ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF BEGINNING
TEACHERS DEFINING THEIR PEDAGOGICAL WAY
OF BEING

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This hermeneutic phenomenological study explores the lived experience of

beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. Many beginning teachers

have found frustration and disillusionment during their first year in the classroom,

leading to high levels of attrition. Those beginning teachers who remain in the classroom

may develop a way of being that opposes how they are as an individual and that pulls

them further from the students in their care. How do the individuals who experience this

phenomenon make meaning of that experience? What insights about the preparation and

support of beginning teachers can be drawn from these experiences?

This research is conducted in the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology,

grounded in the work of philosophers such as Heidegger (1962), Gadamer (2006/1975),

and Merleau-Ponty (1962). Drawing from these philosophers, van Manen (1997)

provides a detailed process used to conduct this form of research. This methodology

serves to uncover the essences of this phenomenon, eliciting lived experience through

hermeneutic conversation.

To uncover the nature of the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their

pedagogical way of being, six participants were recruited from urban, suburban, and rural

secondary public schools in a south central county in Pennsylvania. The

phenomenological text from this study not only reiterates the often noted "challenges"

inherent in the first year experience, but also identifies a language of beginning. I seek to

understand this language by connecting it to the three Buddhist ways of being, which

guides my questioning of the "basics" of the beginning teaching experience, offering a

new way of being in the flowing language of becoming.

The experiences shared by the participants in this study uncovered many insights

that may assist those charged with the care of beginning teachers during the periods of

pre-service "formation" and in-service "orientation." I suggest the importance of

"reflective conversations" to elicit the language of beginning, facilitated by a caring

mentor. As the languages of "blockheadedness" and "splitheadedness" emerge, varying

supports may be implemented to permit reflection and growth.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF BEGINNING TEACHERS DEFINING THEIR
PEDAGOGICAL WAY OF BEING

By

Nathan Frank

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DEDICATION

To my selfless wife, Emily, the first Dr. in our family. You inspire me each day to be a
better husband, father, educator, and person.

To my children, Joshua, Grace, and Madelyn, blessings from above who have brought a
meaning and purpose to my life. You are with me each moment as I seek to care more
thoughtfully for the children of the others in my community.

To my parents, Paul and Ruth. For 37 years you have ministered to my growth as a
person and taught me the transformative power of education and public service.

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CHAPTER 1: TURNING TO THE PHENOMENON

A Teacher Emerges

Here they come.
And I'm not ready.
How can I be?
I'm a new teacher and learning on the job.
(McCourt, 2005, p. 11)

The Educator in Society

Frank McCourt, who captured the hearts of millions when his bestselling memoir,

Angela's Ashes was published in 1996, wonderfully captures the complexities of the

teaching profession. From his childhood in Ireland to his time as a teacher in America,

Frank was a dreamer. Teachers, by nature, are dreamers. Frank reached his dream as a

published author at the age of sixty-six, which led many journalists to ask the question,

"So, what took you so long?" His response brought a smile to every educator's face: "I

was teaching, that's what took me so long" (McCourt, 2005, p. 3).

I have spent fourteen years in public secondary education, as a teacher,

curriculum leader, instructional coach, and assistant principal. I have never considered

leaving education, but have often wondered what life would be like in another job;

teaching is arduous work. Nothing defines the complexities of the teaching experience

better than one's first year on the job. The numbers are widely publicized in the media:

14% of beginning teachers leave the profession after their first year of teaching; 33%

leave after their third year of teaching, and an astounding 46% leave after only five years

in the classroom (Ingersoll, 2003).

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda

(2008) identified the following drawbacks of teaching in a survey to explore reasons

beginning teachers leave the profession after so short a tenure. The following were the

most prevalent responses: the recent emphasis on testing, the increase in unmotivated and misbehaving students, the low salary, prestige, and lack of opportunities for growth in teaching, the lack of support from administration, and even threats to personal safety experienced by teachers. It would be hard to argue that the majority of Americans do not realize the difficulties of teaching, considering the sheer number of teachers who represent 4% of the entire civilian workforce (Ingersoll, 2003); yet, the profession still suffers from drawbacks like pay and prestige that should be easily remedied by a society that respects and values the educators of their greatest asset, children. Sadly, teachers do not always feel this admiration from society, as best expressed by Frank McCourt, angry at hearing the words "All that time off!" repeatedly from others to describe the teaching profession. McCourt laments the fact that "Teachers are dismissible! They're almost second rate citizens. The attitude is that if you're a teacher, you've somehow failed at something else" (Flannery, 2006, p. 38).

Although I tried not to focus on pay and societal recognition during my time in the classroom, I was always cognizant of this contradiction in education. On the one hand, teachers are overjoyed at the difference they are making in the lives of children, while on the other, they may question their self-worth and feel compelled to justify themselves for teaching. Taylor Mali's now famous poem, "What Teachers Make," uncovers this dilemma so profoundly. Mali's poem tells of an overconfident CEO at a restaurant table who says, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?" The CEO then bluntly asks a teacher sitting at his table, "Be honest. What do you make?" After the offended teacher describes the small miracles she makes happen on a daily basis in the classroom, she exclaims, "You

want to know what I make? I make a difference. And you? What do you make" (Mali, 1999)? What makes the small miracles teachers perform with children so rewarding? Why do teachers feel the need to justify their profession to others? How do these contradictions define the way beginning teachers develop in the classroom?

The Dream Profession

I touch the future. I teach. (Christa McAuliffe)

Christa McAuliffe is a famous American teacher. Like McCourt, she did not achieve her national fame in the classroom; she had a dream to go into space, and she lost her life achieving that dream as a member of NASA's 1986 Challenger flight. I will never forget witnessing her demise as a fourth grader sitting teary-eyed in the school auditorium; my body went lame with sadness. McAuliffe's tragic death immortalized her as a national hero. She taught in secondary public schools for fifteen years (Nasa.gov). Did she realize the impact she made in the lives of young people during that tenure? I ponder the impact I have made during my own fourteen year career in the secondary school system. Maybe it is best that I do not know. Would McAuliffe have risked her life going into space to inspire millions if she knew she had reached every child she taught in fifteen years? Would McCourt (2005) have written *Teacher Man* to inspire educators worldwide if he did not believe that teachers have been given a "short shrift" (p. 4)?

Mali's poem and McAuliffe's quote have become cliché hanging in school faculty rooms. Quotes and stories like these inspire teachers and remind them of the power of their work. So, from where do the contradictions mentioned above come? As with most conversations on bias and stereotype, the media must be mentioned as a possible source. A quote by H.L. Mencken, a newspaperman from Baltimore, MD, illustrates this negative

media created image: "The average schoolmaster is and always must be essentially an ass, for how can one imagine an intelligent man engaging in so puerile an avocation?" (as cited in Davidoff, 1952, p. 391). Puerile, defined by Webster's as "juvenile, childish, silly," shows that Mencken believes anyone who teaches is someone who refuses to grow up and get a real job (Webster's, 2009). Maybe Mencken is onto something here. Teachers, like McAuliffe and McCourt are dreamers, who dedicated their lives to cultivating the dreams of others. One certainly must have the heart of a child to be able to plant and nourish such seemingly impossible seeds. Is there a child-like nature that prospective teachers possess that calls them to the classroom? Are beginning teachers driven by the desire to cultivate the dreams of the children they serve, longing to make a difference in the lives of others?

Bernard Shaw's quote, "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches" (as cited in Davidoff, 1952, p. 392) highlights the perception about teaching that has most troubled me in my time in education. When I say that I am an educator, the first response is often, "I thought about being a teacher for a while, but I couldn't do what you do." This answer makes it seem like the respondents with whom I speak have all considered teaching and decided not to do it. In other words, everyone *can* teach, but not everyone *wants* to teach. Does everyone think they could be a teacher because they spent at least twelve years sitting in classrooms observing teachers?

Henry Brooks Adams once said, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops" (as cited in Wolf, 1998, p. 32). The reverse of Adams' quote is also true; a teacher can never tell where his influence starts. This again highlights the contradiction in education beginning teachers must face when entering the profession.

Many teachers define themselves based on the minor miracles they work on a daily basis, but they often question themselves or defend the teaching profession because it is so difficult to know a teacher's impact. To me, it is vital to acknowledge these contradictions about teachers in order to contemplate the formation of a beginning teacher's pedagogical way of being and further examine how that "becoming" is cultivated during the first year of teaching.

Like Frank McCourt and Christa McAuliffe, Stephen King entered the classroom with his own dreams; however, Frank and Christa only left the classroom after retirement and death, whereas King and his publicists make it widely known in four out of the eight sentences included in his Press Biography that the publication of his novel *Carrie* provided "him the means to leave teaching and write full-time" (StephenKing.com). It can only be assumed that King and his publicists used this Press Biography to illustrate King's rags to riches story, presumably to humanize the multi-million-dollar earning writer. Is the rag of teaching compared to the riches of writing simply based on prestige and pay? This theme is mirrored in the highest position in the land, as John Adams, Andrew Jackson, Millard Fillmore, James Garfield, Grover Cleveland, William McKinley, and Lyndon Johnson all taught in the local K-12 school system before moving on to bigger and better things (2000, Cooper, p. 1 and 2). What effect does this perception of teaching as a springboard have on the beginning teachers who enter our schools so enthusiastically each year? What impact does society have on the beginning teachers as they define their pedagogical way of being in the classroom?

A Time of Great Change

> Some of the most intense change, challenge, and growth in my life. You couldn't pay me to go back and relive that first year. (Kelly, first year teacher, in Roehris et al., 2002, p. 160)

As an educator who has spent fourteen years in secondary schools, I know from experience, from observation, and from conversation that the period of growth that the beginning teacher encounters during his or her first year can be the most challenging, physically and mentally, time in the person's life. The new teacher often encounters difficulties while trying to define his or her pedagogical way of being with students, and as Gretchen, a new teacher who spoke to me about the struggles and triumphs of her first year of teaching confirms, it hurts to struggle in the classroom. Gretchen powerfully describes the physical and mental pain that teaching can inflict as she remembered the "tightness" she felt in her chest for the first time in her life during a rough pedagogical period. She compares the torment an educator faces to shortness of breath, as she was constantly thinking of ways to reach her students. Finally, she exclaimed at the end of the year, "I can breathe again!" Many secondary teachers are called to teaching to impart knowledge to students and make a difference in their lives. When they discover that they are unable to engage a classroom of students for an entire period, or that the time it takes to reach students effectively is overwhelming, disillusion sets in as teachers begin to question the calling that brought them to the classroom.

The first year of teaching can be very demanding, often involving long days of teaching and relationship building, joined with even longer nights of assessing and lesson planning. As an added complexity, beginning teachers often find themselves pressured, internally or externally, to get involved with extracurricular activities outside of the

regular school day. Tony Danza, who became a first year teacher at a Philadelphia high school during the 2009-2010 school year, captured these pressures best in an episode of the A&E television program following his first year experience. In one week Tony found himself teaching his regular English classes, coaching football, assisting with the band, organizing the school's performance groups for a party with the mayor, and finally performing at an Atlantic City hotel. The episode ended with Tony regrettably telling the football coach that he needed to step away from coaching in order to focus on the arduous work of teaching. The coach completely understood, agreeing that the first year is very difficult, wishing Tony the best of luck with his teaching. As Tony Danza discovered in his made-for-TV experience, beginning teachers need to know themselves well enough to make the choices about the teacher they want to become. Palmer (1998) names this period of empowerment as developing "the authority to teach" (p. 32). How can schools empower new teachers entering their own classroom for the first time to seek a fuller understanding of their personhood?

My gaze became fixed on the experience of a beginning teacher when I met Erica during my first day on the job as an instructional coach at the high school. The principal wanted to get me into a classroom on the first day, so she sent me into Erica's freshmen English class, saying only that Erica could use some assistance. I ended up spending a lot of time with Erica during her first year of teaching and my first year as an instructional coach. She cared so much about her students. She was not effective in front of the classroom, but she arranged learning activities and moved from group to group, individual to individual, to conference and teach her students. She thrived in this more individualized instruction; however, due to her inexperience with students, she often lost

the attention of the other five groups when she was so intensely engaged with one group. She would then work to settle the class and return to another group. This cycle repeated itself throughout the school year, with a few minor improvements stemming from our work together.

I immediately noticed a changed Erica the first week of the next school year; she raised her voice at the students and lectured more from the front of the classroom. Rather than conference students at their desks, she now brought them to her desk with the class in plain view. Erica labored to choose her words carefully, and she often threatened punishment to any misbehaving students. I advised her of the dangers of moving so quickly from a student centered style to a teacher centered style, but I was not around enough to support her as I transitioned to an assistant principal during her second year. She left the pedagogical way of being she so naturally found during her first year of teaching for the comfort of a quiet, unengaged classroom. It was easy for me to be critical of her, but I was not available to her for the support she needed; she adjusted for the survival discussed so often in the first year teaching experience.

As an assistant principal, I took over the role of organizer of the building portion of the district's beginning teacher induction program. Before that, I struggled to budget the time necessary to support new teachers like Erica. It was through this work with the next group of beginning teachers that I met John, who was a fifty-two-year old first year teacher, with three degrees, including one from an Ivy League University. An observation of his classroom quickly highlighted his difficulties. He cared too much and was unable to detach himself from the students' antics. When they refused to stop talking, he had no idea what to do. He often lost his composure and quickly gravitated away from the

students to the front of the classroom. Seemingly unsure of himself, he would utter a few unintelligible threats; the students would ignore his warnings, and continue their discussions and horseplay. On more than one occasion, I walked into John's classroom to find him bent at the waist and with his head on his desk. Discussions with John revealed that he was working fourteen hour days to plan perfect lessons, and had tried every classroom management technique discussed in the district's selected beginning teacher textbook, *Tools for Teaching* (Jones, 2007). His heart told him that he was not connecting with his students, and this knowledge pierced his soul and crushed his countenance, but his instinct told him to search for answers in the classroom management manual given to him by the school. Why did he reach for a textbook when he encountered struggles in the classroom? Why does the district choose a text that narrows pedagogy and students to tools and objects?

The Beginning Teacher: A River Forms

> Let us bless the grace of water…
> The courage of a river to continue belief
> In the slow fall of ground,
> Always falling farther
> Toward the unseen ocean.
> The river does what words would love,
> Keeping its appearance
> By insisting on disappearance;
> Its only life surrendered
> To the event of pilgrimage,
> Carrying the origin to the end,
> Seldom pushing or straining,
> Keeping itself to itself
> Everywhere all along its flow,
> All at one with its sinuous mind,
> An utter rhythm, never awkward,
> It continues to swirl
> Through all unlikeness,
> With elegance: A ceaseless traverse of presence
> Soothing on each side

The stilled fields,
Sounding out its journey,
Raising up a buried music
Where the silence of time
Becomes almost audible….
Let us bless the humility of water,
Always willing to take the shape
Of whatever otherness holds it,
The buoyancy of water stronger than the deadening,
Downward drag of gravity,
The innocence of water,
Flowing forth, without thought
Of what awaits it,
The refreshment of water,
Dissolving the crystals of thirst.
Water: voice of grief,
Cry of love,
In the flowing tear.
Water: vehicle and idiom
Of all the inner voyaging
That keeps us alive.
Blessed be water,
Our first mother.
(O'Donohue, *In Praise of Water,* 2008, pp. 75-77)

O'Donohue's poem impacted me a great deal as I was ruminating on the lived

experience of a beginning teacher. I began to see Erica and John as new rivers, formed at

the base of a mountain, with a vast journey ahead to reach the unseen ocean. Erica's river

still flows today; however, after five years of teaching, she traverses slowly between

cavernous mountains, affected mightily by the elements that often engulf her. She has

survived, but I do not believe that she has succeeded in finding herself as an educator; her

personhood waits in the distance, promising renewed life. John's river dried up during the

summer after his first year of teaching. The conditions overwhelmed him. He longs to try

again, hoping for the sustaining rain needed to begin anew at another school. Gretchen

feared for her pedagogical demise during her first year of teaching, as chest pains were

like the river fearing the "slow fall of the land it encounters;" however, her courage was

unceasing, as she stayed true to the *pedagogical way of being* she defined during her first year of teaching and now, today, she flows as a "ceaseless traverse of presence," nourishing all around her with her water of life.

In this study, I unpack the naming of *a pedagogical way of being,* as it represents the way that teachers like Erica and John develop during the course of their first year in the classroom. Van Manen (1991) defines "pedagogy" as "a relationship of practical action between an adult and a young person who is on the way to adulthood" (p. 31). This relationship not only impacts the students in the classroom, but it clearly impacts the growth and development of the teacher who stands before them. This way of being a teacher captures not only who teachers are, but also how they are in their presence with children. I begin now by examining the call to a vocation that can be so life giving to everyone around the teacher, yet can be so life altering to the beginning teacher engaged in the journey. What calls an individual to enter this journey?

The Call of the Sea

> If you are here unfaithfully with us, you're causing terrible damage. (Rumi, as cited in Palmer, 2000, p. 31)

As teachers enter teacher preparation from various walks of society, they most likely enter the profession with as many varying views of education as the society around them holds. Most teachers encounter impediments sometime during their first year of teaching, as they alter their pedagogical presence to meet the needs of students. Some metaphorical sea in the distance calls this new pedagogue and guides and motivates him or her during that first year. This study focuses on that individual to understand more fully the experiences that beginning teachers undergo, in order to learn more about the pedagogical practices that sustain them.

There are many reasons that teachers enter the vocation of teaching. Vito Perrone (1991) describes teaching as "a profession of hope" (p. 131). Is this hope inherent in the individuals called to teaching? According to Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, the word "call" is derived from "Middle English, from Old Norse *kalla;* akin to Old English *hildecalla* battle herald" (2009). This definition reminds me of the slogan, "The front line determines the bottom line," which has been repeated ad nauseum in the National Institute of School Leadership training seminars I have been attending. What does the comparison of the school house to a battlefield do to teachers called to love and care for children? In his memoir, *'Tis,* Frank McCourt repeatedly writes of "the old-timers in the teachers' cafeteria [who] say the classroom is a battleground" (1999, p. 253). He contrasts this with the fresh out of college teacher who believes it is her job to care for and nourish children. Perrone (1991) discusses these new teachers, who "enter our schools with considerable idealism. They often see in teaching the fulfillment of a social service commitment" (p. 114). He goes on to caution those in education of the need to "encourage such idealism rather than diminish its value with talk about the 'real world' or claims that 'schools can't be like that…We need to remember that idealism is an important lifeline to a teaching life filled with possibilities" (p. 114).

Lisa Drumheller Sudar wonderfully captures this idealism when she describes her call to teach. After dropping out of her teacher preparation program twenty-three years ago due to a family tragedy, Sudar again finds herself as a graduate student in Washington state preparing to be a teacher. Her reply to the many people questioning her on why she continues on this journey at her age, Sudar responds, "It is a combination of wanting to emulate excellent teachers I had and wanting to help children be the best

people they can be. It is about effecting change in our world in the face of hopelessness"

(in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 14).

Not all teachers enter with this idealism, as individuals choose teaching as a

vocation for many reasons. Kevin Ryan's (1970) classic account of six first year teaching

experiences, aptly entitled *Don't Smile Until Christmas,* illustrates both the realistic and

idealistic reasons that these individuals decided to teach. On the one end, John Canfield

decided not to attend law school, medical school, or pursue his Ph.D. in history after his

undergraduate experience. He then asked himself what was left. "I liked people and I

liked talking…I also liked sports…I liked kids, too" (p. 26). Canfield candidly represents

the teacher who fell back into teaching. On the other hand, Linda Corman describes the

idealism that brings so many into education, as she sought to show her students a better

world, one of "dignity, elegance, and beauty" (p. 113). Despite their differences in

calling, both met similar struggles, as Linda left her first teaching job after only five

months because she did not like the person she had become. John left teaching after his

first year due to administrative reasons. Both learned a great deal about themselves in

their first year of teaching, but sadly, that revelation called them away from teaching.

How can schools create an environment that empowers individuals like John and Linda to

discover their pedagogical way of being and remain in education?

Dwayne Huebner (1987/1999) writes on the importance of focusing on the

individual teacher, creating a "listening/speaking community" (p. 386) where each

teacher's personal story is "talked and listened into being" (p. 386). Huebner captures the

essence of this study, as I seek to understand more fully the lived experience of beginning

teachers as they strive to find their pedagogical way of being. I seek to capture the story

of the beginning teachers, finding themselves so that they can, in turn, help their students to know themselves better. It is only when teaching is viewed as a true vocation that teachers will be empowered to narrate their "own personal journeys," which in turn will help them to "think about the others" (p. 382) with whom they work. Clearly, in the community Huebner envisions, teachers will engage in a great deal of conversation and reflection as they define their pedagogical way of being. Huebner writes:

> Teaching as a vocation is to find one's life and work participating in the formation of another's story, and vice-versa. Bringing journey into story form, however, is possible only when a person is invited to be fully present. Any part of the self that remains hidden or suppressed because of threat, shame, or possible ridicule cannot be incorporated into a person's story line, for it distorts other aspects of the narrative. (p. 382)

Teachers are called to teach for a myriad of reasons; Huebner reminds us that regardless of the calling, individual teachers must be supported as they begin their pedagogical journeys. The whole teacher must be cultivated and nourished as he or she transcends to his or her being. It is the beginning of this journey that I am called to understand more fully, as a researcher and as an educator, as I desire to listen to each individual teacher's story of becoming. Huebner further explains that "To be teachers means re-shaping our values as we ourselves are being re-shaped by the newness of the changing world" (p. 381). How does a beginning teacher re-shape his or her pedagogical way of being throughout the first year of teaching?

Does the beginning teacher really know what it is like to be a teacher until he or she greets his or her students on that first day in the classroom? Or, as Tuan so brilliantly analogizes, does teaching "lack the weight of reality because we only know it from the outside – through the eyes of tourists as from reading it in a guide book" (1977, p. 18). My experience, as well as the research on beginning teachers (Grossman & Thompson,

2004; Kagan, 1992; Meijer, Korthagen & Vasalos, 2008; Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996) suggests that there is a disconnect between the pedagogical way of being formed during pre-service teaching and the pedagogical way of being developed during the beginning year of teaching in the classroom. Why is the reality of teaching so different from the preparation for teaching? Are the "skills" learned in school by professionals in other fields different from those they practice in their respective jobs? I am interested in the pedagogical presence of beginning teachers, and specifically, would like to understand how the experiences encountered during the first year of teaching shape a teacher's pedagogical way of being. Ultimately, I am asking: **What is the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being?**

Lived Experience

> I have not so much learned anything as I have been conditioned by a continuous repetition of experiences. (Cornog, as cited in Ryan, 1970, p. 24)

I seek to understand the experience of beginning teachers more fully so that I may better support them in their pedagogical journeys. Hermeneutic phenomenology provides the methodology to capture the essence of the beginning teacher experience, as conversations open the door to the personhood of the individual teacher. Appropriately, when van Manen (1997) describes lived experience, he uses the new teacher in front of the class for the first time as his analogy. He identifies the phenomenon of being looked at in the front of the room, and the teacher, "Aware of my experience while I am experiencing it" (p. 35). It is this essence that I seek to capture in my conversations with beginning teachers, as they reflect on their experiences while engulfed in the experience of being a beginning teacher. Van Manen continues that the "aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (p. 36). Viewing

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teaching from the outside looking in, like watching a river flow from afar, can appear to be an incomprehensible phenomenon, as its essence appears overwhelming to the senses; however, only by standing beside the river over time, listening and observing its changes, can one hope to fully understand its essence. In this study, I stand with the beginning teacher, fully attentive to the lived experiences that capture the essence of the phenomenon.

The First Year: Water Cutting Through Rock

> It is I who must begin…to live in harmony with the voice of Being, as I understand it within myself – as soon as I begin that, I suddenly discover, to my surprise, that I am neither the only one, nor the first, to have set out upon that road. (Havel, in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 189)

Empowered Educator

A smile erupted on my face as I stared into the eyes of the fifteen beginning secondary teachers in my care as assistant principal at the first after-school teacher induction meeting of the 2010-2011 school year. I could hardly speak as I relished the moment; I knew I was blessed to be facilitating this hour of conversation with so many energetic and passionate educators. I started the meeting by sharing "A Blessing" from John O'Donohue's (1997) book of Celtic wisdom, entitled *Anam Cara*. A calm hush overtook the room as I read the words, "May the sacredness of your work bring healing, light, and renewal to those who work with you and to those who see and receive your work" (pp. 160-161), and most of the beginning teachers broke into stifled laughter as I later recited the words, "May your work never weary you…May the day never burden. May dawn find you awake and alert, approaching your new day with dreams, possibilities, and promises" (pp. 160-161). As we discussed the poem, many of these new teachers shared that they had been staying at work until after six o'clock in the evening,

while others shared that they had been arriving at school before six o'clock in the morning to prepare for the upcoming school day. Several shared that sleep had not been easy, as they often tossed and turned in bed contemplating lesson plans and awoke at all hours of the night worried about students.

Knowing that "A Blessing" would capture some of the struggles beginning teachers face, I wanted also to build on the beauty of teaching, so I arranged for last year's beginning teachers to speak to this year's community in order to show the tremendous joy these educators found during their first year. This enabled the beginning teachers to follow-up with some of the positive experiences they have already had with students in their first twenty or so days of teaching. We ended the meeting reflecting on the difficulties that they may encounter as they seek to understand themselves better during the first year of teaching, navigating the challenges and triumphs in order to create an environment that empowers both themselves and their students to discover themselves on their journey to self-fulfillment. I sent an e-mail to the teachers thanking them for an amazing meeting, telling them that the palpable, positive energy they brought was contagious, as I went home renewed and rejuvenated.

My greatest fear as a supporter of these beginning teachers is that they will become overwhelmed by the difficulties of teaching and lose sight of its beauty and power. Roehris, Pressley, and Talotta (2002) capture this well in their review of beginning teacher literature where they identified more than 500 specific challenges encountered in the first year, which they then organized into twenty-two broader categories. I would love to see a book identify more than 500 specific examples of the beauty in teaching, but clearly, the focus is on the negatives of survival. The editors seem

to revel in the fact that the teachers who return to them after a year of teaching their own class seem to take the content more seriously after the required summer Master's level training. "It takes just a few months of being in charge of a classroom for young people to understand that teaching well requires more than a college education, more than just knowledge of subject matter content" (p. 2). While this accents the benefits of a program like the University of Notre Dame's, which requires course work in the summers and teaching during the school year, it also again focuses on the difficulties of teaching, as these students return in the summer defeated, begging for help.

The power of water is widely known; the Grand Canyon, which was formed by a flowing river, is often described as breathtaking, and I personally was mesmerized by the stalagmites formed by dripping water that I viewed on a tour of an underground cavern. The same refreshing water that can calm a soul in a babbling brook can also cut through a granite surface. The only factor necessary to empower the water to complete its work is time. New teachers can begin as a small creek or as a rushing river, but time can allow them to reach their destination, which I identify as their pedagogical way of being. It would be easy to view the new teacher as controlled by his or her environment, as the river must navigate through rocky surfaces to escape the mountain and drought often threatens to end its life. However, for the title of this study, I chose the action verb "defining" to represent the power of beginning teachers to flow through the impediments they may encounter in order to reach their pedagogical way of being. The beginning teacher is not a helpless object at the whim of the environmental factors that hinder education, but they must know themselves well enough to rise above these hindrances to transcend their being.

The Threatening Educational Environment

> Herein lies the irony of a profound contradiction: the language by way of which teachers are encouraged to interpret themselves and reflect on their living with children is thoroughly imbued by hope, and yet is almost exclusively a language of doing – it lacks being. (van Manen, 1997, p. 122)

One of the major impediments impacting beginning teachers as they begin their pedagogical journeys lies in the current educational environment, infused with the language of measurement and accountability. Every new teacher must deal with an environment that not only stresses the constant measurement of his or her students, but also continuously calls for the strictest measurement of his or her own success with students. This language continually tells teachers what they should do, but it rarely concerns itself with what the teacher might be. In their classic work, Postman and Weingartner (1969) proclaim, "Meaning is not in words. Meaning is in people, and whatever meanings words have are assigned or ascribed to them by people. We have already alluded to this concept, calling it projection" (p. 106). Max van Manen (1997) is very clear about who is projecting these meanings, when he asserts that this language of accountability "is an administrative convenience" (p. 123). The language of hope so often echoed by teachers in the classroom is being drowned out by the language of measurement of politicians and administrators. I believe that it is imperative to examine this language more fully to understand better its impact on beginning teachers.

Today's secondary teachers enter an educational environment that has been dramatically altered by an increasing emphasis on accountability. Vito Perrone (1991), in his book *A Letter to Teachers*, laments the fact that our nation's schools have become "more attentive to technical than moral and intellectual directions" (p. 1). Perrone highlights our recent desire to assess teacher effectiveness through quantitative results

rather than through qualitative observations and discussions. What does it feel like as a professional to be valued and judged solely on the test scores of your students? Does this emphasis on numbers rather than people lead the dreamers of the teaching profession to become disillusioned with their chosen profession? Perrone fears that our "stress on economic competitiveness…takes too much away from the students themselves, the immediacy of their educational interests and needs. In its extreme forms, this position looks beyond the students, right past them, as if they weren't there" (p. 3). Schools should be a place where teachers are free to cultivate the dreams of young people and empower them to reach for the stars. Each beginning teacher at the secondary level must navigate the complexities of caring and assessment to find his or her place of being.

While facing an increasing trend to evaluate teachers based on the test scores of their students, Peggy Ann Howard (2002) brilliantly renders the experience of an observation from one of her administrators when she writes how it made her "feel less human, less worthy," evaluating her performance "in relevance to those silly little boxes" (p. 54). In my current role as an assistant principal, I often have been a part of conversations where my administrative colleagues have shared their desire to have a simple observation check sheet to increase the efficiency of observations. Can a check in a box adequately evaluate the pedagogical presence of a teacher? What does the process of quantifying success do to a beginning teacher's way of being in the classroom?

Marianne Houston places today's educational climate in perspective when she emphatically writes, "I've been teaching for more than four decades, and never have I witnessed such a fascination with measuring and testing a sadly narrow form of intelligence" (in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 126). Whenever she becomes lost in the

disarray of today, Houston turns to Rumi's poem, "Two Kinds of Intelligence" to recommit her to not only developing her students' acquired intelligence, gained by memorizing "facts and concepts from books and from what the teacher says," but also focuses on arousing her students' inner intelligence, fluidly moving "from within…moving out" (p. 127). How can we support beginning teachers to know themselves better in order to respond to the high stakes environment in which they often find themselves?

The state of Pennsylvania, as well as many others, is facing a major budget shortfall in education, especially with regards to paying for the benefits and retirements of educators. This has brought an intense scrutiny of teachers, and the fifteen new teachers I mentioned earlier were welcomed to the area by several newspaper articles that were critical of teachers. First, on September 9, 2010, only a few weeks into the new school year, a local newspaper published an opinion article written by Mary Sanchez (2010), who is a columnist for the *Kansas City Star*. Sanchez praised a decision by the *Los Angeles Times* to "publish the rankings of 6,000 elementary school teachers in the city's unified school system, based on standardized test scores" (p. 1). Sanchez continues that "Sparing teachers from rigorous evaluation of their effectiveness ultimately serves neither the children nor the education profession" (p. 1). Of course, Sanchez stresses a responsible use of this data, but once it is published in the newspaper, for all to see, can it ever be used responsibly? Our society is often quick to paint a broad stroke and make hasty judgments in hopes of a simple solution to a much more complicated problem.

On September 27, 2010, another local paper followed their county competitor's article with their own, blasting local school systems for approving raises for teachers

while so many county citizens are "suffering in this terrible economy" (YDR, p. 1). The editors asked, "Why should public school teachers be among the only ones immune to the economic climate?" as they mockingly posted the salaries of teachers in a local district. "They already were being paid quite well…$79,000 gym, art, music and foreign language teachers? Shop teachers in the mid-$70,000s? Good grief…They've lost a lot of respect in the eyes of our community" (YDR, p. 1A). What effect does public scrutiny like this have on beginning teachers who enter our schools enthusiastic to make a difference in the lives of young people?

The Effective Educator

> The commercial edge of so-called progress has cut away a huge region of human tissue and webbing that held us in communion with one another. We have fallen out of belonging. (O'Donohue, 2008, pp. xiii-xiv)

> One of the complexities inherent in the spaces teachers inhabit is the lack of an

accepted measurement of first year success in the realm of education. As mentioned previously, teaching is so often viewed along the polarities of survival and failure. How should institutions of learning evaluate the success of their educators? ASCD's *Educational Leadership* devoted an entire issue to the ideal of "The Effective Educator." Editor Marge Scherer (2010) identifies the concern with the term "effective" in her introduction to the issue:

> …I have to conclude that most of us know effective teaching when we experience it. Caring, enthusiasm for the subject, getting the best out of students – those are the hallmarks most former students remember. But this intuitive recognition of effective teaching is not enough to inform policymakers, teacher educators, and those who must hire and evaluate teachers. (p. 7)

Stumbo and McWalters' (2010) article, "Measuring Effectiveness: What Will It Take?" continues Editor Scherer's concerns by describing the current political climate in which

schools find themselves. Stumbo and McWalters write that the federal Race to the Top

legislation is sending a clear message to schools: "Federal policy now focuses on teacher

effectiveness rather than teacher quality" (p. 10).

Effective is derived from the Latin *effectus*, means "powerful in effect" and

"making a strong impression" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). This definition

relies completely on measuring the effect or impression of a teacher on the students

receiving the instruction. The often stated maxim, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"

comes to mind, as effect and impression are difficult to assess using a single indicator

like test scores or administrative observations. Michelle, a beginning Science teacher

with whom I engaged in a preliminary conversation, began to feel the harsh sting of

evaluations judging her as ineffective early in her first year. Without any standardized

assessment data in her subject area, she was evaluated solely by administrative

observations. As a beginning teacher, Michelle was formally observed on four occasions.

Are these observations, and the subsequent discussions, enough to define the success or

failure of a beginning teacher? Can an administrative observation adequately capture the

effect or impression of a teacher's instruction on his or her students?

Clearly, today's educational climate, focused on using high-stakes tests to hold

teachers accountable for their effectiveness, conflicts with the pedagogical tact described

by Max van Manen (1991). He writes:

> There are many trends in education in conflict with the deeper interests of
> pedagogical tact: curriculum policy that is predominantly concerned with
> measureable learning outcomes, teachers who feel compelled to teach toward the
> exam, schools whose policies do not help kids experience a sense of community –
> these all tend to lose sight of the fact that all education is ultimately education of
> the whole person. (p. 166)

Teachers must be cognizant of the mission to educate the whole child, but in the same manner, schools must understand the impact of nourishing the whole teacher, ensuring that beginning teachers are able to develop the pedagogical thoughtfulness necessary to educate children by knowing themselves well enough to initiate positive changes in their teaching.

Survival

> Beginning secondary school teachers often face many emotions, including fear, anxiety, frustration, and doubt about their survival. (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2007, p. 70)

As mentioned earlier, almost fifty-percent of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Not every river makes it to the sea. Edward Corley (1998) followed the beginning teaching experience of three high school science teachers to identify five factors that played a role in their success or failure, including "communication, mentoring, classroom savvy, discipline, and expectations of various power blocs" (p. 6). Liz and Rose, two of the participants in his study, "made it" (p. 6) due to their ability to succeed at all or most of the five factors Corley identified. The third participant, Bob, did not survive his first year due to his inability to meet any of the five factors, which led to the district exerting its "formal school power" and ending his "contractual status" (p. 13). Rose, who had a very difficult first year, survived due to her ability to "devote countless hours to get everything done" (p. 14), while Liz's classroom savvy and her year-long team teaching assignment with her mentor led her to survival. Throughout Corley's work, he repeatedly uses the term "survival," which he defines as a renewed contract at the end of the school year. Should that be the goal of every beginning teacher?

Researchers are not the only ones who refer to success in the first year of teaching as survival, as that language has even pervaded into the vernacular of teachers. Kelly, who taught freshman religion at a private Catholic high school, describes her first day and first period of teaching as "paralyzed by fear, daunted by the seemingly simple task of surviving the next forty minutes" (Roehris, et al., 2002, p. 163). When your focus is only on survival, as it clearly was in Kelly's case, students are inevitably going to be referred to as the enemy in the battle for control. Kelly realized this at the end of her year, eloquently stating, "Of course, war in the classroom, like any war, is unwinnable. We all survived, though none of us thrived" (Roehris, et al., 2002, p. 174). I recently looked back at my old e-mails to see if any would shine light into my own language as a beginning teacher and I surprisingly stumbled upon a writing I did for my building principal entitled, "My Hopes for the 2001-2002 School Year." I was shocked to see the first sentence read, "My hopes for my first year of teaching were simple: do the best that you can and survive." I wrote this in the summer preceding my third year of teaching and I still focused on my first year survival. What does the language of survival do to the beginning teacher?

"Survive" etymologically dates to the late 15c., from Anglo-Fr. *survivre*, O.Fr. *souvivre*, from L. *supervivere, meaning* "live beyond, live longer than" (Online Etymology Dictionary). The use of this word in the field of teaching places emphasis on outlasting another teacher, since in order to survive, one must live longer than another. Sadly, this presumes that some teachers who dedicate themselves to the profession will not last through the rigors of the daily grind. The language of survival has become so pervasive that it is used in many book titles available to beginning teachers, including a

book funded by The U.S. Department of Education and included on its website, titled *Survival Guide for New Teachers* (Depaul, 2000). The title of the book illustrates so many of the problems with public education. Why is successful teaching described as a survival? What elements of success take into account the pedagogical way of being of a beginning teacher?

Pedagogy

> Pedagogue: from Latin, *paedagogus,* a slave who escorted children to school and generally supervised them. (Online Etymology Dictionary)

When examining the etymology of the word "Pedagogue," one might be taken aback by my use of the phrase pedagogical way of being. I certainly do not envision a slave forced to supervise a child when contemplating this pedagogical relationship. However, as van Manen (1991) points out, the slave, or pedagogue, was present with the child *in loco parentis*. What a great responsibility, as van Manen writes, to be present with a human child "coming into being, be-coming" (p. 34). Van Manen continues by defining pedagogy as "the excellence of teaching or parenting" (p. 32). It is this second interpretation of the etymology of pedagogy that I accept by choosing to examine more fully the changes made by beginning teachers as they share their lived space and time with students and colleagues; therefore, I use "pedagogical way of being" to represent the phenomenon of the beginning teacher in his or her presence with children.

Too often, beginning teachers struggle mightily to establish a classroom environment conducive to learning. Thomasina LaGuardia, a retired high school English teacher from New York, so wonderfully put into words the challenges facing many beginning teachers as they start their pedagogical journeys in schools:

In my first teaching assignment some of my students were nineteen and twenty

years old, while I was only twenty myself. I was no better at keeping order than most new teachers, severely challenged by the students' well-practiced teasing and clowning, doubtful of my legitimacy as enforcer of rules. Fresh from Sunday's protest march, I felt uncomfortable requiring students to keep still on Monday morning. (in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 132)

Even though I was older than my eighth grade students and I was not active in protests, I related to a great deal of LaGuardia's words as I, too, struggled mightily to engage all of my students during my first year of teaching. I was an English major who believed in creating an open classroom climate that would facilitate discourse and individualized learning. I encountered problems as I tried to establish the procedures to allow students to thrive in an environment like that. Some students misbehaved, and the resulting climate was often chaotic and uncomfortable; I often felt helpless and unable to get the students to listen to me. A veteran science teacher next door to me soon lost her patience with my students. She stormed over on several occasions, screaming at my students for taking advantage of me. In private conversations at the end of the day, she would always say, "You can't be their friend. You have to be tough on them." I kept telling her I did not care if they liked me; I just wanted them to learn from me. I soon got the message from the veterans though, since her advice coincided with my mentor's running joke that I should not smile until Thanksgiving so that students know I mean business. I was on an emotional roller-coaster, where uncertainty and doubt formed the hills and loops.

While reviewing the e-mails from my first year of teaching, I found five messages I sent to a mother of a student with whom I was having trouble. My language makes me shiver today: "I'll be honest, when he is like that, I cannot control him. I was just trying to get through the period…I lose control of his class every day." I even described myself

as a babysitter to this concerned mother. As I tried to get tough and enforce rules, I began to feel more like a slave who supervised student's behavior than the inspiring educator I was hoping to one day become. I became someone I was not, and I was unable to continue the farce. While worrying day and night about controlling my students, I completely lost control of myself. One day, another boy was being very disrespectful to me and the students around him. I finally had enough. I charged his desk, grabbed his books, and threw them out the door and into the hallway, screaming, "Get the hell out of my classroom!" For the first time, he actually listened to me, but I will never forget the frightened look of my students when I returned to the classroom. I had broken right there in front of these innocent children; what had the challenges of teaching done to my pedagogical way of being with students?

Looking back, I now see that it was my own coming into being during that first year of teaching that empowered me to know my students well enough to engage them more effectively during my second year of teaching. My students taught me a great deal that first year, much more than the lessons the two veteran teachers tried to teach me. These lessons shaped my pedagogical way of being during my second year of teaching. It was a perilous journey, but one that nourished the garden of my heart to bloom as it is today. My narrative had a happy ending, as I returned to the classroom my second year of teaching knowing myself well enough to engage my students better. As I reflect back on this experience, I realize that I just needed time to grow and develop; I can imagine that the people who shared the lived space of the schoolhouse with me that first year undoubtedly witnessed a great deal of change in me as an educator.

Van Manen (1991) describes a pedagogical relationship as exhibiting a "thoughtfulness" and "mindfulness" (p. 8) toward children. I clearly lost sight of this, as I lost sight of my students' needs and myopically focused on my own pain and discomfort, eventually leading to my classroom explosion. I witnessed this happen to John as well, as he struggled to establish effective classroom procedures for learning. As a remedy, he turned to the Fred Jones (2007) book, *Tools for Teaching,* for answers on how to engage and motivate disruptive, apathetic students. Jones wrote his book for struggling teachers overwhelmed with the task of "managing a whole classroom full of young people" (p. 1). "Manage," is originally derived from the Latin *manus* meaning "hand," and later from the Italian word *maneggiare*, meaning "to control a horse" (Online Etymology Dictionary). Is classroom management really the best term to use with beginning teachers defining their pedagogical presence in the classroom? Does this definition assume that any adult can just lead students through the rote learning representative of controlling a horse as it completes its paces? Jones perpetuates this perception by offering a technical, teacher proof formula for success, to train anyone interested in teaching to manage a classroom of students. Jones (2007) writes that "Whether or not lessons come alive and students learn depends upon the teacher's skill. Whether or not the students are even on task depends on the teacher's ability to manage the group" (p. 2). Obviously, John with his mathematics background was captured by the scientific language guaranteeing success to anyone who followed the step-by-step procedure as Jones removed the human factor from the equation. What happens to pedagogy when we stop viewing students as humans and begin seeing them as objects to be controlled and subdued?

Jones (2007) continues the "battle" analogy discussed earlier by writing that those who do not make it in teaching are "defeated," accepting the "fact that they cannot win" (p. 11). Teaching cannot be compared to a battle, as the language of survival and defeat devastates the relationships that must be created to allow authentic learning to occur in the classroom. How can we support beginning teachers to overcome the fear and anxiety associated with leading a classroom, and instead turn it into an excited anticipation for the joys that a caring pedagogy can bring? In short, how can we help beginning teachers to embrace the uncertainty of pedagogy?

The Journey to Becoming

> Perhaps beginnings make us anxious because we did not begin ourselves. Others began us. Being conceived and born, we eventually enter upon ourselves already begun, already there. Instinctively we grasp onto and continue within the community in which we find ourselves. (O'Donohue, 2008, p. 2)

In the Beginning

The river does not begin itself. The cycle continues ceaselessly as water is evaporated from the oceans to create rain that nourishes and sustains the beginnings of rivers in the higher elevations. In teaching, it is the veteran teachers who have already found the sea of personhood and defined their pedagogical way of being who give back to society by inspiring future teachers to enter their own educational journeys. This would serve as the education cycle, as generations of teachers are formed to continue to eradicate the drought of ignorance and nourish the earth with the life giving water of knowledge.

Jersild in his classic book, *When Teachers Face Themselves* (1955), uncovers nine categories of problems and concerns beginning teachers face, and writes that "A person resides on an island between what has been and what is yet to be" (p. 21),

stressing that schools must promote self-understanding in all teachers and students. If teachers are not supported in their journeys to understand themselves, then the anxiety, loneliness, negative attitudes toward authority, feelings of homelessness, feelings of hopelessness, and especially, hostility toward others will begin to overtake the teacher's narrative. This can have devastating effects, not just on the beginning teacher, but also on future beginning teachers as they are influenced by the others in the community. Jersild describes the teacher with unresolved hostile tendencies, who, rather than face the source of the conflict in the open, he or she becomes hostile with everyone in the system, including students and colleagues. Jersild describes that teachers "have been schooled for years at suppressing and repressing our hostility. But the residue of grievances and resentments may still be there" (pp. 120-121). If the personhood of teachers is ignored, their daily work can quickly transform from a vocation to a battleground inherent in the original definition of calling.

Max van Manen joins his voice with Jersild's, saying that once teachers reach a better self-understanding, they can act with the "pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact" necessary to reach students in the "always-changing educational situations" (van Manen, 1991, p. 187). Van Manen continues his description of pedagogical tact when he writes, "Tact is the embodiment, the body work of thoughtfulness" (p. 206). I return often to van Man's notion of pedagogical tact, as I believe it describes the mindfulness and understanding teachers gain as they progress on their educational journeys. Beginning teachers must adjust and change throughout the first year of teaching in order to embody the thoughtfulness necessary to interact with others effectively. What empowers

beginning teachers to develop the pedagogical tact necessary to live and grow with others positively?

The Language of Change

> The end of human science research for educators is a critical pedagogical competence: knowing how to act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of a carefully edited thoughtfulness. (van Manen, 1997, p. 8)

I find it of vital importance to discuss my understanding of the word change when used in the context of beginning teachers *changing* to define their pedagogical way of being. Virginia Richardson (1990) examines this idea when she contrasts teacher change literature with the learning-to-teach literature. Richardson opposes the teacher-change literature, which she defines as enforcing "a change deemed by others on rational grounds as good for teachers" but that "may not fit individual teachers' intuitive and nontechnical sense of what they should be doing" (p. 11). The learning-to-teach literature described by Richardson accents autonomy and encourages the teacher to access their experience and personhood in order to drive the development. Literature and lived experience show that the period of pedagogical growth that occurs during the first year of teaching can be a challenging, yet rewarding, experience. My desire is that this research will shed light on the phenomenon of learning-to-teach, not to mandate change in other teachers, but to better prepare and support them in their first year on the job.

Dona Kagan (1992), who reviewed forty learning-to-teach studies for themes and understandings, defined professional growth as "changes over time in the behavior, knowledge, images, beliefs, or perceptions of novice teachers" (p. 131). Several themes emerge from Kagan's review that are applicable to this study:

> Preservice students enter programs of teacher education with personal beliefs about teaching images of good teachers, images of self as teacher, and memories

of themselves as pupils in classrooms. These personal beliefs and images generally remain unchanged by a preservice program and follow candidates into classroom practica and student teaching. (p. 142)

Seatwork spent in education classrooms, where prospective teachers learn the methods and techniques necessary to teach effectively, does not define the being of a teacher; it is the period of growth during the first year of teaching, where teachers develop their individual artistry to apply learned knowledge, that is of the utmost importance. Considering the fact that student teaching typically occurs in a very controlled environment under the supervision of a cooperating teacher, beginning teachers greet their students on that first day with an incomplete picture of themselves as educators. Britzman (1991) refers to the student teaching experience as the "third chronology," preceded by the "first chronology" of "their prior educational biography" and the "second chronology" of the university or teacher education experience (p. 56). In this study, I am shining light on the "fourth chronology" as defined by Britzman, which begins "once the student teacher becomes a newly arrived teacher" (p. 56). Clearly, this sets the stage for intense individual growth to occur during that first year of teaching. This has been an important reality of beginning teaching, as educators define who they will be through hard work and dedication. More often than not, there is a happy ending, as teachers arrive at the end of their journey as a first year teacher in a better place; however, Kagan (1992) describes well the negative possibilities of a system built with such first year pressure:

> The reality of the classroom rarely conforms to novices' expectations or images; instead, most novice teachers confront pupils who have little academic motivation and interest and a tendency to misbehave. Quickly disillusioned and possessing inadequate procedural knowledge, novice teachers tend to grow increasingly authoritarian and custodial. Obsessed with class control, novices may also begin to plan instruction designed, not to promote learning, but to discourage misbehavior. (p. 145)

It is important to state that not all beginning teachers will respond in the manner described by Kagan, but when examining the phenomenon of the beginning teaching experience, I think it is vital to examine the worst-case scenario that can occur in our current situation. What is the emotional toll on a novice educator who begins to move away from the students toward a more authoritarian approach that distances children from the teacher? Knowing that the most important facet of education is the classroom teacher, what impact does it have on our students to have a teacher or teachers who have responded this way to the trials of teaching?

The word *change* is derived from Latin word, *cambire,* which means "to exchange, barter" (Online Etymology Dictionary). This etymology shows that this period of change is not simply an altering, but a period of compromise, where the beginning teacher must exchange or sacrifice something else to achieve a desired state of being. This is not an easy task, especially for professionals forced to make a great many decisions during the school day in their time with children. Often, the decision to be more student-centered will possibly lead to less control over the students or more scrutiny from the teachers who share the lived space of the school house. When a teacher decides to be more authoritarian, he or she may sacrifice some of the relationships that defined his or her time in the classroom with students. Even a simple decision like vowing to grade tests and essays in a more efficient manner may mean bartering some personal time at home with family or friends. During this period of growth, beginning teachers must continually reflect on changes that are most appropriate for defining their pedagogical way of being, always cognizant of the sacrifices that must be made to reach that desired state effectively.

A Home Within Myself

> On the other side of the door I can be a different me. (Moss, as cited in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 37)

Jersild (1955) is clear about the importance of self-understanding and self-acceptance in each individual teacher's journey to grow into his or her pedagogical way of being. In his words:

> The living of life…involves an onward sweep, a positive movement, an endeavor toward self-fulfillment, an impulse to grow. Life should not be regarded as simply a struggle against the road blocks a stubborn environment puts in the way, for it has an impetus of its own, a zeal and a striving to realize potentials with which it is endowed. (p. 61)

As we have seen, many impediments get in the way of the beginning teacher striving toward the sea of personhood. Rather than highlight the struggles, Jersild accents the natural tendency of humans to strive toward their fullest potential, a transcendence of their being. To do this, Jersild continually refers to the homelessness so often felt by beginning teachers to stress the importance of teachers finding homes within themselves. Ellsworth (1997) uses similar language when she refers to "the people who locate themselves and work at the site of education's inner crack – dedicated and radical teachers" (p. 53). In what manner do beginning teachers locate themselves or find homes within themselves?

The word "Beginning" is derived from West Germanic, meaning "come into being" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). In what manner does a beginning teacher come into his or her being in the classroom? How do the experiences from the first year shape the pedagogical style and personhood of the educator for the rest of a career? My initial conversations with four beginning teachers highlighted the physicality of the change process. Alyssa describes the "calm" that she experienced as she became

more successful and comfortable in the classroom. She describes the "rattling" in her voice that has disappeared and triumphs in the fact that the "kids know by my tone of voice where I am. I just feel relaxed like I can let things go and just have fun." Deb shares Alyssa's success, as her initial anxiety transformed into a comfortable ease after the chaos of the first few weeks of school passed. As mentioned earlier, Gretchen's "helplessness" and "tightness" in her chest gave way to satisfied smile as she ended the year with some very successful interactions with her students. All three of these beginning teachers experienced pain and struggle early on in their first year of teaching, but after a period of growth and change, they ended their year in a satisfied, successful place. This sentiment was not shared by the fourth and final teacher with whom I conversed, as Michelle ended the year with great pain and confusion over her first year of teaching. Michelle describes several negative interactions with her supervisors, who in her opinion, were bombarding her with contradictory changes that she needed to make. Michelle, herself, viewed her teaching growth very positively, as she was seeing many examples of success with her students; however, our conversation ended in tears, as she feared that her negative reviews would follow her as she tried to find employment elsewhere. Is Michelle's story a natural element of the new teacher experience, as she continues on her individual journey to define her personhood as an educator?

Michelle's story relates to an all-too common scenario Billingsley (2005) describes as "How we eat our young" (p. 62). When observing and conversing with a first-year special education teacher named Beth, who quit after her first year of teaching, Billingsley writes:

> The adverse conditions of Beth's work led her to resign after her first teaching year. Her abrupt entry into a difficult teaching situation without adequate support

from her colleagues and principal made what is typically a difficult year even tougher. Over the first year, continual stress, low satisfaction with her job, and a sense of being ineffective led to Beth's withdrawal. (p. 62)

An obvious difference is that Beth clearly felt empowered enough to resign, whereas Michelle was not rehired after her first year of teaching, but other than that difference, are these just two examples of many in a profession that routinely eats its young?

Men and women enter the teaching profession each year overflowing with the hopes and dreams of positively impacting their students' lives. At some point along the path they take, too many of these teachers become disillusioned and disheartened about the profession and the students they serve. Many alter their pedagogical way of being to a more teacher centered, authoritarian approach in order to survive the daily rigors they encounter. They replace the language of hope with the language of control and survival. This can be detrimental to these educators and their students. My overall purpose is to explore the lived experience of beginning teachers to understand better the pedagogical changes they may make in order to develop a pedagogical presence in the classroom that allows them to feel "at home" in themselves and with their students. A better awareness of this phenomenon may add insight to the preparation of teachers to enter the classroom and support them more effectively once there, in their continued path toward their becoming. The question, then, that drives this study is this: What is the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being?

In the next chapter, I explore this phenomenon more fully, and in Chapter 3, I develop the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology that grounds this study. I follow Max van Manen's (1997) six research activities, which he names as the following:

(1) Turning to the phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;

(2) Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;

(3) Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;

(4) Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;

(5) Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;

(6) Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

I elaborate on each of the research activities in Chapter 3, but for now, call attention to

them as they guide me toward understanding the phenomenon of beginning teachers

developing their pedagogical way of being. In Chapter 4, I draw out the themes that

emerge from this study and in Chapter 5, I offer insights into the phenomenon that may

benefit those who prepare and support beginning teachers.

CHAPTER 2: EXISTENTIAL INVESTIGATION:

To make a life in teaching is largely to find your own way. (Ayers, 1993, p. 1)

In Chapter 1, I turned to the phenomenon of the lived experience of beginning teachers by uncovering the complexities they face in their becoming a teacher. The first year of teaching is defined by the journey of teachers discovering their way of being in the classroom, and I continue to peel away the layers of that complex endeavor here in Chapter 2. Max van Manen (1997) identifies the second of "six research activities" as "investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it" (p. 30). In this chapter, I examine the experience of educators, theorists, and researchers called to add substance to the understanding of the lived experience of beginning teachers. In order to illustrate the complexities inherent in the beginning teachers' search for their pedagogical presence in their way of being teachers, I continue to use the imagery of the flowing river, illustrating the power and complexity of the first year of teaching. I also call upon van Manen's (1997) "four existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived relation" in order to unite this profession of beauty, hope, and sacrifice with the experiences of all people in order to fully render the phenomenon of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. These existentials "form an intricate unity which we call the lifeworld – our lived world" (p. 105).

Currently, there are over four million teachers in the United States (Rust & Dalin, 1990) and likely over four million unique paths to pedagogical competence in the classroom. What does it feel like to be in the eyes of others each day? How do the lived spaces of the schoolhouse and classroom nourish the personhood of each beginning teacher? In what ways do the relationships forged in schools with students, colleagues,

and the community define the beginning teacher experience? Are beginning teachers supported as they change their pedagogical way of being over time?

When examining the lived experience of the beginning teacher, it is important to break down the mechanistic language currently used in education while seeking a more lived naming of activities and experiences that the beginning teacher will encounter. As van Manen (1997) asserts, "It is only through the collectivity of language that we can access experience, the experience of others as well as our own…Through phenomenological language…we navigate lifeworlds and their hermeneutic horizons" (p. xiii). In this chapter, I seek further understanding of the experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, calling upon van Manen's existentials and the flowing river as the guiding image to assist me in my rendering of this phenomenon.

Lived Body: The Corporeality of Pedagogy

> I know it has been rough because it is the first year. And it is always going to be rough in your first year. But I never expected it to be like this. I never thought I'd feel so down and incompetent…There have been times where I felt so small I couldn't even scrape myself off the floor. (Rebecca, a third-grade teacher, in Billingsley, 2005, p. 33)

In the Presence of Others

Rivers and teachers both receive a lot of attention from the society in which they find themselves. Most major cities were built on the banks of rivers for the transportation, food, and water they provide. Teachers often lament the fact that they cannot even go grocery shopping in the community in which they teach without seeing students and parents. They are always present in the eyes of others, which introduces a myriad of expectations into their lives. Like a shrinking or polluted river, teachers' struggles are often public knowledge, as their efforts benefit the collective community. What happens

to beginning teachers always present in the eyes of others? What physical changes will occur when they are the "object of someone else's gaze" especially when that gaze may be the "critical gaze" of a student, parent, colleague, or supervisor (van Manen, 1997, p. 104)? How does this gaze become a lens through which they see themselves?

Unlike any other profession, beginning teachers need to be at ease standing in front of the classroom for an entire day while thirty pairs of eyes watch their every move. Physically, this can lead teachers to speak more quickly, to stumble over words when the self-consciousness grips them, and to use movements and gestures they may have never used before due to the discomfort of the gaze. Teachers' failures are often public knowledge, as they are questioned by students, parents, and supervisors. Often, successful teachers are even questioned by other teachers uncomfortable with the success shared by the students they may have in common. At times, beginning teachers may need to put on a fake smile and offer a contrived "good morning" to the students, as the late night and stress of lesson planning may have them exhausted before the day even begins. How difficult is it for beginning teachers to be themselves for an entire day in the presence of so many others? What physical toll may this take on the beginning teacher?

I am interested in the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. My use of the word "defining" asserts that new teachers have power over the changes they make in order to develop into the pedagogue they desire to become. At first, the beginning teacher may feel more like an object in the eyes of others than a subject empowered to become the teacher he or she desires to be. In English grammar, an object is acted upon, directly or indirectly, whereas a subject does the acting. Louis Rubin's (1985) comparison of a teacher to an artist is beneficial here, as he

envisions the teacher artist as an actor: "In the crafts of acting and teaching, the artist conveys an image of self…they [the artist teachers] define themselves for their observers" (p. 116). For Rubin, "the intangibles of artistry," which so perplex the researchers who desire to quantify teaching, are individualized in "the skillfulness of the teacher" (p. 4). As presented in Chapter 1, today's educational climate is not always conducive to teacher self-understanding and discovery. This journey is complicated even more by the reality that the artistic discovery must occur in the presence of so many others. How can teachers be empowered to develop their pedagogical artistry in the classroom?

Pedagogical Artistry

> I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing than teach ten thousand stars how not to dance. (Cummings, in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 143)

I was captivated by the beauty of the River Thames in London, England. Both peaceful and powerful, I was lost in personal reflection as I pondered its steady flow. Later, I realized that it was not the river that fascinated me, but the life that arose around that river. The Globe Theater, the Tower of London and Tower Bridge, Westminster Abbey and Parliament: how many people have been inspired by this body of water over the centuries? Like all rivers, the Thames developed through a scientific process, but it is the aesthetic beauty of the Thames, valued by its influence on the life sustained around the water, that returns me to the power and influence of a teacher's way of being with students. Rubin (1985) continues his reflection on "an art form" (p. 100), where those with "natural gifts, rely principally on instinct" while "others…cultivate equally impressive artistry through practice and effort" (p. 15). He contends that "Artistry…is executing any human endeavor with such extraordinary grace, precision, and efficiency

that the performance itself takes on aesthetic beauty" (p. 116). Like any work of art, its beauty is subjective, which makes the evaluation difficult by the many others in the teacher's presence each day. If pedagogy is as much about art as it is about science, then the space between the technical language of methods, objectives, and assessment and the language of artistry must be sought by beginning teachers and those who support and care for them.

Although the language of artistry is less abundant in educational literature, there are several examples to which we can turn. Parker Palmer (2000) describes his artistry as, "My gift as a teacher is the ability to dance with my students, to teach and learn with them through dialogue and interaction" (p. 52). Ron Clark uses similar artistic description when referring to his ability to "close the door and make magic" with his students (10/4/10 presentation). Rubin (1985) writes of teachers who can "weave their spell, catching their students up in the excitement of what is going on" (p. 8). Max van Manen (1991) insists that the artistry necessary to demonstrate pedagogical tact "cannot be taught formally" (p. 9). If we cannot teach pedagogical artistry, then how can we evaluate it as effective or ineffective? In short, we do a great disservice when we ignore the teacher as an artist.

John Sweeney, a first grade teacher in Pennsylvania, exhibits the artistry of teaching in the description of his pedagogy. "I play guitar and sing with my students almost every day. My guitar is often my teaching partner. I turn to it when I need inspiration, comfort, and companionship…It helps me to make music with my life…and it gives me strength to face the challenges I encounter in classroom life" (in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 2). How can we support beginning teachers in their artistic

development, and in turn, encourage them to engage in academic play with their students in the classroom?

Dwayne Huebner (1962/1999) cautions that those in education should not get caught up in the argument of whether teaching is an art or a science. Like the newly forming river, he labels aspiring teachers as scientists, as they use the "analytic-synthetic model of science" in order to "to identify and understand the characteristics of good teaching, or the dimensions of the teaching act" (p. 30). There are methods and practices that can benefit large numbers of students that research can identify and assess; however, as Huebner urges, the teacher "needs to know the parts which make up good teaching. But more significantly, the teacher needs to know how to put the parts together" (p. 23). This is where artist teachers emerge, as they seamlessly incorporate the beauty and ugliness of life, the order and disorder of science, and the personhood of the teacher and students into the classroom canvas that emerges. Only when teachers define their personhoods are they truly able to form the beauty and powerful river of life that inspires and sustains others. Huebner continues, "Whether teaching is or is not an art – is not an issue…Approaching teaching as an art has value in a society moving toward automation but crying out for individuality" (p. 25).

A Space Between Art and Science

> The beautiful, the way in which goodness appears, reveals itself in its being: it presents itself. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 481)

Parker Palmer (1998) wrote his book, *The Courage to Teach*, for teachers experiencing the intense joy and pain, the ups and downs, and the highs and lows of education. Palmer longs to linger in the middle grounds of education, between theory and practice, between technique and artistry, and at the "dangerous intersection of personal

and public life" (p. 17), which represents the contrast between the public stage where teachers find themselves and the "selfhood" (p. 3) each must develop while constantly surrounded by others. Parker repeatedly discusses the "polarities" and "binary thought" (p. 61) of teaching, referring to the "tension of opposites" (p. 83) necessary to achieve balance where so many "paradoxes" (p. 62) exist. He further contends that educators must "escape the grip of either-or thinking" in order to "think the world together" (p. 62) with their students.

Ted Aoki (1993/2005) echoes the pedagogical balance teachers must seek:

Life in the classroom is not so much *in* the child, *in* the teacher, *in* the subject; life is lived in the spaces between and among. What we ought to do, then, is to slip out of the language of curriculum centers. We ought to decenter them without erasing them, and to learn to speak a noncentered language. (p. 282)

Educators often discuss the gray areas that require them to make so many difficult decisions during the school day. Discomfort often defines these murky areas. However, as Aoki describes, educators begin to find more comfort in these spaces in between as they develop their pedagogical way of being. Aoki (1983/2005) names this mental comfort "Praxis," which he defines as "a way of knowing in which the subject within a pedagogical situation reflectively engages the objective world guided by the telos of ordering human action. Here, theory and practice are seen to be in dialectical unity" (p. 116). How do beginning teachers develop this praxis throughout their first year of teaching? In what ways do beginning teachers find comfort in the middle spaces they encounter each day?

Britzman (1991) suggests replacing the rampant dualism evident in the world of education with a "dialogic" perspective, which "allows us to move beyond dualistic perspectives and to focus, instead, on the polyphony of forces that interact, challenge,

beckon, and rearrange our practices and the positions we take up in teacher education" (p. 239). How do beginning teachers find themselves in the spaces between the artistry and science of teaching?

Heller (2004) presents his perspective of drawing on both science and art in teaching. He writes:

> Education has often been referred to as an art…However, the last two decades have produced a wealth of knowledge about brain function, cognitive processes, multiple intelligences, the importance of emotional stability, effective discipline interventions, and numerous alternatives to the traditional methods of education. Education today entails at least as much science as art. (p. 8)

Heller's argument is that there is so much technical knowledge out there for beginning teachers to use in the development of their art. It is vital for those who prepare and support beginning teachers to seek the middle-ground between the technical and artistic language of teaching. In addition to a caution about using only one method to evaluate success in the classroom, educational leaders must also be cognizant of educational reforms and their potential impact on the developing artistry of beginning teachers. Edward Katz, a middle school English teacher in New York, cites a poem by Robert Herrick to issue his caution to teachers to be "skeptical of pedagogical fads and education reforms" (in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 174). Herrick describes how his lover's "sweet disorder in the dress" does more to "bewitch" him "than when art is too precise in every part" (p. 175). Katz continues that, "Discovering and developing a personal style is the essence of sound teaching and successful learning" (p. 174).

When this topic first addressed me, I immediately used the word style to name the being of the teacher, but through my reading of Palmer and van Manen, I embraced the words "pedagogical way of being" to represent the tact, thoughtfulness, and artistry found

in their writing. I was attracted to van Manen's (1991) writing on the "phenomenon of personal style" (p. 121) though, and I wanted to share it here as it applies to the amount of time necessary to develop these stylistic features of teaching:

> There are certain habit-like features of teaching and relating to students that might best be described with the term style. And style is more than a habitual and idiosyncratic way of behaving or talking. Similarly, style should not be confused with teaching technique or method. Style is the outward embodiment of the person. (p. 121)

I feel called to shine light on the development of beginning teachers, not to identify techniques or mandate change, but to understand the process of beginning teachers knowing themselves well enough to alter their style, or pedagogical way of being with children. Knowing that praxis encompasses a melding of the artistry and science of teaching, how can we both prepare and support beginning teachers as they develop or enhance their pedagogical artistry?

It is a natural human tendency to attempt to make difficult tasks easier through standardization, so it is no surprise that educators and educational policy makers would seek similar methods in a vocation as complex as teaching. Interestingly, Huebner contends that "teaching is almost an impossibility" (p. 26), considering all of the complexities and difficulties that teachers face. Ellsworth (1997) concurs when she writes, "Teaching is impossible…and that opens up unprecedented teaching possibilities…Teaching, that is, as giving what I do not have" (p. 18). Lately, the word impossible has been used a lot in educational discourse, as policy makers have debated the possibility, or impossibility, of schools reaching the 100% proficiency requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Obama administration has recently acknowledged this impossibility, as states like Pennsylvania have been granted waivers of reprieve from

the 2014 deadline. I have heard veteran teachers on more than one occasion comfort beginning teachers with the words, "it is impossible to reach every student." It is ironic that in a space where there is such great possibility for becoming that there would exist so much impossibility along the journey. We preach daily that students have the potential to do anything, yet can we as educators realistically reach every child?

I have not found a great deal of relaxation during my time in education; it seems like there is always something to do to better myself. While teaching, it was impossible for me to plan enough or to grade quickly enough. There was never enough class time to teach content and to assess understandings. I never completed a unit of study or sent students home on the last day of school feeling that I had done everything exactly as I wanted; there were always improvements to be made. This defines the impossibility of teaching for me. It is the teacher artist who understands this reality and uses it to know him or herself better. In Huebner's (1962/1999) words:

> Teaching is also this constant search for perfection, for satisfaction, and in a sense, for beauty. It is the frequent disappointment and sadness of visions unrealized, and the joy and contentment of occasional success. As an artist, the teacher must think of maximizing his own individuality, of becoming a unique person in the world; for artists must stand out as individuals if lending their minds out is to have value. (p. 26)

I seek to understand how teachers grow during their first year, how they maximize their individuality, and how they develop their pedagogical artistry to define their way of being in the classroom. True understanding of this development of pedagogical artistry may be an impossibility; however, seeking understanding of this phenomenon will hopefully add to the discussions that are taking place in education about how we can reach every student better.

To Be or Not To Be: Teacher as Actor

> The teacher wants the audience of students to find that teacher interesting, stimulating, believable, someone who helps them see themselves and their world in a new and enlarged way, someone who satisfies their need for new experiences that take them out of their ordinary selves, someone they willingly come back to because they want to see the next act in a play about learning. (Sarason, 1999, p. 36)

Many authors connect teaching to theater or acting, which is applicable to this section on the teacher corporeally in the presence of others each day. Ellsworth (1997) analyzes teaching from the perspective of modes of address from film studies. She writes that "Teaching is a suspended performance in the sense that it is never completed or finished" (p. 158), and that "a performative act cannot be imitated and mass produced" (p. 160). Ellsworth sees the power in analyzing teaching as a performance, knowing that teacher artists must develop various modes to address and engage various students. In her view, this performance is ongoing and cannot be mass produced from one teacher to another. Sarason (1999), who authored a book calling T*eaching As A Performing Art,* concurs with Ellsworth's declaration, agreeing that "The teacher is both stage director and performing artist" (p. 105). Without question, the very nature of teaching, where an individual stands in front of an audience and tries to convey a message, relates highly to the form and function of theater; however, this analogy is very concerning to the personhood of beginning teachers as it assumes that a teacher actor must assume a role to play in the drama. Sarason's language, as he makes the connection between an actor and a teacher, captures this concern:

> The artist has adopted a role the requirement of which is to instill in the audience thoughts and feelings which temporarily blur or even erase the distinction between the artist as performer and the artist as a person. (p. 9)

> Audiences expect actors to be their roles, however different that being is from
> their everyday being. (p. 14)

This language is very concerning to me as I consider the lived experience of a beginning

teacher defining his or her pedagogical way of *being,* as Sarason's language asks teachers

to not only develop their own personhood as educators, but also develop various other

ways of being throughout the years to address the various needs of their students.

    Sarason (1999) joins his thoughts with Arthur Jersild's (1955) mentioned earlier;

however, Sarason's thesis that the teacher is a performing artist dangerously loses the

sense of self Jersild repeatedly emphasizes throughout his work. I can understand

Sarason's hoped connection to Jersild, as he often emphasizes Jersild's focus on the self-

actualization of teachers to know and empower their students to know. Sarason's writing

on the phenomenology of performing captures this sentiment well:

> The phenomenology of performing: How and why it requires a teacher to think,
> feel, intuit, and flexibly adapt to students' individuality, and to do all of this for
> the purpose of engendering understanding and a sense of growth…the teacher as
> performing artist has in some positive way altered the students' conception of the
> relationships between sense of self and the significance of subject matter, i.e., an
> increase in competence. And it is that process and engagement which reinforces
> the sense of the teacher's competence. The word instruct engenders imagery of a
> one-way street interaction, imagery all too frequently observable in the classroom,
> which is why so many students never experience the sense of being moved. (p.
> 48)

I believe in his one-way street imagery. Sarason longs to capture the importance of

teachers' knowing themselves well enough to utilize their individual artistry to engage

students in the script (curriculum), but it does lead me to question if teaching as acting is

an analogy that could do more harm than good.

    In a powerful earlier work, Linda Corman (in Ryan, 1970) verbalizes my fear

when she writes about her departure from her first teaching job:

I did not know myself, and I did not know the role I haphazardly tried to play. I had known tyrant-teachers and push-overs, bright ones and ignorant ones; but I had not known them as colleagues. I had known mischievous students and helpful ones, vicious ones and apple-polishers, but I had not known them as students in a class I was supposed to teach. I had known principals and assistant principals, and counselors and truant officers, but I had not known them as one who expected to be treated as the college graduate, the lady, and the professional I wanted desperately to be. In short, I saw strange faces because I looked out through the strangely new eyes of a teacher. (p. 105)

Linda tried to play a role she based on the characters from her educational past. Her journey led her to a startling revelation about her pedagogical way of being:

Perhaps the lesson hardest to learn the first year of teaching was that I could not be the same kind of teacher as someone else…Teaching, I finally decided, is somehow too closely knit into the basic fabric of one's character and personality to be copied…The dangers incurred in assuming a persona too far from the real me. (p. 119)

Linda's sentiment was reiterated by nearly all of the participants in Ryan's (1970) accounts. Gary Cornog viewed himself as a character acting on stage, and actually believed that he had more success when he was less genuine with his students; Gail Richardson felt like she was "playing a role, the role of interested teacher" (p. 64); and Eleanor Fluke lamented the fact that she did not think through her "role as a teacher before I entered the classroom" (p. 128). These beginning teachers did not find themselves during their first year with students; they found alternate personas that were either effective or ineffective with students. How would their students ever know themselves if they never knew the person guiding them on their journey to self-understanding?

Jersild (1955) often discusses the importance of the teachers finding homes within themselves. In Jersild's words, "A teacher who tries to go out to others but who cannot come home to himself and experience emotion in his own right may be noble, but he is

not actually realizing his potentialities as a teacher" (p. 132). Do we do enough today, fifty-six years since this writing, to enable beginning teachers to find homes within themselves so that they in turn may reach their fullest potential with children? And once beginning teachers reach this level of self-understanding, do schools do enough to support them as they "live" their discovered way of being with the students in their care?

Lived Space: Thriving in a Desert, a Mountain, or a Gulf

> As water takes whatever shape it is in, so free may you be about who you become. (O'Donohue, 2008, p. 127)

A Space to Grow

Rivers must grow and develop in unique settings. A plethora of rivers develop at the base of a mountain or at the gulf to the sea. Rivers that are able to thrive in the hard environment of the desert can have a major impact on the people of that region. Teachers also begin in various settings, including urban, suburban, and rural schools, in states that support education and those that provide few resources for beginning teachers. Just like the rivers in the desert, teachers in harsh educational environments can have an exceptionally positive impact on students thirsty for knowledge. Teachers are often defined by the space they inhabit with children. How can schools empower teachers to grow into their personhood throughout their educational careers?

Isolation

> Beginnings often frighten us because they seem like lonely voyages into the unknown. (O'Donohue, 2008, p. 1)

What empowers beginning teachers to know themselves well enough to define their pedagogical way of being with children? Like the new river formed at the base of a mountain, a beginning teacher is often alone as he or she begins the journey to being;

usually, there are numerous other rivers trying to survive at the same time on the same limited water source. As Arthur Jersild (1955) discovers in his conversations with teachers, "Almost all of the people who were interviewed in this study spoke in one way or another of their loneliness…All of them, directly or indirectly, mentioned barriers that separated them from other people or separated other persons from them" (p. 65). The secondary school teachers with whom I conversed taught a majority of the day, with a quick lunch and a preparatory period to complete any last minute planning. In many secondary buildings, the sheer number of staff members can be isolating to teachers, which is what gave birth to the saying that each teacher is an island, isolated in his or her classroom from the rest of the school.

This isolation can be even more crippling to beginning teachers still trying to find their way in the educational world. Max van Manen (1997) states that "We become the space we are in" (p. 102). What does this mean to the beginning secondary teacher inhabiting an individual classroom contained inside a large building housing hundreds of other individual classrooms? Often, beginning teachers feel isolated and alone, as they close their doors to interact with students, but are not given an opportunity to engage in professional conversations with the other educators in their department or school. This isolation can lead struggling teachers to feel that they are on their own to solve their problems, especially considering that in a lot of schools, a cry for help may bring unwanted attention from colleagues, supervisors, and/or parents.

Often in secondary schools, the isolation faced by teachers can lead to an increase in tensions with their colleagues in the building. Without watching the teacher across the hall actually teach, it is easy to assume and generalize about his or her relationships with

students. Too often, teachers become rivals for the attention and affection of the students in their care. "Rival" is derived from the Latin *rivalis*, which referred to "one who uses the same stream" (Online Etymology Dictionary). This definition reminds us that humans have always competed for limited resources, as the river's sustaining power could be exhausted with overuse. To return to Huebner's (1987/1999) words, it is vital that schools create a "listening/speaking community" to ensure that teachers help each other to thrive rather than compete to bring each other down.

Carol Ann Tomlinson (2010), in her reflection on her journey as an "Accidental Teacher," asserts that "The places we teach shape who and what we become. If they don't feed us as human beings and as teachers, we atrophy" (p. 24). Tomlinson's use of the word "atrophy," which is derived from the Greek word *atrophos* and means "ill-fed" (Webster's Online Dictionary), adds so much substance to the school house as a life support for teachers. How can a school effectively feed and nourish the teachers who occupy its space?

A Positive Space

> The beliefs, feelings, and assumptions of teachers are the air of a learning environment; they determine the quality of life within it. When the air is polluted, the student is poisoned, unless, of course, he holds his breath. (Postman & Weingartner, 1969, pp. 33-34)

I have had the positive experience of moving from a very outdated school building into a new, modern facility. Watching students pouring in sweat during June finals, physically running into each other in cramped hallways, and standing to eat their lunches certainly initiates a sense of awe when students enter an expansive, air-conditioned building that provides so many educational upgrades to assist students in their learning and teachers in their teaching. Simply providing a new place automatically

increases the positive climate of the school; however, it takes time in the lived place to create the positive learning space that we desire to emerge. Teachers, now empowered with so many technological advancements, appear to have wings as they fly around the building. Students, once limited to a single mode of learning, now are provided many ways to demonstrate their learning, utilizing new computers, data projectors, and open spaces like the library, auditorium, and courtyard. There is still work to be done, as teachers, newly empowered with wings to offer educational services for students, now find those wings slightly clipped as they are even more isolated in such a massive building. It is through these negative and positive exchanges between people that transform a place into a lived space. The river of teachers truly determines the air of the school; pollution can destroy the climate, while positive, clean air is palpable to all present. The challenge of Postman and Weingartner, writing forty years ago, remains unmet today. What are the "poisons" that still fill the classrooms in schools? And the obvious question ensures: Who gets access to the classrooms that are not filled with such "poisons?"

All four of the first year teachers with whom I spoke in my preliminary conversations used the binary descriptors of positive or negative to describe the climate of the school building. Michelle, who fears that her "negative reviews would go on to the next place," clearly never feels at home in the place she occupies due to the perceived negative attacks on her teaching; she ends the conversation hoping another place will welcome her into their lived space. Gretchen, Deb, and Alyssa all reflect on the importance of staying positive amongst the negative that dwells around them. Alyssa describes the "pessimistic" people who would bring her down by dwelling on the

negative, while Deb stresses the importance of acknowledging "some of the negatives" without focusing on them to the point that it brings you down. The lived experience of these four teachers highlights the difficulties of working in a school system established to educate all people. Due to, at times, the impossible task of teaching, beginning teachers will face frustrations and difficulties. How does the development of their way of being empower them to rise above the negative talk, challenging students, and frustrating judgments?

Teachers must adjust to the scrutiny of today's educational climate, as well as seek sanity in an educational system that is not always caring to children. Since I am interested in understanding the lived experience of beginning secondary teachers, I believe it is important to explore the unique make-up of the comprehensive high school before rendering the phenomenon further. The comprehensive high school was created to give all students the *opportunity* to learn anything. The liberal arts elective system ensures that a motivated child can enter school on day one and select from his or her interests when choosing classes. Compulsory education laws ensure that all students attend school until the age of sixteen, when they may drop out with documented full time employment. The vision was an environment where every child had the opportunity to learn; the reality of broken homes, poverty, and disadvantage, led to a system that for the most part, rewarded and encouraged the "haves" and pushed out the "have-nots." Essentially, the comprehensive high school has become the great thresher, separating the wheat of students who will enter college to further their educations and reap the rewards of higher pay and better work conditions, from the chaff of students who will enter the work place to work at lower pay in difficult conditions. How do beginning teachers rise

above the structural make-up of institutions to seek social justice while identifying themselves as teachers?

What responsibility do beginning teachers have to seek social justice in the spaces where they reside? Postman and Weingartner (1969) believe that it is the teacher's primary role to subvert attitudes, beliefs and assumptions. This belief is similar to the radical and engaged pedagogy discussed earlier. In this manner, teachers would empower students by engaging them in questioning and dialogue that opposes the archaic belief that students are empty vessels to be filled with information. Postman and Weingartner continue that too often, the space of the schoolhouse teaches students that "Passive acceptance is a more desirable response to ideas than active criticism," and that "Feelings are irrelevant in education" (p. 20). Clearly, this form of pedagogy would require teachers to know themselves well enough to develop the sense of self necessary to engage students in this subversive activity. This form of questioning with students requires individualizing the content for each unique student. Are we ready for this type of engaged pedagogy with our students, when in fact, our schools are still not individualizing the professional development for its teachers?

Teacher "Training"

> I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom. (hooks, 1994, p. 12)

My district has decided to bring in a national teacher training program to educate all beginning teachers in best pedagogical practices. Having been through the training, it focuses a great deal on the nuts and bolts of planning a lesson, managing a classroom, and assessing students. The trainers, Dave Perry and Jean Anastasio (2007) wrote a book,

appropriately entitled, *Teaching: The Book*. Our fifteen new secondary teachers, after only approximately fifty days on the job, were pulled from the classroom for four days to attend the training. Shaeffer (1990) describes a training of this nature as "top down and prescriptive, the implication being that teachers are deficient in some particular knowledge and skills, that trainers and administrators understand better and more wisely the teaching process, and that therefore certain teacher-proof lessons must be transmitted to new and practicing teachers" (p. 95).

Shaeffer advocates for a "participatory approach to in-service teacher training" (p. 96), which places the teacher in an active role as an "agent of change rather than an object of change" (p. 96). What impact does a top-down approach for professional development have on a new teacher's pedagogical presence and way of being in the classroom? In what ways can school districts support the growth of beginning teachers as they "develop" a pedagogical way of being with students? How might the term "training" be troubled to help expose the limitations of such naming?

In the best practices "training," teachers are very passive, soaking in the knowledge of how to teach from the experts, expected to implement it immediately. Rather than directing some of the learning or choosing a professional development path based on needs, these teachers new to the field of pedagogy are being told that they must teach this way. After attending a separate training for administrators, I would again echo my concern in the program's intent to simplify the evaluation of teachers to a checklist: was an objective posted? Did the teacher share the day's agenda? Did the teacher structure the lesson using the 10/2 rule to ensure that after ten minutes of instruction there were two minutes of review? Did the teacher use checks for understanding and extended

wait time? Did the teacher use a closure that asked students to summarize the day's learning? Common sense and fourteen years of experience tells me that there are a lot of wonderful strategies here; however, my heart screams that some artist teachers do not follow these prescriptive routines. Teachers should be exposed to best educational practices and supported in implementing them, but forcing them to follow a formula for teaching will stunt their artistry, especially if they are beginning teachers just establishing their pedagogical way of being. What impact does district professional development foci have on the development of their beginning teachers?

When a school engages with teachers in this way, it sends an immediate message to the new pedagogues who will inhabit and contribute to its space: this is how we expect you to teach. What does this do to the way of being that the beginning teacher has been developing throughout his or her lifetime and pedagogical preparation? Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (2004), who identify six qualities of effective teachers, describe the art of teaching as a "natural talent" when they write:

> Teaching is a vocation for which some people have a natural talent while others may have the inclination but need to develop some of the necessary skills, and others simply may not be suited to the demands of the role. (p. 29)

These authors clearly see the space of the school house as a place where teachers are supported individually based on their unique needs. Some may simply need a supportive hand to guide and empower them to practice their art in the way their personhood supports, while others could benefit from four days of training in order to enhance the aspects of their teaching. Finally, others may need both throughout the year, and in the case of Michelle presented earlier, they may also need counseling out of the profession. Obviously, the issue at hand to beginning teachers deals with how they are helped to

transform themselves as teachers and know fully who they are as persons in the process. Who determines if the natural talent is sufficient, or who could benefit from more skill training? Considering that five of the six categories Stronge, Tucker, and Hindman (2004) identify are technical in nature, with the only exception entitled the "Teacher as a Person" (p. 30), it is no surprise that their formula for addressing needs in the individualized area of teaching would focus more on teacher-change models initiated by supervisors. In what ways do teacher-change models stifle the individual freedom of beginning teachers?

The Language of Training

> Like desire, language disrupts, refuses to be contained within boundaries. (hooks, 1994, p. 167)

In addition to being greeted by trainings to direct their teaching in their school house space, beginning teachers are welcomed to the profession by the language of prescriptive texts in the educational profession. We saw this with John and the *Tools for Teaching* textbook earlier. Beginning teachers are blessed with a plethora of resources to assist them with the dynamic first year of teaching. Many educators have dedicated themselves to supporting teachers through their first year of teaching, but after reviewing several of the options available, it is clear that many follow the same format as the *Handbook for the Beginning Teacher* (Moffatt & Moffatt, 2003), which completely lacks the voice of beginning teachers outside of the author's personal experience. In addition, Broux's (2003) *101 Answers for New Teachers and their Mentors,* promises to provide the answers to all of the questions first year teachers might have. Most of the 101 answers are based on assumptions about the beginning teaching experience, as actual teaching experiences outside the author's own are not included. Broux, like many of the authors

who write about the first year of teaching, also primarily focuses on classroom management. She organizes the six sections of her book from the very technical, i.e. management, planning, instruction, and professionalism, to the inspirational, including motivation, rapport, and a teacher's influence. This reinforces the assumption that teachers must first master technical skills before they can progress to motivating and inspiring students.

The Kottler (1998) family wrote a book similar to those mentioned above, entitled *Secrets for Secondary School Teachers: How to Succeed in your First* Year. In the introduction, the authors promise "tips and secrets" (p. x) and "practical strategies that will help [new teachers] to survive" (p. xi). This one text, on which a beginning teacher might stumble in a basic Google search for assistance, exemplifies so many of the complexities facing the beginning teacher. So often, this profession is scientifically simplified to a few tips and strategies that guarantee success if followed. Also, likely unconsciously, these books present non-conformity to the prescription as the demise of the novice teacher, as again success is portrayed as survival. As demonstrated by Castle and Buckley's (2009) *How to be a Successful Teacher*, the words success and survival are used interchangeably throughout this literature. Once again, the complex pedagogical thoughtfulness and interpersonal relationships necessary to thrive in teaching are simplified and presented in a how-to book. What does the experience of beginning teachers inform us about their journey to define their pedagogical way of being in an environment dominated by simplified, technocratic texts and either-or language of success and survival?

I mention these texts not to belittle the authors' noble efforts to benefit our beginning teachers, or to say that I can do it better than them, but to identify an issue facing teachers new to the profession who are trying to learn from published works. Like John from Chapter One, who turned to the *Tools for Teaching* (Jones, 2007) text when struggling to reach students, beginning teachers can be disillusioned when prescriptive texts fail to deliver on their promise of success. Palumbo and Sanacore (2007) identify this complexity when they describe the weakness of prescriptive pedagogical texts:

> No prescription or cure-all exists that will guarantee success in the classroom. As we reflect on our thirty-plus year careers as teachers, administrators, and professors, we often recall our highs and lows throughout our journey. At the very least, we have learned that all students are unique and that they do not fit into a one-size-fits-all perspective. For us, teaching and learning have been both an inexact science and a personal art. (p. 70)

Teaching is an artistic endeavor where teacher artists meld their personality with acquired knowledge on teaching and learning in order to benefit children. Teachers must be the ones who define their pedagogical way of being if they are to truly transcend into the being they long to become. When supporting beginning teachers on this journey of change, we often seek methods "to train" them to be better teachers, or use evaluation to motivate them to improve. Do we do enough to develop and support the emerging personhood of the novice pedagogue? Palmer (1998) contends that pedagogical techniques are important, but only after teachers know who they are; technique should only be applied to "reveal rather than conceal our personhood" (p. 24). As an educator in a Pennsylvania high school, I am called by Palmer's words. I desire to empower teachers to know themselves better, so that I can then support them with methods and environments to enhance their pedagogical being in the classroom.

Lived Human Relations: Sustaining Life

> Years later…standing before my first class, I scanned the rows of faces, their cumulative skill in the brilliant adolescent dances of self-presentation, of hiding. New teacher, looking young, seeming gullible, I know, I let them give me any excuse and took it…I made of myself each day a chink a few might pass through unscathed. (McCarriston, in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 65)

Growth to Benefit All

People rely on rivers for transportation, water, food, bathing, waste disposal, defense, and hydropower. For transportation, rivers literally carry others during their time of need. Rivers sustain life. Human beings cannot continue as a species without some form of education. From the prehistoric lessons on how to hunt a saber tooth tiger, to modern lessons on medicine and the environment, humans cannot continue to thrive without the education of its citizenry. I have come to believe that this education cannot continue without strong relationships, as teachers must know themselves well enough to in turn empower their students to know themselves. This reciprocal relationship keeps the education cycle repeating. Beginning teachers rely on their students, fellow teachers and mentors, and administrators for the support needed to become the teachers they long to become. The other in the presence of the beginning teacher becomes paramount to his or her success. Teachers inhabit an interpersonal space, where human relations are necessary to the development of knowledge. With the recent prominence of cyber-schooling, some teachers may be able to achieve success without actually making a personal connection with a child. But in this study, I am only examining the lived experience of beginning teachers in the traditional brick and mortar public secondary school, so human connectedness is a necessary action to engage with students in their care.

Many beginning teachers receive the class lists and create seating charts before the first day of school, memorizing the names and places where each child will sit on that first day. But that practice does not enable the teacher to know the person who will sit in that chair. It is vital to meet the students, to engage them in conversation, and to observe their actions to get to know them. Getting to know them will, in turn, help the beginning teachers to know themselves better. Max van Manen (1997) declares, "As we meet the other we are able to develop a conversational relation which allows us to transcend our selves" (p. 105). Students provide the substance and motivation to initiate change in the beginning teacher, as pedagogues strive to transcend themselves by changing to make a difference in the lives of those in their care.

My preliminary conversations with four first year teachers reveal the fact that the relationships they developed during their first year of teaching sustained them and defined their successes. Deb, Gretchen, Michelle, and Alyssa all express the relationships they had built with students as the most positive experience in their first year of teaching. More specifically, each speaks of the joy of watching the growth of a child, best verbalized by Alyssa, who describes a boy who was a "real pain in the butt" at the beginning of the year, but who brought her to tears at the end of the year when he told a classmate that he did not act on a negative impulse in class because he respected the teacher too much. Alyssa continues that the relationships she built with students and other teachers were some of the most challenging aspects of her first year job duties, but after seeing the impact she had on students, and after she herself reaped the benefits that positive relationships with her mentor and other teachers provided, she was able to bask in the glow her efforts created. Alyssa asserts that "I want to be that teacher who makes a

difference…I want to be the teacher who cares about the students." These positive

relationships with students can also be challenging, as a few students may not achieve the

success the teacher had hoped they would. Alyssa proudly shares that one of her students

asked her, "Why do you care so much? I'm going to fail anyway." It is vital to Alyssa

that she never gave up on this student, continuing to push him to succeed until the end of

the school year.

Michelle confirms Alyssa's feelings when she describes a student with whom she

was "butting heads…at the beginning of the year," but who at the end, was "all of a

sudden…actually listening…paying attention" and wanted to do well in class. Deb

continuously speaks of the positive relationships she had established with kids, breaking

into a smile as she recalls the day they surprised her with a birthday cake. The smile only

receded when she thought of the few students who failed her class during her first year of

teaching. She takes pride in the fact that she "tried really hard with those kids," but

laments the fact that she could not have helped them to "at least pass." In a profession

struggling publicly with the ideal of reaching every child, beginning teachers will

continue to experience pain from the loss of a few students, as they seek understanding

and strength through the struggles and triumphs of their first year of teaching.

Gretchen captures the power of the relationships teachers form with students

when she recollects a "horrible morning" she was having during her first year of

teaching, when "everything was going wrong." Surprisingly to Gretchen, it was the

students who made her feel better. "I was so shocked. I would've thought it would have

been the other way around." These four young educators reveal a life-affirming positive

of the beginning teaching experience, as they receive renewal from the young people they

teach. Beginning teachers often revel in the highs and lows, as the challenges enhance the spectacular nature of the triumphs.

The media has captured the essence of these teachers' experiences, as it has repeatedly portrayed teachers thriving in their relationships with children. *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Dangerous Minds*, *Pay It Forward*, *Dead Poet's Society*, *The Great Debaters,* and *Freedom Writers* to name a few, are all movies that share the same formula for success: an unconventional teacher, who believes in the immense potential of his or her students, accomplishes the impossible by inspiring them to achieve something once considered impossible. Teachers plant the seed of dreams through great expectations, and through encouragement and care, they nourish their students to reach their fullest, most vibrant bloom. Is it this altruistic desire to succeed at the impossible, to reach even the most apathetic student, that inspires the beginning teacher to overcome adversity and make a difference in the lives of children?

Wylie Crawford (in Ryan, 1970) highlights the difficulty that these educational movies create for beginning teachers, as he identifies the movies of his era, *To Sir, With Love, Up the Down Staircase,* and *The Blackboard Jungle,* that gave him a false impression of teaching. In his words, "These obviously fictionalized accounts of new teachers' adventures in high school seemed to present realistic discipline problems, but the resolutions of these problems seemed either over-idealized, incomplete, or inappropriate to my own temperament" (p. 83). An interpersonal setting like the secondary classroom, where individuals come together to grow together, cannot be reduced to a 90 minute movie. This is still the case today, as a recent documentary entitled *Waiting for Superman* has shown us. This powerful movie that captures many of

the concerns with today's schools, fails in its oversimplification of the solution to the problems by glorifying the opportunities charter schools provide to families. Beginning teachers in both public and charter schools face the same concerns when striving to educate children. Movies can inspire teachers to continue the arduous path of successful teaching, or highlight difficulties in schools, but the lived experience of the educators and youth in the school system enables a deeper understanding of the challenges and celebrations of teaching. Only by understanding the lived experience of beginning teachers are schools able to support them appropriately in their journey toward their pedagogical way of being. The following sequel, by the same director, *Teach*, possibly reveals a move in that direction.

Guidance and Support

> Mentor, grievously though we may miss my father why go on as if that homecoming could happen? (Homer, as cited in Bookrags)

One method of support to assist beginning teachers in their journey toward selfhood has been to pair each of them with a veteran mentor for guidance and support during their first year of teaching; however, education, especially at the secondary level, has become such an individualized experience that it seems more and more difficult to find the time necessary for sustained mentoring. *Mentor*, derived from the Greek name of Odysseus' son Telemachus' teacher, means "wise advisor" (Online Etymology Dictionary). The quote from Homer above shows the eloquence and power of that original definition, as we are able to see the child without a father to guide him, learning from an elder how to become a successful man. Mentor was a teacher who had a great deal of time to spend with his pupil, ensuring that he was there to guide him through every challenge. Do the mentors so often assigned to beginning teachers have the time to

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guide and sustain them through the trials and tribulations they face? How can mentors assist beginning teachers as they plant the seeds of encouragement and high expectations in their students, and most importantly, how can mentors guide new pedagogues as they anxiously await the fruits of their labor?

I will never forget the first conversation I had with my mentor teacher that first year of teaching. He came to my room the first in-service day and handed me a massive stack of paper, comprised of packets for each lesson he taught throughout the year. He had a large smile on his face when he said, "You can use it all. Good luck." He was in his 28th year of teaching and was a wonderfully nice man, but our discussions could never get past pleasantries, so I abandoned my hope for true mentoring. Every beginning teacher is still assigned a mentor for support during his/her first year of teaching, which is a procedure clearly consistent with a trend the rest of the nation is following, brought to light in the research of Jonah Rockoff (2008), who studied the impact of the New York City mentoring program adopted in 2004. "Nearly 70 percent of recently hired teachers reported that they received help from a mentor in their first year of teaching, up from roughly 25 percent in 1990. Moreover, a majority of states now require mentoring programs for new teachers" (p. 2). His research provided evidence on the importance of having a veteran mentor in the same school to share school specific knowledge, and also that additional hours of mentoring for a beginning teacher could increase the beginning teacher's student achievement in math and reading. How can schools interested in supporting beginning teachers increase the time spent with positive veteran mentors? What impact does the occasional voice of the negative veteran teacher have on the pedagogical way of being formed by the beginning teacher?

If not supported as they narrate their pedagogical journeys, teachers can quickly turn cynical as they struggle to discipline students, plan lessons, complete administrative duties, and engage in the myriad of interpersonal relations the vocation requires. Richelle Patterson (2000), who examined the lived experience of beginning teachers in urban schools, found that it was the veteran teachers who instilled the "teaching as conflict mentality" in the newer members of the staff. In addition to perpetuating the perception that teaching is comprised of battles with students, Patterson also speculates, "Rudeness might be a way for veteran teachers to maintain power over the newcomers in the educational arena" (p. 5). According to Patterson, these same veteran teachers, who view the classroom as a battlefield where they need to maintain control over their students, may also believe it is important to control beginning teachers in order to hold onto the power inherent in a union dominated profession like teaching. Patterson sees power in a system that cultivates both beginning teachers and veteran teachers, using the analogy of a house of cards to explain the importance of the new, crisp cards and the older, worn cards that stack and hold each other up well. Are veteran teachers holding up their beginning teacher colleagues?

As rivers grow, often they begin to pick up sediment from the earthen bed or create sand and gravel through the powerful destruction of large rocks. This sediment can completely transform the makeup of the river and also greatly impact the life the river sustains. For example, animals and fish that lay eggs in the river bed will be threatened by shifting sediment. In the same manner, veterans often pick-up sediment along their journeys, as discussed in Chapter 1 with Jersild's (1955) writing on hostility. This can impact the veteran and beginning teachers in their presence. Fulgham's (2006) *Wit and*

Wisdom Needed in the Classroom, provides an example of this possibility, as her writing focuses on her experiences as an educator with twenty-nine years of experience. Fulgham occasionally drifts into the negative, as she shares her opinion that there is a "lower morale among teachers I know now than there used to be" (p. v). Things have changed a great deal in education, but Fulgham's description of the "basic students" in her low tracked classes really sounds out of place in a current environment focused on caring for children. Fulgham calls the discipline problem students in these classes as "little sociopaths" who "shouldn't be allowed to poison the well for the nice, mentally limited kids who need extra help to get through a course" (p. 104). How would a beginning teacher with little experience dealing with disabled or disruptive students feel about teaching these students after reading this? Does this description lead beginning teachers to demand that these behavior problems be removed from their classes, or does it empower them to question the composition of low-tracked classes to engage in conversations to include all students in the same rigorous curricula with differentiated instruction to reach each child's individual needs?

Frank McCourt (2005) describes well the ongoing advice he received from the veterans in the teacher's cafeteria; however, "The advice was wasted. I learned through trial and error and paid a price for it. I had to find my own way of being a man and a teacher and that is what I struggled with for thirty years in and out of the classrooms of New York" (p. 20). These words from McCourt really struck a chord with me as I ponder the way I support the beginning teachers in my care. So often, I find myself reassuring them with stories of my own first year debacles. I cringe as I recall saying to them, "All new teachers struggle." Have I become so complacent that I do not offer as much support

for these teachers because I believe that all new teachers struggle and they need to work it out on their own? "Support," derived from the Latin *suportare* and *portare*, means to "carry, bring up" (Online Etymology Dictionary). Like the river providing transportation to needy people, am I, or the beginning teachers' mentors, present enough with them to carry them through the difficult times they may face while establishing their pedagogical way of being? Is there a rite of passage that I, and other teachers who have already progressed through the first year, believe that beginning teachers must survive on their own to grow as a professional?

As an educator whose gaze has been drawn to the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, I am interested in uncovering the phenomenon that is the first year of teaching in order to engage each of these novice teachers in the examination of their personhood as it defines the work they do with children in the classroom. Teaching is both a collective activity, defined by interpersonal relationships with students, colleagues, supervisors, and parents, and a personal endeavor, where individual planning, assessing, and reflection comprise the elements of teaching that may lead a teacher to ultimate contentment in the profession. How does a beginning teacher make his or her own way in the teaching world while seeking support and guidance from others?

Who is the Teacher?

> This is the great challenge for all pedagogical understanding: to stand close enough to the child to want what is best for the child, and to stand far enough away from the child to know what is best for the child. (van Manen, 1991, p. 96)

Aoki (in Pinar, 2005) captures the pedagogical understanding described by van Manen when he writes: "Authentic teaching is watchfulness, a mindful watching

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overflowing from the good in the situation that the good teacher sees. In this sense, teachers are more than they do; they are the teaching" (p. 19). In this study, I am hoping to understand more insightfully the growth process beginning teachers encounter as they develop this pedagogical understanding (tact) and authentic teaching (praxis). Teachers hold so much power in the life of a child, as their actions and words are the teaching in schools. Who are the teachers with so much potential to impact the life of children?

Schools are currently designed to reward and support the teachers who plan to spend thirty-five years in the classroom, continually seeking degrees to better themselves as teachers; however, recent demographic data on teachers show us that today's teachers are markedly different than previous generations. Are schools keeping up with the changing demographics of first year teachers in order to support them sufficiently? Susan Moore Johnson (2010), Director of The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, describes today's new teacher on the Project website:

> Today, prospective teachers compare a career in education with many others, such as law, engineering, business, finance, which were largely closed to the cohort of retiring teachers when they entered the classroom in the 1960s and 1970s. Growing evidence shows that today's early-career teachers are, indeed, part of a new and different generation. Nearly half have worked in another field before becoming teachers and many have prepared for teaching in non-traditional programs. As a cohort, they are more likely than their predecessors to treat teaching as a short-term career and to be less satisfied with its professional isolation, standardized pay, undifferentiated roles, and lack of opportunities for influence and advancement. (p. 1)

Ingersoll and Merrill's (2010) data analysis also shows that teaching is continuing to become more female-dominated. The authors predict that in the future "an increasing number of students may encounter few, if any, male teachers during their elementary and secondary school careers" (p. 18). Knowing that most teachers are female, that half are entering teaching as a second career, and many are more concerned about short term

success than long term survival, are schools building the relationships necessary to empower these novice teachers to develop strong relationships with their students?

Today's new teachers are defined by the relationships they build in schools. In van Manen's (1991) words, "Tact is the practice of otherness" (p. 139). It is this way of relating to young people that defines teaching. Bell hooks (1994) calls this otherness, "engaged pedagogy," which she declares requires teachers to "be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (p. 15). Another work by hooks (2009) connects this process of "self-actualization" with the "project of self-reclamation" (p. 220). Clearly, before one can engage in the relationships with others that can lead to the "self-actualization" she describes, they must reclaim themselves through a process of reflection and growth. Hooks (2009) seems to connect the past of "self-reclamation" to the future of "self-actualization" when she writes:

> I pay tribute to the past as a resource that can serve as a foundation for us to revision and renew our commitment to the present, to making a world where all people can live fully and well, where everyone can belong. (p. 5)

These ideas define the purpose of this study, as I seek to shine light on the processes in which beginning teachers might examine their past teaching selves in order to engage in the changes necessary to reach the self-actualization of their pedagogical ways of being.

Lived Time: The Journey from Beginning to Ending

> A teacher cannot make much headway in understanding others or in helping others to understand themselves unless he is endeavoring to understand himself. (Jersild, 1955, p. 13)

Time to Grow

Rivers are classified by age. A river may be called youthful, mature, old, or rejuvenated, depending on its years of service to the environment and people around it. Other rivers are considered intermittent rivers, as they may only flow in the summer time or may actually dry up for several years before re-flowing again. Teachers are often classified by their years of service as well. Often, beginning teachers are considered youthful and idealistic, yet unproven and unsteady. Veteran teachers have proven their ability to thrive in their educational environments, but are often considered oppositional to any changes. There is a man I would call a rejuvenated teacher, not because he ever left the teaching field, but because he felt called to teach Advanced Placement English this past school year, and it has completely re-invigorated him after thirty-two years of teaching. The circumstances of schools are vital for ensuring that teachers have the time to grow and develop into the successful, competent professionals they long to be. As hooks (1994) iterates, "Engaged pedagogy is taxing to the spirit" (p. 202). Jersild (1955) concurs with his statement that "The search for meaning – the search for selfhood – is painful, and although it is healing, the person who undertakes it is likely to feel worse before he feels better" (p. 93). In addition to comforting and caring for teachers during their journeys, schools must provide the time needed to allow a beginning teacher to develop his or her pedagogical way of being with students. What impact does time have on the growth and development of a beginning teacher?

Lived experience shows us that time can take two forms for beginning teachers: physical time and mental time. Physical time represents the actual work time spent at school, as well as the time spent outside of school completing physical tasks like lesson

planning and grading; whereas, mental time represents the time spent worrying or obsessing over the work that needs to be done to achieve success with students. Gretchen leaves her home at 5:30 am every day in order to arrive at work by 6:15, which is an hour earlier than she is required to arrive. She also dreads her weekend time, which she spends working at a local restaurant in order to provide extra income to her family. She dreads this physical time in work, especially when it pulls her away from time with her young daughter, who has been demonstrating negative behaviors like scratching her mother and banging her head on the ground when she is upset. Gretchen continues on in the hope that she will not have to keep her weekend job forever, and that she will not have to plan as hard in the future after working so hard at the start. So, she fights through the difficulties that physical time presents, only to be completely overwhelmed and frustrated by the complexities of mental time. Gretchen shared that two nights prior to our conversation she spent the "entire night revising kids' papers in my mind." She beats herself up for this time spent lying in bed awake when she so desperately needs sleep, but she feels helpless to stop these thoughts that so surreptitiously creep up on her. Teaching is a profession where reflection is needed to fuel positive growth, but what impact do these sleepless nights have on the beginning teacher?

Teacher burn-out and disillusionment have contributed to a high attrition rate with beginning teachers. Successful teachers often lament the lack of time, as they long for more time to reach the students in their care. Time seems to fly-by in a thriving teacher's classroom. On the other hand, time seems to slow down in a struggling teacher's classroom, as the planned activities do not take up the entire period, or the beginning teacher cannot wait for the bell to ring when students are misbehaving. This is the

subjective time to which van Manen (1997) refers as lived time. In his words, "The temporal dimensions of past, present, and future constitute the horizons of a person's temporal landscape" (p. 104). Beginning teachers enter their first classroom shaped by the experiences of their past as students, experiences with teachers, and experiences as student teachers. They are changed daily by the lessons of the classroom, which in turn, alter their reflective memory. Beginning teachers strive to become successful teachers in the future, but this ideal of success will itself be altered by each new experience in the present. These changes become even more complicated when beginning teachers become a part of a school or district with its own past, present, and future, as teachers will alter their temporal understanding based on the lived space they inhabit. In Britzman's (1991) words, "Learning to teach – like teaching itself – is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (p. 8). How can you place a time-line on the change described by this process of becoming?

Time to Develop

> So let us plant dates even though we who plant them will never eat them. We must live by the love of what we will never see…Such disciplined hope is what has given prophets, revolutionaries and saints, the courage to die for the future they envisage. They make their own bodies the seed of their brightest hope. (Alves, in Intrator, 2003, p. 85)

The word graduate originates from the Latin *graduatus,* meaning "experienced or proficient person in an occupation" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). Undergraduate, also derived from *graduatus,* means "not yet an expert" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2002). These definitions would presume that an education major in college is not yet an expert in his or her field until that day when he or she graduates. On

this magic day, the new teacher is experienced and able to enter the classroom as proficient. Anyone who has stood before a group of adolescents on the first day of school knows that this is not the case. As van Manen (1991) writes, "The moment a teacher faces his or her first class does not suddenly make him or her a teacher" (p. 24). Clearly, beginning teachers need time to develop their art, defining their pedagogical way of being through practice and reflection. Teachers stand before their students like artists, using learned skills and behaviors to present themselves to the others in their presence. But does the field of education provide novice teachers the time to develop their expertise before entering the classroom with students?

As Jersild (1955) has reiterated, the first year of teaching is an important time for teachers to find a home within themselves though self-understanding and self-discovery. In his words, "The teacher's understanding and acceptance of himself is the most important requirement in any effort he makes to help students to know themselves and to gain healthy attitudes of self-acceptance" (p. 3). But I surmise that there is more to this process than simply understanding and acceptance, as the first year provides fantastic opportunities for personal growth, which require a great deal of strength in the new pedagogue. Schools need to strengthen beginning teachers to ensure that they become comfortable with the struggle inherent in this journey.

Parker Palmer (1998) captures the power inherent in this struggle when he describes the process as beginning teachers developing the "authority to teach" (p. 32). Ayers (1993) empowers beginning teachers when he refers to this process as the time to name themselves as teachers. This captures the power of the beginning teacher defining his or her pedagogical way of being in the classroom. This process of becoming is not a

passive search for meaning; this is an active journey to self-discovery, as teachers meander through and around impediments to reach the sea of transcendence that waits in their future. The purpose of this study is to stand alongside beginning teachers as they engage in this process of defining their pedagogical way of being. And from this shared "standing," perhaps insights gained can help "stem the tide" of rivers (schools) that are overflowing and claiming lives (teachers) who flee, never to return to such hostile waters.

The next chapter addresses a kind of home that has the potential to return teachers to themselves, so that with such possible "under"-standing, they might not have need of leaving. Like a boat traversing on the river toward the shores of home, I have found a dwelling place in hermeneutic phenomenology, which will allow me to understand more fully the lived experiences of beginning teachers in my care, as well as others who work with beginning teachers. In Chapter 3, I present the methodology I use in my quest for understanding the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being.

CHAPTER 3: PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Finding a Home in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

I want to grasp the meaning of teaching…so that I can live my pedagogic life with children more fully. Therefore, when I reflect on the experience of teaching I do not reflect on it as a professional philosopher, or as a psychologist, as a sociologist, as an ethnographer, or even as a phenomenologist or critical theorist. Rather, I reflect phenomenologically on experiences of teaching…as a teacher...In other words, I attempt to grasp the pedagogical essence of a certain experience. (van Manen, 1997, p. 78)

What I Had Been Waiting For

Max van Manen's quote resonates deeply with me as he most eloquently describes the power of hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry for bringing to light the pedagogical experiences of teachers. As an assistant principal in a suburban high school in central Pennsylvania, I attempt to follow van Manen's advice to live my research question in the presence of children and other educators each day. My fourteen-year journey as an educator has illuminated my research interest, as I seek to understand more fully the experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being.

Barritt et al. (1984) state that "Phenomenological research is done with an eye to the consequences for action" (p. 15), so I seek understanding in order to act more thoughtfully in my support and preparation of new teachers as they begin their own pedagogical journeys. My journey toward understanding the world in which I live and work has also led me to the phenomenological light that can powerfully uncover the lived experience of a beginning teacher. Max van Manen (1997) uses a quote by Nietzsche to describe the power of the phenomenological lantern for illuminating lived experience: "Whoever is searching for the human being first must find the lantern" (p. 4). I am fortunate to occupy the same lived space as exceptional educators, thankful that I am able

to shine the light on their daily work in order to understand more fully the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being.

In Chapter 1, I turn to the phenomenon, elucidating the complexities beginning teachers face as they seek to understand their pedagogical way of being more fully. In Chapter 2, I further uncover the essence of the phenomenon in my existential investigation, finding understanding in the words and experiences of others, namely those beginning teachers who strive daily to achieve success with the students in their care. I now use this Chapter 3 to ground myself in the philosophy that will guide me in my rendering of the lived experience of a beginning teacher. Truly, as I sojourned on my way to understand hermeneutic phenomenology as a research methodology, I realized that I was one of the "present-day readers" to whom Merleau-Ponty (1962) refers when he describes people "recognizing what they had been waiting for" (p. viii) in phenomenology. For the first time, I felt grounded in a methodology that could bring light to the experiences of these new teachers, whom I watched struggle to find their place in an ever increasing technocratic, educational world. Hermeneutic phenomenology can bring clarity to the experiences these novice teachers encounter as they seek tact and understanding in the complex technical world of policy mandates and the interpersonal relationships they find when immersed in the secondary public school system.

The Essence of the "Things Themselves"

Edmund Husserl (1931), often called the father of phenomenology, traces philosophical thought back to Descartes in order to "found a new science…transcendental phenomenology…drawn from real, genuine intuition of essential Being" (pp. 11-12). Husserl (1931) continues his definition by stating that "Pure or

transcendental phenomenology will be established not as a science of facts, but as a

science of essential Being; a science which aims exclusively at establishing knowledge of

essences and absolutely no facts" (p. 44). Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl's who

later established the foundation for hermeneutic phenomenology, often echoes his

mentor's insistence on a return to the "things themselves." I was drawn to another quote

by Husserl that captures this endeavor:

> It is plain that I…must neither make nor go on accepting any judgment as
> scientific that I have not derived from evidence, from experiences in which the
> affairs and affair-complexes in question are present to me as they themselves.
> (Husserl, 1960, p. 13)

Husserl's use of the objective, intensive pronoun *themselves* to follow the subjective case

pronoun *they* highlights to me the power of phenomenological inquiry. The phenomenon

presents itself to the researcher in its own subjective consciousness; it only becomes an

object when the researcher's gaze becomes fixed on it. In Husserl's (1960) words,

"Reflection makes an object out of what was previously a subjective process" (p. 34). In

a mid-size public high school, I inhabit the same space as ninety teachers and twelve-

hundred students. Individuals consciously proceed through their day, subjects

intentionally acting in a world of other subjects. It is only when a subject stops to fix his

or her gaze on another that he or she is able to examine the experiences that make up the

different essences of the phenomenon that presents itself. Husserl calls this act of

stopping, reflection, referring to the process of disconnection from oneself while

remaining in our capacity as "natural human beings." Husserl asserts that

"Phenomenological method proceeds entirely through acts of reflection" (p. 215).

    Reflection is often viewed as one of the most important elements for success in

the first year of teaching, as it is imperative that beginning teachers, exhausted from their

long hours of planning, teaching, assessing, and relationship building, stop to reflect on their practice to ensure their pedagogical growth. As a researcher engaging in hermeneutic phenomenology, I facilitated some of this reflective time for the beginning teachers, as we sat down together to engage in conversations about their lived experiences. I then engaged in my own reflective experience as I gathered themes from the conversations in order to understand the different essences of the phenomenon.

To Husserl (1960), phenomenology is a science that is "absolutely subjective" (p. 30), as the researcher's conscious glance gathers the experiences necessary to give meaning to the essence of Being. Husserl writes that as researchers first turn their gaze toward these experiences, they apprehend an essence that must be reduced through the reflective experience. Husserl (1960) writes that "Every grounding, every showing of truth and being, goes on wholly within myself," which leads him to question, "But how can this business…acquire objective significance?" (p. 82). Husserl answers that question by reiterating that there are no facts or objective truths in phenomenology. In his words, "Science looks for truths that are valid, and remain so, once for all and for everyone" (p. 12); however, phenomenology is interested in the phenomena that lie outside of the reach of pure science. A positivist researcher can observe his or her perceptions of the other, noting what is initially seen by this look. But phenomenology is interested in "the transcendence of the thing, over against the perception of it" (Husserl, 1931, p. 133). Husserl places the initial facts and perceptions to the side by "bracketing" them, in order to ensure that they do not prejudice the reflection that occurs on the new inquiries. Husserl (1931) calls this the "infinite field of absolute experience – the basic field of Phenomenology" (p. 155). Husserl ends by making no promises of objective truth or

simplified research methods. What he outlines is an intensive methodology, where experiences are gathered in order to be reflected upon by the researcher.

Present day readers may be taken aback by Husserl's use of the objective case to describe the phenomena of phenomenological inquiry; however, it is clear in his writing that Husserl (1960) uses the words *object* or *thing* not to describe something at the control of a subject but to provide a description to those "world objects…in the world" (p. 91) looked upon by the researcher interested in a better understanding of the phenomenon. Heidegger (1962) extended this description as he writes, "The person is not a Thing…Essentially, the person exists only in the performance of intentional acts, and is therefore essentially not an object" (p. 73). It is these intentional acts that I seek to uncover, as the beginning teacher defines his or her pedagogical way of being with students.

Heidegger (1962) was inspired by Husserl, his teacher, but took a markedly different path from the transcendental phenomenology his mentor outlined. To Heidegger, the subject in action does not transcend toward one true Being, as he believes that this Being cannot be reduced to a single essence. Heidegger describes this best in his writing on "significance," where "*Dasein* gives itself beforehand its Being-in-the-world as something to be understood" (p. 120). *Dasein* is not a single element to be formed by the beginning teacher; it is a state of Being that is to be discovered and redefined throughout his or her journey. Heidegger rarely refers to Husserl in his seminal work, *Being and Time,* as the differences between the two had become too great. I focus the remainder of this grounding in the writing of those who followed Husserl, inspired by the

philosophy established by Heidegger, including Gadamer, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, van

Manen, Aoki, and others.

The Beginning Teacher Flowing Toward Being

> I've known rivers:
> I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow
> of human blood in human veins.
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
> I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
> I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
> I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
> I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went
> down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn
> all golden in the sunset.
> I've known rivers:
> Ancient, dusky rivers.
> My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
> (Langston Hughes, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers,* www.poemhunter.com)

Martin Heidegger (1962) writes that, "In poetical discourse, the communication of

the existential possibilities of one's state-of-mind can become an aim in itself, and this

amounts to a disclosing of existence" (p. 205). I have found understanding in the imagery

of the beginning teacher as a river, seeking Being in its flow to the sea. Langston Hughes

renders the power of poetry and rivers in his use of the imagery of the river to capture his

identity in the poem, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*. From the African rivers of the Congo,

and Nile, to the American Mississippi, Hughes reflects on his own African-American

history. Rivers represent the struggle and triumph of his personal journey, as the muddy

Mississippi in the deep south of New Orleans was transformed golden by Lincoln's

emancipation proclamation that freed American slaves. Most importantly, Hughes

compares his soul, the one thing that could not be taken from him, to the deep river,

powerful and mighty. Through this poetical discourse, Hughes unconceals part of his

Being, which reaffirms Heidegger's belief in poetry as an access to experience. As a

researcher interested in the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their

pedagogical way of being, I sought to uncover the experiences that render the essence of

this phenomenon more fully.

As a guide on my journey to examine the power and benefit of hermeneutic

phenomenology for rendering my phenomenon, I sought understanding from Heidegger's

(1984/1996) interpretation of Holderlin's incomplete river hymn, later named *The Ister,*

and the film entitled *The Ister* (Barison & Ross, 2004) that later examined Heidegger's

philosophy in picture and word. Heidegger taught a lecture course at the University of

Freiburg in 1942 on *The Ister.* Throughout the published lecture transcript and the video

it later inspired, the river is poeticized to capture the essence of Heidegger's life and

philosophy. I will borrow from these works in my organization of this chapter, as I

continue to render the lived experience of a beginning teacher defining his or her

pedagogical way of being as a new river forming at a source, travailing toward its Being

on the journey to the mouth of the sea.

The Essence of Rivers, the Essence of Teachers

This one, however, is named the Ister.
Beautiful he dwells. The foliage of the columns burns
And stirs….
He appears, however, almost
To go backwards…
(Holderlin, *The Ister,* as cited in Heidegger, 1984/1996)

Barison and Ross (2004) begin their film, *The Ister,* at the mouth of the Danube

River, in Romania, where the Black Sea engulfs the mighty river. The Ister is a

Germanized version of an old Roman name for the Danube River. The video

cinematically follows the Danube, backwards, from the mouth in Romania to its source in

Germany. The filmmakers summarize their rationale for creating this film in the

following words: "What we hope the audience will discover in *The Ister* is a film that

allows the audience to experience the way in which Heidegger's thought remains alive

today" (2004). The filmmakers refer to Heidegger as "the 20th century's most powerful

thinker" and enlist modern-day philosophers to guide the viewer through Heidegger's

thoughts and words. The film powerfully captures the essence of the Danube river and

Heidegger's life and philosophy as it cinematically journeys past the ruins of a Greek city

in Romania, past the column of a Roman bridge, by the war-torn locales of Yugoslavia,

Croatia and Serbia, beside the political institutions of Hungary and through Hitler's

birthplace in Austria. The filmmakers explore Heidegger's connection to the Nazi party

in the river's flow by the Mauthausen concentration camp before the film's culmination

in Heidegger's homes of Freiburg and Beuron, close to the source of the Danube.

The directors use the Danube River to explore not only Heidegger's philosophy,

but also his life. While filming Freiburg University, they explore Heidegger's speech

upon accepting his rectorship there where he ended with the words, "Hail Hitler." While

at Mauthausen, Barison and Ross (2004) examine Heidegger's most infamous quote,

where he compared the motorized food industry to extermination camps:

> Agriculture is now a motorized food industry, the same thing in its essence
> as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and the extermination camps,
> the same thing as blockades and the reduction of countries to famine, the
> same thing as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs. (Heidegger, 1949, in Barison
> & Ross, 2004)

Barison and Ross (2004) interview Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, the French philosopher

who wrote a book on Heidegger's politics. Lacoue-Labarthe refers to Heidegger's

nationalism when discussing his rectorship at Freiburg and explains Heidegger's concern

with technology in his quote about gas chambers and the food industry; however, at the

end of his interview, as Lacoue-Labarthe can only shake his head and say, "How could he do it?" This man, who has exhaustively studied Heidegger's life and philosophy, can only say that he does not understand how Heidegger could commit such awful offenses during a time when his country needed him the most to stand against the atrocities of genocide.

While clearly not justifying Heidegger's actions and inactions during the period of Nazi rule in Germany, Lacoue-Labarthe's response attempts to escape the place of tension created by such an enigma. Martin Heidegger devoted his life to the study of ontology, philosophizing on authentic beings who care for self while caring for others. He also contributed support to those in power who instituted governmental genocide, while failing to ever apologize for his actions. Lacoue-Labarthe's response is an easy way to avoid this tension, failing to take to task Heidegger's actions. Barison and Ross (2004) also interview artist Hans Jürgen Syberberg who attempted to put into words the impact of Heidegger's actions. As he stands alongside the river in Beuron, where Heidegger retreated from 1945-1949 after the denazification committee banned him from teaching, Syberberg laments that the rivers are no longer inspirational to poets today; the warmness is gone. Just like rivers have become a part of the machine of life, ruined by technology, humans have repeatedly demonstrated their many failings. Innocence is gone, as we can no longer make heroes out of individuals like Heidegger, who seem to have so much potential for being, yet fail to reach authenticity.

Aoki (2005) reminds us to embrace the "tension at the margin" (p. 35), so it is imperative that we truly wrestle with Heidegger's words and actions during the Holocaust in Europe when grounding studies in hermeneutic phenomenology. The truth, which Lacoue-Labarthe and Syberberg fail to acknowledge, is that we will never understand

why Heidegger did what he did. He inhabited a place of great hatred and he failed to rise

above that as he projected his essence on those around him. With this said, what is best to

do here? I choose to reference Heidegger in this work, not to celebrate his life and the

mistakes he made while living that life, but because I have experienced the potential of

his philosophy of hermeneutic phenomenology for understanding educational questions.

The great philosophers and educators whom he has since inspired have given to me a

mode of inquiry for rendering the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their

pedagogical way of being.

The Flow of Time

> Yet what that one does, that river
> No one knows (Holderlin, as cited in Heidegger, 1984/1996, p. 6)

Like the poets he names in his philosophizing on the essence of rivers, Heidegger,

too, lived his life as an enigma, as no one really knew where his path was going to lead.

In his interpretation of Holderlin's hymn, *The Ister,* Heidegger (1984/1996) philosophizes

on the importance of the existentials, place and time, as he describes the essence of the

river:

> The river is the locality and the journeying at once, because it is the river spirit
> and as river spirit is of the essence of the demigod. This means here: The river is
> one that poetizes between human beings and gods. That which is to be poetized is
> the poetic dwelling of human beings upon this earth. The poeticizing of becoming
> homely, however, must follow the essence of this becoming. Becoming homely
> demands a going away into the foreign. The poeticizing river spirit, because it
> seeks the homely and must learn to use freely what is its own, must come from
> the foreign into its own. The river must remain in the realm of its source in such a
> way that it flows toward it from out of the foreign. (p. 142)

Societies make their homes along the river banks, seeking the life-sustaining presence of

the river's offerings. While the river represents this settled presence, it also symbolizes

the journey in its flow toward the sea. In this duality, I find the lived experience of

beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. Heidegger names the rivers as poets, demigods between gods and humans, capturing the essence of Being for humans in their poeticizing. I certainly do not want to go as far as to name teachers as demigods, but I have in the earlier chapters compared teachers to artists, who like poets, develop their artistry in the presence of others. Webster's defines "demigod" as "a mythological being with more power than a mortal but less than a god" (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary). Teachers often find themselves living in the spaces between art and science, curriculum and students, being and becoming. Like Hermes on a mission from Zeus, teachers often inhabit this middle ground as they seek to bring knowledge to the students in their care.

Most important to my phenomenon, beginning teachers must journey toward their Being, while constantly returning to their source in order to know themselves well enough to seek their *Dasein* while remaining open to the experiences of the others in their care. Teachers, like the poets Heidegger describes, must venture into the foreign, into the unknown, in order to return to the homely with the knowledge necessary to capture the essence of humanity. It is in these themes of place and time, the technology of science vs. the humanity of art, and the care for others and the understanding of one's own *Dasein* that I begin my examination of hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology to guide me on my journey to understanding the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being.

The Presentation of Being

> Let us also in the days ahead remain as wanderers on the way into the
> neighborhood of Being. (Heidegger, 1964/1993, p. 247)

Heidegger views Being as something that the individual is in constant journey to define; however, as Holderlin captures with the concluding words of his poem, *The Ister,* no one knows what the river, or poet, or teacher, will do. To capture this wandering, Heidegger combines the German words *da* and *sein* to create the word *Dasein,* which he defines in the following words: "*Dasein* always understands itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself or not to be itself...Existence is decided only by each *Dasein* itself in the manner of seizing upon or neglecting such possibilities" (Heidegger, 1927/1993, p. 54). As you can see, this definition places a great deal of power in individuals, consciously acting in the world, projecting their Being on the others around them. Heidegger continues his description of *Dasein* when he writes, "Every sort of thought, however, is always only the execution and consequence of a mode of historical *Dasein*, of the fundamental position taken toward Being and toward the way in which beings are manifest as such, i.e., toward truth" (Heidegger, 1964/1993, p. 295).

The term "truth" that Heidegger (1964/1993) uses can seem contradictory, as he views *Dasein* as in continuous definition, never being reduced to a single truth; however, instead of referring to truth as definitive fact, he asserts that the "essence of truth is freedom" (p. 123). To help the reader understand his use of freedom, Heidegger uses the Greek word *aletheia*, defined as "the unconcealment of beings" (p. 161) to describe the freedom at the core of the revelation of truths. Heidegger describes his thoughts on the word freedom, which typically refers to "letting beings be" (p. 125), and describes how in his use, the letting be in freedom actually means "to engage oneself with beings" (p. 125). Phenomenological inquiry, defined as the search for essential Being, involves engaging with others in order to uncover the *Dasein* hidden to the initial perception of the eye.

Only through intense conversation, observation, and reflection, is one able to uncover the phenomenon's hidden essence.

Sartre's Existential Being and Gadamer's Bildung

Dasein can, in its very Being, choose itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only seem to do so. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 68)

After my first encounter with Heidegger's *Dasein*, I immediately thought of Sartre's existentialism due to its emphasis on individuals acting on their own free will to develop into their full potential. Heidegger also saw this connection in Sartre's work, as he writes to him: "Your work shows such an immediate comprehension of my philosophy as I have never before encountered" (in Safranski, 1998, p. 349). Sartre (1956) expands the idea of an individual's potential when he says, "Since I am always beyond what I am, about-to-come-to-myself, the 'this' to which I am present appears to me as something which I surpass toward myself" (p. 96). Here Sartre argues eloquently that possibility precedes Being, again placing emphasis on the conscious choices made by each Being in his/her journey toward *Dasein*. Sartre echoes Husserl in his use of the word "transcendence" to describe the individual "surpassing toward what it lacks" (p. 89). He describes individuals projecting their essence on the world as they consciously engage in actions that define their way of being in the world. Sartre presents these individuals as transcending beyond themselves, not toward nothing, but toward something that they lack and hope to grasp.

Heidegger's student, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975/2004), presents his understanding of Heidegger's *Dasein* with his description of *Bildung*, which he describes as the "transition from becoming to being" (p. 10). In my understanding, *Bildung* really encompasses Heidegger's *Dasein* and Sartre's "transcendence," as it describes an

individual developing his or her "capacities or talents" (p. 10). *Bildung* is a very

individualistic endeavor, described as "the return to oneself" (p. 13), which would

represent the projecting of Being on the world philosophized by Heidegger. Again, there

is power in subjects acting consciously to project their essence in the presence of others.

Gadamer emphasizes a "historical consciousness," which he defines as a "mode of self-

knowledge" (p. 228). As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, beginning teachers must know

themselves well enough to progress toward the *Bildung* lying ahead of them. Like

Husserl and Heidegger, Gadamer emphasizes the importance of reflection for uncovering

the individual's *Bildung*. Only through thoughtful action, or "praxis," defined by

Heidegger (1977) as "all doing, pursuing, and sustaining" (p. 274), is an individual able

to pursue consciously that which completes his or her true Being. How does a beginning

teacher develop the praxis necessary to engage in the process of becoming?

Care

Care is the all inclusive name for my concern for other people, preoccupations
with things, and awareness of my proper Being. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 223)

Heidegger (1962) refers to care as the Being of *Dasein*. Appropriately, Heidegger

uses an ancient fable that occurred while crossing a river, to describe his idea of care. My

paraphrasing of Heidegger's telling of this fable follows:

Once, when Care was crossing a river, she saw some clay, which she molded. She
then asked Jupiter to give it spirit and he did. Earth then arose and a naming
conflict ensued for the new object. Saturn was called to serve as an arbitrator. He
decided to award the spirit to Jupiter at death, while Earth will get the body. Care
shall possess it as long as it lives and it shall be named homo, as it is from the
earth, or humus. (p. 242)

Humans are in the possession of Care for as long as they shall live, returning

to the earth at death when the spirit rises to Jupiter. Care is not simply the concern for oneself or even just the care for others, but it encompasses both, as *Dasein* is discovered in the presence of others in the world. Heidegger (1962) continues, "*Dasein's* Being is care. It comprises in itself facticity (thrownness), existence (projection), and falling" (p. 329). *Dasein*, in the "average everydayness" (p. 225) described by Heidegger, will fall into concern with others in the world, and in turn, will project itself on the others in its care. The being-alongside defines the beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being with students, as they project their Being on the others in their care.

Noddings (2003) expands on the idea of care, as she describes the powerful relationship that may develop between the "one-caring" teacher and the "cared-for" student:

> It is a total conveyance of self to other, a continual transformation of individual to duality to new individual to new duality. (p. 61)

While being-alongside their students, Noddings emphasizes the pedagogical relationship that occurs when "the teacher receives the student and becomes in effect a duality" (p. 177). Noddings notes that this may sound "mystical" (p. 177), but dismisses that concern by describing how the "one-caring receives the child and views his world through both sets of eyes" (p. 63). By truly caring for others, beginning teachers will simultaneously meet their own needs, as viewing the "world through both sets of eyes" will guide them as they plan lessons, adjust teaching, and create a classroom conducive for learning. It is hard to miss the potential in viewing self and other as a duality in the classroom.

Heidegger (1984/1996) continues his examination of care when he refers to a river as "a *Ratsel*, an enigma. We should not wish to solve it. Yet we must try to bring the enigma as enigma closer to us" (p. 35). Heidegger connects the enigma to care through

the word "*Rat*, or Counsel" (p. 34). He defines "counsel" as: "To take into care, to retain therein that which we care about, and thus to ground our belonging to it" (p. 34). We cannot solve the enigma that is the phenomenon of the beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. We can only hope to get close enough to it to understand its essence more fully. Care puts us hand in hand with the other as we define our own *Dasein* in the everydayness of life.

Like the enigma described by Heidegger, teaching is often described as impossible as teachers ceaselessly strive to improve their pedagogical way of being with students. This journey is even more difficult for beginning teachers as they can sometimes become lost in the chaos of the first year. Heidegger (1962) calls this "fallenness," which he describes as "lost in the publicness of the they. Dasein has…fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the world" (p. 220). As beginning teachers become engrossed in the relationships around them in the space of the school, including motivating and disciplining students and interacting with colleagues and supervisors, they may lose focus of the possibility of their own *Dasein*. Heidegger describes this preoccupation with the world "inauthenticity" (p. 220). On the other hand, the beginning teachers have a great potential for authenticity, since they are the closest to the source of their river of Being. If supported and cared for, beginning teachers can continually progress on their journey toward Being, while looking back at the source of their childhood, educational preparation, and student teaching, where the beginnings of their pedagogical way of being began to emerge.

Sartre (1956) captures the potential for inauthenticity in his analogy of being looked at through the keyhole. Individuals are not alone in the world; they project their

essence on the other, in whose presence they are constantly viewed. Sartre asks the question, "What does being seen mean for me?" (p. 259). This self-consciousness of being in the eyes of the other can cripple a beginning teacher and inhibit their journey to Being; however, as Heidegger explains, freedom is defined by the process of engagement with others, so the immense potential for growth is present in this understanding. Understanding the *Dasein* of an individual is not as simple as putting a subject in a closed room with one-way mirrors in order to observe his or her actions. The journey toward *Dasein* occurs in the presence of others, as individuals define their way of being in the world through these experiences and subsequent reflection to determine their essence.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Jersild (1955) sees anxiety as one of the nine categories of problems and concerns beginning teachers face. This anxiety can draw beginning teachers away from the Being they long to become, as concern over what may be or what may happen can fetter potential. Heidegger (1962) philosophizes on anxiety when he writes, "When something threatening brings itself close, anxiety does not 'see' any definite 'here' or 'yonder' from which it comes. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens is nowhere" (p. 231). Beginning teachers do not always know what they fear, as each day brings a new experience. Anxiety is one means in which beginning teachers often lose focus of their *Dasein,* and instead worry about surviving the things about which they are not even aware. What if I lose control of my classroom? What if I get a bad evaluation? What if my colleagues lose respect for me? Heidegger (1964/1993) continues, "Anxiety reveals the nothing" (p. 101), as the worry and concern of beginning teachers can drive them toward an inauthentic

being. In what ways can beginning teachers overcome anxiety in their journey toward their authentic pedagogical way of being?

From Becoming to Being

An individual acquires his individuality by developing his talents and at the same time experiencing the conditioning effect of circumstances. What emerges, the actual individuality…is not a mere consequence of the causal factors nor to be understood only in terms of these causes, but it constitutes a unity that is intelligible in itself, a unity of life that is expressed in every one of its manifestations and hence can be understood in each of them. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 220)

The river in its becoming is the most arduous stage; once it reaches its state of being a river, it only has to deal with the elements of nature and the intrusion of man to continue its journey to the sea. The time of beginning for teachers during their first year is also the most challenging, as they strive to reach the state of Being a teacher. As we know, for an array of reasons, all beginning teachers do not reach the *Dasein* they hope to become, as dreams fade like the setting sun; however, many complete their *Bildung* as a beautiful picture emerges, projected on the others in their presence. Parker Palmer (2000) describes this variance so well when he describes the "teachers who create the conditions under which young people must spend so many hours: some shine a light that allows new growth to flourish, while others cast a shadow under which seedlings die" (p. 78). I am interested in the experiences that lead beginning teachers to their Being with children, whether it is viewed successful or destructive by the teacher and students in his or her care. As Heidegger (1964/1993) states, "Teaching is a giving, an offering…teaching therefore does not mean anything else than to let the others learn, that is, to bring one another to learning" (p. 275). While rendering the essence of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being with children, I hope that the light I shine also guides the

teachers to a fuller understanding of their pedagogical way of being they create with children.

The Dwelling Space of the School House

> Here, however, we wish to build.
> For rivers make arable
> The land. Whenever plants grow
> And there in summer
> The animals go to drink.
> So humans go there too. (Holderlin, as cited in Heidegger, 1984/1996, p. 4)

Gestell

> Empiricism...is not concerned with what we see, but with what we ought to see. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 36)

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, today's educational system has become overrun by the technical language of measurement and accountability. Like *The Ister* described by Holderlin, teachers have always provided water to those with the thirst of knowledge; however, today's environment threatens to stifle the breath, or spirit, of the educators in the dwellings of society. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Heidegger (1964/1993) writes a great deal about his concern with the technological world he saw emerging, at times out of control around him. He used the term *gestell* to represent the "enframing" of the technological world (p. 325). In his words, "enframing…banishes man into the kind of revealing that is an ordering" (p. 332). His powerful use of the words "banishing" and "ordering" brings to light his concern that technology has reduced persons to simply classifying objects into the already known truths of empiricism. Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Gadamer, and Merleau-Ponty have all sought experiential understanding in a positivistic research oriented world. Merleau-Ponty describes "two modes of being…being in itself, which is that of objects arrayed in space, and being for

itself, which is that of consciousness" (p. 407). Merleau-Ponty (1962) does not disparage empiricism in his quote above; he simply states that phenomenology is the best method for understanding the essence of a human Being. In his words, "There is thus no place for other people and a plurality of consciousnesses in objective thought" (p. 407).

Has science progressed more quickly than the society that uses the technology? Rivers have flowed since the beginning of time, and civilizations have often sought means to build bridges to subdue the river and cross unharmed to the other side. Man, too, has often tried to sort and order experiential understandings into the confines of positivistic research methods; however, it is impossible to measure the essence of *Dasein* or the brilliance of *Bildung*, in the same manner that it is difficult to measure a poem's brilliance. Robin Williams' character in *Dead Poet's Society* so wonderfully illustrates this, as he instructs his students to tear the poem rating scale page out of their textbooks. As Gadamer (1975/2004) declares, a man's being cannot be measured by a "yardstick" (p. 4). Only in humanistic research methods, including phenomenology, can the researcher hope to get close enough to the phenomenon in order to fully render its essence.

As Gadamer's yardstick analogy exposes, empirical research cannot capture the phenomena presented by subjective Beings acting in pure consciousness. To modify an analogy used by Heidegger, a positivistic researcher interested in learning more about human beings could drown a healthy person with the sole purpose of recording the physiological measurements of the dying body. This would tell the world unequivocally how long a person can survive under water and may even lead to some further research about methods for increasing survival time underwater; however, in order for these truths

to be discovered, the object had to lose his life for the benefit of humankind. The only thing this research says about the lived experience of humans is that too often, their individual Beings are lost in the collective being studied by such quantitative measures.

The philosophers presented thus far have echoed their intention to see human science research treated with the same methodological respect as positivistic modes of inquiry: In Heidegger's (1964/1993) words, "No particular way of treating objects of inquiry dominates the others" (p. 94). Gadamer (1975/2004) echoes this desire as well: "Human sciences must be firmly established as an equally autonomous and self-reliant group of sciences" (p. 6). Merleau-Ponty (1964) adds to his words above, "Science manipulates things and gives up living in them" (p. 159). It is the lived experience of beginning teachers that calls me in this research. I seek not truths and answers, but questions, experiences, and themes that further uncover the multiple essences of the phenomenon of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. Only through the tact and thoughtfulness of hermeneutic phenomenology can I hope to access the experiences necessary to render the essence of this phenomenon.

Pedagogical Tact

> If there is one word that most aptly characterizes phenomenology itself, then this word is thoughtfulness. (van Manen, 1997, p. 12)

As I wrote in Chapters 1 and 2, I connected a great deal with van Manen's writing on tact, as it most appropriately names both the pedagogical thoughtfulness needed by beginning teachers in their journey toward *Dasein*, as well as the mindfulness needed by the phenomenological researcher seeking to stand close enough to the phenomenon to unconceal the essences of each experience. Aoki (in Pinar, 2005) captures this so well when he writes:

> Mindfulness [is] a phenomenological meditativeness that enables us to remember that being in the situation is a human being in his becoming. This mindfulness allows the listening to what it is that a situation is asking. (p. 12)

This quote again illustrates the benefit of hermeneutic phenomenology for understanding the lived experience of a beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. Gadamer (1975/2004) echoes this mindfulness in his description of "tact," which he states "helps one to preserve distance. It avoids the offensive, the intrusive, the violation of the intimate sphere of the person" (p. 15). Gadamer describes the complexity of developing tact when he writes about the importance of distancing oneself while remaining close enough to render it fully. This is why van Manen (1997) states, "Phenomenological inquiry is not unlike an artistic endeavor" (p. 39). I spent four years in college to understand the science of teaching; I spent my entire first year of teaching developing my artistry with students. I have spent the past three years studying the history and characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology, and I now rely on my artistry as a writer and as a conversant to use this knowledge to render the phenomenon fully.

The Art-ful Presentation of Being

> Beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment.
> (Heidegger, 1964/1993, p. 181)

Often, the light shone by the researcher reveals tremendous beauty in the beginning teacher. Like the spotlight on an opera singer or pianist, pedagogical Beings emerge in their self-presentation with students in the classroom. Heidegger (1964/1993) continues, "Art then is a becoming and happening of truth…the clearing of beings, happens only when the openness that makes its advent in thrownness is projected" (p. 196). Beginning teachers, striving to reach their individual potential, cast or throw their Being outside of themselves and into this clearing that "grants and guarantees to us

humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are" (p. 178). The researcher shines light on this Being, while students soak up the radiance and beauty of the pedagogical Being that emerges. I borrowed earlier from Parker Palmer (2000), who describes his teaching as a "dance" (p. 52), and I return to it in comparison to Gadamer's (1975/2004) philosophy of "play" as the "self presentation" (p. 115) and "transformation" (p. 111) of a person into his or her Being. The first year for beginning teachers is an exhilarating journey of transformation toward their Being, and the potential beauty that emerges displays itself in an artistic pedagogy in the classroom, if teachers can be opened to such illumination.

Heidegger and Gadamer both dedicate sections of their philosophic projects to the topic of art and beauty. Their musings on the topic have led me to contend that pedagogy is the artwork of the teacher as artist. "It is precisely in great art…that the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work" (Heidegger, 1964/1993, p. 166). This work, which is the teacher in action, shines forth when the light of truth reveals its splendor. "The work of art has its being in the fact that it becomes an experience that changes the person who experiences it" (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 103). The beginning teacher is transformed during his or her first year of teaching, as he or she adapts to meet the needs of his or her students. I have chosen to study this transformation to more fully understand the experiences that emerge from the actions of the teacher artists. I have chosen hermeneutic phenomenology to guide me in my research, as I believe that only an artist can art-fully render the Being of another artist.

As I discuss in Chapters 1 and 2, I am greatly interested in the artistic endeavor of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being with students. Obviously,

there is a science to teaching that beginning pedagogues must understand, but it is the praxis and tact that they develop in order to display artfully their being in the classroom that most intrigues me. Because of this, I was drawn to Gadamer's (1975/2004) use of the word "play" to name the act of transformation that occurs in the process of *Bildung*. Gadamer defines "play" as the "absolute autonomy" (p. 110) an individual feels as he or she puts forth a great deal of effort, but experiences an "absence of strain" (p. 105). *Bildung* is the picture that presents the individual's transformation. This is not a haphazard endeavor, as the individual is striving toward something he or she lacks. The individual's *Bildung* is on display for the other, transformed by the freedom and beauty of truth. Gadamer (1975/2004) states that this picture that emerges through the play of the individual "is an event of being – in it being appears, meaningfully and visibly" (p. 138).

The age-old axiom, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, is relevant to us as we consider the Other who views the beautiful Being that emerges in the classroom. Sartre (1956) tells us that "I recognize that I am as the Other sees me…the Other has not only revealed to me what I was; he has established me in a new type of being" (p. 222). Interestingly, Sartre continues that quote by reflecting on the "education system which consists in making children ashamed of what they are. This shame is shame of oneself before the Other" (p. 222). As an educator, I am saddened by this analysis of our school system, which is echoed in Levin's (1985) recognition of the amount of time teachers spend "suppressing the bodily activities which take the mind away from its material" (p. 228). Too often, I have seen our education system use failure to punish students for misbehavior. Too frequently, we have promoted disengagement over active learning in order to keep order in our classrooms. On too many occasions, I have seen parents

brought to tears by the decision to medicate their child because they were not able to pay attention in school. Is our education system flexible enough to allow students to emerge fully into their individual beings? Are we able to nourish and sustain our beginning teachers in this environment?

As Merleau-Ponty (1964) writes, "Only the painter is entitled to look at everything without being obliged to appraise what he [sic] sees" (p. 161). Only in a non-judgmental atmosphere like this is it possible for individuals to emerge into their being, where beautiful paintings will be on display in every student and educator.

The Artistry of Perception

> Perception opens a window on to things…directed…towards a truth in itself in which the reason underlying all appearances is to be found. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 62)

As Merleau-Ponty states, the window to understanding the essence of Being of another lies in the power of perception. Researchers can look through the window, using their senses to observe a person, and record their thoughts about the significance of the person's appearance, actions, and movements; however, the perception that Merleau-Ponty describes goes deeper than that, as researchers must open the window in order to perceive the individual fully by conversing with the person and then reflecting on the projected experiences. Merleau-Ponty (1962) personifies reflection when he writes:

> Reflection…steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice. (p. xv)

This imagery powerfully captures the task of the researcher called to seek meaning in these transcendent sparks projected from the subject in conscious action. Merleau-Ponty states that the "task" before the researcher is to "rediscover phenomena," which he

defines as "the layer of living experience through which other people and things are first given to us" (p. 66).

I love his use of the word "rediscover," especially when paired with his words, "To perceive is not to remember" (p. 26). I have lived the experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, as I have been a beginning teacher and have spent fourteen years in the presence of beginning teachers; however, during that time, I was a subject in action, never truly stopping in the act of reflection to perceive the object in my gaze. As Husserl warns, I must bracket that which I think I know about this phenomenon in order to open my mind to the phenomenological perception described by Merleau-Ponty.

To Merleau-Ponty (1962), reflection on the experiences which present themselves is paramount. In fact, he makes a distinction between reflection and "radical reflection," which he describes as "reflection, not only in operation, but conscious of itself in operation" (p. 254). It is this act of radical reflection that leads to the thematizing that adds significance to the phenomenon and defines its essential Being. I am drawn to phenomenological inquiry with the desire to capture the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. I have chosen phenomenology as my research methodology to ensure that the individual Being of each beginning teacher is not lost, but in fact, discovered through the light of understanding. It is the individual teacher's *Dasein* I wish to uncover, understanding the pedagogical experiences of first year teachers as they seek to reach the possibilities of their Being.

Pedagogical Experience

The meaning of pedagogy needs to be found in the experience of pedagogy. (van Manen, 1997, p. 53)

I receive some very blank stares when I tell other educators that I am using hermeneutic phenomenology as my research methodology. In my world of the American high school, where test scores and quantitative research data are treated as gospel, the importance of the lived experience of a beginning teacher is often overshadowed by the outcome-based results of students. Merleau-Ponty (1962) states with embarrassment that he still needs to ask what phenomenology is "half a century after the first works of Husserl" (p. vii). To follow-up Merleau-Ponty's statement now almost a full century after the writings of Husserl, I would have to say that that question is still being asked. It is affirming that phenomenology is still a living, breathing philosophy in that modern practitioners like van Manen and Aoki are still redefining it for fields like education; however, the adverse of that is that phenomenology is still relatively unknown in many research institutions across the country. The dominant paradigm of the day is still "objectivism," which, according to Palmer (2009), still views experiential research as inhabiting the subjective "realm of darkness" (sound disc 3). Palmer laments the fact that objectivism currently dominates academia, because it asks the knower to stand apart from the known, giving "it no chance to be a living thing" as it is "objectified" and "thingified" (sound disc 3). As a researcher, I do not want to put up a wall between myself and my participants, as this would keep me from truly seeing them. By inhabiting this lived space with beginning teachers, I seek to illuminate their experiences in order to render the phenomenon in a meaningful pedagogic way.

As van Manen (1997) advises, "The task of phenomenological research and writing" is "to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience" (p. 41). This lived experience is then transformed into a "textual expression

of its essence" (van Manen, 1997, p. 36). As described in Chapters 1 and 2, these pedagogical experiences can be very challenging, as beginning teachers step into the fire on the first day, forced to make a vast number and variety of decisions in the presence of students observing their every move. Because of the challenging nature of this work, beginning teachers too often lose sight of their *Dasein*, as it becomes concealed by the technocratic language of survival. Instead of seeking an understanding of the relationships they have developed with children, they beg for tools to manage their students to eliminate disruptions of learning. Too often, this blindedness impedes the beginning teachers' journey toward their Being. Heidegger (1964/1993) describes this emergence as occurring "beyond beings, not away from them but before them" in an "open place" he terms a "clearing" (p. 178). It is in the clearing where *aletheia*, or truth, occurs, as teachers reach the *Dasein* they seek. I am called to explore a fuller understanding of the Being of a beginning teacher, who daily searches for his or her own clearing of connectedness to the educational world where children reside and where dreams are wrought and brought to fruition.

The Hermeneutic Circle

Literature is the place where art and science merge. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 156)

Like great literature, it is in the humanistic art of pedagogy and the science of hermeneutics that my question comes to life as they meet in the middle, outside of the Being becoming. Like Aoki (in Pinar, 2005), I find comfort living "in the tension at the margin" where "questioning becomes central to my way of life" (p. 35). Gadamer (1975/2004) tells the story of the Greek god Hermes, who defined his existence in the middle, as he brought the messages of the gods to mortals. It is in this spirit that

hermeneutics was born, as the ancient texts, once considered sacred, were brought to the common man through study and interpretation. The hermeneutic circle, where "we must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole" (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 291) and where the question has no beginning and no end, defines the experience of the phenomenological researcher. As van Manen (1997) states, "Lived experiences gather hermeneutic significance as we (reflectively) gather them by giving meaning to them" (p. 37). I was drawn to hermeneutic phenomenology as I gathered the lived experiences of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being and then radically reflected on their meanings to draw out the essences of the experience.

The first known use of the word hermeneutic occurred in 1737 (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary). This origin coincides with the beginning of the German Romantic period, defined as:

> A literary, artistic, and philosophical movement originating in the 18th century, characterized chiefly by…an emphasis on the imagination and emotions…the use of autobiographical material, an exaltation of the primitive and the common man. (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary)

Like the language of Romanticism, hermeneutics emphasizes the power of individuals to form their own interpretations of texts that were once considered only for the privileged eyes of the powerful and educated. Hermeneutic phenomenology emerged following the period of German Romanticism, and it too emphasized a return to the lived experiences present in the stories of individuals. This also highlights the humanism of hermeneutic phenomenology, as it gives value to humans by situating their experiences in the world in which they exist. Heidegger (1964/1993) defines authenticity as the "essence of man [sic] to the truth of Being" (p. 236). This definition captures the power of the individual and

the idea of truth that emerged from hermeneutics. Truth used to be reserved for a privileged few, but hermeneutics restores truth to each individual. Hermeneutic phenomenology seeks lived experiences that capture the essence of a phenomenon, as individuals seek their authentic way of being in the world.

As an educator, I am interested in the unique experiences of each beginning teacher. Hermeneutics adds the humanistic rigor, as I interpret and analyze the lived experience of each beginning teacher who traveled with me on this journey. Heidegger (1977) defines hermeneutics as the "interpretation of the Being of Dasein" (p. 85). As I attempt to render the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, I rely on the thematic interpretation of hermeneutics to elicit meaning from the experiential sources. As Gadamer (1975/2004) says, "The true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between" (p. 295). As a researcher, I capture the lived experience in authentic conversations with my participants. This is the reason that Gadamer states that "the primacy of hearing is the basis of the hermeneutical phenomenon" (p. 458). Sometimes, seeing can be deceiving, as the researcher may unintentionally envision something in the phenomenon that is not truly there. Only through conversations and a thematic rendering of those conversations is a true hermeneutic interpretation of a lived experience possible.

Bachelard (1994) elaborates on the power of hermeneutics when he states that "Hermeneutics, which is more profound than biography, must determine the centers of fate by ridding history of its conjunctive temporal tissue, which has no action on our fates" (p. 9). This history so often presents itself to the researcher as "prepossessions, even those of reason…especially those generated by our prejudices" (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 182). To follow-up the previous section on the beauty of teaching,

Gadamer (1975/2004) shows us that the "play of language itself" and the understanding of a text, "captivates us just as the beautiful captivates us" (p. 484). I am excited that this research has provided me with the potential to render fully an experience in a manner that may present itself as beautiful to the reader interested in acting more thoughtfully to prepare and support beginning teachers. Hopefully, as I strive toward my own possibility of Being, I have captured the lived experience of a beginning teacher in a manner that myself, my participants, or my readers will benefit from its presentation. Of course, I hope that this rendering will be beneficial for other educators as well, and particularly for those who prepare teachers. As van Manen (1997) declares, "Phenomenology is, in a broad sense, a philosophy or theory of the unique" (p. 7). Hermeneutic phenomenology allows the researcher to spend a great deal of time conversing with the individual teacher, whereby the experience is rendered through thematic analysis and made meaningful.

Once themes emerge from the phenomenological conversations, a hermeneutic text emerges. Van Manen (1997) reminds us that "If all the world is like a text then everyone becomes a reader (and an author)…whose interpretation is the correct one" (p. 39). Gone are the days when a sacred text was hidden from the illiterate by learned interpretation. The thematic rendering that emerges from this research exists in itself, for itself, in that it represents my understanding of the essence of this phenomenon. As Heidegger (1977) reminds us, the word "phenomenon" etymologically means "brought to light" (p. 73); therefore, it is hermeneutics, with the task of interpreting the Being of each *Dasein*, that alone possesses the power to reveal the essence that is evident only in the clearing of each co-researcher on this journey to meaning.

Captivated by a Question

To ask a question means to bring into the open. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 357)

Once the phenomenological question is presented, it is the language of

hermeneutics that brings it into the clearing of light. In Gadamer's (1975/2004) words,

hermeneutics is "the light that causes everything to emerge in such a way that it is evident

and comprehensible in itself is the light of the word" (p. 478). The word is embodied as

the hermeneutic interpretation of a true conversation, brought to light by profound

questioning; "Questions always bring out the undetermined possibilities of a thing" (p.

368). The possibilities of interest to me as a researcher are those that presented

themselves to the beginning teachers in their journey to define their pedagogical way of

being. These six men and women lacked experience in the traditional sense in that they

did not have decades of teaching experience with children; however, their individual life

experiences may empower them with the ability necessary to "have new experiences and

to learn from them" in the same manner as an experienced teacher has been "through

experiences but is also open to new experiences" (p. 350). Gadamer continues that

"Understanding begins…when something addresses us" (p. 298). After being addressed

by the call of beginning teachers, I sought to suspend my prejudices in order to form the

"logical structure of a question" (p. 298) suitable for the unconcealment of truth. The

question that drives my research is: **What is the lived experience of beginning teachers**

defining their pedagogical way of being?

Staying on the Illuminated Path

> The method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep
> interest that makes one an educator (a parent or teacher) in the first place. (van
> Manen, 1997, p. 2)

Just like the dwellings that arose on the banks of rivers, many train tracks were laid down beside the banks of rivers. Today, as train travel has been reduced greatly, these tracks have been turned into walking and bike trails. One can now journey beside the river for miles at a time, staying close to capture its essence, while staying far enough away to not disrupt its flow. This analogy captures the role of the hermeneutic researcher, traversing alongside the teacher river, conversing and thematizing to capture the essence of its Being. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Max van Manen (1997) outlines six research activities to guide the researcher calling on hermeneutic phenomenology to render his or her phenomenon more fully:

(1) Turning to the phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
(2) Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
(3) Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
(4) Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
(5) Maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
(6) Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (pp. 30-31)

Turning Toward the Phenomenon

Every project of phenomenological inquiry is driven by a commitment of turning to an abiding concern. (van Manen, 1997, p. 31)

In Chapter 1, I turn to the phenomenon by exploring the beauty and complexity of the first year teaching experience. Teacher attrition is widely publicized, as are the challenges that beginning teachers encounter when they stand in front of their classrooms for the first time. Like the people building a city next to a thriving river, society understands the importance of education for its young; however, during times of economic uncertainty and in the midst of political calls for accountability, the impact

teachers have on children is often forgotten. In times like these, the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being can be lost or ignored.

As van Manen (1997) states, "The aim of phenomenology is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence" (p. 36). Like a river beginning at the base of a mountain, beginning teachers face monumental challenges as they meander through the difficulties of peer and student relationships, the challenges of lesson planning and grading, and the obstacles of compliance and evaluation that often overwhelm them. Too often, these struggles lead beginning teachers to focus more on surviving than on thriving, unable to return to the source of their pedagogical identity to reach their Being in the classroom.

Van Manen (1997) continues, "To do phenomenological research is to question something phenomenologically and, also, to be addressed by the question of what something is really like" (p. 42). I have already been a beginning teacher, so it is imperative that I "bracket" or make explicit my "understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories" (van Manen, 1997, p. 47) about the essence of this phenomenon. Just because I struggled mightily in my first year does not mean that all beginning teachers will struggle. Even though I may have begun to discover my pedagogical way of being during my second year of teaching, that does not mean that all beginning teachers will have that experience that early or as late as I did. Through my research conversations, I tried to stand close enough to the beginning teachers so that I could walk with them on their journey to Being, while standing far enough away to keep the pedagogical tact necessary to render the lived experience fully.

Investigating Lived Experience: Process of Engagement

> This feeling of being looked at may make it difficult to behave naturally and to speak freely…They force me to be aware of my experience while I am experiencing it. (van Manen, 1997, p. 35)

In Chapter 2, I investigate the experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being by seeking meaning in the words and experiences of beginning teachers and those called to shine light on the phenomenon. These experiences, which can at times seem overwhelming to beginning teachers, add substance to their lived experience as they seek meaning and understanding in the conflict and success of teaching. In Chapter 2, I ground my understanding of the power of hermeneutic phenomenology to render the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being.

I engaged six beginning secondary teachers in conversation throughout the 2011-2012 school year. I sought beginning teachers from a south-central county in Pennsylvania. Most school districts in Pennsylvania, including my own, promised not to hire any new teachers for the 2011-2012 school year. The catastrophic budget shortfall that all districts in Pennsylvania are facing certainly made my search for beginning secondary teachers more difficult, which is why I decided to extend my search outside of my own school district. With this said, I believe that the lower number of beginning teachers likely added a greater benefit to the beginning teachers who engaged in this research with me. During the 2010-2011 school year, there were approximately 300 new teachers hired in the county; this year, there were likely less than fifty. The six beginning teachers who joined me on this journey hopefully found communion with me as a co-researcher, as we engaged in three individual conversations in my process of questioning.

In order to find six beginning teachers throughout the county, I presented a letter of invitation (See Appendix A) to as many beginning secondary teachers as I could find when searching the data on new teachers. My own district hired one middle school and one high school teacher, so I presented a letter of invitation to the middle school teacher only since I do not supervise that person directly. I also used my district contacts with other assistant principals throughout the county to find additional beginning teachers to whom I could present my letter of invitation. I initially sought a blend of rural, suburban, and urban school teachers, as well as a variance in gender and race to the best that the pool of potential co-researchers would allow, in order to draw from as many diverse experiences as possible; however, I soon found that this somewhat random process would reveal my six participants to me. After hearing from all of the assistant principals who had new teachers in their buildings, I presented letters of invitation to twelve beginning teachers in schools throughout the county. I soon found that I was unable to be selective based on the criteria mentioned above, as some of the invitations were presented in person, while others were presented through e-mail conversations. Six of the twelve declined to participate, all due to concerns with the time commitment needed to engage in the conversations. The six beginning teachers who emerged after accepting my invitation were an even split between male and female and were from a variety of school contexts, including rural, suburban and urban. I had met three of the participants previously, but the other three I did not meet in person until the first conversation. At that point, I realized that all six of my participants were Caucasian, so I was certainly not able to achieve a diverse racial mix of participants. The south-central county is a less diverse area racially than the rest of the state of Pennsylvania, as Census data identifies 89% of

the 434,972 residents of the county as Caucasian, compared to an 82% Caucasian population overall for the state of Pennsylvania (http://quickfacts.census.org). I was unable to locate specific data on the racial demographics of the county's teaching force, including its beginning teachers. A beginning teacher from a racial minority would have added a more diverse experience to my research; however, I believe that the mix of diverse contexts, from urban to suburban to rural, will add greatly to this research, from beginning teachers with a predominantly minority population in an urban setting to beginning teachers working with a predominantly majority population in the county's rural and suburban schools.

After I received the necessary IRB and school district approvals, I presented the Consent Form (See Appendix B) to each participant for completion and began my initial conversations in late November of 2011. I then engaged each participant in three individual conversations throughout the 20011-2012 school year, which ranged in length from thirty-five minutes to one-hour. All individual meetings occurred in comfortable environments as chosen by the participants, from a local Starbucks to each teacher's classroom. For this study, I used pseudonyms for each participant and changed the district names and titles to ensure confidentiality.

The Beginning Teachers Emerge

Eric. Eric and I met for the first time at a Starbuck's coffee shop across town. He graduated with a bachelor's in science in Mathematics Education from a small, private liberal arts college in central PA in May of 2011 and accepted a middle school position in the Beer Creek School District teaching pre-Algebra to 7th grade students. Bear Creek is a suburban school district where 81% of its 2,109 students scored proficient or above on

the PSSA Mathematics examination while 78% achieved proficient or above on the

PSSA Reading examination. Eighty-two percent of Bear Creek School District's

population is White, while 11% of its students are Black, 5% are Latino/Hispanic, and

1% are Asian.

Eric is a single, White male. Wearing short hair and a trimmed goatee, he exuded

a youthful idealism throughout that first conversation at Starbuck's on a brisk November

evening. As I completed the transcript of our first conversation, I was thankful that Eric

used a very powerful voice throughout the conversation; however, any ease that I felt at

being able to hear his voice over the coffee grinding and holiday music in the background

was erased by the realization that Eric is a very fast talker. Despite sharing several

negative experiences over our three conversations together, Eric never appeared damaged

or defeated by the situation, seemingly willing himself to keep trying new things to

achieve his expectation for success. After our first conversation at Starbuck's, Eric

invited me to his classroom for the second and third conversations, where he would often

use his hands to illustrate a textbook, dry-erase board, or seat where a student sat. Eric's

easy-going attitude was contagious, as I often left our conversation time feeling

enthusiastic and energized.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth and I met for the first time in her middle school classroom.

While her petite frame, dark hair and youthful face fit in well with the other five

beginning teachers fresh out of college, Elizabeth actually followed a non-traditional path

to teaching, having first served in the Navy out of high school. Like four of the other

participants, she recently graduated from a private liberal art's school in the center of the

county of the same name. After receiving a bachelor's of arts in English Education and

completing the requirements for her teaching degree in May of 2011, she accepted a position at Forest Hills Middle School teaching 7th grade Communication Arts. Forest Hills is a rural/suburban district serving approximately 2,116 students. The district achieved an 80% Proficient or above rate in Mathematics in 2011 and a 79% Proficient or above rate in Reading in 2011 on the PSSA examination; however, the Forest Hills Middle School, where Elizabeth works, is listed on Warning AYP Status for its low IEP student scores. Forest Hills has a majority White population of 91%, while 4% of its students are Black, 3% Latino/Hispanic, 1% Asian, 1% Native American, and 1% Multiracial.

Elizabeth and I met in her classroom after school on all three occasions. While sharing similar experiences as the other five beginning teachers, her life experiences often colored those descriptions in a unique way. For example, when discussing the amount of time she needed to spend in order to achieve the success she desired in the classroom or when reflecting on a positive experience with a student, Elizabeth often mentioned her four-year-old son, who helped her to find balance at home and became her impetus for developing positive relationships with her students. In her words, "Just balancing everything and being a teacher has helped me be a better parent." Despite her positive accounts of her son and his successful influence on her pedagogy, Elizabeth often became lost in the negative experiences she shared, as her frustration gripped her, holding her back from moving beyond the challenges faced in her teaching.

Sophia. When I first met Sophia in her classroom at Dewey High School, she was wearing sweat pants and a sweatshirt with her alma-mater's name on it. She immediately told me of the walking club she was advising, necessitating the athletic clothing. She

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laughed as she shared with me the two or three instances where she was confused for one of the high school students during that day. At 22, Sophia was not much older than the Algebra II and Geometry students in her care. Sophia graduated early from a large central Pennsylvania state university in December of 2010 and immediately accepted a long-term substitute position in another county high school for the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year. She happily accepted the position at Dewey for the start of the 2011-2012 school year. Dewey School District is a suburban school district where 91% of its 2,214 students are White, 3% are Black, 2% are Latino/Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% are Multiracial. Eighty-four percent of Dewey's students scored proficient or above on the PSSA Mathematics examination, while 78% scored proficient or above on the PSSA Reading examination.

Sophia is the only one of the six participants who is married, which influenced her experiences in a unique way considering that her husband is a teacher in another county school district. Her husband's school was actually the same one who hired Sophia directly out of college for the long-term teaching assignment, and Sophia spoke very highly of her time teaching mathematics at that high school. In fact, during our first conversation, when trying to make sense of the experiences she was having at Dewy, Sophia mentioned the school where she student taught eighteen times and the school where she substituted twenty-four times. Most of these references were in regards to the community she experienced during her student teaching and the curricular and pedagogical freedom she felt during her long-term substitute assignment. For example, when describing her long-term teaching assignment, Sophia states, "When I was at Merryton, I was free to do basically whatever I wanted." This experience became a

powerful background against which Sophia would be able to evaluate her first full-time teaching experience at Dewey, where she was given considerably less freedom in her curricular and pedagogical decision making.

Doug. Doug's individuality emerged during our first meeting. The tall, soft spoken music teacher and I met in a small music office in between the music tech room and the band room, with the sounds of classical music filling the air as students stayed after school for a practice session with the orchestra teacher. Doug's long brown hair is tied in a pony-tail, and he quickly pointed out the bow tie that he wears each day as his attempt to showcase the power of individuality to his students. Doug graduated in December of 2010 from college and served as a day to day substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year. He was happy to receive this position as a choral director and music tech teacher in the Valley View Area School District; however, due to budget constraints, it was reduced to a ½ time position, which has added a complexity to his first year experience. Doug works on each odd day of their six day cycle and is encouraged to serve as a substitute teacher during his free even days. Doug has called a variety of places home, having lived in Colorado, Indiana, and New York before transferring to college in south-central Pennsylvania after a year in a college in New York. Valley View School District is a rural school serving 1,614 students, 82% of which scored proficient or above on the PSSA Mathematics examination, while 79% scored proficient or above on the PSSA Reading examination. Valley View's student demographic is 96% White, 2% Black, less than 1% Latino/Hispanic, less than 1% Asian, and less than 1% Multiracial.

We decided to trade in the chaos of an after-school music classroom for the calming aroma of a Starbuck's for our next two conversations, held on two of Doug's off days from work. The hot chocolate and latte that we drank led us to briefly linger on other educational topics before I would switch on the recorder and we would begin our conversation about his experience as a beginning teacher. To begin our final conversation together, Doug pensively asked me what I thought the cure for the plight of the urban school might be, and we laughed as I told him that he should sit back and get comfortable, as that would take a while. It was clear that Doug enjoyed our time together, as he never found a colleague to engage in such conversation with. As a half time employee interested in the philosophy of education, his assigned mentor and other colleagues often had to dismiss themselves from conversations with him due to their need to keep moving to accomplish their tasks. Doug viewed a lot of the relationships he formed at Valley View with disappointment, including his mentor, his administration, and his middle school chorus.

Sam. Sam and I met in his small second floor science classroom where he could easily point out the make-shift lab materials he had used earlier that day. At 4:30, the hallways of King Charter Middle School were still active with students staying after-school with teachers for tutoring or behavioral training. Sam graduated in December of 2010 from a south-central Pennsylvania college. He served as a day-to-day substitute and a long-term substitute for the remainder of the 2010-2011 school year before accepting the position teaching 8th grade science at King for the start of the 2011-2012 school year. King Charter Middle School currently serves grades 6 through 9. It is a tuition-free public charter school in the heart of the city, primarily serving the city students who choose to

leave the public school system for the charter school system. I was unable to find any demographics or assessment data on the school, either on their website or on the state department of education's website. Public schools are required to publish their district report card on their district web site, but that information is not present on the King web site. Sam shared that King is an urban school environment whose students are primarily Black. Sam repeatedly discussed the pressure of the high stakes testing environment at King, but the school's PSSA results were nowhere to be found.

Sam is a clean-shaven young man with eyes that immediately draw you into a conversation. His voice was often raspy at the end of a day filled with talking to those students in his care. All three of our meetings were in his second floor classroom; without microscopes or lab tables, the room lacked any signs of a typical science classroom. As we left the classroom after our last conversation together, Sam proudly pointed out the pictures of his students' science fair projects displayed on the hallway walls.

Melissa. Regrettably, there was some confusion on our initial meeting time. Melissa had written that she would see me tomorrow, but I checked it that day and thought she meant the following day. Melissa is teaching 9th grade Geometry at King Charter Middle School, so I saw her after my meeting time with Sam. After an hour long meeting with Sam, I was not prepared to meet with Melissa, but she was expecting to do so. Without realizing my error, I told her I was excited to meet with her the next day. After understanding my mistake as I sat in my car in the King parking lot, I immediately called Melissa to apologize, asking if she wanted me to come back up into the building to engage in the conversation. She was very gracious as she accepted my apology and declined my invitation to meet that day, but I felt that this episode impacted the

conversation the next day as I began our meeting feeling bad, which was exacerbated by her short answers and seemingly closed off attitude. This first meeting in her classroom only lasted forty-five minutes, a full quarter-hour less than the first five conversations with the other participants. Throughout our time together, I was attributing our light conversation to the confusion over the meeting time, but as soon as I turned off the recorder and began packing up my things, Melissa pulled out an evaluation she had received earlier in the day and I quietly watched as a once closed door slowly opened. As Melissa shared with me the hurt she felt over the negative observation, I truly began to see the intense struggles that these beginning teachers face. I thanked her for opening up to me, and after that moment, our conversations were smooth and effortless.

Despite her short stature, Melissa is easily recognized by her red hair and athletic build. When asked about the Algebra I teacher with whom she co-teaches, Melissa shared that the two played rugby together at the local college. This toughness would benefit her greatly as she journeyed through an arduous first year of teaching.

Individual Conversations

Every hermeneutic phenomenological conversation is unending. (van Manen, 1997, p. xv)

As van Manen asserts, there is no script for a phenomenological conversation, and by nature, they are never complete. Gadamer (1975/2004) echoes this when he says, "No one knows in advance what will come out of a conversation" (p. 385). Knowing that set questions are not part of a phenomenological conversation, I reflect back on my preliminary conversations with four beginning teachers. I simply began each of those conversations by asking them to look back on their experiences as beginning teachers. Each then guided the discussion down a different path depending on the nature of his or

her lived experience. Time seemed to stand still as I basked in the glow of their experiences. As the researcher, I was always conscious of my questions, so I simply took notes on each co-researcher's words and then used them in my follow-up conversations. With this in mind, I did plan to have some initial questions as starting points with the six beginning teachers to begin the conversation if needed. With each, I ended up breaking the ice with some basic biographical information to set the stage for our discussion on their experiences so far as beginning teachers. My first conversation with each of the six participants occurred in late November or early December, approximately three to four months into the school year, so my hope was to elicit experiences from those few months on the job to allow themes to emerge. After the brief biographical questioning, I asked them some form of the following starter questions to help them reflect on their experiences thus far in the classroom:

1. What has it been like so far as a beginning teacher?
2. Do you remember that first day of school with your students? Please tell me what you remember about that day.
3. What is it like teaching in the your current position?
4. How did beginning your teaching career as a substitute teacher impact the teacher you are today?

Obviously, each of my participants had seen my research question listed on the Invitation to Participate and on the Consent Form; however, I only quickly mentioned the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being when introducing myself at the very start of each conversation. Doug was the only one of the six participants who referred to the title of my research while he was pondering the reason he wears a bowtie to school each day. In his words, "It carries an expression of character with it…it is a kind of encouragement for teachers to be themselves, which

does hearken back to the pedagogical way of being." None of the other participants mentioned the title or even asked a question about this title.

After my introduction, I then told the participants that I was interested in hearing about their experiences as beginning teachers. I was very careful not to guide the conversation to places where I wanted to go; I allowed the beginning teacher to guide the conversation. This was a powerful process, as I sat and soaked up each participant's experiences for a full hour. I took notes on words and phrases that stood out and underlined possible themes that emerged, using the participant's own words for each follow-up question. I believe that this process brought each beginning teacher into experiences necessary to capture the lived nature of each teacher's becoming.

I worked to arrange a group conversation with the six participants but was unable to make it happen. After an emotionally draining first year of teaching and after cooperating with my seven month research project, most of the participants apologetically declined my invitation to meet together as a group. I talked to them about it during our last individual conversation and all seemed interested, but when I sent out the e-mail with the three dates and two place options, the response was not as enthusiastic, with the exception being Doug, who was very interested in meeting together with the other participants. He replied right away that he would meet any time and any place. Eric said he really wanted to meet, but with his summer job umpiring baseball games and his volunteer work coaching the middle school football team, he was unable to make any of the evening meetings. Sophia's response was similar, which says a lot about the summer involvement of beginning teachers. She had her graduate course each evening and would also be unable to make the meeting. Elizabeth politely declined, citing

softball games, her sister's birthday, and her son as making her completely unavailable. I did not hear back from either Sam or Melissa, whose charter school year ended later than the other schools.

I would have appreciated a collective reflection on the themes that emerged in the individual conversations; however, I felt that the individual conversations brought us into their lived experiences sufficiently. From the start, the group conversation and the writing prompt were optional. Of course, I believe that more conversations in any form would have furthered my understanding of the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, just as time observing them teaching and interacting with students and colleagues would have furthered my understanding. However, my aim in this research from the start was to conduct individual conversations to gain insight into the growth of a beginning teacher during the first year of teaching. I gained so much from them during the time we did have together that I do not feel that this research is any less valuable without the group conversation and writing prompt.

All conversations were transcribed to create a document for hermeneutic interpretation. As a full time assistant principal throughout these conversations, it was important for me to seek assistance of a professional to do my transcriptions. I was able to find a competent transcriptionist who quickly and professionally transcribed all conversations. All of the sound recordings and transcripts were kept in a locked office to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Transcripts were provided to the participants as a way of helping them to engage in the textual understandings. A few of the participants were reading them prior to our next conversation, while others chose not to read them at all due to time constraints.

Thematic Reflection: The Teacher Researcher

> We always find ourselves within a situation, and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 301)

Van Manen (1997) instructs us that in order "to grasp the essential meaning of something" the researcher must engage in hermeneutic phenomenological reflection on the lived experiences gathered from the conversations and writings outlined in the past section. After engaging in this task, I believe strongly that van Manen's (1997) use of the term "textual labor" (p. 78) accurately captures the complexity of this arduous endeavor. After engaging in three thirty-five minute to one hour conversations with six teachers, the substance of the transcripts was certainly great. Once the transcripts were gathered, I then began the task of thematizing. As van Manen (1997) writes, "No conceptual formulation or single statement can possibly capture the full mystery of this experience…A thematic phrase only serves to point at, to allude to, or to hint at, an aspect of the phenomenon" (p. 92). With this in mind, I searched for understanding, hoping to grasp some aspect of the phenomenon of the beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. Van Manen (1997) describes three approaches toward uncovering these aspects that greatly assisted me in this task:

1) The wholistic or sententious approach,
2) The selective or highlighting approach,
3) The detailed or line-by-line approach. (p. 93)

I found each of these approaches valuable in my thematic analysis, varying the approaches throughout the process. I always used the wholistic or sententious approach during my first reading of each transcript, searching for major themes that emerged from the conversation, always cognizant of van Manen's (1997) warning that the researcher should be wary of this approach, since "expressing the fundamental or overall meaning of

a text is a judgment call" (p. 94). After my initial reading of the transcript, I wrote down three to five ideas that stood out to me immediately after my first reading. After employing the wholistic approach in my first reading of the transcript, I then moved to the more specific selective or highlighting approach. This is when words and phrases began to jump off the page. I underlined and made notes in the margins. At times, I simply stopped to process how powerfully these young men and women described their experiences as beginning teachers. Finally, I used the detailed or line-by-line approach to discover sentences or part-sentences that might elicit the essence of the beginning teacher defining his or her pedagogical way of being. This third approach guides the researcher line by line through the transcript to create statements about what each sentence shows to the researcher. As van Manen (1997) writes, the specific question asked of the reader and text when employing this approach is, "What does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described?" (p. 93). For this detailed work, I used highlighters to make sense of common themes that emerged across the six participants over time through the eighteen conversations. When employing any of these approaches to thematic analysis, the researcher must always remain open to new possibilities and meanings that may emerge, as he or she enters the hermeneutic circle shining the light of understanding on the text.

These approaches guided me in the meaning making that I sought in my thematic reflection on these transcripts. Each work or phrase uttered by a beginning teacher can highlight so much about the pedagogical way of being of a beginning teacher. They are merely the starting points of gathering thematic statements that can thereby question and engage with the following. What hopes guide beginning teachers in their daily work?

What experiences do they identify as defining their work with students? In what ways do they traverse onward in their struggle to develop their pedagogical way of being?

Throughout this thematizing, I found it important to keep in mind that, "I am not just a researcher who observes life, I am also a parent and a teacher who stands pedagogically in life" (van Manen, 1997, p. 90). In this human research, there is no objective distance that the researcher must keep with the participants; there are no walls that must be built between them. All thematic rendering in hermeneutic phenomenology is subjective as there are no absolute truths. As an educator standing side-by-side with beginning teachers, I sought to render the essence of this phenomenon in a manner that its themes may benefit those who support and care for teachers each day.

The Never-ending Process of Writing and Rewriting

> Herein lies the irony of a profound contradiction: the language by way of which teachers are encouraged to interpret themselves and reflect on their living with children is thoroughly imbued by hope, and yet it is almost exclusively a language of doing – it lacks being. (van Manen, 1997, p. 122)

The power in hermeneutic phenomenology lies in the language of the rendering, as the researcher accesses the artistry of writing to capture the essence of living. As van Manen (2002) tells us, the "central methodological feature of phenomenological inquiry" is "wonder" (p. 5). So like Heidegger, I begin my journey in wonderment. Instead of portraying the researcher as an expert seeking answers and solutions, phenomenologists use the language of "wonder," "mindfulness," "tact," and "watchfulness" to describe the research qualities necessary to engage in this methodology.

Van Manen's (1997) language puts a great deal of pressure on the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher, as he states that "Much depends…on the quality of our language and writing (theorizing)" (p. 111). Heidegger (1962) describes the importance

of discourse between researcher and participant, emphasizing that "Hearing and keeping silent are possibilities belonging to discursive speech" (p. 204). It is vital that the researcher demonstrates authentic listening throughout the conversations with beginning teachers, before entering a period of conscious reflection in order to discover the themes that encompass the thematic rendering. Van Manen (1997) states:

> Phenomenology is a certain mode of reflection done traditionally by scholars who write…a certain form of consciousness is required, a consciousness that is created by the act of literacy: reading and writing. (p. 124)

This form of consciousness is often referred to as "praxis," defined as "action full of thought and thought full of action" (p. 128). This type of reflection and writing are not completed in a single session or even in several sessions. Dozens upon dozens of rewrites must occur to reach the essence of the phenomenon. This sounds like the description of poetry I used to give my eighth graders, as I told them they needed to read and re-read each poem dozens of times to reach a fuller understanding. I wrote earlier about Heidegger's belief in poetry to uncover essences, and van Manen (1997) echoes this in his statement: "Phenomenology, like poetry, intends to be silent as it speaks" (p. 131). Only through tact and mindful watchfulness can the researcher reach the understanding he or she seeks in the duality of the silently speaking text.

A Pedagogue and Researcher Seeking Understanding

Horizons change for a person who is moving. (Gadamer, 1975/2004, p. 303)

Teachers are always striving to improve their pedagogical way of being with students. A researcher cannot set his or her sights on a certain horizon and vow to describe the essence of the being that reaches that point. The horizon is always moving for the teacher engaged in pedagogical praxis. With this in mind, van Manen (2002)

reminds us, "No interpretation is ever complete, no explication of meaning is ever final, no insight is beyond challenge" (p. 7); therefore, I have uncovered not solutions or answers, but understandings. Too often, educators are painted as those in the business of knowing; however, I seek to be an educator in the business of learning, unconcealing the complexities of the beginning teacher experience. Van Manen (1997) iterates that the hermeneutic phenomenological text must be "oriented," "strong," "rich," and "deep." This type of research is different than the positivistic study that can be summarized in five sentences on the front page of the newspaper. Van Manen explains this by again reflecting on the meaning and power of pedagogy:

> We need to act in the lives we live, side by side without children, but then also wonder, always wonder whether we did it right. We need to listen to pedagogy so as to be able to act in a better way pedagogically tomorrow. (p. 149)

This statement says so much about my research interest as I sought to listen to the pedagogy of beginning teachers in order to understand better how they developed their way of being with students. I wondered about this phenomenon, so I looked not for answers, but for understandings. At the conclusion, like the end of every day of my teaching career, I still wonder if I did it right; however, I am certain that these understandings will empower me to act in a better way pedagogically tomorrow.

Seeking a Balance

> I revel in the writing space that seems to dissolve beginnings and endings, that proliferates and disseminates *and* here, there, and in unexpected places. I am now thinking, maybe I would like to play in and among the *and* for a while, at least for a part of the next 50 years. (Aoki, 1991/2005, p. 260)

Ted Aoki again reminds us of the importance of finding the middle ground of art *and* science, theory *and* practice, beginnings *and* endings, curriculum *and* instruction, etc. Van Manen (1997) concludes his six research activities by considering the balance the

researcher must seek when considering the parts and the whole of the phenomenon being studied. For many, this middle ground of questioning can present the discomfort of tension; however, for Aoki, he revels in this space between. I followed Aoki's words as I contemplated the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. As a researcher, I sought to be present with the teachers throughout the start of their pedagogical journeys in order to "bring to light" (Heidegger, 1927/1993, p. 73) the phenomenon being pursued. I chose to engage them in conversations that uncovered the things that make teaching such a challenging, yet rewarding, profession. As Heidegger describes, an individual's Being is not easy to render, considering the fact that, "The manner of access and interpretation must instead be chosen in such a way that this Being can show itself to itself on its own terms" (p. 59). This is where the phenomenological researcher can achieve the greatest impact, by grasping the hand of beginning teachers and by walking with them on their journeys. Merleau-Ponty (1962) describes the relationship between researcher and co-researcher as alternating "the roles of touching and being touched" (p. 106). I believe that these understandings have benefited both the researcher and the co-researcher, as we each sought to act more thoughtfully in our presence with children. Each participant echoed this benefit at some point during our time together.

It was Merleau-Ponty's (1962) words who I began with in this chapter, as I celebrated the research interest that found me, in which I found a home. One could say that I entered hermeneutic phenomenology selfishly seeking what benefit it could bring to me; however, I now end this chapter with Merleau-Ponty's words calling to mind the selflessness needed to engage in this research. I now seek balance, as I reflect on the

research that brought to light my understanding of the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, while most importantly, helping to guide the beginning teachers to a fuller understanding of their own Being with students. I believe that this work together in questioning will benefit beginning teachers as we alternate the vital human roles of touching and being touched, by the core of who we are in relation with others.

CHAPTER 4: FINDING FLOW DURING THE FIRST YEAR

Seeking Authenticity in a New Place

Our lives are so place-oriented and place-saturated that we cannot begin to comprehend, much less face up to, what sheer place-lessness would be like. For just this reason, we rarely pause to consider what being no place or having no place might mean. Even when we are displaced, we continue to count upon some reliable place, if not our present precarious perch then a place-to-come or a place-that-was. (Casey, 2009, p. ix)

The Teacher In-Between

The lived experiences shared by the beginning teachers in this study highlight the place they find themselves on their first day in their own classrooms, as they stand in-between the way they have been during their pre-service living and the pedagogical way of being they long to cultivate through their lived time in the classroom. The corporeality of this place can serve as a substantial transition for these young men and women, as it begins to represent not only a new physical environment, but also a new way of being in the classroom. Casey's (2009) examination of gardens as middle-places adds to this understanding, as he describes gardens as "liminal phenomena," at the "threshold…between a building and circumambient nature…between dwelling-as-residing and dwelling-as-wandering" (p. 155).

When the participants in this study first enter the threshold of their own classrooms, they begin a new journey in the middle-place between their pre-service learning and the pedagogical way of being they will develop. As Ted Aoki (2005) reminds us, there is a great deal of "tension at the margin" (p. 35), and the beginning teachers immediately become engulfed in this tension as they enter a new dwelling place while seeking to find a home there. As we will see, this tension emerges in many ways,

but in the end, many of the participants, like Aoki, begin to find comfort in the middle-ground, as they seek how they will be in the classroom.

Angus Brook (2009), in his book entitled *The Potentiality of Authenticity in Becoming a Teacher*, speaks to another state of in-between in which beginning teachers find themselves, as cultivators of their own being and the facilitator of the formation of the others in their care:

> The phenomenological interpretation of education discloses the teacher as a human being with an extraordinary task. For, the teacher is a human like any other (with the tendency to fall away from being truly human), and yet, has the task of cultivating and building the formation of others. (Brook, 2009, p. 52)

Brook examines Heidegger's phenomenology and its application to the formation of beginning teachers in their becoming authentic. Brook continues, "Authenticity…is constituted via the notion of being-one's-self, or becoming truly human; of caring for the sake of others and of being directed towards the ground of the sense/meaning of our life as humans" (p. 49). The lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being encompasses this idea of the formation of an authentic being, as beginning teachers must *care* for the formation of their own way of being while taking *care* of the development of the students assigned to their care. The lived experiences shared by these beginning teachers shine light on the intense growth in which they engage during their first year on the journey toward authenticity. For these teachers, many opportunities to fall away from an authentic way of being emerged during this first year, especially when examining the dwelling place of the schoolhouse. Casey (2009) makes the case that "In the beginning was the Place" (p. 18), so it is where I, too, begin, as this place stands at the beginning of these teachers' journeys toward their development of a pedagogical way of being in the classroom.

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Place-Panic

> I almost feel like it comes natural to just get up and start teaching…It's just going the extra mile that I'm not to that point yet, which I don't know that I should be at this point. I should be pushing to get there, because that's what I want to do, and that's obviously what I should be expected to do. (Sophia)

Sophia, a high school math teacher, describes the process of teaching as coming natural to her, something that she has been doing for most of her life. But it is the unknown that her words capture in the introductory quote, as she shares her own confusion on where she should be as a beginning teacher. This self-doubt emerged after a poor observation from her building principal, as she sought to incorporate the district's mandated teaching model into the pre-service way of being she had developed. This experience quickly pushed Sophia into a "place-panic" (Casey, 2009, p. ix). Casey (2009) uses this term to capture the anxiety that strikes those who must now "confront the imminent possibility of there being no place to be or to go" (p. ix). Sophia's words express this panic, as she worries that she will not be able to be the teacher she longs to be, as well as her fears that the principal leader of her school place does not want her there. As shared in Sophia's description in Chapter 3, this anxiety leads Sophia to seek a home in the "place-that-was" (Casey, 2009, p. ix), as she nostalgically names her student teaching placement and the school where she was first hired as a long-term substitute on forty-two occasions during our first conversation. This place-panic was an overriding theme to varying degrees in the experiences shared by all six participants in this study.

Casey's (2009) use of the word "panic" mirrors the language of educational researchers who examine the place in which beginning teachers find themselves on the first days in the classroom. Veenman (1984) uses the descriptors "reality shock" and "transition shock" to capture the "transition from teacher training to the first teaching

job" (p. 143). Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2009) name six stages of teacher development, beginning with the first stage they call, "chaos and fixation on problems" (p. 301). The term "chaos," synonymous with Casey's use of the word panic, adds to our understanding of the experience of beginning teachers at the start of their time in the classroom. "Chaos," defined as "utter confusion" dates back to c. 1600 and is extended from the theological use of chaos for "the void at the beginning of creation in the Vulgate version of Genesis" (Online Etymology Dictionary). Beginning teachers have been developing their way of being as educators for many years during their pre-service lives; however, the voices of the beginning teachers from this study illustrate the great "void" where they find themselves, as they commence a new journey to form a new way of being in the classroom.

As Heidegger (1964/1993) states, "The origin of something is the source of its essence" (p. 143). When considering the beginning teacher, where does the source of his or her essence begin? When did he or she *become* a teacher? Eric shares that his pedagogical "style" is modeled after his 10th grade math teacher. Sophia knew that she wanted to be a teacher since the age of five and experienced the profession as early as high school when she was able to co-teach some lessons with her favorite math teacher. Elizabeth found her love for teaching while she was in the Navy tutoring a needy student. Every river has a source, but all vary greatly in their distance from their exit to the sea. When examining the essence of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being with only these six participants, one has to look back as far as age five and as near as a post-secondary experience in the Navy. Despite this variance, all began the first day in some form of place-panic early in the first year due to the unknowns they experienced.

For Sophia, it developed after that observation from the building principal, as she faced the reality that she would need to adjust *how* she teaches to meet the lesson plan model implemented by the school. Elizabeth, a middle school English teacher, felt a similar place-panic when she was directed *what* to teach by the curriculum map created by her colleagues and building level administrators. And finally, Eric, who felt very comfortable in his suburban middle school math placement at the start of the school year, spiraled into a deep place-panic when he was informed that his position was being considered for a possible furlough. For Sophia, Elizabeth, and Eric, these circumstances they encounter when transitioning to the new dwelling place of their first teaching assignment present impediments to their pedagogical way of being, but all three respond with the goal of making this place-"meant" work, as they believe that they were *meant* to be in this *place*. The place-panic experiences shared by Melissa, Sam, and Doug all capture a greater threat to their development of an authentic way of being, as they begin to question whether they are *meant* to continue in that *place*. And perhaps it also deepens their development when going through such an existential crisis if you will.

Anton's (2001) analysis of authenticity focuses on the moral nature of self-fulfillment, as individuals may pursue a self-centered mode of authenticity, overlooking the reality "that we cannot separate ourselves from others" (p. 6). This leads Anton to conclude:

> Authenticity, as a quest for self-fulfillment, requires or demands an adequate comprehension of the selfhood that is to be fulfilled. And yet, such a comprehension is sorely lacking. We seem to be without an adequate grasp on the nature and constitution of the human self, and moreover, it is only through such comprehension that the quest for authenticity may be fruitfully enabled. (p. 8)

As Anton states, one cannot selfishly seek an authentic way of being, as relations with others will define one's self-fulfillment. As we will see, Melissa, Sam and Doug all find themselves in an educational environment where the others in their presence at first appear as strangers to them, leading to an emergence of an inauthentic way of being focused more on individual survival than on forming the pedagogical relationships necessary for self growth.

The First Place-"Meant"

> I just don't think that I was thinking I was going to be an urban teacher, so I was there to observe and take notes and see what was going on, but I don't think it ever clicked that I could be in that position. I could be the one up there not being listened to. (Melissa)

Melissa's words capture the panic in which she found herself when accepting a position at King Charter School teaching middle school mathematics. This was not a completely unfamiliar place to her, as she remembers the short drive she made from the local college to King Charter School during one of her teacher preparation field experiences. Many schools of education require an observation in an urban setting, so Melissa sat in the back of the room dutifully taking notes and observing the teacher and students in the classroom; however, as the quote above highlights, she never actually envisioned herself teaching in an urban classroom like this. Can one really experience a new place when required to enter as an observer? Melissa felt that she had an excellent student teaching experience in a nearby suburban county school that was very much like the suburban high school she had attended in New York. That was the environment where she had planned to teach, but with limited jobs available in those suburban settings at the time of Melissa's graduation, she found herself as that teacher in the urban setting of King Charter School. This calls into question the importance of context in teaching

during both pre-service and in-service work, as Melissa seems to have a defined image of herself as a teacher, one that goes beyond her own picture of self to also include the students who share her classroom space. This image has become a part of who Melissa is as a teacher, which greatly impacts how she will define her pedagogical way of being. With such a dramatic change in her vision of people and place, Melissa quickly found herself in a pedagogical panic, completely unaware of the teacher she wanted to be as the students entered the classroom on that first day of school:

> I just remember being really, really stressed out because I had no idea what I wanted my procedures to even be. I was thinking back to when I went to high school and on the first day I was given an agenda of what was going to be expected throughout the school year – what you had to do, the homework policy, and all of that. I was like, how am I ever going to be able to come up with anything like that? (Melissa)

Rather than refer to her four years of college educational preparation or to her semester of student teaching, Melissa thought back to her time in high school for guidance on how to greet the students on that first day of school, a high school that she describes as very different than the urban setting in which she was teaching. Melissa's feeling of dis-placement manifests itself in her feeling of not being listened to by the students. But were the students really not listening to her, or did they simply not understand each other's language? Melissa greets her students on the first day as a "stranger in a strange land" (Corley, 1998, p. 1). She had observed children from an urban setting from afar, but had she ever experienced a pedagogical relationship with a student from an urban environment? Would she have felt like a visitor or tourist if she started teaching in a suburban environment? This calls into question teacher preparation

programs that do not prepare teachers for diverse classrooms in diverse places (urban, suburban, and rural). What is "meant" in place-"meant" that is so myopic in place?

Encountering Others, Encountering Self

> Pedagogy as a discipline is always concerned with the question of what one should know, what one should be capable of, what kind of person one should be, in order to orient and deal practically with children in specific pedagogical situations. (van Manen, 1991, p. 48)

As van Manen (1991) reminds us in the quote above, pedagogy is not only concerned with content knowledge and teaching skills, but also about the personhood of educators that enables them to develop powerful relationships with their students. His use of the word "orient" when describing the teacher's ability to connect with students "in specific pedagogical situations" (p. 48) speaks to Melissa's difficulty when transitioning to the urban environment of King Charter Middle School. "Orient" is defined as, "to set right by adjusting to facts or principles; to acquaint with the existing situation or environment" (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary). Melissa is initially unable to orient herself to the environment, which results in a deep sense of out-of-placeness. Why is Melissa unable to orient herself to King Charter, and in turn, develop the pedagogical relationships necessary for learning to occur? Jonathan Kozol (1991) powerfully captures the shock he experiences when he transitions from an urban school in Boston to a suburban school outside of the city. Kozol was fired from his first position teaching fourth grade in an urban school for reading his students the poetry of Robert Frost and Langston Hughes, since they were not on the list of approved fourth grade poems. He soon found himself teaching in a suburban school system, which he describes in the following way:

> The shock of going from one of the poorest schools to one of the wealthiest cannot be overstated. I now had 21 students in a cheerful building with a principal who welcomed innovation. (p. 2)

For Kozol, this first year teaching experience opened his eyes to the "remarkable degree of racial segregation that persisted almost everywhere" (p. 2). This topic would then define his life work, as his books call attention to the dangers of racial isolation in yesterday's and today's schools. Kozol (2005) writes:

> What saddens me the most during these times is simply that these children have no knowledge of the other world in which I've lived most of my life and that the children in that other world have not the slightest notion as to who these children are and will not likely ever know them later on…I have believed for 40 years, and still believe today, that we would be an infinitely better nation if they knew each other now. (p. 11)

Of course, Kozol is referencing the students who have no knowledge of the other world, but this too can apply to a first year teacher like Melissa, who spent her entire educational life in a suburban school setting. Melissa never mentions race during our three conversations, but by repeatedly sharing that she did not plan to be an urban teacher and by constantly mentioning her inability to get to know her students, she sheds light on an out-of-placeness that develops from entering a dwelling place unlike any that she experienced before. After attending a suburban school, observing suburban schools, and student teaching in a suburban school, Melissa felt that she was trained to be a *suburban* teacher. This realization of self seems to overwhelm her and lead her to question whether she would be able to move beyond this initial identity as a teacher. As Kozol describes, we inhabit an educational world where the other is often unfamiliar depending on secluded environments like urban and suburban schools. As Levin (1989) captures, it is in a lost world like this where "the dimensionality of Being itself" (p. 15) is most at stake.

A pedagogical way of being involves developing a relationship with all students, not just those with whom one is most familiar.

As Noddings (2003) writes, teachers are first and foremost "one-caring" (p. 176), but this can be applied to "one-caring" for self while simultaneously "one-caring" for the other. When describing "one-caring," Noddings notes, "One-caring receives the other, for the interval of caring, completely and nonselectively" (p. 176). Caring for others cannot involve selectively choosing the others for whom one can care. Melissa's place preference presents not only a moral problem for her as an individual, but also an ethical dilemma for our nation's schools. Clearly, Melissa cannot grow as a teacher until she is able to accept and find comfort teaching all students. One would also wonder if our nation's schools can continue to develop without seriously addressing the concerns Kozol eloquently presents, ensuring that all students truly *know* each other.

Like Melissa, Sam also accepted a science teaching position at King Charter School when he was unable to find a position similar to the suburban school in the county where he student taught. Sam echoes Melissa's sentiment about seeking comfort in an unfamiliar place:

> I never envisioned teaching at a school like this. I grew up in a very suburban school district, a good school district, all, you know, White like you and I. Good teachers and good money in the school, good technology in the school, so I've thought of myself as being a teacher at one of those schools. (Sam)

Sam candidly describes the culture shock he found at King Charter School. His words capture the sad reality of segregated school districts and limited resources in urban environments. Like the insights gained from Melissa's words, Sam's words call to mind the importance of beginning teachers finding comfort with themselves before they are able to comfort the students in their care. This was the only time Sam mentioned race in

our time together, but this one reference does capture the out-of-placeness he felt on those first days at King. Sonia Nieto (1994) seeks to incorporate the voice of the student in the discussion on diversity and multiculturalism in schools. The words she shares from Rich, a Black high school student, are very powerful and speak directly to Sam's words above. As Rich ponders the expectations of his teachers, he concludes that all teachers should teach the curriculum "as if they were in an all-White school" (p. 414). It seems that Sam, a White teacher, and Rich, a Black student, both view "White Schools" as superior to non-White schools. These are disturbing statements as we near the sixtieth anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education.

Gloria Ladson-Billings, (2001) in her book *Crossing Over to Canaan*, chronicles the preparation and experience of eight beginning teachers in the Teach for Diversity Master's degree elementary certification program. While none of the eight students had studied education in their undergraduate preparation, all had the desire to teach in urban educational settings. Ladson-Billings admittedly writes about "the small number of prospective teachers who want to teach poor children of color" (p. xii). While her work captures instances of place-panic in the first year experiences of these teachers, it does not refer to teachers like Melissa and Sam, who end up accepting positions in urban school environments out of necessity and not out of choice. Their experience highlights the damage that can occur when *falling back* into a teaching position in an urban environment when one is not truly invested in that environment. The work of schools is so vital to a community. Can a teacher engage in this imperative work while feeling so out of place each day in the presence of others? How can teachers like Melissa and Sam

be supported to develop their pedagogical selves while also seeking to develop the ways of being of the students in their care?

Practices of the Self

> To look at any thing,
> If you would know that thing,
> You must look at it long:
> To look at this green and say,
> 'I have seen spring in these
> Woods,' will not do – you must
> Be the thing you see:
> You must be the dark snakes of
> Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
> You must enter in
> To the small silences between
> The leaves,
> You must take your time
> And touch the very peace
> They issue from.
> (John Moffitt, *To Look at Any Thing,* in Intrator & Scribner, 2003, p. 125)

The place-panic that Melissa and Sam experience in their new dwelling place of King Charter highlights many possible impediments to the development of their pedagogical way of being in the classroom. To better understand this dilemma, I seek guidance from Mofitt's poem cited above. Like the cry of phenomenologists, "To the things themselves!" Moffitt's poem captures the need to *experience* something fully before one can truly understand it. Admittedly, neither Melissa nor Sam truly experienced a pedagogical relationship with a student in an urban school environment, and therefore, were unable to *touch* and *be touched* by students who both need so much but also offer so much in return.

In his phenomenology of listening, Levin (1989) identifies four stages of self-development. I believe that stage three is applicable here as we considering the development of a pedagogical way of being of Melissa and Sam. Levin writes:

In the third stage of listening, we are essentially involved in developing our listening as a practice of compassion, increasing our capacity, as listeners, to be aware of, and responsive to, the interrelatedness and commonality of all sonorous beings. (p. 47)

Levin's "description of listening as a practice of compassion" highlights the growth and development of a pedagogical way of being in both Melissa and Sam, as both are truly hearing the voices of urban students for the first time. Levin continues by naming this development as "practices of self," as individuals begin to "understand the essential intertwining of self and other, self and society" (p. 117). Finally, Levin captures the power of this listening for individuals, as it promises to fuel positive growth:

There are potentials in us which cannot emerge or develop except in (specific kinds of) communicative interactions with others – and there are some potentials which can be brought to fulfillment only in specific types of communities or societies. (p. 134)

Without truly knowing the students they encounter at King Charter, Melissa and Sam both experience a displacement that led to quite a few embarrassing admissions of preference for the students they felt they already *knew* in the familiar suburban environments. Upon encountering "others" at King Charter, both fail to hear the voices of their students, and in turn, turn their backs on their own development. If they can experience an openness to "others" in their dwelling place, they can reach a greater level of self-fulfillment. With that said, continuing to ignore the voice of "others" and failing in one's practice of self can lead the beginning teacher to leave the dwelling place they find so foreign.

It is no surprise that Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) found that "High-poverty, high-minority, urban, and rural schools have the highest rates of turnover. Not only were the rates higher in these kinds of schools, but…the data show a significant annual shuffling

of teachers from poor to wealthier schools, from high-minority to low-minority schools, and from urban to suburban schools" (p. 19). Melissa and Sam both describe King Charter as a high-poverty, high-minority urban school like those studied by Ingersoll and Merrill. The ills of the urban school place have been greatly chronicled (see Kozol, 1991, 2005; Rothstein, 2004; Wilson, 1987), and the experiences shared by Melissa and Sam from King Charter are certainly no exception. As I examine the development of a pedagogical way of being in beginning teachers, I must state that the ills of the urban school are certainly not the phenomena I am examining. However, this reality greatly impacts the development of both Melissa and Sam, as they seek to find a dwelling place in the urban environment of King Charter school. The realities of poverty encountered them at every turn.

Sam spent a great deal of time during our conversations pondering the intense socio-emotional needs of the students who entered his classroom each day without many of their basic needs met at home. Interestingly, Melissa rarely discusses this aspect of her new dwelling place, choosing to focus more on the controlling teaching mandates enforced by the school. While both share the same school, their experiences illustrate another example of the importance of context, as Sam was assigned all of the emotional and learning support students in his team, while Melissa was assigned all of the advanced mathematics students from her team. Context matters, even amidst the same building.

One story that Sam shares captures the emotional needs of his students and the out-of-place feelings it elicits in him:

> While my room was vacant, a student from one of the other classrooms up here left to go to the bathroom. [He] came in [and] urinated in the corner. At that table right there - behind there. [Sam pointed to the corner of the room]. He urinated,

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and there were papers on there. The papers got soaked, the urine dropped on the floor. [It was a] puddle.

Sam shared this story in a very matter of fact manner only a few days after it occurred. This extreme act seemed to elicit mixed emotions in Sam. The fact that he had to prepare for things like this to happen during his day overwhelmed him. In his words, "I used to wonder how I was going to make it through the day…The unknown of what the day was going to bring; it scared me. I knew I could teach. The unknown of the day was intimidating." In addition to the fear it creates, this experience also drives home the severe needs of the students in his care. He begins to wonder if he is able to meet their emotional needs and teach them science. Sam admittedly graduated from college in a very confident state of being, believing that he could teach science to anyone. With that said, Sam's fear of the unknown of the day expresses that he had clearly not experienced a pedagogical relationship with *all* students during his pre-service preparation, which led him to experience an out-of-placeness during his first days at King Charter.

As I continue to unpack the development of a pedagogical way of being in beginning teachers, it is important at this point to state that Sam does overcome the extreme out-of-placeness he experiences early in his first year of teaching by working to develop pedagogical relationships with his students and colleagues at King Charter. These relationships enable him to know better not only his students, but also himself. Early in the school year, a few boys began to hang around Sam's classroom at the end of the school day in no hurry to go home. As teacher and students interacted with each other, the walls that separated them began to come down. Nieto (1994) shares the words of Manuel, a senior Cape Verdean-American student, who captures the power of pedagogical relationships when he states:

> If you don't know a student there's no way to influence him. If you don't know his background, there's no way you are going to get in touch with him. There's no way you're going to influence him if you don't know where he's been. (p. 418)

The stories the students begin to share with Sam not only shock him, which contributes to the out-of-placeness he feels, but they also help him to ponder his own privilege. This has a powerful impact on the development of his pedagogical way of being. I will elaborate on the transformation that these pedagogical relationships have on Sam later in this chapter, but for now, I continue to examine the dwelling place the schools offer to the beginning teachers in their presence.

Inhabiting a Lived Space With Children

> If the [curriculum] planners regard teachers as essentially installers of the curriculum, implementing assumes an instrumental flavor. It becomes a process, making of teacher-installers, in the fashion of plumbers who install their wares. Within this scheme of things, teachers are asked to be doers, and often they are asked to participate in implementation workshops on how to do this and that…At times, at such workshops, ignored are the teachers' own skills that emerge from reflection on their experiences of teaching, and, more seriously, there is forgetfulness that what matters deeply in the situated world of the classroom is how the teachers' doings flow from who they are, their beings. (Aoki, 1986/2005, p. 160)

Sam captures well the out-of-placeness that can develop when one feels helpless to develop the pedagogical relationships necessary for learning to occur. While engaging in the challenging work of getting to know their students, Sam's and Melissa's experiences are complicated by the restrictive programs required by King Charter School. Ted Aoki's words to introduce this section remind us of the power of a teacher's pedagogical way of being, from which their doings flow. Who the teacher is impacts how the teacher acts in the classroom. This is evident in the stories of Melissa and Sam, whose past experiences in suburban schools contribute to their sense of displacement at the urban King Charter school. As we examine the development of their way of being a

teacher, one must examine fully the *place* where both begin their teaching careers. In addition to the increased socio-emotional needs of their students, Sam and Melissa, more so than any of the other four participants in this study, find themselves overwhelmed by the requirements demanded by their union-less, for-profit charter school. King Charter requires both a detailed lesson plan format and the strict adherence of their teachers to a prescriptive behavioral program. This creates a tension in Melissa and Sam, as they balance getting to know their students "face to face" while complying with the "faceless" (Aoki, 1993/2005, p. 212) prescriptive programs. This captures what Aoki (1986/2005) names as, "a tensionality that emerges…from indwelling in a zone between two curriculum worlds: the worlds of curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived-experiences" (p. 159). Melissa's description of the tediousness of the lesson plan format requirements are useful here when examining the place these two teachers find themselves in when agreeing to teach at King Charter:

> Lesson planning takes me about four hours every night. We have to break our lesson plans down into five and ten minute increments for every class, so I am really detailed oriented, so I try to make it really specific…Actually, in the beginning of the year, it was really bad, because I needed to make a good impression…I get here at 6, 6:15 (in the morning) and I leave normally around 5:30, 6'ish (in the evening) and then I plan at home. (Melissa)

One is struck by her language of compliance, completely absent of any reference to *lived* time with students. Rigid lesson plan formats like the one Melissa describes reduce the professionalism of teaching and complicate the process of relationship development. Rigid lesson plan requirements seem to send the message to beginning teachers that the administration of this school place does not trust its teachers enough to plan in any manner they deem appropriate. One could argue that this type of control over the lesson planning of its teachers is necessary due to the large amount of staff turnover, since there

are always new teachers present who desire to know how the school wants them to plan. With that said, does this lack of trust make beginning teachers feel valued enough to want to stay in this place? Does this focus on planning for instruction ignore the lived curriculum that happens in the *presence* of students each day in the classroom?

Melissa calls to mind the lived time she spends engaged in the process of planning instruction before she even engages her students. When one examines her school day, it is clear that there is not much time for her to reflect on her teaching. Since King Charter does not have a cafeteria of its own, and since there are no extra teachers to provide time for the classroom teachers to eat lunch on their own, Melissa and Sam are required to eat lunch in their classrooms with their students each day. Also, due to a scheduling complexity, Melissa's preparatory period does not occur until the end of the day at 2:30, leaving her in the presence of middle school students for seven straight hours. In addition to calling into question her ability for quiet reflection during the school day, one has to wonder how she is able to care for her basic needs, as even a trip to the restroom is complicated with this type of schedule.

Like the statistics Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) present, both Melissa and Sam discuss the promise of a future dwelling place, as each shares their plans to move onto other schools with easier workloads. During his initial period of out-of-placeness, Sam reaches out to the teachers he met during his student teaching experience in a suburban setting. They inspire him with a reminder of the temporality of his current place-meant:

> They said, 'you're going to be a great teacher, don't let this job take you down. There's better things after it – shorter workdays, less requirements of the teachers. Take the positives of each day. Don't let the kids drag you down.' (Sam)

Rather than focusing on how he is *meant* to serve in this *place*, Sam is focused on the fact

that his current *place-"meant"* is only a temporary discomfort, as he hopes to transition

back to a more comfortable environment in the next few years. Sam already has a

transition plan to become one of the statistics when he says, "I think of this as probably a

three to five year plan. I think just to get some experience and move on." Melissa

expresses the same desire when she states that "I don't think I am going to be able to

keep up with it for five or ten years – maybe five, but no more than that" (Melissa). These

statements by Sam and Melissa make their first teaching assignments in an urban

environment sound more like a *sacrifice* than a *calling*, more of a paying of dues than of

finding a dwelling place.

The temporality with which Melissa and Sam both view their teaching positions

exemplifies the reality that both view their role of teacher as a *job,* much like the factory

worker who constructs widgets each day. When one is simply passing through, it is hard

to not only develop the pedagogical relationships necessary in teaching, but to even want

to complete the effort necessary to know and understand the others in their presence.

When unpacking this idea, it is impossible to discover what leads Melissa and Sam to

view this teaching position as a temporary discomfort. Is it, as Ladson-Billings (2001)

claims, the reality that "Few teacher education programs prepare teachers to be effective

in urban classrooms serving diverse groups of students" (p. 3)? If one accepts this, then

the individual reaction to their placement is minimized. Is there a selfishness evident in

Melissa and Sam's reaction? Anton (2001) writes that "Those who make ease, comfort,

or always feeling good the main goal of authenticity may miss the prereflective import of

our affective powers" (p. 149). Does this focus on self lead beginning teachers to enter

into an individual survival mode, leading them to lose sight of the students in their care? Anton concludes that "Authenticity is…based in the quality of our concern" (p. 151). When one is looking into a more comfortable future in a new educational dwelling place, the quality of concern for the students in his or her presence may be inhibited, which may in turn impede one's own pedagogical development.

Making Room for Authenticity

> One possibility of applying the notion of dwelling could be called making room for authenticity in the classroom. (Brook, 2009, p. 49)

In time, Melissa and Sam both find a home in the dwelling place of King Charter School, despite their initial out-of-placeness associated with the challenges of building relationships with the others in their presence and difficulties implementing rigid building mandates. Both realize that the relationships that were so complex at first ended up lifting them up and energizing the work they do. This is imperative for their development of a pedagogical way of being, as they initially enter their new dwelling place as a teacher of *some* students, but in the end, emerge a teacher of *all* students. Parker Palmer (1998) shares a similar experience with Melissa and Sam when he enters his first teaching position at Berea College in Kentucky. Palmer found the students from Appalachia, that the college served, so different from any he had ever known. He writes that his "capacity for connectedness…frequently failed because [he] lacked personal knowledge of the 'other.' Worse still, [he] was slow to acknowledge and repair [his] own ignorance" (p. xi). Do beginning teachers like Melissa and Sam enter their first teaching assignment with an adequate "capacity for connectedness," especially in an environment that they feel is so different from the one in which they came?

When we consider Casey's (2009) words, "Place-being is part of an entity's own-being" (p. 16), we realize the power of place on the beginning teacher experience. Beginning teachers will begin to define themselves by the dwelling place they inhabit and those who inhabit it with them. While all six participants share experiences of place-panic at some time during their first year of teaching, Melissa's and Sam's stories of out-of-placeness fall in the extremes of the lived experiences shared by the participants. When we consider Brook's (2009) reminder that it is the dwelling place that creates the space for authenticity to occur, we understand the importance of finding a home in one's first teaching environment, no matter how strange that environment may seem on the first day in the classroom. Brook names "homeliness or being oneself in our environment" as an "essential characteristic of authenticity" (p. 53). It is the students, who at first seemed so different to Sam and Melissa, who will in the end provide the "homeliness" these beginning teachers desire during their journey, demonstrating that a dwelling place is formed through pedagogical relationships. Heidegger (1964/1993) connects the journey toward authenticity with his notion of care when he writes that "Care" is not only a "concern for other people" or "preoccupations with things," but also an "awareness of my proper Being" (p. 223). Melissa's and Sam's authentic selves are connected to the care of their students; desiring to run away from this dwelling place seems to be one way of falling away from their authentic selves toward inauthenticity.

It is important to note that this out-of-placeness is not unique to the urban school in this study. Doug, who accepted a half-time middle/high school music teaching position in the Valley View Area School District, also found himself teaching in a place that varied greatly from his own place of schooling and those places he experienced during

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his pre-service training. Doug describes Valley View as a rural school where "the political and social perspectives of the majority demographic are quite opposite my own." In addition to the struggles he encountered walking into a position where he would only be employed every other day, traveling between the high school and the middle school to teach chorus and music technology classes, Doug initially felt the need to hide parts of his personality. He saw himself very different from the people in whose presence he spent his days as an educator, due to his perceived discomfort with the community. In his words:

> There are still aspects of my personality that I guess I could say, I am hiding from everybody, which includes my mentor. But 'hiding' actually feels like too strong a word. It's simply that certain qualities in my personality I maintain as subtleties instead of features… Earlier in the year, there were more things that I felt like I had to hide more extremely, and that was less comfortable. (Doug)

When given a challenging teaching assignment in an unknown environment, Doug begins his first day in the classroom feeling that he needs to be someone else and put on an act for his students. Doug wears a figurative mask to cover-up his out-of-placeness in this rural environment. Although it led to dis-comfort, he continued the charade. In his words, "I'm not scared that my ideas are wrong; I'm just scared about how they'll be received" (Doug). Doug's fear not only results in his insistence on performing as a teacher that he thinks the community wants him to be, but it also drives a wedge between him and the students in his care. Heidegger (1964/1993) defines authenticity as the "essence of man [sic] to the truth of Being" (p. 236). This act is leading Doug away from authenticity and towards an inauthentic way of being in the classroom.

The Inauthentic Emerges – Playing a Role

> Every experience of the secrecy of our world is an experience of the manifold secrecy of our self: of creative imagination, of the indeterminacy of identity, of

the felt existence of inwardness, of self seen in mirrored reflection, of a compelling wonder about being here, in this world, with this body, at this time. (van Manen & Levering, 1996, p. 35)

By day, Doug wears a long pony-tail and tidy bow tie, playing a role in the script he believes the community wrote for him. By night, Doug pens a secret educational blog that he chooses to hide from everyone else. If his teaching role is an act, then is it in the blog where his authentic being emerges? As discussed in Chapter 2, many researchers and theorists (Ellsworth, 1997; Rubin, 1985; Sarason, 1999) find a great deal of value in comparing the teacher to the actor on stage, captivating the audience with his or her performance. Although I agree that teachers do at times perform lessons for their student audience, I fear describing the pedagogical process as *playing a role*. If one agrees with Brook (2009) that "Authenticity is the goal of human existence" (p. 53), then the beginning teaching experience is also defined by this journey towards an authentic way of being. If "the foundation of becoming authentic is freedom" (p. 51), as Brook contends, then beginning teachers will all have the freedom to change as their rivers of being continue to flow toward authenticity. With that said, for those beginners who choose to play a role oppositional to their authentic way of being, the flood of in-authenticity may threaten with each storm, as beginning teachers must navigate the complex seas created by their dual role of the cultivator of their own being and facilitator of the development of the way of being of the students in their care. As van Manen and Levering (1996) express in the introductory quote, hiding behind a secret self in public can result in hiding one's self in private. Clearly, this can negatively impede the development of a pedagogical way of being in the classroom. All of the participants in this study share the secret fear that they may not be welcome in their new educational

dwelling place. The out-of-placeness experienced by Melissa, Sam, and Doug, however, highlights the secret fear they have about not wanting to remain in their new place.

To return to Postman and Weingartner's (1969) declaration that "The beliefs, feelings, and assumptions of teachers are the air of a learning environment" (p. 33), how polluted might the air be in the classroom of a teacher who does not want to be there or who is pretending to be someone he or she is not? Melissa, Sam, and Doug illustrate to varying levels the impact that their out-of-place state may have on the students in their presence. First, Melissa repeatedly echoes her dis-placement when stating her confusion over how she wants to be in the classroom:

> I definitely started out too soft and I realized at the end that I cannot do that…when I came in here, I didn't know what I wanted, and that's something I had to learn…Now I know what I want in a classroom and how I want them to act basically. (Melissa)

Once she did get to know her students, she learned how she wanted to *control* their actions. I discuss this desire to control in greater detail in the next section, but for now, it is easy to see that Melissa begins in a state of panic, starting over as she tries to find her way of being in the urban classroom. By viewing them as strangers whom she did not understand, Melissa immediately distanced herself from the students in her presence, and from herself as well perhaps. This way of being on her part also provided an excuse for her not to take responsibility for a way of being a teacher that she found challenging. What help does she need to see and accept students for who they are?

While Melissa stares unknowingly at the students she greets on the first day, Doug's potential for inauthenticity emerges when the act he is performing fails to captivate the audience of his middle school chorus. When describing the group of eighty

kids, Doug simply states that "They push my sanity to the limits." He finds himself in a

bad place with these students early on, as exemplified by the following:

> Everybody knows that there are a couple of annoying kids…Only so many
> leashes that you can carry before some of them get loose. That's happened, and it
> just feels like, there's this tension where you're trying to not let their minds run
> away during the entire rehearsal. It's pretty stressful. (Doug)

When beginning teachers find themselves in unfamiliar places, frustration may seep in as

they fail to achieve the success they desire. If supports are not in place to care for them

during this time, beginning teachers may turn their anger towards the one element of the

experience they *think* they can control: the students. What does this need to control

signal? What does it take to *unlearn* this way of being with students?

Doug, too, directs his frustration toward the others in his presence when he

compares his middle school choral students to animals needing leashes. The most

important aspect of pedagogy is the relationship with the child, so viewing students as

"annoying" can have a drastic impact on the development of an authentic way of being in

the classroom. Like Sam and Melissa, Doug, too, finds hope in the possible departure

from his place, as he explores the possibility of leaving his teaching position to enter

graduate school. He shares during our last conversation together his decision to return to

his half-time position again in the following year thanks to his administration's decision

to alter his "place-meant," removing the middle school chorus from his following year's

teaching duties.

Place-panic is a common theme amongst all six of the participants in this study,

but the extreme feeling of out-of-placeness emerged most in the extremes of context,

including Doug's rural setting and Sam's and Melissa's urban settings. Does context

matter to the beginning teacher? I think Melissa's words answer this question most

eloquently:

> I definitely think that every first year has its challenges. I think no matter what,
> most likely it's going to be really hard and there are going to be days that you hate
> and you are going to wonder why you are here, no matter where you are. But I
> think definitely, depending on where you are, it's not as hard as other places.
> (Melissa)

Melissa grew up in a suburban setting and student taught in a suburban setting, so she has

experienced that environment as a student and as a teacher. Of course, she has never

experienced the suburban school as a beginning teacher. From the stories shared by these

six participants, the beginning teacher experience is marked by a period of place-panic

that emerges at varying times during the first half of the school year. With that said, the

greatest panic appeared in the experiences of Sam and Melissa in the urban setting and

with Doug in the rural setting. The extremities of the urban and rural places offer so

much potential, as they, like our own bodies, offer the caring touch of the hands, the

power to overcome impediments at our feet, and the thoughtful action to overcome

adversity with our minds. It is the heart that lies furthest from these extremities, as these

beginning urban and rural teachers must show their love of these dwellings, as well as

remain open to receive the care to be offered by the others in these places.

Using a metaphor of sewing, Parker Palmer (1998) compares the heart to a loom,

"on which the threads are tied, the tension is held, the shuttle flies, and the fabric is

stretched tight" (p. 11). It is in the heart of the teacher where connections are made,

uniting the content that seems so challenging, the students too often marginalized on the

outside, and the place that appears so different than expected. The heart brings together

the power, the care, and the thoughtfulness of the feet, hands, and mind. This is not an easy task as Palmer writes:

> Small wonder, then, that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, even breaks the heart – and the more one loves teaching, the more heartbreaking it can be. The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require. (p. 11)

It is an open heart that embraces and welcomes the relationships necessary for pedagogy to occur. As we will see in the next section, all six of the participants in this study encounter obstacles as they develop relationships with students as they seek to create an environment conducive for learning, with the most extreme examples again occurring in the rural and urban places.

Forming Oneself While In-Forming Others

> For the teacher, the notion of dwelling incorporates two goals: the building of an environment in which students are given space to be themselves (in relation to formation) and the cultivation of an environment that assists students in becoming truly human. (Brook, 2009, p. 54)

The Corporality of Classroom Non-Compliance

The words of the beginning teachers with whom I spoke flood through me as I seek to capture their meaning of the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being in the classroom. I begin this thematic rendering by examining the places in which these beginning teachers find themselves on their first day in their own classrooms. The dwelling of the school house brought an initial place-panic to these six participants, as they experienced a fear of not belonging or not being wanted. The three teachers who began their teaching career in urban or rural schools feel completely out-of-place in their schools, which brings them into a state of panic as they seek to enter

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the unknown void that lies ahead of them. When speaking with these participants, it is difficult to separate the *place* from the *people* who share the classroom with them. The formation of beginning teachers is intertwined with the formation of the students in their care. Brook's (2009) words in the introduction to this section capture the power of beginning teachers on the classroom environment, as they are responsible for the "building" and "cultivation" (p. 54) of the dwelling place of the dozens of students who enter their classrooms each day. This already complex task becomes even more complicated when one considers that beginning teachers experience some level of panic when they enter their school dwelling place. While still forming one's pedagogical way of being, beginning teachers must form an environment conducive for in-forming to occur, since most would agree that the goal of any secondary classroom is to facilitate student learning and development of knowledge.

The experiences of Sam, Melissa, and Doug in their new dwelling places shared in the last section call attention to the pain inherent in this aspect of teaching. Unintended negative consequences can result when beginning teachers feel unprepared to respond to the needs of their students during the lesson. But this experience was not isolated to these three individuals, as all six felt the corporality of this pedagogical practice. Melissa shares the fact that her students "would not listen" to her, and Sophia has the same experience with her math students at Dewey High School, as she describes how it feels when her students are talking and refusing to work appropriately:

> I am going to get red in the face if they don't stop it now. Where does my health come in, where mentally, I can't physically hold all of that in and continue to act so cool? (Sophia)

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Sophia's candid response not only captures the physical pain caused by the misbehavior of her students, who refuse to listen to her, but it also captures a defining moment in her growth and development as a beginning teacher. This situation described by Sophia plays itself out in America's schools on a daily basis.

As an assistant principal, I implore the students with whom I work to stay cool in anxiety filled moments, offering them refuge in the office where they can productively process their emotions. Teachers do not have the luxury to walk out of a classroom when emotions run high. In Sophia's words, they must *act* cool, as losing one's temper would introduce too many other potential concerns. I share in Chapter 2 how I utterly lost my cool and threw a student out of my classroom during my first year of teaching. What my experience taught me is that as a first year teacher, being *calm* and *cool* in the face of noncompliance really is an act, whereas after years of experience, the seasoned teacher truly does stay calm and cool. As Sophia shares, learning to stay cool is an important part of the beginning teacher experience.

Patricia Jennings and Mark Greenberg (2009) explore the emotional health of teachers as they try to stay "cool" during the challenging situations that often arise in the classroom. Like my own personal experience, the authors were drawn to this topic after watching teachers alter their way of being in the classroom to a more authoritarian nature in order to reduce the impact of classroom non-compliance. They describe the purpose of their work in the following way:

> Emotionally exhausted teachers are at risk of becoming cynical and callous and may eventually feel they have little to offer or gain from continuing, and so drop out of the teacher workforce. (p. 492)

To combat this concern, the authors suggest investing in programs to support teachers as they seek to develop a strong Social and Emotional Competence (SEC). Jennings and Greenberg find that "relationship management" (p. 501) is a core component of SEC, which they describe as "teachers' ability to develop and maintain caring and supportive relationships with their students" (p. 501). As I trouble in previous chapters, I would think that "relationships" are the last thing that should be "managed" in the controlled connotation that the word possesses. When Sophia describes losing her cool, she is referring to a distancing that is occurring away from the students as communication has broken down and she is simply holding everything inside of her. Outside of this concern with naming, the authors capture the importance of teacher self-awareness when they write:

> Helping students self-regulate (rather than imposing rules) requires a high degree of awareness, sensitivity, and thoughtful decision making to observe, understand, and respond respectfully and effectively to individual student behaviors. (p. 507)

Clearly, as Sophia describes the corporality of classroom non-compliance, she was expressing her own lack of the "awareness, sensitivity, and thoughtful decision making" needed to motivate her students around shared behavioral goals of self-regulation. She is worried about her own ability to self-regulate, wondering when she might blow up. Jennings and Greenberg recommend that schools incorporate "emotional intelligence training," including "practicing mindfulness" (p. 510) for their teachers, with the hopes of providing reflective opportunities to guide future responses to conflict. In addition to content knowledge preparation and pedagogical training, the experiences of the six participants in this study highlight the need to prepare beginning teachers for the emotional challenges they will encounter on their first days in the classroom.

Elizabeth talks at length during our time together about a challenge to her authority that emerged on her first day of teaching in her English classroom at Forest Hills Middle School. The challenge came from an unlikely source, as two of her advanced English students, a male and a female, expressed their dislike for her during her opening introduction to the class. While she was describing her past experience in the Navy right out of high school and her return to college for her English teaching degree, Elizabeth remembers these two students laughing, and when addressed, telling her that "you're going to be easy to get rid of." This outburst was only the beginning, as both students continued to challenge her throughout the school year. During our second conversation in February, Elizabeth shares the following about the male student:

> It is hard, literally hard for me to breathe when I'm in a classroom with that one male student. I am physically uncomfortable around him. He is significantly larger than me, and since he has a negative pattern with women, if he comes to class early, I'm outside. I am not comfortable in the classroom with him in here...I feel like I'm going to have a panic attack whenever he challenges me, I can't breathe. My throat closes up; my hands start shaking and kids see me shaking a little bit. I should be able to do more things with that class than any other group. I can't because of two people in there. I feel horrible about it; I dread that class, actually. I've had nightmares about that class. Not all of them, just those two. It's really frustrating. I feel horrible about that, but I feel sick before the class even starts. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth captures so many emotions in this statement. I can feel her struggle for breath; I can see her hands shaking. My heart also pours out as an educator who understands the pain that comes with not being able to do as much with most of the class due to the misbehavior of only a few. Does Elizabeth really believe that this large seventh grade boy is going to physically harm her if she is alone with him in the classroom? As we will see, this *fear,* described by physical discomfort and pedagogical pain at not being able to reach the students, impacts all six of the beginning teachers in this study.

The Change Begins

> For their task is not merely to teach other human beings about school subjects, but also to teach them how to cooperate and how to learn, neither of which comes naturally, so that teachers must also persuade students that all of this is worthwhile. (Kennedy, 2010, p. 595)

The difficulties creating a classroom environment conducive to learning described by the six participants in this study is certainly not a novel experience. As I trouble in Chapter 2, a plethora of literature is marketed to beginning teachers on assisting them with the task of *classroom management.* As Kennedy (2010) expresses in the introductory quote, the in-forming of content is typically a comfort area for beginning secondary teachers, but it is the second part of her statement that captures the aspects of creating a dwelling place for students that does not always come naturally. Of course, this aspect of the beginning teacher experience is nothing new, as we see from Veenman's (1984) classic study, where the term "reality shock" (p. 143) is used to describe the first days in the classroom. He examines 84 empirical studies published between the years 1960 and 1984 to discover "The 24 Most Frequently Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers" (p. 155). In rank order, the number one problem by a long shot was "Classroom Discipline" (p. 155). It could be argued that many of the other 24 problems could also fall under the classroom environment umbrella, including number two "Motivating Students," number three "Dealing with Individual Differences," number eight "Dealing with Problems of Individual Students," number 19 "Dealing with Slow Learners," and number 20 "Dealing with Students of Different Cultures and Deprived Backgrounds" (p. 155).

As I review each of these "problems," I can hear the voice of each beginning teacher with whom I spoke telling a story that captures the pain of living with such

"perceived problems" in the classroom. The language of Veenman seems very dated today, as he presents these "problems" to be solved in "dealing with" students in diverse classrooms. When I think of the phrase "dealing with," the image of fixing a broken water heater or an overheated car comes to mind, not the image of a disadvantaged child. But like Doug's reference to his students as animals, for the most part, the participants in this study still use a naming similar to that used by Veenman over twenty-five years ago. Is this a dire fault of these beginning teachers, or is it representative of the educational environment they enter as they seek to create a dwelling place for their students? Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2008) provide an answer to this question when they describe today's schools as places where everything has been "broken down into isolated, seemingly unrelated fragments," leaving the teacher with the uninspired work of "monitoring and management" (p. 6). The uninspired work is illustrated well by Melissa's experience with the rigid lesson planning mandates of King Charter School, but also emerges in suburban settings like Sophia's experience with the mandated teaching and lesson planning model she is required to follow and Elizabeth's experience with a controlling curriculum map dictating everything that she teaches. These district mandates grossly underestimate the importance of pedagogy in the life of teachers and students, ignoring the fact that teachers are the ones most prepared to make these decisions based on their knowledge of the students in their care.

In today's educational environment, *classroom management* has been used to name the myriad of decisions teachers make, from planning their lessons, to engaging their students, to responding to confusion and/or misbehavior, to assessing understanding,

leaving it difficult to argue with the premise of Palumbo and Sanacore's (2007) following declaration:

> Management is important. It is the open door that good teaching must walk through to establish itself in a classroom. Without it, the education of students that society depends on for its own continuity does not have a chance to settle in. (p. 67)

Although this might be a bit of an overstatement, as they portray class management as the key to a stable society, I pause at the words "settle in," as they uniquely capture the relaxed attitude the participants in this study identify as being paramount to their development as teachers. This section also takes a greater importance in my journey toward understanding the lived experience of beginning teachers when I remember that it was Erica, a beginning teacher who altered her way of being during her first year of teaching, which turned my attention to this phenomenon. Veenman (1984) was also drawn to the change in behavior of beginning teachers, whom he had seen change "their original student-centered teaching behaviours into a more authoritarian way" (p. 145).

In order to get a sense of the "behavior" changes of the participants in this study, notice the similar language used by Eric, the middle school math teacher, and Doug the music teacher:

> I think that at the start of the year I may have been a little bit too real, so a lot of the kids felt a little too comfortable right away. That's one of the things that next year I probably want to wait to bring out that much of my personality. (Eric)

> I ended up getting to the point where I think they got too comfortable with me, and lost a little bit of my intimidating sway. Like I said, I never have an intention to scare them, but I think it's important to be in control of students' perspective of roles. (Doug)

It is interesting that both of these beginning teachers used the words "too comfortable" to describe the classroom environment they had created at the start of the school year. One

would think that *comfort* would be an attractive attribute of a classroom dwelling place; however, both of these young men regretted being "too real" and allowing students to get to know them so well that they were not "intimidated" enough to act appropriately in the classroom. This language and naming used by these beginning teachers illustrates the pervasive desire to control the students in their care.

Pace and Hemmings (2007) analyze the changing idea of classroom "authority" in the classroom. The authors chronicle the great increase in student rights and freedoms that emerged in the 1960's and 1970's and the impact this has had on classroom relationships. Pace and Hemmings continually return to the challenge created by the "cultural paradox of egalitarianism in service to the common good, in which students are to be treated the same, and, on the other hand, individualism, in which students are to be treated differently according to their different needs" (p. 8). Finally, the authors note that "By far the most perplexing challenges for teachers are those related to diversity" which has "had an enormous effect on classroom relations" (p. 12). A pedagogical way of being involves forming relations with students that permit learning to occur. Clearly, the challenges mentioned by the authors create a delicate balance for beginning teachers. Too often, teachers become overwhelmed by these structures, and instead of deriving their classroom authority *from* the students, they enforce their authority *on* the students, using control strategies like routines, rewards, influence, and coercion. These methods of control can impede the development of relationships with their students, separating rather than uniting students from teacher.

The Unnecessary Battle for Control

I knew if I broke eye contact with him, I would lose the class. (Elizabeth)

As the experiences of the beginning teachers in this study demonstrate, when encountering the initial panic of a new dwelling place with students on the first days in the classroom the first instinct may be to seek to control "behavior." When so many unknowns present anxiety and stress, one of the few aspects of the experience new teachers feel that they can control is the students. This is reflected in Doug's and Eric's regrets that they were not stricter at the start of the year, and Melissa's belief that she had "started out too soft." We have known for so long that beginning teachers encounter difficulties when addressing student misbehavior while trying to form a dwelling place for their students. Because of this, many researchers and theorists have offered that it is possible to control the students in their presence, and in turn, limit the feelings of helplessness in beginning teachers. Obviously, this promise of control offers a great deal of hope to beginning teachers and those who support and prepare them for their work in the classroom. It appears as the easiest thing to do to change classroom environments for the teachers' benefit. Clearly, Eric, Sam, and Melissa have bought into this message, as they now believe that if they had flawless procedures and consequences in place on day one, as the prescriptive texts tell them, their experience would have been *easier*. It is this belief that may introduce the language of control into the educational vernacular of these beginning teachers. What does this, then, mean for students?

With the pervasiveness of this language with beginning teachers, it is no surprise that behaviors to control will also begin to emerge. We see this on the very first day experience of Elizabeth when challenged by the two gifted students who said that she "would be easy to get rid of." Rather than dismiss the childish statement and deal with it at a later time, Elizabeth immediately rose to their challenge, retorting back, "Not a

chance. I've been in the Navy. This is nothing compared to what that was like." The battle was set, as both sides now appeared willing combatants. The male student, whom Elizabeth describes in a quote presented in the last section, was certainly not going to back down in front of his peers, so he began to stare her down, which is what led to the quote to introduce this section. Elizabeth responds in a firm, aggressive manner by returning the stare of the thirteen-year-old boy, refusing to look away. How does this happen on the first day in the classroom? Elizabeth answers that with the high-stakes feeling she expresses, that she would lose the class for the rest of the year if she did not respond aggressively. The language and behavior of control leaves no room for a middle ground, as the students are either controlled or not controlled, and the teachers either have control or are controlled.

The etymology of the word "control" is beneficial here, as we seek to understand better the desire of beginning teachers to control the students in their presence. "Control" is derived from the Latin word *contra*, meaning "against" (Online Etymology Dictionary). To control the students in the classroom means that beginning teachers must establish themselves *against* them. This behavior appears to stand in opposition to an authentic way of being. Inhabitants who live in the presence of a mighty river know that they cannot exist in opposition to or against the river, as it provides so much of their life sustenance. As we will see from the experiences shared by these beginning teachers, the same circumstance exists in the classroom, as many will begin to see as the first year progresses; it is the students who provide their sustenance for teaching.

This realization will take time, however, as the beginning teachers undergo experiences and reflections that shape how they will be in the classroom. Melissa, who

was immediately scarred by the experience of students refusing to stop talking at her

request, corrects her misuse of the word control when she says:

> It feels horrible [when students will not stop talking]. I feel like I have lost
> complete control of the classroom. I say that, but then, they were all in their seats,
> they were all doing what they were supposed to be doing to a point, but they just
> wouldn't stop talking. (Melissa)

Melissa instinctively uses the word "control," but almost immediately corrects herself,

identifying that students were not technically out of control, because they were sitting in

their seats and *complying* with some extent to her requests. Melissa's words show that

"control" must be some state of being where the teacher feels that the students are

complying with his or her directives. Sam's words express a similar feeling, where he is

frustrated that he is never teaching, which he realizes is not actually true:

> I feel like it's a constant struggle. I'm dealing with just behaviors, and I feel like
> I'm never teaching, which is not the case. It just sometimes feels that way. (Sam)

The language shared by Melissa and Sam illustrate the conflict present in these young

men and women, as they so desire to have all of their students enthusiastically respond to

all of their pedagogical requests. But when they enter the classroom on the first day, none

of the participants in this study believed that they were prepared to receive this

cooperation from their students, so they began to seek control over cooperation. This

matches Pace and Hemmings' (2007) analysis that "the legitimacy of teachers as

authority figures is not something that can be assumed but rather is granted during the

course of ongoing interactions with students" (p. 12). Although it seems that these

beginning teachers want to create a community where their authority as teachers is

"granted" by the students in their care, the delicate balance needed to do this successfully

can create a great deal of anxiety in the beginning teacher.

The Anxiety of the Unknown

> Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength. (Charles Spurgeon, as cited at BrainyQuote.com)

The task of forming a dwelling place for their students, while also finding comfort in their own new educational place, leaves the beginning teachers in this study conflicted about the first day in the classroom. As we have seen, researchers like Harry Wong (2009) and others have promised to reduce this anxiety if beginning teachers follow his prescription to be effective on *The First Days of School*. Wong continuously speaks in polarities, naming various techniques and skills as effective or ineffective, but the experiences of the participants in this study show that this line is not always so clear. Many of them considered themselves effective at times and ineffective at other times. As Palmer (1998) states, dwelling in these "polarities" (p. 61) has led educators to live a "divided life" (p. 167) where their inner and outer worlds are not in perfect harmony. In addition to the division inherent in these beginning teachers when seeking to control the students in their care to establish a productive classroom environment, another anxiety emerges when considering the impact that this conflict has on the development of a pedagogical way of being.

Doug's frustration with his middle school chorus continues to grow throughout the school year. When describing the group of eighty kids, Doug simply states that they are "out of control, absolutely." Although Doug is apparently unaware of the negative, controlling language he uses to describe his students, he often ponders the impact his struggles to create an environment conducive to learning have on his pedagogical growth in the classroom. He recalls advice given to him by his cooperating teacher for how to deal with disruptive students: "You've got to yell at them" she says. Doug's response

illustrates his reflective nature, as he strives to define his pedagogical way of being: "But no educational theory's telling me I'm supposed to yell at kids, ever." Doug wants his caring personality to shine through, but this same teacher who states that he must hide parts of himself from others in the classroom, is also finding it hard to establish procedures and classroom norms to maximize learning time. How should he respond? He does choose to follow his cooperating teacher's advice and resort to yelling, which goes against the way of being he longs to develop. Yelling, a method to institute fear and quick compliance, seems to capture the state of a conflicted beginning teacher in not only Doug, but also Eric, who uses it to ponder the way of being he is developing in the classroom. When reflecting on a few confrontations with students in the classroom, Eric states that "It gets to yelling quickly and I don't even intend for it to be yelling. I need to learn to talk quieter." While still entangled in the anxiety of control, Eric seems to be learning how he wants to be in the future.

As Heidegger (1962) states, "Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its Being towards its own most potentiality-for-Being – that is, its Being-free for the freedom of choosing itself and taking hold of itself" (p. 232). Anxiety is present in both the beginning teacher and veteran teacher experience. As an administrator in my fifteenth year in education, I still become crippled at times with the fear that one poor decision that I make will define how others view me for the rest of my career. I know this fear is absurd; however, I am unable to hold it back during sleepless hours at night. Heidegger (1962) continues, that in a state of anxiety, "what threatens is nowhere" (p. 231). Quite literally, anxiety makes a something out of nothing, as these beginning teachers fear that one act of student noncompliance will threaten their teaching for the rest of the year. Is this fear justified?

Elizabeth, who continues to have struggles with her advanced group of students, responds in a similar manner to Doug when she began to question the support she felt from parents and administrators. At one point in our conversation, I ask her who is in "control" of the classroom, to which she replies:

> The students, which is a little frustrating…I'm actually kind of scared when it comes to grading with that group, and discipline, because I feel like it doesn't matter what I do. There are some parents that will support me and I've forwarded those emails to administration, just so they know there are people on our side. (Elizabeth)

After only six months in the classroom, Elizabeth was already seeing her role in the classroom as engaged in a battle with certain students, their parents, and the administration of her school, where she would need to document everything to ensure she was supported. Instead of developing her way of being in the classroom, Elizabeth was in a state of fear over the loss of control, or even the loss of her job. She continues:

> The arbitrary things that teachers are fired for…It's that kind of stuff that worries me in that classroom, because the one girl that's constantly calling out, she's also accused another teacher for making sexist remarks in the classroom. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth's experience highlights how beginning teachers may begin to develop a distrust of students, parents and administrators, which could result in the departure toward a controlled, teacher centered environment, like the one I discuss in Erica's classroom in Chapter 1. What really stands behind their need to control then? What is missed when *control* is the end sought? Does anyone (teacher or students) want to be controlled?

Building a Classroom Learning Community

> Planning for the productive activity of 30 or more individuals (some of them present reluctantly) and successfully executing those plans, all within the context of multiple (and sometimes conflicting) demands from the school, district, community, and state, leave many teachers – particularly novices – buffeted, confused, or discouraged. (Danielson, 2007, p. 5)

Charlotte Danielson's (2007) words above nicely bring together the first two sections of this thematic rendering, as she captures the anxiety and fear that beginning teachers encounter from the demands of a new dwelling place and from the challenges of forming a dwelling place for the students in their care. When analyzing the totality of the conversations from the participants in this study, I realize that the terms *classroom management* and *dealing with discipline* fall drastically short of naming this aspect of the new teacher experience. I instead borrow Sharon Feiman-Nemser's (2001) naming of cultivating a "classroom learning community" (p. 1029) that encompasses the multitude of responsibilities that beginning teachers assume on their first day on the job.

The participants in this study are anxiety filled, to the point where they actually fear losing their jobs (or their sanity as Doug wonders). Throughout our conversations, Doug spends the most time discussing the difficulties he encounters engaging his middle school chorus, while Elizabeth reflects most often on the negative relationships being developed with her advanced English students. While Melissa and Sam both encounter a great deal of misbehavior, both spend more time discussing their attempted acclimation to the lesson plan and behavioral procedures established and enforced by their new school place. Sophia also speaks in great length about her attempts to implement the mandated lesson plan format required by her school, while Eric primarily focuses on the curricular decisions he makes each day in an attempt to engage the students in his math classes. While all of the stories are unique, they all lead to the same anxiety as each contemplates the plethora of decisions they have to make with the ominous fear present that a mistake may cost them their jobs.

This fear is expressed in Elizabeth's worry of the arbitrary things teachers are fired for, and in Sophia's words below about her fear of non-compliance with the mandated lesson plan structure:

> The standard here this year, as I've been told, is you need an activator, you need a summarizer, and the other item for whatever reason is slipping my mind right now, but there are three items that if you don't have them, that's basically like, fail. You get re-observed. You will get a 'needs improvement' on your permanent record. I know that for those things I have to have three items in each lesson, and if I don't, then I'm going to get major flack about it, regardless of what year you're in. (Sophia)

The language of blind compliance is so evident in Sophia's words, as she cannot even name the third component of a mandated program. She knows she must have it in her lesson or she will receive a lower performance rating, but yet it is not part of her working language. Whether it is the fear of losing control of the students in a classroom, or the fear of losing the support of the dwelling place in control of the beginning teacher, the anxiety is the same. These beginning teachers, expressed well by Sophia, feel that they must be perfect during a period of time when perfection is likely an impossibility.

Wilhelm (2013) contrasts a "buy-in" of a school's instructional program, demonstrated well by Sophia's blind compliance, with the idea of "ownership" (p. 66). How does a school create ownership over the lip service created by buy-in? Wilhelm is clear when he writes that "shared leadership creates ownership. Ownership thoroughly trumps buy-in" (p. 66). This shared leadership is happening across the country in varying ways. This could be done by simply freeing up classroom teachers to serve as "teacher leader coaches" (p. 47) for their peers, resulting in a shared, consistent message about what instructional practices the school values. Or, the more daunting task of creating a peer assistance and review (PAR) program like those described by Darling-Hammond

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(2013) could be organized where consulting teachers actually serve as evaluators of their peers. Whether they actually have evaluative power or not, the key is that teachers do not just "buy-in" to the school's instructional program, they actually spend time each day working with their peers to implement that program.

Many misguided practices do not seek teacher ownership, but instead, rely on teacher buy-in through the threat of negative evaluations. This is true with Charlotte Danielson's (2007) "Framework for Teaching," which was recently adopted by the state of Pennsylvania for its evaluation of teachers. I find it ironic that Danielson seems to understand that novice teachers are not going to be able to thrive from the first day in the classroom, since it is her framework for teaching that districts use if they do decide to fire a beginning teacher in their dwelling place. Danielson (2007) created her "Framework for Teaching" to "define what teachers should know and be able to do in the exercise of their profession" (p. 1). Her framework is divided into "22 components clustered into the following 4 domains of teaching responsibility: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities" (p. 1). Like the model Sophia is required to use, Danielson's framework sends the message that compliance to a single, *correct* way of teaching is more important than supporting teachers to develop their unique personhood as a teacher. Such evaluative frameworks can have a negative impact on the development of a beginning teacher's pedagogical way of being.

Building a classroom learning community encompasses so many aspects of pedagogy, bound together by the relationships necessary to make the myriad of decisions demanded by the first year experience. Beginning teachers must plan for instruction using the appropriate district method, establish learning procedures that benefit the varied needs

in the classroom, assess and gauge student understanding, and react accordingly to the multitude of unknowns that develop each class period. We have already seen how the experience can be defined by the anxiety associated with these decisions, but how does it feel for the beginning teacher when he or she experiences success making these pedagogical decisions in this classroom? As I would soon discover, in addition to inheriting the language of control, many of the participants in this study also share a flowing language to name the positive way of being they began to develop in the classroom.

Learning to Flow

> I feel like with math, it's almost like finding the right formula that works for me, but at the same time, it is also an art because I have to adapt it. I have one plan for my five sections but they are five very different groups and so I have a basic plan, but I don't follow it to a tee; I adapt it. I go with the flow. It is kind of an art form in that sense, but for me, the planning is almost the science, figuring out the way I want to teach it, the order I want to teach it, the types of problems, that's really the science part of it. The art form is actually going up there and doing it and going with the flow. (Eric)

Developing as a Teacher

With the presence of anxiety and fear in the first year experiences of these beginning teachers, it is no surprise that they share a dark period at some point in their first year of teaching, occurring sometime between September and February. Eric describes a "tougher spell" in January and February where, "I was running myself into the ground." Doug describes "a rough time toward the middle and end of December." Sam encounters his rough spell a bit earlier, stating that, "September and October were rough because it was just overwhelming the amount of stuff that we had to do besides teaching" (Sam). Melissa was still in her rough spell when we spoke in December, one that she describes as beginning the first day of school. Still, she is hopeful when she says,

"I think eventually it will get easier. It's still December. I've been teaching five months…it feels like five years!"

Sophia describes her "teacher depression" as a "downspin" that occurred during the winter months of December and January. When we speak for the second time in February, she exclaims, "Now I'm all right. I'm back into the swing of things." While the participants share this common language of teacher depression, Sophia's use of the phrase "back into the swing of things" mirrors Eric's use of the word flow in the introductory quote. Flow captures the experience of beginning teachers' adjustment to a new dwelling place while finding comfort with the plethora of decisions necessary to create a classroom community. As van Manen (1997) states, "It is only through the collectivity of language that we can access experience, the experience of others as well as our own" (p. xiii). Eric's use of the word "flow" captures his ability to make the curricular decisions that plague him so often in our conversations. His words are an answer to my question of whether teaching is more of an art or a science. His profound answer powerfully captures the complexity of the first year teaching experience, as these beginning teachers seek to navigate the challenges of learning a new school, new curricula, new students and colleagues, and a new way of being in the classroom.

In Eric's use of the word "flow," he eloquently captures the pedagogical "tact" he needs to adapt a lesson in the presence of children. Van Manen (1991) defines "tact" as a "pedagogical understanding," which is sometimes "instant – a kind of embodied knowing" while other times, "there is time and space to reflect in coming to a pedagogical understanding" (pp. 84-85). Is "tact" something that beginning teachers can possess on the first day in the classroom? In addition to the understanding necessary to

adapt instruction mid-lesson, it is the "otherness" (p. 139) of "tact" that requires teachers

to get to know their students in order to be attentive to their needs.

Bullough's (1989) case study of a beginning seventh grade public school teacher,

whom he names Kerrie, captures this notion of tact in his description of "with-it-ness:"

> Being with-it requires the ability to simultaneously attend to a variety of stimuli
> and then to appropriately categorize what is observed and quickly respond in a
> way that will prevent disruption and maintain the flow of the lesson. (p. 47)

Bullough repeatedly uses the phrase "flow of the lesson" when describing this "with-it-

ness." What does a flowing lesson look like? And more importantly, how does a teacher

find this flow? Bullough continues that there were "no sudden noticeable increases in

Kerrie's discipline and management related skills; rather they evolved" (p. 52). Bullough

often focuses on classroom management and the "common problems" (p. xi) beginning

teachers face, but this description of Kerrie's "with-it-ness" in the midst of a lesson

demonstrates her ability to *define* her pedagogical way of being throughout her first year,

as these skills "evolved" rather than appeared overnight. Flow represents this ability to

find comfort in the pedagogical decisions required in the classroom in order to respond

appropriately to the needs of the students in the teacher's care.

Eric uses the word "flow" two more times during our first conversation to

describe how good it feels to make these decisions smoothly in the classroom. In another

example, Eric states:

> It's frustrating when I make a mistake, but when I do it right, it feels great. I have
> days where I feel like I just flow; it just comes out and it's just perfect. They get
> it. It worked well. They were interested. It was great. There are other days when it
> feels herky-jerky, like trying to start a car but it's stalling. It goes again then it
> stalls again. (Eric)

Just as I compare the beginning teacher to a new forming river, Eric uses the word flow to capture the relaxed way of being he feels in the classroom, where time passes quickly and student and teacher interactions occur effortlessly. One gets a good sense of the labor-intensive nature of Eric's "herky-jerky" days, contrasted with the effortless days when everything "just comes out" perfect. Eric's description returns me to Gadamer's (1975/2006) writing on "the ease of play," which he states "does not mean that there is any real absence of effort but refers phenomenologically only to the absence of strain" (p. 105). Eric works just as hard on the days where things are "herky-jerky" as he does on days where things seem to flow. It is not the amount of effort that makes the difference, but the lack of strain he feels when in a state of flow.

Eric's language of flow is repeated by other participants throughout our conversations as the collectivity of language captures the essence of the phenomenon. Three other participants use the word "flow" at some point during our conversations, each representing a different aspect of flow that develops during the first year of teaching. First, Sam discusses how good it feels to get into "the flow of my lesson," adding that he "felt in the groove" and "in stride" the second half of the school year. Sophia describes her struggle to adjust to the changing school mandates as learning to "go with the flow." And finally, Melissa describes her journey as a beginning teacher as "getting into the flow of things, getting used to everything." Interestingly, neither Elizabeth nor Doug uses the word flow during our three conversations; this reality captures further meaning when considering that they are the two who struggle the most with the relationality of teaching, as they both at times lost faith in the others in their presence. I return to Elizabeth's and Doug's development later in this section, but for

now, the "flow" language used by four of the participants represents the development of a

pedagogical way of being that allows them to respond to the plethora of decisions that

confront them in the classroom. This state of being serves them well as they acclimate to

their new homes in the classroom and school, where they find themselves amidst

changing policy, defined curricula, and mandated district and building initiatives.

Learning to Listen to Students

> To create a responsive curriculum, new teachers must bring together their
> knowledge of content and their knowledge of particular students in making
> decisions about what and how to teach over time and then make adjustments in
> response to what happens. (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1028)

Feiman-Nemser's (2001) description of a "responsive curriculum and instruction"

(p. 1028) mirrors the flowing language captured by the participants in this study. What

emerges most from her words is the balance needed when melding the "knowledge of

content" with the "knowledge of particular students" (p. 1028). Feiman-Nemser (2001)

continues, "Learning to listen to what students say and to construct appropriate responses

on a moment to moment basis places special demands on new teachers" (p. 1028). My

intention is not to establish the complexity of problems associated with the beginning

teacher experience, but to capture the essence of their experience. These beginning

teachers often begin in unfamiliar environments, which can lead them to a state of panic

as they seek to create a dwelling place for their students. For further understanding of this

phenomenon, I return again to van Manen's (1991) writing on pedagogy, which he

defines as the "multifaceted and complex mindfulness toward children" (p. 8). Pedagogy

entails the delicate task of *listening* to students and *responding* appropriately to their

needs. As van Manen (1991) continues, pedagogy is "defined as the excellence of

teaching" (p. 32). Van Manen's use of the word "excellence" captures so much more than

the dry, rigid term "effective" that I trouble in previous chapters. As beginning teachers navigate the ebbs and flows of teaching, the pedagogical relationships they form capture the pain of struggle and the triumph of excellence. I now look at this language more fully.

I have presented Eric's description of "flow" to represent the pedagogical decision making he needs to make in the presence of his students each day, altering his planned mathematics lesson in order to meet the arising needs of his students. Sophia agrees with Eric when she states that this decision making is a "struggle I think I deal with just about every day in at least one of my classes." She describes this challenge as searching for "the balance sometimes where to stop and go back or if I should keep pushing forward and find something else for the others to do while I help the ones who are struggling." This goal is made more complex by the "mixed emotions" she gets from her students, where it seems that she "can never seem to please them." Her words capture the pedagogical "tact" it takes to know her students well enough to respond appropriately to their needs. In contrast to her language of struggle shared earlier, where she has to hold in her emotions while physically showing the signs of pain, Sophia describes the positive, confident state of flow in the following manner:

> I think some days I am totally in the zone…I don't even know where it will come from, but I will just start teaching and I will be like, "Let's do this!" and then… while they are working or while I'm up at the board, I will have another thought, like let's break off and do this. Those are the days where I am just like, "Wow, where did that teaching come from?" I wish every day could be like that, but obviously, it can't. (Sophia)

Sophia describes this feeling of being in the zone as not an extended state of being, but as a fleeting feeling of confidence and openness to her students. Her words capture an absence of strain, as she feels that she does not even know from where her instruction emerges.

Researchers and theorists use many images to capture the decision making in which beginning teachers need to engage when listening to their students each day in the classroom. One analogy that has been repeated over time is the teacher as a juggler, and York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, and Montie (2006), in their analysis on reflective practice in schools, capture this image well in their following words:

> The dominant culture in many schools is one of doing, with little or no time for reflection and learning…Educators routinely juggle multiple tasks, process information on many levels, manage a continual stream of interruptions, and make on-the-spot decisions to meet the changing needs and demands in the teaching environment. (p. 2)

This juggling is not just about keeping the objects in the air, which is a very physical task. The challenge lies in the processing of information that must occur in order to make the proper decisions while engaging in the very corporeal profession of teaching. Jackson (1968) in his classic essay questioning the future of technology in the classroom experience, captures the uncertainty of pedagogical decision making in the following way:

> Teaching is an opportunistic process. That is to say, neither the teacher nor the student can predict with any great accuracy exactly what will happen next. (p. 4)

Jackson makes his case that no matter how much educational technology emerges in the future school, teachers still define student learning as their decision guide to facilitate learning.

When considering the interaction between students and teacher in the classroom, Heidegger's (1964/1993) writing on technology is beneficial. Today, many teachers use PowerPoint presentations and data projectors to deliver their content. They may use Excel spreadsheets to organize their grades and assessment scores. Teachers may have their students make podcasts and vodcasts to demonstrate learning. But in the end, it is

the engagement that occurs between teacher and students that sets the stage for learning to occur. This is why Heidegger writes that, "Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens" (p. 319). Technology does not replace the pedagogical thoughtfulness that occurs between teachers and students, which explains why so many of my students who flee the brick and mortar public school end up failing the cyber school programs they enter. As Heidegger writes, "Technology is a means to an end" (p. 312) that actually unconceals the truth of education, that pedagogical relationships allow learning to happen. Technology cannot listen and respond to students; only classroom teachers can engage in this pedagogical relationship.

Eric's and Sophia's words show the complexity of curricular decision making in the classroom, as they attempt to alter their instruction based on what they hear from their students. In addition to on-the-spot curricular decision making, the participants in this study also struggle with the behavioral decision making that repeatedly presents itself in their experience. In the first section of this thematic rendering, I briefly mention the restrictive lesson planning and behavioral procedures that Sam and Melissa were forced to use at King Charter, and I think elaborating on the behavioral program would shed more light on this decision juggling that happens in the beginning teacher's classroom. Sam describes the system well when he says:

> We have a 1-2-3 system set up where a 1 was their warning, 2 was their redirection, 3 was their peace partner, but until you're doing it, you really don't know what a 1 really is…It's not that I didn't feel prepared as a teacher, because we had such an orientation, but I really feel like you can orientate all summer long, but until you're actually in it for the first week or two…

Sam trails off before he can finish his idea, perhaps realizing for the first time the impossibility of the task given to him at the start of the school year. In addition to offering an extended school day and extended school year, King Charter also requires their teachers to participate in an extended orientation to the new school year. Those who prepare and support beginning teachers can tell them to give a certain number to a student if he or she is talking, but when there are many students talking, beginning teachers like Sam and Melissa have no idea how to differentiate between on-task and off-task conversation. Clearly, Sam realizes that no matter how much of an orientation he was given, he is going to be unprepared to stand in front of those students on the first day of school.

I start this section writing about the need for beginning teachers to listen to their students in order to respond appropriately in curricular and behavioral decision making, but Sam's description of King Charter School's behavior program begs the question as to whether school districts are really listening to the needs of their teachers. Anton (2002), in his analysis of discourse, troubles the nature of hearing, which he names "the most communal of the senses" (p. 192). Because of this, "Sounds…separate from their sources, and therein the intervening distances seem liquidated in the very act of hearing" (p. 192). Schools, like the beginning teachers who occupy them, receive an influx of competing sounds each day. Often the loudest cries come from the lawmakers and politicians, who themselves desire to control schools by mandating assessment and compliance. As it is important for beginning teachers to hear both their students and themselves on their journey toward authenticity, it is vital that schools as places of dwelling truly hear the voices of their teachers in order to provide for their needs. Anton completes this analysis

of hearing by cautioning that "Given this way of making spaces, sounds can compete with each other and even drown each other out" (p. 194). All educators must hone their sense of hearing in order to listen attentively to the needs of those in their care.

How a Beginning Teacher Develops

> In general, flexibility and responsiveness are the mark of experience. Novice teachers rarely have the instructional repertoire or the confidence to abandon a lesson plan in midstream and move in a new direction. Such a response requires both courage and confidence, which come with experience…Such flexibility is, indeed, a high-level skill. (Danielson, 2007, p. 90)

Danielson's words greatly intrigue me as I contemplate the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, most likely because I spend so much time in the presence of her framework each day as I complete my evaluations of non-tenured teachers. So often in her writing, she echoes the impossibility of excellence for a beginning teacher, like she does in her words to introduce this section. When beginning teachers use the language of flow to describe their absence of strain in making pedagogical decisions in the classroom, they are discussing the "flexibility" and "responsiveness" that Danielson captures in her description of Domain 3: Instruction. Danielson herself even uses a flowing language to describe this domain, when she writes that "Teachers who excel in the components of Domain 3 have finely honed instructional skills. Their work in the classroom is fluid and flexible" (p. 29). A contradiction is evident here, as beginning teachers and the theorist who created their evaluation document are both describing excellent instruction as fluid, yet Danielson names this "high level skill" in teaching as the "mark of experience." What Danielson seems to miss in her either/or thinking of "Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, or Distinguished" (p. 42) is the ups-and-downs, the ebbs and flows of the teaching experience. The participants in

this study capture this well in their development of how they are going to be in the classroom.

Eric, who contributes the term "flow" to capture the smooth relaxed feeling of excellent pedagogy, does not always find his decision making flowing in the classroom. During our first meeting, Eric expresses his frustration with the endless chatter in the classroom. I will never forget his quick talking confidence as he pulls a whistle out of his pocket to show me his antidote for the talking his students had been displaying. The idea had emerged from one of his graduate courses on classroom management. He felt it was important for his students to understand the difference between acceptable, on-task conversation and inappropriate, off-task talk. His plan was to blow the whistle anytime when classroom talking crossed the line and reached an unacceptable level. After a test run, he let the students know that anyone who uttered a word after the whistle blew would have to stay after class for reprimand. Eric shares this plan with me in November, and when we meet again in February, he fails to mention the whistle again, so I decide to ask him how it went. He just simply responds that he is not using the whistle anymore and then tells a story that demonstrates how he was developing his pedagogical way of being in the classroom. When the whistle failed miserably, as it scared some students and challenged others, Eric decided that during times when he would want to blow the whistle, he would simply look at the clock and wait for the class to quiet. He began adding the time spent off task to the end of one of his classes, sending those students late to their lunch. The whistle was an action Eric took to instill order in the classroom, but rather than emerging from his authentic being, it came from a class promising panaceas to common issues experienced by beginning teachers. The theme that this experience

captures is that Eric tried a method of control, albeit an exaggerated one reminiscent of a circus trainer training his animals, but he listened to himself to realize that this was not the pedagogical way of being he longed to develop. What emerges from this revelation is a pedagogical relationship with his students.

Max van Manen (1991) adds further meaning to Eric's experience blowing a whistle in his classroom when he writes, "Pedagogy refers to our need to reflect on our pedagogical living with children" (p. 41). Eric tried a method of control, but knew he could not create a true dwelling place for his students by using a whistle to express himself each day. As Van Manen (1991) writes, "Pedagogical tact is pedagogical understanding in being attentive to young people, through what we notice about them, in the way we listen to them" (p. 123). As Melissa demonstrates, tactful decision making cannot occur in the classroom until the teacher knows her students well enough to institute appropriate procedures for learning, while facilitating the learning of appropriate content.

Melissa began the year at King Charter with a lot of uncertainties and unknowns, which led her to go overboard with her lesson planning (four hours a night) and to stick to the script with her content. In the beginning, she followed the book compliantly until she found out that the students were not learning the material. In order to get to know her students' needs better, she began experimenting with book work, group work, and work in stations in order to discover engaging activities. It was only after she decided to create her own note packets "with the guided examples and notes and hints on what you need to do" that she began to see growth in her students. When the textbook says to introduce "non-Euclidian Geometry," which she did not even learn until college, Melissa tries to

make "the right decision, the professional decision to not even introduce that to them."

Also, rather than spend four hours planning for a lesson and creating a PowerPoint, as she

was doing each night at the start of the school year, Melissa says she began to "come up

with the problems off the top of my head." Initially, one might view this as a flippant

attitude, to see what comes to mind while standing before her students. But, her words

literally show the "thoughtfulness" of her decision making, as she must know her content,

students, and herself well enough to be confident enough to stand in front of her class and

teach more naturally, adjusting as necessary to meet the needs of her students. In her

words:

> I would never have done that in the beginning of the year, but now that I know
> what I am doing, or at least more of any idea what I am doing and now that I
> know my students and how they are going to react to that, it is a lot easier and a
> lot better. (Melissa)

Melissa's declaration was a far cry from the teacher I met in our first meeting, who

laments that she has no idea what she wants her classroom to look like. Her experience

and Eric's experience with the whistle provide exceptional insight into *how* beginning

teachers develop during their first year of teaching.

Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1991), in their seminal work entitled *Emerging as*

a Teacher, also studied the first year experience of six beginning teachers. Like the

insights I am presenting here, the authors also found beginning teachers immersed in a

"trial-and-error" of "complex and interrelated decisions" (p. 178). Although I have

benefitted a great deal from their work, I feel that its purpose and findings vary from the

research presented in this study. When describing the totality of their findings, the

authors write:

> The story of their first year of teaching was one of building a more comprehensive, cohesive, fitting, and productive teaching schema initially and primarily through trial-and-error testing and adjustment of meaning, and of seeking metaphors and attendant images by which to define a teaching self consistent with the inner self. (p. 168)

Bullough, Knowles and Crow reduce the beginning teaching experience to metaphors for teaching assumed by the beginning teachers and the altering of those schemas during the first year. In essence, their study examined *who* beginning teachers were when they entered their first year and *who* they became by the end of the school year. What emerges from the conversations in my study is *how* beginning teachers develop their pedagogical way of being during their first year. Rather than defining their identity, this research more fully understands their pedagogical way of being, as they seek to acclimate to the uncertainty and unknowns of the first year experience. For example, the authors name Heidi, a secondary language instructor, as a "subject-matter specialist" (p. 119) and Larry, a secondary science teacher, as changing from a "teacher as expert" (p. 23) role to a "policeman role" (p. 35). The experiences that emerge from my study examine how Sophia responds to a poor observation or how Melissa changes to create a classroom conducive to learning. In its essence, the development of a pedagogical way of being for beginning teachers involves finding comfort in their new dwelling places while forming the dwelling place for their students. In the process, they seek new ways to acclimate themselves to the plethora of decisions they must make each day in the presence of others.

Experiencing Flow Without Seeking to Control

> To be a teacher in general, you have to be lenient and wanting to go with the flow. (Melissa)

After reflecting on this idea of flow that emerged from the participants in this study, I recall that this is not the first time I have come across the word flow to describe positive experiences. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's 1990 work entitled *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* describes his research on "the positive aspects of human experience – joy, creativity, the process of total involvement with life I call flow" (p. xi). Csikszentmihalyi defines flow as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (p. 4). Csikszentmihalyi did not connect his theory of flow to teaching, choosing to study "artists, athletes, musicians, chess masters, [and] surgeons" to understand "what it felt like to do what they were doing" as they were engaged in optimal experiences (p. 4). His method of studying his theory was to have these individuals carry a pager with them that would beep at random times throughout the day, asking the participants to write down how they felt at the time of the beep and what they were thinking about.

Pondering Csikszentmihalyi's flow benefits me a great deal as I seek understanding of the phenomenon of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. With this said, Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) conclusion differs greatly from the themes that emerge in this study, as his emphasis is on how individuals can control their circumstances to permit the optimal state of flow to emerge more often. To illustrate this point, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) refers to Yu the Great, who ruled China in 2100 BC. Yu reached his mythical status by demonstrating his ability to control the mighty rivers that were hurting the economy of China during times of flood. Rather than block the flow of the rivers, Yu was able to control the water's flow by directing it away from the crops.

Csikszentmihalyi's ultimate thesis is that human beings can control flow experiences to increase happiness. Again, this promise from the psychological tradition will appear very attractive to beginning teachers and those who support and prepare them, and the beginning teachers in this study were no different, as all sought to *control* their environments, teaching situations, and their students. Four of the participants share experiences that express the impossibility of Csikszentmihalyi's promise to control flow, as the excellence of powerful pedagogical relationships often arises unexpectedly and always reflects the ebbs and flows inherent in the experience. Two of the participants, Doug and Elizabeth, were still immersed in a state of control during our last conversation at the end of the school year, again demonstrating the futility of attempting to "control" optimal experiences.

Throughout our time together, Elizabeth repeatedly shares in great detail the frustration she feels from her experiences with her advanced communication arts students, but it is her description of one of her learning support students that provides the most troubling example of a controlling language:

> I have another student in my (Period) 1/2 class. She's autistic. She refuses to accept that she's autistic. She wants no part of it. I know there's some sort of camp over the summer for kids with autism, [but she] won't have anything to do with it – nothing – [She] has very unrealistic views of her abilities…She did something earlier in the year where she fixated on Shakespeare. I explained to her, 'I have one student in my advanced class that understands this. It's just above grade level. I can get you other versions of this, but Shakespeare in its pure form, college-level kids don't understand it. It's nothing about you.' She's just not getting it, reading it constantly. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth shares several stories where students and parents express concerns over her attitude in the classroom. These appear to be isolated incidents, but many focus on her strong willed attitude to challenge students in her classroom. From the advanced boy who

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argues with her about the organization of his notebook, to the advanced girl who passionately argues with her about content taught in class, to this learning support female student Elizabeth describes above. In the flowing language they use, the other beginning teachers in this study have demonstrated a willingness and openness to adapt to meet the needs of the students in their care, but Elizabeth's words here still express her desire for students to adapt to meet *her* demands. Although she is likely correct about the reading of Shakespeare and the benefit that the autistic camp can have on this student, beginning teachers can be hindered in their growth by trying to control elements of their positions that are out of their control, like families, district mandates, and challenging teaching assignments. Even a child's excitement for reading Shakespeare becomes a negative that Elizabeth feels the need to control.

In addition to using the language of control with regard to her students, Elizabeth also shares an example of this language that emerges in her relationship with a teacher colleague. When Elizabeth discovers that her students are complaining about her to their other teachers, Elizabeth confronts her colleague in front of the students they share:

> I even corrected a teacher. [She was] like, 'Oh, you're the movers and shakers.' I said, 'No, you're not. You are seventh graders. You have the potential to be influential people in society, but right now, you are seventh graders. You do not run the show.' [The teacher] kind of looked at me like, 'what are you doing?' and I was like, "Mm, mm, no.' (Elizabeth)

This is another example of Elizabeth's negative reaction to the children in her presence, which opposes van Manen's (1991) description of pedagogy. Her colleague was clearly trying to build up the students, and Elizabeth responds by not only bringing down the students, but also by embarrassing her colleague in front of the children.

Where four of the participants of this study develop a way of being to go with the flow, Doug, like Elizabeth, seeks to control those in his presence rather than truly listening to their needs and adjusting his pedagogy. Doug discusses his struggles with his middle school choral group in great detail, and when reflecting on how he would improve the group, he shares the following vision:

> I would have a lot more leeway for punishment. I'd be able to have a 'let's get everybody into singing choir,' and I'd be able to have a 'you don't meet these expectations. You are out of here because you are going to ruin it for everybody else' choir. That's what I would call it, just so that it was clear for everybody. I'd be able to do all of that, and I think establishing a kind of structure that I would be able to approach with my mindset, my capabilities, that would be successful. (Doug)

Doug responds to the daily challenges presented by middle school students by seeking to control the situation with his explicit selection of who is permitted in his presence. Rather than seeking to embrace and accept, he seeks to push away and exclude.

The etymology of the verb *flow* is beneficial here, as it illustrates a characteristic of flow that Doug and Elizabeth might develop more in order to reach authenticity. "Flow" is derived from the Old English, *flowan,* which means "to flow, stream, issue; become liquid, melt; abound, overflow" (Online Etymology Dictionary). Water can harden as ice, capturing whatever it holds in its grasp. But this freezes life. It is only the melting heat that creates the flow from the top of the mountain, allowing life to flourish in its path. The language of flow shared by the participants in this study demonstrates their ability as beginning teachers to "melt" and "become liquid" in order to adjust to their new dwelling places and find comfort in the myriad of decisions they must make each day. The participants in this study describe the pedagogical changes they made throughout the school year in order to become the teacher they longed to be. The participants did not change who they were, just like the water is still the same as the ice

that developed at the top of the mountain, but they did need to alter their ways of being in order to find comfort in their new dwelling places as they sought to give parts of themselves to the students in their care.

Seeking Authenticity

> There's an aspect of teaching, I feel, that is putting on a one-man show… I can't let that – I really try not to call it an act – but I really can't let that act falter, I can't lose that character while I'm teaching and become tense and stressed because I feel like I wouldn't even know what decisions to make anymore. (Doug)

Doug's words to introduce this section capture the major themes presented in this rendering, as we return to the act in which Doug feels he needs to engage due to his perceived differences with the dwelling place where he begins his teaching experience. His words capture the anxiety he feels when his act falters, as he realizes that he does not know how to make the plethora of decisions demanded of him each day as *himself*. Doug troubles his own use of the word act, but yet continues to use the term, identifying a continuing source of conflict as Doug seems to be acting against the way of being he longs to develop. David Levin (1989) analyzes the development of an authentic self in his book, *The Listening Self,* emphasizing the importance of trusting ourselves when he writes:

> We must ultimately put some trust in the innate wisdom of our natural capacities, trusting that, through critical discourse, we can elicit from them their own sound sense regarding what they need in order to continue developing. (p. 115)

Levin's words emphasize what Doug's experience has shown us, that only by listening to himself, will Doug be able to begin on the path toward authenticity. Doug knows what he needs to do to define his pedagogical way of being in the classroom, but he needs to trust himself enough to be himself.

In his book *Selfhood and Authenticity,* Corey Anton (2001) thoroughly examines an individual's journey to develop an authentic self. He begins with a simple definition of "authenticity," which he names as the "quest for self-fulfillment, self-realization, or personal development" (p. 3). However, he then cautions how this basic quest can become grossly misunderstood, as many improperly view the journey toward authenticity as a selfish path toward one's own comfort, or a "being-for-oneself" (p. 64). Anton counters this with his contention that the other aspect of authenticity, which he names as "being-for-others" (p. 65), is equally important in defining the way of being of an individual. Anton captures this dialogic relationship when he writes, "Others are part of the way world [and] self become manifest" (p. 55). Essentially, humans cannot reach their authentic being without the nourishing presence of others. Anton continues that this "co-attending" (p. 63) to self and others can reveal a far greater potential than one could reveal with his or her own endeavors. Anton's words elucidate the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being as he highlights the importance of defining self while caring for others.

How do beginning teachers develop an authentic way of being in the classroom? To answer this question, Anton (2001) focuses on the things that matter to the individual, as that will then lead the quest toward self-fulfillment. In his words:

> People are, in a sense, perpetually outside of themselves, actively caught up attending to and caring for the things that matter to them. People dwell in the things into which they meaningfully weave their lives. (p. 7)

The experiences shared by the six participants in this study suggest that they do always exist in a state *outside of themselves*, constantly attending to the others in their care, through lesson planning, teaching, assessing, and caring. But their "being-for-oneself"

often conflicts with their "being-for-others*,*" their students. So, what *matters* to the beginning teachers? Without a doubt, all six participants in this study describe the pedagogical relationships they develop with their students as defining their way of being as a teacher; therefore, authenticity is pursued through the dialogic attending to self and other. To develop their pedagogical way of being, beginning teachers need to be able to live authentically with their students as well as themselves.

A Two-Way Street of Caring

> I left that day realizing that he confided in me some very personal things and I've realized that I've only been teaching here four months but I've actually been able to make a very positive impact with some of the students… I've had such great conversations with the students and I realized that's why I became a teacher, to make a difference in some of these kids' lives. You're really able to see the positive differences at an urban school district. There's a lot of negative stuff I can take out of every day, but there's a lot of positives, too, immediate differences in their everyday lives, because you're their teacher. (Sam)

When working with young people, as a parent or as a teacher, it is typically true that the most piercing pain and the deepest sorrow is often caused by the children, but the reverse is also true, as the most exhilarating pleasure and unceasing satisfaction also emerge from these relationships. When you care so strongly for innocent children, it is natural to work tirelessly to impact them positively. I began this thematic rendering by examining the place of King Charter School, where both Sam and Melissa experienced an out-of-placeness when transitioning to an environment they felt was so different than the educational environments they had experienced in their pre-service lives. In time, both began to feel the same power of pedagogical relationships with students they experienced in pre-service settings, only to a heightened degree in the urban setting of King Charter. In Sam's words, "The strong connections" he develops with many of his students are "a

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reason to get up every day and come to work." His words to introduce this section most eloquently describe the positive impact he begins to feel, which overwhelms any of the negatives he initially experienced.

As I mention at the start of this chapter, a few boys often stayed after school to help Sam clean the classroom and white boards. One day, one of the boys lingered after the others left to share with Sam the stress he was feeling to get enough money to buy his mother a nice Christmas present. The boy shared that his father was not around, and Sam immediately realized the power he could have in this boy's life and later, realized the impact the boy would have on his teaching. After the child left, Sam pondered his own privilege and how lucky he was that he "grew up in the same house" where his parents still live together today, and that his father always gave him money to buy his mother a Christmas gift. This experience not only illustrates the development of a powerful pedagogical relationship, but it also opens the door to understanding himself more fully as his pedagogical way of being begins to develop in the classroom.

Melissa, who describes experiencing the longest period of dis-comfort to begin the school year, slowly began to find the positives from her teaching, discovering an impact she was having on two of her challenging students, whom she felt she was able to impact more than their other teachers. To one of the boys, she declares, "You give me so much hope. You make me feel like I do my job." Her experience shows how life affirming these pedagogical relationships can be, as they may lift a teacher out of a negative place. Melissa describes this on a day late in the school year:

> Well, I had a horrible day last week…My advanced kids…would not stop talking…it was just a really bad day. And then we went to a board meeting to get a tenth grade and just to hear other people talking so badly about something we're trying to do better, it got me thinking - now I know why I am here. These kids

need me. So, it's definitely rewarding in that aspect. I definitely think I have impacted at least some of them...I never thought I would be teaching in urban – never - but I think that now that I have…I think I can make more of a difference. (Melissa)

In the morning, her students took her to a very bad place, as their non-compliance led Melissa to question her being in the classroom; however, only hours later, as she sat at her charter school board meeting trying to present the benefits of adding another grade to the school, Melissa becomes defensive as the community speaks negatively about King Charter School, which leads her to take pride not only in her students, but also in the impact she now realizes she is having on the lives of the students in her care. Melissa begins to realize the difference she is making in the lives of her students, and that realization makes all of the difference in her own life and teaching.

Eric, who struggles throughout the school year to enhance his pedagogical decision making in the classroom, captures how a relationship of mutual respect defines him as a teacher. In his words, "I had one kid actually say to me, 'I don't agree with the way you teach, but I respect you as a teacher.' That I think really does define me." Eric describes so many students in our time together, so it is interesting that the one who best defines him is a student who does not even agree with the way he teaches. It is almost like Eric connects with the child, since Eric himself does not always agree with the way he teaches. Eric knows that he is not perfect in his pedagogical decision making, but is thankful that despite this, his students still respect and care for him.

Listening to Self

Selfhood is an intentional implicate to how things are talked about. As we come to terms with the lived-through world-experience we accomplish selfhood; in our speaking, we concernfully speak about something and so disclose and inscribe a concerning self. (Anton, 2001, p. 91)

As Anton captures in the quote above, in our speaking and in our language, we disclose an image of self, as authenticity emerges in the language of the individual. This idea again highlights the importance of phenomenological conversations for uncovering lived experience, as the words of the participants may bring to light their development of a pedagogical way of being in the classroom. I have already elucidated the language of control that Doug and Elizabeth use in contrast with the language of flow that emerges from the other four participants. I now return to the experiences shared by Elizabeth and Doug in hopes to bring to light the importance of listening to oneself in order to develop authentically. As a researcher, I tread lightly in this section, heading the words of Anton (2001) when he states, "Authentic existence is not to be judged by others" (p. 154). I seek not to judge the way of being of the participants in this study as authentic or inauthentic, but only to bring to light the themes that emerge in my conversations with these six beginning teachers that point toward the idea of authenticity.

Like the other beginning teachers in this study, Elizabeth and Doug both share the power of pedagogical relationships with their students. For example, Elizabeth takes a great deal of pride from a connection she makes with a girl in her general education communication arts class. She shares:

> Apparently she's a nightmare for other teachers, but she's a perfect angel in my class. She knows that I grew up in Baltimore. She probably could even identify my house in Baltimore. It's just that little thing. She's horrendous in other classes, but not in mine. That does make me feel pretty good. (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth describes the connection she develops with this student by simply talking about the Ravens and the city of Baltimore, where both grew up. Her reflection on this pedagogical relationship leads Elizabeth to share her belief that "The stronger the rapport, the better the classroom environment is, the more work that gets done, the more learning

that gets done, and it just falls together." Doug also describes the pedagogical pleasure he gets working with one of his small group music tech classes. Because of the smaller numbers, he feels like he is able to reach a personal rapport with every student. As he describes, this rapport enables them to "get as much done as any of my other classes with five, sometimes ten minutes spent at the beginning of the class just chatting." Most relevant to this study, Doug exclaims that "I'm more myself with them than I am with the classes that have more than twenty students at a time…it feels great!"

The issue of class size is a controversial one, especially during today's economic climate of decreased educational budgets. As Matthew Chingos (2013) reports, "Between 2009 and 2010, the pupil-teacher ratio in the U.S. increased by more than half a student for the first time since the Great Depression" (p. 1). In some states, the increase was even more dramatic, including California, "where the pupil-teacher ratio increased by more than 4 students between 2009 and 2010, an increase of more than 20 percent" (2013, Chingos, p. 1). What impact does increased class size have on the classroom? Chingos states that like Doug, parents and teachers for the most part prefer smaller class sizes, as it promises both groups that enough attention will be given to each student. There is some truth to this statement, as Tennessee's Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio) discovered. Frederick Mosteller (1995) compiled the data from this four-year educational reform experiment, conducted from 1985-1989 in K-3 classrooms in the state of Tennessee. All students made gains in small classes (13-17 pupils) compared with students in regular class size classrooms (22-26 pupils), but of a greater interest is the fact that "The effect size for minorities was about double that for majorities" (p. 119).

My interest in this research study is on the development of beginning teachers at the secondary level, where class size benefits are harder to determine, since teachers have several different classes during the school day. With this said, one has to wonder whether lower class sizes would benefit the students who come to school from lower socioeconomic levels in Doug's rural district and Sam's and Melissa's urban district. Also, as beginning teachers hone their way of being a teacher, it may benefit them across the board to have fewer students each class period to whom they need to listen and respond.

Making Contact

> I believe
> The greatest gift
> I can conceive of having
> from anyone
> is
> to be seen by them,
> heard by them,
> to be understood
> and
> touched by them.
> The greatest gift
> I can give
> is
> to see, hear, understand
> and to touch
> another person.
> When this is done
> I feel
> contact has been made.
> (Virginia Satir, in Intrador & Scribner, 2003, p. 123)

Satir's poem wonderfully captures the idea of developing an authentic pedagogical way of being, where beginning teachers seek to care for self while caring for the students in their presence. Teacher cannot be separated from student, and "contact has been made" when the relationship develops that permits both to thrive. Elizabeth and

Doug both share powerful pedagogical experiences similar to those shared by the other four participants. But with a second look, it is clear that the relationship Elizabeth shares is with one of the students in her general education class with whom she has a great deal in common. This was the only experience she shares from her general education class, as she primarily focuses on the extremes of her advanced class and learning support class.

Doug's experience with his small group music tech class shows that he knows what he needs to do to find his pedagogical way of being in the classroom: be himself. But as we have seen, this is not as easy as it sounds when encountered with the challenges of an unfamiliar rural setting and a large middle school choral group. Again, Doug would likely prefer to control his schedule to have classes with only twenty or less students, but as we have seen from the varying contexts in which beginning teachers enter, teaching means building relationships with the students assigned to your care, no matter how that assignment appears. Positive relationships cannot occur only on the teacher's terms. To truly "make contact," both teacher and student need to seek to be seen, heard, and understood.

As Anton (2001) writes, "We are transparently caught up and absorbed in that over which we care" (p. 30). Beginning teachers clearly become absorbed in their relationships with students, but as Doug's and Elizabeth's experiences show, this absorption can lead down an inauthentic path when so focused on the few negative relationships that emerge. After Elizabeth tells a story about the challenging female advanced student jumping up and down and screaming throughout the classroom about a topic in class that "she feels very passionate about," I ask Elizabeth if the other two classes were still going well. Elizabeth simply responds, "Yes" without any elaboration.

It seems that Elizabeth is having a lot of success in the classroom with most of her students, but she seems blinded by the negative that even keeps her up at night. This blind focus on the negative may lead her to seek greater control of her experiences, which results in a rigid, controlling language used about and toward the others in her presence.

While feeling comfort and ease with his small music tech class, Doug feels anxious and stressed with his large middle school choral group. This discomfort leads him to respond in a manner that he feels is opposed to his authentic self, best illustrated by his response to his cooperating teacher's advice to yell at his students. For Doug, yelling represents the wide divide between the teacher he wants to be and the teacher he finds himself becoming. Doug states, "If I were to be completely myself, I would never yell. I'm not a yelling, angry kind of person in the slightest" (Doug). With this said, Doug does yell, quite often as he describes it, at his middle school chorus. It is valuable to contrast the language of Doug's experience with the language used by Melissa, who also encounters substantial discipline problems in her first few months at King Charter Middle School. At one point in the school year, one of her students likely frustrated by the way his classmates were treating her, tells Melissa that she needs to be "mean." Melissa responds confidently, "That's not me. I would rather have a relationship with my students and talk to them like we are on the same level. I'm not going to yell…I am not going to be nasty…That's not who I am" (Melissa). Where Doug compromises his pedagogical way of being by resorting to an authoritative technique that he adamantly opposes, Melissa stays true to herself through the hardships that develop as she exhibits an openness to her students and to herself. Doug is still lost at sea, not having found how to *be* himself while *being* a teacher.

Whereas Elizabeth never questions the way of being she is developing, Doug does seem to recognize the inauthentic path he is traveling when he states that his mind "is not focused inwardly on how I feel about what's going on. I can't be completely myself" (Doug). Again, one can learn a great deal from these experiences by contrasting Doug's language with the language shared by one of the other participants. Eric, when describing the anxiety that develops when he is told that his position may be furloughed, shows that he is able to rise above the flooding water to find his authentic self:

> I really took that week off and just focused on me. I got back to being me. I knew that I wasn't doing my job the best I could, and I needed to take care of myself and then my teaching would follow. (Eric)

What does Eric mean when he describes his focus on me? Like Levin's (1989) description of the development of self, Eric's care for self described above will enable him to continue the "ongoing process of self-development" that is intertwined with the development of his "listening as a practice of compassion" (p. 47). In short, teachers must seek self before they can truly *hear* others. This point is evident in Sophia's struggle with the lesson plan format model she was required to use. In the end, she was able to strike a balance within herself, a "middle ground" in her words, where she would utilize the lesson plan format, but to stay true to herself by deciding that "if it doesn't fit, don't force it." This type of self-compromise illustrates the flowing language used by four of the participants, who found ways to adjust to the expectations set for them while staying true to themselves. Essentially, beginning teachers must engage in dramatic change during their first year of teaching; however, they must find comfort and peace with that change or it will not truly represent their way of being.

Connecting the Language of Flow to the Related Themes of the Study

In this thematic rendering, I have examined the most discussed aspects of the beginning teacher experience, including the acclimation to a new dwelling place and the ceaseless decisions that must occur while attempting to facilitate the creation of a classroom community for one's students. What emerges from the shared telling of these experiences is not only a shared language of flow, but also the importance of listening to one's self in order to find an authentic path on the road toward the development of a pedagogical way of being in the classroom. This language of flow represents an accepting and open way of being to the most important aspect of the new teacher experience, namely the pedagogical relationships that develop in the classroom. By demonstrating care for others, beginning teachers will grow in their care for self. They do have a great deal of power to define this pedagogical way of being, but it is important that the others in their presence who prepare and support them for their work in the classroom understand the experience and language of beginning teachers as they seek to guide them on the path toward authenticity. I present the insights I gained from this thematic rendering in the next chapter, in order to consider ways in which we might grow as a community of educators in our care for beginning teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE: A LANGUAGE OF BEGINNING EMERGES

The Journey Toward a New Way of Being

> Emphasis on the severity of beginning teachers' problems hides the ways in which problems appear, disappear, and reappear, and how their intensity ebbs and flows over the course of a school year. (Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1989, p. 209)

Throughout this rendering, I use the image of a flowing river to capture the journey beginning teachers face as they seek to develop their pedagogical way of being in the classroom. As I discover in my conversations with the participants in this study, like a new forming river, teachers enter the classroom on the first day with "the innocence of water, flowing forth without thought of what awaits it" (O'Donohue, 2008, pp. 75-78). They encounter myriad unknowns, from place-panic when adjusting to a new school and its established ways, to the time it takes truly to know their students and curricula. Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1989) in the introductory quote above also suggest a river metaphor in the "ebbs and flows" of the first year of teaching. This imagery aids me as I ponder the insights from this study. I use the phrase *pedagogical way of being* in my research question in order to capture the state of being beginning teachers' desire to develop during their first year of teaching. However, only after completing the thematic analysis of my research conversations has the meaning of the words pedagogical way of being become clear to me.

Hermeneutic phenomenology has granted me access to the voice of six beginning teachers, all engaged in a similar experience as millions of new teachers before them. The individuals and *the pedagogical way of the individuals* emerge through the telling of their stories. These stories cannot simply be expressed in terms of extremes, as either dry ground or a flowing river. All six of these beginning teachers are still in a state of

becoming, as they continue to define and discover who they are and *how they will* be in the classroom.

I am now conscious of first meeting my participants when I sat down in conversation with them to begin this study. I was admittedly listening for words or actions that would promise to alleviate some of the stress inherent in the beginning teacher experience. Like the introductory quote, I was focused on the *severity of their problems* in hopes of providing a panacea. Alas, I am a secondary school administrator, inhabiting my educational space with those who measure and quantify teaching. As I heard their stories in the beginning of our time together, the air of labels and extremes permeated my body; it was much easier to respond in a similar manner than to rise above the polluted air in order to see the phenomenon below. But, somewhere in the midst of these conversations, the language of the participants began to change me, the hearer. I began to realize that it is the uncertainty of the first year experience that shapes the incredible growth of the individual in the midst of that journey. Rather than identify the experiences that trouble beginning teachers in order to provide them with the tangible solutions of a mentor, an extra preparatory period, or a proven curricular program, I began to seek a deeper understanding of the experiences beginning teachers face in their teaching lives. In this chapter, I present the insights gained from this study, which ultimately lead to some recommendations for the preparation and support of beginning teachers. With that said, as with all phenomenological studies, this study does not provide any panaceas to solve the problems inherent in the beginning teacher experience. Rather, I bring their lived experiences forward in order to be more thoughtful about them.

As Max van Manen (1997) promises, phenomenology is changing me. His words have been my guide on this journey since the beginning. His definition of pedagogy, capturing the relationships developed with others in the school house, forms the base of the phrase, "pedagogical way of being." But as my eyes are opened, I find another language, that of the participants in this study, guiding me to understanding. Hargreaves (1994) captures the importance of hearing the voice of the teacher:

> To understand teaching, therefore, either as a researcher, administrator, or colleague, it is not enough merely to witness the behavior, skills and actions of teaching. One must also listen to the voice of the teacher, to the person it expresses and to the purposes it articulates. Failure to understand the teacher's voice is failure to understand the teacher's teaching. (p. 249)

All six participants describe place-panic when they entered their first classroom, and all struggled to find comfort and ease with the multitude of decisions that they had to make in the presence of others. But it is a flowing language that emerges over the first year that offers so many insights for educators interested in the preparation and support of beginning teachers. This language captures for me what a pedagogical way of being means for a beginning teacher. As the phenomenon shows, impediments will arise along the journey, but the experiences of these participants reflects an open and accepting way of being, a fluid way of being if you will, that captures the way beginning teachers are able to flow around these obstacles to renewed growth.

Hermeneutic phenomenology allows me access to the lived experiences of the participants in this study. Van Manen outlines this methodology, rooted in decades of philosophical grounding. I now seek to complete the final task of this methodological framework in this chapter, which van Manen (1997) explains in the following manner:

> The end of human science research for educators is a critical pedagogical competence: knowing how to act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of a carefully edited thoughtfulness. (p. 8)

Just as the participants in this study seek to act tactfully as they engage in the myriad of decisions they must make each day in the presence of others, I, too, seek a pedagogical thoughtfulness to guide my actions here. The final aspect of my research question involves the power beginning teachers have to *develop* their pedagogical way of being during their first year of teaching. If this pedagogical way of being is reflected in the emerging language of beginning teachers, then they truly have the power to develop that open and accepting way of being. However, it is my role as a supporter of beginning teachers, just as it is for professors of pre-service teachers, to provide opportunities to elicit language to emerge in the form of thoughtful practice and reflective conversations. In this way, language and conversation emerge as the paramount insights from this study, serving as an anchor for the other insights and possible recommendations that I continue to uncover throughout this rendering.

A New Language Emerges

> To be like letters carved in rock is to be rigid in thought and action, accepting only what dominates the landscape. To be like letters written in sand is to give way a bit to the dichotomies of dominance but still to be dominated by the discourse of dualism as the measure of self. Sand, as the residue of rock, does not quickly disappear by the oncoming tide; its composition is rocky. These two ways of being, the Buddha has said, posit being as fixed, permanent, and intractable. I have been pushing my argument toward a different way of being, the way of running water. (2000, Doll, p. 146)

A Way of Being Like Running Water

Gadamer (1986) guides my understanding of the language that emerges in this study when he writes, "To name something is always to call it into presence" (p. 135). My naming of a pedagogical way of being took on new life as the participants in this

study formed and shaped its meaning with their language of openness and acceptance during a time when it would have been very easy to harden and close themselves to the others around them. Mary Aswell Doll's (2000) words to introduce this section provide a new way of seeing the experiences the participants in this study share. Doll describes her journey to understand her own dried out topic of curriculum, as she found new life in the running water of literature, which she uses to examine the shared space of teachers and students in the classroom. Doll seeks guidance in the three ways of being shared in the Buddhist belief, as she finds the field of curriculum mired in the first two ways of being, like rock and like sand as "fixed, permanent, and intractable" (2000, p. 146). Doll seeks understanding in the third way of being, like that of running water.

All six beginning teachers in this study encountered difficulties acclimating to their new school dwelling place and all struggled to find comfort in the myriad of decisions they had to make in the classroom. These insights are not novel. Other methodological traditions might respond to these concerns with solutions and recommendations. What emerges from this study are not the problems, but the *way* the beginning teachers develop in response to these challenges. When Sophia encounters challenges adapting to her school environment, she learns how to "go with the flow." Despite a conflict with her principal that threatens to harden her heart and blind her to her possibilities for becoming, she responds by sharing how she was getting into the "swing of things," and describes feeling "in the zone" where words just "roll off of" her tongue.

Like Sophia, Eric discovers a way of being like flowing water as he learns to think "on the fly" by reading his students, understanding his content, and responding appropriately. Melissa struggles to implement the programs prescribed by her school,

while also finding challenges understanding the level of her students and the procedures

needed to help them succeed. Eventually, she finds the "flow of things" after a period of

great change. Finally, Sam finds himself "in a groove" after initial struggles to engage the

students in his care. Doll (2000) uses the term "fountainheads" (p. 145) to name those

individuals who exhibit this way of being like running water, as their fluidity not only

leads them to thrive but also promises to nourish those in their presence.

When examining the ways of being like letters carved in stone or written in sand,

Doll (2000) uses the names "blockheads" (p. 2) and "splitheads" (p. 81). Before I begin

this section, I first must state emphatically that I am not calling Elizabeth a *blockhead* or

Doug a *splithead*. The words carry with them an extremely negative connotation, and

simply naming them as that would actually represent a very closed way of thinking,

ignoring the reality that beginning teachers ebb and flow throughout various ways of

being during their first year of teaching. With that said, I do feel that it is vital at this time

to examine a powerful insight that emerges in the language shared by Elizabeth and

Doug, as neither use the flowing language demonstrated by the other participants, and

both did use language representative of these other two ways of being. I strongly believe

that those who prepare and support beginning teachers can learn a great deal from this

insight, so I proceed here with an example of each teacher's language use.

A Way of Being Like Letters Written in Sand

> Splitheads have glimpses or peeps into another side of themselves because they
> feel split…These characters allow their social selves to take the place of their
> authentic selves, until the difference between the two is blurred. What is reality,
> what is illusion; what is the true self, what is the false? Such a person is playing a
> part in a script written by others. (Doll, 2000, pp. 82-83)

Doug's language throughout our time together captures the language representative of letters written in sand. First, he experiences severe place-panic when he accepts a teaching position in the rural environment of Valley View:

> I am working in an area where it's clear that the political and social perspectives of the majority demographic are quite opposite my own. That makes me very hesitant to be completely open with my colleagues.

Wearing a bow tie each day and showing up to work on his off days, Doug chooses not to close himself off to the others in his presence. However, he does respond by playing a role he feels the community wants him to play:

> I can't be completely myself…If I were to be completely myself, I would never yell. I'm not a yelling, angry kind of person in the slightest.

The line between his *authentic* self and *social* self becomes blurred, as he struggles to make the decisions necessary to build pedagogical relationships with his large middle school chorus:

> There's an aspect of teaching, I feel, that is putting on a one-man show…I really can't let that act falter. I can't lose that character while I'm teaching and become tense and stressed because I feel like I wouldn't even know what decisions to make anymore.

When Doug states that his mind "is not focused inwardly on how [he feels] about what's going on," he demonstrates an awareness of his authentic way of being, but is unable to implement it in the classroom outside of his small group music tech class. He discovers a conflict between how he wants to be in the classroom and how he is in the presence of his students:

> I…showed up right away with this clash between what I've been learning as good modern educational theory and what I was able to make work in the classroom.

Doug's language clearly captures a pedagogical way of being like letters written in sand. It is imperative that those who prepare and support pre-service and beginning

teachers like Doug seek ways to allow this language to emerge in order to arrange proper

supports. Doug's experience identifies his own desire for reflection and conversation, as

he unsuccessfully reaches out to a past college professor and his assigned mentor during

his first year of teaching. When those supports fail, Doug turns to his anonymous blog;

however, he realizes how inadequate that is when he states, "Those were helpful times to

write things down, but it's also helpful to talk to somebody about those thoughts."

Doug's words demonstrate the importance of the presence of a caring other to assist a

beginning teacher like him who is feeling split between a desired way of being in the

classroom and his actual practice as a teacher.

A Way of Being Like Letters Carved in Stone

> They are one-sided. Their way, the Buddha says, is like letters carved in rock, for
> they cannot see beyond the blocked entrance; they cannot move beyond the
> blocked ego. (Doll, 2000, p. 81)

In Chapter 4, I explore the themes that emerge from Elizabeth's stories as a

beginning teacher, highlighting the instinct to control that pervades many of her

experiences. I seek now to reexamine her words in hopes of eliciting the language of

letters carved in rock coloring her first year experience. Like Doug's negative experience

with his middle school chorus, most of Elizabeth's controlling language manifests itself

in her telling of experiences from her advanced communication arts class. However, this

language dominates any positive experiences from her other two classes and, therefore,

may impede her development of an authentic pedagogical way of being. As I write in

Chapter 4, to develop an authentic way of being entails both the care of self in the

development of being, as well as the care of others in one's presence, so this closed

nature may impact not only her development but the development of the students in her care.

On day one, Elizabeth demonstrates a blocked sight by immediately labeling her problem students:

> I picked out my interesting children right away: basically, the ones who were arguing with me immediately on day one and challenging my authority on day one.

Fear begins to develop as she finds discomfort in a student controlled classroom, which leads her to exhibit a defensive (mirroring the language of war) way of being:

> I'm learning how to be a teacher and just thinking, 'I cannot screw up.'

> That's definitely what it's like when I'm in a classroom with them. I'm on the defensive if they're in a bad mood.

Soon, Elizabeth loses faith and trust in the others in her presence including her students:

> That class is just…they're very smart, but they don't use their powers for good. They use them for evil.

Once Elizabeth begins to lose a connectedness with her students, she begins to point her finger toward her supervisors when seeking a cause for her frustration:

> She ended up getting one lunch detention taken away by a person higher than me and the rest of the students found out. All of the progress that I've made with that group is gone. I have no authority in that classroom anymore.

This mistrust of the others in her presence is then directed towards her teacher colleagues:

> I can't relax in there and the fact that other students in there go to the other teachers.

Elizabeth's hardened attitude even passes outside of the school house to the parents of her students:

> When I started student teaching, they gave us a statistic that half of teachers quit before five years…after being in here for almost a year, I think it is in part due to parents.

By the end of her first year of teaching, Elizabeth *blocks* herself to the others in her presence. She demonstrates a lack of empathy when she assigns a detention to a student for forgetting her materials when she is well aware that the student has "a preceding medical condition which affects her memory." Elizabeth also loses patience with a student who "refuses to accept that she's autistic." Her solution for the problems she is experiencing is to plaster Navy Seal pictures all over the classroom the next school year, surmising that, "A little fear factor isn't bad." Finally, still on the defensive, her plan for *survival* is to develop "a thicker skin" the next year.

After an arduous first year of teaching, Elizabeth responds with the desire to harden herself even more by *thickening* her skin, preparing her for the battle scars that may come. Like Doug, Elizabeth identifies her desire for conversation about her experiences when she describes her practice at the end of the school day. Elizabeth states, "I don't usually write anything, really, because I'm worried that if I leave it out, someone's going to find it." This again highlights Elizabeth's fear and lack of trust. Despite her fear of writing her thoughts, she does reflect with others when she identifies that she visits her "mentor," "co-teacher," and her "boyfriend" to vent about the day. She does not get into detail about the conversations she has, so it is hard to determine if they present opportunities for her hardening language to emerge in order to provide reflection on the pedagogical way of being she is developing in the classroom.

Reinvigorating the Language of Beginning Teacher Preparation and Support

> Educational theory and practice seems stuck when it comes to imagining what this term basics might mean in the living work of teachers and learners, except in the taken-for-granted and exhausted ways that the profession has inherited. (Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2008, pp. 2-3)

The language used by the participants in this study clearly demonstrates a stark contrast between the flowing language used by Sam, Sophia, Eric, and Melissa and the prevailing language used by Doug and Elizabeth. The three ways of being offered by Doll (2000) present the names for "fountainheads," "blockheads," and "splitheads," but this naming does little to assist these young educators as they seek to develop their way of being a teacher. If one is willing to sit in the presence of beginning teachers and listen carefully to them, this study demonstrates that their language will identify ways to support them as they navigate the tensions inherent in the experience. This is the greatest insight that emerges from this research. In addition to identifying the importance of listening to beginning teachers to identify ways to guide their development, this study also highlights the need to reinvigorate the conversation around preparing and supporting beginning teachers. Doll (2000) makes her "argument toward a different way of being, the way of running water" (p. 146) in her field of curriculum studies. This insight can greatly benefit the field of teacher preparation as well.

Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2008) echo Doll's sentiment when they challenge the "basics" of the teaching and learning experience. In the introductory quote, they echo the hardened language of letters carved in stone when describing the current educational state "stuck…in the taken-for-granted and exhausted ways that the profession has inherited" (pp. 2-3). One becomes "stuck" when seeking understanding of these basic understandings carved in rock. Like Elizabeth's loss of faith in the others who share her school dwelling place, those who prepare and support beginning teachers may demonstrate a loss of faith in the teachers in their care if they fail to hear their voices and arrange appropriate care. Like the participants in this study who need to reflect on the

language they routinely use to describe their living with children, policymakers and those who prepare and support teachers need to examine the language they use to describe the pedagogy that happens in classrooms around the nation. I join my voice with Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen's in a call for a rebirth in our understanding of the beginning teacher experience; renewing the language of a pedagogical way of being can add new life to the basics that have been etched in stone for decades.

Educators have sought for years to *empower* beginning teachers by providing tools they might use to address the elements of the first year experience, but these efforts fall short because they assume that someone else has the power from which beginning teachers can learn. In reality, it is the beginning teachers who have the power to alter and adjust their pedagogical way of being during their first year in the classroom with the support of those who prepare and care for them. The participants in this study were told by their supervisors, mentors, and even their students *to be* firm, consistent, mean, and in control. They were told to yell more. They were told that teaching would be easier in a new school in the future. They were told not to let the kids bring them down. Compare this hardened language with the language used by Jardine (2008):

> We are asked as teachers, to be public intellectuals who think about the world, who think about the knowledge we have inherited and to which we are offering our students living, breathing access. We need to be precisely what we hope our students will be: curious, knowledgeable, adventurous, well read, questioning, creative, and daring in their intellectual ventures. (p. xxii)

Notice the ways of being captured in Jardine's words compared to the basic language so often shared in the beginning teacher literature. Jardine's language emphasizes a state of continued growth, as teachers seek to be *curious, knowledgeable, adventurous, well read, questioning, creative, and daring*. Unlike the rigid ways of being captured by letters written in rock or written in sand, a new language of flowing water

would seek to understand more fully the complexities faced by beginning teachers as they develop their pedagogical ways of being in the classroom. By altering the language of the beginning teacher experience, we might better prepare those who enter the classroom for the first time to develop ways of being that will benefit both their own growth and the growth of their students. This language is inhibited by the current focus on the *skill* of a teacher or the *outcomes* of their students. We can learn most by listening to the language of the educators in the classrooms, as their stories shed light on their development as a pre-service or as a beginning teacher. We would be wise to begin listening more intently.

The Wisdom of Stories

> That essence of schooling is rarely captured in educational research. Somehow, the reality slips through the net of our research paradigms…Much of the wisdom about education has been captured in constructed narrative accounts based on some human experience – or more simply, in stories. (1983, Ryan, p. ix)

As I search for the essence of the experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being, it is the stories that emerge from my phenomenological conversations that uncover that which is already known, but is often hidden by the educational discourse of the day. Doug's and Elizabeth's stories offer a myriad of insights to guide the thoughtful practice of educators who prepare and support beginning teachers. Both of these individuals have so much to offer their respective schools, but the language they use in the telling of their stories demonstrates a concerning reality in their pedagogical growth, as relationships are clearly damaged when one plays a role or loses faith in the others who share their space. Beginning teachers encounter many challenging experiences during their first year in the classroom, which ultimately will change how they are in the classroom and, in turn, who they are for the rest of their pedagogical lives. As I discuss in in previous chapters, too often in the dried out realm of the beginning

teacher literature, these *challenges* that lie ahead for beginning teachers are viewed

negatively. Researchers and theorists offer prescriptive tools, secrets, and answers as

panaceas for the strain of the first year experience. Rather than emerge from this study

with solutions for the problems beginning teachers face, I now understand that the

challenges inherent in the beginning teacher experience guide and shape these

individuals, offering a myriad of opportunities for growth and renewal. These

experiences bring forth a flowing language of openness and acceptance that many of the

participants discover. By listening to pre-service and beginning teachers, facilitators of

their growth may discover ways to offer support as they develop their way of being in the

classroom.

The Riddle of the Beginning Teacher Experience

> They are far from claiming to solve the riddle. The task is to see the riddle.
> (Heidegger, 1964/1993, p. 204)

Throughout this rendering, I attempt to capture the extremes inherent in the

beginning teacher experience, as teachers seek to find a balance amidst the tensions that

emerge all around them. Heidegger's (1964/1993) words that begin the Epilogue to his

essay on *The Origin of the Work of Art*, offer another way to view this phenomenon.

After troubling the process and appreciation of artistic works, Heidegger refers to art as a

riddle, not necessarily to be solved but to be understood as such. This naming nicely

captures the beginning teacher experience as well, as I believe that beginning teachers

and those who prepare and support them would be better served to acknowledge this

reality and instead embrace the unknowns presented by this phenomenon. The experience

of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being is complex and

multifaceted, dwelling in both the subjective world of art and the objective domain of

science. Without attempting to solve the riddle of the beginning teacher experience, it is important to understand the complexities of this phenomenon as I attempt to offer suggestions for a more meaningful and helpful first year of teaching.

As I become engrossed in the experience of beginning teachers, I often discover a dry and rocky landscape, as educators continue to offer quick solutions to alleviate the known difficulties in the beginning teacher experience, including challenges adjusting to a new school, managing student behavior, and juggling the myriad of decisions that must be made each day in the presence of others. But if we stop at these truths, we either stand satisfied with the basic understandings carved in rock, or we throw up our hands in futility with the plethora of incoherent experiences flying through the wind like gritty sand. Beginning teachers cannot stop there, as they must continue *to be* in the classroom, flowing toward the already known *unknowns* that lie before them. Teachers live and work in the presence of others, so reiterating the problems while attempting to provide solutions to keep the troubles from emerging does not benefit them in their pedagogical journey.

Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2008) charge that the field of education as a whole has traversed off course, as teaching and learning has been studied so exhaustively that everything has been "broken down into isolated, seemingly unrelated fragments," leaving the teacher with the uninspired work of "monitoring and management" (p. 6). These words still ring true today ten years after they were first written, as the often *blockheaded* educational environment of assessment and accountability threatens to stifle the pedagogical way of being of the teachers in the classroom. As I hear the voices of the six participants in this study, the basics of the beginning teaching experience emerge, as they share their struggles *to manage* student behavior, *to handle* the multiple dimensions

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of lesson planning and grading, *to adjust* to the intense time commitment, *to comply* with the various district and school building mandates, *to receive* feedback from supervisors and mentors, and *to ensure* students are prepared for the state assessments. When I examine these experiences on the surface, they represent the basics of the beginning teacher experience, as many encounter similar difficulties during their first year in the classroom. With that said, phenomenology offers a new way of envisioning that which has failed to be seen previously. As I examine the infinitives italicized above, I find the hardened language of control that results from years of promised solutions to the challenges beginning teachers face.

Listening to the Language of Beginning

> This new language is fluid and metaphorical, 'like letters written in running water.' It is the language of love and laughter. (Doll, 2000, p. 147)

I will never forget my student teaching experience as I had to stand in front of one-hundred students the day after the Columbine tragedy. Nothing in my pre-service education prepared me to teach them after a tragedy that shook their worlds. Instead of lecturing them about the tragedy or even worse, ignoring their feelings and moving on with the curriculum, I decided to have students write, speak, and most importantly, I decided to listen. In the end, we got through it together. Despite the knowledge I gained from this experience, two years later, when the tragedy of 9/11 devastated our nation, I again felt completely unprepared to meet the needs of the students who entered my classroom. I truly became like water and allowed the students to shape me as I led with them in front of the classroom. It is impossible to prepare beginning teachers for everything they will face during their teaching careers because teachers teach humans and human lives are unpredictable.

Although my place as an educator has changed since those experiences early in my career, I would be wise to remember the lessons those stories taught me. As much as I may think it, I do not have all of the answers to solve the problems of the beginning teacher experience. Sai Baba's words speak to me as I ponder my own story as an educator and the impact that this research has had on me personally:

> Man [sic] learns through experience, and the spiritual path is full of different kinds of experiences. He will encounter many difficulties and obstacles, and they are the very experiences he needs to encourage and complete the cleansing process. (Sai Baba, as cited at BrainyQuote.com)

I use the imagery of water throughout this rendering, but his quote speaks to the cleansing power of water on the individual. As a high school assistant principal, I now see that I have traversed into a state of inauthenticity, seeking at times to control the harsh environment where I find myself, while also developing a way of being I believe others want me to be, one that I think fits the hardened role of assistant principal. As I hear and analyze the experiences shared by these beginning teachers, I begin to understand my own experiences better. Like Doug, who was told to "yell more" by his cooperating teacher, I have been told to be *meaner.* After all, "that is what an assistant principal is supposed to be." I have also allowed myself to become mired in the anxiety of decision making that occurs in the presence of others, as I constantly worry about how my words and actions will be perceived by my supervisors, my teacher colleagues, and the students and parents with whom I work. After six years of serving as an assistant principal, I have lost my way. I now seek the cleansing power of water, which has the power to erode letters carved in stone or wash away letters written in sand. While I ponder the language of a pedagogical way of being like running water with beginning

teachers, I seek my own cultivation of being, attempting to care for my own be-coming as

well as the coming-to-being of those in my care.

As I write in Chapter 1, I turned to the phenomenon of beginning teachers

defining their pedagogical way of being because I encountered difficulties as I sought to

become the teacher I longed to be, and I later empathized with the others in my care who

struggled to define how they would be in the classroom. This experience is even more

poignant to me as I realize that I am no longer a teacher myself. Since I left the

classroom, I call myself an educator and continually emphasize the life lessons I *teach* to

troubled youth in my office, or reiterate the pedagogical conversations I have with

faculty. However, I am not a teacher, so I examine the cacophony of voices I hear as a

conductor waiving his baton, aware that the fine line between harmony and discord may

not accurately present the lived experience of those singing the notes. With this in mind, I

now seek to uncover the insights that emerge in this research on beginning teachers

defining their pedagogical way of being. These insights naturally organize themselves

into two sections. First, I offer those insights that most speak to educators who prepare

pre-service teachers during a time of formation. And lastly, I present the insights that may

benefit those educators who support beginning teachers during a period of orientation.

The Formation Begins

The first dimension of the becoming/being of teaching might be called something
like 'planning for authenticity.' (Brook, 2009, p. 53)

Planning for Authenticity

Brook's (2009) words return us to the notion of developing an authentic way of

being. His naming of "the first dimension of becoming/being of teaching" (p. 53) nicely

captures the pre-service experience that occurs once individuals choose to study teaching

at a college or university. As I mention in Chapter 4, the six participants in this study began forming how they would be in the classroom at such differing times that it is no surprise that they will not reach an authentic way of being under the same timeline. Eric captures this well when he states, "There's no one script that works well for everyone, because you have to find what matches your personality." Linda Darling-Hammond echoes Eric's words in her interview with Marge Scherer (2012), when she states, "The problem with standardizing teaching…is that children are not standardized" (p. 21). In the same vein, teachers are not standardized, as unique preparation methods and processes must exist to assist them with the development of their way of being in the classroom. Considering the uniqueness of each individual who enters a school of preparation, in what manner can these institutions heed Brook's (2009) words in order to create a period of formation during pedagogical study that assists the teacher in their "planning for authenticity" (p. 53)?

The themes that emerge from this research study emphasize that the primary purpose of a teacher formation program is to cultivate the development of the authenticity of these individuals by preparing them to adjust to a new place. Also, by facilitating their development of a pedagogical way of being allows them to find ease in the myriad of decisions they must make each day in the classroom. As Brook (2009) continues:

> Becoming or being an authentic teacher, as such, is becoming in such a way that the authentic possibilities of being-human show themselves through the formation of learning. (Brook, 2009, p. 57)

Brook's phrase *formation of learning* appropriately names this period of *planning for authenticity*. "Formation" is defined as "an act of giving form or shape to something or of taking form: development" (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary). How appropriate that the dictionary definition of formation begins with the words "an act of giving."

Schools of preparation give pre-service teachers opportunities to find their authentic

selves. These opportunities, whether they present themselves as a conversation about

educational theory, or as a pedagogical interaction with a student, should provide an

opportunity to *show* the pre-service teachers their possibilities for being.

Deconstructing the Notion of Teacher

> I wasn't very well prepared. I had a great experience at Keystone College, especially with my academics, but field experiences can only do so much. You may observe a lot and teach with other teachers, especially during student teaching, but really once you start to have the classroom totally on your own, then it becomes much different. (Sam)

> Schools that prepare pre-service teachers have for years sought to increase the

frequency and relevancy of field experiences. The National Council for Accreditation of

Teacher Education (NCATE) has placed a great deal of emphasis on this aspect of

formation by devoting one of their six standards to "Field Experiences and Clinical

Practice." In addition to requiring the school to develop and facilitate a variety of field

experiences, the standard also emphasizes the reflective communication that should occur

from these experiences:

> Field experiences allow candidates to apply and reflect on their content, professional, and pedagogical knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in a variety of settings with students and adults…They interact with teachers, families of students, administrators, college or university supervisors, and other interns about their practice regularly and continually. They reflect on and can justify their own practice. (NCATE, 2008, pp. 29-30)

Whereas many of the requirements of NCATE may come across as very firm and rigid,

accepting only one way of preparing pre-service teachers, the language used in this

standard offers an ideal vision of formation. Notice its emphasis on language, as pre-

service teachers must "interact" in conversation with not only their professors, but

teachers, students, families of students, and school administrators. These conversations

may present myriad opportunities for a language to emerge that identifies both strengths and needs, as they "reflect" and "justify" their development as pre-service teachers.

Obviously, for these conversations to elicit any potential change, beginning teachers must be *open* to seeing and discovering their possibilities for being. It is very possible for pre-service teachers to already hold *firm* and *rigid* beliefs about teaching after thirteen-plus years in the classroom as a student. To begin the journey toward authenticity, it would certainly benefit pre-service teachers to navigate the ways of being human which present themselves during their formation. Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1989) realized this almost twenty-five years ago:

> Teacher educators must help the prospective teacher answer the question, 'Who am I?' Otherwise, many of the early experiences in teaching may well leave beginning teachers crippled for the remainder of their careers, unable to develop educationally sound approaches for stimulating student learning and unable to locate a pathway leading to further personal and professional growth. (p. 231)

It is impossible to know how many of the rigid and uncompromising ways of being Doug and Elizabeth brought from their early experiences in education. Obviously, the earlier the language of letters carved in stone or written in sand can emerge, the sooner it can be challenged and questioned. An insight from this study is that a formation program should offer opportunities for language to emerge that calls into question previously held beliefs in order to guide beginning teachers toward their authentic beings.

When considering the importance of formation programs to assist pre-service teachers in *deconstructing* their previously held beliefs about teaching, I find guidance in the work of Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2008), who identify six stages of teacher development. I referred to their first stage, "chaos and a fixation on problems" in the last chapter when unpacking the place-panic experienced by the participants in this study.

Without advocating for stage theory, I find understanding in the fourth of their six stages, which they name as "discovering presence and deconstructing core beliefs." Generally speaking, the six participants each move through the authors' identified six stages at varying levels, which is why I disagree with *solidifying* six stages through which *all* teachers progress. But with this said, I do find it interesting that Doug's and Elizabeth's language demonstrates what appears to be an inability to "discover presence and deconstruct core beliefs." Clearly, one who is blocked off to questioning one's practices as Elizabeth demonstrates, and one who ignores self to play the role of someone else as Doug chooses, the act of deconstruction appears impossible. This insight gathers further meaning when connected to Brook's (2009) analysis of authenticity when he names the "first phase of phenomenological interpretation" as a "destructuring of the basic preconceptions about teaching as an idea, e.g. teaching content, learning outcomes, students as objects, etc." (p. 48). As these researchers contend, beginning teachers cannot develop a presence, or authenticity, in the classroom until they break down the preconceptions they have about teaching in order to build a new way of being in the classroom. Formation programs may be able to benefit their pre-service teachers by arranging courses of study and periods of pedagogical interactions with students that call into question beliefs and attitudes that were once firmly held.

My conversations with six beginning teachers illustrate that the cultivation of being associated with the deconstruction of previously held beliefs should begin as early as possible during the pre-service formation, as increased interactions with students under the guidance of teachers and professors will help individuals to break down their previously held perceptions about teaching in order to begin developing their desired

pedagogical ways of being. This deconstruction will continue during the student teaching experience, as beginning teachers ruminate on the pedagogical ways of being developed by their cooperating teachers, pulling insights from this experience through conversation with a thoughtful professor.

(Un)Becoming a Teacher

The phrase (un)becoming a teacher is meant to suggest that learning to teach is a form of unbecoming the identity one brings to the process of learning to teach. (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996, p. 81)

When considering how a formation program course of study can assist with the pre-service teacher's deconstruction of core beliefs about teaching, I find a great deal of value in Sumara and Luce-Kapler's (1996) work entitled, *(Un)Becoming a Teacher: Negotiating Identities while Learning to Teach.* The authors take issue with the state of pre-service teacher preparation, which they describe as a process that too often separates personal attributes from the teaching skills they are to be taught. In this view, "The project of teacher education becomes one of transposition rather than transformation" (p. 67). Rather than offering a "transformative" experience to pre-service teachers, the authors worry that too often, today's schools of preparation focus more on "transposing" skills on individuals ready to begin in the classroom. Their words return me to my own pedagogical preparation.

I was an English major at a small liberal-arts college. In order to receive my secondary education certification, I was required to take one Educational Foundations course, one Educational Psychology course, one semester of observation in local schools, and one semester of student teaching. My experience matched Sumara and Luce-Kapler's (1996) work perfectly, as it was assumed that I as an individual had the "virtues to

become a teacher," but that I needed to learn the necessary "teaching skills" (p. 67). Of course, their dated work was published during my college years. Despite the age of this work, a current review of the requirements for a degree in English Education from the small liberal-arts institution that four of the six participants in this study attended, illustrates that the course of study has not varied greatly since that time. The *teaching skills* course work is vast compared to what I experienced. In addition to the Educational Foundations and Educational Psychology courses I was required to take, these pre-service teachers are also required to take an Educational Technology course, a Processes and Procedures course, an Instructional Needs of English Language Learners course, a Teaching Strategies course, a Teaching Communication course, a Community and Legal Issues in Education course, and an Effective Instructional Methods course. Despite this strong emphasis on coursework to "transpose" skills on pre-service teachers, time in classrooms with students is still almost nonexistent in the college's preparation. There is a striking difference between *skills* training and *pedagogical* preparation.

It is no surprise that the participants in this study lament the limited experiences they had in the presence of students prior to student teaching. As Eric states, "I feel like those experiences gave me a taste of what it was going to be like, and now I am really seeing it in full motion." Doug echoes Eric's words when he says:

> What I realized is education training is really just designed to give you a little taste of what teaching on your own is like. I was stunned at the difference between student teaching and solo teaching. Stunned by it. I suppose that was because I was still looking at teaching through the lens of being a college student as I was doing that work. I was amazed at how much harder it was to be a solo teacher, even half time, than student teaching was.

Whereas Doug's words note the place-panic I discuss in Chapter 4 upon entering one's own classroom for the first time, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1996) identify "three conceptions of self-identity" beginning teachers must negotiate, including:

> the pre-teaching image of themselves as teacher they bring to teacher education; the fictive image that develops while they learn to teach; and the lived image that forms during their interactions with students in the practicum. (p. 67)

This is where their naming of (un)becoming a teacher develops, as pre-service teachers must first deconstruct their initial image of self as a teacher, as well as the fictive image that develops while learning to teach. The authors contend that only then can a lived image of self as teacher develop. Obviously, these words bring to mind the experience of Doug, who continues a fictive image of self during his first year of teaching, as he acts a role that he believes the community wants him to be.

As I reflect on the words of the participants in this study, I question whether the student teaching practicum actually succeeds in breaking down the fictive image of self to allow the lived image to begin to emerge prior to entering their first teaching assignment. The nature of place-panic that all six participants experience illustrates that the self with which they enter the first year of teaching is more of a fictive image that is altered throughout the first year experience. Again, this period of change should not be viewed as a negative, as the myriad of unknowns that develop during the first year of teaching offer many opportunities for growth. This study does not reveal the need to *fix* pre-service preparation. With that said, the participants in this study highlight the importance of language for formation as facilitators work to arrange pedagogical interactions that may allow them to deconstruct the vision of self as teacher prior to entering their first teaching assignment.

Pedagogical Interactions / Interruptions

> Recent reform proposals call for teacher candidates to spend extended periods of time in professional development schools, internships, and other clinical sites. The real challenge for teacher educators is to see that prospective teachers not only have appropriate and extended field experiences but that they learn desirable lessons from them. (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1013)

Feiman-Nemser captures the desire expressed by the participants in this study when she states the recent calls to add more time for pre-service teachers in pedagogical situations with students outside of the student teaching experience. But her words express an important qualifier to these experiences; not only do pre-service teachers need more experiences with students during their period of formation, but they also need focused attention from their professors to ensure that they actually *learn* from these experiences. When I think of pedagogical experiences with students, the image of a pre-service teacher sitting in the back of the room observing a class does not come to my mind. Pedagogy involves building relationships with students while implementing learning opportunities. Sophia experienced this type of relationship as early as high school when she worked with a teacher to plan lessons. Elizabeth experienced a pedagogical relationship in her one-on-one tutoring work in the Navy. Regardless of the course of study, the formation program that I experienced during my undergraduate preparation and the course of study outlined by the private, liberal arts college in the heart of the south-central Pennsylvania county leaves the prospective teacher as an observer, passively soaking in the wisdom of the professor in the classroom lecturing on various educational theories and practices.

A pedagogical way of being can only be developed through active relationships with others, so more opportunities to interact prior to student teaching can only benefit pre-service teachers. It is interesting that none of the participants in this study share any

pedagogical preparation from the first few years of their college/university experience. As I discuss in Chapter 4, Melissa shares an observation experience at a local urban school, and all of the participants share their growth during their student teaching experience, but what *teaching* were they able to do before the student teaching experience?

The private, liberal arts college attended by four of the six participants in this study is located in the heart of a dozen or so independent, local school districts. These schools offer so many opportunities for pedagogical relationships to occur. By developing a fluid arrangement with all of the school districts in their vicinity, the college would be able to offer their pre-service teachers an array of opportunities to interact with students before school, during school, and after school, tutoring students and teaching mini-lessons under the supervision of a university professor and/or secondary teacher. One such program called "Peer Mentoring" could greatly benefit from the assistance of pre-service teachers. Currently, it is a high school intervention program that pairs at-risk freshmen students with upper-class mentors to work together during the school day. Mentors gain not only "experience relevant to future educators," but they also learn "patience, empathy, and the ability to listen to students whose life stories are very different from their own" (Frank, 2011, pp. 68-69). Pre-service teachers could enter the secondary schools surrounding their college or university and serve as mentors to needy students, or they could plan and teach mini-lessons to students before, during, and/or after school. Pedagogical experiences such as these will benefit not only the pre-service teachers during their time of formation, but also the secondary schools who can now offer yet another support for their students.

Clearly, in order for these pedagogical interactions to occur, there must exist a

fluid communication between schools of preparation and local secondary schools. Again,

NCATE (2008) presents a vision of this relationship:

> Both the unit and school-based faculty…participate in the unit's and the school partners' professional development activities and instructional programs for candidates and for children. The unit and its school partners share expertise and integrate resources to support candidate learning. They jointly determine the specific placements of student teachers and interns for other professional roles to maximize the learning experience for candidates and P-12 students. (p. 29)

This standard captures the possibility for a powerful collaboration between schools of

preparation and secondary schools. So why is this vision not a part of the experiences

shared by the beginning teachers in this study? Feiman-Nemser (2001) answers this

question when she presents the following reality on many campuses:

> There are few incentives for teacher educators to undertake the labor-intensive and time-consuming work of program development. Collaborating with practitioners may count as service, but it does not help in decisions about tenure and promotion. (p. 1021)

> Aware of this reality, NCATE (2008) presents the following language in its sixth

standard on "Unit Governance and Resources:"

> Workload policies and practices permit and encourage faculty not only to be engaged in a wide range of professional activities, including teaching, scholarship, assessment, advisement, work in schools, and service, but also to professionally contribute on a community, state, regional, or national basis. (p. 44)

This language sounds euphoric for those who prepare pre-service teachers, as it promises

to allot them the time to do all of the things I am sure they want to do to prepare our

future teachers. But the reality is that maybe it is too ideal. So far, I have chosen to cite

from the "Target" language of the NCATE standards, ignoring the "Unacceptable" and

"Acceptable" language for each standard. In order to receive NCATE accreditation, the

unit as it names it, only needs to meet the requirements under the "Acceptable"

descriptor. The language that mirrors the quote above listed under the "Acceptable"

descriptor reads very different:

> Workload policies, including class-size and online course delivery, allow faculty
> members to be effectively engaged in teaching, scholarship, assessment,
> advisement, collaborative work in P-12 schools, and service. (NCATE, 2008, p.
> 44)

Working in schools, I realize that there is a major difference in the wording of "permit

and encourage" contrasted with the connotation of the word "allow." The former places

the responsibility for this collaboration on the school, while the latter places the

responsibility on the professor. This illustrates the need for schools of preparation to

commit fully to their relationships with partner secondary schools. Obviously, at this

level, we are examining the changing of programs of teacher preparation to encourage

more pedagogical interactions. But does our nation's educational policy support a change

like this?

Encountering a "Blockheaded" Policy

> From the moment students enter a school, the most important factor in their
> success is not the color of their skin or the income of their parents, it's the person
> standing at the front of the classroom…America's future depends on its teachers.
> That is why we are taking steps to prepare teachers for their difficult
> responsibilities and encouraging them to stay in the profession. (President Barack
> Obama, as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2011)

President Obama's words above champion the power of the classroom teacher on

the lives of the students in his or her presence each day. While the level of respect this

statement demonstrates honors the devotion of teachers, is it fair to put the future of

America on their shoulders? These individual teacher heroes do not work in isolation, as

national, state, and district policies often influence the students who enter the school

house each day, the way the teacher must teach those students, and the measures of success that are used to evaluate the teacher. Not surprisingly during this period of educational assessment and evaluation in which we currently find ourselves, the federal government also demonstrates its desire to move toward standardizing our educational systems in order to control the *product* that is produced. Although the noble words of a President are important for establishing a climate of support for educational initiatives, the real test of policy lies in the initiatives the administration supports. One such initiative published by the U.S. Department of Education (2011), entitled "Our Future, Our Teachers: The Obama Administration's Plan for Teacher Education Reform and Improvement," establishes the goals behind the President's lofty words that introduce this section.

The Obama Administration Plan begins by documenting the dire state of today's schools of teacher preparation, identifying this as the perfect opportunity for reform. Their "Comprehensive Agenda" covers three areas of teacher preparation, including "Institutional Reporting and State Accountability," "Reform Financing of Students Preparing to Become Teachers," and "Target Support to Institutions that Prepare High Quality Teachers from Diverse Backgrounds" (p. 9). My intention is not to critique this plan, but to use it to identify the current state of our nation's educational system, which greatly impacts the preparation of today's teachers. The overarching mission of the Obama Administration Plan is best summarized by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan:

> Under this plan, teacher preparation programs will be held to a clear standard of quality that includes but is not limited to their record of preparing and placing teachers who deliver results for P-12 students. The best programs will be scaled up and the lowest-performing will be supported to show substantial improvements in performance. (Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, as cited in U.S. Department of Education, 2011)

All three areas of their Comprehensive Agenda serve the purpose of ranking the top

schools of teacher preparation in order to permit the consumer to decide which programs

continue and which fail. Of course, no one wants ineffective programs to continue to be

ineffective, but what measure is used to determine success?

As the Administration's Plan demonstrates, quantitative data like "aggregate

learning outcomes of K-12 students" (p. 10) and "job placement and retention rates" (p.

10) data become the determiners of success. The only qualitative data programs are asked

to collect involves survey data of "recent program graduates and their principals" (p. 10).

Rather than working to implement more opportunities for pedagogical interactions for

their pre-service teachers or working to establish better communication with local K-12

schools, schools and preparatory programs will need to respond decisively, creating a

tracking program that follows their graduates to employment, polls their administrators

on their level of satisfaction, and also tracks the standardized assessment scores of their

students. With all of the time spent on tracking data, will there be time left to make any

adjustments to the actual course of study for these teachers? Will the identification of

"best programs" (p. 11) and "top-tier" (p. 11) programs really benefit prospective

teachers?

The language of this initiative is representative of letters carved in stone, as the

voice of the teacher is almost completely ignored. This federal initiative for how to

prepare beginning teachers ignores the issue paramount to the riddle presented by the

new teacher experience, that the formation of how beginning teachers will be in the

classroom must be facilitated by those in whose care they are placed. Rather than being

mindful of the needs of beginning teachers, this approach acts without concern for the

development of the pedagogical way of being of the beginning teachers in their care. Heidegger's (1964/1993) words on the essence of truth capture the blockheaded nature of this initiative:

> Where beings are not very familiar to man [sic] and are scarcely and only roughly known by science, the openness of beings as a whole can prevail more essentially than it can where the familiar and well-known has become boundless, and nothing is any longer able to withstand the business of knowing, since technical mastery over things bears itself without limit. (p. 129)

Technical mastery results in the hardening of our thoughts and words, which fails our beginning teachers with its empty promises to make their experience easier. This initiative that promises to *fix* the ills of the beginning teacher phenomenon, actually may damage schools of preparation even more as it will direct their time and resources away from prospective teachers and toward the business of measurement.

Being Measured for Quality

> By giving consumers the power to make more informed choices, we can help them become the engine for driving change. As we've seen in most other sectors, informed consumers are hard to ignore. (Kate Walsh, as cited in NCTQ, 2013, p. 1)

After the Obama Administration outlined its plan for improving teacher preparation, the National Council on Teacher Quality (2013) responded to the challenge by publishing its Teacher Prep Review, which evaluates more than 1,300 institutions which "together graduate 99 percent of the new, traditionally trained teachers each year" (p. 5). Using "open records requests," (p. 2) NCTQ assessed "four critical areas of teacher preparation," including "1) the selection criteria used by the institution for admitting candidates, 2) preparation in subject areas, 3) practice teaching, and 4) evidence of institutional outcomes" (p. 5). Although the liberal arts college four of the six participants in this study attended was not included in the report, overall Pennsylvania's

schools performed poorly. The most glaring failure noted by the report speaks to my earlier comments on the practicum experience of the college four of the participants attended. NCTQ concludes that "97 percent" of Pennsylvania's schools of preparation "entirely fail to ensure a high quality student teaching experience, in which candidates are assigned only to highly skilled teachers and receive frequent feedback" (p. 3). Of course, there is worth to *knowing* areas where preparatory schools are failing, but NCTQ's report hardly inspires confidence in me that they unequivocally know who is failing and who is succeeding; their methods of determining those assignments are equally as questionable. If only this issue was that easy to solve.

As Doug expresses in his student teaching experience, where his cooperating teacher advised him to "yell more," not all pre-service teachers are assigned cooperating teachers who assist them as they develop their pedagogical way of being during their period of formation. With that said, half of the participants in this study do share an exceptional student teaching experience, as Melissa, Sophia, and Elizabeth all share that they hoped to be just like their cooperating teachers or a mix of their cooperating teachers. But are these qualities necessarily the ones that are most desirable for beginning teachers to emulate? Chesley and Jordan's (2012) conversations with beginning teachers also identify that "student teaching, rather than the lessons they experienced in university classrooms, was the most effective component of their pre-service learning" (p. 42).

Like the importance of having an *effective* teacher preparation program, no one would likely argue that pre-service teachers should not be assigned to the best cooperating teachers. But does NCTQ labeling 97% of Pennsylvania's schools and "71% of programs across the country" (p. 3) as failing actually benefit the preparation of our

nation's teachers? One can access NCTQ's (2013) scores by typing in an institution on the website. For example, the University of Maryland – College Park brings up five categories, including Undergraduate Elementary, Graduate Elementary, Undergraduate Secondary, Graduate Secondary, and Graduate Special Education. Next to each category is a score out of four stars. But what does this score really mean? Just as test scores are being used to rank our nation's K-12 schools, NCTQ's rankings promise to make it easier to label schools as effective or ineffective.

Like the psychological recipe books that promise to alleviate the problems beginning teachers face, policies that lead to simplistic rankings like this de-humanize the experience when they seek to address the concerns they see with rigid evaluation programs that seek to rate and punish. In order to prepare beginning teachers more effectively for this period of becoming, schools of preparation must seek a humane response to the complexities they face, instituting a way of being that permits them to facilitate the intense growth that occurs during the first year of teaching. Rankings and ratings separate schools of preparation from the student teachers they prepare by taking the focus off of their growth and development. On a larger scale, this challenge is very similar to the one beginning teachers face as they define how they will be in the classroom. Policy makers and the schools of preparation they influence should seek to set aside the instinct to control in order to develop an openness that permits continuous growth and reflection.

Interestingly, Donna Wiseman (2013), Dean of the College of Education at the University of Maryland – College Park, seems to recognize the blockheaded emphasis on rating and ranking. While acknowledging that Maryland "fared pretty well in the review,"

Wiseman also questions the "18 standards developed by NCTQ that claim to be indicative of a quality teacher training program" (p. 1). She captures a fear of relying on such measures when she writes:

> We were highlighted as one of only 13 colleges to have multiple programs with strong design. However, the road ahead for colleges and universities that house teacher preparation programs is going to be difficult as they will continue to be scrutinized by NCTQ. That being said, the results of NCTQ in no way legitimize, reaffirm, or take away from that which we already know. (Personal Communication)

Her words are reminiscent of Martin Niemoller's quote about the government coming for socialists and then trade unionists, but he chose not speak out because they were not coming for him. Finally, as he famously quotes, "They then came for me – and there was no one left to speak out for me" (Brainyquotes.com). Although celebrated as an institution, Wiseman rightly questions the detriment of such rating systems meant to punish and close.

Moving Forward

> For teacher education, this is perhaps the best of times and the worst of times. (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 35)

While borrowing the famous line from Dickens, Darling-Hammond (2010) captures the current state of teacher education, as she celebrates the exceptional programs that have emerged over the past two decades, while she also laments recent attacks on schools of education. As I examine the insights that emerge from this study, I feel that it is important at this time to reiterate that my purpose for conversing with beginning teachers was never to determine what is wrong with pre-service teacher preparation in hopes of *fixing* this phenomenon. My research question explores the development of beginning teachers' pedagogical ways of being during their first year of teaching. As I

discover in this chapter, it is often impossible to separate preparation (formation) from support (orientation). All six beginning teachers encounter challenges, so it is natural that they at times wonder if their preparation is adequate to enable them to flow through the impediments that emerge. At this point of wondering, of course, beginning teachers have completed their schooling and are in the hands of the mentors, colleagues, and administrators who inhabit their new dwelling place. Teaching is not unique in this reality, as many professions involve a great distance between schools of preparation and workplaces of support.

However, formation does not end at graduation, so I choose now to examine the current state of orientation in the secondary schools of where the participants begin their teaching careers. I return again to the language of formation, as I reflect on the possibilities of reflective conversations to benefit both the formation and orientation of beginning teachers. I now turn to the period of becoming that occurs once beginning teachers accept their first teaching position. As with the period of formation, beginning teacher orientation programs provide many opportunities for the lived language of pedagogy to emerge.

Orientating Beginning Teachers

> Conventional programs of teacher education and professional development are not designed to promote complex learning by teachers or students. The typical pre-service program is a weak intervention compared with the influence of teachers' own schooling and their on-the-job experience. 'Sink or swim' induction encourages novices to stick to whatever practices enable them to survive whether or not they represent 'best' practice in that situation. (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1014)

Determining One's Being

Programs to introduce beginning teachers to their new positions in the classroom are often referred to as New Teacher Orientation Programs. Interestingly, the noun form

of the word "orientation" has a rather short life, dating back to only 1839, when it represented the "arrangement of a building, etc., to face east or any other specified direction" (Online Etymology Dictionary). This word was then humanized in 1868 to describe the "action of determining one's bearings" (Online Etymology Dictionary). This etymology captures the insights from this study, as beginning teachers seek to determine their pedagogical way of being in the classroom. The use of the word "bearings" immediately calls to mind the image of a ship at sea trying to find its bearings from the knowns of the sun, moon, and stars in the sky. Schools of support need to be the sun, moon, and stars to these beginning teachers, as they seek to develop their way of being during their first year of teaching. Interestingly, the noun form of "orientation" took on one more meaning in 1942, as it became used to represent the technical "introduction to a situation" (Online Etymology Dictionary). It is likely this new etymology captures the goal of today's new teacher orientation programs, which are often referred to as "sink or swim induction" (Feimen-Nemser, 2001, p. 1014) due to their emphasis on new teacher survival. The insights from this study hearken a call back to the 1868 definition, with one minor alteration added by me, removing three letters from the word "bearings" to form a new purpose for the orientation of beginning teachers, as the "action of determining one's being."

Max van Manen (1977) assists this understanding when he troubles the term "orientation" as it applies to the curriculum presented to students. He defines "orientation" as "the specific ways in which an individual looks at the world" (p. 211). As the language of the participants in this study demonstrates, Doug and Elizabeth developed a different way of being a teacher than the other participants. This orientation,

or way of being, guides beginning teachers as they find themselves confronted with various unknowns, from new students, to new curricula, to new pedagogical programs, and to new relationships with colleagues, mentors, and supervisors. They can harden from the challenges before them or hide their true selves, seeking to control those in their presence. Or they can develop a way of being that permits them to adapt smoothly to the impediments that develop before them. Van Manen (1977) continues, "Moving from one orientation to another is usually experienced as a transition between two worlds – as a shift from one reality to another" (p. 212). The experiences rendered in this study demonstrate that currently, beginning teachers are experiencing great place-panic as they transition from their pre-service learning to their practice as a beginning teacher.

Currently, beginning teacher orientation programs in this south-central Pennsylvania County provide monthly meetings with mentors, supervisors, and other beginning teachers. They provide common readings to motivate and engage beginning teachers. They schedule motivational speakers to address beginning teachers during their first year in the classroom. They offer technological training and lectures on professionalism. They provide opportunities for beginning teachers to observe and learn from their colleagues. The insights gained from this study do not call into question any of these practices, but instead, the experiences shared show that these practices may have lost sight of the most important aspect of an orientation program, which is to support beginning teachers in the development of their pedagogical way of being. I believe that current orientation programs have become ossified, as those who support beginning teachers seek to solve the known problems that arise, which in turn misleads beginning teachers to believe that they should be able to fix the problems they are having.

Beginning teachers need to begin knowing that difficulties will arise and be taught how to seek support, how to ask questions, and how to examine their own pedagogical way of being.

Care for Being

> Beginners, mentors, experienced colleagues, education leaders, and politicians must do their part if we are ever to rewrite the ending of *Survivor* stories. Our goal should not be to throw people off the island but to entice them to stay and thrive. (Scherer, 2012, p. 7)

In her introduction to the May 2012 issue of *Educational Leadership,* devoted solely to the purpose of Supporting Beginning Teachers, Editor Marge Scherer challenges educators to change the focus of the first year of teaching from individual teacher survival to a unified support system to help all beginning educators to thrive. Her imagery of beginning teachers occupying an island fighting for survival perfectly captures the dominant metaphors of the day; however, she seeks to move beyond this hardened image of individual survival to create a caring environment of interdependent support. The experiences shared by both Doug and Elizabeth illustrate from where the survival mentality appears, as both share strong feelings of *fear* that develop during the first year in the classroom. When fear is the driving attitude of a beginning teacher, he or she will more likely gravitate toward the promises of control that a way of being like letters carved in stone will promise. The experiences Doug and Elizabeth share demonstrate the transformative power of fear on their pedagogical way of being, as both change how they want to be in the classroom for the way they feel they have to be in the classroom. Both soon become disillusioned with their supervisors, their colleagues, and their students, as they discover that they were not able to *control* any of them.

Following the metaphor in Scherer's introductory quote, it is helpful to view the beginning teacher sprawled out in the sand on a deserted island, as it returns me to the Buddhist ways of being I share at the beginning of this chapter. As Doug is split between the teacher he feels he needs to be and the teacher he desires to be, he is like that teacher sprawled out on the island, lost in the blowing sand while the nourishing waters lie all around him and underneath the sand below him. Rather than provide beginning teachers like Doug with all of the answers that promise to alleviate their ills during the first year of teaching, maybe it is best to view the mission of schools of support to care for beginning teachers by giving them the courage to step off that sandy island and into the water that surrounds them or give them the strength to begin digging in the sand for the wellspring that lies below the surface. Rather than trying to catch the sand flying around on the island in hopes of grasping it to solidify it, one might benefit more from the fluidity of the water all around that may enable the individual to excel through the impediments that will undoubtedly arise during the first year of teaching. As Cody (2013) writes, "The wisest leaders may do less leading as they create space around them for others to develop and grow" (p. 68). It is time for school leaders to meet the needs of those beginning teachers in their presence by creating a space where pedagogical growth and development can occur.

It is interesting that none of the participants share any positive experiences with regard to their teacher orientation programs. Elizabeth and Sophia share the shotgun trainings they received to the teaching programs they would be required to use; Melissa and Sam share the extended orientation they received at the start of the year into the behavioral and lesson planning formats they were required to use, and Doug flippantly

joked about the minute details he was required to follow that were likely buried in some manual somewhere. The word "required" stands out in these experiences. Although it was my word usage, it does represent the type of orientation received by these beginning teachers, as they were orientated to the requirements of their new school. There was no evidence of any opportunities for growth and reflection on practice outside of a few negative *battles* Sophia, Melissa and Doug describe with their building administrators. This is not an effective way to conduct an orientation program.

Instead of being offered activities and focused conversations to allow them to get to know their new dwelling place, and in turn permit the others in the district to get to know them, these beginning teachers were greeted with in-service training mandating how they needed to teach. Rather than welcoming them with open arms, these prescribed methods offered clenched fists and crossed arms. Melissa eloquently describes how her forced acceptance of these requirements makes her feel:

> If I am told to do something and I don't feel strongly about it, it's hard to be positive about it and pretend that it's going to work. So, the students can see that. They see right through me just going through the motions.

It is interesting that *going through the motions* almost sounds like the flowing and accepting language these participants find so valuable, but instead of demonstrating acceptance, Melissa's words illustrate a resignation or giving up. It sounds like these schools are going through the motions as well, treating each new teacher as the same rather than welcoming their individuality.

Understanding the Needs of Beginners

> Unless we take new teachers seriously as learners and frame induction around a vision of good teaching and compelling standards for student learning, we will end up with induction programs that reduce stress and address immediate

problems without promoting teacher development and improving the quality of teaching and learning. (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1031)

Feiman-Nemser (2012) contends that schools that prepare and support beginning teachers mistreat them by ignoring "their status as beginners" (p. 13). To make her point, she refers to James Conant's 1963 recommendations that all beginning teachers should be given the following:

> (a) Limited teaching responsibilities; (b) aid in gathering instructional materials; (c) advice of experienced teachers whose own work load is reduced so that they can work with the new teacher in his classroom; (d) shifting to more experienced teachers those pupils who create problems beyond the ability of the novice to handle effectively; (e) specialized instruction concerning the characteristics of the community, the neighborhood, and the students he is likely to encounter. (Conant, as cited in Feiman-Nemser, p. 10)

As Feiman-Nemser concludes, nationally very few of Conant's recommendations fifty years later are evident in the experiences of the six participants in this study. Interestingly, Bullough, Knowles, and Crow (1989) present very similar recommendations to Conant's recommendations:

> To succeed, as they can, first-year teachers require reduced teaching loads, an appropriate match of expertise with assignment, reduced class sizes, reasonably 'good' class assignments (not to be assigned 'tough' classes), and mentors who have no part whatsoever in personnel decisions, such as certification. (p. 232)

Knowing that beginning teachers can benefit from limited or reduced teaching responsibilities as both of these researchers recommend, why are schools still reluctant to act on this wisdom? Is this how they *ignore* the needs of their beginning teachers as Feiman-Nemser contends? As I reflect on the themes that emerge from this study, I do believe that Conant's recommendations could benefit beginning teachers. They appear to be sound policy recommendations, so why after fifty years have they not been implemented? Again, I seek the tension in the middle ground here. We cannot ignore

sound policy recommendations, but we also have to realize the environment teachers

enter on their first days at their new dwelling place. There are, of course, practical

reasons why recommendations such as reducing the teaching load of beginning teachers

have not been addressed. In a taxpayer supported profession like teaching where unions

actively bargain hours and pay, the practice of reducing a beginning teacher's workload

will ultimately increase another's.

Wise and Usdan (2013) challenge teachers unions to "turn back to their original

missions of strengthening teaching and learning" (p. 34). The authors envision the

following future for teachers unions:

> They will be advocates for a teaching profession that appeals to the best and
> brightest, for high-quality teacher preparation and meaningful mentoring of
> beginning teachers, and for a career progression in teaching in which novices are
> supported and veterans take on greater leadership roles. (p. 34)

Notice that the language used by the authors does not contain any specific solutions to the

problems experienced in today's schools, unlike those listed earlier. Rather than demand

a specific support, like the need to add an additional preparatory period for beginning

teachers, Wise and Usdan (2013) call for advocacy of those in power for stronger teacher

preparation, meaningful mentoring, and teacher leadership. This study has shown me that

we must thoughtfully discuss policies and practices that can benefit today's teachers, but

we also must be wary of the hardened language of simple solutions. I cannot measure the

impact of the misguided policies that impact the participants in this study, but I can

reiterate the reality that all six were presented with mandates of varying difficulty levels

and four were still able to develop an open and accepting way of being. I am confident

that this way of being will benefit them and the students in their care. How can teacher

leaders, including unions, support the growth of beginning teachers and in turn, improve the profession of teaching?

Those who learn to develop a flowing way of being during their first year seem to understand the uncertainty inherent in the beginning teacher experience. One of the complexities all teachers face is that beginners in this profession, like those in many other fields, accept a full work load on day one. To be a teacher means to teach for the entire school day. This reality defines the beginning teacher experience, so rather than trying to solve these problems, beginning teachers and those who support them might be better served to seek a way of being that permits them to thrive in an environment like this. As the experiences of Doug and Elizabeth illustrate, failing to be oneself or hardening one's way of being with the hopes of controlling those around them may inhibit the development of one's pedagogical way of being in the classroom.

Of course, as Kennedy (2010) contends, the "teaching situation: the school, the classroom, the teacher's schedule, and the teacher's resources" (p. 592) can greatly impact the experience of a beginning teacher. Context does matter, as the experiences of Melissa and Sam highlight, but both of them were able to develop a flowing way of being in order to adjust to the myriad mandates of their charter school environment. Elizabeth, who seemed to encounter many less mandates and constraints as a first year teacher, was hardened by her interactions with others, developing an uncompromising and rigid way of being. This certainly does not mean to ignore the policies and recommendations to improve the beginning teacher experience, but focusing solely on reduced teaching assignments or easier classes are means to *solve* the problems inherent in the beginning teacher experience. Instead of seeking the rigid way of solutions, schools of support

might better serve new teachers by devoting their efforts toward providing a consistent

presence in the form of a mentor, colleague, and/or administrator to arrange pedagogical

experiences and facilitate conversations that allow beginning teachers to process the

challenges they encounter during their first year of teaching.

Common Readings to Elicit Common Language

> A truly good book teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down, and commence living on its hint. What I began by reading, I must finish by acting. (Thoreau, as cited at brainyquote.com)

One area where the county where this study occurred can examine its facilitation

of reflective conversations is in the list of texts it offers to school districts to be used in

their induction program. As stated previously, the county uses an induction consortium to

unite forces in the support and mentoring of beginning teachers. The Intermediate Unit

that supports the county school systems organizes a group purchase of books to be used

by the individual school districts in their support of beginning teachers and their mentors.

This order form provides three options for beginning teachers and those who support

them, including *101 Answers for New Teachers and Their Mentors* by A.L. Broux

(2003), *Tools for Teaching* by Fred Jones (2007), and *The First Days of School* by Harry

and Rosemary Wong (2009). I discuss all three of these texts in earlier chapters. Each

text focuses primarily on the science and skills needed to manage a classroom, promising

effectiveness using the hardened language of *answers* and *tools.* This would be very

appealing to those beginning teachers gripped by the fear that Doug and Elizabeth

describe. But this is yet another example of a hardened technical language pervading the

new teacher experience. The participants in this study demonstrate the importance of

developing an open, flowing language of acceptance and understanding. It is important in

a time of standardization to remember the uniqueness of each beginning teacher's experience and ensure that the texts we use allow them to uncover the way of being they are developing during their first year of teaching.

In addition to the prescriptive texts that districts may choose to introduce to their beginning teachers, they would be wise to balance them with texts that speak to the human side of education in order to elicit language that speaks to the pedagogical relationships paramount for learning to occur. Rather than attempting to create an all-inclusive canon of beginning teacher literature, the following are topics that may benefit beginning teachers during their time of orientation. Knowing the time constraints of the first year of teaching, facilitators may use excerpts of texts to share with beginning teachers to guide group and/or individual conversations.

The Vocation and Calling of Teaching

As beginning teachers are acclimating to the rigid ways of being a teacher that often greet them in their first days in their new schoolhouse dwelling place, it is important to guide them in reflection on why they chose this profession in the first place. These texts should go beyond the technical how of teaching in order to focus on the who of the teacher.

Deconstructing Teaching

In addition to examining who the teacher is through reflection and conversation, the experiences shared in this study highlight the importance of deconstructing not only the teaching self, but also teaching as a profession. This topic will seek to question what is currently considered "basic" in teaching today and allow beginning teachers to offer their ideas for enhancing pedagogy, curriculum, and school structures. As some of the

experiences from this study illustrate, it may be necessary to tear down existing negative views of teaching in order to re-construct the personhood of the teacher and their beliefs about the profession of teaching.

Seeking Understanding and Acceptance as Challenges Emerge

As the experiences of the six participants in this study demonstrate, significant challenges emerge during the first year of teaching. It is important to not only assist beginning teachers with "answers" that may uncover technical understandings, but also strengthen them to reflect on the difficulties and initiate growth based on the lessons learned.

Finding Humor and Beauty in Teaching Stories

Teachers often tell the best stories. Too often, stories are ignored in the education of teachers, as the science of facts are often given priority. It is important that beginning teachers are exposed to the stories of teaching, so that they may find a way for their stories to emerge.

Seeking to Understand and Care for Others

The experiences shared by the participants in this study, especially the stories shared by the urban and rural teachers, highlight the importance of pre-service teachers and beginning teachers to ponder their cultural experiences and the impact they have on the assumptions they bring into teaching. It is imperative that beginning teachers understand the stories of the others who will share their classroom dwelling place, especially as our nation's schools become more diverse, ethnically and socioeconomically.

There are a plethora of books that speak to these topics and can greatly benefit the development of a beginning teacher's pedagogical way of being during their time of formation and orientation (see Intrator & Scribner, 2003; Kozol, 1991; McCourt, 2005; Palmer, 1998, 2000; Santiago, 2006). With so many options, it is important that facilitators remember both the science of teaching and the humanity of pedagogy, as they select common readings that permit reflection and elicit lived language.

A Guide to the New Dwelling Place

> Districts can serve a powerful role as teacher educators, even if first year teachers are only dimly aware of formal district policies. The tasks they assign to new teachers, the resources they provide, the learning environments they create, the assessments they design, and the conversations they provoke have consequences for what first-year teachers come to learn about teaching. (Grossman & Thompson, 2004, p. 298)

It seems unlikely that beginning teachers will be able to provide a dwelling space to facilitate the be-coming of their students if they themselves are not provided with an environment that facilitates their at-home-ness in the school where they find themselves. All six participants in this study experience place-panic when transitioning to their first teaching position. Although at-home-ness appears to entail many different factors, the support that seems to offer the most promise for a beginning teacher orientation program would be the presence of a caring other. All six participants are assigned a paid mentor through the county Teacher Induction Consortium, but the experiences with these six mentors vary greatly. The importance of an assigned mentor is widely known, as the Department of Education's *Beginning Teacher Attrition and Mobility: First Look* study found. *NewsLeader* (November 2011) magazine reports on the study, presenting the staggering reality that only "Eight percent of mentored teachers stopped teaching after one year, and 10% stopped after two years. On the other hand, 16% of teachers without a

mentor quit after one year and 23% quit teaching after two" (p.1). This data review highlights the vital practice of assigning a mentor to each beginning teacher, but only after speaking in depth with beginning teachers does one see the varying degrees of mentoring that take place during these first years on the job.

Melissa is paired with a mentor who does not share her subject matter area or any students, so she gives up quite early any hope for true mentoring from him, instead seeking support from her team members. Sophia, on the other hand, finds exceptional support in her assigned mentor, but also seems to learn a great deal from the veteran teacher with whom she shares her classroom. Elizabeth is open to the close mentoring offered by her mentor, but she is closed to the lessons that could be taught by her colleagues and students. Each participant was assigned a mentor teacher, but in all cases, this individual was used as a problem solver, someone to whom the beginning teacher could go when he or she had a question or concern. Sam shares some powerful conversations with his mentor, but they all involved him asking a good question and then listening intently to the answer. When is the beginning teacher provided with time to talk? When is the focus entirely on his or her experience?

Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2008) studied the importance of constant presence with a beginning teacher in order to assist him or her to develop a *presence* in the classroom. The authors used a "new approach to the supervision of student teachers developed in the Netherlands…called core reflection" (p. 298), which involves continued conversations in order to elicit understanding. The authors highlight the importance of these core reflective conversations with the student teachers as they seek to move them toward autonomy, represented by the state of self-reflection and beginning teacher

initiated growth. The student teacher from their study describes the presence she develops from this experience as a "being-while-teaching" (p. 298). This autonomy is fascinating, as the student teacher describes how she is able to re-call her presence in the middle of a lesson in order to reflect on the being she is developing in time to change on the fly:

> And then I can call this being present to the fore really easily. It just comes. In the beginning I needed some deep breaths to do so, and to focus on my stomach...I know this sounds strange, but that's how it goes for me. (p. 306)

Notice the bodily experience she describes, as she physically collects herself, mentally reflects, and thoughtfully adjusts her instruction. Her words mirror Eric's as he describes his process for adjusting his instruction in the middle of his lesson. This represents a pedagogical way of being like running water, where beginning teachers are able to develop an authentic presence by *learning how* to reflect and adjust while in the presence of the students in their care. On occasion, beginning teachers may develop this authentic presence on their own, but from the experiences of the participants in this study, it is important to have a caring mentor from whom the beginning teacher can learn.

Bel Kaufman's (1964) classic fictional narrative of a beginning teacher's experience, entitled *Up the Down Staircase*, provides a relevant image of a mentoring relationship. On her first day in the classroom, the new teacher, Sylvia, approaches her mentor Bea and asks, "Will someone drop out tomorrow? Will it be I?" (p. 29). Bea responds with a gentle scolding, "Don't you dare! We need you! This is just the first day; you'll get used to it. The rewards will come later, from the kids themselves and from the unlikeliest ones" (p. 30). Sylvia's fictional story does not end positively, as she chooses to leave the public school and teach at a private school the following year. Interestingly, it was a story shared by her school nurse friend that captures her frustration with the

school where she works. After the school board issues a directive that the nurse may not touch any of the students, Sylvia ponders, "Are we, none of us then, allowed to touch wounds? What is the teacher's responsibility?" (Kaufman, 1964, p. 241). The first year is a wonderful opportunity for beginning teachers to touch and be touched by the others in their presence. Strong mentors can assist these beginners to navigate through the ebb and flow of these complex relationships that have the power to hurt as well as the power to heal.

Bambrick-Santoyo (2013) examines a powerful mentoring situation when he writes about a practice used at Vailsburg Elementary School. Rather than rely on the traditional system of observation and evaluation, Principal Yasmin Vargas freed up his strongest teachers to serve as teacher leader coaches. By taking away the typical administrative duties the teachers would have, Vargas was able to provide extensive peer coaching for his teachers. I recently witnessed a similar relationship develop in my school, as the English curriculum leader agreed to serve as a mentor to one of our new English teachers. Although not as formal of a process as the one existing at Vailsburg, the curriculum leader chose to use the administrative free time given to him during his day for department tasks to spend time with the beginning teacher in her classroom. He observed her so often that when I would walk into her classroom, I always expected to see him sitting in the corner. By being constantly in her presence, he was able to assist her with the development of her pedagogical way of being throughout the school year. From the start, the focus was not on surviving but on thriving. Although she still experienced many of the struggles presented by the participants in this study that are inherent in the beginning teacher experience, the ample time she was given for reflection

in the presence of a teacher mentor facilitated her growth. I witnessed how her success

became everyone's success, as her mentor was able to rally the rest of the department

behind her. By thriving in her first year, she pushed her students and colleagues toward

excellence. She developed a strong pedagogical way of being in the classroom, but only

with the support of those in whose care she remains.

Support Adjusting to a New Place

> I guess no matter where you go, you are going to have different things that are
> holding you back, so you just have to figure out how to make it work for you.
> (Melissa)

> Outside of an assigned mentor, schools of support can greatly assist with the

transition to a new educational dwelling place. Melissa, who like Sam and Doug

experienced stronger place-panic than the other three participants due to her urban

environment, demonstrates her open and accepting language in the quote above, as she

realizes that every new environment offers challenges during transition. Colbert and

Wolff (1992) address the orientation of beginning teachers in urban schools:

> If we want to retain new teachers, particularly those teaching in inner-city
> schools, we must introduce them to the profession humanely, in ways that
> engender self-esteem, competence, collegiality, and professional stature. We must
> develop a more gradual method of induction into teaching within a supportive and
> collaborative environment. (p. 193)

Whereas many would draw their attention to the authors' recommendations for

developing a "more gradual method of induction" (p. 193), including peer coaching and

increasing collaboration between schools of education and local school districts (p. 198),

my eyes are drawn to their language, including the words "humanely," "self-esteem,"

"collegiality," "supportive," and "collaborative" (p. 193). What I hear from them is the

importance of greeting our beginning teachers with a caring environment with many

others willing to give their time to elicit the language of the beginning teaching experience in order to offer supports and necessary pedagogical engagements.

Mary Kennedy (2010) offers a unique perspective on this issue regarding what schools of support offer their new teachers. Kennedy contends:

> We have veered too far toward the attribution of teaching quality to the characteristics of teachers themselves, and are overlooking situational factors that may have a strong bearing on the quality of the teaching practices we see. (p. 591)

Kennedy laments that "Researchers continue to seek the magic ingredient that makes some teachers better than others" rather than "look beyond the teacher to the teaching situation itself" (p. 591). I do agree with many of Kennedy's contentions, including her statement that "When people account for their own behavior, they place more weight on the situation than on their own personal qualities. It is mainly when accounting for other people's behaviors that they rely on personal characteristics" (p. 592). This is one explanation for the plethora of blockheaded policies that emerge in education, as many of the policies assume that teachers are personally failing their students. If I do not meet one of my administrative goals, rather than acknowledge a personal weakness, I always offer a situational excuse. Kennedy definitely captures something here. However, I worry that her ultimate thesis does not differ from the plethora of prescriptive texts offered to beginning teachers and those who support and prepare them. By focusing on situational factors, we could just as easily ignore the person of the beginning teacher. I do not believe that we need to focus so minutely on the quality of beginning teachers, but on providing them with opportunities to reflect and converse with caring others on the situational factors that are present in every teaching context. Place does matter as Kennedy agues, and as the participants in my study highlight; however, all experience

place-panic when entering a new dwelling place regardless of context. The urban and rural extremes only increase the feeling of displacement.

In the end, Kennedy's (2010) most coherent argument for improving the place teachers inhabit is to follow the example of Chinese and Japanese schools and increase the amount of time American teachers have to spend on lesson planning. In her analysis, American schools typically offer teachers one hour of planning time for every five hours of instructional time. Kennedy notes that in China and Japan, teachers are given more time to teach fewer instructional periods than American teachers. This is also the case in Finland, where Sahlberg (2013) notes that "teacher collaboration is possible because a teacher's teaching load is lighter than in the United States" (p. 37). In addition to providing productive time planning lessons and designing instruction, this increase in time could involve conversations with caring colleagues, discussing how to address a challenging concept. This idea falls nicely into the recommendations from this study to increase time in reflective conversation.

Learning How to Learn

> I think that there's an openness for me, because I have that curiosity to see what other people are doing. (Sophia)

I have sat through hundreds of parent/teacher conferences during my years in education, and one comment that I have heard in most of them involves the teachers telling the student and his or her parents that it is so important to ask questions of the teacher in order to learn appropriately. Often students will dutifully shake their heads, but on occasion, the disgruntled parent will comment that his or her child does not know what questions to ask, or that he or she is afraid to ask questions for fear of looking stupid in front of peers. I find a lot of truth in this and also see its application to the beginning

teacher experience. When talking with the participants during our first meeting, none of them share examples of going to their mentors or colleagues with specific questions or concerns. This begins to change though in our second conversation, as the participants demonstrating a language like running water start sharing stories of times where they went to others with specific questions that would help them grow as teachers. Like Sophia's words in the introductory quote, this "openness" takes time to develop, and often develops from the anxiety of struggle, as in her case after a poor observation from her building principal. Her principal identifies several concerns from his observation, from which Sophia recognizes, "I didn't know how to fix them, so I went and asked people like, what should I do to kind of help myself and make this look better?" Sophia's openness is on display here, as she could have easily responded to her principal with a rigid and hardened way of being in response to the stinging criticism. There is an acceptance that exemplifies this way of being, as one must push aside pride in order to deconstruct previously held ways of being. For the first time, someone challenges Sophia on the pedagogy she is developing, but rather than dig in her heels and solidify her way of being, she fluidly adjusts as necessary, which guides her toward her authentic being, or does it? If the emphasis remains on "fixing," where is the being of the teacher?

Eric demonstrates this openness early on in his teaching career when he grasps the importance of reflection for developing as a teacher. This attitude assumes that the beginning teacher is open to the insights that emerge from one's reflection. Eric repeatedly emphasizes his willingness to go to others on his own, often using the words, "I will go to a team member and say…" or "I have gone to my mentor and said…" Again, a way of being like letters carved in stone or written in sand assumes that all of

the answers are already known, so there is no need to seek reflective conversation with the others in their presence. But a way of being like running water opens the beginning teacher to the healing rains that can be provided from those who have traversed this path once before. Like Sophia and Eric, Sam demonstrates his ability to ask questions when he opens up and expresses his awe to his mentor after an observation of her class:

> When I walked in to observe you, I noticed that you were going over the "do now" and no one was speaking. How do you get the classroom to like – when you wanted their attention – they can all be talking, they can all be in a group, and then you need their attention and they all come back to you. (Sam)

Sam's struggle to find the right words for his question demonstrates the fragile state he is in as he expresses amazement over such a taken for granted element of teaching like gaining the attention of the students in the class. It takes both confidence in oneself and trust in another to ask a question like this.

In contrast, Doug never develops this confidence and trust with his mentor, as his own struggles to act a role in the classroom inhibit him from acknowledging his weaknesses. Instead, the focus always goes back to changes others have to make, keeping the attention off the development of his way of being. Brook (2009) expresses the importance of questioning for the development of authenticity when he writes, "To learn how to think requires that we learn how to ask questions and the various ways of interpreting what we find" (p. 57). In order to facilitate the flow of questioning and interpretation, mentors, professors, and supervisors can learn from reflective conversations, which can open up new realms of conversation and reflection on the language that emerges.

Reflective Conversations On Pedagogical Interactions

>Facticity implies that an entity within the world has Being in the world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its destiny with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 82)

Throughout this rendering, I write about the importance of bringing forth the language of beginning teachers. There are many phenomenological recommendations that emerge from this study, but the most profound one focuses on the language of the beginning teacher experience and the importance of eliciting that language to facilitate development. This one pedagogical insight speaks to all four "fundamental existential themes" that "pervade the lifeworlds of all human beings" (van Manen, 1997, p. 101). The language that emerged from the participants in this study was altered by the "lived space" of their new classroom dwelling place. The hardened language of a way of being like letters carved in stone reflected the "corporeality" of the experience. The participants in this study shared the "lived time" inside and outside the classroom, which had a powerful impact on their language. Finally, it is the "lived human relations" that elicits both a hardened language and a flowing language. Based on the stories shared by the participants in this study, this insight to the language of the beginning teacher experience applies to both the formation and orientation of beginning teachers, so I continue with both teacher preparation and teacher support in mind. Rather than offering a silver bullet to solve the problems of preparation and support, I conclude this rendering by focusing on the importance of facilitating reflective conversations to occur between the pre-service/beginning teacher and a caring other. It is the word *care* that forms the basis of these reflective conversations.

Heidegger (1964/1993) defines care as "the all-inclusive name for my concern for other people, preoccupations with things, and awareness of my proper being" (p. 223). His writing on "facticity" in the introductory quote adds to this understanding of care as he describes each person's *Dasein* as being connected to the others in his or her presence. This notion of the communal nature of the development of care applies greatly to the education profession, where beginning teachers share their space with so many others, who, as we have repeatedly seen, can be impacted mightily by the students, colleagues, and supervisors in their presence. Troubles will emerge in the beginning teacher experience, so it is vital that another in their presence is present to offer moments of reflection to permit understandings to emerge. Like the students assigned to the care of the beginning teacher, it is vital to assign pre-service/beginning teachers to the care of professors, cooperating teachers, or mentors in their presence. The importance of a listening ear is reiterated throughout this rendering. Wilkinson's (1997) survey of beginning teachers brings forth a nice quote from a teacher reflecting on the importance of having someone to talk to during the first year:

> I would like to have had a listening ear concerning my first year – just someone to use as a sounding board and to offer support. (Wilkinson, 1997, p. 48)

The development of an authentic pedagogical way of being during the first year of teaching is an arduous endeavor, but this study identifies the importance of presence and conversation to assist beginning teachers with this development. Knowing that the process of hermeneutic conversation I used for my research conversations and the reflective conversations I am recommending will vary, I still find great value in examining the process I used as it may benefit those who care for beginning teachers. I was amazed that during my conversations with the six beginning teachers, the

participants always found ways to echo their benefit from speaking with me during our three meetings.

As we met for our third and final meeting, Sophia appears ready to burst with anticipation as the words flow from her mouth describing a transformative experience she had:

> I actually had a moment of my own making, and I knew you would love this. The other night I made a flipchart. I have not made a flipchart basically all year and I wanted to make a review game for my kids, because in my shared classroom during my prep, one of the teachers in here plays the game *trashketball* when she does review. So I spent Sunday night making a flipchart and I loved it. I've forgotten how engaging this is to me, because it makes my mind stretch. 'What am I going to do? What's my plan? and things like that, instead of just pulling up my computer and double-clicking on the PowerPoint that's already created and opening and presenting. So I thought, 'Nate's going to love this on Tuesday when we meet.' (Sophia)

Sophia's words demonstrate the power of phenomenological inquiry for not only the participant but also the conversant. I feel so honored to be associated with such a dramatic discovery about a beginning teacher's pedagogical way of being in the classroom. Sophia's simple discovery, that by learning from her own experiences in lesson planning and not simply using the canned materials already created, she can reinvigorate her love for pedagogy. It is hard to believe that a trivial pursuit like creating a flipchart can awaken such understanding, but for Sophia, it was the reflection that emerges from knowing what is best for her students and then excitedly creating something that she believes will guide them to understanding. This is the teacher artist on display. But unlike the canvas and watercolors that allow the artist to record her vision, Sophia's artistry emerges not only in the classroom in the presence of her students, but later in a conversation with a barely known researcher. Why did my name come to her mind while in the midst of her own private revolution against disengaged pedagogy? I

believe it is because I inquired about her growth in the classroom, about her development of a way of being with students, and I spent two previous sessions in her presence and I promised to return again. My role was simple: I asked her about her becoming and she enthusiastically shared this engaging evening that not only stretched her mind but also increased her flow of decision making as a beginning teacher.

Charlotte Danielson's (2007) framework for teaching has been sold to various states including the state of Pennsylvania, where they are using it in a "blockheaded" attempt to assess teacher quality. One of the first alterations the state of Pennsylvania made to her framework was to alter her language in the Levels of Understanding from "Unsatisfactory" and "Basic" to "Failing" and "Needs Improvement." The state again emphasizes their desire to label teachers rather than guide them to develop professionally. Danielson (2007) explains the original purpose of her framework in the following way:

> With a framework for teaching in hand…participants can conduct conversations about where to focus improvement efforts within the context of shared definitions and understandings….These conversations focus on means, not ends, and they are conducted in an environment of professional respect. (p. 12)

Outside of its punitive nature, this goal of Danielson's framework perfectly captures the insights from this study, as focused activities and conversations can identify areas of improvement. Sadly, this lofty idea can no longer occur between administrators and teachers, as the air between them will always be polluted with the language of *failure* and *mandated improvement*. With that said, we can still learn from her original intent when establishing caring relationships in schools where reflective conversations can occur over shared understandings.

Sophia is not the only participant who seems to benefit from the conversational time that this study afforded. Eric appears to benefit from the reflective conversation in

which we engaged when he told of a conflict he experienced in the classroom with one of his female middle school students. After the telling of his story, I asked Eric about his authority in the classroom following something he said in his recollection. He responded in a factual manner, detailing how he will progress from a soft reminder to a stronger, and louder, correction. We then moved on to a completely different experience when Eric stopped and began to ruminate on the way of being he was developing, specifically in regards to the yelling he seemed to just realize he had been doing. He began pondering the gender role he found himself inhabiting, as he believed it was his role to yell in the hallway to hurry along the students, since all of his team members were female teachers. Eric was developing a presence by deconstructing his previous notions of teaching; soon, he will demonstrate his ability to engage in this process autonomously in the presence of his students.

I feel so privileged to have played this role in the lives of these six participants, but what about the rest of our nation's secondary beginning teachers? Do they all have someone charged with eliciting lived experience in order to seek understanding? I of course had my own selfish intentions for speaking with these individuals, as I sought not only a greater understanding of the lived experience of beginning teachers, but also sought a degree that would benefit me personally. I sat before each of these young men and women selfishly seeking my own benefit, but when I thanked them at the end for generously giving of their time, they all returned the thanks, echoing the benefit they experienced recalling the paramount moments in their pedagogical development. How many other beginning teachers are able to sit in the presence of a caring educator and simply talk about themselves for hours throughout their challenging first year of

teaching? They did not have to worry about asking questions of me or feel selfish for keeping the conversation fully on them, as this was the purpose of our time together. The power of this time should serve as a recommendation for those schools that prepare and support our beginning teachers. Most beginning teachers cannot reach their pedagogical way of being on their own. They need caring professors and colleagues who pledge to join them during the ebbs and flows that will define their state of becoming. Most importantly, they need to spend time in the presence of other educators, eliciting experiences that may assist the pedagogues to more fully understand themselves.

The participants in this study seem to have realized the power of reflective conversation on their growth and development. In a follow-up conversation with Sam, he shared that during his second year of teaching, he started a conversation group called "Teacher Talk" to "assist the new teachers with the stresses and pressures of being a new teacher in an urban school environment." Sam attempted to create a "judgment free zone" in their bi-weekly meetings in his classroom after school. Sam was compelled to start the group as he "saw that early on this year, we had a lot of new teachers that weren't getting the support they truly needed." As he spoke with these new teachers, he realized that "Many were also afraid to ask for help in fear of looking incompetent in front of their superiors." Sam shared that the meetings got off to a great start, as all beginning teachers came to his classroom at the end of the school day to reflect in the presence of other caring educators who have been there before; however, Sam lamented the fact that attendance slowly died off as the teachers began to feel overwhelmed by the teaching day. Sam understood exactly what they meant! It is sad that a second year teacher is the one who decided to offer this support to beginning teachers, trying to meet a lack he felt

from his first year experience. Sam wrote to me that "As a first year teacher, I believe I truly benefitted from the forum that you and I had. Additionally, my conversations with other new teachers were very beneficial."

We must humanely support our nation's beginning teachers, offering them opportunities to permit understandings to emerge. Hopefully, those who support beginning teachers also see the benefit of these conversations, as they also serve to uncover the language of being in the classroom, which in turn, offers opportunities for support. Life will grow around the flow of a river, but without attention and care, it will dry up and cease to exist. Let this be the charge of the educators who prepare and support our nation's beginning secondary teachers as they strive to define their pedagogical way of being with students: to listen, to care, and to support them in their flow towards becoming. These insights have greatly impacted me as an educator and as a supporter of beginning teachers, and I am mindful of them as I continue to offer my recommendations for a plan for orientation.

Avoiding the "Fix-it Response"

> In our culture, the approved response when we hear almost any sort of problem is to offer advice that will 'fix the problem.' Unfortunately, this reflexive fix-it response often makes the person who shared the problem feel unheard and dismissed. Indeed, our tendency to offer fixes stems from the desire to distance ourselves from the person with a problem: if you take my advice, you will be fine, and I don't need to worry about you anymore; if you don't take my advice, I have done the best I could, and I can forget about you and your dilemma. (Palmer, 1998, p. 14)

As Palmer (1998) captures in the introductory quote, I fear exhibiting a "reflexive fix-it response" in regards to my recommendations for the formation and orientation of beginning teachers (p. 14). There are so many things that our nation's teacher preparation institutions and schools are doing well, as well as many areas where they can improve.

Clearly, this topic is more than I can adequately uncover in this rendering, as I must remain focused on the essence of the beginning teacher experience; however, many insights emerged from this research that I believe can benefit schools of preparation and school teacher support initiatives. Heeding Palmer's warning, I focus on the establishment of reflective conversations that promise to bring the pre-service teacher closer, rather than pushing him or her further away with promised solutions and misguided rating systems. Simply identifying the fact that Doug is hired by a rural school district for a half-time position and then measuring the assessment scores of his music students distances those who prepare Doug to teach from the personhood of the teacher. It is therefore vital, in Doug's case, to engage in reflective conversations that allow his language of *splitheadedness* to emerge. Why is he unable to show himself as a teacher?

Clearly, Doug had established a close relationship with one of his university music professors, since he reached out to him during his first year of teaching for support and guidance. In the beginning, the relationship is fruitful, but without a fluid communication line between them, this support, like the poor cooperating teacher and the absent mentor, also fails Doug. As Brook (2009) contends, "Learning is more than the curriculum taught, but is additionally the formation of being truly human in general. The teacher as an exemplary learner is thus a human whose life discloses the authentic possibilities of human existence" (p. 52). As the participants in this study demonstrate, through hermeneutic conversation, their language may disclose their possibilities for becoming. But will anyone be there to listen to them?

"Educative Mentoring"

> I am a very reflective person. I am fortunate in that sense, because teaching, it seems to me, is a very reflective profession. (Eric)

Feiman-Nemser (2001) offers another naming for these reflective conversations, which she calls "educative mentoring" (p. 17). Peter Frazer, who is a 30-year veteran teacher released from teaching responsibilities to mentor 14 beginning elementary teachers, captures the language of an educative mentoring relationship:

> It seems that wondering about our work and wondering about kids is a major element in being able to improve our teaching…Part of the excitement of teaching and also the effectiveness depends on a sense of wondering. (as cited in Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 25)

The notion of wonderment beautifully captures the pedagogical relationship that can develop between a first-year teacher and a thirty-year veteran. This opens up the possibility for the beginner to wonder about the way of being a teacher, while the veteran mentor can wonder about the way of being the new teacher is developing as a guide. Frazer continues:

> I want to be a cothinker with them so that I can help them to see new perspectives, new ways to solve the problems they have…And always, as they're doing the thinking, I bring to that as a listener my whole worldview…So I certainly don't want to impose my whole view on them…I just want to stand beside them and work and let them take from me what fits into the solution of the problem they're working on now. (as cited in Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 20)

Frazer's language differs so much from the rigid language that often greets beginning teachers, as ways of being a teacher are imposed on them in shotgun in-service sessions. His focus is not on being a *voice* but on serving as a *listener*. Rather than seek to impose his way on them, he pledges to stand beside them and facilitate their growth. This is the power of reflective conversations.

I return to Gadamer's (1975/2006) notion of *Bildung*, which I unpack in Chapter 3. As I offer insights for how schools of preparation can care for their pre-service

teachers, it is important to note that it is the individual's responsibility to "develop one's natural talents and capacities" (p. 9). Gadamer writes:

> *Bildung* is intimately associated with the idea of culture and designates primarily the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities. (Gadamer, 1975/2006, p. 9)

This idea is imbedded in my research question, as I ponder how beginning teachers "develop" their pedagogical way of being. Gadamer again reiterates the idea of a "human" way, emphasizing the authentic development of self and the other for the pre-service teacher. Gadamer connects *Bildung* to the idea of formation by identifying it as the "transition from becoming to being" (p. 10). As we consider the formation of pre-service teachers, how can they cultivate their pedagogical way of being from "becoming" a teacher to "being" a teacher? And yet, a teacher is always "becoming" to be alive in the classroom. Gadamer answers this by stating that *Bildung* cannot be sought as a goal, "except in the reflective thematic of the educator" (p. 10). This idea forms the basis of reflective conversations, where pre-service teachers are able to reflect on their experiences in order to cultivate their *Bildung*.

To further expand Gadamer's (1975/2006) reflection on *Bildung,* it is important to describe the process of a hermeneutic conversation, which offers insights for allowing a proper understanding of self and other to emerge. These conversations will create a text to be understood, excluding "all prepossessions, even those of reason (and, of course, especially those generated by our prejudices)" (p. 182). What this means for the conversant charged with the care of the pre-service teacher is that he or she cannot enter with any preconceived ideas of what is wrong with the teacher learner and also should refrain from offering any advice or solutions to that which is said in conversation. The

task of this individual is simply to allow the script to be written by the pre-service teacher, to be analyzed by both speaker and listener at a later time.

With this said, conversations alone cannot address the needs of beginning teachers. Like the other participants, Doug and Elizabeth had my ear during their first year of teaching, but simply "telling" their experiences did not seem to greatly benefit their development of an authentic way of being. The language of a hermeneutic conversation must be recorded, either by facilitator notes or by the way of a voice recording. The facilitator must continually question the language reminiscent of a pedagogical way of being like letters carved in stone or written in sand. For example, when Doug compared the students to animals needing leashes, it is important for the facilitator to question this language, either later in the conversation or during the next conversation. The important thing is that the facilitator continues to ask so that understanding can emerge rather than simply telling the beginning teacher what to do.

Questions Emerge

> Try to ask rather than tell, to explore rather than advocate, to wonder rather than know, to trust that people are thinking and learning in silence as well as in conversation. (Palmer, 1998, p. 12)

There are many individuals who can engage in these hermeneutic conversations with pre-service teachers. A school could arrange a professor of education to mentor the pre-service teacher or even reach out to another department, like Doug's music professor. A mentor instructional coach could be assigned, as Sawchuck (2013) describes in his review of the Match Teacher Residency Program. Involving the cooperating teacher increases the power of these conversations on the development of the pre-service teacher. Once teachers begin their first teaching position, the obvious choice is the assigned

mentor. This would be a change for this position, as mentors have served more as *problem solvers* than as *reflective conversation facilitators*. Whoever engages in these conversations, it is important that all are on the same page as to how to conduct these reflective conversations, and most likely, some guidance will be needed. Palmer's words provide a guide for the facilitator of these conversations, as one cannot sit down with the pre-service teacher seeking to solve problems and providing wisdom. These conversations are about the growth of the pre-service teacher, so the language must emerge to be unpacked and questioned later.

Palmer (1998) describes "an honest, open question" as "one that I ask you without believing that I know the 'right' answer and without hoping that you will give me the answer I have in mind" (p. 15). An example from the participants in this study may be beneficial here. During our first conversation, Eric excitedly shared his idea to blow a whistle during class when students would begin to get too loud. I *knew* that this was not a good idea and had to restrain myself from stating my opinion. As a researcher, this was easy for me, but it may be harder for a university professor or cooperating teacher. Of course, they would want what is best for the teacher (and the students in his care), but in a hermeneutic conversation, it is important for the pre-service teacher to work through understandings on his/her own. When I followed up with Eric on his whistle idea, I witnessed the powerful impact that experience had on him, as he learned that sometimes less obtrusive methods of cooperation and care can more effectively engage students and motivate them to want to learn. Trying to provide an answer during the conversation could have hindered this understanding to emerge.

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Seeking to solve problems or provide answers can actually cause greater harm to the beginning teacher, as Laura Varlas (2013) captures in her analysis of Teach for America classrooms. Varlas expresses her concern with having too many voices barraging beginning teachers with solutions to their problems when she writes:

> Site-based mentors, Teach for America mentors, principals, and other professional development leaders were just bombarding new teachers with different priorities. (p. 3)

This stresses the importance of not overwhelming beginning teachers, but even more importantly, it identifies the kind of support they do not need. We should not be *bombarding* beginning teachers with anything. As we learn from the beginning teachers in this study, they are overwhelmed with new policies, procedures, and mandates from their first day on the job. The language in Varlas' quote clearly shows that instead of arranging for a listening ear to help beginning teachers process their thoughts, this program was providing more voices to barrage these beginners with yet more promised solutions to problems that emerged. I can hear these well-intentioned individuals responding with stories from the beginning teachers with a, "Try this" or "Do this." What they need is a thoughtful educator to listen, clarify, and elicit, more than someone to solve, offer, or brainstorm.

Conversation Starters

Reflective conversations, like the hermeneutic conversations used in this study, will not have pre-determined questions; however, based on the experiences of the participants in this study, there are certain topics that can be used as conversation starters. These are topics that pre-service/beginning teachers should likely encounter in great depth in order to develop their pedagogical way of being. The facilitator of these

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conversations should then use the language of the pre-service/beginning teacher to formulate follow-up questions. The priority is allowing language to emerge.

As Heidegger (1964/1993) writes, the "essence of language" is "the home of man's [sic] essence" (p. 237). In a reflective conversation, we are seeking to find the essence of the individual, in that this understanding may guide the development of his or her pedagogical way of being. Gadamer (1986) continues his exploration of language by stating that language "allows us to experience nearness" (p. 114). In reflective conversations, the facilitators bring the pre-service/beginning teachers close to them by seeking to elicit the lived language of the classroom. These conversations should happen as often as possible, imbedded in the coursework and pedagogical experiences in which the beginner engages. Even though it is difficult to plan the content of a reflective conversation, as by definition they will focus on experiences that have occurred since the last conversation, the participants in this study identify several topics that should be reflected upon during the formation/orientation experience depending on the development of the teacher.

What Is My Teacher Identity?

As I mention earlier, Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2008) studied the development of a pre-service secondary teacher in order to "determine the stages" (p. 300) of her development. Though I find fault with naming six concrete stages of teacher development based on the experience of one individual, the process of "core reflection" (p. 307) used by the authors greatly assist my understanding of the process of how a reflective conversation might look. The authors seek to find a balance between what they label as "Competency-Based Teacher Education and Humanistic Based Teacher

Education" (p. 298). In other words, they sought to navigate the tensions inherent in the middle-ground between the art and science of teaching. The experiences of the participants in this study illustrate that the two cannot be separated. For example, Sophia defined her way of being a teacher based on not only her techniques for teaching math, but also on her ability to develop pedagogical relationships with her students. The introduction of the rigid lesson plan format mandated by the school district disrupted this balance that she had found, so she worked throughout that first year to again discover comfort in that dwelling between her own skill and artistry.

When Meijer, Korthagen, and Vasalos (2008) identify the questions, "Who am I?" What kind of teacher do I want to be?" and "How do I see my role as a teacher?" they label them as strictly the realm of Humanistic Based Teacher Education. I do not see how these questions can be separated from their pedagogical experiences in the classroom, which clearly involve their skill as a teacher. With this in mind, I borrow these questions as I recommend the realm of the identity and way of being of a teacher as an early topic for conversation. By beginning with these big idea questions, language should emerge to guide the facilitator to further questioning of the experiences brought forth.

"**Arrogance Reduction"**

To introduce another important subject matter for the reflective conversations of pre-service teachers, I borrow the term "arrogance reduction" from Sonia Nieto (1994). Nieto uses this term to describe her vision for multicultural education in the United States, and I believe her idea applies well to teacher education as well, considering the fact that in our nation's schools, "14% of teachers identify as African-American or Hispanic, compared to 38% of students" (U.S. Dept of Education, 2011, p. 13). Nieto's

argument is that too often our schools focus on cultural sensitivity, arranging isolated

opportunities for exposure to cultures different from one's own. In Melissa's case, she

was briefly exposed to urban students when she observed a classroom at King Charter

School during her pre-service preparation, but she was not held accountable for really

questioning her own potential biases and assumptions, as she did not need to consider

that environment again. Nieto writes:

> A focus on cultural sensitivity in and of itself can be superficial if it fails to take
> into account the structural and institutional barriers that reflect and reproduce
> power differentials in society. Rather than promoting cultural sensitivity, I would
> suggest that multicultural education needs to be understood as 'arrogance
> reduction;' that is, as encompassing *both* individual *and* structural changes that
> squarely confront the individual biases, attitudes, and behaviors of educators, as
> well as the policies and practices in schools that emanate from them. (p. 416)

"Arrogance," defined as "an attitude of superiority manifested in a manner or in

claims or assumptions," (Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary) can certainly sound

harsh when applied to the preparation of beginning teachers. But it is the word

"assumptions" that stands out the most, as the participants in this study appear to have

been left to "assume" what it is like to have a pedagogical relationship with an urban

student or a rural student. In addition to Sam's, Melissa's, and Doug's experiences in

urban and rural settings, the same can be applied to suburban settings when you consider

the assumptions Elizabeth made about her special education student. Reflective

conversations must assist the pre-service teacher to "squarely confront" their "individual

biases, attitudes, and behaviors" by reflecting on their pedagogical interactions with

others with different cultural experiences. Possible questions would be, "How did the

community where you grew up shape who you are today?" "What would it be like for

you to teach in a suburban, rural, or urban school?" "What experiences have you had

working with students from other cultural groups?" The purpose of these conversations would be to elicit conversations that allow pre-service teachers to reach understandings of themselves and allow for a critical examination of their assumptions before they enter a new dwelling place that may vary from their previous experiences.

Beliefs about Pedagogy

In addition to focusing conversations on who the pre-service/beginning teachers are and how their cultural experiences may have shaped their assumptions they bring into teaching, it is important to also allow language to emerge that calls into question pre-service teachers' beliefs about pedagogy. As the language of the participants in this study demonstrates, beginning teachers shape their beliefs on how to teach from varied experiences that occur prior to their student teaching experience. Reflective conversations would permit pre-service teachers to consider the various methods of instruction they have witnessed in the past as well as those in which they are engaging in the present. Feiman-Nemser (2001) captures the importance of this reflection on pedagogy, especially since many schools of education still reflect more traditional methods of instruction:

> The pedagogy of teacher education mirrors the pedagogy of higher education where lectures, discussions, and seat-based learning are the coins of the realm…All this reinforces the belief that the K-12 classroom is the place to learn to teach. (p. 1020)

Many beginning teachers may have idealized visions of teaching in schools prior to engaging in their student teaching, while others have had numerous opportunities to practice teaching prior to their teaching preparation. Because of this, beginning teachers need opportunities to reflect on their beliefs about effective instruction. Possible questions that may elicit this language include, "How do different students learn best?"

"What approaches do you prefer to use when engaging students?" "On what do you base those approaches?" and "Why do you like to teach?"

The Language of Development

> It is impossible to teach recruits how to teach powerfully by asking them to imagine what they have never seen or to suggest they 'do the opposite' of what they have observed in the classroom. No amount of coursework can, by itself, counteract the powerful experiential lessons that shape what teachers actually do. (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 42)

As Darling-Hammond implies, the concept of reflective conversations in isolation cannot positively impact teacher preparation. Reflective conversations must occur in conjunction with lived pedagogical experiences with students. These experiences will form the majority of the conversation time between pre-service/beginning teachers and professors/mentors/cooperating teachers. Sandra Cisneros, author of *The House on Mango Street,* captures the power of lived language as she reflects on her first year of teaching in the introduction to Greg Michie's book, *Holler if you Hear Me: The Education of a Teacher* (1999):

> Needless to say, I made a lot of mistakes those first years. Eventually, I came to realize that teaching was like writing. Just as I had to find my writing voice, I also had to find my teaching voice. They both came from my center, from my passions, from that perspective that was truly mine and made me different from any other teacher. To get there I had to take the same circular route as writing. I had to be intuitive, and I had to be willing to fail. (Cisneros, as cited in Michie, 1999, p. x)

Cisneros' words are in reference to her first years of teaching at an urban high school, fresh out of graduate school. Just as I begin this chapter by exploring the importance of hearing the voice of the beginning teacher, I end it by returning to the development of a language that captures the voice and way of being of beginning teachers. Just like Cisneros, who admittedly struggles to find her way of being during her

first year of teaching, the participants in this study also encounter obstacles to their becoming. But the language that four of the participants bring forward demonstrates their development of a pedagogical way of being in the classroom.

Sam, who suffered a unique insult when a child urinated in his classroom, demonstrates an open and accepting way of being through his way of moving on after this incident:

> They asked me, 'are you okay Sam?' because that's not a good thing to happen to your day. They were surprised by my reaction. It got cleaned up, it got sanitized, the smell was gone, I moved on. I told my friends at home and they were like, 'Some kid must be out for you.' I'm like, 'For some reason, I don't think of it that way.' Looking back, eighth grade with the students that have the issues that they have, it's not all that surprising. It got cleaned up, I moved on, and I laughed it off.

Of course, after this incident occurred, the building principal likely reviewed the policy for unlocked classrooms to ensure that something like this does not happen again, but the important thing Sam demonstrates is when your profession is defined in the presence of others, as the teaching profession is, things like this will happen. Sam could not control the decision the child made, but he could control his reaction. Sam soon finds that this open and accepting attitude can not only benefit the beginning teacher and the students in his care, but it can also have a great impact on the other adults in his presence. One day out of the blue the 8th grade English teacher on his team texted him to tell him, "I want to thank you for being such a positive influence, because no matter what's happened, you've always kept positive."

Sophia captures the attitude demonstrated by Sam when she states:

> I think as a first year teacher, your goal is, like they say, to survive and I think that my goal is not only to survive, but kind of improve what I do every single day and as the year goes on, better become a teacher.

I love how Sophia ends this statement. Rather than say that she wants to become a better teacher, she hopes to "better become a teacher." Her words represent that she still has a long way to go to reach the authentic teacher she longs to become. But her willingness to grow in the presence of others has her on the right track toward her pedagogical way of being.

Eric mirrors Sophia's words when he says:

I am a perfectionist at heart and teaching is an imperfect profession. I am learning that every day. I cannot do everything perfect the first time. I've got to learn and do better…I've got 35 years of this ahead of me – well, 34 now – It's not going to be perfect the first year. As much as a perfectionist I am, this is a very non-perfect job.

Eric's words highlight the journey of the teaching experience. It is important to note that this journeying nature of the beginning teacher experience still offers Doug and Elizabeth the opportunity to grow into their authentic selves, but in order to do so, it appears that they will need the guidance and support of others to engage them in reflective conversations in order to elicit understandings of self.

When reviewing the totality of the lived experiences shared by the six participants in this study, it is evident that none of them seemed to *develop* in a systematic or set way. In my research question, I use the word *define,* capturing the power demonstrated by four of the participants in this study to flow through the challenges inherent in the beginning teacher experience and exhibit an open and accepting way of being a teacher. Develop and define may appear synonymous, but I make this distinction in order to note the potential shortcomings of noting a clear course of beginning teacher development. As the lived experiences shared by the participants in this study highlight, all encountered unique impediments when entering their first year of teaching, and four of the six

demonstrated their ability to overcome the obstacles and *define* how they will be in the classroom. One may question the amount of autonomy possessed by these beginning teachers, as their new dwelling places mandated rigid lesson plan and teaching formats, but this study highlights the autonomy beginning teachers have in *defining* how they will be in the classroom. Elizabeth and Doug still possess this power, but it may take caring and supportive others in their presence to assist them to confront the hardened language they are using in order to accept a more open and flowing way of being in the classroom. They can still *define* their pedagogical way of being.

During our final conversation in May, Elizabeth offers a language that seems to capture a more open and accepting way of being in the future:

> Parents view teachers as mean ogres and they must protect their child from the mean, scary ogre. That's the most comical way I can look at it without stressing myself out, because there's going to be parents like this every year. There are going to be children like this every year. I need to deal with it somehow, and I even said last night that humor is needed to get through the profession, so I'm finding humor everywhere.

Where a lot of her language in this quote still represents a battle mentality against the student, the parent, and the others in her presence, her words do capture a state of being where she recognizes that there are some things she cannot control, and that it may be helpful for her to accept this and find comfort with it. One can easily see how a reflective statement like this could provide a great conversation starter for a mentor or colleague to examine further with Elizabeth. She can still choose and accept her authentic way of being.

In the words of Lao Tzu, "How can a man's life keep its course if he will not let it flow" (Lao Tzu, as cited in Doll, 2000, p. 149)? Elizabeth and Doug both inhibit their development of a pedagogical way of being in the classroom by acting a role or by

blocking oneself to the others in their presence. Like Elizabeth, Doug offers a glimpse of

an emerging self when he states:

> With the middle school chorus, where I managed accidentally to allow my inner ideal-director-self to be a little bit more present was a step in that direction of shedding that shell a little bit. Getting my ideas about music technology out there was quite successful with opening up those inner ideas as well.

Doug's words offer another powerful example of reflective conversations on the

development of a way of being in the classroom. These words offer so many avenues for

exploration as Doug realizes that he is wearing a protective shield to protect himself from

students. He also begins to find his voice when it comes to his passion for music

technology.

A New Way of Being a Beginning Teacher and a Mentor

> Imagine if we treated as *basic* to teaching and learning listening openly and generously to each other, not just to a healthy and sane understanding of others, but also of oneself. If we treated *these* things as "basic" to teaching and learning, students and the living questions they bring from their lives to the life of the classroom become imaginable as basic to the living character of the disciplines entrusted to schools. (Jardine, 2008, p. xi)

> I end this chapter as I began it, pondering a new way of being a beginning teacher.

But rather than conclude this study with a myopic focus on just beginning teachers, I

refer to Jardine's quote above to capture the new way of being a mentor charged with the

pedagogical formation and orientation of teachers. Jardine is calling for a renewal of the

basics of the classroom experience, as teachers seek to listen "openly and generously,"

gaining not only an understanding of others, but also a window to oneself. It is the

mentor/supervisor that organizes pedagogical interactions with students and others in the

school house and facilitates reflective conversations around the understandings that

emerge. These conversations are powerful, as they should seek to elicit the language

representative of the way of being beginning teachers are developing during their period of growth, as a caring other is able to question and guide understanding with them. To again borrow from the language of Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2008), this language offered by beginning teachers is a "gift" (p. 217) to be accepted by the teacher educator. Will these mentors and supervisors accept this gift, using it to guide further understanding of self, or will they return the gift, pushing it aside with the quick offering of a solution or a promised reprieve?

I take liberties with this analogy, as Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2008) are speaking to the language of the classroom, not to the language of beginning teacher preparation and support. However, like the authors, I use this metaphor to capture the experience of teaching, and it applies well to the mentors and supervisors who prepare and care for beginning teachers. As Jardine, Clifford, and Friesen (2008) write, the "image of the gift" captures the "idea of taking up what is freely given in a classroom conversation" (p. 217). The research presented in this study demonstrates the current state of teacher preparation and support, where reflective conversation "is something where individuals simply enter into relations of exchange" (p. 217). Pre-service teachers seek wisdom on teaching from their professors, and teacher mentors "cooperate" with them when they permit them to enter into their classrooms as guests. Pre-service teachers are taught how to teach, as a consumer learning a new skill. Once they become teachers with their own classrooms, mentor teachers are paid to impart knowledge on them, offering answers to the problems they encounter. Mentors and supervisors enter their classrooms in observation, providing evidence on how well beginners are teaching. Rather than

infuse the experience with the lived language of being, this blockheaded way of being serves to reduce the experience to the language of doing.

An assessment model of being a mentor or supervisor of pre-service or beginning teachers treats conversation as a "commodification," that "stops the movement," (Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2008, p. 220) allowing experiences to harden. These exchanges seek to provide solutions and answers to the problems inherent in the first year experience. An alternative model of being a mentor or supervisor will instead view this language as a gift, as it permits the movement of "lived" reflection and growth. The language offered by beginning teachers, through hermeneutic conversation, can be returned as a gift by the mentor or supervisor by eliciting the language of the three ways of being, freeing them to offer opportunities for growth and renewal.

The language shared by the six participants in this study is still active and alive in my mind, altering my way of being a supervisor of beginning teachers. The next step is to act thoughtfully, as I seek opportunities for conversation with the beginning teachers in my care. My gift to them is my presence, undivided and whole, as I seek to elicit the lived language of the beginning teacher experience. This study has shown me the power of this gift of language to transform an experience stuck in a fixed and rigid way of being. The language offered by beginning teachers is a gift with the promise to alter the way we prepare and support teachers for the life-giving work in our nation's classrooms. But will anyone be there to accept this gift, offered by beginning teachers as they traverse through their pedagogical journey? My charge is to continue to seek understanding of this language as I myself define my pedagogical way of being a mentor / supervisor. With this pedagogical understanding, transformation is possible for both the giver and the receiver.

APPENDIX A

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

You are invited to participate in a research study that will explore the lived experience of beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being. This study is being conducted by Nathan Frank, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of beginning teachers. Using the qualitative methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology, the interest is in making recommendations for improved practice in the support and preparation of beginning teachers from the insights gained in this study.

Your participation will entail sharing your teaching experiences as a beginning teacher defining your pedagogical way of being. Each conversation will be recorded to preserve the integrity and completeness of your experiences as you share them with me. The recorded conversations will be transcribed into written form so that I have an opportunity to study the text and formulate themes that describe the experience. All conversations, recordings, and written transcripts will be held in strict confidence. Your identity and that of your school will be anonymous.

As a participant in this study, you will be agreeing to meet with me on three separate occasions during the 2011-2012 school year. Each meeting will last approximately 60-90 minutes. Meeting times and places will be agreed upon mutually by the researcher and the participant to maximize the most convenient time and place. An additional meeting may be held as a group conversation with other beginning teachers in the county participating in this study. At that time, we will address common themes beginning to emerge. During this research study, you will be asked to reflect thoughtfully on your experience of being a beginning teacher defining your pedagogical way of being. You may also be asked to write a short description of your experience. In turn, the researcher will be sharing themes as they emerge from our shared dialogue.

Your shared experiences will add a greater dimension to this work on beginning teachers defining their pedagogical way of being in the classroom. If you decide to participate in this study, please sign the attached consent form. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

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APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Project Title	The Lived Experience of Beginning Secondary Teachers Defining their Pedagogical Way of Being
Purpose of the Study	This is a research project being conducted by P. Nathan Frank, under the guidance of Dr. Francine Hultgren (primary investigator), at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a beginning secondary level teacher. The purpose of this research project is to explore and understand the nature of the lived experience of beginning secondary level teachers defining their pedagogical way of being during the first year of teaching.
Procedures	The procedures involve your engagement in at least three conversations with the researcher on your experience as a beginning teacher. You may also be asked to complete one written reflection and engage in one group conversation with other beginning teachers. All conversations will occur in a mutually agreed upon setting, such as a classroom, an available conference room, or another public setting. Each conversation will last between one hour and one and a half hours. The written reflection would take approximately twenty minutes to complete. There are no set questions, as the researcher is interested in conversations with you about the lived experience of a beginning teacher. A conversation may begin with the question, "What does pedagogy mean to you?" The researcher may then follow with the question "How would you describe your pedagogical way of being?" Other follow-up questions may include: "Have you had any experiences so far this year that have led to changes and adjustments to your pedagogical way of being?" "What one experience so far this school year best defines who you are as a teacher?" "How do you see yourself most in your teaching future?" All conversations will be audiotaped so that they can be transcribed into a written document to be analyzed by the researcher to identify common themes. This research study will last throughout the 2011-2012 school year.
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.
Potential Benefits	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the lived experience of a beginning teacher. Phenomenological inquiry involves the researcher bringing to light the lived experience of each participant, so it is hoped that you will benefit from the thematic rendering of your journey to pedagogical being. It is also widely known that reflective practitioners are the best teachers, so

	this time investment will hopefully benefit you as they reflect on your daily experiences as a beginning teacher. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the lived experience of a beginning teacher defining his or her pedagogical way of being.
Confidentiality	Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized by storing data in a locked office. We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your identity, school, school system, and that of persons named by you will remain anonymous. You will be given a pseudonym throughout the text to provide confidentiality. You will be permitted to read the researcher's interpretation of themes and to participate in reaching intersubjective agreements about their meaning. You also have the right to request certain specific written information or conversations not to be used in the study. You will be informed of any tape recorders present during recorded conversations, and you may ask that recorders be turned off at any time. You are free to ask questions and to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty and that your agreement to participate or not participate in this study will have no impact on your job as a secondary level teacher. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others. This research project involves making audiotapes of you. The audiotapes are being made to capture the essence of the conversation and to ensure that a correct transcript of the conversation can be created. Only the researcher will have access to these audiotape recordings and they will be secured by the researcher and erased ten years after the conclusion of the research study.
Medical Treatment	The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized

	or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator, Dr. Francine Hultgren at: 2311 Benjamin Building College Park, Maryland 20742-1165. 301-405-4501. fh@umd.edu
Participant Rights	If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: **University of Maryland College Park** **Institutional Review Board Office** **1204 Marie Mount** **College Park, Maryland, 20742** **E-mail: irb@umd.edu** **Telephone: 301-405-0678** This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Statement of Consent	Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form. If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.
Signature and Date	**PARTICIPANT NAME** **[Please Print]**	
	PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	
	DATE	

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