this seemed a critical relationship based on classroom observations, it was even more evident when the teacher escorted the researcher and the first two students to be interviewed to the room that had been reserved for this purpose. She said to the students, "Remember, only say good things about me". Perhaps not surprisingly, these two students were less forthcoming than expected during this interview. What was unclear that day was whether the issue was one of rapport and trust with the researcher, the nature of the questions, a style of communication, language differences, or the result of the teacher's condoning only positive comments. The following questions became increasingly important to consider:

How does the teacher's voice influence the voices of the students?

What factors lead to differences in the students' perception of the teacher's voice?

What factors lead a teacher who speaks of the importance of student voice to implement practices that silence students?

Teacher as participant in relation to researcher: Human considerations

Determining when and how to give feedback became complex. On the one hand, I was concerned about giving feedback without an adequate

understanding of Helen's goals, pedagogy, and students. Simultaneously, I was concerned about increasing her discomfort with my presence in the classroom. In addition, while I could give feedback on specific practices, there was much about the dynamics that went on in the classroom that I did not understand. Not being able to interview students during the initial months in the classroom meant that a more complete understanding of the situation would be delayed. I was very interested in knowing how the students would speak of their experiences in the classroom. While I had been a principal, and was currently a university field supervisor for student teachers, and a teacher educator, providing feedback in this situation seemed more complex. This ambiguity may have been due in part to the reality of taking on these multiple roles in different contexts concurrently.

Beginning with the first visit to the school, I found myself trying to sort and clarify my role. This concern may have emanated from having been conversant with the literature on quantitative and qualitative research at a theoretical level but with no experience in its application. In addition, given the short duration of this study, I was concerned that it would be more difficult to understand the natural dynamics of the setting and the impact any intervention, in the way of feedback, might have had. I was concerned about, among other things, not providing feedback that would "contaminate"[3] the study, particularly since I was unable to interview students until later in the semester. In fact, many of the more in-depth interviews continued over the summer.

An additional concern was the impact of feedback on Helen's view of herself as a teacher. While at times she spoke of herself as a strong teacher who

had much to offer, at other times her vulnerability was more evident. Helen gave several indications that she felt vulnerable because of my presence in the classroom. On several occasions she made comments to the students such as, "If you are trying to make me look good, then just participate in discussion" (Field notes 0224)[4] or "Please don't embarrass me", when they did not respond to her questions (Field notes 0302). As the school year came to an end, she spoke of the fact that I had seen her on her good days and her bad. There were times she seemed aware of ineffective or troublesome practices. For example, she did at times say to the students, "What is with you today?" when they seemed unresponsive to the day's lesson. These comments suggested an awareness that something was not working. She did not verbalize a concern that the students' lack of responsiveness was related to something she was or was not doing, nor did she verbalize the need to understand what their lack of responsiveness might have been about. She did, however, seem to increase her emphasis on wanting to know if she was a good teacher.

This research had implications not just for the field of education in general, but in a very real way for Helen as an individual teacher. Bloom (1999) addressed the human side of the researcher-participant relationship.

> In the research context, so much depends on the trust between the researcher and the respondent, the respondent's readiness for such an examination...and the researcher's ability to sincerely, thoughtful, and adeptly analyze stories while being both gentle in tone and sensitive in understanding (p.95).

What was Helen's readiness? What was my ability to analyze and communicate my understandings? In what ways would failure to give feedback work against the very goals of the research relationship? The portrayal of Helen was the most significant struggle of the research process. Trying to remain true to the data, yet painting a picture of the dynamics of the classroom was personally complicated, especially as the task of critically portraying Helen in all of her complexity. Bloom (1999), however, suggested that this more complete and multi-dimensional portrayal is important. She wrote,

> ...for when women are deprived of the potential for complex self-representation as a means through which to gain self-knowledge, their complex subjectivities are masked and the power and energy they may derive from such self knoweldge is not allowed to be a source of nourishment and strength (1999, p. 68).

I, like Helen, was a White woman, who found much in feminist literature compelling. What I was initially unaware of, was the degree to which Helen, while she could articulate understandings from feminist pedagogy had not yet made these understandings her own. In addition, as is the case in literature emanating from any epistemological or ideological stance, it is not monolithic. Perspectives and ideologies within the broader realm of feminist literature vary. So it would not be surprising that from the first day at the school that our ideas about caring differed. Perhaps because this difference seemed so striking during the first visit to the school, it provided an opportunity to be explicitly aware of the need to seek to understand both Helen's meaning and to reflect upon my own. I was most

interested in how the students perceived Helen's interactions with them and was at times painfully conscious of not wanting to judge Helen's actualization of a caring teacher in a negative manner until I gained a more complete understanding.

I myself had a challenging experience during student teaching, and continued for many years to gain a solid sense of competence as a teacher. That struggle in Helen I was sensitive to, and perhaps this sensitivity led to a hesitation and resistance to interpretation that was critical of her. This may have been an instance of what Mies (1999) was referring to when the border of "conscious partiality" is extended and interferes with interpretation. It also may be an instance in which "...[without the recognition of difference] the tacit and unexplored assumptions of sameness cause problems in allowing the researcher and the researched to collude in the reproduction of 'lived *but critically unexamined*, life experiences" (Hurd and McIntyre, 1996, p. 79).

Yet, it was the struggle to represent Helen in a way that was "true" to the data and illustrated the complexities of her experiences that necessarily involved critical analysis that seemed to work against the goal of a collaborative relationship. In trying to work through this issue of representation, I delayed providing drafts of chapters or engaging in dialogue until feeling fairly confident of what I had written.

In addition, I was aware that this study reflects my story about the school experiences of Helen and her students. My own experiences, values, and subjectivity are, by necessity, a lens through which this story is told. As Christine

Griffin (1996) wrote, "I can use the voices of Others from (my understanding) of their positions, but I can never speak/write *from* their positions. I cannot become them, I can only pass on selected aspects of (from what they have shown me about) their lives" (p. 101).

The researcher's role: Issues related to integrity of the study

While the notions of reliability and validity are most often spoken of in the context of data and findings generated by quantitative research methods, these issues are not irrelevant to data collected through qualitative research methods. Patton (1990), for instance, spoke to an examination of methods that result in data that has integrity, validity, and accuracy. His work and Brantlinger's (1993) spoke to the importance of looking at participants' messages for overt content and more subtle inferences, examining alternative explanations, and making explicit underlying assumptions. Patton (1990) spoke specifically to triangulation of sources and researcher effect. These issues were relevant to methodological considerations as they related to this study. Each speaks to aspects of the researcher's role in the research process.

The issues related to giving feedback discussed earlier in the chapter represent one such instance. For example, the concern that related to giving feedback without an accurate understanding of the phenomena was one such issue that related to the validity and integrity of the study. So too was the concern about feedback as an intervention in a study of relatively short duration.

Methodological issues related to integrity of the study became a focus of a portion of the meeting between Helen and myself after she had read an earlier

draft of this document. Helen wondered aloud whether the data and resulting analysis would have been different had I interviewed different students. One particular concern she had, involved the students being interviewed through the required summer session: Did their negative response to this requirement make a difference in their statements? I shared the ways in which I looked for this possibility. Because all of the students who were interviewed in the summer were also interviewed several times during the school year and at least once before the results of the ITBS were announced, there was an opportunity to compare the content and subtext of the interviews pre- and post- test score announcement. Consistent responses related to their school experiences seemed to be present. The frustration and anger about the lack of helpful instruction during the summer was an issue for many of these students. However, they seemed able to differentiate their summer experience from their experiences with Helen and their team. Helen was especially fond and proud of one particular student, but this student did not agree to participate. It is not known whether that student's responses would have provided a perspective that was significantly different from the others.

Students as participants in relation to the researcher

While the researcher's relationship with Helen raised unexpected methodological issues in this study those that arose with students, as participants cannot be ignored. I, like Helen, was a White woman interviewing students who were members of ethnic and in some cases racial groups that differed from my own. These were perhaps the most difficult relationships to determine the extent

to which my differences impacted their responses. As I spent more time in the classroom and began the interviews, a few students expressed a concern that I had an evaluative role to play and that what they said to me might be used to get their teacher in trouble or fired. These concerns seemed to be allayed as interviews proceeded and more students participated. However, these concerns may have resulted in some students' refusal to participate. On the other hand, it may also have been related to issues of trust and rapport, especially early in the study. If issues of trust and rapport were involved, they may have been due to the differences between us.

I became aware early in the process that I had expected to find differences in responses based on gender and ethnicity. The within- group differences were greater than I expected and caused me to reflect upon the ways that we place others in "fixed essentialized positions based on differences" (Hurd and McIntyre, 1996). While I am confident that the data analysis represents an accurate reporting of student perspectives, there may have been additional understandings missed due to cultural differences or language differences. What I was not able to do was to discuss my findings with the students who were key participants. Although I had sought clarification and/ or verification of the accuracy of my understanding of their dialogues with me throughout the spring and summer, I did not have the opportunity to share with them my interpretations of their experiences. I wondered if the fact that I did not engage them in critical dialogue to explore the larger issues articulated in this document was a manifestation of a devaluing of student voice.

Participants' responses to the research process

Helen had looked forward to reading what I had written, but her initial response left her feeling significant distress. As she worked through her own feelings, she initially did not respond to my phone calls to talk about her responses. She did call to speak with the chairman of my committee, a faculty member she had known during her master's program at the same university. After a period of three weeks a phone conversation proved to be the beginning of a dialogue. During that conversation she shared her initial feelings of distress. She also indicated that she had, in part through sharing parts of the draft with co-workers whose opinions she valued and through further personal reflection, begun to look at the manuscript in what I would describe as a more complex way. She indicated that there were elements with which she agreed, aspects of her teaching which she herself was somewhat uncomfortable with, other elements which she had not thought about before but which left her with an awareness of a desire to do some things differently, and other sections with which she disagreed. During our phone conversation she shared information about a teacher professional development program she had been participating in over the summer. We briefly discussed the nature of the researcher role and relationship with participants during this conversation as well.

These topics and issues were discussed in more detail over a three-hour breakfast meeting several days later. At one point in this meeting Helen described her reading of the dissertation draft as "a wake-up call". She said she had a clearer sense of who she was as a teacher at this point in her career than

she had during her student teaching experience. Helen indicated that she realized that she needed to hear less from others whether she was a good teacher, yet she wanted to do some things differently.

This response seemed to be contradictory to her seeming desire for positive feedback at numerous times earlier in the research process. However, upon further reflection, it may be an indication that, while certain aspects of the dissertation manuscript were painful to read, her basic sense of herself as a teacher remained intact. It seemed that, unlike the feedback she received during student teaching, she was able to use those aspects of the content that rang true for her in order to intensify her commitment to on-going professional development.

Helen's concerns after reading the draft of the dissertation largely revolved around how she was portrayed as a teacher. She focused more specifically on the teaching aspect of the learning process. During the initial phone conversation and later in the breakfast meeting, she was less overtly concerned with reflecting on the feedback she received from students' voices as specified through field notes, interview excerpts or my analysis. She seemed less aware or less concerned about the learning component of the teaching process. The focus of her comments was on the teacher separate from students and their experiences of learning. It may be that based on a better understanding of the methodological concerns she had relating to validity and accuracy of the data, that she could then look at the issues through the perspectives of the students and come to a

greater understanding as to the powerful role of the teacher in the classroom and its impact on student voice, learning and identity.

She indicated that reading the dissertation confirmed her view of the importance of a well-functioning team in a setting where teachers were working closely as a team of four teachers. She reported that as she read she reflected on her experiences with the team during the study and realized the degree to which she was, while not the team leader that year, in a role that resulted in her carrying the weight of the team's problems. She dealt with more than her share of discipline incidents, she was involved in mediating conflicts between students and other teachers on the team, and she took on the major responsibility for the coordination and development of the ten-week interdisciplinary unit on the Holocaust. While she in some ways put herself in the position to take on additional responsibility, she also recognized that when she did not take charge of situations with students or planning activities, she had to deal with the problems that resulted later on. For example, she made a conscious decision not to take over planning the logistics for a field trip that took place during the month of May. The teacher who had planned the trip had not taken care of several details, including the travel route and arrangements for lunch for 115 students and their teachers. The group arrived almost an hour late to the museum, the speaker and docents at the museum were frustrated, and the hungry students were angry and frustrated. She then became involved in dealing with the student and public relations problems that resulted. While observations of interactions among team members at various points during the semester pointed to evidence

of Helen's role on the team, she indicated that in reading the dissertation, she realized the degree to which the team conflicts drained her and diminished the energy she had for the students. Helen had played an active role in restructuring a team for the following school year bringing teachers together who were supportive of her goals and style.

Helen also indicated that she had some concerns about her pedagogy that were supported or became clearer in the dissertation manuscript. For example, she indicated that, while she liked the *Facing History, Facing Ourselves* Curriculum, she needed additional strategies and pedagogical approaches to support her use of it. She saw the workshop that she attended during the summer as a means to strengthen her implementation of the curriculum. She indicated that two other teachers, including one team member, were taking the class, so the possibilities for implementing these approaches became more probable, given the support they could provide each other. These two issues, functioning of the team and pedagogical approaches, were ones that were raised for her in the dissertation and ones she had already begun to address.

Her most significant struggle after reading the dissertation had to do with the portrayal of the ways in which cultural issues were addressed. During our discussions she said, "I can't change the fact that I am a White middle class woman". Later she asked, "What is wrong with middle class values?" She went on to discuss the fact that several of her colleagues who were Latina/o spoke to the students about how they themselves had bettered their lives by getting a good education and moving out of their neighborhoods. She indicated that she

had shown these colleagues the dissertation. It seemed that through her discussion with them, she was able to see that perhaps some of the ways she communicated messages about her students were problematic. She could see that the ways in which she communicated information about receiving government aid[5] might not have been the message she had wanted to communicate. She said that she actually intended to explore with the students the complexity of the decision to quit school to support one's family or to stay in school and receive government support. While this was not how the lesson was communicated to the students, it suggested her willingness to rethink particular lessons. Less evident to her were the ways she communicated cultural messages that minimized students' lived experiences or diminished the acceptability of their lives. Nor was it evident to her that her colleagues who were Latino/a, could communicate messages to students in ways that might be perceived differently, given their socio-cultural positions.

The issue Helen articulated was one that Maher and Tetreault (1997) described as "...largely unacknowledged assumptions of Whiteness as a key aspect of dominant culture, and how these assumptions interact with constructions of gender, class, ethnicity, and race to shape the assumptions of classroom knowledge" (p. 344). It seemed to make more sense to Helen to look at specific examples of lessons that may be problematic. However, for Helen, as for all teachers, especially teachers who are White, grappling with the larger issues regarding Whiteness and differences is an on-going process. These issues are at the heart of issues related to educational reform and policy making

decisions, though they often remain below the surface and not articulated (Scheurich, and Imber, 1991).

<u>Methodological Understandings: Emerging Realizations</u>

The methodological issues described in the preceding pages have been articulated by many (Reinharz, 1992; Weis, 1992; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996; Fine, 1994). As has been suggested by others (Bloom, 1999; Gitlin, 1990), there is considerably more written on the problematic nature of conducting feminist research and less on methods or research strategies to specifically deal with these issues.

Engaging in this research project has allowed me to experience first hand some of these dilemmas. I gained an understanding of the complexity of conducting research while honoring the voice of participants. Particularly difficult was honoring both the teacher's and students' voices as they participated in this research. Through our dialogue Helen indicated that it would have been helpful to her to ask more specific questions related to situations or lessons that I had observed, suggesting that in this process, I could gain a more complete understanding of her. This suggestion resonated with the notion of "polyphony authority" that Wilkinson and Kitzberger (1996) discussed. The responsibility to recognize and honor the knowledge that both the students and Helen brought, "insider knowledge" (Gitlin, 1990; Cochran-smith and Lytle, 1993) was an important insight even when I saw situations differently. Through the process of engaging with Helen and the students, my need to explore difference and to be consciously aware of my own became increasingly clear. The complex ways in

which researcher and the teacher and students as participants were "knottily entwined" brought to the forefront the challenges of honoring the voice of participants while also finding a place for the voice of the researcher. A final, though no less important, realization was the issue of the purpose of the research. It became increasingly important to me, to look at ways in which this research, and research in general, reaches audiences, facilitates change, and enhances educational experiences for students and teachers in the school setting.

Endnotes

[1] A tribunal is a meeting in which the four teachers on the team meet together with a student who is not meeting expectations in terms of either school behavior or academic performance. At some times a student or small group of students are asked to participate in the tribunal. These students would speak to the importance of meeting expectations and provide feedback to the student whose performance prompted the tribunal to be called.

[2] The switch from third person to first is intentional. The third person is often used in research, particularly in the quantitative tradition. However, given the nature of this section that refers directly to the researcher-participant relationship, the first person will be used through the remainder of this chapter.

[3] The use of the term "contaminate" is more generally used in the quantitative tradition. Its use reflects the ways in which paradigms influence the researcher's thinking about the process of research in often implicit ways.

[4] In this chapter and each of the following chapters, field notes and interview transcriptions represent the actual words of Helen or her students. No changes have been made in terms of word use or grammatical structure.

[5] This lesson is discussed in Chapter Five. In it, Helen links receiving government aid during the Depression of 1929 with the use of government aid and welfare today.

CHAPTER 4

THE ETHICS OF CARE AND RESPONSIBILITY: VOICE AND AGENCY

<u>Introduction</u>

At the heart of many interviews with students and Helen were the themes

of care and responsibility. Within the first five to ten minutes of each initial

interview, students spoke of the fact that teachers[1] care about them. These

comments came in response to the question, "How would you describe

Community Middle School to someone who had never been here?" At other

points in the interviews students spoke of care and responsibility related to their

school, their families, and themselves. The concluding chapter of Helen's master

thesis (1994) was titled "The Caring Ethic".

For Helen, care and responsibility were interwoven with themes of power

and authority. The ways in which she embodied care and responsibility had a

strong impact on student voice and the students' views of themselves. In this

chapter Helen's discourse on care and responsibility is explored with a focus on

three fables that she shared with students. The complex ways in which power

and authority are woven into these fables is explored as are the messages these

fables conveyed to the students about the norms of the classroom and society at

large. The ways in which the students defined caring teachers are explored, as

are their perspectives on responsibility.

One outcome of Helen's practices, based on her ethic of care, was that

her students internalized blame. This dynamic is explored specifically through

examining the meanings two different students gave to their school experiences.

Finally, the ethics of caring and responsibility are reconceptualized and framed in pedagogical choices that support conditions for students to experience a greater sense of agency and voice with a resulting possibility for a sense of empowerment (Ruiz, 1997).

Teacher Narratives on Care and Responsibility

Helen identifies herself as a feminist teacher. At the core of her belief about the role of the teacher is the ethic of care. This theme was integrated throughout her master's thesis, and it continues to inform her thinking about herself as a teacher. Helen also addressed responsibility in her thesis and linked it to power and authority. An understanding of her conceptualization of care, responsibility, power, and authority are important in that the practices she embodies as a teacher who values care and responsibility have a direct impact on student voice. She wrote:

> Feminists face two tasks; that of developing cooperation and addressing differences and subjectivity in a classroom that has taught competition and individualism for over a century, and secondly, addressing the element of nurturing in their classroom and school. The success of feminist scholarship and feminist teaching methods depends on teachers taking responsibility for the authority in their classroom. Women have been taught and learned well that they must not assert themselves or question power and authority. By assuming and asserting power as women and not as

women who want to be like men, teachers free themselves to claim their territory (Helen, 1994, p. 9).

The way in which Helen "took responsibility for the authority in her classroom" and at the same time addressed "the element of nurturing" seemed, at times, contradictory. It was after my first visit to the school that the apparent discrepancy between the discourse on caring as evidenced in her master's thesis and the way it was actualized in her interactions with students led to the question, "Do you still believe what you wrote in your thesis?". When Helen answered in the affirmative, the task of truly understanding what Helen meant by the "ethic of care" began.

On my first visit to her classroom Helen introduces me to the students. She tells them that I am working on my doctoral degree and then explains the sequence one can earn degrees upon leaving high school. She tells them that I will be spending time in the classroom for a few months and will want to be interviewing them. She describes the fact that she got a master's degree and that she did research to finish her degree. She said she did it on killing students without anyone being able to find out about it. She told them that the jar on her desk contained the ashes of the dead students. She then showed them the jar that had the words "ashes of dead students" on it. Some students wanted her to open the jar but she said no. It appeared that the students were not sure whether to believe her. Some seemed to think she was joking with

them. Some seemed to sit wide-eyed and silent (Field notes, 0203)[2].

It may be that interactions such as this, prompted one of the students who wrote a poem about Helen for the anthology to include the following verses:

She's sometimes funny with the classmates

But sometimes the funny things turn out to be real

You don't even want to be near her when she is angry.

(Community Anthology, 2000)

It was several months later when Helen articulated her refined definition of care. Based on her experience over the five years since she wrote her thesis, she said, "What works with these kids is love combined with fear." She saw this as compatible with her previous writings on care. The interaction described above was the first of many in which she seemed to control student behavior by keeping them guessing about what she might do in a given situation. This approach was consistent with her construct of the urban adolescent[3] and illustrates the power of discourses to impact interactions. If urban adolescents cannot be counted on to be responsible but need an education to "make it," then caring for them means controlling them, and one way to do this is through fear. This interaction occurred on my first visit to the school during the after school program. The meaning such interactions had for students and the impact it had on their voices would become clearer over time.

Helen used fables to communicate her beliefs about care and responsibility to her students. Through them she seemed to be communicating a

discourse about what is important both in her classroom and in life in general. The ethic of care is central to her view of herself as a feminist teacher; however, the messages about care, responsibility, power, authority, and agency as embedded in these narratives communicated messages that are potentially problematic. The first of these messages was based on a television series about a Zen master staring David Carridine.

> While the student read, Helen talked with me and explained a bit about the grasshopper story. She said that in a Kung Fu martial arts movie David Carridine played the part of a Zen master who asked deep questions. The Zen master would say "little grasshoppers..." when one of his students gave an insightful response. Helen indicated that this was a feminist way to indicate that something clicked. She used "ah grasshopper" for a significant teachable moment when the students "got it" (Field notes, 0229).

Her use of the term "ah grasshopper" is illustrated in the following interaction with a student during reading class.

> Students enter class and are mingling and talking. Elisa shows Helen a typed assignment. Helen asks Elisa how to note the title. Elisa says, "ah, underline" and then "ah grasshopper". Helen responds "hop back to your seat" and both laugh (Field notes, 0229).

Helen also talked about the Aesop fable of the grasshopper and the ants. In this fable the ants collected all of the food for the grasshoppers; while the ants

were working, the grasshoppers were idle. Relating this to her classroom, she said that the students, who didn't work, like the grasshoppers, would starve and have to stay in eighth grade. The students who did their work, like the ants who collected the food, would go on to high school.

Helen used these fables and the messages embedded in them in different ways and for different purposes. The use of the term "ah grasshopper", as illustrated above, was generally used by both Helen and individual students when they were feeling good about the interaction. In contrast, the Aesop fable, whether referred to directly or not, was used at times when Helen was frustrated with the students. The following interaction is an illustration of its implicit use as well as the students' interpretation of its meaning. In this lesson, Helen was talking about propaganda and Hitler's use of it.

> Helen asked, "What kind of propaganda did Hitler use?" One
> student said, "Hitler killed the Jews," another student said, "Hate
> the Jews." Helen then read a short paragraph and discussed the
> meaning of the word relating it to the way she used propaganda.
> One student used a gesture indicating that Helen's use of
> propaganda was like fire out of her mouth; Helen laughed at his
> description. She then tried to get the students to understand
> propaganda by further discussing what she referred to as her use
> of propaganda. She asked, "What do I say?" Students responded
> with responses such as "no whining" and "read, read, read." One
> student then added, "You won't graduate." Helen responded by

saying, "That's not what I said." One of the girls replied "You said get an application for eighth grade" and Helen said "yes." Then there are distractions due to talking, seemingly in response to the previous interchange, and Helen said, "What happened? OK I'll wait, I have all the time in the time in the world," to which a student replied, "She's not getting any younger." Helen then said, "Yes, I did pass eighth grade." A student then says, "see" [what I mean about you saying we won't graduate] to which Helen says, "I'm not [saying that] just bragging about myself" (Field notes, 0329).

As in the Aesop fable the implied message is that students who don't read or do their work need to pick up an application to repeat eighth grade, as they won't graduate.

This was one of the few times when students said anything to challenge Helen's messages. The girl who brought up the comment about telling them that they won't graduate was one who did not agree to be interviewed or complete the questionnaire. In the classroom she associated with other students who were generally compliant and focused on their academic work and had status as a "good student." While a student who was generally successful in school articulated this interpretation, it illustrates the power of teachers' words to communicate beliefs and expectations to students. However, despite the articulation of this perspective, Helen did not seem to see it as problematic to some students or as negatively impacting their sense of efficacy. For her, the admonitions that they would not graduate if they did not get serious about learing

was at its core an expression of care for their well being. While some students could see this as an expression of care, others saw it as an inevitable outcome.

Skinner, Wellborn and Connell (1990) in their study of young adolescents' engagement in school linked self-efficacy and perceived ability with student engagement. A number of students interpreted comments such as "You won't graduate" in a way that limited their belief in themselves to pass. As one student put it, when teachers say that "you can't do it...they keep putting you down, if that's what they think is going to happen, it is going to happen" (Interview 1212). Although this student and others stated that teachers probably made comments like this to encourage them, for many it amplified their sense of defeat. This result is concerning in that, based on Skinner, Wellborn and Connell's (1990) findings, a decrease in school engagement is a likely outcome. While they wanted to be the ants, they believed they were destined to be the grasshoppers. As will be discussed later in the chapter, those students who fit the description of ants—doing their work and believing in Helen's admonitions to "read, read, read" but still did not graduating due to low scores on the ITBS blamed themselves for their failures.

The third fable Helen shared with the class was about a man, his wife, and a donkey on a perilous journey. She described it this way to a new student who entered the class late in the second semester.

> Helen introduces the story by saying it is about a man and his wife
> who live in a small village in Mexico. They take a donkey with them
> for the journey over the mountain to get supplies in town. It is a long

trip and about eight or nine in the morning the donkey sits in the middle of the road. The man takes his walking stick and hits him in the head and says, "That's one." To illustrate the impact Helen picks up a ruler and says in a loud voice, "Boom." The situation repeats itself midday. The donkey stops and sits in the middle of the road. The man says, "That's two." The man, his wife, and the donkey continue on their journey. At 3:00 it is very hot, and they are on a narrow ledge. The donkey stops again, and the man says, "That's three" and shoves the donkey off the side of the mountain. His wife 'goes nuts' and tells her husband how dumb he was and says, "Who is going to carry all of the supplies?" The man replies, "That's one." Helen tells the new student that she has had these students for two years and never has gotten to three. She reiterated that, "You would not want to get there." She then said, "As long as you remember I am the Queen we have no problems" (Field notes 0403B).

Helen used the term "That's one." when the students were pushing their luck with her. She also used it in a disciplinary meeting during which the four teachers on the team met together with a student who was not performing as expected in his classes. These fables and stories, when taken together, communicate a number of messages about the "right" way to be in her classroom and in the world. They communicate Helen's belief in hard work and equal opportunity. They communicate messages about the role of the student. If one

were to equate Helen with the man taking the supplies up the mountain, she seems to be saying that she is in charge and that the experiences and needs of those with her on the journey do not matter. Like the donkey or the wife, voicing disagreement or actively resisting her efforts will result in her shoving them off the mountain. The discourse embedded in this story reinforces the discourse of the "good" student as quiet, passive, and docile. Good students do not ask for what they need, do not speak out about conditions that are oppressive on the long, hot, steep journey.

It is not surprising, then, that students would respond with silence. Voicing their beliefs or opinions, describing their experiences, or raising their concerns would be risky. If they are afraid of being shoved off the mountain, they are likely to calculate the risk as being too high. In denying the legitimacy of what they might have to say, they are disempowered. As this dynamic relates to learning, there is reason for concern. If as Vygotsky (1978) and Neo-Vygotskians (Gallimore and Tharp, 1990; Moll, 1990) claim, language and dialogue are central to intellectual growth, then their learning is also diminished. Goodman (1992) suggested that silencing students' voices has additional long term consequences. He writes, "If critical democracy is to be fostered then any change in consciousness among children must not be obtained by silencing others' voices that come from a different perspective" (p. 156). Not only is their learning limited, but potentially so is their active participation in a democratic society.

On "Taking Responsibility for Authority" in the Classroom

Helen's view of caring and responsibility were intricately related to how she negotiated the meaning of "taking responsibility for the authority in her classroom." She believed that some of her university professors worked at that level because they would not be able to teach at the younger grades. She said that students would walk all over them because they were "too nice and empathic." Her formula of love combined with fear suggests a view of authority in which power comes from instilling fear in students. Authority lies in a hierarchical relationship. Helen's conceptualization of responsibility, authority, and power, and the ways she manifested them in the classroom necessarily informed her relationships with students (Darder, 1997). While her words and actions were at times contradictory, she seemed unaware of the ways in which they potentially disabled her students. In her classroom the power and authority belonged to the teacher. Darder (1997) suggests that teachers who view authority in this way often feel helpless. In many ways, as much as Helen spoke with pride about her ability to manage the classroom, she at the same time seemed to feel little sense of power or agency related to student engagement in learning and overall academic success.

Her view of authority was reinforced, at least from her perspective, through feedback from others in the context of the school. She relayed a conversation she had with an administrator earlier in the year. This individual had come to talk with her while the class was watching a video. When the students began to talk, she stopped her conversation with the administrator and stared at

the students. His comment to her was that if all the teachers could act in such a way the school would have fewer problems. This conversation reinforced her belief in the value of her approach based on the philosophy that love combined with fear was the answer to dealing with these students. In actuality, when she stopped and stood quietly, students did stop talking. In that regard her silence served as an effective way to gain or re-gain the students' attention. Evidently, though, she saw that she was able to do this because of their fear.

Other teachers on the team expected Helen to take on the role of "enforcer" as well. A number of times during the study another teacher called on her to deal with a non-compliant student and to exercise her power over them to force their compliance. But her activity came at a cost.

> The constant effort to exercise power over others makes one increasingly dependent on getting defeated responses from others. If the desired responses are not forthcoming, the effort to persuade must be redoubled. And this preoccupation closes the door to one's own personal development. The power of personal competence is given up for the exercise of power over people (Brown and Keller, 1994, p. 287).

Helen put considerable effort into enforcing compliance. Her frustration peaked numerous times during the semester leading her to lash out at students. She would feel badly about this later, work hard to be more patient, and then redouble her efforts to again persuade them of the need to "read, read, read" so they will make it. When they did not respond as she hoped they would, it only served to

reinforce her judgement of them as less capable and also perhaps of herself as incompetent. When parents criticized her, she felt further defeated. Her efforts to use power over the students as she attempted to exercise her authority in the classroom contributed to her self-doubts.

Not only did this approach to exercising authority have a negative impact on Helen, it affected her students as well. As much as Helen used every means she knew to try to get the students to understand the importance of an education and most immediately the importance of doing well on the ITBS, her efforts seemed to reinforce some students' beliefs in themselves as incapable and communicated a message that she had low expectations of them, not only as students but as people as well. This, however, was not her intent. Both Helen and many of the students felt powerless. Many of the students internalized blame, accepting definitions of themselves as less capable. This phenomenon is further explored later in the chapter.

Goodman's (1992) connectivist perspective on agency and care illustrate a struggle central to the issues with which Helen dealt. He wrote, "...as an act of caring, teachers and administrators face the problem of creating an environment in which students feel affirmed and cared for while at the same time their behavior is being evaluated and often restricted" (p. 114). For Helen and for other teachers the core issue in this regard seems to be to find an expression of caring that is affirming yet at the same time reinforces responsible behavior to self and others in the learning community. Doing this in a way that students respond not

with fear but with a sense that they can voice their ideas and concerns while being viewed as responsible is at the heart of the challenge.

Kuzmic's (1993) view of teacher authority builds on Goodman's (1992) and suggests a direction for meeting this challenge. He wrote (1993) that emancipatory authority centers on the provision "of a sense of direction and empowerment...authority serves as a basis for maintaining a sense of purpose and commitment in regard to schooling that challenges students to critically examine themselves, their relations with others and the world around them" (p. 48). This last statement is consistent with Helen's goals and self-definition as a feminist teacher.

Student Discourse on Caring Teachers

Students made numerous references to the notion of caring teachers throughout the interviews. While they had different ways of describing what a caring teacher did and said, and at times perceived teachers' behaviors in different ways, all students indicated that it was important to have teachers who cared. The following analysis is based on comments students from five different interviews made about caring teachers.

In general, students defined caring behavior on the part of the teachers as being exemplified by the statement made by one student, who said, "They help us out when you need it" (Interview 0101). In several interviews students defined caring as giving them a break. As one student said, "If the teacher's nice and they sometimes they be like I'll give you one more day or something" and "give us like extra time to do something if we're not finished"(Interview 0101).

Other students indicated that teachers show they care because "they want us to pass"; "they're always trying to get us to do our work, yea, they push us"(Interview 0810). This theme of showing care by pushing students to get their work done and at the same time to being flexible if they needed extra time was reiterated in many interviews.

Students also associated caring teacher behavior with responses to student behavior. Specifically, they linked strictness with caring, explaining it in the following terms: "They [teachers] do care about you, but they're real strict, but it's because bad things have happened [drugs, gangs]; they want to make sure we're OK" (Interview 0502). This student's use of the word "but" suggests a crack in her definition of caring teachers. She seemed to be saying they do care "but" they are too strict and that does not feel very caring. Then, as if to convince herself that they do care, says, "but, they want to make sure we are OK, so see, they really do care."

In another interview two girls, when asked what the teachers did that showed they cared, spoke of the equation of strictness and caring this way: "They're always making sure we're not getting into fights or anything so we're not getting hurt. Yeah...We've got the best team because our teachers are so strict" (Interview 0811). One of these girls suggested that the principal was willing to let their team go on more field trips because they were well behaved due to their teacher's strictness. Later, however, she suggested that opportunity was not enough to compensate for the restrictions and said, "...if they're gonna be that strict with us they should give us like privileges, rewards...yeah...for putting up

with that strictness" (Interview 0812). While some students were unequivocal in their equation of strictness and caring, others seemed ambivalent. For some it seemed that when strictness and caring are related to high expectations (pushing them to do their best) there was less ambivalence. Those students whose statements suggested that they might be hedging seemed to equate strictness with restrictions on self-identity and might best be understood in the overall context of Helen's definition of a "good" student who knows the "right" way to be an adolescent.

Students also had some clear ideas about what caring behavior was not. In many interviews students spoke about the metal detectors. Students needed to walk through the metal detectors in order to enter the building. While many spoke about the metal detectors as being important to them and at times were concerned that security was not tight enough, they were very frustrated when they had to wait in line as students walked through the metal detectors. This sometimes resulted in them being late to class. It could be argued that, their knowing that they had to wait in line would motivate them to arrive earlier, but what is important here is their interpretation of the teacher's behavior when they did arrive in class. They often received detention for arriving late and indicated that the teachers said, "I don't care why you are late". As one student said, "I tell the teacher, but she doesn't care" (Interview 0314). It seemed that he was also saying that his voice didn't matter, that he didn't feel heard.

In one interview the three students really seemed to struggle with how to describe teacher behavior that was indicative of the fact that they cared about the

students. Part of their struggle had to do with determining how much teachers should care. Finally, one of the students in the group said, "They should care, but yelling is no way of caring" (Interview 0304). Other students reiterated this and reported that they did not ask for clarification or help with an assignment out of fear that the teacher would "yell" at them. This fear of being "yelled at" or perhaps being "shoved off the mountain" limited their voice and agency.

Many students appreciated Helen and the many efforts they saw her make on their behalf. Some saw this as evidence of caring; others problematized some of the ways she and other teachers expressed concern for the students and struggled to define how teachers could care and they as students could feel that what their voices were acknowledged and valued.

<u>Differentiated Caring</u>

The most significant delineation of caring behavior had to do with caring differently about different types of students. In a number of interviews some of the students spoke of the differential caring that was shown to students who did well as opposed to those who did not. In three different interviews with small groups of girls this theme was particularly manifest. Each of these interview groups included at least one student who was considered "smart" in the eyes of teachers and peers. All were generally compliant with teacher expectations. In one interview the girls described their observations in this way:

> They [teachers] care more about smart students. They expect you
>
> to do better. If you do something wrong, right away they think
>
> there's something wrong at home or something....yeah, they make

smart people [work] they care about them. And if they slack off, they go right [to their parents] but about dumb people, they're slackers, they don't care. They don't care. If they don't learn that's your business, just push them aside (Interview 0824-25).

In another interview, the girls made the following recommendations for teachers to show concern for all students:

Student One, "Pay attention to all the students, not just the ones that are good. So the ones that aren't doing good, if you see they are slowing down....back up and explain again."

Student Two added, "Like do it individually, talk to each student individually, don't just talk to the whole class and yell at the whole class for one student not understanding."

Student Three joined in explaining, "They [the students] don't understand. And they [the teachers] should just go back and go over it. Some of these teachers they be like, oh well, you know, you didn't get it the first time, you're not going to get it at all. So I really feel strongly about that. They should explain that more to the other students" (Interview 1010-12).

During two different interviews in which the girls focused on students' lack of understanding, they were asked to estimate how many students in their homeroom don't understand the assignments or the work that's being done. In both interviews, the girls estimated between 60% and 75% (Interviews 1012, 1708).

It would seem, based on the student observations and recommendations, that these students were saying that Helen had, for all practical purposes, pushed some of the students off the mountain, like the man had pushed the donkey off the mountain. Muller et al. (1999) spoke of the differential treatment that these girls observed. They wrote of it in this way: "It is difficult to establish a causal relationship in the association between teachers' and students' expectations because each plays a primary role in shaping the other" (p. 297). Students and teachers each make decisions about the extent to which they believe investing in the relationship is worthwhile. These authors found that teachers relied on standardized test scores, the strength of peer influence and classroom behavior in making this determination.

> ...[T]he anticipation of achievement and success may be essential to the student-teacher relationship. In part, this may be because the relationship exists in the school between individuals who have well-defined roles....when one actor does not behave in keeping with these roles...the other actor appears to withdraw from the relationship (Muller et al., 1999, p.329).

It may be that Helen, consciously or unconsciously, placed greater investment in the "smart" students, those who exhibited "good student" behavior. Criteria of a "good student" illustrated this point in the following interpretation of Helen's interaction.

Michael, who described Helen as a "fair teacher" and one he learned a lot from, but whom he knew "doesn't even like me", also felt pushed off the

mountain, when the teacher "blew off my question." He spoke at some length

about Helen's response to a question he asked in class. He said that "instead of

asking me to explain it more to the point where she could understand it, she just

said, 'I don't get it, oh well' and she just blew it off, she don't care, that was that"

(Interview 0705). Michael was referring to a question about children of different

races playing together and their parent's responses. Michael did not fit Helen's

description of a "good student." His outspokenness was unacceptable within the

context of her classroom. While he valued the learning that took place in her

classroom, especially about Hitler, he seemed to make the decision that the

investment in their relationship was not worth it as the year drew to a close.

Michael was required to attend summer school not because his scores on the

ITBS were below the cut-off necessary for graduation but because he failed his

classes due to incomplete work.

Central to the issues raised by the students about differential caring

seemed to be teachers' expectations and messages communicated either

intentionally or not, when students failed to meet them. Muller et al. (1999)

described this dynamic as a decision making process in which students and

teacher make choices about whether it is worth maintaining the teaching-learning

relationship. Levering (2000) discussed the issue of teacher and student

disappointment. This disappointment may be due to not meeting one's own

expectations or those of others. Disappointment may have been a factor in the

conscious or unconscious decision to disengage from some students. It may also

have been a factor in what the students described as caring differently about different kinds of students.

Student Perspectives on Responsibility and Blame

Like Helen, the students' discourse on caring was interrelated with that of responsibility. Throughout the students' interviews their words spoke to the ethic of care and responsibility, both in terms of their own behavior and that of their teachers. They identified behaviors on the part of the teachers and themselves that were indicative or caring and responsibility and others that were not. Their words spoke to the complexity and contradictions they experienced in themselves, their peers, and their teachers regarding these values.

They framed their understanding of care of the school and safety in school in terms of responsibility[4]. On the one hand, the students seemed to yearn to be seen as responsible and capable, and on the other, they seemed to feel they needed to be protected from themselves and others who were irresponsible. The fact that they were restricted from activities and situations in which they would like to participate was based, at least from their perspective, on the teachers' view of their irresponsibility. So, for example, the restriction on wearing jewelry was, for the students, related to responsibility. As one student said, "It is their [students] responsibility to have it. Teachers make a big deal out of that, yeah, we know the consequences, we, we know, we're the ones that wear and lose them; we can't find em." Within the same response these students expanded the notion of responsibility to include classroom assignments. "They be mad at us about little things like if we have this paper to do and we don't do it, they start

screaming at us for nothing. But we know if we did it we get a good grade but if we don't we know the consequences to it, of not doing it" (Interview 0303). These students struggled with how much teachers should care or how they should show they care when students are not responsible. Throughout the interviews students struggled to clarify this ambiguity, perhaps because the caring they experienced seemed to contradictory.

They strongly believed that the teacher's role was to be responsible to all the students, but were also very quick to place blame on themselves. This theme became very prevalent during interviews after students had received their test scores and found out whether they would be graduating or not. For example, one of the students who did not meet the cut-off score necessary to graduate, when asked what might have been helpful to her to help raise her test scores, said, "I should have read more like I was suppose to but I didn't, like that" (Interview 1710). She went on to say that she could have tried harder and that there was nothing the teachers could have done to help her. Although after a brief pause she added, "They could have just kept me aware that what was happening and all, that I need to keep my reading scores up." This student reported that her grades ranged from A's to C's. She was very quiet in class, never participating in whole group discussion, but very attentive to her work in small groups. She had internalized Helen's message of "read, read, read" and blamed herself for not doing enough of it. Cummins (1993) addressed the relationship between self blame and power relationships in society:

> Minority students are disabled or disempowered by school in very much the same way that their communities are disempowered by interactions with social institutions. Since equality of opportunity is believed to be a given, it is assumed that individuals are responsible for their own failure and are therefore, made to feel that they have failed because of their own inferiority, despite the best efforts of dominant-group institutions and individuals to help them (Cummins, 1993, p. 106-107).

Cummin's description of minority experiences seems consistent with the student's perspective described above. Two girls who participated in summer school and in interviews over the summer also provide perspectives on the relationship of self-blame and agency.

Self-Blame and Agency: A Downward Spiral: The Experience of Two Students

Elisa's experience

Elisa spoke of self-blame during an interview in July. She reflected on her seventh and eighth grade years, including her low test scores in eighth grade. While she had received the cut-off score necessary to move from sixth grade to seventh, at the end of seventh grade she had to attend summer school due to low test scores. She explained the experience this way:

> I joked around a lot. I thought I was going to pass because all my cousins was like, "oh, seventh grade is like easy..." In seventh grade, it is more difficult than sixth grade. It is the friends; they change a lot. So when you're with all those friends, you're like OK, I

want to be like them, they're cool, whatever. So you start doing the

stuff they're doing and then don't pass. It was hard. I joked around

a lot. I'm not have ... retarded [unintelligible] friends. [pause]. I'm

not trying to blame it on nobody, it was my fault. I didn't chose my

friends wisely. [This last sentence was uttered in a noticeable lower

volume than previous sentences in this interview.] (Interview

S0205).

Elisa had talked about the move to the middle school in seventh grade as

a big change with exposure to different peers whom she enjoyed but who

distracted her from her schoolwork. She felt that if she had not come to

Community Middle School she would have passed, like her brother who attended

the same school for his elementary and middle school years did. Despite Elisa's

emphasis on her poor choice of friends, during the months of this study Elisa sat

in a group with four students who were focused on their work and graduated in

June. When asked why she sat with Cecelia, she said,

Because Cecelia, when I need help, she helped me because I think

she graduated. So we got real closest being in the seventh grade

and I figured if I had a good friend I'd do good. I started doing fine

when I was with Cecelia (Interview S0205).

Her focus on making a poor choice of friends seemed contradictory to her

everyday behavior in the classroom. While she was friendly and social and

seemed to have a network of friends that extended across several peer groups,

in the classroom she was generally focused on her work. In addition, she was

observed on numerous occasions to focus on details of assignments suggesting more than just minimal effort to do well. When asked about how her friendships had interfered with her achievement she said,

> Because I would talk to Gloria a lot though, like the beginning of eighth, I used to be with her, and in seventh grade, I used to be with her and me and her were close friends. We used to do things together, everyday. If I got in trouble, she'll get in trouble. If she get in trouble, I got in trouble. That is why she [Helen] told me to choose my friends wisely (Interview S0206-07).

It seemed that Elisa had internalized the message that she had made a bad choice in friends and hence was to blame for failing, despite the fact that at least for the last five months of the school year she sat and worked with a group of students who were focused on academic work. This situation was problematic in that her active choice to associate with a peer group that was more successful academically seemed not to matter. Her perception of the lack of connection between the classroom curriculum and the material on the tests complicated her experience in summer school and her sense of efficacy. When asked how summer school was going she said,

> They [teacher] help you a lot. It is just that they give us things that I know is not going to be on the IOWAS. Yes, but then again, the way they teach us, it is going to be on the IOWAS, like the way its-I don't know how to say it, [pause] they help us a lot. My teacher what she does, I don't know, she is crazy or something. She gives

us the books to work on, and if we don't understand a question, she'll just read it to us and tell us what it says. I tell her I know that is what you're supposed to do, but I don't even understand it. So she'll go, OK hold on. So she'll go to her desk, grab the teacher's edition, put it on our desk, and let us copy from the book. So I told her unless you're going to give me the answers to the IOWAS, then I'm all right. But if you're not, then don't let me copy. I want to learn something. [As this did not sound consistent with her initial response to her teacher helping a lot, Elisa was asked to clarify] She does—once in a blue moon. But then almost every day she'll just give us the books (Interview S0203).

Elisa's experience of not getting the assistance she needed was problematic on many levels. The short-term implications for her were significant. Unless she raised her test score, she would be repeating eighth grade either at Community Middle School or at a transitional school. If a "passing" score was indicative of prerequisite skills needed for success at the high school level, then lack of mastery of these skills had implications for her long-term academic success. At another level, her experience was an example of her exercising initiative to advocate for her needs, but still being unsuccessful.

While she was concerned about how she would do on the re-take of the ITBS, she was also concerned that her efforts would not make a difference for yet another reason. She explained it this way:

It is just, and I don't know what kind of stuff is that, in eighth grade she would teach us ratios and in social studies we had, we studied the Holocaust and the Civil War but none of that stuff was on the IOWAS. So they're teaching us like the same stuff like in math and reading. So I know it is not going to be on the IOWAS (Interview S0204).

The view that the curriculum was irrelevant to success on the ITBS in combination with the belief that completing classwork would not lead to success on the tests may have led her to the conclusion that her efforts to complete her daily work and associate with others who were pursuing the same goals did not matter. These two factors have the potential to further diminish her sense of efficacy and place her at risk for continuing to make difficult choices relative to peers and effort on school work. Yet these were not unreasonable conclusions. She did receive passing grades from her teachers and while some of the items on the social studies section of the ITBS were related to skills that Helen said they had addressed in the social studies curriculum, much of the content was unrelated. Should she decide that the obstacles to success are insurmountable, disengagement from the learning process is likely (Muller, et al., 1999, p. 319).

Maria Victoria's experience

The themes of agency and self-blame were woven through Maria Victoria's narratives as well. Maria Victoria exhibited a sense of responsibility for her academic progress to a greater degree than many of the other students who were interviewed. She manifested a sense of agency that was strong but fragile.

Her description of her experiences during summer school illustrated both her sense of agency and threats to it. While she was careful not to criticize any of the teachers she had during the school year, she was quite critical of her summer school teacher.

She expressed her anger saying, "At this point right now the way the teacher is teaching us, I think I'm going to get a lower score in reading because of this" (Interview S0109). She followed this statement with a response that illustrated a sense that she herself had the power to do something that would make a difference. " So what I got to do is read and do stuff in reading" (Interview S0109). Throughout the summer interviews, as she spoke of her frustration with her experience in summer school, she indicated steps she would take to "pass" the ITBS. For example, just as she appreciated her sixth grade teacher for teaching her the "secrets" for being a better reader, she made a similar comment about her middle school math teacher and spoke of using the math journals they completed during eighth grade to study for the IOWAS as well as for high school. She said:

> In math I liked her a lot because in math we didn't understand work and she gave us ideas. She gave us another way to do and she made us do journals for us so we could know on the IOWAS and I still have that journal. Some of them who graduated probably threw all their math stuff. I didn't throw all the math stuff away because I know I'm going to need that in high school and probably in the future because that is what happens (Interview S0104).

In a similar vein she spoke of shopping with her mother and begging her to buy a math program for the computer so she could improve her skills in math. She maintained a sense of agency despite her frustrations with having been placed in a bilingual class in seventh grade, not being able to graduate in eighth, and not receiving the assistance she needed in summer school.

This is not to say that her view of herself as a good student was not fragile, however. In an interview early in June she seemed to be convincing herself that she had worked hard and improved, and that effort and achievement were more important than passing the test. She would talk about the advanced math her brother had taught her as if to convince herself that she really was a capable student. Throughout the summer interviews she spoke of instances that demonstrated her intellectual capabilities. For example, in another interview, she spoke of reading some of her brother's books from his high school English classes. Each time, she contrasted the level of difficulty of the academic work assigned in school with what she did on her own or with her brother outside of school. While she acknowledged the difficulty of these books, she seemed to take some comfort in being able to tackle them despite or perhaps because of the challenges they provided.

She experienced threats to her sense of agency from experiences in summer school and from her extended family. She felt significant stress because she perceived that her extended family did not believe she would pass. She felt she needed to play a role in breaking what her cousin said was a family characteristic of not graduating. In one of the interviews in July, she spoke more

about her family and described her cousin's school experiences. This was a cousin who had dropped out of school and whose family she felt doubted her academic abilities. She described his process of dropping out this way:

> Yes, my cousin, he is actually my god-brother, but I just call him my cousin. He stopped going to school because he always protected his sister and he always got in to fights and everything and that is why they suspended him out of school. He kept on going to some schools but he kept on taking him out so that is why he stopped. So he kept getting suspended and then just kind of gave up on it? Yes (Interview S01).

While it is difficult to know what other factors contributed to her cousin's negative school experiences, Maria Victoria did not see as problematic that the school was not able to intervene in providing a safe environment for her female cousin and rather responded by repeatedly suspending her god-brother. In the same way, while she articulated the positive experiences she had with several of her teachers over the years, she never critiqued problematic situations with other teachers or school in general. It is quite possible that Helen's admonishment to "only say good things about her" as Maria Victoria walked down the school hallway to her first interview for this study contributed to her silence on these issues.

The closest she came to any direct reference was when she commented on the low number of students who had received passing scores. She was commenting on the fact that her homeroom had a large number of students who

passed the IOWAS and in her homeroom only eight students had to go to summer school. In the other homerooms there were only eight or so who passed and were not going to summer school. There had reportedly been extensive cheating during the test in her homeroom, and she was aware that this is what made the number of students who passed so different from the other homerooms. She said, "So it is weird that the schools are the opposite, eight students supposed to pass, almost everybody is supposed to be going to summer school" (Interview S0103). This was the most direct criticism she made of her school experience. She seemed to understand that it should not be that way, but would not say more.

She denied being negatively affected by the many comments teachers made about "how you won't graduate," saying that she was doing what she needed to do, she was doing her work, so it wasn't about her. She basically blamed the students who were not doing their work for their failures, yet the outcome she experienced in terms of graduation was the same for her as for many of these students.

Hynds (1997) found that "the places of greatest interest, tension, and contradiction were not openly articulated by the participants but seemed to lie in the nonverbal negotiations beneath the 'official' classroom text of writing or speech" (p. 74). She suggested that sociopolitical forces were at the heart of the non-articulated contradictions. While there were moments when Maria Victoria gave glimmers of recognition of school structures and practices that were

unresponsive to her needs and those of other students, she generally focused on what she needed to do and avoided any appearance of being critical.

During one of the days of summer interviews the usual rooms for interviews were unavailable. It was necessary to use a room in the office area. While she did not seem concerned about this, it was clear by her response pattern that she had taken on the belief that one should not criticize the school or teachers. Each time during that particular interview when she said anything that was hinted at frustration, she lowered her voice to make sure no one else could hear. Even though the door was closed, she was concerned that she might voice an opinion that would not be acceptable.

Beside her critical comments about summer school, other critiques, while unspoken, became clearer. This was particularly evident when she spoke of looking forward to high school. She said that one of the things she was looking forward to was having teachers that did not yell. She said that she had noticed that during her visit to the high school. Yet when asked if that bothered her at Community Middle School, she denied it, saying she ignored it because it was not directed at her.

While she blamed other students for their lack of success, her self-blame centered on being lazy. It seemed that when she was not meeting what she had taken as an acceptable way of being by either her family or school, she was lazy. Gloria Anzaldua's use of the term "lazy" to describe engaging in behaviors inconsistent with the culturally espoused behaviors expected by her family (1987, p. 59) is similar to Maria Victoria's. Maria Victoria used the term most frequently

in the context of comments related to family expectations for school performance or academic competence. While she would ask her mother to buy her books and engage with her brother on math problems, at other times she worked to hide her academic pursuits from them. She described reading in her bedroom with the light off and pretending to be asleep, and she described not answering questions about school to which she knew the answer. While she talked about being "lazy", she also indicated that she needed time without the pressure of school and was concerned that showing too much of an interest in outside academic pursuits at home, while it would please her family, would put too much pressure on her. While being "lazy" was seen as negative, it also seemed to be a way for her to present and perhaps maintain a more complex view of herself, to maintain a different identity at home than at school.

In many ways she had a stronger sense of agency than many other students, as illustrated by the ways in which she would compensate for the lack of challenge or assistance in the school setting. At the same time she seemed to use her new abilities to deal with the more advanced work to reassure herself that she was capable; that even though she did not graduate, she could do high school work. Yet she never shared her initiatives with her teachers at school. While those around her in the school setting may not have been aware of her sense of purpose and agency, for Maria Victoria, her inner voice helped her navigate the difficult time of summer school.

However, if the cut-off score for going to high school had not been lowered after the July test scores came back, Maria Victoria still would not have been

able to go on to high school. Despite being seen by her teachers in a very favorable light for her hard work, despite quietly taking a more proactive stance toward academic progress outside of the school day, and despite completing her work regularly during the school year, she would be repeating eighth grade. The implications for her continued belief in herself seem significant. While her brother's academic success was a source of pride and encouragement for her, it is hard to imagine that her sense of agency and identity would not have been seriously impacted if she were to repeat eighth grade. It seemed to be a matter of family pride. As she said, "I am going to put a stop to this [school drop out in the family]. This is not right!" (Interview S0101).

The pattern of self-blame might be understood as a result of students looking at themselves and measuring their worthiness through the reality lens of the larger society, as represented by their teachers. It may be that these students had internalized the assumptions implicit in the "inferiority paradigm (Tate, 1997), an ideology that supports the belief that minority students are inherently inferior to non-minority children. DuBois (1903) uses the term "double consciousness" to describe the experience of living in multiple worlds. For many of these students, this consciousness had not yet emerged or perhaps was not yet able to be articulated. Hartsock (1996) suggests that "dominated groups experience a series of inversions, distortions, and erasures that can become epistemologically constitutive" (267). For Maria Victoria, Elisa, and other students, while they were vulnerable to the "critical eye" of mainstream society, they themselves were not critical of it. This may be, in part due to their age and the fact that in general they

may not have come into full awareness of the limiting views of the broader society as most of them are living in a community where they are in the majority.

Stevenson and Ellsworth (1993) reported that in their research with white adolescents from working class backgrounds who had not graduated from high school this pattern of self-blame was evident as well. While some of these youth voiced criticisms of school practices or uncaring teachers, they valued school. Stevenson and Ellsworth (1993) suggest that these students take on the mainstream value of individualism and blame themselves. They use the term "split-consciousness" in describing the students' awareness of shortcomings in the school as institutions, but ultimately still blame themselves personally. The similarities between the students at Community Middle School, many of whom had not met graduation criteria for eighth grade, and the adolescents in Stevenson and Ellsworth's study of adolescents who had dropped out of high school raises concern. While it is not inevitable that the students at Community Middle School will drop out of high school, for many the lack of agency they experienced in getting their academic needs met, combined with the negative appraisal of their abilities on standardized tests that are highly valued by the school district of which they are a part, and explicit or tacit messages about their academic and personal capabilities, may be factors that lead to the process of disengagement that culminates in dropping out (Finn, 1989; Skinner, Wellborn, and Connell, 1990; Brantlinger, 1993; Murdock, 1999).

Maria Victoria's description of her sixth grade teacher is indicative of a pedagogical approach that is based in care and responsibility. It is in contrast to

the description she provided of her summer school experience following her eighth grade year. Both descriptions speak to the relationship among agency, voice, and knowledge; however, her sixth grade teacher created the conditions through which her learning advanced and she developed her voice and a stronger sense of agency. It is presented in contrast to her description of her experience during summer school.

Caring and Responsibility in Relationship to Pedagogical Approaches

Maria Victoria in describing her sixth grade teacher seemed to incorporate each of the elements of caring that the students spoke about. She looked back to her elementary years with a certain amount of fondness. She described that school as like a home to her. She said that all of the teachers knew her and her family. She described how her third grade teacher had realized she needed glasses and called her mom. But her sixth grade teacher was the one she spoke most about. She indicated that this teacher cared. She described this teacher as "tough". She felt that this teacher had helped her a lot and that her achievement was high as a result. She attributed this success to her teacher being tough and teaching the secrets. "Yes, she would teach, she'll say this is what this means. She tells us everything. She tells how to find secrets in it...she showed us tricks" (Interview S0313). These secrets could be described as codes that made the written word intelligible. The secrets provided Maria Victoria with the tools she needed to take on the identity of a literate person. Giroux wrote the following about this process:

> According to Bakhtin, language is intimately related to the dynamics
> of authorship and voice. It is within and through language that
> individuals in particular historical context shape values into
> particular forms and practices. As part of the production of
> meaning, language represents the central force in the struggle for
> voice. ... Schools are places where language projects, imposes,
> and constructs particular norms and forms of meaning. In a sense
> language does more than merely present 'information'. In actuality
> it is used as a basis both to 'instruct' and to produce subjectivities
> (Giroux, 1997, p. 134).

This teacher provided Maria Victoria with a sense of ownership of language in a
way that became more meaningful and which she could use for her own
purposes and a sense of her own power to do so. Equally important to Maria
Victoria was the lesson this teacher gave her regarding believing in herself. She
said this teacher,

> expected a lot out of you. When asked how she knew that, she
> said, "Well, because she always said don't [let them-unspecified]
> tell you something about this that you can't do, don't give up. Show
> them that you can do it. If people try to tell you like you can't do
> this, you can't do that, move them aside. Don't let them take you
> down. As soon as [unintelligible] you have to get up. ..." That
> helped me a lot. I still remember what she said (Interview S0314-
> 16).

This teacher provided Maria Victoria with an enhanced sense of herself. Not only did she gain literary tools she could continue to use but also a belief in herself that she was capable. When she was feeling defeated, she was able to draw on the strength of this teacher's words to get through difficult times while still seeing herself as capable. Bingham (2001) describes this teacher as having provided a mirror for Maria Victoria:

> The mirrored image gained by looking at the silver glass on the wall, as well as the mirrored image provided by the other with whom we come into contact, are both reflective and constitutive....Mirroring brings on a new sense of self at the same time that it solidifies the old sense. The encounter is reflective and reflexive as it portrays the self and works on the self (Bingham, 2001, p. 34-35).

This teacher provided Maria Victoria a new sense of self. During the summer as well as during other difficult times she was able to recall this reflection of herself and to use it as part of her self-construction. At the same time, this teacher gave her a lesson about power. She lets Maria Victoria know that there will be people who will try to pull her down, people in power. This teacher gave her knowledge about literacy skills that she "...will need to work and live in the wider society, but also knowledge about the social forms through which human beings live, become conscious and sustain [her]self. This included knowledge about power, and how it works..." (Giroux, 1997, p. 108).

These words were significant to her, as she felt "pulled down" by not having been able to graduate in June. She also referred to them as something to remember when her cousin tells her that not doing well in school and dropping out "runs in the family."

Each of these characteristics— personal relationship, the strategic teaching, and believing in herself was important and seemed to give her a sense of agency that she carried with her. These experiences were significantly different than how she described her summer experiences. While during the school year she felt "special" because she received attention and interacted with her teachers, she described herself as feeling like a "mop" in summer school. She was particularly frustrated that the teacher could not or would not provide her with academic attention in the form of strategies that would enable her to do better on the test. This frustration was exacerbated by the fact that teachers and other building staff in summer school "don't know what is going on." She had gotten many conflicting messages about what the requirements for moving on to high school were. She was unsure whether she needed to "pass" both the reading and math subtests of the ITBS or just one. She had also heard that if she passed the summer class and did not "pass" some or all of the ITBS she could still graduate.

Maria Victoria had a difficult time elaborating on what she meant by feeling like she was a "mop" in summer school. It seemed to come from a bodily knowledge that was beyond words (Goldberger, 1996; Hurtado, 1996; Mirochrik, 2000) and had to do with being shoved back and forth along the floor by others.

She explained it this way, "like "someone is using you because you know how you do a mop when you mop the floor, you make it move back and forth and you shake it and you roll, it. Like all sort of stuff, that is the thing..." She said her mother had used this analogy of a mop when she said, "don't let people do this to you like a mop and this what it is called" (Interview S0107). This message was important to her and echoed a similar message that her sixth grade teacher had communicated. She seemed to experience a total lack of agency in getting what she wanted and needed from the summer school staff. The descriptions Maria Victoria provided of these two teaching approaches and the impact they had on her as a learner suggest a way to look at care and responsibility that encompasses the expressed and tacit concerns, recommendations, and needs identified by many of the students.

Rethinking the Ethics of Care and Responsibility

A perspective on agency, authority, and power informed by theorists from phenomenological, critical, and feminist theorists provides another window to look at the issues of care and responsibility, agency and voice. Cummins wrote:

> Students from 'dominated' societal groups are 'empowered' or 'disabled' as a direct result of their interactions with educators in schools. These interactions are mediated by the implicit or explicit role definitions that educators assume in relation to four institutional characteristics of schools (1993, p.104).

The institutional characteristics he referred to include the extent to which the students' language and culture are incorporated into the school program, the

degree to which family and community members participate as integral partners in the children's education, the degree to which the school curriculum and pedagogical efforts actively promote the intrinsic motivation of students to use language to generate meaning, and the extent to which school professionals who are involved in assessment activities advocate for the students rather than focus on the individual child as the location of the problem. He recognized, as do others (Gee, 1996; Giroux, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Brantlinger, 1993; Nieto, 2000) that the power relations in the school itself, between students and teachers and between the school and minority communities, do not exist in isolation but reflect and interrelate with the power relations that exist among groups within the larger community. The teacher takes on either an "additive or subtractive" role in terms of the students' language and culture. Teachers who communicate the message that the student's cultures and languages are valued are seen as empowering students in Cummin's framework. Delpit (1995) supports this position. "To deny students their own expert knowledge *is* to disempower them" (Delpit, 1995, p.32-33). This being the case, the ethic of responsibility might be seen in the light of empowering students. Empowerment in this sense has to do with creating conditions in the classroom for it to occur (Darder, 1997). It takes place in an environment in which "...genuine dialogue between students and teacher in both oral and written modalities, guidance and facilitation rather than control of student learning by the teacher and encouragement of student to student talk in a collaborative learning context" (Cummins, 1993, p. 111).

In this case control is shared. As Cummins wrote, "In short, pedagogical approaches that empower students encourage them to assume greater control over setting their own learning goals and to collaborate actively with each other in achieving these goals" (1993, p. 111-112). In this way students' senses of efficacy and inner direction are supported. Such an approach is consistent with a view of power as shared by students and teachers.

Moreover, it is supported by a view of teaching that is self-reflective and as such requires an awareness of the ways in which the values and beliefs of the larger society and its institutions reflect the dominant culture. It requires an awareness of the curriculum as experienced by the students. Aoki (1988) wrote

An educated person, first and foremost, understands that one's ways of knowing, thinking, and doing flow from who one is. Such a person knows that an authentic person is more than a mere individual, an island unto himself or herself, but a being-in-relation with others and hence is, at core, an ethical being (In Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman, 1995, p. 428).

It requires recognition of the interrelationship of the epistemological and the ontological. It requires sensitivity to context. If such a perspective involves "power with" rather than "power over," it involves a recognition of adolescents not as underdeveloped adults but capable of creating meaning of their own experiences inside and out of school. Their knowledge, as is that of their teacher, is "...a historical and cultural product...forever in a creative state of partiality" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 338). Ballnow spoke of pedagogically significant moments allowing for

"rejuvenation of consciousness". This term would seem in contrast to Maria Victoria's experience in summer school in which she described her brain as "melting". In describing the "pedagogical atmosphere" he used the term "educational love" with meanings similar to what Helen seemed to strive for. It is

a notion which incorporates patience, hope, serenity, humor, and finally goodness: goodness does not relax the situation by lowering the demands, instead, it accompanies the other, especially the younger and more vulnerable person with a requirement of strictness and a sensitive watchfulness" (in Pinar et al., 1995, p. 433).

Care and responsibility in these perspectives are interwoven as they were in Helen's mind as well as those of her students. Examining the meaning of power, control, and authority, and the ways these are shaped through experiences and positions within society, as well as the ways in which they impact teachers at both the personal and professional level, seems to be at the core of the relationship between care and responsibility.

As does Aiko (1995), Helen sees the issue of care as being an ethical one. However, she does not seem to be aware of the ways in which her embodiment of caring disables her students. In large part this may be because she has only a tacit understanding of the ways she uses power and authority. Her view of care and responsibility seem largely tied to efforts to control students through fear. In this way caring became coercive. Her notion of responsibility seemed to focus heavily on ensuring that her irresponsible students were kept

under control. It was a narrow definition centered on power over her students, an effort that was all consuming, and one that served to silence her students. As they did not meet her expectations, for example, when many did not receive the test score required for graduation, it only served to reinforce their views of themselves as inferior.

The degree to which she silenced them did not allow her to create conditions to support their empowerment. If she wants her students to "make it," they need to see themselves as capable people who can take action and influence their world. Her view of caring and responsibility serves as a crutch, not a walking stick, on that journey. In focusing on their lack of responsibility and doubling and redoubling her efforts to exercise control over them, she does not look at responsibility in terms of what she might do differently and thus closes the door on her own professional development and sense of competence (Brown and Keller, 1994). To allow for such a possibility she would need to be able to allow them to participate more actively in the journey up the mountain. Instead of seeing her journey over the mountain to the next village (graduation) as one to be tightly controlled and one that is so dangerous that anyone who interferes with the task would need to be shoved off, she would need to be able to see "herself as in-relation" with the students. Pinar's (1995) concept of *currere*, the Latin derivative of curriculum would provide an alternative journey for her and one that would be consistent with the rethinking of care and responsibility described above. *Currere* means "to run the course." It focuses on the educational experience of individuals as lived experience. Rather than a narrow path that

requires one to maintain a firm footing lest one slip off the mountain, it allows for a more reflective exploration of the contours of the terrain, a journey in which students and their lives, language, and culture are central to both the planning and the path. It requires making explicit the ways in which power and authority are interwoven in the various discourses that teachers bring to the classroom. It involves recognition that students have something to contribute to the classroom conversation.

Such a conceptualization is one based on pedagogical caring and responsibility and requires a process of self-transformation. This process involves a critical examination of the various cultural practices and social and political structures that have informed one's identity. "More than anything else, however, it forces a recognition of how one is oneself always and everywhere complicit in such ignorance, and that the hardest work, the work that provides the only true authority for teaching others about social transformation, is by addressing the condition of one's own ignorance (Smith, 1999, p. 468). Like Smith (1999), Noddings (1992) spoke of the responsibility of self-transformation. She emphasized that "when we care, we accept the responsibility to work continuously on our own competence so that the recipient of our care-person, animal, object, or idea is enhanced" (p. 175). Such self-transformation then opens the door to providing pedagogical caring.

A conceptualization of care and responsibility embedded in a pedagogical framework suggests a consideration of the ways in which students and teacher approached knowledge. In the next chapter, ways of knowing are addressed.

Contextual factors that shape discourses influencing pedagogical choices as are the contradictions that mark teaching practices both at Community Middle School and beyond. Examining the epistemological stance of the teacher make possible an understanding of ways of knowing that are recognized and validated in the classroom.

Endnotes

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[1] When the word "teacher" is used in the plural form, it indicates that students were speaking of teachers in general or teachers on their team in general. When teacher is used in the singular form it is used to refer to Helen.

[2] Any direct quotes from interviews, field notes or other primary sources have been incorporated in their original form.

[3] Grant (2001) and Popkewitz (2001) speak to the construct of the urban child and its power to shape practices. Included in this commonly held construct is a view of the urban adolescent as deficit and inferior. The way in which the construct of the urban adolescent is integrated into Helen's discourse on her students and the ways in which her practices reflect conceptualization is discussed further in chapter 6. Also discussed in chapter 6 is the identity of the "good student" and Helen's conceptualization of the "right" way to be an adolescent. These themes are introduced in this chapter and elaborated on in following chapters.

[4] Students spoke at length about issues related to safety and responsibility. They centered these discussions around the presence of video surveillance cameras, metal detectors and vandalism. They struggled with whether or not school officials were fully carrying out their responsibilities in regard to insuring safety. They suggested that not taking these safety measures seriously was an example of not caring. These students also struggles with issues of whether students could be counted on to be responsible. Some indicated a sense of powerlessness regarding their ability to influence or stop vandalism.

CHAPTER 5

WAYS OF KNOWING: VOICE AND PEDAGOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Introduction

The way in which knowledge is viewed shapes not only decisions about what is taught but how it is taught (Shor, 1992). It shapes the role of the teacher, the role of the students, and the activities that are undertaken. Helen addressed this relationship in her master's thesis. The conflicts over the nature of knowledge as she saw it envisioned by others and that which she believed to be essential to her work as a feminist teacher were articulated then and continue to be a source of tension. Helen recognized then that the socio-political reality of teaching in a large urban district, one that she continues to teach in six years later, the differences in race, ethnicity, and class among herself and her students and her commitment to feminist teaching created challenges that were at times, as she put it, "exhausting."

In this chapter the ways in which knowledge was defined both in theory and practice are explored, as are the strategies engaged in by the teacher and students as they sought to interact with knowledge. The types and ways of knowing evidenced in this classroom are examined in terms of their impact on student learning. The lived experiences of teachers and students at Community Middle School were impacted by the reality of the current socio-historical climate that places a high value on the performance of students on standardized tests. At the same time the assumptions that the teacher brought to the classroom about

the reform efforts of the local district, the community and families of which the students are a part, the nature of adolescents and the knowledge they bring with them to the classroom were also important factors. So too, were the epistemological assumptions about the role of schooling, knowledge that matters, and the pedagogical factors that support student learning. In examining knowledge as it related to voice in the context of this study, each of these factors will be considered.

Informed by the views of cognitive theorists, as well as those who espouse a feminist, and critical, postmodern perspective, this chapter examines the intersection of knowledge, voice, relationship, and culture. The perspective that knowledge and thinking are socially constructed, and that assumptions about thinking and knowing are grounded in a particular socio-historical and socio-cultural context, is central to understanding these intersections. An understanding of what constitutes knowledge and legitimate ways of knowing are impacted by the social forces that operate subtly and not so subtly in the socio-cultural-historical context (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993; Giroux, 1992; Hurtado, 1996; Goldberger, 1996; Eisner, 1985). As Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg wrote, "In settings such as schools, students and teacher behavior cannot be understood without careful attention to the setting and the individuals' relationships to the traditions, norms, roles, and values that are inseparable from the lived world of the institutions" (1993, p. 189).

These larger socio-historical discourses including accountability through high stakes testing and other forms of monitoring, an emphasis on controlling

students from an authoritarian hierarchical position, and emphasis on acquisition of decontextualized knowledge frame education. While these discourses have been critiqued and alternative discourses have begun to exert influence, teacher's pedagogical choices are shaped by the larger, sometimes contradictory, social discourses. Helen is no exception. Her particular resolution of the tensions embedded in these larger discourses is analyzed in this chapter.

Ways of Knowing

The term "ways of knowing" has been increasingly prevalent in educational literature during the past fifteen years. The Eighty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (1985) was titled *Learning and Teaching the Ways of Knowing*. A central premise of this volume is the existence of multiple ways, mechanisms, or modes through which individuals come to know their world. A year later, *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belensky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986) was published. The work of these theorists as well as the writings of others (Lyons, 1990; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993; Johnson, Woodside-Jiron and Day, 2001) supports an approach that recognizes various ways of knowing. While coming from different theoretical perspectives, the work of these authors adds complexity to the primary way of knowing recognized in Western culture. Bruner (1990) suggested that the logical-scientific way of thinking/knowing is so pervasively implicit that it is taken for granted.

Nona Lyons (1990) provided a framework for exploring the relationship between ways of knowing and voice. She characterized "the relationship between students and teachers as knowers" as "nested knowing." While she

used this term provisionally, it described the ways in which the teacher's epistemological beliefs and perspectives interact with the students' epistemological perspectives. Both teachers and students come to the learning situation with a clear epistemological base. The discourses that have helped to frame this epistemological base include those communities in which the teacher and her students have participated or currently participate.

For the teacher, this includes her conceptualization or definition of what constitutes knowledge, assumptions about knowing, her conceptualization of herself and also her students as knowers, as well as her conceptualization of her specific subject matter. These interact with goals for her students as knowers, her goals for her students' epistemological development, her teaching practices and knowledge of her subject matter, and her practices that promote or challenge the students' epistemological development (Lyons, 1990).

Like Lyons (1990), Britzman (1998) suggested that the teacher and students' engagement in learning is of an interdependent nature. While acknowledging that theories of knowledge and learning are embedded in any learning experience, she emphasized, "... such a theory must begin within the tensions exercised when the knowledge offered through pedagogy meets the knowledge brought to pedagogy" (p. 5). For Britzman, like Lyons (1990), teaching involves "being-in-relations."

The discourse communities to which teachers currently belong and others in which they have participated inform the epistemological perspectives regarding knowledge that teachers and students bring to the classroom. For the teacher,

the school itself serves as a discursive community socializing teachers into the ways of being and thinking recognized as important to the culture of the school (Kuzmic, 1994; Biklin, 1995). Family, professional communities, and past experiences have shaped the teacher beliefs regarding knowledge, students, and teachers. For students, their families, communities, and past experiences both in and out of school have shaped their beliefs regarding knowledge, teachers, schools, and themselves as learners. Discourses become a lens through which both students and teachers view the world, their role in it, and their actions in it (Biklin, 1995). The way in which the teacher conceptualizes knowledge and views students, will impact the learning experiences in the classroom (Kuzmic, 1993, Alexander, 2000; Roderick, 1991; Aoki, 1991). The framework provided by the work of these writers is useful in examining the strategies or ways of knowing utilized by Helen and her students at Community Middle School.

Ways of Knowing: The Teacher's Perspective

Examining the ways in which Helen viewed herself as a knower and her students as knowers, provides a framework for understanding the tensions she and her students experience as they encountered knowledge in the classroom. In general, she viewed knowledge as information that is infallible, simple, value-free, and generalizible. She viewed her students as knowers who needed to acquire the values and beliefs of the mainstream, needed an education to be saved, were passive and uninvolved, and who knew how to be good students but who chose not to be.

Her goals for her students, as expressed in her thesis and though her interactions included, development of cooperation, interaction, critical thinking, success in life, passing eighth grade, experiencing nurturance, seeing themselves and valuing themselves in the world, and seeing another side of themselves. She promotes or challenges students' epistemological development by asking questions, using slogans, presenting information and working to inculcate values. Tensions existed between her goals and epistemological beliefs about knoweldge and the nature of her students.

In general, learning at Community Middle School, as Helen conceptualized it, could be categorized according to three dimensions. Helen identified each of these in her thesis; they became themes repeated regularly during the semester. The teacher's responsibility for addressing two of these dimensions: success in life and passing the IOWA's and hence eighth grade were identified as "a double edge sword" in her thesis. She saw the former as focusing on the whole child and central to the teacher-student relationship; she saw the later as becoming the sole focus of the teacher-student relationship according to the priorities set by the district. The internal conflict she felt between these two goals for learning was illustrated in contradictory practices and tensions in teacher-student relationships. The third goal of learning while related to the first two, focused more specifically on coming "...to see themselves and value themselves in relation to the world around them...to show them another side of the world and where they fit in...to try to get them to think about who and what they are every single day" (Helen, 1994, p. 29).

To a certain extent the second and third goals were concerned, at least in part, with the acquisition of the norms and values Helen saw as necessary for success in mainstream schools and society as a whole. Hynds, (1997), Kincheloe and Steinberg, (1993), and others have referred to this as cultural capital. Helen strove to inculcate the students with the skills, behavior, and value of academic success consistent with mainstream, white, middle class society. Bruner (1990) did not use the word cultural capital but addressed the issue using these words. "Cultures are composed of institutions that specify more concretely what roles people play and what status and respect they are accorded....they are further legitimized by a complex symbolic apparatus of myths, statutes, ways of talking and thinking, ..." (p. 29).The importance of the acquisition of knowledge as a commodity necessary to survive in the mainstream culture was a theme repeated on a daily basis. While this message was reiterated daily, the tools and codes necessary to do so seemed illusive to many of the students.

The way in which a teacher conceptualizes knowledge and views students, will impact the learning experiences in the classroom (Kuzmic, 1993, Alexander, 2000; Roderick, 1991; Aoki, 1991). The framework provided by Lyons (1990) and the work of those writers referenced above, is useful in examining the strategies or ways of knowing utilized by the students at Community Middle School. The interrelationships between the teachers and students in the learning environment of the classroom are discussed in the following section of this chapter.

TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Tensions and contradictions occurred in Helen's classroom when she and her students experienced disjunctures between their epistemological beliefs and the teaching and learning practices. Also at issue, were instances in which the students' experiences of and expectations for school in the context of their community, their lives, and their needs were in conflict with learning experiences in the classroom. Five tensions or contradictions are discussed below and illustrate the connections between the teacher's epistemological beliefs and her pedagogical practices and the students' epistemological beliefs and their relation to teaching practices and learning strategies in which they engage.

Tensions and Contradictions: Epistemological Stance and Pedagogical Choices

The tensions that center around the contradictions between her epistemological stance and pedagogical choices affected both Helen and her students. In her master's thesis, Helen indicated that her job as a feminist teacher was to "encourage cooperation, interaction, critical thinking, and creativity" (Helen, 1994, p. 26). This would suggest pedagogical choices supporting ways of knowing that Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1996) describe as connected or constructed and which Hildebrand (1999) describes as critical activist.

Yet in analyzing her lessons, Helen designed learning activities that center on the transmission of knowledge, be they related to the discipline of social studies, literacy, or socio-cultural knowledge of mainstream society. Her role was to present information, to ask questions, to inculcate values. The students were

to listen and respond to her questions. The students had learned that responses that were consistent with her values were those considered legitimate.

The contradiction and lack of coherence became more striking given her choice of curriculum for use during the last ten weeks of the school year. *Facing History, Facing Ourselves*, was designed to actively engage students in examining issues related to divergent perspectives, and tolerance. Yet, during these ten weeks, there were no forums for exploring students' beliefs and opinions. The following description of a segment of a lesson on this topic illustrates this point.

In previous lessons Helen had reiterated that dictators counted on lack of bravery and lack of intelligence in their citizens. This particular lesson took place during the second week of a unit on the Holocaust.

As the lesson began, Helen read a story about a teenager who despite having had friends who were Jewish, became active in Hitler's youth groups and distributed hate literature about the Jews. The interaction described below followed this reading.

Helen: What do leaders such as Hitler need to depend on? What do people need to lack?

Students: [Silence; no response]

Helen: Bravery. What other trait did we talk about?

Students: [Silence; no response]

Helen: What did Ruth lack?

Students: [Silence; no response]

Helen: Is she asking questions?

1st Student: Intelligence

Helen: Why?

2nd Student: Because she doesn't ask questions.

Helen: Like when you never ask questions, what I say. Ruth lacked

intelligence.

Helen then finished reading the passage.

Helen: "Have any of you ever met anyone who was so sure they

were right, no matter what? Who believes an idea without thinking

about it?

Students: [Silence]

Helen: This is why I want you to ask questions.

(Field notes, 0323)

This lesson illustrates the values and beliefs Helen hoped her students

would acquire. It also illustrates the pedagogical practice used throughout the

unit. Students maintained a passive stance. Even when they were actively

engaged in putting together their timeline project the last several weeks of the

semester, their activities continued to engage them in an intellectually passive

way. As students described their interactions during the completion of this project

in interviews, most of their interactions centered around who would take on what

responsibilities and how they would arrange the artifacts that they had chosen.

Brown (1998) described a pedagogical approach that fosters the students'

engagement. She wrote, "Strong feelings allowed into the public world of the

classroom, invite dissent, genuine excitement, and full engagement in the learning process. Encouraging the expression of reasoned anger prepares a place for social and political critique and serious consideration of the culture of power" (p. 209). While such an approach has merit in general, it seemed particularly fitting for the Holocaust unit the students were studying.

One of the facilitators from the *Facing History, Facing Ourselves* project visited the class at the conclusion of this unit. The following interaction took place in the classroom:

> She asked why they had spent ten weeks on this topic? Why was it so important? The questions were met with silence. A few seconds later, Gloria said, "to know how people were treated back then because of being a different nationality." The facilitator expressed concern that the students had not understood the differentiation between nationality and religion. After she walked the students through understanding the difference by asking a series of questions that focused students on the differences between their own religion and nationality, she said to Helen, "You have more work to do here". The students quickly came to the defense of their teacher and said, "no, no, we just didn't pay attention." A few minutes later, the facilitator asked the students the following questions: "What differences can you make in your own community? What are the problems you face today? Are your problems the same in any way?" The students remained silent after

each question. To break the silence, Helen said, "I know a problem you will be facing tomorrow, you will get your test scores back." Elisa asked, "Will I graduate?" The facilitator tried again to ask her questions but at this point the students were focused on their test results. The period ended a few minutes later (Summary of field notes, 0527).

This interaction created a complex dynamic. In general, the facilitator's questions were of a different type that those experienced in social studies classes with Helen. While students found that there was generally one right answer to Helen's questions, the questions asked by the facilitator were open-ended, inviting a sharing of beliefs and opinions. This may have created a disjuncture in ways of interacting with knowledge in the classroom. Gloria's response may have been an illustration of the misconceptions and fragmented knowledge that resulted from Helen's pedagogical approach during this lesson which largely focused on the transmission of knowledge to the students.

The students' silence may have been a result of several factors. As a stranger, questions such as "What problems do you face?" may have been threatening. The students were certainly aware of the problems they faced, at least as seen through Helen's eyes. Their silence may have been an indication that the connections between their lives and the Holocaust unit were missing for them. It also may very well have been a response of resistance. Their silence may have been a response to protect their sense of selves in this interaction with a stranger.

The students' response to the facilitator's message to Helen about having more work to do was probably due to several factors. Some were tired of the Holocaust unit and may not have wanted to spend more time on it. Some may have been standing up for their teacher in the face of this stranger's affront. However, their response may also have been part of a larger pattern that became increasingly evident as interviews continued into the end of the school year and over the summer. This theme of self-blame is explored in later chapters.

Whether the students remained silent because the issues raised by the facilitator's questions had not been part of the curriculum as they had experienced it, whether the relationship to their own lives in ways suggested by these questions had not been considered, or whether they were fearful of the responses of their peers or teacher, is unclear. Their responses to interview questions, however, suggest that for most of them the connections with their own lives were missing for some and limited for others.

On one occasion, a group of students was showing other adults in the school their timeline projects. When asked if they could see any connections between what happened then and now, they could not. When it was suggested that similar things might be happening in Bosnia or other places in the world, the students did not see any similarity. In addition, the facilitator from *Facing History, Facing Ourselves*, expressed concern on the day of the visit, that one of the students labeled a Jewish family that had lost their home to the Nazis as both bystanders and victims raising questions about the students' understanding of critical concepts.

During an interview these students were asked if they could think of a way that what they had studied in social studies might be connected to their lives. Without hesitation, one student replied

> Well like in the Holocaust, the way people were really mean to Jewish people, they [teachers] could put it a lot of people are still prejudiced against black people they could show why those things are similar, they could teach us not to be that way with black people, we only have one black person in our class, you know (Interview, 0513).

This student's response indicates that she did construct an understanding of some connection between her life and the events during the Holocaust. Yet she still puts the teacher in the role of the authority for knowledge dissemination. Rather than recognizing that she herself had made this connection that she too was a source of legitimate knowledge, she put the teacher in the position of the knowledge holder. It was the teacher who could "put it in ..." or "teach us not to be that way..." Her epistemological belief regarding knowledge, the role of the teacher, and the role of the student is consistent with Helen's.

Another student wrote an essay that was published in the class anthology. She wrote that the speaker, who was a Holocaust survivor

> Helped me a lot because it made me understand many things about the Holocaust, life and family. I learned that one person can manipulate a whole country. I also learned that when you speak to

others, it could really help you [The speaker had indicated that talking about what had happened to him had helped him to heal.] (Community Anthology, 2000).

This student spoke with more authority on what she learned. She said, "I learned, I also learned." However, she introduced her statement with the statement that the speaker "made her understand". While perhaps a subtle distinction, this phrase still suggests that it was an adult to whom she owed her knowledge or understanding.

While a few other students indicated that they had learned through this unit that stereotyping was bad, most did not speak of the relevance of this lesson for their lives. All, however, spoke of Hitler as having done bad things to the Jews.

While the teacher espoused an approach to learning that engaged students in critical thinking, her practices were not coherent with this epistemological base. This may have been due to her attempt to reconcile what she saw as the disparate approaches to education espoused by her previous university coursework and the school district in which she worked. The resolution of these contradictions, however, required valuing additional ways of knowing.

Tension between Opportunities for Participation and Discouragement

According to Tarule (1996), "voice is an integral component in the thinking process, in knowing" (p. 279). The impact on students' thinking when they were unable to give voice to their ideas was evident in their comments regarding their

lack of participation in class discussions. The impact of being discouraged or that of their "courage denied" (Brendtro et al., 1996; Muller, et al., 1999) is that their learning is equally denied. Rather than speaking, they chose silence as a safer path.

Silence as a response to feeling unsafe was a theme reiterated through most interviews across all four homerooms. When asked if she participated in class discussions, one student said, "No, cause, there's kids in the class that make fun of you, what you're going to say or sometimes I just don't know the answer. Yeah, sometimes I know it, but I just stay quiet" (Interview 0102). This student and several others in the same class spoke particularly about one male student whose comments and joking about other students' contributions make it hard to participate because "you totally forget what you were going to say" (Interview 0507). During the same interview the second girl, Sonia, added "I just don't because I am very shy, and I still wouldn't do it even though I know the answer, I still wouldn't answer the question. I am very concerned about what other people would say." At another point in the interview Sonia reiterates her lack of participation even when she knows the answer. She elaborates. "I'm usually a good reader but then when I get in front of the class I get like real red and nervous and stuff, I mess up, mostly because I think people are going to make fun, truly, that's what I think." She then goes on to acknowledge that she too laughs when others "mess up." Then, seemingly at a loss for an explanation to the contradictory behavior says, "it just happens, I don't know, we don't get to laugh that much so when we get a chance we like to laugh, we just do it." In

marked contrast to their interactions in class, both of these girls were observed to be very social and outgoing outside of the classroom situation. Sonia and other students who expressed concerns regarding participation that were similar to Sonia's were loud in the hallways and seemed to enjoy bantering peers.

Noticeably missing here is an experience of voice that is imbued with confidence or authority. Ridicule or fear of ridicule contributed to the lack of participation. It is also possible that student ridicule was a co-option of the teacher's critical stance on students' not doing well in their schoolwork.

As relationship and language are central to understanding voice (Britzman, 1998; Tarule, 1996), the students' discouragement may have to do with the absence of relationships that support the articulation of their ideas. A response of ridicule or the expectation of such a response would also suggest that students did not believe others would find what they had to say worthwhile. This belief, however, is fundamental to voice (Ada and Smith, 1998).

Clearly evident in most students were the tensions between the "needs to protect the private self and the necessity of public performance" (Finders, 1997, p.114). The social consequences of publicly partaking in class discussions silenced many students. Those that did partake through participation in oral discourse did so according to rules that had been worked out by the students. For example, a number of students described a ritual for participation. Being aware that they were knowledgeable about the subject at hand, or thinking that they might be, they would quietly, almost inaudibly, respond to the teacher's question. Her response of "I heard someone say it" would either serve to validate

their knowledge without negative social consequences or some cases give them the courage to repeat it in a somewhat more audible form. In other cases, the students would use another student in their small group to speak for them. In this case, as well, the outcome was validation of their knowledge without the negative social consequences of overt participation.

While all students discussed the issue of critical peer responses, and while this dynamic was a powerful deterrent to participation, it was not readily evident. The teacher was not aware of this dynamic in the classroom itself but suggested that maybe it played itself out in other classrooms or in the hallways or lunchroom. Neither was this dynamic evident to the researcher. As Hynds (1997) found, issues impacting voice and safety often lie beneath the surface. Unless they are examined and dealt with, they can powerfully affect authentic expression. Similarly, bell hooks writes "it is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or a lack of student engagement" (1994, p. 39). She suggests that the ramifications of maintaining order coupled with "the fear of 'losing face' of not being thought well of by one's professor and peers, undermines all possibility of constructive dialogue" (1994, p. 179).

As Helen was unaware that student lack of participation centered, in part, on lack of safety, she did not address it. At the same time, her expressed frustration at their lack of participation may have served to further aggravate the situation. Although students were quick to blame themselves or be critical of themselves, they were less willing to be critical of the teacher. However, some of

the ways in which she responded to their seeming lack of cooperation may also have decreased their sense of safety.

McNeil (1986) spoke of responses to student disengagement in the following way. "As students disengage from enthusiastic involvement in the learning process, administrators often see the disengagement as a control problem. They then increase their attention to managing students and teachers rather than supporting their instructional purpose" (p. xviii). If one were to substitute the word 'administrator' with 'teacher' the tension resulting in this classroom could be described as that between educating and controlling students.

The Tension between Educating and Controlling Students

This tension between a strongly held conviction of the importance of "educating" her students and the perceived lack of effort and disengagement on the part of the students affected the form and content of school knowledge in this classroom (McNeil, 1986). While Helen served as a resource for the team in dealing with disciplinary matters and spoke with pride about the fact that it was a rare occasion when she or her team needed to request assistance from the office in dealing with a student, her approaches to controlling students interfered with her attempts to educate.

As discussed in previous chapters, Helen defined her approach as "love combined with fear." Her approach led to compliance with most school rules. Many students commented on the fact that their team, more than any other followed the school dress code. Gum chewing was seen as a major sign of

disregard for school rules. It also seemed to be the most difficult to control and the source of many interactions between teachers on the team and students. A number of students spoke of the consequences for this violation as contrary to learning. At times, when students were caught chewing gum, they had to put it in their agendas/assignment notebooks and press down. Yet as one student pointed out, "how are you going to write your assignments, if you have to put the gum in it, the pages stick together." Another student indicated that she was never sure what Helen would do. She spoke of embarrassing interventions such as having to put gum on your nose. She indicated that this interfered with her having the nerve to answer in class.

Helen's epistemological beliefs regarding control were informed by institutional expectations, those of deans and colleagues. She was aware of the constitutive role these institutional expectations had on her but may not have been aware of how they impacted student learning.

This tension between education and controlling students might be more meaningfully considered within the framework of pedagogical care and responsibility. This conceptualization was introduced in the previous chapter. It is useful to first examine the ideology of control as it is manifested in school systems and broader social policies. The discourses embedded in the accountability movement provide one such example. Administrators, teachers, and students are told they need to be held accountable. The notion that they need to be "held accountable" suggests that they cannot be accountable or

responsible without someone in a higher position of authority monitoring their decisions and actions.

Another powerful discourse related to issues of control is that of urban adolescents who don't know what is best for themselves and who need to be made to conform or act in specific ways for their own good. There is an assumption here that students' do not know what they are interested in, what they know and want or need.

These related discourses shape the thinking and actions of teachers and students. Helen, like many teachers, had some awareness of the discourses embedded in the accountability movement. She was less aware of how powerfully these shaped her interactions with students and pedagogical choices in a way that interfered with her goal of being a caring teacher.

Her accommodation to her approach to students that began as one of care was transformed to love and fear. In part this may be attributable to her taking on the discourses in the broader educational system that emphasizes control over and gives recognition to teachers who exercise control over their students. As has been discussed previously in this study, schools are powerful socializing agents. Nel Noddings (1992) spoke to the strength and outcome of the ideology of control. She wrote,

> With the ideology of control so firmly entrenched in our professional
>
> and personal lives, it is very difficult to move to an approach that
>
> emphasizes mutual respect, responsible freedom, self-evaluation,
>
> open cooperation, caring and sharing. Even well intentioned people

can make or accede to decisions that will press promising

programs back into the control mode (p. 158).

This emphasis on control interferes with dialogue as a way of encountering

knowledge. It assumes the need to control students' activities, thinking, and

behavior to force compliance, which might not naturally be forthcoming from

adolescents. Within the discourse of the ideology of control the possibilities for

dialogue that assumes that students and teachers bring something worthwhile to

the exchange is not likely to be chosen as a pedagogical approach.

Yet dialogue is essential not only for intellectual growth, it "...connects us

with each other and helps maintain caring relationships. It also provides us with

the knowledge of each other that provides a foundation for response in caring"

(Noddings, 1992, p. 23). In contrast to responding from a position of control,

when conflict arises and a teacher responds to an unacceptable behavior, the

teacher approaches the situation from the perspective of being in relation with

the child. This approach supports Smith's (1999) definition of a caring response

as one based on an "understanding of the unique needs and capabilities of each,

honoring differences and knowing what is best for each" (p. 466).

Rather than coming from a position of control, the teacher addresses

conflictual situations often called classroom management concerns of disciplinary

matters from a place of connectedness. Smith (1999) described an approach to

classroom management highlighting the interrelationship as follows:

From the point of view of full compassion, war arises precisely out

of Self and Other, with attempts to name the virtue of one at the

Other's expense. Wisdom however, desires the loss of neither seeing their essential mutual necessity within the integrity of what sustains us (p. 467).

For both Noddings (1992) and Smith (1999), action coming out of an ethic of care provides an alternative to the need to control students. Such an approach lays the foundation for continued academic and intellectual growth (Noddings, 1992), thus allowing for an emphasis on education as opposed to control. Such an approach is based not on separation or authority over

...dealing with that complexity [that exists in any classroom] requires not yet another recipe for control, but precisely the opposite, namely a radical openness to what is actually happening therein, in the lives and experiences of both students and oneself and an ability to deal with all of it somehow on its own unique terms. Again such an ability requires first and foremost a true facing of oneself and others as sharing in a reality that at its deepest level is something held in common, something that upholds one and all together in a kind of symphony" (Smith, 1999, p. 468).

So, while Helen focused on control, the real issues related to lack of student engagement in learning were largely unexplored and as a result unaddressed. The tensions that resulted from a perception of lack of safety, and from the contradictions that resulted from efforts to both control and educate the students were factors that often led to silence and a low level of engagement.

Additional tensions that led to lack of engagement included tensions between individualism and collectivism; mainstream ideology and subjugated knowledge.

Contradictions and Tensions between Individualism and Collectivism

While students spoke of the value their families placed on their hard work and success in school, many classroom structures differed from the social structures of their students' home and community by placing an emphasis on individual accomplishments and competition (Huerta-Marcías 1998). Despite changes in Latino families as they respond to economic, generational, and cultural pressures, family ties continue to focus on cooperation rather than competition. This remains so despite the fact that the traditional family has become less common (Tatum, 1997). While the students valued hard work and achievement, there was a contradiction between the ways of knowing most valued by most students and the emphasis on individual accomplishment and achievement. The tensions were evident in the difference in the level and form of participation in small group activities as well as in the use of high stakes testing as the ultimate measure of student learning.

The physical layout of Helen's classroom supported a collectivist approach to learning. Throughout the semester, student desks were arranged in groups of four. In this way, when students were doing silent reading or completing a written assignment, there were students in close proximity to ask questions or offer assistance. In each interview students spoke of the value of working together in supporting their learning. They found their interactions during these activities promoted their understanding of the content. Maria Victoria who

did not participate in whole group activities because she "might be wrong" said

that in small groups,

> We talk a lot it doesn't matter, we help each other out. The
>
> problems we don't know [pause] we ask each other. If we don't
>
> know something we can teach each other, if that person knows it,
>
> they could teach all of us (Interview 0102).

This theme was reiterated throughout the interviews.

> You can understand more what you're doing, you get to learn
>
> better, different people... with different ideas... it makes it funner,
>
> easier to understand with people helping you and stuff (Interview
>
> 1203).

> And the students help you. They don't just leave you. Like, they'll
>
> help you with, if you need help, they'll help you, they don't leave
>
> you here not knowing what to do (Interview 1102).

> I think groups are better because you get more information and you
>
> can share that information. If you're by yourself, you just, it's just
>
> your information there (Interview 1102; second student).

While the students spoke enthusiastically about the value of their work

together, it was not unproblematic, as it did not in all cases lead to accurate

understandings of the content. While learning together in small groups has been

seen as a way of fostering active participation (Darder, 1997; Shor, 1992;

Wiburg, 1998) in and of itself may not be sufficient to foster development of

student understandings and skills. Finders (1997) noted that the academic life of

the middle school girls she studied lacked "intellectual grappling." She wonders what would constitute a "compelling invitation to read and write", an issue which will be further addressed in the last chapter.

The bilingual abilities of many students provided another venue for increasing understanding. At times, during small group learning experiences, some students communicated using words, phrases, and sometimes sentences in Spanish. This did not occur during whole class activities although students did communicate this way in small group interviews when they were trying to clarify or make a point. One student would speak in Spanish and look to others in the interview to provide the English meaning.

The contradiction between this collaborative way of knowing and the way in which students were held accountable for their learning was significant. Upon entering the classroom on the day the students were taking the social studies section of the IOWA, the physical layout of the room was a startling contrast to its usual configuration. The students' desks were in four long rows. This arrangement would facilitate their taking a test that would not allow for the collaborative style with which they completed every other assignment in that class during the semester. Adding to the contrast was the strict timeline in which the testing needed to be completed. Other than at the end of the five- week grading periods, such precise deadlines for performance were not part of their experience in this classroom.

Just as the completion of the tests was contradictory to their style of collectivist learning, so too was the way in which they heard the results. The

teachers, in an attempt to manage what they expected to be a day of high affect, separated the students who earned the cut-off score necessary to graduate from those who did not, before they announced the results. During several interviews, students spoke of the acute distress they felt that day when they were denied the opportunity to console or support their classmates.

When scores were announced at the end of the summer school program, students who did not pass were again taken to another room to receive the news. Despite having received the cutoff score necessary to go to high school, Sonia and Maria Victoria were distressed on the day the test scores were announced. Their distress, exhibited through their somber and tearful faces was a response to the news that one of their peers, had not met the criteria and would not be going on to high school. This was not an issue of not being able to attend high school together as they were going to attend different high schools. However, their success was diminished because their friend's outcome was not successful.

This was very puzzling to the summer school teacher who expressed anger and frustration at their response. She could not comprehend why they could not be happy about having achieved the cutoff score themselves. Her interpretation of their response was that they were impossible to please. The contradiction between placing value on individual accomplishment and collectivism was beyond her understanding. Goodman and Kuzmic (1997) suggested that the dominant message communicated in many schools is that learning is about achieving individual goals and that the notion of learning in community with responsibility and concern for others is generally not considered.

In positing a connectivist rationale for schooling they propose that "..children need to learn to achieve not just some individual goal but also a form of social responsibility...to nurture their intellectual talents for constructing our society into a more democratic, just and caring culture (Goodman and Kuzmic, 1997, p. 85).

While Sonia and Maria Victoria may not have been able to articulate a purpose of education supporting the creation of a just and democratic society, the values of caring and social responsibility were important to them. This is the lens through which they approached school. In several interviews Maria Victoria used the word "house" to describe her classroom or school. In describing her classroom, she said, "...our room is like a house, yea, like our house to us, so everything that we own is ours and belongs to us and everybody, you know, has to take care of it, has to do their responsibility." In an interview several months later, she uses this analogy again. Mutual responsibility and interdependence are cultural values that Maria Victoria and other students carry with them to school. When their school experiences are contradictory to these values, they create tension for the students. Participation in whole group teacher directed question and answer sessions and high stakes testing, such as the IOWAs, were filled with these tensions and added to the stress that the students and teacher experienced in the classroom.

Helen valued individualism and did not seem to understand the value most of the students placed on collectivist or collaborative efforts. She accepted the ideology of rugged individualism that did not appreciate the ways in which teacher directed discussions that focused on one correct answer and individual

public responses were inconsistent with the ways in which her students seemed to most comfortably approach learning. At the same time, she did not see how she could be more directly involved in bridging the gap between the learning that took place in whole class learning activities and small collaborative group work. In addition, she was unable to support the students with strategies or techniques when they were faced with high stakes test that placed individual accomplishment over that of the group. Helen's inability to resolve the tension between individualism and collectivism left her frustrated and diminished learning possibilities for her students. Rather than build on the strengths of the approach to learning that the students brought with them to school, she at times withdrew from the learning situation puzzled by the students' responses.

Tensions and Contradictions: Subjugated Knowledge and Mainstream Ideology

Adding to the complex interrelationship of factors contributing to student participation, was the tension between the worldview Helen brought to the classroom and the lived realities of many of her students. The tensions between knowing informed by their position as adolescent members of a minority culture and lower socioeconomic class contradicted ways of being validated by Helen[1].

Students described the presence of gangs and drug dealers and fear of violence at school and the community in interviews and through their writings. In class, male students spoke of shopkeepers who followed them around and questioned their presence in stores making it difficult to do an assignment that required their comparison of items in that store. While these students also spoke of the caring people in their lives and the fun they had, the harsher experiences

of their lives, when referred to in the context of the school curriculum carried with them the message that these realities of their existences were lacking in legitimacy.

The tensions and contradiction between their knowledge, gained through their lived experiences, and that of the dominant ideology is illustrated in the following description of a lesson in social studies on the Depression of 1928.

> The students were given a one-page handout from Russell Baker's autobiography in which he describes his family's experiences during the Depression while he was an adolescent. In it, he describes his feelings of shame at the point his family needed to 'go on relief'. Before reading the excerpt, Helen spoke of her grandfather's experience during the Depression. She said that her grandfather told her that his biggest accomplishment was that he didn't take money from the government during the Depression because he said that only slobs in the neighborhood did that. She tells the students they should think about whether people's reaction to receiving relief is different today than it was then. Helen then read the excerpt aloud. She then asks, "Is the reaction of the author typical?" Students respond with silence. Helen expressed frustration with their response saying, "It amazes me how this group talks every change you get, yet when given a chance, you won't talk. I hope you get lots of worksheets in high school." At this point several students make comments to each other. Then Helen asks,

"if their [the students'] parents had to quit school to work or support their families". A third of the class raised their hands. She said that her parents did too and then asked " if they could support their families by selling magazines, or by working twenty hours a week?" There were some mumbled answers of yes and no. Helen then said, "So what is the moral? Stay in school so you can get a job" (Summary of field notes, 0223 A2).

The symbolic dissonance between the content of this lesson and the lived experiences of students was striking. In her determination to make sure the students understood how important an education is to their future employment, she seemed to be unaware of how her students might have experienced this lesson. Her drive to inculcate the values that would "save them" served as a blinder preventing her from seeing what dynamics might have been behind the silence.

This same lesson was repeated the next day in another class. This day, she did not relay the story about her grandfather. After reading the excerpt from the autobiography she asked "Is being on welfare today different from 1929?" Martha replied, "I don't think you should be ashamed. Some people need help. It's nobody else's business. You never know when you will be in this position." Helen asked about how society and its government should judge who needs aid and whether the government should be responsible for this. Martha presented several examples of situations including a

pregnant woman whose husband leaves and a fifteen-year-old who is thrown out of the house when her parents find out that she is pregnant. Helen responds by asking, "What options did the woman have?" Regarding the teen that is pregnant, Helen asks about birth control. Then she asks if the" government should pay for day care?" She then asks, "Do we feel better when we work and get paid or do nothing and get paid?" The students responded with silence. Helen then told the students, "Say, get paid, because we should." She then added that some people prefer to take advantage of the system (Summary of field notes, 0224 B1).

While previously identified dynamics related to perceptions of safety and a participation structure that privileged individual student responses were at issue in this lesson, the minimization of the complexities of students lived experiences was also a factor. Helen preaches her values related to the "work ethic," education, and making responsible choices. The power of her words lie in the way she defined socially acceptable ways of understanding the world and what matters in life (Ruiz, 1997).

The realities of the students' experiences and their knowledge were seen as less than legitimate although, they too, hoped for a better future for themselves. Helen's judgmental language created a barrier that silenced the students. Given that over 90% of the students in the school are on the government sponsored free and reduced lunch program, one wonders what message they internalized about themselves and their families. Some may have

wondered if they too were the "slobs of the neighborhood" (Field notes, 0223). In many ways, while such questions might elicit a discussion that encourages students to think critically, she shuts these conversations down before they get started. Martha was one of only a few students who would respond to such questions in a voice that was audible.

While she asks many questions, the answers she is seeking are those that match her perspective. Helen said, "my job is to encourage cooperation, interaction, critical thinking, and creativity" (Helen, 1994, p. 26). Yet, if her views are the only legitimate ones, critical thinking becomes less important than seeing the world her way. The students' silence was to an extent, a response to the focus on correct information as defined by the teacher, that excluded an invitation to share beliefs and opinions (Fine, 1991). The muting of their personal voices created by this dynamic in combination with their concern about the response of their peers to their participation, limited the expression of even the academic voice of the "good" student many of them sought to be.

Such classroom conversations while initiated with the aim of teaching students to be successful in life, devalue their current situation and simplify the complexity of the students' lives. As a result, students may come to devalue their own knowledge (Ada and Smith, 1998).

In the dedication to the literary anthology, a student wrote, "We dedicate this anthology to the teachers who don't even live here but try to teach us and show us a better future. We also dedicate this anthology to all of the kids that have died at the hands of gang members (Community Anthology, 2000). In

writing this, the student shows appreciation to the teachers while illustrating the contrasts and complexity of life, as he knows it. While many of the students internalized the messages about working for a living and getting a good education, from both their teachers and their parents, these messages seem like little more than slogans when

...day by day

Night by night

I look at the sky and

Wonder why people are

The way they are

Why do they cheat, steal, and lie

And soon their crimes will make them die.

(Excerpt from poem titled "Gangbangers", Community Anthology, 2000)

While Helen's discourses on the value of work and a good education were well intended they served to discount voice and subordinate students' experiences (Ruiz, 1997). It is as if her admonitions and value inculcation was meant to provide the ingredients for a good life. In this way she views empowerment as a gift to give her students. Much like knowledge was to be given or transmitted, so too were keys to successful living. This view of empowerment and voice is consistent with Cummins (1993), however, as Ruiz (1997) illustrated, voice and agency as components of empowerment are facilitated when learning experiences encourage critical and independent thinking

and build on students' strengths. It suggests the need to bring public knowledge

to the private and private knowledge to the public domain.

Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) spoke to the importance of recognizing

the "particularity of individual and family experiences." They wrote,

> Place is the entity that brings the particularistic into focus. A sense
>
> of place sharpens our understanding of the individual and the
>
> psychological and social forces that direct her or him. Place, in
>
> other words, grounds our ways of seeing by providing the
>
> contextualization of the particular (1993, p. 190).

They spoke of school practices that emphasize ways of knowing that are

separate from the context of students' lives. As a result students are acculturated

to value decontextualized school knowledge over their personal experiences.

> As our children progress to the upper grades, too often they are
>
> taught to leave their particular autobiographies behind; these
>
> narratives have no place in the 'real work' of school...The
>
> curriculum is a public domain as education leads us out of our
>
> intimate place to a world of public anonymity (Kincheloe and
>
> Steinberg, 1993, p. 190-191).

Helen, like Steinberg and Kincheloe noted a change at the upper grades as well,

albeit from a somewhat different perspective.

> Tragically, by the time students reach the upper grades, they are
>
> firmly entrenched in the worksheet mentality. It is a monumental
>
> task to drag them into critical thinking.... They have not learned

how to learn. Worse, they are angered and frustrated by attempts to make them do so (Helen, 1994, p. 26).

Perhaps if their autobiographies were integral to the curriculum, engaging them in learning would feel less like "dragging". Perhaps their anger and frustration is more about 'being dragged" into tasks that may not seem anymore meaningful than worksheets if it is devoid of their autobiographies. Participatory education (Shor, 1992) begins with students' subjectivities. Students' life experiences, feeling, language and understandings are brought from the fringes to the center of classroom life (Darder, 1997; Hynds, 1997). The ways in which cultural issues are navigated will influence the degree to which students are likely to bring their private knowledge, experiences and understandings into the public arena of the classroom. If conditions that encourage student voice are to be realized, the public and private spheres need to be brought together. "This then entails making the public more private (i.e. developing a critical understanding of the ideological, contextual and value-laden character of curricular knowledge) and making the private more public" (Kuzmic, 1993, p. 50). This would allow for recognition that students and teachers as individuals and persons-in-relation (Britzman, 1998) with each other "...interpret, define, and create the curriculum based on their own experiential, cultural, racial, gendered, and social class histories" (Kuzmic, 1993, p. 50). Bruner (1996) suggested that "A system of education must help those growing up in a culture find an identity within that culture. Without it, they stumble in their effort after meaning. It is only in the narrative mode that one can construct an identity and find a place in one's

culture. Schools must cultivate it, nurture it, cease taking it for granted" (p. 42).
Bruner seems to be recognizing the importance of integrating the students'
autobiographies into their school experiences. This view supports the
development of learning experiences contextualized by the particular.

Tensions between Decontextualized Rationality and Contextualized Relevance

The lack of particularity and emphasis on decontextualized knowing
created another tension in the classroom. While the lesson on welfare, as
problematic as the presentation may have been, did touch on a reality in the lives
of many of her students, in general, students saw limited relevance in the
curriculum to their lives during the school day. Some students chose silence as a
form of resistance to knowledge detached from meaning to their lives.

One student who did not participate in any whole class discussions but
whose reading and math scores on standardized tests were above the level of
most of his peers, said he did not participate "cause it is not anything I would like
to participate in" (Interview 0302). When asked what he would like to participate
in, he indicated the he was interested in discussing topics that related to his life.

A few students indicated that their silence during class discussions that
they found uninteresting was a purposeful choice that would result in the teacher
moving on to another potentially more interesting topic. "Sometimes it's like you
know boring, you don't really want to talk about so if we're quiet then she [the
teacher] won't talk about it any more so then we don't have to talk about it"
(Interview 0508). Yet failing to begin with the life experiences, understandings,
and feelings of the students is inconsistent with participatory education (Shor,

1992), and contradictory to Helen's teaching philosophy as she articulated it. It also interferes with learning (Shor, 1992; Sumara and Davis, 1998; Darder, 1997) and reinforces the separation between students' private lives and school experiences.

This use of silence as a way to voice their disengagement while often successful in the short term was not constructive to their desire to engage in meaningful content. No students verbalized the question "What does this have to do with me?" and Helen interpreted their lack of participation as evidence that they did not care about their education nor appreciate its importance. Yet, as she said to the students one day, "Education is the only thing that will save you." What she saw as her inability to instill this belief in the students affected her identity of herself as a teacher and was a source of tension in interactions with students.

Helen, through her pedagogical choices, privileged a decontextualized knowing that Wersch (1990) refers to as "decontextualized rationality."

> In general, contextualized forms of representation foreground issues of perspective that derive from the interlocutor's identity and the concrete communicative context, whereas the voice of decontextualized rationality strives to represent phenomena in terms of their referentially semantic content such that information from the communicative context is backgrounded or even made to seem irrelevant (Wersch, 1990, p. 121).

Without a context of relevance, the students found the content difficult and disconnected from their lives. For example, one student in speaking about what would be helpful to learning said,

> Start putting what we learn to real life and just not in the books, yeah, instead of just reading it out of the books, makes us you know, bored, ...it's not going to stick in our heads, it's not going to stay in our heads, but if you put it into real life, we'll remember it no matter what (Interview 0513).

This student's use of the term "bored" is in contrast to Mark's (2000) definition of engagement as "...attention, interest, investment, and effort that students expend in the work of learning" (p. 155). This suggests the importance of contextualizing information; linking lived experiences and knowledge that the students bring into the classroom with school knowledge. It also suggests that Helen's pedagogy was counterproductive to her goal of providing her students an education. While her desire to "save" her students by providing them an education is problematic in that it suggests that they are in need of being rescued from a lowly existence, her pedagogical choices left students disengaged. While not an inevitable outcome, dropping out is often the ultimate step in disengagement from school (Muller et al., 1999).

Several encounters with curricular knowledge illustrate the potential for enhanced learning when students can see the connections between their lives and school learning. While there are limitations to the knowledge and understandings students constructed they suggest that expanding ways of

knowing generally privileged in schools expands the ways in which students can at least tentatively engage in contextualized knowing.

For some students, photographs served as a way to provide a more meaningful context for their study of the Holocaust. A number of students who were completing their timeline projects[2] related their experiences of seeking pictures of those who were held in concentration camps as significant to their learning and understanding of the impact of the Holocaust. These visuals served to foreground the context and take it out of the "world of public anonymity" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 191).

One student's experience while on a field trip to a museum devoted to commemorating the experience of Holocaust victims and survivors spoke of the impact on knowledge when emotions ground cognition. As she entered another room and was looking at photographs of individuals whose bodies were emaciated, she said aloud, "I was in a good mood when I got up this morning. Now I feel really depressed" (Field notes 0508). She was speaking of the impact the photographs had on her; one that touched her more deeply than the study of the Holocaust had during the previous eight weeks. Other students, when speaking of what they learned through completing their timeline projects also spoke to this. "We had to look for pictures and see how it was, yea, how bad it was, I didn't notice how bad it was before I started looking at the pictures and I was seeing how, ooh, how nasty it was" (Interview 0304). This suggests that connections between the private lives of students and the public knowledge of

schools can be strengthened through engaging the emotions and use of graphic materials.

The trip to the Holocaust Museum provided another illustration of the ways in which students seek connections between their school experiences and their lives. In this case, the student's experiences resulted in an inaccurate construction of those living in the Jewish ghettos.

> As students were walking through the Holocaust Museum looking at artifacts that were displayed, two girls spend a few minutes looking at a work permit that was required to be carried by Jewish people. One of the girls remarked "look they really were ghetto, they couldn't even spell 'July.'" She was referring to the fact that the month was spelled "Juli." The student did not realize that the permit was written in German and spelled correctly but instead linked the spelling to her perspective that people who lived in the ghetto were uneducated. She equated the Jewish ghetto that she had heard a Holocaust survivor at the Museum speak of to those of the urban "ghetto" areas of the city with which she was familiar. (Field notes 0508)

In this situation, as the student sought to understand what she saw and heard that day, because she lacked a context for understanding what was meant by the " Jewish ghetto," related it to what she did know. It illustrates that contextualization and particularity play an important role in knowing. It suggests

that the interaction between public and private knowledge can result in more complete understandings.

Unlocking the Door

Had Helen expanded her pedagogical choices to include two additional ways of learning, the tension she experienced over the lack of student responsiveness might have been decreased. One was a link between teacher directed learning and the formal and informal small group work engaged in by the students and the other an emphasis on strategic learning.

As was previously discussed, the lack of verbal response to content-related questions frustrated Helen. At the time the transition was made from whole group to individual or small group work, there were days when it seemed that, out of frustration, she abdicated, and ended the group lesson prior to reaching the outcome or completing all she had hoped to do. When students were given work to do independently, whether it was reading or answering questions, there were no specific instructions regarding whether students were to work alone or together. Typically the class was quiet for a few minutes and then students began to talk among themselves. On many days it was difficult to determine how much of this talk was task-related and how much social; but generally it resulted in Helen repeatedly telling them to be quiet. It was unusual; however, for Helen to engage with students during this time on their assignments by monitoring their progress, asking questions, or checking for understanding. She would work at her desk, speak with the researcher about the day's lesson, or monitor their on task behavior from the side of the room.

For the most part, what was discussed by students in their small groups, the "underlife" in the classroom, remained unknown to the teacher. Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995 in Tarule, 1996) suggested that there was a "third space" which held important possibilities. Had the teacher directed lessons and the "underlife" of student dialogue in classroom conversations, especially as they were carried out in small groups, intersected, the potential to create a richer learning context may have existed. Had there been a space in which the teacher's script and the student's conversations had intersected a different type of dialogue and growth in knowledge may have emerged. It is possible that through this space, the students may have "developed a shared understanding ... framed by the unique autobiographical and cultural resources that each one of them brings to school" (O'Laughlin, 1992, p. 802 in Hynds, 1997, p. 258). The willingness to consider student opinions and views that were different from her own as legitimate knowledge would be a necessary precondition to such a "third space." Additionally it would require acceptance of a definition of voice that involved a meaningful consideration of what students had to say (DeVault, 1999) and recognition of the importance of understanding how students "produce and reconstruct meaning" (Kuzmic, 1993, p.45). Inherent in such recognition would be an epistemological stance that viewed knowledge as constructed not merely transmitted.

The possibilities for this "third space" would be further enhanced if the students developed competence in the skills necessary to engage in critical discussions. In two separate interviews, several girls indicated that the majority of

students do not understand the content and that not only limits their participation, but also limits their learning.

Moll (1990), Huerta-Marcías (1998), and Delpit (1995) support an emphasis on strategic learning for African-American and Latino students. Luis Moll (1990) noted that in order for students to master concepts taught in school, they must be competent in the use of cultural signs and tools including literacy. Through his research, he found that bilingual children learn best when provided instruction that emphasizes the creating of meaning not the teaching of specific, isolated skills. For example, he found that by assisting students to develop an awareness of an author's strategies, encouraging development of their own strategies and incorporating the strategies of authors in their own work, students "internalize ways of using and analyzing language and make this knowledge their own" (1990, p. 14).

Ana Huerta-Marcías (1996) and Josefina Villamil Tinajero, and Sandra Rollins Hurley, and Elizabeth Valera Lozano (1996) also write of the inclusion of reading strategies as valuable in the process of constructing meaning. These authors emphasize the importance of such learning taking place in the context of actual reading. Lisa Delpit (1995) supports this approach. She defines skills as "useful and usable knowledge which contribute to a student's ability to communicate effectively in standard, generally acceptable literary forms... skills are best taught through meaningful communication, best learned in meaningful contexts" (Delpit, 1995, p. 18-19). She emphasizes the importance of teaching these skills in the context of critical thinking.

While Helen valued critical thinking, lack of skill, combined with her general pedagogical choice, limited students' ability to engage. The suggested curriculum for the after-school program that was designed to assist students, who were performing below grade level, incorporated a skill-based approach. While the specific workbooks chosen for this program may have supported a decontextualized approach to skill building, the general dismissal of this approach served to limit student knowing.

While the use of strategic learning in context was generally not incorporated, particularly in the social studies curriculum, one example of its use in the reading class suggests its usefulness in both linking learning to the lives of students and using another author's strategy for writing about their own community. This lesson took place over several days and only some of the lesson was actually observed. Helen had introduced the *Spoon River Anthology* by Lee Masters. Helen talked about the anthology and read numerous poems from the anthology to the students. Students then wrote poems about their own community based on Master's approach. Many of these poems were included in the class anthology that was printed at the end of the year. One student whose poem was particularly well written and whose engagement in most other learning activities observed during the semester was limited, borrowed the book to study the poet's approach.

During a number of interviews, students spoke of the value of strategic learning both in their homes and school contexts. Maria Victoria spoke of her experience in sixth grade reading.

I went to the teachers that got me the work advanced so they helped me. If there was something I didn't know they showed it to me and they helped me...They asked, Who was this person? What was the main idea of the story? How were they [the characters] involved in the story? If they had problems, how they solved their problems...she [the teacher] says this is what this means. She tells us how to find the secrets of it, she showed us the tricks (Interview 03SS).

For Maria Victoria, it was the strategies the teachers taught that she attributed to the growth of her reading skills.

Elisa spoke of the value of skill learning in context as she contrasted school and home learning. In speaking of her mother, she said

She tells you right from wrong all the time, and she's more, I don't know how to say it, you know how some people talk like "I ain't got no..." If we do that at home my mom would correct us... tells us respect our elders, to do good in school, to use the right language...What I mean is if we would do something wrong my mom would tell us and show us. The teachers just [say] "don't do that again." If I were to, I'm trying to figure out something that I did – [Pause] I wouldn't respect my elders. She would tell me you said this the right way and you do that the right way like if I was to give them attitude, like I do with my brother all the time, he is 18. She would tell them if you do that again, don't do it. She would show me

how to talk to him and everything. Here, they just don't do that. The teachers just don't do that, 'that's disrespectful' [they would say] and that is how it is. [They] would just say 'think about it' (Interview 02SS).

The approach Helen used to prepare students for the standardized tests, was similar to that used in dealing with discipline as described by Elisa. As "that's disrespectful" was the approach used to teach students to express themselves differently, the approach used to prepare for the testing consisted largely of chastising them for their lack of engagement in class assignments and warnings of impending failure that would result.

As illustrated by the experiences of these two students, as well as the student performance in the anthology writing activity, an expanded use of this approach held promise as a way to increase students' literary skills and hence their success in school and life. These were goals to which Helen aspired. At the same time these strategies might have supported the students success on subtests of the IOWA.

For Latino students and their families who are either outside the understanding of mainstream codes or who have been systematically excluded, this translated many time into closed doors. Linguistically, and/or culturally many Latino students and their families find themselves outside these gates, without keys (Ada and Smith, 1999, p. 47).

During the last week of school, Helen spoke to Elisa, who did not meet the cutoff score necessary to graduate, using the same metaphor. Helen described the scene from the movie *The Shining* in which there is a long hallway with many doors. She explained to Elisa, that like the girl in the movie, doors were closing for her too. Elisa explained in an interview, that she took this to mean that "as you get stupider, more doors close". Providing Elisa with the keys of strategic learning and enriched learning experiences made possible by the creation of a "third space" would create conditions for Elisa to unlock and open doors.

This chapter examined the many tensions and contradictions that existed in Helen's classroom. Each of these tensions manifested themselves as Helen faced the larger, sometimes contradictory, discourses that frame education in the early twenty-first century. Every teacher makes pedagogical choices that are shaped by larger social discourses. The resolution of these tensions and contradictions impacts students' interactions with knowledge, experiences of voice, and learning experiences.

The many tensions that existed in the classroom not only affected the nature of knowledge and ways Helen and her students encountered this knowledge, it also affected their identities. Belenky, Tarule, Clinchy, and Goldberger (1996) speak of the interconnections of a sense of self, voice, and mind. The interactions with each other and the curriculum in the classroom at Community Middle School impacted both teacher and students. The degree to which their voices were honored and their ways of knowing legitimized affected

their sense of self, their learning and self-efficacy, and the possibilities that existed for them.

ENDNOTES

[1] The term "subjugated knowledge" is used to refer to the knowledge of those whose categorical group memberships (gender, class, race, and ethnicity) lead to different experiences of the world. This knowledge and understanding stems from their subjugated positions. Historically this knowledge has been discounted or overlooked.

[2] The timeline project was a culminating activity following a several month study of the Holocaust. Students worked in groups of four. They were to make a timeline covering the period of time from the mid-1930's through the end of World War II. Utilizing large pieces of white paper, the students used pictures and some words to mark key dates and events happening in America, Europe, and Germany specifically, during these years.

CHAPTER SIX

TEACHER AND STUDENT IDENTITIES: VOICE AND PEDAGOGY

Introduction

The experiences of Helen and her students cannot be fully understood without examining the relationships between their sense of identity as it interacts with learning activities in the classroom and impacts their voices. The complexity of the construct of identity is well documented in the literature emanating from multiple theoretical perspectives (Erikson, 1968; Galatzer-Levi and Cohler, 1993; Tatum, 1997; Giroux, 1994, 1997; Darder, 1997; Anzaldúa, 1997; Phelan, et al., 1998). Identity development takes place within a sociocultural context, one grounded in a particular time and place. One's identity is continually being constructed and reconstructed as the individual interacts with others in their environments (Bingham, 2001). As such, identity is not fixed. Nor is identity one-dimensional; rather it is complex, multidimensional and multifaceted. While each individual possesses certain personality characteristics that may be genetic in origin, through their experiences and interactions with others, additional aspects of their identity evolve. Bakhtin (Holquist, 1990; Vadeboncoeur, 2001) suggested that individuals perceive themselves through the gaze or lens of others, thus suggesting that identity develops through a discursive process. While sociocultural factors may constrain or inform possibilities for identity development, these do not determine identity.

Through one's lived experiences, individuals construct knowledge of their world and their position in it. Through their agency, they might accept, reject, resist, or negotiate the social identities others reflect back to them. For both Helen and her students, sociocultural factors inform their views of themselves, their views of each other, and the expectations they hold for each other.

In this chapter, these factors will be examined as they impact Helen's identity and provide a lens through which she views her students' identity. The sociocultural factors impacting the students will then be explored, as will the ways in which these factors mediate how they define the teacher and themselves. At times it appeared that Helen did not recognize the complexity of her own identity or that of the students. For both Helen and her students, the construct of adolescence and the notions embedded in this term became central to the understanding of the students' identity. However, the notion of the "universal adolescent" interfered with an appreciation of the complexity of the students as individuals. In addition, the notion of the "universal adolescent" served to create a set of expectations for both teacher and students and became central to how they identified each other. This created tensions and unrealized possibilities that were often not recognized. While at times both Helen and her students responded to these tensions with silence, at other times, both Helen and her students responded in voices intensified with anger, as their identities were not validated.

Teacher Identity and Pedagogy

Sociocultural factors and the construction of self as teacher

As introduced in Chapter Two, the changing demographics of the population in the local community, the wide discrepancies in economic realities, and the accountability movement that has swept the country are all factors impacting Helen and her students. While these factors provide a broad framework for understanding aspects of Helen's experience as a teacher in a large urban school, other factors that impact her and inform her view of herself and her students, are worthy of further exploration. The experience of growing up in a working class family who struggled economically during the Depression and the years that followed impacted Helen. Helen had incorporated into her belief system the notion of "rugged individualism." Not only had her family been able to "pull themselves up by the bootstraps," she herself had made a career change in her thirties, returned to school while raising four children and earned a teaching certificate and master's degree. She did this at a time in history during which it had become increasingly "acceptable" for women to pursue a career while raising a family. Helen spoke of the impact of the women's movement and related discourse in her master's thesis, which was heavily influenced by feminist thought of the last thirty years. She had internalized a belief that with hard work one can overcome economic and personal hardship. One day, while the students were working at their desks, the impact of these experiences became clear. She shared that "there are two things that one can't say to her [meaning criticize] and these are her own kids and education because she had to work hard" (Field

notes, 0323A). She was referring to the fact that while people might criticize her, she could not tolerate criticism of her family or her education, as she had worked hard to both raise her children and to earn her master's degree. It seemed that these two aspects of her identity, being a mother, and a teacher who chose to pursue this goal at the mid-point of her life, were such important aspects of her identity that to be critical of these would be to dishonor her.

This perspective was shared following a lesson she presented in her social studies class during which she introduced a lesson on identity webs. After a brief review of Hitler's rise to power and a reading about two young people who chose different paths for dealing with the rise of the Nazi party, Helen told the students that they were going to be making identity webs. She described identity as a reciprocal construct in much the same way that many theorists have. She told the students that they were going to make identity webs and that they are "about how you perceive others and how others perceive you." The following is a description of the lesson as it progressed.

> Helen drew her name in the center of a web on the board.
> She wrote descriptors that she herself generated as well as those students suggested. The following descriptors were on the web: daughter, wife, scary, crazy, teacher, mother. Students then said strict, bossy, and rude. In regard to the last two, ones that she considered derogatory, she asked who had said these. No student acknowledged contributing these descriptors. The next two descriptors students added were honest [about feelings] and loud.

> Then one of the students said "untrustworthy". Helen responded,
>
> "Do you really think so? I don't see myself that way." Next a
>
> student added "responsible". Helen then added "unorganized" and
>
> then asked, "What do I like to do?" A student said "read" and Helen
>
> added this to the web. Helen then said, "eat" and added it to the
>
> web. Then Helen added the following descriptors, Lutheran,
>
> spiritual, believes in a good public school system in education-to
>
> which she added, it is the only thing that will ultimately save you
>
> (Field notes, 0323A).

Helen, through the descriptors she added of herself, recognized multiple social

identities, that of mother, daughter, wife, teacher, and Lutheran. While it was

consistent with her view of herself, that disorganized, strict, and honest were

aspects of her identity, clearly, bossy, rude, and untrustworthy were not. She

voiced her disagreement by seeking to identify those who challenged her view of

herself. Their silence suggests, perhaps, that voicing a perspective that differed

from that of the teacher was risky. While willing to do so with the anonymity that

speaking while the teacher was facing the board and students randomly calling

out responses provided, to name their experience, their perspectives, and take

ownership of this experience was too risky; so risky that silence and not sharing

what they knew from their experience was the option chosen. While Helen was

asking for their input, she was accepting of specific responses that matched her

point of view. This was as true in social studies discussions as it was in this

lesson and was a reality that limited student voice. The impact of this on their identities is discussed later in this chapter.

As is illustrated by the classroom interaction described above, Helen's identity is informed by her membership in multiple communities: family, religious, professional. As a White middle class, woman, her identity was also informed by her membership in these groups. The values, beliefs, and practices she internalized or took on from each of these groups intertwined with her own personal traits and professional identity to influence her interactions with her students. Sumara and Davis (1998) and Tajel (in Hurtado, 1996) speak of the interrelationship of personal and collective or social identities.

> . ...a sense of *personal* identity cannot be extricated from senses of communal/collective identity. They are, in fact, not two separate things. At the same time, because each person is always involved in many discursive systems, practices, and communities, the sense of personal and communal identity is always multiple. Our sense of who we are alters as our social relations and situations vary. Furthermore, our sense of identity always emerges from the fusing of previous, current, and anticipated experience (Sumara and Davis, 1998, p. 78).

The values, beliefs, discourses, and practices Helen internalized and accepted based on her membership in these many groups intertwined with her own personal traits to influence her identity. While she often seemed unaware of the ways in which her beliefs were informed by her position as a White, middle-class

woman and the knowledge and beliefs from the various discursive communities of which she had been or continued to be involved with, these nonetheless mediated her interactions with students and informed her identity as a teacher. However, this seeming lack of awareness prevented her from understanding the ways in which her pedagogical choices and talk impacted her students in ways that diminished opportunities for learning and the development of identities as capable students. At the same time, while failing to appreciate the differences between herself and her students, possibilities for making connections between their home and community lives and their school lives were largely missing.

At times this difference served as a border between Helen and her students. This developed, in part, because, while some of her students were also from a working class background, ethnic, economic, political, and historical factors mediated the ways she and her students had experienced this demographic fact. One significant factor in this difference can be attributed to her membership in the dominant cultural group. The fact that she is no longer a member of the "working class" is another factor. Steinitz and Solomon (1986) write about the contextualization of class in this way,

> ...differences in power frame and organize but do not determine people's thoughts and actions and the meaning of social class evolves as individuals construct and reconstruct their social identities as they act in specific contexts. The consequence of class depends on what is learned from the entirety of their experience in their community [school and family] the meaning they give to hope,

ambition, class, how they reconcile competing messages, identify

sources of support and recover from 'setbacks in self-esteem'

(Steinitz and Solomon, 1986, p. 145)

Based on her experiences, Helen had learned that hard work was the

way to move up the socio-economic ladder. Her grandfather had rejected the

option of welfare during the Depression years, and through his hard work and

that of other members of her family, including herself, she had risen out of the

working class and was a member of the middle class. But she did not understand

the ways in which her experiences, as a member of the dominant culture in a

different time and place were not the same as that of her students. She did not

seem to realize that when she used the example of a soccer mom when

explaining the meaning of a car ad, her students' blank looks may have had to do

with the differences between their life experiences. She was trying to explain to

the students that a mom would use a car to drive her children to their soccer

games, something she had done as a soccer mom. The boundaries of their

differing worlds become borders that created barriers to communication and

learning (Phelan et al., 1998).

While there were times, especially after a frustrating encounter in the

classroom, that she acknowledged that the differences between her students and

herself created a struggle for her, she did not always seem cognizant of how

these differences affected interactions in the classroom nor the significance of

them. She could name differences between herself and her students, yet seemed

to lack a reflexivity that would allow her to fully understand the meaning of these

differences in her situation. Without this understanding, she could not shift her behavior. She believed that her students could "pull themselves up by their bootstraps", just as she and her family did. She supported "...the dominant hegemonic belief about ethnicity in the United States –assimilation into the dominant (often undefined) mainstream is the desired path for ethnically and racially diverse populations" (Hurtado, 1996, p. 375). While she desperately wanted them to "make it", she did not see that they can make it and maintain their identities, which for many involved being bicultural. While her identity as a White middle class woman informed her teaching practices, her professional identity and the discourses associated with it, mediated her interactions with her students as well.

Identity, the good teacher, and pedagogy

As a teacher candidate at a private university that emphasizes a commitment to urban education, social justice, and appreciation of diversity, she took on the beliefs of this system. While at times it seemed that she was "ventrilocating" (Bahktin, in Brown, 1998), and has yet to fully make these words her own, they had shaped her view of the role of the teacher and helped to define what she perceived as effective teaching. Her interest in feminism and the significant place of caring in the schools was also nurtured during this time.

At the same time, her work in an urban school district that defined success largely by a score on a high stakes test influenced her to measure herself as an effective teacher by how well her students did on this test. While she dismissed the real importance and meaningfulness of these tests, she and her colleagues

experienced significant tension and stress in anticipation of hearing the outcome of the testing and worried about whether the students' performance on the reading section would reflect the work she had done to bring grant money to the school and implement a literature based reading program.

The work of Muchmore (2001), Gee (1996), and Bahktin (1981) provide a framework for understanding the ways in which Helen's participation in the various discursive communities of which she is or had been a part, intersected as she attempted to define herself as a teacher. Muchmore (2001) spoke of the relationship between beliefs teacher bring with them from their life experiences previous to their entry into a teacher certification program and the ways in which these relate to, or interact with the knowledge they gain through their coursework and related experiences. He suggested that those that they have internalized through the discourses they have taken in over the years have a powerful hold and considered them core beliefs. These beliefs may be tacit or explicit, conscious or unconscious (Gee, 1996). Whereas, the discourses from their teacher education program tend to be more superficial and may or may not be congruent with the primary discourses that inform the core beliefs. Gee also spoke to the existence and relationship of multiple discourses. "Since Discourses always exist and *mean* in juxtaposition to each other, performances in one often have meaning in regard to—and repercussions for others. I can be asked in mind and body to 'mean against' some of my other social identities and their concomitant values" (Gee, 1996, p. 135). Helen's process of "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1981) like that of all teachers, developed as she took on

aspects of these various, sometimes, contradictory discursive communities and took as her own certain values, ideologies, assumptions, and points of view.

These perspectives, in combination, provide an insight into Helen's view of herself as a teacher and her work with her students as she developed her identity as and definition of, a teacher. She brought to her graduate school experience an understanding of what it meant to be a teacher and what it meant to be a responsible adult. In her graduate classes she was introduced to additional perspectives about what it meant to be a teacher and furthermore, what it meant to be a woman and a teacher who sees herself as a feminist teacher. To her previous definition of a teacher, she added notions that might be summed up as: a feminist teacher cares for and about her students, is concerned about the whole child, not just their academic progress, and is committed to social justice. While she received feedback from her student teaching supervisor that she experienced as contradictory to the values and knowledge of her coursework, she dismissed this, attributing it to this individual's lack of understanding of her urban students. At the point she began teaching, the district she worked for was heavily investing in reforming schools so that students in the system would experience more academic success. The primary means for measuring this academic success was through standardized test scores. This priority added another layer to the definition of what it meant to be a good teacher.

While Helen's first three years in this district were difficult and nearly resulted in her leaving the field, she found the two years at Community Middle School to be a much needed change. Her difficulties during her first three years

generally revolved around issues she described as being dismissed by administrators, feeling discounted for being a White teacher, challenges in classroom management, and student tensions that were dismissed as imaginary by the principal. While she felt heard and respected by her current principal, the district-wide emphasis on standardized testing continued. Her experiences with her students, while she saw them as more manageable, in part because she felt respected and supported by the school administrators and other teachers, continued to be frustrating. Despite her frustration, she continually tried to find ways to provide them with an education and find ways to make the curriculum a worthwhile experience. However, she was continually faced with conflicting definitions of what it meant to be a teacher. Each of these discourses about what it meant to be a good teacher informed her beliefs in terms of what knoweldge and perspectives were legitimate and valuable and as will be discussed, were aligned in a way that impacted the students' identities.

Constructing others: Pedagogy, voice, and the adolescent

Her interactions with her students were further informed by her construct of an adolescent. She tended to view the students in their collective identity as adolescents. This filter served to limit recognition of the complexity and multiplicity of their individual identities and affected the ways in which she interpreted their activities. Finders (1997) attributed this phenomena to the way in which the discourse on adolescence and its associated myths (universal adolescence, period of stress and storm) may obscure appreciation of the diversity that exists within adolescence and can and often does draw attention

away from the historical, economic, social, and cultural complexities that impact, inform, and shape the lives of the students. So, for example, despite the fact that in the context of the interview situation, students clearly articulated their desire to do well in school and expressed distress at their failures, Helen interpreted their lack of responsiveness to her questions, or their interactions with each other as signs that they didn't care about their education. She saw them as one and failed to see the complex and numerous reasons why they might have been responding as they did. She was extremely frustrated that they "just didn't get it."

From her perspective, they didn't get that they needed to score well on their standardized tests and that they needed an education to be "saved." This was one example of how the students' public persona, as interpreted by the teacher, did not match their private experience. What seemed to have been more at issue than the students "not getting it," were issues related to understanding course content and the inability to understand how doing their classwork was going to necessarily impact their test scores. For example, one of the days when Helen expressed her frustration and told the students that they drove her crazy, she had asked them "What is a primary source?" No student could answer this. A few minutes later she asked, "Who is in the primaries?" referring to the elections. The use of this word in two different ways seemed to be a point of confusion.

In several small group interviews, girls who did well, as measured by above grade level scores on the ITBS, indicated that they believed that the low level of participation was due to the fact that many students did not understand what was going on in class. They did not understand the content. In each of two

interviews, these separate groups of girls estimated that only twenty to twenty-five percent of the students successfully understood the content. The issue seemed to be less about "not getting it" and more about the fact that "...there seem to be patterns of interacting and rules of communication inaccessible to them" (Brown, 1998, p. 179).

Just as she gained knowledge about what it meant to be a good teacher through her life experiences, graduate school experience, and professional teaching experience, she also constructed an understanding of what it meant to be a good student. Consistent with the dominant culture ideology of individualism that privileges autonomy and independence (Galatzer-Levi and Cohler, 1993; Finders, 1997), a discourse deeply imbedded in her belief system, for Helen, the construct of adolescence, seemed to focus on the expectation of increasing responsibility. Coupled with this belief was one that these young people could not yet be trusted to carry out their lives with responsibility. A primary responsibility she identified related to taking school seriously. It was her interpretation of the students' lack of responsibility in this area that led to tremendous stress and frustration. At the same time, she gave many messages that spoke to her concerns that the students were not yet ready for the responsibilities of being an adolescent. Her frequent, almost daily lectures regarding the dangers of drugs, gangs, pregnancy, and school failure attest to this concern. The papier- mache pig that sat on top of her computer hard drive served as a metaphor for her beliefs. This pig had been in another room the previous year. Students, or at least one particular student, would stab it with his pencil putting holes in the pig.

Helen took the pig into her room, put Band-Aids on its wounds, and put a sign that said, "witness protection program" around its neck. While Helen would joke about how the pig became part of her room, in a way, its presence was symbolic of her view of the students. They demonstrated that they cannot handle the independence and freedom often assumed to be a need of adolescents, so their movement needed to be curtailed for the protection of others. This pig was safely out of reach of the students yet a reminder of their transgressions and a statement about their identities.

Her construct of adolescence and the needs of her students were based on a perspective of them that recognized their universality as adolescents from minority groups who were disadvantaged due to their social, economic, and minority status. This homogenizing of these students did not allow for recognition of their individuality.

Multiple identities, conflicting voices

Helen sought to make sense of these various discourses that reflected her various identities as daughter, mother, graduate student, and teacher. Johnson, Woodside-Jiron, and Day (2001) wrote, "people work to maintain personal integrity, but the frequent tensions and disjunctures" within and among the various discursive systems of which they are a part, leads to "talking out of both sides of their epistemological mouths" (2001, p. 224). For Helen this may have been due in part to the fact that she had not yet made some of these discourses truly her own. Bakhtin (1981) wrote,

> The work in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the work, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the work does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language...but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own" (in Wersch, 1990, 117)

As she tried to navigate the tensions between the discursive systems that influenced her identity as a teacher, there were many signs of the stress she experienced as she sought to strengthen her identity as a good teacher. Behind her desk she had a doll from the Hunchback of Notre Dame hanging by its neck on the cord of the window shade. On other days, she would make comments such as "students cause teachers to drink, or be addicted to drugs." On numerous other occasions she would make comments such as "I really feel good about being with you these last two years, "... you guys drive me crazy" or "I'm just a fat, ugly, old White woman. What do I know?" While initially it seemed that some of the stress in these situations, when students did not respond to questions she felt they should know, was, in part, a reaction to the presence of the researcher, these comments continued throughout the semester both in class and when talking with students in the hallway.

In addition, her conflictual experience during her student teaching semester continued to haunt her. While she indicated early on in the study that she wanted to know if she was "walking the walk," whether her actions were consistent with her belief in the value of a feminist pedagogy, it became increasingly clear that she also wanted validation as an effective teacher. A few days after the lesson on the webs, she asked "Would I get an A in student teaching now?" and then pulled out a letter written by two of the students who told her how interested they were in the Holocaust unit and as a result of the interest she sparked in them, they had visited the library to learn more about Hitler. One of the two students was one who had, in Helen's opinion, never shown an interest in social studies before. It was clear that Helen felt validated by this letter. It was also clear that she continued to have doubts about herself as a teacher.

The fact that the students did not respond in the ways Helen would have liked, in ways that indicated that they did understand the importance of doing well in school, impacted her view of herself as a teacher. She relayed a conversation she had with an administrator the prior afternoon. She spoke of how she was taking out her frustration on the students and felt badly about that. She knew she had been a "grouch" and was concerned that at least half of her class would not meet the cut-off score on the ITBS and thus not graduate. She indicated that she was aware that she was taking it out on the kids and feels bad. (Summary of field notes, 0329). It was this retelling that immediately preceded asking if "she would get an 'A' in student teaching yet."

In summary, it seems that Helen's sense of identity and the tensions she experienced developed in part, due to the ways in which she attempted to reconcile the meaning of being a good teacher from the various discursive systems of which had, or continued to be a part. While Helen saw the definition of a good teacher as she understood it from her graduate coursework as contradictory with the definition put forward by her current district, she attempted to integrate these with her beliefs informed by past life experiences, as she worked to teach her students. However, the ways in which she negotiated these discourses and attempted to align them into her teaching approach, contributed to the tensions she experienced. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) and Gee (1996) spoke to the presence of implicit or tacit knowledge of beliefs and assumptions that are part of an individual's discourse. While she articulated a resistance to the district's emphasis on standardized tests as a mismeasure of student progress, in many ways as she attempted to increase student responsiveness to her classes, she adopted the fragmented approach to content that she despised in the standardized tests. She aligned the discourse on social justice from her teacher education program with that of her core belief in the importance of education as a force that would allow an individual to "pull oneself up by the bootstraps". She incorporated her knowledge of social justice as a dimension of good teaching by introducing the *Facing History, Facing Ourselves* curriculum, but then used its content to drive home to her students the value of an education. She was carrying forth the discourse on social justice by trying to "save her students" by providing them with an education and at the same time

chiding them to be more responsible and hard working. As she faced the frustration of carrying out the discourse on feminist teaching as centered around caring, she took on the rhetoric of the urban child as needing to be controlled 'for their own good', so she aligned care with creating fear in her students. The ways in which she aligned her practices in a way that made sense to her resulted in contradictory practices and mediated her interactions with her students.

Constructing Teachers: A Window into the Students' View

In many ways the students respected their teacher and recognized her hard work. Most of the students spoke of the fact that Helen made learning fun. They appreciated her honesty and genuineness. They made comments like, "she doesn't hide nothing. She gives it to us straight." One student spoke of the "fire coming out of her mouth." Another said, "Teachers are cool, they just be themselves, like [Helen], she is like a normal person, not like a teacher, like a good friend, she goes down to our level." One student used the example of her striped socks, and dresses as an example of her being a regular person. Another student said, "she has charisma, she brings us up when we're down, she makes us feel good...because she makes us laugh." Several students chose to write their poems for their anthology about Helen.

> Mrs. [Helen] is our guidance
>
> Through school and life.
>
> She can help us with all she can
>
> And we try to do our best.
>
> Mrs. [Helen] is only human.

She deals with many students

Some of those students turn out to

Become successful people

All because of one teacher,

Mrs. [Helen]

Lets all applaud Mrs.[Helen].

This student seemed to be recognizing the role Helen played in advising them not only about school, but life in general. At the same time she acknowledged that she has shortcomings, as she is "only human." In both this poem and the following one, the students' description of Helen was consistent with how what she believed is the most effective way to actualize her feminist pedagogy, through love combined with fear. Helen's approach to caring that combines fear and love was discussed in Chapter Four.

Mrs. [Helen] is a very nice person

With a nice personality.

She is sometimes funny with the classmates

But sometimes the funny thing turns out to be real,

When she is angry you don't even want to get close to her.

She is like a leader

She is sometimes more than a leader, more than a teacher, more than a wife.

She is like our mother.

She is always working her butt off.

She's like breaking her head for us to do better

And be better than anyone else.

Mrs.[Helen] is always watching us, what we do.

She is somebody that can smell us,

To tell if we are going to do something wrong.

She is touching us with the things she teaches.

Mrs. [Helen] is always listening.

She is always correcting us.

She is an amazing person

If you get used to her you'll like her too

(from Community Anthology, 2000)

Student Identity

Sociocultural experiences and student identity

The students' life experiences were also impacted by the sociocultural context in which they lived. They have lived in the continental United States for varying numbers of years but many held strong ties to their birthplace or that of their families. Many traveled between Puerto Rico or Mexico and the continent; many retained some degree of bilingual fluency. Many of them experienced financial stresses. A factor that many spoke of were the changes within the school district. Community Middle School was built several years ago and become the alternative to the K-8 neighborhood schools that had previously served the families in the community. As a result, most of the students were the first in their families to experience a change in school prior to eighth grade

graduation that resulted from a change in school structure. At the same time, these students had all experienced the increased emphasis on standardized test scores as a measure of success. Especially when they did not experience the hoped for success on the tests, and were faced with not graduating, students brought up the fact that they thought they would have been more successful if they had been able to stay at the local elementary school rather than moving to the middle school in seventh grade. Whether or not they would have been more successful, the fact that their brothers, sisters, and cousins had been successful and the fact that they had not faced with a school change was significant to current students. This seemed to have less to do with looking to find fault outside of themselves for their lack of success and more to do with the fact that they did not have the support of family members who had directly experienced this change and who could help them navigate the challenges they experienced.

Their families were important to them and many spoke of the importance of not letting their families down. Despite the fact that many of their parents did not find schools welcoming places and had experienced many disappointments in terms of their own lack of desired success in terms of reaching the "American Dream," the students indicated that their parents placed a high value on academic success. As Suárez-Orozco (in Tatum, 1997) found in a study of both recent Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans born in the United States, the value of familism was a strong force in the lives of these students.

In terms of their communities, most spoke of the presence of gangs and violence. They also spoke of the many shopkeepers and neighbors whose

presence added to their sense of belonging to a community. Many of the entries in their anthology were of community members. Poems about neighbors, many of them elderly were interspersed with community servants, mailmen, firefighters, and shopkeepers. A number focused on the lives of community members impacted by drug use, homelessness, and violence. Several wrote about the role of their mothers in their lives. One of the boys wrote a poem about the police. In the second stanza he wrote,

> Even when there' s a little beef
>
> They put us behind the sheets
>
> But if the police weren't
>
> Guarding these streets
>
> We would probably all be dead meat
>
> (Community Anthology, 2000)

It is unclear whether this poem was an expression of his own mistrust in his ability or that of his peers to regulate their own behavior in safe ways or whether it was an internalization of beliefs adults had conveyed. However, given the messages regularly communicated in the context of the school, as well as the presence of violence in his own community and the national media attention on issues of school violence, it is likely that, at least to some degree, a process of internalization played a role. While many students raised concerns about physical safety at school and in their community, he focused on the presence of gangs in his general description of the school more than most students.

Students' experiences of their constructed identities

Several other boys described interactions with local shopkeepers that served as another example of receiving messages from their community that adolescent males are not to be trusted. The students had received an assignment that required them to look up costs of items in a store. When asked why they had not completed the assignment, a number of boys joined in a conversation to explain to Helen that shopkeepers did not trust them to be in the store because they assumed they were going to steal. That the boys received messages about their irresponsibility both in the community and school is a concern as it points to the potential of them taking on that identity.

Through their experiences in school, the students were faced with many interactions that spoke to their identities. Helen's perspective of adolescence has already been introduced. She provided many messages to support any they were receiving from the community about dangers associated with being adolescents particularly with her many messages about drugs, gangs, and pregnancy.

Along with expectations for responsible behavior, Helen communicated standards regarding which expressions of their adolescent experiences and concerns were acceptable to bring into the classroom and which were not. During their reading class, there were some times when students were given the opportunity to choose a book to read from the many hundreds of books in the bins at the back of the room. One of the students indicated that he was trying to find a "Goosebumps" book. The teacher indicated that the time for reading pulpy books was over and that they needed to stretch and read more mature books.

While Helen's goal may have been to expand this student's literary horizons, if what is important in language [as a component of literacy] involves the saying-being-reading-valuing coherence (Gee, 1996), then this statement suggests that not only is there something wrong with his choice of book but also with him. At another point after the teacher had disciplined a student by putting gum on his face, she asked if any of them remembered whom it was that she had brought crayons and a coloring book for during the previous year. This reference would suggest too, that coloring was an activity acceptable at previous times in their lives but not part of sanctioned activities of adolescents. It also assumes the homogeneity of the group due to their status as adolescents. It is quite possible that the student who longed for '"recess" might also enjoy crayons. Yet if this were the case, Helen's social construction of adolescence would give this student and others the message that his was the wrong way to be an adolescent.

The "right" way to be an adolescent

Helen communicated expectations both tacitly and explicitly regarding acceptable adolescent behavior and performance. These communicated what she considered the "right" way to be an adolescent. It seems though that her definition limited the options for the students' identities. Neither crayons, coloring books, nor relationships with boyfriends were sanctioned activities for adolescents. As these students constructed knowledge of their position in the world, they made choices to accept, reject, negotiate, or resist the identities put forth as acceptable. Given the narrow range of possibilities put forth by Helen,

many felt constrained in exploring and expressing their identities, particularly in the context of the classroom.

Each student interviewed seemed to place importance on being accepted by his or her teachers. As already has been illustrated, most viewed voicing a perspective that differed from the teacher or than might differ, as risky, and many chose silence as a response. Michael's reflections on his experiences in the classroom illustrate the impact when a student does not conform to the right way to be in the classroom. His interactions with Helen were seen as outside the boundaries of acceptable. When Helen spoke of him during an interview at the end of the year, she indicated that because he was critical of her and the students were supportive of her, they rejected him. His rejection was particularly significant as, even outside of the classroom, his peers isolated him. He described the impact in this way

> The school I came from was an all Black school. Now there's a difference between cultures there and here. A big difference.
>
> ...Now when I came here, this is the only Puerto Rican school I've been where the Puerto Rican actually speak Spanish in school. So that was weird to me that I said "Hey, that's their first language, why not use it? English is mine, you know." Then they got to talking to me in Spanish. It was a few times when I did some things that was normal at my old school that wasn't normal here....and I got laughed at....So if I hear someone say "Michael, blah, blah" in Spanish and everybody laughs, I know they are talking about me.

And then you think about it all day, because you don't know what they said, You wonder, is she calling me smart or dumb?...it's hard to learn and hard to concentrate you feel like you're surrounded by enemies basically, and it affects your concentration...I got to talk about my assignments. Other then that, I am not going to speak (Interview 0704-09).

The distance created by the response of silence significantly diminished the possibilities for teachers to know their students in all of their complexities. At the same time the opportunity to engage in dialogue about issues that were significant to the students' lives was also diminished. While Helen may not have wanted to hear about their boyfriends, or gangs, these issues and others were central to the students' current life experiences.

Students regularly spoke of their interest in and experiences with "romantic" relationships in interviews and could be seen and heard giving each other advice about the challenges of their relationships in class. Many of the poems printed in the class anthology were written in the format of "I Remember" included references to relationships—both the excitement and hurt; yet this was not a topic to be discussed in class. Silencing them and lecturing them on the evils of gangs and pregnancy did not provide them with opportunities to explore ways to develop relationships and make decisions about their lives. While pregnancy and gang membership are two possible outcomes of adolescent relationships they are not the only ones. The following description of a classroom encounter illustrates the type of opportunities missed.

One particular day, Helen walked into the classroom soon after the students had returned from their elective class. The students were in their desks; however, there was a great deal of intense conversation going on among many groups of students. Helen was angry at the level of conversation and confronted them about not doing their work. One of the boys told her that they were talking about classwork, and told her that they had just had just come from a presentation about date rape (Summary of field notes 0302).

Interestingly, the four words written on the chalkboard in the front of Helen's room were "bystander, victim, perpetrator, rescuer." Students were to draw symbols of these words that day in their social studies class as part of their unit on the Holocaust. However, just as poems about boyfriends were not part of the curriculum, neither was the topic of date rape despite the seeming relevance to their social studies vocabulary words for the day's lesson. Yet this seemed to have been a time to pursue a pedagogical moment and an opportunity to prepare students for situations in their current or future lives. This was problematic in that it not only spoke to their identities as adolescents but also reiterated that their personal lives, present or future were irrelevant and separate from their school lives. At the same time it denied the opportunity to develop their knowledge, make connections between personal and public lives and develop their vocabulary so they had the words to describe their experiences.

It seemed that boyfriends, male-female relationships, and concerns about date rape were all part of the "wrong" way to be an adolescent and were not

acceptable parts of their experiences as adolescents. Yet, if "...a fit between personal experiences and external events is central to identity" (Erikson, 1968), this disjuncture between the acceptability of their personal concerns and experiences and public expression of it impacted the student's identity development. The message was that there was no place for this part of who they were in school. If the school, as an institution of society, conveyed the message that their interests and experiences were not how one should be as an adolescent and there was no room to explore the issues the students were dealing with in terms of their peer relationships, the students were left to try to negotiate these on their own or internalize the message that somehow, who they were was not an acceptable way to be in society. Furthermore, students may continue to see knowledge gained through personal experience as separate from that gained through their school experiences. Unless these connections can be made and school experiences are seen as relevant to their lives, the benefit of school learning is diminished. Viewing these two types of knowledge as distinct, is to view education as a neutral process, one that can be carried on without consideration of or concern for the identities of those participating in the experience.

While there were some types of experiences students could bring to the classroom, it would seem that Helen privileged a view of adolescents as innocent rather than worldly, and asexual rather than sexual. Cannella (1998) wrote, in speaking about young children, that, "To hear the voices of children, we must first accept as legitimate those who have been most often ignored and silenced....the

everyday lives of younger human beings must be viewed as legitimate, multidirectional, and multidimensional" (p.176). While the teacher may hold different beliefs, if the views of the student are not respected as true to their experiences and given some form of expression, there is little hope that they are going to feel that they have a place in the school. Nor are they likely to see the relevance of learning in the larger context of their lives.

While Helen worked to restrain the expression of at least some aspects of their identity and warn them of the dangers of irresponsible expressions of others, many students saw their positions as adolescents as warranting more opportunities and freedom. In some cases these were opportunities related to freedom of expression and in others they were opportunities related to experiences within the context of the school. Several school activities that were planned for the last few weeks of the school year demonstrated the conflict between the student's desire to be treated as adolescents and not like "little kids", and the school's need to control the expression of their adolescent selves. The graduation luncheon was one such school event. A number of the girls expressed frustration at not being able to wear make-up. While they were frustrated that this was not allowed in school in general, some students were particularly angry about not being able to wear make-up to the graduation luncheon. They saw this luncheon as a mark of their passage to high school, a milestone in their lives. The prohibition of make-up seemed contradictory. It also communicated that individual expression of their identities as the students put

them forth through their appearance was dangerous, and that this expression to be curtailed or at least contained.

> RZ: They make such a big deal...for example, the luncheon, we're
>
> going to this Friday and we have to dress up for it, it's going to be at
>
> a place out of school and they don't want us to wear make up, you
>
> know, it's know like we're going to come out messed up or
>
> something...
>
> DR: God, it's no biggy....(Interview, 0302).

A bit later in this interview, one of the students summed up the issue this way,

> "We are not adults yet, but we are not little kids, like we're
>
> teenagers now" (Interview 0303).

For other students the limitations placed on their activities on the grassy field on the north end of the school grounds was another indication of lack of recognition of their status as adolescents. This was a large field on which goal posts had been installed. The students were not able to play soccer or other sports on these fields during their physical education classes. Several students interpreted this as an affront. One explained it this way, "They made the field out for a purpose for us to play on...they think we might injure ourselves, but we're like big already" (Interview 0308). Whether this explanation was directly conveyed to this student or whether this was his interpretation of the restriction is less important. What is relevant here, is that he saw this restriction as a reflection on him, on his identity. While there may be many reasons why the field is not used, given the many sanctions students feel limit their self expression in school

plus the limitations some experience in the community due to fear of gangs and mistrust of local businesses, the field may provide a place to engage in alternative adolescent activities.

While many students focused on a desire for more freedom of movement and a recognition that they could handle it, the responses of two boys illustrates the diversity of ways in which they expressed this. Luis who was attentive in class and participated regularly, said that he would like "recess after lunch...so you can get out all of your energy." Another student in this same interview reframed Luis' responses, saying he would like to see a ten minute passing period like they have in high schools (Interview 0409). This interaction illustrates the diverse ways in which these adolescents saw themselves and the risk to their identities if narrowly defined by their teachers.

While the students had many ideas about what they would like to see at the school, they did not share these suggestions with their teachers or other school personnel. As one student said "I guess we're afraid that they're going to say no." Another student agreed and said, "Yea, they'd go, do you think these kids could handle a party, they think we're bad, but we're not really" (Interview 0507).

Throughout the interviews students spoke of experiences in and out of the classroom with reference to their age and the expectations that go along with that status. Their responses indicated they were seeking to understand who they were and how they fit into the school and community. Given the imminent transition to high school, their interview responses were indicative of an attempt

to integrate their past experiences with their current experiences as eighth graders with anticipation of what the future might hold. In many ways, it appeared that students were increasingly developing an awareness of themselves as complex beings, with multiple and at times contradictory selves. Through their school experiences they were gaining a view of how they might fit into the larger society or at least the larger society that they were brought into contact with in the high school.

Their teachers' views of them were important and at the same time as they sought opportunities to express themselves in what they saw as a way more in keeping with their adolescent status, the messages their teachers communicated impacted their identity. They recognized and often appreciated the strict expectations for behavior as it increased their sense of physical safety, yet they sought more opportunities for self-expression. For some students, the teachers' messages encouraged them to try to be better, for others it increased their sense of self-doubt and led to a sense of powerlessness and self-blame. For many students; however, there was a contradiction between the desire for self-expression and being able to be who they were. In addition to the seeking an understanding of themselves as adolescents, their status as members of racial and or ethnic groups was important aspects of their identity.

Racial and ethnic identity

All students in this study identified themselves as a member of one or more ethnic and or racial groups that despite their rising numbers in census figures, (Census, 2000) are most often identified as minority populations. Of the

53 students who participated through the questionnaire and/or interviews, all but five identified themselves as being a member of the broad category of Latina/o. Viewing them as a collective whole; however, is to deny the complexity of their identities. They were diverse in their personal characteristics, their specific cultural identity/identities, and the ways in which they responded in the classroom when various aspects of their identities were respected, devalued, included, or excluded from the curriculum. The student's reflections on their experiences illustrated that the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, and class is complex. Each of these constructs interacts in a dynamic and complicated manner (Steinitz and Solomon, 1986; Cohen, 1993).

The number of students who identified as African American was small. The only two boys, who were African American and completed both individual interviews and questionnaires, responded differently when asked if they had experienced racist behavior from others. Erik felt that he was treated no differently than any other student. He did acknowledge that he had just come to the school mid-year and it took a long time to get to know students, but did not see this as related to his race. His status in the classroom changed during the course of the study. He had been failing his classes when the study began. Helen saw him in a negative light. In an interview at the end of the year, she indicated that when the only other African American was added to her homeroom, several months later, Erik's behavior and academic performance turned around. She linked this new boy's arrival with Erik taking a more serious approach to his schoolwork. He began to do his class work, told other students to

be quiet when then were talking, and offered to help others. This change led to him being viewed in a different light. He now fit the role of the "good student," an identity that brought with it, special attention from the teacher.

Michael enrolled in the school in the middle of the second semester. Helen acknowledged that this was a difficult time to enter the school, but that he "never figured the rules were for him." As discussed earlier, Helen's perspective was that the students in the class respected her and that when Michael entered and said negative things about her [was critical of her], the class aligned against him. His experience of trying to understand the norms at this new school and the impact of peer ridicule on him were introduced earlier. When Michael was interviewed he had been enrolled at Community Middle School for two months. The following excerpts from his interview, which took place over two days, illustrate the impact of race and ethnicity on his experience of his new school. At the time this interview was conducted, he had been transferred out of Helen's homeroom. He did not know why this had occurred. In an interview, Helen explained that it was because of the need to remove another student from his homeroom due to a conflict in that room, so Michael was traded in exchange.

> CR: What was it like to be a new student at Community Middle School
>
> M: Weird...cause where I came from, I felt more comfortable.
>
> ...That school to me was like home. That was one school I found that I liked [pause] to be transferred out in the middle of the year to come to a school I don't like.

CR: Most of the students in this school are Latino. There aren't many students who are Black at this school. How does this affect you?

M: Well, the thing that really gets to me is that I got Puerto Rican family. I'm not mixed but I, you know how you grew up with somebody, after a while that becomes your family. So I have Puerto Ricans who are my family. But the thing that gets to me the most is when I see two Black kids arguing and fighting in the hallway or outside. That really gets to me because you're at a Puerto Rican school, you know, represent what you are and fighting is not that. I mean fighting comes a part of life you know, I mean over the course of your lifetime, you are going to throw a few punches. But I feel while you're in a Latino school, you should represent what you are. Show em because since, if you knew my granddaddy, he'd tell you ever since he was little, black people were said to be stupid, were said to be this, said to be that. But if you look at this classroom outside, Black people have build that and being for you to sit in a Latino school you suppose to be representing what you are and then to show a sign of ignorance, to me that's, you know everybody gets frustrated, but there's a certain place and time for everything at school.

Michael's communication style was different from that of most students in Helen's classes and incompatible with the culture of her classroom. Helen felt

that Michael "made his mark" by violating classroom rules when he chewed gum or came to class unprepared. Yet his violations of these rules seemed no more significant or even obvious than that of other students. However, the difference in his pattern of communication created a barrier, one which did not allow Helen to look beyond the way he "made his mark" to why he may have felt the need to do so. Michael's willingness to speak his mind became an impenetrable border limiting his inclusion into the culture of the class with severe personal and social consequences for Michael. His peers ostracized him, he was sent to a different homeroom, and despite his high scores on the ITBS was required to attend the summer program because of his failing grades. Michael ran away during the first few weeks of the summer session. While there may have been other contributing factors to his decision to run away, it's ... really difficult not having no friends and trying to learn in the classroom of enemies... sometimes I don't even want to come to school. And trust me, I like school" (Interview 0712).

Most of the students had not, or did not speak of an awareness of discriminatory behavior on the part of others. I t was clear; however, that most students lived in a community in which they were the majority, ans saw issues of racism or negative stereotypes as more relevant to the African-American students in the school. In several interviews, when asked about the most imporatant learning from the Holocaust unit for them, students indicated that it was "not to be racist." When asked if they were aware of incidents in the school in which racism was evident, most students who were asked, did not identify any. One group of boys said it happened "once in a while" and described an incident

from the prior week in which a teacher removed a whole team from a three-on-three-basketball tournament because one of the team members had received a technical foul. The players were African American and the two boys interviewed attributed this decision to racism.

The impact of stereotypes on non-dominant groups on racial and ethnic identity was addressed in an interview with three girls, one who identified as Puerto Rican, another as Mexican, and another as African American. The girls responded to a question about whether there were differences between the expectations of their parents and the community and the school.

> K: In my community, Mexicans always tend to like drop out. And I want to [unintelligible] maybe not all Mexicans drop out, just [voice dropped or another student started to talk]
>
> R: The same goes for African Americans, they either drop out of school or have kids and they're either nasty or something, there's just like a lot of stuff like its not really like that. I mean yes. Some of them do that stuff, but not all. They just tend to put it out like that.
>
> M: The same thing for me, they tend to get pregnant of get drug dealing and in gangs.

In each of these responses, their ethnic or racial group was referred to in a way that suggested the girls were resisting the stereotypes they described. In two of their responses the girls used the pronoun "they" to describe a group to which they are members by virtue of race or ethnicity. The following responses suggest

the ways in which they work to dispel the potential hold of this stereotype on

themselves. The pronoun "they is not replaced with "I."

> CR: What effect does that [the fact that people often have
>
> expectations of their group] have on you?
>
> K: it makes me like work. It makes me like work harder and like
>
> when I see that I'm getting aggravated or something, I thing twice
>
> about doing stuff that I would normally do at home or something
>
> K: Okay, because if I don't think twice about it, I might do something
>
> that I might regret or something.
>
> CR: At school?
>
> K: Yeah.
>
> R: I just try to pace myself, you know to work harder, you know but I
>
> just pace myself to work harder. I mean just to basically meet my
>
> goals and what I want to do [hard to hear]
>
> M: I just try to do my best, you know. I try to aim for B's, I don't aim
>
> for A's cause sometimes that's a little too high but I try to do my
>
> best.

Each student then indicated that they see themselves graduating from high

school. They were then asked about an event in the classroom in which Helen

told them that because they were minorities, that they would have to work harder

or that they would have more obstacles to overcome. They were asked if they

believed that to be true and what the impact of that statement had been.

[long pause]

CR: Do remember her saying that?

M: Yes. To me the obstacles are the same as for children like us and that for adults because they get um the same thing we do like let's say we deal with drugs and gangs and everything, and so do they,[another student adds] because that's part of our life.

M: Probably we're going to have to work harder cause (K adds)[inaudible]

Yeah, and I guess our parents don't have the best jobs, so we're not going to, unless we get scholarships, we're going to have to work harder to go through school and pay everything off (Interview 1007-1009).

In this statement it seems that the girls are suggesting that their personal ambition and hard work will mediate the consequences of their socioeconomic status. It appeared that they had internalized the dominant ideology of individualism and equal opportunity. Their responses however focused solely on their class status and not on any obstacles based on their "minority" status. Bingham writes,

> The self of recognition in the public sphere is most often a cultural self, a gendered self, a raced self, or a self of ethnicity. In other words, the sorts of recognitive interactions that confirm a sense of dignity are most likely to be identity horizons that are held by that individual to be salient" (2001, p. 42).

In Helen's comment about the need for about the students' as members of minority groups, to work harder, the mirroring suggested that their lives were something to be overcome. At the time she said it, there was what seemed to be a deep silence in the classroom. While it was a statement of a political reality, the implication, at the time that it was said, seemed to have been that they were less than adequate. It is unclear whether these girls did not perceive the comment in that way, whether they did not remember the specific interaction, or whether they did not want to elaborate on it.

Several other girls spoke of stereotypes they believed were applied to their ethnic groups as well. They had written cinquains that were included in the Community Anthology (2000). When asked about these, they explained that, in part, they chose the words they did because they knew these were stereotypes of how Latina's were thought to be. Following are two examples.

Puerto Rican-American

Pretty Girl

Smiling, Yelling, Laughing

Nice, helping, funny, anger

Boriqua

(Community Anthology, 2000)

Mexican American

Dancing, Loud

Screaming, Singing, Partying

I am proud

Mexican

(Community Anthology, 2000)

In the first cinquain, the word anger seems to stand out from the other descriptors. The girl who wrote this cinquain is the same one who wrote the poem about Helen. While it was not possible to interview her after the Community Anthology came out in late May, one way to understand her anger, may be in comparing her cinquain with two lines from her poem about her teacher.

She [Helen] helps us with all she can

And we try to do our best.

Mrs. [Helen] is only human.

There was an incident during the spring when this student had forgotten her folder. When she was asked if she was going to give some lame excuse, she got tears in her eyes and walked away. She was quiet in class and fit the description of the "good student" described in the section below. The use of the word "anger" in her otherwise upbeat poem in combination with an incident in which her voice was silenced suggests that perhaps beneath her quiet demeanor, there were stronger feelings about her school experience.

For each of these girls, as had been true of Michael, they had internalized messages regarding their cultural identity from others.

Adolescents draw conclusions about who they are, what society holds for them and what they can hope for. Adolescents assess

their 'social location' and form ideas about their future including the definition of success, conceptions of maturity, and standards to judge their progress (Steinitz and Solomon, 1986, 135).

The students experienced different discourses relative to their identity leaving them with multiple and sometimes contradictory perceptions (Cohen, 1993).

The ways in which these students experienced contradictory messages regarding their ethnic and racial identities was evident in the ways in which they made meaning of other experiences at school as well. Maria Victoria spoke at length about two experiences that were significant to her identity. When she entered Community Middle School as a seventh grader, she was placed in a bilingual class despite the fact that she had not received bilingual services prior to this time. While she was never told why the decision was made, she explained it this way

> Yes because I wasn't bilingual on team 1 and I told Mr. Rodriquez, a nice teacher, I told him that, "why am I bilingual?", I was all my life, because I [spoke] always English in school, never, never in Spanish. At home I talk Spanish but not here and I told Mr. Rodriquez, "I'm now on this team and [inaudible] talk English." I didn't understand what they were writing because I don't know Spanish. I don't know how to write it. My mom found out about this and she is like, she came to school and fought for it. They were going to leave me there and they thought my mom was lying. They had to put a teacher, a special lady to talk to know if I understand

English because I probably was lying, oh well, I want to get

attention. Why would I lied about it? To get attention. They think

that we're lying here—that's what I don't like about this school. That

is why my grades, when I got like switched, I got like really low

score and then I came here for a year and got higher (Interview

1806 and S0109).

Maria's cultural heritage was important to her, at least as she described

the connections she felt with relatives still in Mexico. Yet she felt that to be

placed in a bilingual class was to be placed in an inferior status. As she sought to

make sense of her failure to achieve the necessary score on the ITBS to

graduate, she focused on this placement in the bilingual class as a deterrent to

her success.

Yet at the same time, she saw her bilingual and language identity as one

to be kept separate from her school identity. Her failure to graduate took on an

even greater significance due to the response of some extended family

members. Just prior to the end of the summer session, she spoke about her

hoped for, upcoming graduation in this way.

Now it is our turn. [Other people] graduated and it is our turn to show

them that we could pass and just because we failed doesn't mean that we

will stop. Because I told my cousin I didn't pass and he goes like it runs in

the family and like no it doesn't run in the family, I'm going to put a stop to

this because everybody in my family who failed 8th grade, whatever grade

they failed because when they stopped and they were going back to

school and I told him I'm going to put a stop to this, I want to keep on going to 8th grade. It doesn't matter to me how old I am but I'm going to keep on going to school because I want an education (Interview S03).
Like the girls in the interview earlier, she was resisting the stereotype of failure.

Another manifestation of the ways in which students internalized negative messages regarding their culture came from their responses to communication sent home from the school. According to the teachers, most of the parents were not literate in English, yet most of the students would prefer to take permission slips home in English rather than Spanish. Interestingly, though, in some interviews, students spoke of "slipping into English" at home and would then apologize to their parents. It appeared that some of the students were embarrassed to take the permission slips home in Spanish. That they had determined that Spanish was not valued in the school is not surprising. Other than a few classroom examples in which the students' cultural experiences were mentioned and the presence of both traditional and rock Latino music at a talent show, the lack of cultural representation in the curriculum was striking.

Identity of a good student.

A number of students spoke of the equation of smart and good; bad and stupid. This theme came up in a number of the interviews. While no student who was interviewed diminished the value of doing well in school, for a number, the way to do so seemed illusive. One of the boys who had a learning disability that affected his ability to express his thoughts in written form, frequently answered the teacher's questions. The group of boys he sat with seemed to respect him for

his knowledge. When asked what factors affected their participation, one said, "sometimes we don't participate cause we know it's not appropriate" When asked what he meant by "not appropriate," he said "we think it is the wrong answer." The use of the word inappropriate is a telling one in this instance. It speaks further to the equation of bad and stupid. Rather than being willing to put forward their response, the boys in this group believed that if they were not certain of the answer, it was inappropriate or bad to talk. While these particular boys were more willing to risk involvement than most, there were many who had become "imprisoned in the identity of a bad pupil and an opponent" (Perrenoud in Shephard, 2000, p. 10).

Another student who was in the summer Bridge Program when speaking of her school experiences in fifth and sixth grade, spoke with pride of her good grades. In speaking of her current performance, she said, "I used to be such a brainiac and now I'm just a little bad girl." Sonia's identity as a "little bad girl" seemed to center around her failure to achieve the cut-off score on the math subtest of the ITBS. While she continued to pass her classes and scored at the tenth grade level on the reading sub-test, she was not able to graduate at the end of the year due to her lower math score. She is no longer a brainiac. As she shed this identity, she took on the identity of the little bad girl. Consistent with the equation of smart and good; bad and stupid, she adopted a different demeanor toward school. True to her new identity, she began to violate school rules. She no longer followed the uniform dress code and on a number of occasions spoke of "talking back" to her summer school teacher.

During the last few weeks of the regular school year, she and Maria Victoria spoke of a plan to initiate a food fight in the cafeteria on the last day of school. They stated that they were tired of being the "good girls." They saw their identity as "good girls" as limited. They were more complex than their teachers knew. The food fight would demonstrate this to their teachers. It was interesting that their desire to be "bad" came during a time when they were not longer convinced that they were good students. They had just received their test scores back and realized that they would not be graduating with their class in June. While they tried to hold onto the fact that they had worked hard and that even though they did not pass, the fact that their scores had gone up was evidence of their increasing skills, they were ashamed and upset a their failure. Even though they took some comfort in the encouraging words of one of their teachers, this was not enough in a system that defines success by test scores (González, 1998).

At the same time, at least one student was able to look at what it meant to be smart in a more complex way than some of the other students. Maria Victoria spoke of her frustration during summer school, when the teacher did not explain how do solve math problems but instead asked a student to help the others. Maria Victoria indicated that this student was asked to help because he received a math score above grade level and was only in summer school because of his reading score. She was very frustrated that he could not explain how he solved problems. She indicated that being smart also meant knowing how to explain the process to someone else.

<u>Silence and outspokenness: Negotiating public and private selves.</u>

Throughout the semester and over the summer, the split between the ways the students publicly presented themselves at school and their private experience became clearer. Based on observations in the classroom, it was clear that students who were docile, compliant, and quiet were showing behaviors consistent with those favored by the teacher. It seemed, however, that this was at the expense of any kind of "intellectual grappling." It seemed that much like Finders (1997) found in her study, docility was privileged over intellectual engagement that entailed arguing, debating and wrestling with ideas.

The contradiction between presenting as good students and being themselves was striking when the Community Anthology (2000) was published. As previously mentioned, several of the girls had written cinquains. The format for writing them had been presented in class and their choice of topic for the cinquain matched that in the example. What was particularly interesting though were the words they chose to describe themselves and the contrast between this description and their presentation in the classroom. Two additional cinquains are presented as examples.

> Puerto-Rican American
>
> Dancing Loud
>
> Laughing, Singing, Playful
>
> Honor and Pride
>
> Boriqua

Mexican American

Nice girl

Smiling, Laughing, Running

Hard working and Reliable

Chicano.

(Community Anthology, 2000)

Each of these girls was very quiet in the classroom. If they spoke in class, it was in a voice that was barely audible. Even in the interview situation, these girls spoke in very soft voices. While they were not all interviewed in the same group, in each case, their comments were very difficult to transcribe because of the low volume of their voices even though in several cases, the tape recorder was closest to them. When asked about the contradiction between the ways that they described themselves, the girls indicated that to a certain extent they wrote those descriptors because they were stereotypes of their ethnic group. They also indicated that they could not be as they described themselves in the poems and still be good students. As they spoke, it was clear that they believed that they could not be themselves and still be good students. To be good students, they needed to leave themselves at the school door.

It was also clear in many interviews that to in any way disagree with or criticize what teachers said and did, was not being a good student. One student who expressed frustration with a teacher on the team said, "I don't like her, forgive me God, but that's the worst teacher I ever had." Somehow, making this comment about a teacher was severe enough to need God's forgiveness. In

another case when a student was speaking of the impact of Helen's words on her, added conditions to her thoughts, saying, "I'm not saying that this is what she was saying, but...." While interview questions were not aimed at eliciting criticism or praise, students felt free to say what they liked but were hesitant to be critical particularly of Helen. Instead, they would express talk about teachers or school policy, but not talk about their personal reactions to her class.

Docile, agreeable behavior was privileged. Outspokenness, expressions of disagreement or anger was discouraged. While anger was rarely shown in class, its presence became clearer as the summer interviews continued. When students indicated angry feelings during the year, they spoke of "trying to hold it [anger] back." While this was the most common experience of students, for at least one student, she felt that expressing herself, including her angry self was important. This student was the object of a great deal of anger and frustration on the part of Helen and drained her energy. Their relationship demonstrated the impact of outspokenness. While this student felt that it was important to express oneself and even used an example Helen had provided during a social studies lesson to explain this belief, her expression of anger was ultimately self-defeating.

During the last week of school Gloria shared with Helen the impact of their relationship on Gloria's school progress during the year. There were only a few students in the room at the time. Helen was at her desk doing report cards and said "I'm tired of doing report cards for those who don't care." One of the girls said, "Then don't." Helen responded, "Then I'll have a parent on my case." Gloria

joined in at this point and Helen asked her why she cared about graduation now when she hadn't all year.

Gloria: I can't, you'll take it bad.

Helen: You gave up on yourself.

Gloria: If a teacher gives up on me, I give up.

Helen: Do you think my expectations were too high? I expected more than you could...

Gloria: When you don't understand, why don't you listen. You gave up on me too fast, [when Helen didn't help if she was confused with her work].

Helen: You will have to work it out over the summer.

Gloria: It's hard when you are worried about family.

Helen: What should I say, "Oh, poor baby."

Helen: No one understands more than me. You need to do it for yourself. No one did it for me. No kids for me until after high school and college.

Gloria: Its too hard [unable to articulate it] when it's a bad day, you make it worse, be like a friend and teacher.

Helen: I don't want to be friends. You're the last person I want to be friends with.

Gloria: Dee is a teacher and a friend.

Helen: Notice, that she is the only one, you have not had for a homeroom teacher.

Gloria: OK, let me give you advise, watch who you put together, this year, you put me with the wrong kids.

Helen: We put together but it turned out different, the bottom line is that I am the teacher, an adult, and you are the student, child.

Gloria: I know more than any; it's good that you push us to follow our goals and dreams.

Helen: You'd be surprised how family haven't...

Gloria: You got a force [us].

Helen: Everytime, ... your screechy voice, took away from kids who want to learn.

Gloria: I'm trying to tell you what you could of done.

Helen: You need to focus on what you could've done, it's your responsibility.

Gloria: Everything I say you take too personal.

Helen: I disagree, I feel like I could have danced naked down the street and it wouldn't have been enough.

Gloria: Oh, Mrs. [Helen]...

Helen leaves the room

Gloria, directing her comments to the researcher, says, she was taking it too personal, I need someone to fall back on. To illustrate she said in a voice imitating a patient "caring" voice, "you have your work, let's do it together." I knew she would ask for it the next day. When she stopped doing that, I stopped trying (Field notes, 0605).

Both Gloria and Michael spoke out against their experiences in the classroom, both were ostracized from the teacher. When students experience their teacher giving up on them, they too may give up.

> Disengagement occurs over time; even a student who appears to be disengaged will jump at an opportunity to invest when he or she perceives the odds to be favorable for learning. Yet even the most persistent students will stop trying when she or he concludes that the odds are insurmountable (Muller, et al., 1999, p. 317).

This struggle regarding Helen's identity as a "good" teacher and her students' identities as "good" students, is understandable from a framework which links the epistemological and the ontological (Sumara and Davis, 1998; Steward, 1994; Mohanty, 1994).

> ...there is no clear boundary between the epistemological and the ontological: who we are is necessarily caught up in what we know and conversely our knowing—that is how we perceive and act toward the world cannot be extricated from our senses of who we are (Sumara and Davis, 1998, p. 78).

This suggests that knowledge is not derived from a transmission of information from one to another, a transmission that results in the reception of an unadulterated copy of knowledge. Helen's attempts to inculcate in her students the wisdom of her knowing, by challenging her students' potential to graduate, was counterproductive in that, among other things, it, at least for some students, reiterated their views of themselves as inadequate and doomed to fail. If these

students' sense of themselves was that of inadequate learners, it was unlikely that their actions related to academic tasks would relate to anything but a reinforcement of that outcome. And if, as a number of students indicated, one cannot be themselves and be a good student, that being a good student involved suppressing who they were, then what they know would also remain detached from who they were, diminishing the possibility for integrating it, or problematizing it from the perspectives of their own knowledge of how the world works. It would inhibit the likelihood of any critical engagement of the curriculum.

Mohanty (1994) described the relationship between the epistemological and the ontological in this way, "This issue of subjectivity represents a realization of the fact that who we are, how we act, what we think, and what stories we tell become more intelligible within an epistemological framework that begins by recognizing existing hegemonic histories" (p.148). Helen herself did not seem cognizant of these "existing hegemonic histories," nor did she seem cognizant of how they were perpetuated. Without such recognition it would be difficult to have genuine dialogue with students on these issues. Yet for the students, and perhaps for Helen, too, school was seen as "eminently good" (Stevenson and Ellsworth, 1993) and as such was granted "moral authority" (Brantlinger, 1993) over their lives. As such when students were faced with failures to meet teachers' expectations either in terms of their achievement or interactions, the students internalized blame and identified themselves as bad students who also lacked intelligence.

Negotiating Identity

This chapter highlighted the role of sociocultural factors as they constrain or inform the identities of the teacher and of her students. Both Helen and her students sought to define themselves as teacher and students through ideologies from various discursive communities that at times limited and at other times broadened possibilities for self-definition.

Helen and her students each attempted to align the messages they received about their identity from others. The students recognized Helen and the complexity of her identity as they spoke of her genuineness, her humanness, her angry self, her humorous self, and her charisma in her roles as advisor, teacher, and mother. Helen, at times, saw these as true representations of who she was. At other times she resisted or rejected these representations. In either event, her identity as a teacher was strengthened, made more complex, or vulnerable based on the ways students recognized her.

Students were impacted by the ways their teachers, families, and community members (police, shopkeepers, etc.) gave recognition to their identities. As they saw aspects of their identities affirmed or rejected, their sense of who they were as individuals and collectively was altered. At times students accepted these representations, at other times they resisted or rejected them as they sought to further understand whom they were and how they fit in their schools, communities, and larger society. For some students the recognition was affirming of their potential, for others it affirmed their limitations. At times their resistance or rejection of these constructed identities led to rejection by their

teacher. In other cases, the aspects of their identities that were affirmed led to self-rejection of other aspects of their identity.

The voices of teachers carry with them powerful messages informed by the various discursive communities in which they have participated. Bingham (2000) wrote,

> Before [a student] has had the opportunity to define for himself who he will be in this public space of the classroom, he has already become subordinated to a set of institutional regulations that, laterally, set the parameters for who he can be in the classroom (p. 119).

This suggests that as evidenced in Helen's classroom by the powerful discourse of the adolescent, student voice may be limited to the degree that opportunities for student self-definition are limited. The voices of students are less likely to receive meaningful consideration if their complex identities are not recognized. The ways in which identities are constructed, affirmed, rejected or denied then, have significant implications for voice.

CHAPTER 7

VOICE REVISITED

Introduction

This study examined the ways in which students were encouraged or

discouraged from participating in the classroom. Drawing largely on literature

from critical theory, feminist theory, cultural psychology, cognitive psychology,

and postmodernism, the ways in which voice was tied to knowledge construction,

identity, and agency was explored. An examination of sociocultural discourses

that framed the teaching and learning dynamics at Community Middle School

provided a context for understanding voice as Helen and her students

experienced it.

In re-examining the original research questions it is clear that teacher and

student voice are inextricably linked. The teachers' voice powerfully impacted

opportunities for students to express their beliefs, knowledge, and opinions. The

teacher's voice served to silence the students particularly during learning

activities that involved the entire class in teacher-led discussions. Most students

did experience a sense of authentic voice when working in small groups with

their peers. Their knoweldge was limited, however, by the overall pedagogical

choices Helen made. When students had concerns about school issues broader

than the classroom level, students did not experience a sense that their voices

were heard. In most cases they did not articulate their concerns to their teachers,

as they were confident the teachers would not hear them. An exception was that

many girls did feel heard when boys were harassing them and they shared this

experience with teachers. This was not a universal experience; however, as illustrated by the power of a few boys' voices in one of the homeroom groups.

A number of students articulated the belief that teachers were more responsive to the voices of high achieving students, "smart" students as they called them. While some of the high achieving students did not appreciate the attention their status brought, students felt that teachers cared more about these students and thus attended more to them. Analysis of the quantitative data suggests that an additional difference in teacher responsiveness to student voice was related to classroom groups or homerooms. This finding and others which address the original research questions are discussed in further detail in Appendix B. Additional factors that led to differences in students' expression of voice or differences in students' perception of teacher voice are less clear and warrant further study.

The complexity of the notion of voice in a classroom context became increasingly clear during the course of this study. The complex and fundamental ways in which voice is intricately tied to knowledge construction, identity, and agency was an unexpected but central finding. In this concluding chapter, salient features of the ways these issues are interwoven are detailed. The factors that led the teacher, who spoke of the importance of student voice, to implement practices that silence students are discussed below. The impact of these practices on student voice, knowledge construction, agency and identity are highlighted as well. Following this discussion are implications suggested by the findings of this study as well as areas suggested for further exploration.

The Power of Context and Discourses on Experiences of Voice

Any understanding of the educational experiences of students and teachers is more meaningful and valid when examined in its social, historical, and cultural context. Particularly relevant to this study, were contextual factors including the institutional structure of the school district, the dominance of standardized testing as a measure of student success, and differences in cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds of teacher and students. The power of language and the images it creates were also significant in that the discursive systems that informed Helen's worldview and became the lens through which she viewed the students. The language that was imbedded in these discourses created the images and constructs of herself and others. The socio-historical cultural context in combination with the culturally constructed images of students, teachers, and the roles each was expected to play created pressures, defined limitations, and created possibilities.

During the first meeting with Helen, she spoke of the importance of considering the voices of students, teachers, and parents in the educational process. Her own tenure as a teacher nearly ended when she could not find a place for her own voice in the school system. While by her own reporting, she has found a school in which she feels she has a voice, at least among the teachers and administrators, she found herself wondering where the place was for her voice in the classroom. Despite setting herself up as the central authority in her classroom, the sense of powerlessness she felt in the classroom led her to question her competence. When students talked among themselves and did not

attend to her, she was frustrated and questioned where the place for her voice was. When students did not respond to her directed questioning in reading or social studies, she felt powerless. Yet she did not see that the ways in which she set herself up as the ultimate authority whose truths were not to be questioned, both silenced the voices of the students and left her feeling voiceless as well. She mistook the talking that the students did among themselves for voice in the sense of "authentic participation" (Anderson, 1998).

As Helen integrated and aligned the beliefs, assumptions, and worldviews associated with the various discursive systems of which she was a part, into her identity as a teacher, she made pedagogical choices that impacted the students. As she tried to make sense of her experiences in the classroom and school district and integrate her knowledge gained through life experiences and her graduate studies, she embraced contradictory practices, which created tensions. She was largely unaware of the contradictory practices and the ways in which they impacted her as well as the students' sense of voice, knowledge, agency, and identity.

While she spoke of the importance of student voice, she was impacted by the ways in which her own voice was not honored. At the actual building level, she felt heard by the principal and building administration, however, many of the mandates that she found so frustrating emanated at the district office level. She felt little sense of agency in being able to make a difference or be heard at that level. If her voice is not heard and she feels powerless to impact the practices that are mandated at the district level, it makes sense that she would find it

difficult to hear and honor the voices of the students and their parents. If her voice was not heard as legitimate it might be hard for her to consider the voices of others as legitimate either.

In addition, schools can be powerful socializing forces. She found many of the practices, particularly those she saw as emanating from educational reforms that were to result in higher levels of achievement on the standardized tests, as contrary to her educational philosophy. Yet the use of standardized tests was embedded in a discourse that was strongly accepted at the district level. In some ways, as she resisted the focus on accountability and testing as contrary to being concerned for the whole child, she more broadly resisted the skills-based approach embedded in it. In this particular context, rejecting any pedagogical choice linked to the district testing, disadvantaged the students. Skill-based instruction was one such choice. In dismissing this approach, as advocated for use in the after school program, for example, she missed the opportunity to provide skill-based instruction within the context of meaningful lessons. In so doing, she missed an opportunity for students to know the codes and access the tools necessary for learning, particularly in a culture that places emphasis on performance on high stakes testing. As some of the tools and codes were directly tied to achievement in a broader sense, this opportunity was lost as well. At the same time, she accepted the curriculum of control that suggested students needed to be tightly controlled to save them from their own impulses. The focus on success as a test score and the need to restrict self-expression shaped the role of the teacher, the role of the student, the nature of the school, and the ways

in which both Helen and her students constructed their personal and collective identities.

Added to this, is the discourse of the minority urban child as "lacking." Helen saw them as poor not only socio-economically, but also in terms of being uninformed of how to make it in American society. While there is little doubt that many of these students do not come to school with the social capital in the form of cultural tools and codes that many White, middle class children do, and that the playing field is not equal, the deficit view of them, informs Helen's gaze as she interacts with them and engages in pedagogical decision making.

If Helen, and teachers more generally, view students as inferior by nature of their minority, urban status, then given the power of discourses to inform behavior, educators are likely to speak to them and interact with them as less than adequate. If urban students are defined as problematic due to their status, then that is how they will be approached (Johnston, et al., 2001; Becker, 1998). The power of these beliefs can be life changing as "...children are acquiring not simply facts and strategies but also routines of behavior and patterns of values, beliefs, roles, identities and ways of knowing. In other words, discursive environments have powerful effects on children's epistemologies, over time changing the course of their development" (Johnston et al., 2001, p. 231). Suggested here is the power of constructs such as the urban adolescent to impact students' identities and belief systems. Ideologies also impact the students' views of their sense of agency and voice.

As both the medium and outcome of lived experience, ideology

functions not only to limit human action but also to enable it. That

is, ideology both promotes human agency and at the same time

exercises forces over individuals and groups through the 'weight' it

assumes in dominant discourses, selected forms of social-historical

knowledge, specific social relations and concrete material

practices. Ideology is something we all participate in, and yet rarely

understand either the historical constraints that produce and limit

the nature of that participation, or what the possibilities are for

going beyond existing parameters of action in order to think and act

in terms that speak to a qualitatively better existence" (Giroux,

1997, p. 76).

This perspective has important implications for the lives of students and

teachers. It recognizes the power of language as embedded in ideology to shape

people's lives that are limiting but at the same time suggests its transformative

potential. It suggests the need to deconstruct the meanings associated with

seemingly neutral terms such as "accountability" and the "urban" child. (Giroux,

1997; Popkewitz, 2001) and then examine the ways in which these constructs

have informed past practices and could inform new ones. As has been seen

through looking at the sources informing Helen's ideology, these exist at various

levels of consciousness, have their foundations in various discursive systems,

and thus may be contradictory. A lack of critical, self-conscious examination of

these discourses and ideologies has significant implications for teachers and students.

For Helen, as for all teachers, not to understand the power of ideologies and to be self-consciously aware of those that have been part of their own acculturation process over time, and inform interactions and decisions in the school and classroom situation, is to negatively impact their ability to be effective. For Helen this resulted in a repeated questioning of her competence and a diminished pedagogical experience for the students. As students interacted with the curriculum that did not consider the context of their lives, and led to fragmented understandings, many continued to see themselves reflected as failures. Her voice had a powerful effect on her students' voices and identities. She did not fully realize the impact of her voice. Giroux (1997) spoke to the power of teacher voice in this way,

> Teacher voice moves within a contradiction that points to its
>
> pedagogical significance for marginalizing as well as empowering
>
> students. On the one hand, teacher voice represents a basis in
>
> authority than can provide knowledge and forms of self-
>
> understanding allowing students to develop the power of critical
>
> consciousness. At the same time regardless of how politically or
>
> ideologically correct a teacher may be, his or her 'voice' can be
>
> destructive for students if it is imposed on them or if it is used to
>
> silence them (p. 142).

In order for teachers to be able to develop the power of critical self-consciousness with students, they themselves need to possess or develop a level of self-understanding.

The Power of Pedagogical Choice to Impact Knowledge, Agency, Identity, and Voice

Helen's pedagogical decisions were informed by the ways she aligned the various ideologies of the discursive systems of which she was a part. She juxtaposed the language and meanings inherent in these in ways that were sometimes contradictory and that resulted in some of the tensions described in previous chapters. Consistent with the view of the urban adolescent as deficient, her pedagogical choices placed her at the center, as the source of knowledge in whole class lesson. She, as the authority, was responsible for transmitting truths about history and life. As such, she privileged correct answers and following procedures over recognition of knowledge as complex, relative, and sometimes controversial.

Consistent with the student-centered approach to learning, as embedded in her graduate school discourse, she incorporated projects and small-group learning. While all students interviewed indicated that they enjoyed these, the knowledge gained tended to be minimal, comprised of fragmented concepts, and lacking in meaningfulness and relevance. Her role during small-group activities was generally that of "task master." It was as if she had transmitted all the important knowledge to them and the students were to apply it in whatever way made sense to them as they worked in small groups answering questions or completing "hands-on" projects. However, in not considering the worldviews of

her students, their prior knowledge and mental constructs, and in viewing learning as a process of transmission, the outcomes were diminished. While the hands-on projects provided an opportunity for students to interact more directly with the content by discussing and producing products together, the lack of teacher mediation was a lost opportunity. It could be that one way Helen negotiated the tensions between her role as authority and source of knowledge, and her awareness that learner- centered approaches were emphasized in her teacher education program, was to provide time for these and use the evidence of the products that were completed as student learning. In this way it was not necessary to more directly navigate this contradiction, particularly given the significant frustration she experienced as she did try to impart knowledge to the students. It also may be, that given the tensions between the two approaches, she was unsure of how to go about actualizing a more engaged presence during the group work.

These approaches to teaching were problematic in terms of the impact they had on the students' knowledge construction, identity, and agency. The students were placed in a passive role when Helen was directly engaged in teaching. The fact that they described learning as a process of "teachers putting things in our heads" makes sense based on their experiences. However, learning is not just about facts but also about ways of being and identity. Through their school experiences students were developing identities of themselves as learners. The ways in which knowledge that was considered important and

legitimate was that of the teacher, their agency as learners, as knowers, as active constructors of meaning was diminished.

If one accepts the premise of Vygotsky (1978) and Neo-Vygotskian theorists (Moll, 1990; Wertsch; Gallimore and Tharp; 1990) that "out loud or silently, voice animates thinking, produces thought, and enables the thinker to stabilize and expand her thought" (Tarule, 1996, p. 279), then the significance of believing one has something worthwhile to say takes on increased importance. If students accept the belief that passivity and being a good student are inseparable and if they accept the authority of the teacher as being in possession of knowledge, they will diminish the value of their voice and their thinking. In addition to taking on the beliefs and assumptions communicated by their teachers, many are willing to accept the identification of the good student even though their school identity is kept separate from their sense of self in the world outside of school. In not seeing who they are as compatible with being a good student, their overall sense of who they are is diminished and segmented.

Viewing themselves as lacking authority either due to not seeing themselves as having anything worthwhile to say or viewing themselves as necessarily passive, they are most similar in their approach to Clinchy's (1996) formulation of received knowers, who

> believe that knowledge is 'out there' and that someone in authority
> will be able to give them the knowledge they need. Knowledge
> exists as facts and clear transmission of these facts....is the central
> part of learning....Their own experiences and feelings are not part

of real knoweldge and are kept separate from their literate learning. This perspective has an implicit hierarchical framework of authority and control (Johnston, et al., 2001, p. 225).

This passive approach to knowing embedded as it was for some students in the received identity of a good student, or coming from a place of lack of understanding, see themselves as dependent on others to let them know what they need to know (McNeil, 1986). Unless they are able to see themselves as having a sense of agency or authority, they are unlikely to be actively engaged learners. Gonzalez (1998) proposed that this agency would take the form of seeing themselves as "authors of their own lives, protagonists of stories of the past and also the present" (p. 59). Gee (1996), too, saw the power of this view. He suggested that if students identified themselves as authors, they can "...develop expertise that would motivate them to practice it" (p. 86). This would only be possible if they could see themselves as knowers who have an identity consistent with one "who can ask questions and contribute new answers" (McNeil, 1986).

This is not to suggest that students did not benefit in any way from being in Helen's class. They appreciated the fact that she made their classroom experiences fun, they enjoyed her sense of humor and the fact that she was willing to be "real" with them. Some students who were more consistent with her view of the "good" student, particularly found the opportunity to read books they enjoyed. Some pursued their readings about Hitler and the Holocaust outside of school. Many spoke of the fact that they had never heard about Hitler, and while

they did not have a complex understanding of what happened or an understanding of its significance or understanding of issues today, they did have an understanding that what happened was important to know about and reinforced the idea that stereotyping can have serious consequences. They also appreciated the fact that she was able to orchestrate field trips.

What they did not experience to any great extent was an encounter with knowledge that engaged them in a way that allows for an appreciation of its complexity or to see themselves through history as persons from cultures who played an active role in the making of history. They did not experience the cognitive benefits of engaging in "...a dialogical sharing of perspective [and through] this process slowly come to see their own points of view as one of many socio-historically constructed ways of perceiving" (Kincheloe, 1998). While they did hear the voice of their teacher, and several speakers who spoke to them about the Holocaust, they had limited opportunity to engage in this dialogue and to come to a deeper understanding of themselves.

Implications

While this study took place largely within one classroom, in one middle school in an urban city, the findings suggest several implications that may have relevance to other schools as well. This is said with the recognition of the importance of context and the problematic practice of making decisions and implementing changes without consideration of the context in which they are applied. These should be considered with that caution in mind. Many of these implications relate to individual teachers seeking to continue their professional

growth. Others relate to the role of teacher education programs, but are also relevant to schools whose mission includes the ongoing professional development of teachers. While each of these implications focus on a different component of the educational community, all involve teachers. Lastly, implications for the strengthening of a democratic society are discussed.

Implications for teachers

This study suggests that it is especially important that teachers develop awareness of the various discursive communities including those at the larger societal level that inform their thinking. Critical reflection on their interactions with their students and the ways in which acceptance of the ideologies derived from these discourses they accept serve to limit or expand possibilities for students becomes an essential next step. With a deeper understanding of the influences of these various ideologies they will be better equipped to navigate them in ways that create conditions for empowerment of students.

This study also suggests the importance of recognizing the complex identities of their students. Included here is getting to know students: what's important to them, what they value. It involves a looking beyond their superficial identities. Just as adults are multidimensional, so too, adolescents will exhibit seemingly contradictory behaviors as various aspects of their identities come into play. As indicated by the data in this study, lack of participation may have multiple beginnings. This points to the importance of reflecting on the lack of responsiveness to the curriculum. In addition, if teachers examine the discourses that inform their views of teacher authority and power, a deeper

understanding of the subtle and not so subtle manifestations in the classroom, some of which create conditions for empowerment and others of which support disempowerment, is possible.

Finally, the process of reflection described above is of little value—unless accompanied by a reworking of curricular and pedagogical practices in order for the educational process to be carried out with consideration of and concern for the identities of those who partake in it. This is particularly true as "teachers with different epistemologies will respond differently to children, organize instruction differently, and represent children's development differently" (Johnston, et al., p. 223). For there to be a shift in pedagogical practices, a corresponding shift in the teacher's view of the learner and of authority is required. If the teacher possesses an epistemological view of knowledge as belonging to the teacher, the authority, possibilities for truly actively engaged learners is diminished. If authority lies solely with the teacher, it is unlikely that students will view themselves as constructed knowers who

> ...view knowledge as constructed by individuals in interaction through language...Thus, discussion is valued as a tool for learning, and knowledge is more properly thought of in the active sense of knowing. Knowledge, in this view is not separate from life experiences and feelings, and certainly the most interesting knowledge is rarely simply right or wrong. Constructed knowers expect complexity and ambiguity and can find it most engaging. The implicit authority relationship is necessarily more distributed

and less hierarchical than the framework underlying received

knowledge (Johnston, et al., p. 225).

It is in classrooms in which teachers' epistemological views are in keeping with

learners as constructed knowers that students experience classrooms as sites

where knoweldge is constructed with the "...pedagogical emphasis on creating

conditions in which particular types of dialogues can occur" (Tarule, 1996, p.

291).

This shift in the view of authority and subsequent pedagogical practices

does not suggest that the teacher abandons authority, but rather that authority is

shared. It is most similar to Darder's (1997) notion of "emancipatory authority."

"Authority is not abandoned but 'silenced' to allow for absorbing the authority of

another or while constructing a new group authority....The role of authority and

expert is lodged in the conversation as is the construction of knowledge" (Tarule,

1996, p. 298).

Implications for teacher candidates, teachers, and teacher educators

Given the role of ideology and the various levels both conscious and

unconscious at which it operates, incorporating opportunities for teacher

candidates and teachers to come to understand the way these operate within the

larger society and themselves personally seems important. It would also seem

important, particularly based on Helen's experience of the disjuncture between

the ideology and discourses she experienced in her teacher education program

and the school district in which she works, that teacher candidates and teachers

are provided opportunities to navigate these various, sometimes contradictory discourses in ways that leave them with a sense of their own agency intact.

A concern has been raised in the literature that teacher candidates often discard practices advocated in teacher education programs when they are not found to work in the classroom. Given the difference between the worlds of higher education and the institutional structures of the K-12 school system, and with the recognition that teacher candidates enter certification programs and schools with a set of core beliefs deeply embedded in their identity, teacher candidates need opportunities to examine their core beliefs, come to a deeper understanding of these beliefs, and develop "functional pedagogies that are both theoretically sound and consistent with who they are as people" (Muchmore, 2001, p. 2). Teachers would likely feel more competent and students would benefit from these critically considered pedagogical choices. At the same time, teacher candidates and teachers would have opportunities to shed those beliefs that may no longer fit their worldview and adopt others.

In addition, this study suggest the importance of providing teacher candidates and teachers with opportunities to further examine the ways in which children and adolescents are portrayed in society and schools and the ways these views are socially constructed with implications that are either potentially empowering or disabling for students. If teachers value the knowledge, culture, and experiences students bring to the classroom and at the same time develop the strategies to support their academic growth, schools are likely to be more caring places for students and more satisfying places for teachers. Teacher

candidates need opportunities to critically examine their pedagogical choices and the ways in which these choices speak to the identities and learning needs of their students. Included here are strategies that support the learning of students whose first languages are not "standard" English as is used in schools, so these students can "navigate the contours" of the "uneven playing fields" (Hynds, 1997) that our schools represent, in meaningful contexts.

In addition, this study would suggest that teacher candidates and teachers would benefit from examining issues of authority and power, their sources and manifestations, and the implications of the ways in which they are used. Schools by nature of their structure and function in society are places in which power and authority are manifest. Clark (2001) in a study of teachers who had been in the field for ten to fifteen years, found that each came to a turning point, at which time, they "possessed or claimed their authority." Helen spoke of the need to "take responsibility for the authority in her classroom." Both expressions suggest that the power associated with various types of authority is worth exploring.

Implications for teachers, university faculty, and school leaders

Finally, whether it is through partnerships with schools and universities or through structures implemented within schools in the K-12 system, it seems that teachers entering the system and those who are relatively young in their careers, would benefit from being able to talk through the tensions they experience. Lewin (2001) in a longitudinal study of the development of pedagogical understandings in teachers found that "pedagogical understandings continued to develop through

resolving cognitive dissonance or conflict on an inner level through reflection and metacognition and on a social level through dialogue with a supportive person."

The diminished sense of agency these teachers experience and the sense of isolation should they want to make changes, limits the possibilities for the sustenance of such efforts. If the voices of students are to be seen as worthwhile and legitimate, and if they are to develop a sense of themselves as individuals capable of making a difference in their lives and the lives of others, teachers need opportunities to develop a critical consciousness, and experience their own voices as worthwhile, legitimate, and capable of informing change. While recognizing that the voices of teachers, as well as those of students are expressions of their personal and collective identities and, as such, are complex and at times contradictory, not to provide opportunities through dialogue that might lead to social action, is to limit the possibilities for both students and teachers to flourish.

Implications for the strengthening of a democratic society

Finally, this study suggests implications for a democratic society. Student voice, a coherent sense of identity and the ability to see themselves as active participants in their own lives at school, builds skills and dispositions necessary for active participation in a democratic society. Goodman (1992) elaborates on this connection. "Critical democracy needs individuals who are able and willing to honestly express what they believe, but it also needs people who listen carefully and critically to what others say" (p. 156). Johnston, et al. (2001) differentiate

between mere acquisition of academic skills and those necessary for participation in a democratic society.

> It is possible, for example for students to develop a sense of competence in reading or writing without developing a sense of agency or authority. Without a sense of agency and authority, and a history of expected engagement in public discourse, researchers might wonder about the significance of schooled literacy for subsequent participation in democratic self-government (Johnston, et al., 2001, p. 231).

It seems that if students who gain this sense of agency and engagement and hear the voices of others, be they guest speakers, teachers, or peers, consider these views of others as well as their own to examine how they impact their world, their view and understanding of themselves, and possibilities that exist rather than being passive, listening without questioning or asking why. If students are provided with opportunities to participate in dialogical sharing of perspectives, the possibility exists for them to see their perspectives as one among many socially constructed perspectives (Kincheloe, 1998).

Recommendations for Further Study

This study raises questions that suggest the need for further exploration. One concerns the internal and/or external factors that cause different students to either accept, reject, resist, or negotiate the messages conveyed by the content of the curriculum or through interactions with teachers. These may be related to traits or factors such as motivation, attributions of success or failure, self-

concept, self-efficacy, resilience, beliefs of other significant people in their lives, or prior experiences in school. These and other factors may be woven into the relationships among voice, identity, agency and knowledge construction.

Additionally, while each student who was interviewed indicated a desire to be successful, their beliefs that they could actually do so varied. An area for further study may be the experiences of these students as they encounter high schools. While some students were to attend smaller charter schools or religiously run schools, most were planning to attend large urban high schools. Although students indicated that teachers cared more about students who are smart, most students spoke of the fact that their teachers cared about them. This seemed important. When they get to high school, they will not be with a small team of teachers who work closely together as they did at Community Middle School. This change in structure combined with the resulting changes in relationships with teachers may further impact their motivation, self-efficacy, sense of voice, identity and knowledge construction. Furthermore, studies at the middle or secondary level might explicate the types of experiences and meanings that come together at the point that students change their self-definition from good student to bad.

Finally, questions related to teacher professional growth are suggested by this study. While it is clear that discursive communities to which teachers belong impact their interactions and teaching in the classroom, it is less clear what factors, skills, and resources would support teachers in more critically examining their curricular and pedagogical choices that impact on student voice, identity

knowledge construction, and achievement. In addition, further study would add clarity to understanding what it would take for teachers to be able to hear student concerns, and help them to understand and talk about their experiences even when they are critical of schools or society.

At a broader level, this study suggests the need to look at schools as socializing agents and consider the purposes of such socialization. Each decision made about the curriculum, student and teacher relations, the role of the teacher and student or teaching method is political and informs the way youth are socialized (Counts, 1932; Shor, 1992). The larger question is in what way can schools serve a transformative role in the process of socialization and which public discourses might gain in recognition to support such a process. The recognition of the importance of context, both in and out of the classroom, at the school and broader society level has been illustrated. Socio-cultural, historical and economic based discourses and the beliefs emanating from them impact the experiences of both students and teachers in classrooms. Included are misrecognitive discourses, those that lead to experiences in which a person's experiences or identity is diminished, not acknowledged or ill-treated (Bingham, 2001). As was illustrated in this study, such misrecognition was present in the public sphere of the classroom. At times students were able to articulate these misrepresentations, these affronts to their identities, occasionally within the context of the classroom, and at other times in interviews. Bingham (2001) addressed this issue:

Misrecognition is not a personal issue. Especially within schools that tend to reproduce the hierarchies of the larger society, it is most likely that personal affronts to dignity have larger social meanings. If this is so, and if there is agreement that misrecognition needs to be combated, then there is an obligation of educators and students to look into the links between *personal* misrecognition and *systematic* misrecognition in order to combat the latter as well as the former. I see the school not only as a place where this semantic bridge can be established but also as a place where students and teachers can learn to get into the habit of doing so. The school is not only a place where personal and social misrecognition can be combated, it is also a place where students and teachers can learn how to combat misrecognition outside of the classroom doors (p. 50).

This linking of the misrepresentation in school to that of the larger society speaks to the overriding importance of honoring student voice. It suggests the need for teachers and other school personnel to assume responsibility for establishing conditions in schools and classrooms that open doors for students to develop a coherent sense of themselves as empowered active participants.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored the dynamics that impact students' opportunities to share knowledge and express beliefs, values, and opinions in the context of an eighth grade urban classroom. Both teachers and students brought

beliefs regarding schooling and its purposes, the role of the teacher and learner, and legitimate sources of knowledge to the classroom setting. These various beliefs were shaped in part by the sociohistorical and cultural context and the discursive communities in which teachers and students variously were members.

The teacher's voice created dynamics that contributed to the possibilities for enhancement or diminishment of opportunities for student voice. The ways in which students were encouraged or discouraged in their efforts to participate impacted their construction of knowledge and their identities. The way in which the teacher defined care and responsibility and actualized practices based on these beliefs also impacted the ways in which students identified themselves as learners.

This study pointed to the multiple and complex factors that impacted students and teachers as they encountered knoweldge in the classroom. It further suggested that the identities of both teachers and students are complex and at time contradictory. Students and teacher at various times and in various ways accepted, resisted, rejected or negotiated the messages received from each other and the broader groups of which they were a part.

This study offers hope and promise as it conceptualizes a view of voice that recognizes teachers and students as active, capable agents in their construction of knowledge and themselves, with possibilities for authentic participation of both in the classroom. It provides a reconceptualization of care and responsibility to support such a view and an understanding of the ways discourses and ideologies frame possibilities. It suggests that conscious and

critical understanding of the power of language in these discourses to define will

open possibilities for pedagogical practices that enhance opportunities for

student voice.

APPENDIX A

What is Happening in this Class?

| Student Questionnaire |

Directions for Students

These questionnaires contain statements about practices which could take place in this class. You will be asked how often each practice takes place.

There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. Your opinion is what is wanted. Think about how well each statement describes what this class is like for you.

Draw a circle around

1.	if the practice takes place	**Almost Never**
2.	if the practice takes place	**Seldom**
3.	if the practice takes place	**Sometimes**
4.	if the practice takes place	**Often**
5.	if the practice takes place	**Almost Always**

Be sure to give an answer for all questions. If you change your mind about an answer, just cross it out and circle another.

Some statements in this questionnaire are fairly similar to other statements. Don't worry about this. Simply give your opinion about all statements.

Practice Example

Suppose you were given the statement "I choose my partners for group discussion." You would need to decide whether you choose your partners 'Almost always', 'Often', 'Sometimes', 'Seldom' or 'Almost never'. If you selected 'Often' then you would circle the number 2 on your questionnaire.

Your Name: _____

Homeroom Teacher: ___Helen ___Dee ___Katie ___Linda ___Rebecca

Gender: ___Female ___Male

Language(s) you speak: ___English ___Spanish ___Other: _____

Ethnicity/Cultural Background (check all that apply)
___Cuban ___Mexican ___Puerto Rican ___Dominican Republican
___White ___African-American ___Native American ___Guatemalan
___Colombian ___Honduran ___Ecuadorian ___Other: _____

What is Happening in this Class?
Student Questionnaire

SC	Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
1. I make friendships among students in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I know other students in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am friendly to members of this class.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Members of the class are my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I work well with other class members.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I help other class members who are having trouble with their work.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Students in this class like me.	1	2	3	4	5
8. In this class, I get help from other students.	1	2	3	4	5

TS	Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
9. The teacher takes a personal interest in me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The teacher goes out of his/her way to help me.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The teacher considers my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The teacher helps me when I have trouble with the work.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The teacher talks with me.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The teacher is interested in my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The teacher moves about the class to talk with me.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The teacher's questions help me to understand.	1	2	3	4	5

IN	Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
17. I discuss ideas in class.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I give my opinions during class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
19. The teacher asks me questions.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My ideas and suggestions are used during classroom discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I ask the teacher questions.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I explain my ideas to other students.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Students discuss with me how to go about solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I am asked to explain how I solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5

IV	Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
25. I carry out investigations to test my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I am asked to think about the evidence for statements.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I carry out investigations to answer questions coming from discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I explain the meaning of statements, diagrams and graphs.	1	2	3	4	5

		Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
29.	I carry out investigations to answer questions which puzzle me.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I carry out investigations to answer the teacher's questions.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	I find out answers to questions by doing investigations.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	I solve problems by using information obtained from my own investigations.	1	2	3	4	5

TO		Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
33.	Getting a certain amount of work done is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I do as much as I set out to do.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	I know the goals for this class.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	I am ready to start this class on time.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	I know what I am trying to accomplish in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	I pay attention during this class.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	I try to understand the work in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	I know how much work I have to do.	1	2	3	4	5

CO		Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
41.	I cooperate with other students when doing assignment work.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I share my books and resources with other students when doing assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	When I work in groups in this class, there is teamwork.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I work with other students on projects in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	I learn from other students in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I work with other students in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	I cooperate with other students on class activities.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	Students work with me to achieve class goals.	1	2	3	4	5

E		Almost Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Almost Always
49.	The teacher gives as much attention to my questions as to other students' questions.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	I get the same amount of help from the teacher as do other students.	1	2	3	4	5
51.	I have the same amount of say in this class as other students.	1	2	3	4	5
52.	I am treated the same as other students in this class.	1	2	3	4	5
53.	I receive the same encouragement from the teacher as other students do.	1	2	3	4	5
54.	I get the same opportunity to contribute to class discussions as other students.	1	2	3	4	5
55.	My work receives as much praise as other students' work.	1	2	3	4	5
56.	I get the same opportunity to answer questions as other students.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

STUDENT AND TEACHER VOICE COMMINGLED: ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

<u>Introduction</u>

This study of student and teacher voice was designed to make use of data collection and data analysis methodology with roots in both qualitative and quantitative traditions. This approach was felt to strengthen findings by providing for triangulation of data. Previous chapters have examined findings from student interviews, teacher interviews, and field observations. The findings discussed in this appendix lend support to a number of significant findings generated based on findings from qualitative data analysis.

The following hypotheses are explored through analysis of the quantitative data:

To varying degrees, students see themselves as having a voice.

Students differ in their expression of voice.

Teachers differ in responsiveness to student voice in different contexts.

Factors such as ability, gender, ethnicity, and race lead to differences in students' experience of their own voice and their perceptions of teacher voice.

Students' perceptions of the teacher's voice impacts students experiences of their own voices.

<u>The "What is Happening in this Classroom" Questionnaire</u>

The "What is Happening in this Classroom" Questionnaire was developed in 1996 by Barry Fraser and his colleagues. This particular learning environment

questionnaire differed from the many others developed in the last twenty years in two ways that were particularly important to the decision to use this instrument. Unlike many other instruments, WIHIC consists an option for use of the Personal Form or the Class Form. The Personal Form focuses on students' perceptions of their role in the classroom environment. This focus seemed consistent with the goals of a research study that focused on student voice. In addition this particular instrument was designed to incorporate elements of a classroom environment consistent with a student centered or constructivist classroom. Most prior learning environment questionnaires focused on items most compatible with a traditional teacher centered classroom. Thus it supported more current views of education. Helen viewed her classroom practices as being compatible with a constructivist or student centered view of learning.

The "What is Happening in this Class?" questionnaire is comprised of seven scales with eight items in each, for a total of 56 items. The response scale is comprised of a five point Likert scale. The Personal Form was chosen as it was consistent with an emphasis on student responses to their classroom experiences and because its use is particularly recommended when seeking the perceptions of subgroups of students or case studies (Chionh & Fraser, 1998; McRobbie, Fisher, & Wong, 1998). Use of the Personal Form of learning environment scales "...open the way for the utilization of qualitative and quantitative data together to paint a more compelling picture of the learning environments of individuals and small groups of students (McRobbie et al., 1998, p. 593). This possibility supported the decision to use the WIHIC personal form.

The wording of items on the scale for investigations did not match academic expectations for social studies. Due to the concern that student responses to this scale might not accurately reflect their experiences of this class, scores from this scale were not used in any of the statistical analyses.

This instrument has been used in a multi-method cross-national study in Australia and Taiwan in science classrooms. It has been used in Singapore in mathematics and geography classes. These studies have supported the factoral validity, internal consistency reliability, ability to differentiate between classes and predictive validity associated with cognitive and attitudinal outcomes. In addition, its "robustness and wide applicability" is supported as it has been used in three countries, in classrooms involved in the study of three disciplines, and in two languages (Chionh & Fraser, 1998, p. 9).

Sample

This study of voice in the classroom involved a teacher and students from four homerooms. Given the interest in examining voice as experienced by a group of students in a given teacher's class, the sample chosen, by necessity consisted of the four classes of students with whom the teacher interacted in the classroom. There were 115 students in this team. Of these 115 students, 53 participated in the study by participating in interviews and/or completing the "What Is Happening in this Class" Questionnaire. 59 students on the team were female and 56 were male. 29 females participated in the study and 21 males participated. In other words, 51% of the team was female and 57% of those who participated were female. In terms of gender, this sample can be considered

representative of the population of the team. Since all students who gave their assent to participate were either interviewed or given the questionnaire, all 51 students were involved in at least one aspect of the study.

<u>Measures</u>

Student voice, the dependent variable, as defined in Chapter One, refers to opportunities to share knowledge and express beliefs, values, and options. More specifically it refers to students' experiences of talking or writing with confidence or authority that elicit a response indicating meaningful consideration. The "What is Happening in this Classroom" Questionnaire addresses three dimensions of participation on three different scales: Task Orientation, Involvement, and Cooperation. Involvement refers to the "extent to which students have attentive interest, participate in discussions, do additional work, and enjoy the class". Task Orientation refers to the "extent to which it is important to complete activities planned and to stay on the subject matter". Cooperation refers to the "extent to which students cooperate rather than compete with one another on learning tasks" (Chionh and Fraser, 1998, p.3).

An additional dependent variable defined in the WIHIC instrument is Student Cohesiveness. It refers to the "extent to which students know, help, and are supportive of one another".(Chionh and Fraser, 1998, p.3). It is explored as it relates to caring, a theme explored in analyzing the qualitative data and is seen as potentially related to teacher voice.

Independent variables that are thought to impact student voice, include homeroom membership, reading ability, and student perceptions of teacher

voice. Reading ability is defined by the score on the reading comprehension subtest on the ITBS administered in March 2000.

Teacher voice as operationally defined for purposes of quantitative data analysis is measured by students' perceptions of teacher voice as measured on the Teacher Support and the Equity scales of the WIHIC. These dimensions correspond to two themes that evolved in analysis of the qualitative data. As discussed in previous chapters, caring equally for all students was seen as important. Teacher Support refers to the "extent to which the teacher helps, befriends, trusts and is interested in students. Equity refers to the "extent to which students are treated equally by the teacher" (Chionh and Fraser, p.3).

<u>Results</u>

Alpha scores were derived from students completing the questionnaire in this study. Reliability coefficients for each scale ranged from .78 to .90 with the Task Orientation scale receiving the lowest alpha and the Equity scale receiving the highest.

STUDENT COHESIVENESS SCALE
R E L I A B I L I T Y   A N A L Y S I S   -   S C A L E   (A L P H A)

N of Cases =   46.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
Scale	30.6304	31.9271	5.6504	8

Item Means Variance	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
	3.8288	3.4565	4.3261	.8696	1.2516
.1054					

Reliability Coefficients   8 items

Alpha =   .8372   Standardized item alpha =   .8433

TEACHER SUPPORT SCALE
R E L I A B I L I T Y   A N A L Y S I S   -   S C A L E   (A L P H A)

N of Cases =   45.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
Scale	27.9556	45.6798	6.7587	8

Item Means Variance	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
	3.4944	2.6889	4.3778	1.6889	1.6281
.2216					

Reliability Coefficients   8 items

Alpha =   .8892   Standardized item alpha =   .8901

INVOLVEMENT SCALE
R E L I A B I L I T Y   A N A L Y S I S   -   S C A L E   (A L P H A)

N of Cases =   47.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
Scale	24.0638	36.9306	6.0771	8

Item Means Variance	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
	3.0080	2.4894	3.4894	1.0000	1.4017
.1142					

Reliability Coefficients   8 items

Alpha =   .8177   Standardized item alpha =   .8187

TASK ORIENTATION SCALE
R E L I A B I L I T Y   A N A L Y S I S   -   S C A L E   (A L P H A)

N of Cases =   46.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
Scale	32.8478	21.9097	4.6808	8

Item Means Variance	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
	4.1060	3.8043	4.3696	.5652	1.1486

.0341
Reliability Coefficients   8 items

Alpha =   .7767   Standardized item alpha =   .7866

COOPERATION SCALE
R E L I A B I L I T Y   A N A L Y S I S   -   S C A L E   (A L P H A)

N of Cases =   46.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
Scale	31.1087	27.5213	5.2461	8

Item Means Variance	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
	3.8886	3.5217	4.1957	.6739	1.1914

.0716
Reliability Coefficients   8 items

Alpha =   .8463   Standardized item alpha =   .8474

EQUITY SCALE
R E L I A B I L I T Y   A N A L Y S I S   -   S C A L E   (A L P H A)

N of Cases =   46.0

Statistics for	Mean	Variance	Std Dev	N of Variables
Scale	32.1739	51.0357	7.1439	8

Item Means Variance	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Max/Min
	4.0217	3.7391	4.3478	.6087	1.1628

.0406
Reliability Coefficients   8 items

Alpha =   .9016   Standardized item alpha =   .9060

Do to the strong alpha scores that indicated internal consistency in student responses to items within each scale, the mean for each student's responses to each scale was derived. These mean responses were then used for further analysis to determine further associations.

<u>Manifestations of student voice.</u>

In examining different manifestations of student voice as measured by scores on the Involvement, Task Orientation, and Cooperation Scales, analyses were computed to determine if differences were found with regard to gender, ethnicity, ability, and race. Ethnicity was eliminated as a viable variable for purposes of quantitative data analysis as seven students indicated membership in more than one ethnic group. In addition, there were 13 categories for ethnicity with less than three students in a number of categories. While representative of the team, only two students who identified as African-American completed the questionnaire. Again the number of students in this category was too small to compute meaningful analyses.

In comparing the means of scores on the three scales that were to measure aspects of student voice, there were no significant differences found based on gender. The same was true when comparing means of the three scales and three levels of reading ability (above, at, or below grade level as measured by the ITBS reading comprehension. A significant difference was found on the Cooperation Scale with differences between homeroom groups with $F(3,40)=3.6$, $p<.02$.

Group Statistics

	Homeroom	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Cooperation	Helen	15	4.0067	.5035	.1300
	Linda	9	3.4222	.6534	.2178

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances assumed	.621	.439	2.464	22	.022	.5844	.2372	9.244E-02	1.0764
	Equal variances not assumed			2.304	13.721	.037	.5844	.2537	3.937E-02	1.1295

Group Statistics

	Homeroom	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Cooperation	Dee	9	4.3333	.4743	.1581
	Linda	9	3.4222	.6534	.2178

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
COOP	Equal variances assumed	1.153	.299	3.385	16	.004	.9111	.2691	.3406	1.4817
	Equal variances not assumed			3.385	14.599	.004	.9111	.2691	.3361	1.4862

Group Statistics

	Homeroom	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TEACHER SUPPORT	Helen	13	3.7154	.4997	.1386
	Linda	9	3.2667	.8860	.2953
EQUITY	Helen	15	4.2200	.7153	.1847
	Linda	8	3.4500	.7783	.2752

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
TSUPP	Equal variances assumed	2.559	.125	1.519	20	.144	.4487	.2953	-.1673	1.0648
	Equal variances not assumed			1.375	11.539	.195	.4487	.3262	-.2653	1.1627
EQUITY	Equal variances assumed	.534	.473	2.387	21	.026	.7700	.3226	9.907E-02	1.4409
EQUITY	Equal variances assumed	.534	.473	2.387	21	.026	.7700	.3226	9.907E-02	1.4409
	Equal variances not assumed			2.323	13.372	.037	.7700	.3314	5.606E-02	1.4839
	Equal variances not assumed			2.323	13.372	.037	.7700	.3314	5.606E-02	1.4839

Group Statistics

	Homeroom	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TEACHER SUPPORT	Dee	9	3.8000	.5454	.1818
	Linda	9	3.2667	.8860	.2953
EQUITY	Dee	9	4.4444	.4447	.1482
	Linda	8	3.4500	.7783	.2752

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
TEACHER SUPPORT	Equal variances assumed	1.540	.233	1.538	16	.144	.5333	.3468	-.2019	1.2685
	Equal variances not assumed			1.538	13.302	.148	.5333	.3468	-.2142	1.2808
	Equal variances not assumed			1.538	13.302	.148	.5333	.3468	-.2142	1.2808
EQUITY	Equal variances assumed	5.145	.039	3.285	15	.005	.9944	.3027	.3492	1.6397
	Equal			3.182	10.853	.009	.9944	.3126	.3054	1.6835

To further explore the between group differences Independent Samples t tests were computed. A significant difference was found between students in Helen's homeroom and those in Linda's with $t(22)=2.5$, $p<.02$. A similar difference was found between students' level of cooperation in Dee's homeroom and Linda's with $t(16)=3.4$,$p<.004$. In both Helen and Dee's homeroom, students indicated a higher level of participation as measured by the Cooperation Scale than in Linda's room.

Manifestations of teacher voice.

Students perceptions of teacher support and equity, two dimensions of teacher voice were examined to determine whether these varied by homeroom, gender, or ability. A One Way Anova was computed which indicated that the differences between homerooms were greater than the within homeroom scores. In further analyzing these scores using Independent t tests, a significant difference was found between Linda's homeroom and Dee's on the Teacher Equity Scale with $t(15)=3.2$, $p<.009$. Students in Linda's homeroom perceived Helen to treat them with a lower degree of equity than those in Dee's homeroom. A similar difference was found when comparing perceptions of students in Helen's homeroom with those in Harris' homeroom on the Equity Scale with $t(21)=2.4$, $p<.03$.

In summary student's in Linda's room indicated that their own voices as measured by the Cooperation Scale and Helen's voice as measured by the Teacher Equity scale were lower than students in both Dee's and Helen's homeroom. This data suggests an association between manifestations of teacher

voice and student voice. Based on this finding further statistical analyses were computed to determine if a relationship existed between the measures of student perceptions of their own voices and that of their teachers.

Interactions between manifestations of teacher and student voice.

Results indicate that there is an association between Teacher Support and Student Cohesiveness Scales with $r(41)=.46$, $p<.002$. A similar association was found between Teacher Support and Cooperation Scales with $r(41)=.59$, $p,>001$. The two measures of teacher voice, Teacher Support and Equity indicate a positive association as well with $r(40)=.66$, $p<.001$. In other words those students who viewed their own use of voice in a stronger way as measured by the cooperation dimension of participation also saw the teacher as treating them in a supportive and equitable manner.

The Teacher Equity Scale was significantly associated with each of the other scales. A moderate positive correlation exists between Equity and Involvement Scales with $r(42)=.40$, $p<.008$. A similar correlation was found between Equity and Task Orientation with $r(41)=.39$, $p<.01$. A stronger relationship exists between Equity and Teacher Support with $r(40)=.66$, $p<.001$ and Cooperation with $r(42)=.71$, $p<.001$. Both Equity and Cooperation were positively correlated with each of the other scales to a statistically significant degree.

Correlations

		STCOH	TSUPP	INVOL	TASKOR	COOP	EQUITY
STCOH	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.464	.262	.165	.608	.410
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.086	.289	.000	.006
	N	45	43	44	43	44	43
TSUPP	Pearson Correlation	.464	1.000	.264	.214	.585	.660
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.087	.174	.000	.000
	N	43	43	43	42	43	42
INVOL	Pearson Correlation	.262	.264	1.000	.267	.451	.396
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.086	.087		.080	.002	.008
	N	44	43	45	44	45	44
TASKOR	Pearson Correlation	.165	.214	.267	1.000	.512	.387
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.289	.174	.080		.000	.010
	N	43	42	44	44	44	43
COOP	Pearson Correlation	.608	.585	.451	.512	1.000	.710
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.002	.000		.000
	N	44	43	45	44	45	44
EQUITY	Pearson Correlation	.410	.660	.396	.387	.710	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.000	.008	.010	.000	
	N	43	42	44	43	44	44
	N	43	42	44	43	44	44

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The findings generated through analysis of the quantiative data lend

further support to several key elements of student and teacher voice discussed

previously in this study. Based on students' indication that teachers cared more

about the "smart" students, it was expected that differences would be evident

when analyzing the quantitative data. It is possible however that operationally

defining reading ability as measured on the ITBS was invalid. Using student

grades as a measure of achievement may have been a more valid approach as

teachers often view students' achievement and effort based more strongly on grades than scores on standardized tests.

Statistically significant differences, however, were found to exist based on homeroom composition. The fact that differences were found between students' experience of voice and their teacher's expression of voice in Linda's room was predictable given the students' responses to interview questions. It was in this homeroom that a number of students spoke of the powerful voices of a few boys in the class who teased or demeaned them. It was also in this class that some students discussed the fact that while their teacher was the team leader, Helen and the other two teachers on the team made decisions and implemented curricular and classroom management decisions without their homeroom teacher. Helen had spoken of this teacher during interviews. She perceived Linda as ineffectual as a team leader and too easy on the students in terms of disciplinary matters.

More generally findings suggest that there is a relationship between students' participation as measured by involvement, task orientation and cooperation, and their perception of teacher support and equity. These findings support previously discussed conclusions that speak of the extent to which teacher and student voice are "intricately" interwoven.

When operationally defining several scales in the WIHIC questionnaire as manifestations of student and teacher voice, findings support those generated by the qualitative data analysis. Given the small numbers in the sample, it is recommended that a more exhaustive study with larger numbers and more

complex and robust statistical analyses be conducted to see if the findings bear out. This study does support Chionh and Fraser's (1998) contention that the use of qualitative and quantitative data together paint a more compelling picture of the classroom environment.

APPENDIX C

PERMISO DE PADRES

Soy una estudiante de la Universidad de DePaul. Estoy haciendo una investigación para completar mi doctorado. Este estudio esta aprobado por la Junta de Evaluación Institucional de la Universidad de DePaul.

Estoy interesada en como identificar como los maestros y escuelas pueden asistir a los estudiantes en el 8vo grado a mejorar en las escuelas estoy especialmente interesada en las formas que los estudiantes comparten ideas y opiniones con sus maestros y compañeros. Yo creo que entendiendo las experiencias de los estudiantes ayudara a los maestros y administración proveer mejores oportunidades a los estudiantes en las escuelas. Quizas este estudio no beneficie a su hijo/a directamente pero beneficiara a los estudiantes futuros de la Escuela [   ] y de otras escuelas.

Yo estaré trabajando en la Escuela [   ] con la [   ]. En adicional de pasar tiempo en el salón, me gustaria hablar con los estudiantes en su equipo sobre sus experiencias en la escuela. Le estaré preguntando a los estudiantes que completen un cuestionario y entrevistare a otros, tambien revisare la puntacion en el examen de "IOWA".

Se le entregará el cuestionario a su hijo/a en la clase de estudio sociales y se tomará 20 minutos. Las entrevistas se llevaran acabo en la escuela durante el horario de clases o despues de las clases como sea mas conveniente para su hijo/a. Las entrevista seran entre abril y junio de este año. Yo tendre una grabadora para ayudarme a recordar lo que su hijo/a tengan que decir. Y yo no tocaré esta grabación para ningún otro individuo. No usare los nombres de los estudiantes en mi reporte. Nadie mas que yo sabré lo que su hijo/a dira en la entrevista almenos que su hijo/a reporte abuso. Si su hijo/a reporta abuso, yo reportaré esa información al Departamento de Servicios de Niños y Familias. Algunas de las preguntas que yo estare preguntandole a su hijo/a se encuentran en la siguiente pagiña.

No hay ningún riesgo que su hijo/a participe en este estudio. Si su hijo/a se siente incómodo con algunas de las preguntas el/ella no tendrá que contestarlas. En cualquier momento su hijo/a tiene el derecho de no participar mas en este estudio/entrevista.

Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio o la participación de su hijo/a, favor de llamar a la [   ] al [   ] o [   ], a mi al [   ]. Yo puedo tener a una persona que hable español para que le conteste todas las preguntas.

Colleen Reardon

_____ Yo le doy permiso a _____ para que sea entrevistado. Yo entiendo que el nombre de mi hijo/a no se usará en este reporte.

_____ No le doy permiso a _____ que participe en la entrevista.

_____   _____
Firma del Padre/Tutor   **Fecha**

PREGUNTAS DE LA ENTREVISTA INICIAL

Junto al permiso de padres
Disponible en Espanol e Ingles

Las siguientes preguntas son ejemplos de algunas de las preguntas que le pueda hacer a su hijo/a durante las entrevistas:

- Cuanto tiempo haz asistido a la Escuela Intermedia [   ]?

- Como es ser un estudiante de la Escuela Intermedia [   ]?

- Participas en discusiones en el salon de estudios sociales con la clase?   Porque o porque no?

- Como responden los estudiantes hacia tus ideas?

- Como responde el maesto a tus ideas?

- Como te afecta si el maesto o los estudiantes noestan de acuerdo con tus ideas?

- Compartes mas ideas que tus companeros o menos ideas que ellos?

- Te piden tu opinion los maestros de lo que pasa en la escuela? Da ejemplos.

- Tienes opiniones que deseas compartir sobre tu escuela pero nunca las ha compartido? Da ejemplos de tus ideas. Porque no las compartes? Que seria necesario para tu compartir tus ideas?

PARENT PERMISSION

I am a student at DePaul University. I am doing a research study to complete my doctoral degree. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of DePaul University.

I am interesting in identifying how teachers and schools can best assist students in eighth grade to do well in school. I am especially interested in the ways in which students share their ideas and opinions with their teacher and each other. I feel that understanding the students' experiences will help teachers and administrators provide even better opportunities for students in school. So. While this study may not benefit your child directly it will benefit future students at [   ] and other schools.

I will be working with [   ] at [   ] School. In addition to spending time in the classroom, I would like to talk with the students on her team about their school experiences. I will be asking students to complete a questionnaire and interview some students. I will be reviewing their scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

The questionnaire will be given in your child's social studies class and take about 20 minutes. The interviews will take place at school during the school day or after school, if that is convenient for your child. The interviews will take place between April and June of this year. I will have a tape recorder on for the interviews to assist me in remembering what your child has to say. I will not play these tapes for other individuals.

I will not use students' names in my report. No one other than myself, will know what your child says in the interview unless your child reports abuse. If your child reports abuse, I will report this information to the Department of Children and Family Services. Some of the questions that I will be asking your child are listed on the next page.

There are no known risks to your child in participating in this study. If your child is uncomfortable with any interview question, he/she does not need to answer it. Your child may ask at any time to no longer be part of this study. There will be no negative consequences if your child makes this decision. Your child will not be paid money for their participation.

If you have questions about this study or your child's participation, please call [homeroom teacher] at [   ] or call me at [   ]. I can arrange to have someone who speaks Spanish present to answer questions if that is helpful.

Colleen Reardon

_____ I give permission for _____to be interviewed. This study has been satisfactorily explained to me. I understand that my child's name will not be used in the report. I understand that I may request to speak to a member of the DePaul University Institutional Review Board by calling (773) 325-7388, if I have any questions about my child's rights as a participant in this research. I understand that I am free to withdraw this consent at any time, even after signing this form. I have been given a copy of the consent.

_____I do not give permission for _____ to be interviewed.

_____   _____
Parent or guardian signature   *Date*

APPENDIX D

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

I am a student at DePaul University. I am doing a research study to complete my doctoral degree. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of DePaul University.

I am interesting in identifying how teachers and schools can best assist students in eighth grade to do well in school. I am especially interested in the ways in which students share their ideas and opinions with their teacher and each other. I feel that understanding the students' experiences will help teachers and administrators provide even better opportunities for students in school.

I will be working with [   ] at [   ] School. In addition to spending time in the classroom, I would like to talk with you as students on her team about your school experiences. I will be asking you to complete a questionnaire and participate in interviews.

The questionnaire will be given in your social studies class and take about 20 minutes. The interviews will take place at school during the school day or after school, if that is convenient for you. The interviews will take place between April and June of this year. I will have a tape recorder on for the interviews to assist me in remembering what you have to say. I will be the only person listening to these tapes. I will not use your names in my report. No one other than myself will know what you say in the interview unless you report that you are being abused. If you report abuse, I will report this information to the Department of Children

and Family Services. Some of the questions that I will be asking you are listed on the next page.

There are no known risks to you in participating in this study. If you are uncomfortable with any interview question, you will not need to answer it. You may ask at any time to no longer be part of this study. There will be no negative consequences if you make this decision. You will not be paid money for your participation.

If you have questions about this study or your participation, please call me at [   ]. I can also talk with you in person at school.

Colleen Reardon

This research study has been explained to me. I understand I can withdraw my consent at any time and discontinue participation in the study. I have received a copy of the student assent form.

_____ I agree to participate in this study by completing the questionnaire and taking part in interviews. I understand that my name will not be used.

_____ I do not agree to participate in this study.

Student's signature	*Date*

APPENDIX E

INITIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

TO BE ATTACHED TO PARENT CONSENT AND STUDENT ASSENT FORMS

AVAILABLE IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH

The following questions are samples of some of the questions that might be asked during interviews.

- How long have you attended [   ] School?

- What is it like to be a student at [   ] School?

- When you are in social studies class, do you participate in class discussions? Why or why not?

- How do the students respond to your ideas?

- How does the teacher respond to your ideas?

- How does it affect you if the teacher or other students disagree with your ideas?

- Do you share ideas more often or less often than most students?

- Do teachers at school ask your opinion about what happens at school? Give some examples.

- Do you have opinions you would like to share about school but have not? What are some of these? Why do you not share them? What would be necessary for you to be willing to share them?

APPENDIX F

TEACHER RELEASE FORM

The study I am interested in undertaking in your classroom seeks to examine the ways in which students voice their opinions, perspectives, and beliefs. Student participation will be explored in a classroom setting as students engage with you, their peers, and the curriculum. Particular emphasis will be placed on the opportunities they have to express beliefs, values, and opinions in both oral and written discourse and the ways that they do this both formally and informally. Your responses to these expressions of voice will also be explored.

More specifically this study will address the following questions:

Do students see themselves as having a voice?

How do students view their use of voice?

In what ways are you responsive to the voices of youth?

What factors lead to differences in students' expression of voice?

In what manners, situations, and context do students have an opportunity to express themselves?

Do you differ in your responsiveness in different situations?

How do gender, race, ethnicity, class, and ability intersect with and
I   impact voice?

What is your role when some student voices silence others?

I understand the nature of this study. I know you will be interviewing students and asking them to complete a questionnaire. I am willing to participate in this study.

_____   _____
Teacher's signature   *Date*

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