Acknowledging Identity in Teaching and Learning:
Reflections on My Journey, through Acting to Teaching and Beyond

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

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This personal narrative inquiry into some of my formal and informal educational experiences is a way of exploring who I am as a person, as well as of reconstructing how this has influenced my beliefs and thereby my "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) as a teacher and as a learner. In conducting this study, I have attempted to document connections I make between some of the early "educational interactions" I see as formative of my sense of identity, and the teacher I have become/would like to be. I recount stories about relationships I have had with certain teachers who made strong impressions on me in public school settings, as well as stories of personally transformative experiences I had outside school. Through these examples, I make the case that such investigation is critical to understanding how teaching professionals in general define teaching and learning, and to becoming more effective educators.

In addition to these stories, I posit that my background and training as an actor—as well as the theoretical basis and rationale behind the development of an "epistemology of acting"—may have great relevance to and utility in the development of talent and potential in prospective and in-service teachers in my future career as a teacher educator. In particular, respect for the integrity and interaction of emotional,
psychic, and intellectual realms, empathic abilities, self- and meta-awareness, and sensitivity to one's human and physical environment are of interest in terms of their relevance to both acting and teaching.

Citing their kinship to the goals of the narrative inquiry approach to teacher development and research, I argue that the development of such abilities is a worthwhile objective in teacher training programs, and that acting training techniques could provide one useful way of developing them. I briefly identify elements of several types of acting training and dramatic/acting theory which might be useful and informative in this regard, but the naturalistic acting style based on psychological realism known as "the Method" is explored in greatest detail.
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Introduction

By pursuing advanced doctoral studies in the Department of Curriculum at OISE, it is my intention to further synthesize and professionally to apply interests which have been developing since my childhood. I have been exposed, through the influence of my parents, my formal schooling, and my own sense of adventurous curiosity, to a variety of languages, cultures, academic and artistic disciplines, and perspectives on the world. In the process, I have sought to better understand humankind and the ways in which we interact and share knowledge. I have also tried to discover how I might help, through the development and use of my own analytical, observational, and problem-solving talents, to better understand, interpret, and facilitate these communicative processes on the many levels at which I encounter them in my life. The underlying theme and unifying thread of this lifelong inquiry has been the promotion of social justice and human equality, as I have come to comprehend these principles.

I was raised by parents who prized my developing a sense of social responsibility. I came to share their belief that individuals should be proactive participants in society and contribute to solutions to its problems; I therefore embraced political involvement and awareness at an early age. In my undergraduate studies, the change in my major from Politics to Economics and thence to Theater Arts came about only after profound personal reflection with respect to how this shift could be rationalized, in terms of how it helped me to better fulfill such a mandate.

As a result, I began to perceive the study of acting as a wholistic approach to understanding human interaction. Whereas politics or economics might have facilitated the comprehension of issues of power related to mass social behavior, psychology or linguistics might have enabled me to understand some of its cognitive dimensions, religious studies or philosophy its spiritual aspects, and dance to explore its physical manifestations, I found that the study of theater arts (and acting, in particular) enabled me to explore all of these disciplines simultaneously and in an integrated way, using myself as the medium for developing my understanding and communicating what I had learned. This was perhaps the quality that made the choice of theater and acting so appealing to me, given the stage of my personal development I was in at that point. As a result of this study--particularly the study of dramatic characterization--I became increasingly intrigued with alternative ways of looking at things, and with seeing matters through the eyes of others as a means of establishing communication.

This fascination carried over from the individualized basis on which it was pursued in my acting to my love of travel, of studying other languages (I have now learned four others besides my native English over the years, to varying degrees), and in my multidisciplinary exploration of how people come to know what they seem to know about their worlds. It might even explain my
sustained fascination with the twin arts of salesmanship and marketing during the twelve year period (1979-1990) immediately following the first phase of my postsecondary education, perhaps, although there were obviously pragmatic considerations involved in my decision to work in the wholesale natural foods industry during this phase of my professional life, too.

As this interest in human interaction has grown and evolved academically, it has taken me into applied linguistics and language acquisition theory, into the related fields of sociology and anthropology, and finally into advanced studies in education. Almost all the endeavors I have undertaken so far, in fact—artistic, academic, and professional—can in one sense be seen, as attempts to integrate and develop the insights I have gained along the way.

I believe it is no coincidence that, while I may have lost sight of it at particular moments, I have rediscovered the sense of social responsibility which proved the initial impetus for these explorations, en route to getting to where I am today. Many cultures speak of the circular/spiral nature of life, of how the individual’s journey through life can be seen as a constant relearning of what s/he has learned many times before. It is what Luis Valdez (1971) labeled “el pensamiento serpentino [serpentine thought],” which he attributed to the Aztecs. According to Valdez, it was this early Western civilization that invented the number zero as a way of reflecting the simultaneous existence of— and confluent relationship between—infinitude, nothingness, and the repeating cycle of life; this concept was often depicted by the Aztecs as the snake swallowing its own tail, “re-cycling” itself, returning to its own beginnings.

I know from personal experience that a great truth is reflected in this metaphor. It is not a coincidence either that when I was twenty-four, and faced a choice between entering a bilingual education teacher training program at UCLA with full scholarship and continuing the relatively hand-to-mouth existence of a performer by pursuing training in a clown school, the choice was not a difficult one. Being a “fool”—in the traditional theatrical sense—was easy for me, but being a teacher would require at least one more trip around the spiral for me. I somehow could not believe that a teacher might not be an expert, that once undergone, the transformation from student to teacher could not be reversed. Nor had I even considered that a person could be both a teacher and a learner; I had to step away from the brink.

My awareness of how my image of teaching/doing research as forms of learning has changed is central to my new professional identity. It is now clear to me that, in my profession, I must engender an appreciation of the ongoing nature of learning in those with whom I am working, a sense of self-respect and self-reliance in those affected by my efforts, and most importantly perhaps, continue my own learning. In so doing, I will be able to look back at my life’s work with a feeling of great satisfaction. The opportunity to do doctoral work at OISE is an integral part of my progress toward these goals.
The preceding two pages provide key background information about the threads I have woven through my life, a useful point of departure for the reader in her/his attempts to understand what I have sought to accomplish in this dissertation; further, it should be made clear that it is my "grand intention" herewith to bring this ongoing process of synthesis and the "bringing of worlds together" to at least a temporary culmination.

The telling of my story reflects my understanding of what learning is, and my choice of a narrative inquiry frame within which to conduct this investigation reflects the degree to which I value the idea stated by one of Casey's (1993) teacher subjects:

There are a lot of ways of thinking about the world. And I don't think in fact that any one of them is right. We can never know the whole thing. We can never understand it entirely, and which perspective, which lens we look through depends on what . . . our agenda is in life. (p. 76)

My ways of thinking about the world, and the "constructs" (Diamond, 1991) which influence my ideas about learning and teaching, have come to me largely through my "lived experience" (Pinar and Grumet, 1976), as well as through my reflections upon that experience. This is the curriculum of my own life. As I have come into contact with other people's ideas about the issues I have been considering, in the form of study I have undertaken and books I have read, these people and their ideas have become inextricably intertwined with my own, so that where "they" end...
and "I" begin becomes impossible to discern, at times.

Thus, my conception of my journey is heavily influenced by schema (Rumelhart, 1980), multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1988), and sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1978) theories of learning. Based on my personal experience, a profound belief in the "arts as epistemology," (Gallas, 1994) and the role of imagination in learning (Greene, 1995), as well as the transformative power of education (Courtney, 1988; Pinar and Grumet, 1976) can all be clearly seen. As a teacher trying to keep mindful of the social and sociopolitical implications of my work, I have depended a great deal on Greene's (1988) notion of freedom and Simon's (1992) concept of a "pedagogy of possibility," as guides to help keep me on track, as well as to keep me true to my convictions in these domains. And finally, as a future teacher educator, a recognition of the importance of telling our stories (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995; Witherell and Noddings, 1991; and Diamond, 1991) as a key to unlocking our potential for continuing development as educators, and for expanding our awareness of our "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), frames these other aspects of my picture of the world of education.

My approach to writing this dissertation is not intended particularly to rationalize any of the decisions I have made in my personal/professional life over the last twenty years, although it is certain to be construed as such by those who may question some of those decisions. I will concede that my laying out the history of my intellectual development is an effort to make sense of my behavior for myself, and to explain the connections I see in it in ways deemed appropriate to those who must
judge my fitness for passage into the community of "doctors of philosophy." But it is not simply my goal to be right in the positivist sense, even if I thought "being right" were an absolute possibility; I frankly never expect to arrive at such a destination.

It is more important to me to put my ideas "on the table" so they can be analyzed, discussed, picked apart, and--in some sense, at least--seen for what they are in the context of "where they are coming from." As Reinharz (1992) says, "Researchers who adopt this view draw on a new 'epistemology of insiderness' that sees life and work as intertwined." This strikes me as a far more intellectually honest and useful approach to contributing to humankind's collective knowledge than does ascertaining some absolute fact. In the process of laying out my understanding of what my set of "objective truths" is, in Phillips' (1990) sense--and upon which I base most of my behavior--it is my intention to continue moving at least in the general direction of what I see as "right." In essence, then, I feel most comfortable with "a stance that acknowledges the researcher's position up front, and that does not think of objectivity and subjectivity as warring with each other, but rather as serving each other." (Reinharz, 1992, p. 263.)

The spiral journey I have traveled to get here, the story I have to tell are hardly conventional ones, in one sense. There are not, for example, sections titled "Rationale," "Analysis," "Findings," nor "Conclusions," and yet these pieces are all here. At times, my dissertation reads as "partly informal, engagingly personal, and even confessional (Reinharz, 1992)." Nonetheless, this introduction can, using a different lens, be seen as a rationale, the first three chapters as the context for the
question, the fourth the posing of the question and the data, and the last four chapters cumulatively as constituting the findings, conclusions, implications, and summary. But in keeping with my aesthetic sense of how I should tell this story of what I have learned, I have resisted the temptation to follow the most obvious conventions of this form (i.e., the division of these steps in the dissertation product into such clearly marked parts), precisely because it does not accurately represent my understanding of what I have learned in this inquiry. Instead, I have conceived of these three main sections as "Where I have been;" "Where/Who I am now" and "Where I wish to go from here;" as I shall explain in the later chapters, it is a very "actorly" approach to becoming a Ph.D.

Therefore, in the reading of this dissertation, I ask the reader to keep in mind the following words of Pinar and Grumet (1976):

Approaches to curriculum are too often drawn to one pole of the dialectic or the other. Too often those charged to design educational curriculum flee from paradox, from ambiguity, from self-report to mechanistic and analytic descriptions of the process of education . . . Thus, to talk of education as the dialogue of a man and his world is not to break down this complex interaction into separate parts, subjecting each to a distinct isolated analysis. Nor are we describing education as a magical transformation, a metamorphosis of self into the forms of the world. Educational experience is a process that takes on the world without appropriating that world, that projects the self into the world without dismembering that self, a process of synthesis and totalization in which all the participants in the dialectic simultaneously surpass their identities and surpass themselves. (p. 36)

The conclusion I see emerging most clearly from this study is that there is no definite separation between who I was before my thesis journey began, and who I am as a result of it, although a transformation has certainly occurred along the way. I am
committed now to revisiting my interest in theater and in performance to see how I can consciously apply the knowledge I gained during my acting training, and how I might utilize the view of the world I developed during the period in which I mainly identified myself professionally as an actor, in the context of my current career as an educator. But part of the transformation I have undergone in this process is reflected in the voice I use to describe my experiences, the "register shifts" which occur as the story which follows unfolds. These, too, are obvious, yet not always clearly demarcated changes; they move from a fairly colloquial description of my early life history, through the narrative style of a novelist, to the more academic registers of scholarly written discourse.

The results of trying to bring my acting to bear on my transformed self have been satisfying, so far, in certain ways; superficially, there has been the enjoyment of my classroom "performances" as a teacher, based on a very conscious awareness of myself as entertainer for my students. But at a deeper level, what I was attracted to (but fearful of as a new teacher in the high school classroom) was the potential for seemingly complete freedom and creativity in the design and control of the workspace, over the activities to be conducted there, and over how my instructional objectives were to be achieved. This for me was reminiscent of my experiences of freedom on stage: an exhilarating blend of discipline, inspiration, and intuition.

One of my first awakenings, therefore, was the realization that the freedom was far from complete; as with Greene's (1988) idea of what freedom means, it needed to be exercised with an awareness of a particular social context. Perhaps it
was simply a matter of anxiety about exercising a more complete kind of freedom, due largely to the many kinds of pressures and fears a relatively untried teacher feels. In any case, I felt that my first year teaching in a Central California high school was a failure in many respects. While this assessment is partly a result of a tendency I had developed--originating in my years as a professional actor--to be "my own worst critic" (an inclination which eventually spoiled my enjoyment of acting for me, incidentally) and partly from my feeling a lack of control over the circumstances in which I found myself, I felt the need to bring everything I knew and understood to bear on trying to figure out what went wrong. Hence, my desire to bring what I perceived as my strengths (as a performer) to bear on my weaknesses (as a classroom teacher), and the basis for this inquiry.

Doing so has required a Herculean effort, in an almost literal way. Indeed, I have conceived of what I am trying to accomplish as bringing several worlds together in a very physical sense, provoking images of Atlas carrying the world on his shoulders, with all the burdensomeness and strain which that image conveys. Lest this sound too self-pitying, it should be noted that this is a task I have always chosen for myself, and that I get as much out of it (in the way of personal satisfaction) as I accomplish for others, in the process; it is not purely altruistic. In social interactions and in community groups of which I have been a part, I always seek to build bridges between participants, to open doors; I am by nature a consensus builder. As I have also suggested, I do it in my efforts to bring together the worlds of educational theory and practice, in the present effort to integrate the telling of my story with the more
traditional rhetorical forms required in a doctoral dissertation, and probably most importantly, I do it in my attempts to synthesize the array of professional and personal influences which have been part of my formal and informal education into a coherent, plausible whole.

When I do this kind of integrating work, it almost always requires the breaking down of walls, of often artificial differences which cause people to focus on the differences themselves rather than on the commonalities which might inform and unify the elements or people involved. It is the same sort of impulse required by an actor trying to prepare a character which s/he conceives of as alien or "other;" the trick becomes to find one's way into the character (or conversely, to find those seemingly "alien" qualities within oneself). In the course of developing group presentations for classes taken at OISE, for example, I have had the psychic, intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic satisfaction of integrating many roles I have played (and usually enjoyed playing) in the past: teacher, mediator, producer, student, performer, child, friend, colleague, and even father.

For one of my first classes at OISE (David Booth's course, "Arts and Education"), my collaborators and I crafted a presentation in which the lines--between the improvisation and the presentation, the actors and the audience, the teachers and the learners, the creators and the viewers, the spoken word and the other media therein presented/discussed, the play and the play within the play--were intentionally blurred. In a similar way, the stages of my development documented here are not sequential or distinct, and the order in which my story unfolds does not always neatly
correspond to the chapters or sections of the dissertation. In one sense, my entire
to the chapters or sections of the dissertation. In one sense, my entire
journey can be seen as a "blurring of disciplines," as the relating of it represents a
"blurring of genres" (Reinharz, 1992).

At the beginning of page iii of this introduction, I stated that I would make an
effort to bring to "at least temporary culmination" the process of reflection and
integration that the occasion of this dissertation has helped to make possible. This is,
indeed, an arbitrary stopping point, made convenient by my status in my degree
program. But the process, as noted, will only momentarily stop here. Its threads do,
in fact, weave themselves through my other professional experiences, and in the long
run will do so throughout my career as an educator, whether I choose to acknowledge
this or not. These threads cross--and over time obliterate--the distinction between my
work towards the Ph.D and the work of my entire professional life; it is all, ultimately,
of a piece.
Chapter 1: Where I have been and what it was like there

"I never let my schooling interfere with my education."

--Mark Twain

Developing my political consciousness

I was a "red diaper" baby. If the term is unfamiliar, it means I was born to a generation of parents in the U.S. who positioned themselves quite far to the left of the spectrum in their political opinions, at a time when it was not considered dangerous or inherently un-American to do so (i.e., the period between the end of World War I and the end of the Great Depression immediately preceding World War II--roughly from 1920 until 1940).\(^1\) Contrary to what the Dies Committee in the U. S. House of Representatives of the late 1930's and early 1940's, its offspring (the House Unamerican Activities Committee), or the Army-McCarthy hearings of the early 1950's seem to have presumed, this did not mean I read Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* as my first school primer.

Because my parents were driven "underground" by the abovementioned mentalities and witchhunts, in terms of officially being willing to be labeled Communists or dogmatically following any party line, they simply did what they could to promote what they saw as the ideals underlying their left-wing politics: social justice, equality, the right to opportunity regardless of class or race. Their ideology

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\(^1\) For a fascinating ethnographic/biographical sketch of some of the individuals who were the parents of "red diaper" babies (and of their nonparental contemporaries), a viewing of Warren Beatty's movie, *Reds*, is highly recommended. Beatty, who also starred in and produced the film, won an Academy award for Best Director for *Reds*, in 1981. (Bergan, Fuller, and Malcolm, 1994).
was based on a definition of freedom closely akin to that of Maxine Greene (1988), who asked, "Does not one have to act on one's freedom along with others [italics added]--to take the initiative, to break through some boundary? (p.3)"

Greene goes on to define freedom in a way which includes another tenet central to my understanding of the concept:

. . . [F]reedom ought to be thought of as an achievement within the concreteness of lived social situations rather than as a primordial or original possession. We might, for the moment, think of it as a distinctive way of orienting the self to the possible, of overcoming the determinate, of transcending or moving beyond in the full awareness that such overcoming can never be complete. (pp. 4-5)

Simultaneously, because my parents and many of their contemporaries who shared their view of the American political situation wanted to see the improvements they worked for start to manifest during the lifetimes of their own offspring, they kept a watchful and healthy eye to surviving in a social and economic environment for a fairly steady period of about twenty years (roughly 1940-1960) riven by a collective American paranoia² about subversion by these "Commies." Anachronistically, using the jargon of the 60's and 70's, one might have accused my parents and their likeminded compatriots of their time of "selling out," but I have never considered that

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² While there was a small, viable, and growing Communist Party in the U.S. during the 1920's and 1930's which (among many other things) advocated the overthrow of the government, most historians would agree that it never became a serious threat to the stability of American society or the U.S. government. By the beginning of World War II, the left in the U.S. had become so fragmented and factionalized by infighting, the Roosevelt administration's "New Deal" programs, and the start of World War II that any threat it may have come to pose had been effectively eliminated. The activities of the legislative committees mentioned above contributed greatly to the final destruction of effective nominally Communist political activity in the twentieth century, as these committees harassed and punished many non-Communist leftist activists through blacklists and efforts to condemn many through "guilt by association." (See Vaughn, 1972, for example, for an account of the Hollywood blacklist and related events during this period.)
they might have done so at all.

"Selling out" was an expression only my own contemporaries, the youth of the 60's and 70's, could afford to bandy about, and it was usually reserved for identifying our own peers who were beginning to start families of their own and thereby reproducing second and/or third generations of the American middle class. We could afford such cynicism because few of us had been required to reconcile the conflicting ideals of making a better world for the longer term while constantly having to face the more immediate needs of our own children--of meeting the day-to-day demands of getting food on the table and clothing to keep ourselves and our loved ones warm.

Even though I was an enthusiastic participant in the countercultural movement which coined this expression--or at least this particular use of it (that is to say, as a white middle class, well-educated young man with effectively unlimited social and economic potential), I am no longer preoccupied with how to avoid "selling out," nor with whether I have in fact done so. In the words of Popeye, "I yam what I yam." I have had to reconcile the issue of "selling out" on a more immediate basis already in my life, in order to be at peace with myself and maintain my self-respect.

It is interesting that I should still feel the need to address this issue more than twenty years after it was a very central concern to my considerations about major personal life decisions, like career, personal relationship, and other situational choices which I was facing then; I suppose it is a measure of how important it was for me then, and continues to be for me now. But to me, accepting what "I yam" does not at all imply that I am impervious to nor uninterested in self-change or social change;
on the contrary, I still find myself grappling with these issues--albeit on a more theoretical/philosophical level--possibly because in wanting to work for freedom in the sense that Greene (1988) has defined it, as an educator for a "pedagogy of possibility" (Simon, 1992), while simultaneously wishing to have the personal growth experiences and satisfaction that have come from having a family of my own, I have realized that there are many ways in which I both contribute to the reproduction of the existing social order and can have some impact on transforming it into a more equitable, socially just one.

For what it's worth, though, I am also sure that I have been "bought" and "sold" many times by now, according to some, and must be considered as "Red" as the flag of the former USSR by an equal number of others. Nor in certain respects and at certain times would I disagree entirely with either assessment; nonetheless, the matter is still often in the forefront of my awareness, and like my parents, I often find myself struggling to maintain my social and political values as I negotiate the daily personal professional pressures to which I sometimes feel exposed. As a result, I have a great deal of respect and admiration for my parents and other like-minded people of their generation for having braved the "white water rapids" in the rivers of American public sentiment that surely threatened to overwhelm them at times, with only their ideals to cling to. This notion of "bucking the tide"--of being a rebel, in this sense--is a powerful central image in my construal of who I am today, therefore, and it is one I identify with greatly as I endeavor to define my own roles as citizen, educator, husband, and parent.
Ironically, it is a dimension of my identity that I simultaneously label my "American-ness," and one of the few aspects of my nationality in which I am willing to allow myself actually to take pride. At times, in the nation called the United States of America, there has been a tradition of rebelliousness, and as a result it has—in the eyes of some historians—become one facet of the composite American persona with which many Americans identify. Undoubtedly, this has something to do with the birth of the nation being a rejection of and separation from the British Empire (even though it was initiated by a very "well-heeled" group of rebels, some of whom remained monarchists even after the Revolutionary War). This rebellious, independence-minded, individualistic aspect (or is it, in fact, a delusionally universalizing discourse which allows me to identify with this dimension of the "collective American persona"?) has, in one reading of U.S. history, been manifested in such historical events and social movements since the Revolutionary War as the War Between the States of 1861-65 (i.e., the Civil War), the growth of the labor movement in response to the excesses of many powerful industrialists during the period from the start of the Industrial Revolution through the 1920's, the Civil Rights movement in the mid-late 1950's and the 1960's, the progressive growth of resistance and social protest in response to American foreign policy with respect to the conduct of the Vietnam War as the 1960's progressed into the early 1970's, and even the much publicized "taxpayer's rebellion" of the 1980's and early 1990's. To the extent that such a construal of what it means to me to be "an American" is valid, then, it is an explanation of the context in which I can identify myself as being both an American
and a rebel, knowing full well that there are many other perspectives from which this might seem at best an unlikely combination of attributes.

I do not mean "rebel" here primarily in the negatively connotative sense of the word (i.e., as one who is motivated to destroy what one comes into contact with, institutionally speaking, or "to go against the grain" purely for the sake of doing so). But I have no absolute philosophical quarrel with the destruction of social and institutional obstacles to what are perceived as more worthwhile objectives; in fact, I have been taught in my teacher training that "critical thinking" --a concept to which I closely link the notion of rebel I have been describing here-- is a highly desirable objective to pursue with learners. I would agree that it is so, just as I would agree that "teaching against the grain," as Simon (1992) has called it, is an often worthwhile and necessary (if at times seemingly futile) endeavor.

But as I did even in the late 1960's and the early 1970's, when I was a conscientious objector to the Vietnam war, I also believe deeply in nonviolence as a mode of engaging in constructive socially responsible action. I feel the need to limit the way I identify with being a rebel these days in other senses as well, primarily for two reasons that I can identify. In getting older and having "bought into" the institutions of power in our society more deeply, I feel less urgency about (and am

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3 I am well aware that the labels "rebel" and "American" are incompatible for some, and understand how--in an era in which the United States is the major superpower in the world--the label "American" symbolizes the status quo. I am simply attempting to explain how I link the two labels, right or wrong, in the construction of my own identity. I ask the uncomfortable reader to bear with me for the moment with respect to these characterizations, and to turn her/his attention to the sociohistorical context in which I have framed the terms, instead; I believe it is a plausible linkage, from a sociohistorical perspective which is situated inside the U. S., just as I can see it to be highly problematic from outside it, in many other parts of the postmodern world and/or in other senses (i.e., economically, politically, etc.).
therefore less attracted to) this destructive connotation of the term. Also, practically speaking, because I do believe in nonviolent change and have great faith in my reasoning and powers of persuasion, I am sensitive to the need not to undermine the possibility of collaboration with those in the professional educational community and in the general public who hold the notion of rebellion in less esteem than I.

My identification with rebellion and with being a rebel are related primarily to the sense in which rebellion is seen as a means of engaging in constructive social change. Therefore, one facet of this political aspect of my identity is a fascination with getting involved in *improving* upon the social environment I encounter. Insofar as I am able to determine what constitutes "improvement," this overrides and supersedes any interest I may have in destroying what does not seem to be working. As a result, I often find myself getting deeply involved in those social institutions where much of the work of reproducing the social order and/or influencing its transformation seems to be taking place (e.g., the public schools).

I also consider myself to be quite self-confident and very privileged. Perhaps this is because I was raised in what most psychologists would call a very secure home environment, with a lot of parental support (morally, psychologically, emotionally, etc.), or because I was the beneficiary of all the "goodies" that come from being the baby of my family. Or possibly it is because I have been blessed with a particularly fortunate combination of genetic, cultural, socioeconomic influences on who I am (i.e. which "theater" I find myself "performing" in). Regardless of the explanation, my self-confidence and good fortune have both played important roles
in the success I have had in my life so far.

As a result of a complex interplay between these factors (i.e., who "I yam" and the social situation in which I find myself, however defined), and others of which I may not be aware, I have often noticed that I am relatively adept at moving quickly from peripheral to central participation in those causes and the inner workings of those institutions to which I am drawn. In short, I have "bought into" many systems for which (as a 70's antiwar and civil rights activist) I once had considerable disdain, while being fully cognizant of the fact that one person's "buying in" may well be another's "selling out."

Earlier, I stated that this dilemma has taken on a theoretical/philosophical quality in the more recent years of my life, and I want to describe it in these terms now. As one hears often these days in human interest stories published periodically in American in popular magazines, newspapers, and broadcast journalism, the challenge for so many of my countercultural contemporaries who were so deeply committed to social change twenty years ago, as much as it is for me, seems to be maintaining a balance between--and acknowledging the dialectic tension inherent in--clinging to our ideals while attempting to have optimal influence in making the institutions in which we participate more democratic, more egalitarian, and more socially just.

This is essentially the same "tightrope" our parents walked which I tried to describe earlier. Obviously, there are troublesome contradictions in efforts to be both inside (as participant in) and outside (as critic of) these institutions, because aspects
of my involvement—whether motivated by revolutionary ideals or not—help to reinforce the viability, the stability, and the immutability of the larger frameworks which support the institutions themselves. Nonetheless, walking this tightrope and striking this balance in my professional work is precisely what I am committed to achieving.

This thesis is not primarily about justifying my choices about where I have "positioned myself" (hooks, 1994; Simon, 1992, Gallop, 1995, and others) with relation to these institutions, although as an academic treatise on this and related issues, it will of necessity have justificatory overtones at times. In order to earn my doctorate, I need to rationalize my position, which is deemed legitimate yet somewhat peripheral (Lave and Wenger, 1991) by those scholars to whom I am "petitioning" for that status, while acknowledging that I am, in fact, still at the periphery of the community of scholars into whose midst I wish to move. I make no bones about the fact that I have an eye to moving toward the center of this community, as opposed to being completely uninterested in it or on the periphery. But I do feel that I am aware of my position, and of many of the important ways in which my status both privileges and constrains my perspective; I also believe that being aware of one's position in the social order is a critical part of striking the balance to which I referred above. Most of the justificatory rhetoric in the current work, however, will be aimed more at explaining how the theoretical underpinnings I have synthesized have been linked together so that I could arrive at my particular point of view about the state of educational affairs in general, as well as about ways the subfields of education I have chosen to focus on (e.g., second language education, multicultural education,
pedagogy) and our conceptions/perceptions of them can be reformed or "improved upon."

Still, I do not feel that I can either "tune in, turn on, and drop out," as Timothy Leary (1968) used to admonish those of my generation to do, or "wait until the Revolution comes" (two of the alternatives those of us who identified with the counterculture of the late 1960's-early 1970's felt we were faced with in confronting the social issues of that time), when confronted with the crises that need to be addressed in the culturally diverse environments which most North American public schools have become in the last twenty years. Circumstances call me to action, no less than if I were responding to a "vocation," in the religious sense of the word; I feel an obligation to bring my talents, passions, intellect, and my position of privilege to bear in providing learning environments which allow students of color, of economic poverty, of the opposite sex, and those whose first language is not English, those adolescents who are awakening to the realization that they do not share the majority's sexual preferences, those who have incapacities which alter or limit the ways in which they can access learning, to optimize and equalize their educational opportunities.

My early interest in acting

Besides being a rebel, another important identity I bring to my work as a teacher is being an actor. I have been performing since I was seven years of age and was a frequent member of audiences before then, thanks to my parents. It was not until I was ten, though, that I really became conscious of performing as a deliberate
act, when I went to a Whittier Junior Theater production of *Mr. Popper's Penguins*, and left thinking that it would be fun to "be up there" myself. I had to lie in order to become part of the cast of *Winnie the Pooh*, because I was only ten, and I was supposed to be twelve. So, my life of crime and in art have approximately the same origins. I was cast as "Wol," the owl who is supposed to be the wisest animal in the Hundred Acre Wood, primarily because he was the one who knew how to spell. This identity has had major implications for my view of the world as it has developed over the years; it is discussed in considerable detail in subsequent chapters of this work.

The history lesson: My interest in the social sciences and the humanities

"No es justo, no es justo, no es justo." [It isn't fair, it isn't fair, it isn't fair ."]

--the bulletin board in Martin Davidson's Spanish 4 classroom, 1970-71

(and probably for years before)

One day when I was in tenth grade and, feeling exasperated after I had been studying for a while, I went to complain about this fact to my father. "Why is it so important to learn about history?!" I asked him. "It's all about dead people and the past. I don't understand what any of this has to do with what I want to know about!"

His response was quite direct. "You'll never understand anything about how you got where you are right now, much less about where you might end up, without studying history. And without this knowledge, you're destined to make the same mistakes that have been made time and time again." There was a double message

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4 It is precisely for this reason that no one realizes he can't even spell his own name, which should be spelled "O-w-I," of course. I have yet to figure out the symbolic significance of this casting in my own life.
in my father's advice; one part of this message, obviously, was that the importance of knowing history was not to be underestimated, but the second was that it would be a great waste of my time and talents to expend them repeating past human folly. By knowing "my" history, I could avoid contributing to the accumulation of human mistakes of which it was comprised, and to the collective human misery which was a certain consequence of such ignorance.

By the time I arrived in Martin Davidson's Spanish classroom a couple years later, therefore, I also considered the expression on his bulletin board cited above to be an invitation to try to make "it" fair, or at least more so. (By "it" I thought he must mean the world, although he told us at one time that the saying was a sort of stock response he kept in plain view so that, instead of having to respond verbally, he could mutely point to it when a student came to him to complain of the way he ran his class, or about a grade they had received on the latest test). It seemed to me that it must be a sort of guiding proverb for him, a sort of resigned philosophical acceptance of "the way things are." It has become an aphorism I live by, too, in a way, but more because of the perennial challenge it places in front of me than because I have come to accept it as a fact.

I remember sitting in his class on many occasions, enjoying his sense of humor and even learning some Spanish in the process, reflecting on the degree to which his bulletin board was a reflection of his own cynicism about teaching. I was fascinated by the split I saw in the double image of Mr. Davidson as a teacher (i.e., as an authority figure) and as a person; even then, I was always intrigued to see if
I could discern the individual behind the masks of authority the teachers and administrators at my school wore. The person I saw and knew of in this last year of studying Spanish was a graduate of UC Berkeley (which at the time epitomized everything a university should be, in the wake of the "Free Speech Movement" born there in 1965), a former track star now somewhere beyond middle age, with a shock of white gray hair sticking up-and-outward toward us from just above his forehead and a bemused grin virtually pasted onto his face. He got a kick out of making wisecracks about our town's "favorite son," Richard Nixon (now residing in the White House), whenever he thought he could "slip one in" sufficiently laden with double-meaning, so that he could deny any malicious intent if he should be "called on the carpet" for it.

It was partly the fact of his being a Berkeley graduate (which I naturally assumed meant he must be a radical of some kind, given the history of the previous five years there), I suppose, and partly his enjoyment of a good joke at Nixon's expense which led me to think he was probably one of those "rare birds" in my hometown: a political ally to my parents and me. This undoubtedly contributed to my perception that I was being personally challenged by his faded bulletin board, too. Never mind that Berkeley, previous to 1965 (when Mr. Davidson assuredly must have attended), was also the paragon of well-established academic tradition (and to this day still is, within many disciplines and in many quarters), or that he may have simply been a political middle-of-the-roader who had a great sense of humor and couldn't resist, as a target for his jests, the sometimes grotesquely buffoon-like public persona
"Whittier's most famous citizen" projected. But what was important at the time (and is significant to me now, as I consider more fully what good teaching is about) was that I projected onto Mr. Davidson the image of someone to whom I could relate. It is not insignificant in the context of the larger story of this thesis that I enjoyed doing well in his class and I learned a lot about Spanish and the wonderful variation that exists in Spanish-language culture beyond that which is dominated by the Castilian standard variety.

The lessons take hold

In 1970, at the beginning of my senior year of high school, I was student body vice-president and had the chance to give a speech to virtually the entire school's student population at the "Welcome Assembly," an event which occurred every year at the end of the first week back in school after summer vacation. In my speech, I compared having to return to school after this period of relative freedom--and having to cut my hair in such a way that it conformed with what seemed to many of my friends and me the school's antiquated dress code--to returning to prison after a furlough.

This was distinctly and definitely offensive to the school's principal, and apparently to many others in the administration and those in the guidance office charged with enforcing the code; I was suspended from school for three days "or until a parent-principal conference could be held." I had not considered that I might so hurt certain people's feelings (or was it actually that I had the audacity to threaten their
authority?) that they might summarily abridge my right to freedom of speech in this particular manner. After all, I was neither declaring nor suggesting that students' should disobey the dress code. I was merely being highly vocal and visible in my opposition to its existence, a right which I had learned in my study of the U. S. Constitution in the eighth grade and again in U. S. History in the eleventh, was "inalienably" mine.

My parents were outraged that I had been suspended, and came in the very next day, as I recall, to voice their disapproval of the principal's decision. As it turned out, even though the suspension had been a decision he made, Dr. Matthews was not available for them to speak to about this matter on this particular day; instead, they spoke with the assistant vice principal for guidance, who happened also to be the father of my best friend at the school, the student body president. Mr. Espinoza (who, because of my relationship to his son, was also an acquaintance of my parents) explained somewhat sheepishly that the reason for my suspension, as indicated on the official form used for this purpose, was "disagreement with school rules."\(^5\)

My parents and I were somewhat incredulous that Dr. Matthews did not show

\(^5\) Mr. Espinoza had been transferred from an administrative position at another school in the district before the start of this particular school year; it seems I had already established a reputation at the high school—and indeed throughout the district—as a "radical." This was due partly to my long history of vocal opposition to the dress code and to the Vietnam War, and partly to my controversial promotion of a district-wide "draft forum" I had organized the previous spring to familiarize male Whittier Union High School District students with their rights and responsibilities in regard to the Selective Service Act for military conscription. His son (my best friend Tim), who had been elected student body president for the year, told me confidentially that he suspected his father had been transferred to his new position as a way of minimizing the likelihood that I would subvert the school either directly through my official actions as a student body officer, or indirectly through my influence with Tim himself. As of the Welcome Assembly, it became evident that the district administration—if this was their purpose, in fact—had overestimated Mr. Espinoza's ability to intimidate me through the mere fact of his presence.
up to explain his own disciplinary action, and while to this day I suspect Mr. Espinoza
must have shared our incredulity and was uncomfortable about having been put in
this position by his superior, there was ultimately no satisfactory resolution to the
matter other than a signing and bureaucratic filing of forms. When asked to explain
the principal's position beyond his straightforward explanation of the rule to which I
objected, all Mr. Espinosa was able to offer was a shrug. All the furor surrounding this
event seemed to amount to a face-saving gesture on the principal's part, with respect
to the other school staff; I went back to class, my parents went back to work, and the
school went back to business as usual.

There was little doubt on the part of anyone involved in the events surrounding
my Welcome Assembly speech and my subsequent suspension that Dr. Matthews'
handling of this situation called into question the principal's judgement as the chief
administrator at the school, and of his priorities as agent and representative of the
school's potential for undemocratic silencing of its students points of view. To this
day, there is still uncertainty in my own mind about how this situation might have
been handled more gracefully than it was; while I remember hearing rumors circulate
at the time of certain school authorities' being dismayed that my parents would
encourage such disruptive behavior on my part by standing up to Mr. Espinoza, and
indirectly thereby to Dr. Matthews, for years later when I returned to Whittier to visit,
I would hear stories about my former principal's erratic behavior there.

The events following the suspension were emblematic of my parents'
disagreement about the priorities of the school with regard to the dress code and
such related policies, priorities which my parents saw as anti-libertarian and counterproductive to what they thought should be the school's agenda in a democratic society. But their sometimes vocal opposition was not borne of either an outright rejection of the school's *raison d'être* as they perceived it, nor of a general lack of faith in the goals of public education. This realization was a critical part of my analysis in comparing the experiences and educational atmosphere that existed for me when I was in high school with the ones I would encounter as a classroom teacher more than twenty years later.

Mark Twain's quote at the opening of this chapter became "words to live by" for me, as much as a reflection on my past encounters with formal education; I used the quote, in fact, as the cover page on the high school graduation announcements I asked a friend to help me create through a silkscreen and construction paper process, and it served as a final thumbling of my nose at those within the system who felt smugly assured that "Tom will fall into line, sooner or later." My friends, family, and the allies I had among the faculty at Monte Claro High School seemed to get a kick out of it.
Chapter 2: The long and winding road: My educational journey continues

It was with an awakening sense of education as a journey and as an exploration, with the commensurate knowledge that I was both leaving some parts of myself behind and embracing or opening myself to worlds that were yet to make themselves known to me, that I began my undergraduate career at the University of California at Santa Cruz, in the Fall of 1971. In fact, it was in my first quarter there that I took a course in general astronomy where I was exposed to astronomic history for the first time. I also discovered Kuhn's (1962) notions of scientific revolution and paradigmatic shift in a course called "Modern Society and Social Thought" during that first term. I wrote my first college paper for that course on "Man's Illusion of Central Position," which I recognize in retrospect as the first in a long series of attempts to reconcile the development of my sense of self and and my sense of social responsibility in my life and in my academic career.

I am somewhat amazed, as I look back on that work, to see the seeds of ideas that would eventually lead to a dramatic transformation in my thinking, away from what I now see as an overemphasis (or a unidimensional emphasis) on politics as the key to social transformation, to a more multifaceted, culturally/historically-based, multidisciplinary kind of understanding about the way meaningful social change occurs. This was a crossroads for me, at which what first appeared to be a detour proved to be a path to self-discovery for me, and to a soul-searching process of discovering "what I wanted to be when I grew up," in the form of trying to determine what I should major in as an undergraduate. The struggle to define this for myself led
me through my four years at the University of California and has continued to lead me well beyond that period.

**The Epistemology of Acting**

When I first decided that perhaps acting was my vocation (at the time I had to declare a major at the beginning of my third year of undergraduate studies), I was torn; I had--over the first two years at university--gradually moved from being officially "undeclared" to thinking I wanted to be a politics major, then an economics major. I did not finally decide to major in theater arts until the second term of my junior year. The whole time I was transforming myself into a professional thespian in my mind, I remained officially "undeclared" on paper. It was an agonizing process for me, largely because of a deep "pragmatic streak" in me. This aspect of my personality influenced a wide range of decisions I made, particularly about such life-determining issues as the choice of a profession (with which I equated the choice of a major course of study).

My father died during my senior year in high school, when I was seventeen, and I still remember clearly that one of his last bits of advice before he passed away was one I took to heart and which seems to me to have permanently transformed my own "ways of knowing." Of course, I'll never know for sure whether I'm correct in this; it is equally possible I would have made the same choices I made about many other important life decisions if I had not chosen to attend the university he thought would be best suited to me. In any case, at the time I applied for admission to the University
of California, the University's admissions policy dictated that you could only prioritize your preferences among as many of the eight undergraduate campuses as you wished to be considered for, and apply to your first choice; you could not apply to more than one.

I had assumed since the summer of 1965, when I was twelve and my family spent the summer in Berkeley while my father studied Black History, that I would attend UC Berkeley. It was politically exciting and it was far enough away from home that I could enjoy the freedom that went with striking out on my own for the first time, a rite of passage fairly common to many middle class teenagers in this era who had been tracked into "college prep" classes during their high school years and managed to do well with them. The San Francisco Bay area as a whole--of which Berkeley is a part--was teeming with the excitement related to the vibrant free speech, counterculture, and anti-Vietnam War movements. All of this appealed to me greatly as the perfect antidote to too many years subjected to "white bread culture" in largely Republican, middle- to upper-middle-class, conservative Whittier, particularly because I was so interested in leftist politics to begin with.

My father certainly had never voiced any objection to Berkeley--as many other parents in Whittier might have--based on its political reputation and image, so I was initially shocked when he counseled me to consider listing the Santa Cruz campus as my first choice. Had I been more conscious of the influence my father's professional interests as a clinical psychologist might bear on such a choice, or remembered that he himself was very interested in alternative models of education
like Summerhill (Neill, 1960), I might not have been so startled that he questioned my choice of Berkeley for the first time at this point, shortly before the application deadline for admission to the UC system.

As it turned out, his concerns about my going there had nothing to do with politics. Berkeley was the original and oldest, and--as it still is today--the largest of the UC campuses, with a population of more than 50,000 students. As he expressed it to me, he was worried that I might get "lost in the crowd," and that instructionally speaking I would not get the individual attention he thought I deserved. He was especially concerned that my individual strengths as a member of such a community would be overlooked in the large classes and overcrowded lecture halls which typified most of the undergraduate education which would be available to me there.

By contrast, UC Santa Cruz was the newest of the nine campuses in the system, having opened six years before I would commence my studies there. It was modeled after the Oxford and Cambridge model of small, clustered, communitarian residential colleges, intended to be villages of academic and intellectual endeavor. Its focus was entirely on undergraduate students and their education; of the 4,500 students then attending, no more than 500 were graduate students. The classes were mostly small seminars with twenty or fewer students. The largest lecture halls seated 120 students and were almost never filled to capacity (except for on the occasional sellout of a Friday night movie showing), and the campus itself was situated on what had until very recently been the spectacular coastal Central California ranch of the Henry J. Cowell estate, which had bequeathed it to the university. It overlooked the
north edge of the Monterey Bay—and the then still relatively sleepy little town of Santa Cruz—from a perch in the midst of cow pastures and coastal redwood trees. It was idyllic in many ways, and would prove to be the perfect place for me to begin my education. In 1970, before the California and U.S. economies had yet been affected by the pressures resulting from the global energy crisis which surfaced a few years later, I may have selected the academically "tried and true" of Berkeley over the as yet unproven experimental college, "U.C.S.C.," but under the circumstances I faced at that time, I deferred to my father's opinion.6

It was not that Santa Cruz did not have a good reputation in its own right; at the time I applied, admissions were at their historical peak of competitiveness, and it had a reputation as the "Stanford" of public universities, in terms of how difficult it could be for some to get in. But I happened to fit the scholastic, demographic, and intellectual—and, I suspect, sociopolitical—profile of what they seemed to be at the time for membership in their student body very well. Again, while this may not have been true in another, later time, it was true at the end of my high school career and the start of my undergraduate years.

6 It was not until I arrived to begin my residence there the following fall that I found out that "U.C.S.C." actually stood for "Uncle Charley's Summer Camp," as it was referred to, both affectionately and derisively by its attendees, and exclusively derisively by its detractors. For members of the campus community itself, this was not just a comment on the type of student that populated the place or the ambience there, but also a characteristically irreverent reference to Charles Hitch, the president of the University at the time of the campus's founding.

7 Almost certainly, Stanford University, 40 miles north of Santa Cruz, was the most difficult private school to get into west of Boston, where Harvard University "ruled the roost." The highly-ranked public universities—Berkeley, Michigan, Ohio State, and (as mentioned) at this particular point, Santa Cruz—were generally not quite as "discriminating," if only because they were public universities, and therefore committed to different admissions criteria (and to serving a different constituency).
The point here is not to exercise bragging rights, on my part, if I have any basis for doing so in the first place. Instead, I am emphasizing the quality of what I had access to, in terms of academic resources—the faculty, facilities, the uniqueness of this particular place and of this particular time in its history, the creativity and brilliance of my own peers at Santa Cruz, at a very nominal cost. In essence, I had what amounted to a very elite and sheltered—in the sense that I operated largely protected from the need to preoccupy myself with the "everyday cares" of the world—undergraduate education, at bargain basement prices. Nonetheless, as is so often the case, I did not appreciate this fully at the time. The rising economic tide of middle class American wellbeing was at its highest point, and few if any of us realized yet that it was about to recede. Like so many of the surfer boys and girls who made the beaches of Santa Cruz internationally famous as one of the great surfing spots in the world, I was content to "ride the wave," and enjoyed my vantage point atop this "city on a hill\(^8\) as a perfect place from which to learn about and reflect upon this world from a safe distance.

The realization of just how isolated my peers at the university and I really were came in the wake of Nixon's 1972 landslide victory in his bid for reelection. While I had been concerned that George McGovern, his Democratic anti-Vietnam War rival, might be in trouble in his bid to win the White House, I was equally certain that the national press's anticipation of a landslide was unwarranted, based on my canvassing for McGovern during the fall, and on my reading of "the situation." As it turned out,

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\(^8\) In keeping with this image, the student newspaper for the campus was called the "City on a Hill Press."
I couldn't have been much more wrong than I was. McGovern carried only the state of Massachusetts and Washington, D. C., giving Nixon a margin in the electoral college of 520 to 17, and the popular vote nationally was nearly as skewed; Nixon received 47 million votes to McGovern's 29 million (World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1973).

In any case, I found myself sitting on my little perch among the redwoods, realizing that the world was not going to cooperate with my plans to change it quite as readily as I had hoped. I was quickly becoming frustrated with the notion of direct political action, even though many of my compatriots and I had played a major role in the preceding ten years in getting Nixon to bring an end to the Vietnam War, albeit an end which was excruciatingly slow and vindictive in its execution. I was becoming steadily more disgusted with the arena in which politics, as I understood it then, took place (i.e., national congressional and presidential politics). "Tricky Dick" (as he was known by many) had survived another indictment of his sometimes questionable behavior--this time in conjunction with his reelection campaign--by temporarily

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9 The "Vietnamization" of the Vietnam War (i.e., the gradual withdrawal of American troops) had started in April, 1969, and it took over two and a half years—until December, 1971—for the Nixon Administration to reduce the U. S. presence in that part of Southeast Asia from 543 million to 184 million troops. It was not until the last ditch efforts to achieve an American victory in the region—through an incursion into Cambodia to cut off North Vietnamese supply lines in April-June, 1970, and the mining of Haiphong harbor "and six other North Vietnamese harbors, in response to the major Communist offensive that followed the breaking off of the Paris peace talks in March, 1972" (Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, 1988), that Nixon faced the likelihood of complete withdrawal. He did this at least partly because of massive and unprecedented anti-U. S. policy demonstrations which were becoming an increasingly regular feature of urban American politics, and because of the upcoming presidential election. The closing of a freeway overpass in the city of Santa Cruz by some of us, who walked onto the freeway and sat down to symbolically and literally halt "business as usual," had been one such action in the "student mobilization" part of this growing popular push to force an end to the war from within the U. S.
sidestepping the innuendo of political "dirty tricks" that appeared to lead directly from the Watergate Hotel to the White House.\(^{10}\)

It was around this time--my second year of college--that, not coincidentally, I began to lose enthusiasm for the idea of getting involved in electoral politics myself. By the time I graduated from high school, I thought I would head in the general direction of politics by getting a degree in politics and going on to law school, and eventually run for political office myself, en route to eventually becoming President of the United States. This was a goal which I had been taught in school to believe "any American boy (sic) could become." My own personal disenchantment with electoral politics was also partly rooted in the horrors of the political assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy in 1968, and in the rioting at the 1968 Chicago Democratic convention. But by 1972 this dismay was in full bloom.

Nixon had been an example of a middle class grocer's son who "made good" in this way; he had gone to law school, then worked his way up through the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Vice Presidency. But in the wake of the Watergate scandal, his public persona was so despicable to so many people (including me), and his ascendancy and demise was so representative of everything that had gone wrong with the American body politic, that his story not only discouraged many of us from an interest in participating, but permanently soured many Americans on any trust they might have had for their elected officials. For

\(^{10}\) It took nearly two years more for Nixon to finally give in to the pressure for his impeachment--stemming from his handling of the response to the investigation of the White House's role in the break-in to the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate hotel--by resigning the presidency in August, 1974.
many--of all political persuasions--those feelings still run strong even now, and I believe they have become a major factor in the ambivalence many Americans feel about the "democratic process," such as it is, in the U.S. today. Whether it was a cause-and-effect relationship, or simply coincidental with the other factors which brought things to pass in such a way, Nixon's political fall signaled the death of a certain naivete in the American public about what it could expect of its government. I was among those who had been shocked out of my innocence in those jarring times. It was not very long thereafter that I lost interest in attending law school, as well.

Still, I was reluctant to dive headlong into acting as an alternative career choice. My pragmatic streak was still firmly intact, and I was having a hard time breaking the news to my mother--who had a strong sense of what was practical in her own right--that I did not want to go to law school. Michael, my eldest brother, was in theater (a stage director, in fact), and had made a reasonable "go of it" up to that point directing small theater productions and companies in various Midwestern and Eastern cities and towns. My elder brother, Andy, was just finishing his undergraduate degree at Cornell University in theater arts and history.

I remember that my mother often confided to me over the phone how worried she was about my brothers being able to make a living. It seemed we talked about it whenever I spoke to her. So I was still not ready to tell her that I was even considering majoring in theater arts, let alone actually doing it. As a result, my first step away from the social sciences was a sort of half-step, in fact; I declared a double
major in economics and theater arts at the beginning of my junior year.

Nonetheless, as I have described, I had begun to become disaffected from direct political change as a way "to make the world a better place to live." I began to look for alternatives. My dabbling in economics\textsuperscript{11} had been one such exploration.\textsuperscript{12} But economics was not satisfying either, because I constantly felt myself alienated by a view of the world which could be reduced to supply-and-demand curves and equations of marginal utility, and which did not connect these—in what to me seemed any but the most demeaning ways—to the lives and aspirations of human beings. The "dismal science" was far too dismal for me.\textsuperscript{13}

As it turned out, by the second term of my junior year, I had also "painted myself into a corner," bureaucratically speaking. I had taken so many credits in theater arts that I either had to major in it (or the infinitely less appealing discipline of economics) or face a protracted stay at UCSC. This was a prospect which struck me as wholly unappealing, in spite of the wonderful experiences I had had there. Most of what I felt I had gained from my time there seemed, as in high school, to have

\textsuperscript{11} I took enough courses in economics to constitute what would have been a "minor" at most other institutions while I was at UCSC, but it was not officially possible to declare a minor field of study there at that time.

\textsuperscript{12} It was in this context, too, that I first became familiar with Marxism and with the notion of economic determinism, an analytical outlook which still heavily influences my thinking about social relations today.

\textsuperscript{13} Ironically, it was at this juncture, facing my decision about what major to declare near the start of my junior year (and while enrolled in both microeconomics and play directing), that I went to meet Doug Dowd, a former economics professor from Cornell, and a friend of my brother's who was then a visiting scholar at UCSC. He loved vaudeville and "soft shoe" dancing, and he suggested that the "theater was a far more respectable place to make a living" than the field of economics, and advised me to choose theater arts as my major. He also confided to me that he wished he had realized it at the beginning of his career, instead of near its end.
happened in spite of my school rather than because of it. In fact, this had been such a challenging time of my life in so many ways, that there were points at which it was all I could do to finish up the four-year program I had started. But somehow I managed.

I remember my standing joke at the time being about how the left half and the right half of my brain seemed to be headed in separate directions at the beginning of fall term, and that by the end of it, the tug-of-war was likely to result in some sort of catastrophic cerebral hemorrhaging. Microeconomics and play directing just seemed like such unlikely bedfellows to me, somehow. As it turned out, I survived the quarter without serious injury. The decision about my career was finally made halfway through my junior year—in the form of the resolution of my protracted internal debate about which academic discipline I should major in—in favor of acting. After promising my economics professors that I wouldn't trouble them any further, I went to the registrar's office and changed my declared major to theater arts.

This did not mean as much in practice as it did on paper, as it turned out; I had already been taking most of my courses in theater or theater-related subjects by this time, and had also been extensively involved in extracurricular student dramatic productions. This was one of the great things about Santa Cruz, and it often caused me to reflect on my father's counsel to attend UCSC rather than Berkeley; he had been right that I would have opportunities at the former which I may never have had.

To be fair, I have since come to feel that this was not really an accurate assessment of the situation, in either case; this thesis stands in testimony to my change of opinion about the influence of my formal education on who I am as a person and as a professional educator.
There was a tremendous amount of encouragement from faculty and a fair quantity of resources available, scattered among the various small colleges, to support student-initiated theater projects. As the Theater Arts Board of Studies had just gained the official status required to be able to offer a major to undergraduates at the start of my career there, these circumstances were salutary to the creation of a very "democratized" theater scene on the campus. I had opportunities to participate in making theater in a wide range of capacities and interesting productions, and to play characters I may never have been given the chance to play in a more established, entrenched program like Berkeley's. I was having a ball, and getting university credit for it a fair amount of the time, too.

On various occasions, I tried to figure out what it was that appealed to me about theater in general--and acting in particular--beyond the obvious gratification that came from direct and immediate audience approval of my work. I also was trying to reconcile a commitment to learn about acting--which I viewed as an exercise in vanity, a self-indulgent, guilt-engendering sort of endeavor--with my parents' and my feeling that, whatever profession I chose, it had to be something that had some great social utility. I felt my career choice had to be made as much for others' sake as for my own, and that it should provide an outlet for the sense of social responsibility which had been a guiding principle in the ethos of my upbringing. There was nothing wrong with the fact that acting felt good to me; I was no puritan, to be sure. But that wasn't enough, either. It would help if I could feel good about it because it did serve
my sense of social responsibility. Fortunately, this possibility seemed within my grasp at UC Santa Cruz, as well.

While I was attending Santa Cruz, one of the faculty in the Theater Arts program was Luis Valdez, most widely known today for having directed two excellent films which have become slightly more famous than cult favorites. The first of these was Zoot Suit. The second was La Bamba, which had a broader mainstream appeal largely because of its subject matter; it was a biographically-based dramatization of the tragico-heroic life of Richie Valens, the 50's Mexican-American rock 'n roll star whose career took off with the flight of his song of the same name to "the top of the charts." Valens was a contemporary (and widely regarded as a peer) of such other popular music favorites of the time as Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis.

What is not as widely known about Luis Valdez is that he got the chances he had in the film industry because of a long and impressive vita in theater. He had been one of the co-founders (along with his brother, Daniel, and several others) of El Teatro Campesino [The Farmworkers' Theater]. "El Teatro," as it was often referred to, had been masterminded by its founders originally as a sort of "agitprop" (i.e., agitation and propaganda) political theater group in Central California, established and based in Delano, California, to develop farmworker and public support for Cesar

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15 It would be anachronistic to call him a "Chicano," as this term did not come into widespread use until some time after his death. Nonetheless, Valdez does portray Valens's life as emblematic of some of the contradictions and crises of identity which historically gave rise to "the Chicano Movement" (Camarillo, 1984); symbolically among the most important of these was the fact that Valens's name had been shortened from Valenzuela, a move his record producers apparently felt was necessary to make him seem more "American," and therefore make his records more marketable. Valdez makes it clear that he feels the record producers' definition of Americanism was racist, exclusionary, and symbolic of the destructive pressures to assimilate which were being felt by most Mexican-Americans up until that time.
Chavez's grape and lettuce boycotts during the early days of Chavez's leadership and founding of the National Farmworkers of America (NFWA), in the early 1960's. Especially in the Southwestern U.S., El Teatro's efforts were instrumental in raising American public consciousness with respect to the plight and treatment of Mexican migrant field workers at the hands of the big growers who controlled most of the agribusiness in the San Joaquin Valley.

Later, as the union became famous in its own right, Luis's and his thespian *compadres'* and *comadres'* passion for theater as a force for personal and cultural exploration vis-a-vis the shaping of identity—in addition to its potency in effecting political and social change—grew. El Teatro went its own way and set up a base of operations in northern Central California, in the mission town of San Juan Bautista, north of Salinas and less than an hour's drive from Santa Cruz. In its early days in San Juan Bautista, Luis used touring productions of El Teatro's work, his teaching at UCSC and San Jose State College, and later the contacts that grew out of his own speaking tours and his membership on the California Arts Council (to which he had been appointed by then-governor Jerry Brown), to gain the resources and other forms of support which were necessary to sustain the group's operation financially during its early independent life.

I know so much about Luis's and El Teatro's history not only because I was

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16 The school has since been renamed "San Jose State University," in light of its official redesignation as a university some years later.

17 It was during this period, too, that he wrote his narrative poem, "Pensamiento serpentina: A Chicano approach to the theater of reality (1971)," to which I alluded in the introduction to the present work.
a student and admirer of his (attracted as I was to his awe-inspiring vitality and zest for creative exploration in the theater), but also because I had been in contact intermittently with him and other members of the company since the start of the grape boycott, when the NFWA first began to seek financial and moral support outside its base in the San Joaquin Valley among the progressive political organizations (like the American Civil Liberties Union) in which my parents and I were involved.  

Around this same time, my elder brothers were having some theatrical success of their own. They had reunited, after Andy had finished at Cornell University and Michael was ready to leave the Boston area. They ended up back in Los Angeles County, where Michael had gotten a grant from the Mark Taper Laboratory Theater project to produce an improvisationally-based piece about the implications for men of the then-burgeoning women's liberation movement. The piece was produced "from scratch" by a small collective of theater artists (i.e., actors, a writer, technicians, and designers, which included my brothers), from improvisations Michael had set up.

As director of the piece, his intention was to get at the real life stories and experiences of men--sometimes in ways which echoed women's experiences of gender discrimination, and sometimes in ways which raised powerful personal questions for these men (and for all men, indirectly) who had been affected by this movement; the idea was to explore the significance of women's liberation generally in the daily lives of all people concerned about equality between the sexes. The play

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18 While neither Luis nor anybody in my family seems to remember for sure that it was him who stayed with us when we hosted two members of El Teatro for a couple of nights during one of their original tours of Los Angeles County, the consensus years later when we finally crossed paths again--and our family lore--now have it that this was the case.
was called *Signals*, and it was basically a supportively pro-liberation movement male-perspective counterpart to the then-emerging women's/feminist theater movement.

At the time, *Signals* was "cutting edge" theater, and represented an exploration of completely new dramatic territory for an all-male company. When I went to see it in Los Angeles, I was very deeply moved by it, particularly at seeing parts of Andy's life unfold on stage which struck me in certain immediate, conscious ways that no real life experience can (except perhaps in retrospect)—perhaps as a result of the raw symbolic purity of certain scenes which is characteristic of all good theater. Shortly after its premiere in Los Angeles, the theater company which had formed out of this production of *Signals*—the "Bear Republic Theater"—moved to its new home. Founded in 1974, by the fall of that year (my senior year at UCSC), my brothers and their entourage were in residence in Santa Cruz County.

So I had two very compelling examples of "theater in social action" right in "my own back yard," by the time I graduated. But between the time I had taken classes from Luis (in my freshman year) and the time my brothers arrived, I had been struggling with my very practical concern about what to major in, and needed to undergo a certain kind of personal transformation to justify the pragmatic decision I had to make; I needed to convince myself that becoming a thespian was "the right thing to do." The examples provided by Luis and by my brothers had led me a long way toward this decision, by persuading me that becoming an actor did not have to be a selfish act, or even necessarily self-indulgent. My brothers' work, in particular, had made the connection between the personal and the socially responsible clearer.
to me, and had made acting more acceptable as a career choice. This was important
to me, because of how deeply I felt I needed to somehow honor my parents'
expectations of me, as I perceived them; it was a powerful motivation for me, for
reasons I am not sure I understand to this day, that I be seen by them as a good and
dutiful son.

My solution (whether I was conscious of it or not as my effort to rationalize
the decision I was in the process of making) was that I began to take stock of my
educational experience at UCSC. My practical streak informed me in no uncertain
terms that I had to make the most of the four year window of educational opportunity
which had opened to me during this period, and my disenchantment with my study
of economics and politics had been equally clear examples to me that I perhaps was
not the "book learning" sort: I needed practical, "hands-on" learning experiences,
which I could integrate into what I would learn nearly twenty years later were my
affective and psychomotor domains, and overall I was craving what I would eventually
learn was called a "holistic education." Theater arts (and performing, together with the
discipline involved in it, in particular), provided this for me.

This proved to be a very satisfying discovery for me personally, as well; it
related both to this growing holistic sense of what education was all about, as far as
I could tell, and to a steadily deepening conviction that direct political action as such
was not the best way to go about having an impact in terms of changing the world.
My experiences with acting and with seeing what I considered "good theater" almost
always combined the deeply felt personal experience of the performers involved and
some sort of "socially responsible" message. It was very reassuring somehow for me to know that I could be both very inwardly directed, in terms of simultaneously focusing on my personal growth (i.e., developing a profound awareness of myself for the purpose of being a more powerful performer and person) and on developing my ability to analyze social relations and communication with others.

The experience of watching my brother, Andy, tell his story in the context of his performance in Signals is but one example (albeit a particularly poignant one for me personally) of what I had come to appreciate about the tremendous potential theater seemed to have, with respect to the ability to penetrate personal defenses and resistances (however consciously they were maintained), and to communicate in ways that political debate or polemical discussion could not. As my study of acting unfolded both at UCSC, and several years afterward in my study of mime and commedia dell'arte, I became fascinated even more with the power of nonverbal theatrical communication--dramatic and comic--in the form of gesture, physical characterization, dance, and pantomime.

Charlie Chaplin was a hero of mine, because as an artist he seemed to personify the penultimate synthesis of consummate performance, social conscience, and universal appeal to which I aspired. I became an avid student of the silent movies, especially comic ones. I was acutely aware of the bittersweet combination of sadness and comedy that characterized most of the great clowns throughout history and identified with them deeply, while envying them for their power to make me alternately laugh and cry. Nothing that could be felt so profoundly could be
miscommunicated, I felt, and its achievement was tied intimately to the common experiences which I felt had to be shared by all human beings. Being a "universalist" from both a political and a spiritual perspective, this seemed at the time to be the territory in which I must work.¹⁹

As I finished my undergraduate education, I gave a silent graduation speech (a "graduation mime," one might say) which, while unconventional in terms of its medium, thematically followed the tradition of addressing the topic "what my education means to me." In this sketch, I used the action of digging with a shovel to symbolize one's life work. The scene opened with me digging a hole ("shoveling away," so to speak), and being interrupted by an imaginary someone interrupting me by tapping on my shoulder. I turned around to face him, and he gave me a cap (the traditional "mortarboard" associated with such occasions, tassle and all) and the gown to go with it.

After donning these and playing with their unusual features a bit in a characteristically Chaplinesque way, this phantom standing before me handed me a parchment scroll, which I looked at quizzically. I began to inspect it more closely, trying to figure out what it was meant for; I first put it up to my eye like a telescope, but could see nothing special through it, and then tried to eat it, but had to spit out the mouthful I had started to chew. Discouraged by these ill-fated efforts, I tried to

¹⁹ I was raised, in fact, in the Unitarian-Universalist faith, and my formal religious education consisted partly of studying the history and traditions of all the major religions of the world, as well as some of the minor ones. This has contributed to an ongoing fascination with spiritual exploration and desire to make sense of my experiences within a spiritually meaningful context in my life, in many forms.
smoke it (a not-too-thinly-veiled reference to one particular dimension of Santa Cruz's public image, as a haven for drugged-out pot-smoking "Upper Class School Children"\textsuperscript{20}), but got only a fit of coughing and a dry throat for my efforts.

I was just beginning to grow impatient with my little scroll and was at the point of discarding it, when I got an idea; I unfurled the parchment, placed my hands one at a time flat on its surface, traced the outline of each one onto it, then cut out the outlined patterns. These I stitched together with a needle and thread so that I had gloves, which I then slipped onto my hands, before picking up my shovel so I could get back to my digging. The assembled audience of professors, graduands, their parents, other relatives and friends--virtually silent up until that point--laughed, roared, and clapped its approval.

I feel even now that this may have been the most successful performance of my acting career (it certainly was up to that date); I had not only said--more eloquently through nonverbal performance than I ever could have in words--what my years at Santa Cruz had been for me, but I had totally captivated the imagination of my audience in the process, as far as I could tell.\textsuperscript{21} This was exactly why I had been so fascinated with theater as a field of study, and for me this culminating experience served as confirmation that I had made the right choice.

\textsuperscript{20} This was the other popularly construed meaning of the campus's acronym, UCSC.

\textsuperscript{21} It may have been that the audience was so captivated because mine was the last of an extended assortment of other "orations" at the ceremony that day, including ten or twelve student speeches, poems, or other types of remarks, so that they were ready for something completely different by the time I started. They had been "primed," in the classic show business sense of the term, if only for a little silence. In any case, I chose to believe it was the brilliance of my pantomime that enthralled them, rather than any such extraneous factors as this.
I left Santa Cruz in search of more training and of a performance identity that was uniquely my own. The training I had received in acting there was fairly minimal, which was understandable in view of the fact that the Theater Arts department was part of a university community which placed more value on a cross-disciplinary, broad-based liberal arts education than on professional preparation. Perhaps for this very reason, I hungered for more. I also felt the need to leave my "nest" because it had become too easy and safe, and because I needed to prove—to myself, as much as anybody, I suppose—that I had talent enough to make it on my own in the "real world," without my brothers' theater's help.

It was not until around this time that I began to consider myself a professional actor, at the age of twenty-one. I continued to do so until I was thirty-seven, when I got fed up with the way artists generally and thespians in particular are treated in American society.22 Before I reached that point, however, I traveled a meandering path in my studies of the performing arts from the study of acting for "serious" theater through singing, mime/pantomime, and clowning. Now, as an educator, I am interested in tracing these and subsequent changes in my professional identity and to try to discover the underlying logic to them that I am sure is there, awaiting this investigation.

22 I recall an article which appeared in the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists union newsletter I had read some time around then which cited an unemployment rate of 97.5% "at any given time" among the rank and file of AFTRA and its sister union, the Screen Actors' Guild (SAG). By my estimation, this effectively meant that unless you happened to be in the top of one-half of one percent of unionized professionals (who worked more or less steadily as performers in the radio, film, and television industries), the likelihood that you were making enough money to live on from your profession was virtually nonexistent. The picture cannot have been any brighter for stage actors, although there was a lot more non-union, subsistence-paying or nonpaying work for people who just wanted to perform on a stage regardless of the circumstances.
It is important to me that I began to identify myself as a professional actor only at this point; it has to do with my appreciation of the ritualistic dimensions of donning an identity that is socially-constructed, an awareness that the profession by which someone chooses to identify her or himself represents a sort of "presentation of self" (Goffman, 1959) or impersonation (Gallop, 1995) that is associated with the public faces we all wear at various points in our day, our week, and in fact throughout our lives. My dissembling the organizers of the Whittier Junior Theater by pretending to be a twelve year old when I was only ten was a perfect example of this, and it had something to do with my decision to postpone becoming a teacher so I could attend clown school, three years after I left Santa Cruz. Most importantly, it ties in with my current definition of teaching, and heavily influences my self-perception and the perceptions of others about who I am as an educator. I call this awareness "the epistemology of acting."
Chapter 3: Bringing my experiences home again

"My Hometown"

I was eight years old and running with a dime in my hand into the bus stop to pick up a paper for my old man. I'd sit on his lap in that big old Buick and steer as he drove through town. He'd tousle my hair and say son take a good look around this is your hometown . . .

In '65 tension was running high, at my high school. There was a lot of fights between the black and white. There was nothing you could do. Two cars at a light on a Saturday night, in the back seat there was a gun. Words were passed, in a shotgun blast. Troubled times had come to my hometown . . .

Now Main Street's whitewashed windows and vacant stores seem like there ain't nobody wants to come down here no more. They're closing down the textile mill across the railroad tracks. Foreman says these jobs are going boys and they ain't coming back to your hometown . . .

Last night me and Kate we laid in bed talking about getting out. Packing up our bags maybe heading south. I'm 35, we got a boy of our own now. Last night I sat him up, behind the wheel, and said son take a good look around this is your hometown.

--lyrics by Bruce Springsteen (1984)

I set off for Los Angeles in December of 1975, six months after I graduated from U.C. Santa Cruz, to earn and save some money to pay for whatever training I was going to get, and after having spent the summer hitchhiking eastward across the
United States and back. While I worked as a waiter at a Mexican restaurant in a shopping mall in western Los Angeles County, where I honed my Spanish (as a result of being the only one there besides the manager who was essentially bilingual) and started exploring the Hollywood scene for acting opportunities in the film industry. I took acting classes from a top-notch "Method acting" teacher there named Nadine Turney, to whom I had been referred by one of the Los Angeles-based actors who had been a member of the company that had created my brothers' production of *Signals*.

This was my first acting training outside the university, and it had a definite professional flavor to it that distinguished it from the training I had gotten at UCSC. The class met in a warehouse in West L.A. not far from my mother's home and a few of the bigger film production companies' (e.g., MGM, Twentieth Century Fox) headquarters. The interior walls were bare except for some drywall and a few pictures that Nadine had taken from scrapbooks, magazines, and newspapers--almost exclusively chosen for their relevance to what she was there for (i.e., turning her students into actors).

A second-hand gold carpet covered a significant percentage of the floor. I was grateful that she kept it reasonably clean, because we spent a fair amount of our time

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23 This was my second such transcontinental sojourn; I had hitchhiked across Canada in the summer of 1972 with two friends of mine. At the time, hitchhiking was a relatively easy, safe, very inexpensive, and particularly attractive way to travel—particularly if like me, you were white, physically large, male, appeared to be "clean-cut," in a particularly adventurous mood, and your head was filled with images of America from such books as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1958), Ken Kesey's *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, and Tom Robbins's (1971) *Another Roadside Attraction*. As Kerouac (cited in Nisker, 1994) once said, "There is nothing nobler than to put up with a few inconveniences like snakes and dust for the sake of absolute freedom." Decidedly, the sugar-plum images which danced in our heads were sometimes overly-romanticized, but not always or entirely.
lying down on it doing various "floor exercises," as they were called, and standing on it, shoeless, to do our scene studies. There was also a bathroom at the back of the space, and a little coffee stand Nadine had pieced together from odd bits of furniture. But beyond these, it was just her and us.

The textbook for our classes was Uta Hagen's Respect for Acting (1973), a title which I later came to view with a certain amount of irony after seventeen years as a professional performer, for reasons indicated at the end of the previous chapter. This ironic sense of the significance of her title had no relevance to my feelings of respect for both Hagen or Turney, however; I grew to appreciate them and the reverence with which they both obviously regarded the art of acting. It was in this setting and context that I was first exposed to Stanislavskii's work beyond merely reading about it, and this contact with it was almost exclusively via Turney's and Hagen's interpretations of it (and less directly through that of Hagen's husband and artistic colleague, Herbert Berghof, whose ideas influenced her book and helped to inspire their work together in the HB Studio in New York).

I came to appreciate and understand the significance of Stanislavskii's ideas about acting on modern theater much more profoundly than I ever had before, and became familiar with his terminology for a range of exercises and activities we undertook in this class, including sense memory, emotional recall, and script—or more precisely, "bit" or "beat"--analysis. The common objective of all these exercises was to be able to reconstruct and recreate as realistically as possible the lives and beings of the characters we portrayed. By deconstructing their personalities as we
understood them based on the information we knew about them from the script, and by bringing our imaginations and our own personal experiences to bear on our character development tasks, we created lives for them that extended beyond the temporal limitations of the script, with the purpose of making the actions and behaviors of our characters plausible and compelling to behold in the context of the action and the world of the play itself.

This work affected me and my understanding of human behavior profoundly; it was visceral, challenging, and fascinating. Hagen's words, "To rebel or revolt against the status quo is in the very nature of the artist," remain powerful in my memory to this very day. At the time I first encountered them, though, they reassured me that I had made the right choice vis-a-vis my linking politics and theater in the particular way I had, and made me feel more comfortable about "indulging in" such deeply personal work.24

I saved money from my waiting job while I studied "the Method," and even won a car on a television game show that year; I used the proceeds from these the next year, when I found myself working on an MFA in Acting at the School of Theatre, California Institute of the Arts, in Valencia. I thought it would be "the practical thing

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24 There was another similar expression that had given me solace and inspiration during my transition from politics to theater arts at UCSC. I had a poster hanging in my room throughout my many moves in my undergraduate years. It was a picture of Che Guevara, the Argentinian revolutionary thinker and guerilla leader, and a famous quote from a speech of his: "Dejeme decirle, al riesgo de parecer ridículo, que el revolucionario verdadero está guiado por grandes sentimientos de amor." ["Let me say to you, at the risk of seeming ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love."] As I type this, I am remembering it verbatim without hesitation, a testimony to its significance as a guiding principle for me still, more than twenty years later. The poster itself is still with me, too, although (perhaps significantly, as well) it has been rolled up and in a box in my closet for most of the subsequent time.
to do"--to get my training and my Masters degree at the same time. I was also motivated to do so because my eldest brother had an MFA (in Directing) from Boston University, and I admired him for it. But mainly, I was at Cal-Arts for the training, which at the time I didn't appreciate fully.

After the first year of the two-year program, I decided that the training was not worth the expense, especially because--in my estimation--the second year promised to be little else than "more of the first" (i.e., there was no developmental progression built into the overall structure of the program, that I could discern). The only real value added by "sticking it out" was a piece of paper granting me the right to teach acting in a university setting. Based on my brother's experience, I knew this was not very likely; I would have been extremely fortunate to find work in the economically very constricted job market of the time, which still prevails vis-a-vis higher education teaching opportunities in the fine arts. Besides, like Cynkutis (1994), this (i.e., training other actors for a dubious professional subsistence in this field) was something I decidedly was not interested in doing.

After this somewhat unsatisfying one-year experience at Cal-Arts, I spent a year driving a municipal bus in Los Angeles. I found this work comforting; it made me feel like a solid, respectable, upstanding member of my community; after all, I was contributing to the worthy cause of getting my fellow urban residents where they were going efficiently, safely, and inexpensively. During the middle of the day throughout this year (corresponding to the 1977-1978 school year), during my four hour break between the two halves of the split shift schedule I was assigned to as a bus driver,
I would drive over to the local community college just down the street from the yard where the buses were garaged, where I had enrolled to study French. Also during this period, I made plans to study mime with Jacques LeCoq in Paris. Although I was accepted to study in his program, had talked quite extensively to a friend of my brother Michael who had studied with LeCoq about her experiences studying there, and had gotten very excited at the prospect of doing so myself, being a student in France was not "in the cards" for me, ultimately.

It was during this year, too, that I first applied to a teaching credential program, at UCLA. I remember going for a sort of proficiency screening of my Spanish on the campus one day in the early spring of 1978, and being interviewed by Dr. Concepcion Valadez, a professor at the Graduate School of Education who was the resident bilingual education expert at the time, to my knowledge. While it was certainly no reflection on my respect for Dr. Valadez, her work, bilingual education, or UCLA, it was then and there, lying on the lawn just outside the School of Education's facilities at Moore Hall, that I reflected on my options and made my decision to go to clown school, in spite of the fact that UCLA offered me a full scholarship to attend their program as a bilingual teacher candidate in the elementary education program.

25 Dr. Valadez was still there, and still the expert in bilingual education when I finally attended UCLA to get my California Single Subject teaching credential and my M.Ed. in Secondary Teaching in 1990.

26 It is worthwhile to note that there have been so many significant changes since 1978: for me, my shift from wanting to teach at the elementary level to desiring to work at the secondary level; within the field of education, the significant amounts of research and development—together with the impact this has had on professional attitudes and interests—that have gone into this area; and finally, for North American society as a whole, the dramatic ups-and-downs in public (and fiscal) support for bilingual education in the interim (cf. Cummins, in press).
remember that, at the time, I thought I still had far too much to learn to feel comfortable about the prospect of becoming a teacher; I had a definite image in my mind of teacher as authority and transmitter of knowledge, and I felt very clearly at that point that there was very little knowledge I felt authoritative enough to transmit to any students of whatever age. These attitudes about what teaching is and what I might bring to it have changed dramatically in the intervening twenty years.

Part of the cause of this transformation was, as one might imagine, explicitly attributable to literature I have become familiar with about pedagogy and teaching methodology in the course of my graduate training in education and my experiences as a teacher. But what I find even more interesting are the aspects of the transformation in my views about teaching which resulted from other learning I did, as a result of taking the "other fork in the road." This alternate route led me to teaching via clown school, the further pursuit (and exhaustion?) of my interest in performing in the strictest sense, my career in the natural foods industry, and my fascination with the study of more foreign languages.

When I left Los Angeles in the fall of 1978, it was ultimately not en route to Paris, as I had expected it might be. I had "chickened out" on an opportunity to study with Jacques LeCoq because I had no money saved, no visa to enable me to work, and was frightened by the prospect of ending up in a foreign culture with little knowledge of the language, and littler still confidence that I would find a way to keep body and soul together in such circumstances. Once again, my pragmatic side was dominating my decisionmaking process, and I opted instead to attend a clown school
in Blue Lake, California, called Dell Arte School of Mime and Comedy, which had been established by a protege of LeCoq's. The training was intended to teach physical comedy for theatrical (as opposed to circus) clowning, and our study was focused on learning the physicality, timing, and other technical characteristics associated with the stock characters from a form of Italian Renaissance theater called *commedia dell'arte*.

I enjoyed the training and the time I spent in Blue Lake very much, but was feeling very insecure about my performing at the time. I felt the need to perform, but not the need to be at work in the hypercritical environment that a school situation in the performing arts often affords--particularly the kind of specialized one that Dell Arte was. After six months, feeling pretty discouraged about my own prospects as a performing artist and sorely in need of work, I decided to return to Santa Cruz, find work, and investigate the possibility of acting in my brothers' company, the Bear Republic Theater.

In the Spring of 1979, I got one of the last jobs funded through the Carter Administration's Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), a position as a bilingual "consumer protection specialist." The job was based in Watsonville, an agricultural community in south Santa Cruz County, and my primary duties were akin to those of a paralegal: helping Spanish-speaking residents understand and comply with the demands of their relationships with various bureaucracies in both the private and public sector (businesses, employers, small claims courts, etc.), and even occasionally advocating on their behalves, in adversarial situations related to these...
relationships. I found the work rewarding, challenging, and exhausting, much as I would find teaching in the nearby town of Joaquin almost fifteen years later.

When the CETA grant ran out in the fall, I was ready for the job to be over. I vowed that I would find a job that did not take so much out of me emotionally, so I could "have some left over" for my acting at the Bear Republic Theater. I found a job doing delivery work for the biggest natural foods bakery in the San Francisco Bay area at that time (which happened to be based in Santa Cruz), distributing and promoting the sales of their whole grain line of breads, pastries, and cereal. It felt good to be making an honest living (as I had felt when I was driving the bus in West Los Angeles), doing something I thought of as promoting the health and wellbeing of my community, while at the same time being able to "punch the clock" and leave my work behind me at the end of my work day. This made it ideal from the perspective of saving some energy for my acting, too, as it was only a halftime position and paid well enough to meet my subsistence needs at the time.\textsuperscript{27}

My positive feelings about this work were the justification I felt for staying involved in the natural foods industry for almost thirteen years, although the sense that I could "leave my work behind" only lasted for the first four years of the parallel career it turned out I was developing (unbeknownst to me, at the time), as I pursued my artistic interests. But as good as I had it, in terms of having struck what seemed a pretty ideal balance between my pragmatic and creative needs, I felt the need to

\textsuperscript{27} About a year later, I got extra work selling underwriting (the noncommercial equivalent of advertising) for a public radio station in Santa Cruz on a part-time flexible basis, as a way of saving a little money; this, too, felt compatible with my goal of doing socially constructive and creative work for a living, while still allowing me to do my acting.
try something more challenging; I decided to produce my own one-man show with which to tour Australia and New Zealand, which I called *Goin' for Broke*. I had no idea how prophetic that title would prove to be in my life.

In the summer of 1983, not long after I had returned from touring my show, which explored my relationship to my deceased father and the parallels I saw between my life and his when we were each 30 years of age, I began to wonder whether my interest in theater and in acting as a profession had served its purpose. In retrospect, I surmised that perhaps my interest in acting had something to do with me "fulfilling my father's destiny." Symbolically at least, this piece was a sort of heart-to-heart final conversation with him about who I was becoming in my own right as a young man. I began to get impatient with my acting and with the world of theater; I rarely enjoyed my performances anymore, and was constantly "my own worst critic." And, as alluded to at the end of the preceding chapter, I did not feel I

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28 By his "destiny," I mean his writing career, as abridged by his desire to have a family. Given the sense of responsibility he felt to his family as chief "breadwinner," the fact that he wanted to have a family precluded the possibility of having a writing career simultaneously, as my mother tells it. She once told me that this preoccupation with financial security (as it did for many Americans of his generation), had its roots in the particularly challenging time his family and he had during the Great Depression of the 1930's. It was this apocryphal story which led me to set my one man show in the Depression era.

29 As already stated, my father had died of a heart attack when I was seventeen. During the time of my undergraduate training, and until I produced this show, I would frequently imagine that I saw him sitting in the shadows in the back rows of theaters I performed in, behind the "real" audiences for whom I was performing. Because his face—and especially his eyes—were always just out of view (and because I did not want to break the "fourth wall" convention of theater, in which the performers in most traditional drama have to act as if a fourth wall is in front of them, instead of the audience), I often found myself wondering about his reaction to my performance. The last line of *Goin' for Broke* was spoken directly to the back rows of seats where I had always caught these glimpses of him: "What do you think, Dad? What do you think?" Interestingly, these "visions" ceased around the time I began performing this piece.
was getting any respect for my acting in the U.S. I was fed up with the split between having to make a living and doing my art.

This realization did not come to me easily, however. After spending two years upon my return from the South Pacific setting up and operating a natural foods distribution business of my own to enable me to do more solo performance projects, that business drove me to bankruptcy; I spent the next five years voluntarily repaying debts I had incurred to friends and close associates. As a result, I was, ironically, further away than at any time in my life from doing any theater. I have yet to return to performing (at least in the strictest meaning of the term)—twelve years later and now with a beautiful family of my own—with the sense of purpose and motivation which once inspired me. I am not sure I ever will.

I once had my palm read on a whim, as a means of self-amusement. I was in Taos, New Mexico, on what for me was a sort of spiritual retreat. New Mexico (whose official state nickname happens to be "The Land of Enchantment") is known as a sort of mystical, magical, highly spiritual place among those interested in such matters.30

30 New Mexico (and particularly the northern part, where Santa Fe and Taos are both located) is the home of a great and disproportionate number of religious and spiritual groups that are marginal to mainstream religious practice in the U. S. Among these are a Sikh community in the town of Espanola; a Muslim community in Abiquiu—known in the world of art as the home of Georgia O'Keefe, arguably among the greatest American artists who ever lived—which had built a beautiful mosque that remains unseen to the traveler who does not take the time to wander off the two-lane highway near Ghost Ranch; the Lama Foundation just up the road from the town of Taos, and the Neem Karoli Baba Ashram in Taos, founded in honor of the Hindu guru after whom it has been named. This latter spiritual teacher had been made famous in the West by Ram Dass, a scholar who had resigned from his position as a Harvard professor—and former colleague of Timothy Leary—turned spiritual teacher and author of many books about his experiences in India with Neem Karoli Baba, including Be Here Now (1971) and Miracle of Love (1979). It was at this ashram, while by chance camping in the adjacent field and taking part in the celebration of Baba's mahasamadhi (i.e. his passing from the material into the spiritual world seven years earlier) at the annual festival for this purpose called bandhara, that I met my future wife, Laura.
I had heard it was a beautiful place, and having just been laid off my umpteenth job in the natural foods industry, I was feeling greatly in need of a personal and spiritual retreat so I could gather my thoughts and feelings in order to make plans for my future. I had a free "frequent flyer" airline ticket to travel anywhere in the southwestern U. S. from my home in San Francisco. I had been in contact with San Francisco State University and UCLA about pursuing my teaching credential, but was far from certain that this was the appropriate next step for me. I needed to sort things out.

I had the name and address of only one person to look up in Taos, and it so happened that the night I arrived in town she was at the Taos Inn doing palm readings. She took one look at my outstretched hand and said "You'll get where you're going, but it won't be like this (she traced a short straight line on the fleshy part of my hand at the base of my fingers); you will get there like this," and she proceeded to draw a spiral with her fingertip on my open palm, starting from the outer edge of its surface and circling gradually and slowly to "my" destination point at its center. I laughed both in recognition and at the irony that a total stranger should be able to capture the essence of my journey so immediately and succinctly.

Toward a new profession

This spiral defines my journey into teaching, although it remains to be seen whether teaching/being a teacher educator is the ultimate destination of all my circling around this perceived target. It is a particularly apt metaphor because, as I said at the very beginning of this work, I have always felt there was a unity to my
personal/professional journey, although it has only intermittently seemed clear to me what that unity was; I have only sporadically glimpsed the "logic" underlying my choices about where I will go along the way, and when I will do it.

The circular quality of a spiral seems an appropriate metaphor for this journey, too; like a hummingbird circling a flower before lighting to draw its nectar, I have described my numerous passes at becoming a teacher, the ways I have been attracted by the "scent" of teaching. I had been lured to it several times before actually having committed myself to becoming a teacher, and submitting to the rites of passage which would lead me to being officially designated as a teacher in the eyes of society and its institutions.  

And on each pass, my perspective—defined both as my position in relation to and my perception about the essence of the flower—has been significantly different. Finally, six years after I started teaching, I am beginning to feel comfortable with what being a teacher means, with playing that particular role in the "nature of things," of finding just the right place to land and partake of the flower of teaching. But at the same time, I realize that I could not have arrived where I am currently without conceiving of myself as a learner and without continuing to consider myself one throughout this process.

31 I even briefly considered becoming a Unitarian minister—and went so far as to visit the theological seminary I would have attended—before finally following through on my off-and-on impulse to become a credentialed teacher in 1990. The deciding factor for me, with respect to a career in the ministry, was the musty, stale odor which pervaded the seminary. I "followed my nose" in this case, and took it as a sign that the place—and perhaps the profession—was not lively or engaged enough with respect to people's real and everyday life concerns, as I saw them, to suit my needs. (This is no criticism of the seminary, incidentally, but rather a comment on how it and I were matched at this particular point in time. Ironically, in fact, I viewed this as a spiritual decision, based on a definition of spirit that had been shaped by my religious education as a child in the Unitarian Society of Whittier.)
As may be evident at various points in the preceding narrative, my path through acting--my training, my exploration of it as a career option, my self-identification as a professional actor, my disenchantment with the way actors and other artists are treated in the U.S.--has been an integral and essential part of my becoming a teacher. As I embarked on the formal part of this process of becoming in the fall of 1990 (when I entered the teaching credential program at UCLA), I finally felt ready to try to unify passion and profession.

I realized that I still did not consider myself to be an "expert" at anything I could name, or an "authority" in any of the disciplines offered as options to me as majors to be declared during my credential year. With my liberal arts education, I was adequately trained in both social studies and English to pass the National Teachers' Examinations which would allow me to become licensed in the State of California as a secondary teacher in either of these broad areas, but I almost always felt my knowledge was broad and general, rather than deep and specific.

I was ecstatic, therefore, when I encountered Gumperz's (1979) video, *Crosstalk*, in a class called "Fundamentals of Linguistics for Teachers of English as a Second Language" (which I took through U.C. Berkeley Extension in the summer of 1990, before I left San Francisco). It is based on ethnographic research Gumperz, a cultural anthropologist, did in England, in which he observes and analyzes the interethnic interactions between immigrants in Great Britain and various employees of the social welfare system in that country. In it, he focuses on the nonlinguistic, nonverbal aspects of communication between the parties involved, phenomena such
as body language, gesture, personal space, the dynamics of the use of space between the interactants, and so forth. As I watched the video, I had the growing feeling that I "knew this stuff," that this sort of interpersonal communication was, in fact something I could do expert analysis of. I was elated, and because UCLA had a program in Applied Linguistics that at the time seemed as though it would accommodate my developing further expertise in this area of knowledge, it decided me in favor of working on my credential there--with an eye to getting into the Department of TESL and Applied Linguistics once I got there.

Also, by the time of my admission to UCLA, opportunities for teachers in arts education and in social studies only were severely limited in the U. S., theater arts/drama and speech arts were subsumed under the domain of English teaching, and I was not interested in teaching within any one of these categories as a single discipline, anyway.32 As when I was in the midst of my program at Cal-Arts deciding whether to stay on to finish my M.F.A. in Acting, the notion of "preparing students for the acting profession in which they have little hope of being employed" (Cynkutis, 1994) simply did not hold much attraction for me. I was at a stage in my life, both personally and professionally, where I had seen too much of "the big picture" to feel very comfortable limiting myself to just one little corner of its canvas. Instead, I was trying to find ways in which I might make use of my own way of looking at the world, my own epistemology, of developing--first in my personal life, and later as an

32 This has all turned out to be a "blessing in disguise," since I believe it has often been my eclectic and esoteric qualifications that have earned me the professional opportunities I have had. The job I had at Esperanza High School in 1993-94, my admission to OISE, and the teacher education positions I am currently being considered for are all cases in point.
educator--"curricula designed to investigate the creative process of performance, not for its professional potential, but for its educational value" (Cynkutis, 1994, p. 55). I had become a confirmed multidisciplinarian.

My most recent flirtation with trying to specialize served only to corroborate this sense of myself. When I finished my M.Ed. in Secondary Teaching in the fall of 1991, I stayed on at UCLA to earn my M.A. degree in Teaching ESL, to find out both what it was about learning languages that fascinated me so much and to start to address some of the questions I had about the role language and other forms of interpersonal communication play in learning. In particular, I felt myself drawn to study a certain subfield of the human learning process: the passing down of values and social understandings from generation to generation in "a given culture." Mid-way through my M.A., as I came to the realization that I had barely scratched the surface of exploring these questions, I realized as well that to stay at UCLA to pursue further study in these areas I would have to work towards a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics, as the people I might have wanted to work with in education did not seem to be teaching and working at the Graduate School of Education there.

But I was quickly running out of courses in linguistics and applied linguistics--as it was defined in this particular environment--that were relevant to what I felt I

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33 This phrasing bespeaks the understanding of "culture" I had at the time I started my M.A. studies--as a solid, transmissible, unchanging unit, which could be bestowed upon the younger by the older generation somehow, and by which people could be readily identified. Today, I have a very different mental image of what culture is; by contrast to what stood before, I now see culture as something which is socially constructed, dynamic/significantly fluid, in which each participant in interaction plays a part, and which both forms and is formed by the individual members of the society defined by it.
needed to be studying. Instead (largely because of Gumperz's video), I found myself attracted to cultural, educational, and linguistic anthropology. But I could not afford (nor endure the thought of) pursuing a shift to the field of anthropology, even if I might have been able to get accepted into a doctoral program in this discipline at this stage of my academic career. OISE seemed to be the one institution to which I applied for a doctoral program that could apparently accommodate and appreciate the eclectic nature of the journey had thus far been on, and the potentially unificatory aspects of the direction I have defined here as the one in which I seem to be headed. Ultimately, coming to OISE has proven to be the right choice for me. It is both ironic and of no small significance that I had to leave the U.S. to study what I had seen and still see going on inside it.

I bear no ill feelings about these decisions or about the criteria used by these institutions for determining who they will admit to their programs; for one thing, the

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34 Even though I may have been able to make the leap intellectually which would apparently have been required of me in order to do this, the time it would have taken me to backtrack and gather the epistemological and research methodological knowledge necessary to work at the doctoral level in anthropology—or in any other academic discipline, for that matter—would have been prohibitive, given the compartmentalized way knowledge and specializations institutionally limit the distribution of "mantles of expertise" in higher education in the U.S.

35 I have done a little informal research to determine the rationale behind decisions made about my admission at the other institutions to which I applied. The person who would have been my academic advisor at Berkeley said she believed that OISE would better tolerate/appreciate the "cross-disciplinary spectrum" of my interests, than would her institution; after two or three conversations, she recommended OISE heartily to me.

The second rejected me because—as I had been warned by a faculty member who might have been my advisor there—I did not have solid knowledge (i.e., an M.A. degree) in any one traditional discipline. A third was concerned finally that I a) did not fit into the nontraditional discipline that was the focus of its program (i.e., Communication) narrowly enough; and b) that I might not be properly trained to deal with the theoretical foundations of this field as they had helped to define them. I made it as far as the waiting list for this latter program the second time I applied, after a campus visit and discussions with various faculty there, but was eventually turned down for admission.
people who make these decisions obviously do not know me personally, and to a certain extent, the challenge of the application process is to either make or find an appropriate match. And after all, I have had—and benefited professionally from—a wealth of contact with some remarkable scholars and their expertise in the fields mentioned above, which is one of the advantages of attending the institutions I have had the good fortune to attend.

What I have also realized during my career as a graduate student, though, is that such decisions are sometimes a reflection of an institutionally defined notion of what knowledge at the postsecondary level is, and have wondered whether this may prove to be a definition of knowledge which contributes to an institutional myopia detrimental to the vitality of these institutions themselves, as the knowledge that is valued within them becomes more rarified and irrelevant to the populace operating outside their walls. This definitely seems to be one of the challenges institutions of higher learning face in tight budgetary times. One of the ways I can see my constructive rebellious side operating as a teacher educator, therefore, is to work to broaden acceptable definitions of knowledge, both for pre-service teachers I supervise (who will then take these broadened understanding of learning and teaching with them into their classrooms), and for graduate students with whom I work. It is one way I can see to open spaces for the development of what Greene (1988) calls greater freedom in education and the strengthening of our society as a whole, because while I can afford to be philosophical about my own fortunes, I do not feel this to be as true for decisions I make that affect my learners' lives.
In my experience—as my father in his wisdom understood when he advised me to attend UC Santa Cruz instead of UC Berkeley twenty-five years ago—I do very well when I get the opportunity to make personal contact with "gatekeepers" on the screening committees for graduate programs or the search committees at potential places of employment. While I may be a somewhat accomplished writer, there is nothing I can achieve on paper which in any way approximates the kind of impact I can have in person, the kind of depth I can project, the kind of interest I can generate—intellectually as well as socially/personally and affectively—in terms of communicating and exchanging ideas.

So one of the "spirals" I am currently on has at its center discovering where else my expertise might lead me, and I see the parallels, cycles, and patterns abound. My father's alternative to writing professionally—one which he faced in his midlife, at the age of thirty, and which was the theme of my one-man show—was to become a clinical psychologist, when he was 44 years old, shortly after I was born. He was employed as an English teacher and case counselor for the California Youth Authority, the state agency charged with responsibility for the care and custody of juvenile offenders. My becoming a teacher of ESL and having a preference for working with "at risk" students, then, is one of the parallels; I have very much embraced my parents' concern for social justice in my career choice. And it is certainly partly my desire to have and support my own family that has guided me to make that choice.

As the experience I related earlier of my response to the viewing of Gumperz's
(19XX) video, the expertise I possess is that which I have developed in interpersonal communication. This is not to say that I am an expert interpersonal communicator who never makes mistakes or misjudgements in his interactions with others, by any means. What I am claiming instead is that I have developed a certain expertise in this specialization in the academic sense. I understand the dimensions of interpersonal communication well, as well as some of its limits; I have systematically gone about developing knowledge in the field (which has, by definition required cross-disciplinary inquiry, as suggested above); and I can do a credible job of analyzing samples of it.

What makes my expertise nontraditional, in academic terms, is that, for one thing, it is so cross- and multidisciplinary, although this attribute of my background and training has been gaining more respectability recently in academia. The other distinction between my expertise and the more conventional forms of expert knowing acknowledged in university communities is that so much of the data upon which I base my claims to expertise is based on what Pinar and Grumet (1976) would call "lived experience;" I have not always used terminology absorbed from scholarly writing in the field to dissect and comment upon what I know. This puts me on the boundaries between conventional academic disciplinary knowledge and the knowledge that comes from lived experience; nonetheless, this is comfortable and familiar territory, and I believe I owe this fact, in significant measure, to my training as an actor and to the epistemology that has emerged from it.

Of course, I see the development of an area of expertise as extremely important (even critical) to my professional success. As I have worked with
acknowledged experts in bilingual and second language education, cultural and linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis and other subspecializations of applied linguistics, and more recently in literacy and teacher development, I have come to appreciate this fact more fully. The rite of passage in which I am about to participate is all about coming to acknowledge and accept it, and about coming to see more fully that the epistemology I have developed throughout my education--as Twain defines it, rather than as schools might--is worthy of coequal status with those of the various scholars I have been lucky enough to have worked with during my apprenticeship for my Doctorate of Philosophy degree. And finally, because of my understanding of what education is (i.e., of its utilitarian nature), I feel I must address the question of where my epistemology will lead me once I pass through "the eye of the needle" that is the doctoral dissertation and its defense.

In the most general terms, I want to bring my understanding of human interaction to bear on the difficulties that have resulted from crosscultural miscommunication in its many forms, but particularly in school settings between the major stakeholders--the students, parents, teachers, and administrators--in the activity which is supposed to be the raison d'etre of these environments: the education of the students who populate them. Even more specifically, I want to get involved in teacher development/training, pedagogy, and research because teachers--for many students and their parents--embody the school and all it represents; they work on the "front lines" of educational interaction. And to the extent that this is so, in spite of the policy and theory which are "funneled" into and "litter" the "professional landscape" of
schools (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995), it is still important both that teachers are aware of this and that they attend carefully to how they wish to and can portray their roles as "school" to these children.

For me, Springsteen's lyrics at the beginning of this chapter capture the essence of what has happened to "my hometown" over the last thirty years, although the reader needs to remember that I did not come from the kind of working class, semi-urban factory town environment of which he writes. Because of my orientation towards social and political issues, I hear his song as capturing the sense of powerlessness that many of my generation feel about the urban and moral decay in small towns and big cities throughout the U.S. over this period; in this sense, the story of his hometown sounds like the story of my hometown, metaphorically speaking.

I also share his awareness of and concern about the intergenerational significance of this degradation. For me, it is not just Springsteen's story, nor mine, but the story of American society in general, as well as large parts of the American public school system. This scenario also serves to connect the story I have been telling, about my own upbringing and expectations, with the one I am about to tell. It is a story of culture shock, when my vision of the world and how it operates clashed resoundingly with the visions of the world my students had in the high school in which I taught, upon completion of my graduate study at U.C.L.A.
Chapter 4: The Many Masks of the Teacher

Janus, the mask that looks forward and back

What can be expected of a new, well-intentioned teacher—wishing to contribute his or her energies and knowledge to improving the school experiences of those he or she sees as less privileged than himself—in terms of the productivity and efficacy of his teaching? What happens when, as in the case of this particular teacher or others like him, there is not only a generational mismatch (as is usually the case) between him and his students, but when the gap of experience has cultural, socieconomic, and other sorts of experiential dimensions? How is teaching affected by the sense of "culture shock" that pervades most elements of the relationship between the teacher and those whom s/he has the responsibility to educate in situations like the one in which I suddenly found myself?

I had undertaken a significant midlife career change. Sometimes this period is referred to as a crisis, but in my case, I did not see it as such; I was simply at a juncture in my life when, like the "secular Jewish women teachers" in the work of Casey (1993), questions of "what I was gonna do with my life" (p. 87) were beginning to resurface in earnest. As is probably clear from the preceding chapters, I have been constantly mindful of my motivation for entering this field as I made this transition. I definitely have been compelled by the desire to contribute my abilities and knowledge to the knotty problems related to multicultural and multilingual educational settings, as well as to repay a debt I felt I owed to society as a beneficiary of the public education I had received. Even now, I spend a lot of time considering what it was I
hoped to achieve--and how I hoped to achieve it--with such a move.

As stated earlier, although I have gone through several career changes and pursued many different interests in my adult life--a luxury afforded me by my class status, upbringing, and the era during which I came of age, I believe--it would be fair to say that I have always conceived of my life experiences as learning or teaching "in one way or another," as Casey (1992, p. 206) puts it. The stories of the progressive women activists whose professional lives are described so beautifully in Casey's (1993) work, and those of the minority immigrant Canadian teachers in Bascia (1994b) struck deep chords within me, reflecting back to me my own reasons for wanting to be a credentialed teacher at this particular point in my life. The life story of Edgar Culver and the description of his motivations for going into teaching, as related in Bascia's (1994b) case study of teacher leadership, was one I related to very much. Teaching has always been my life's vocation, so while my background is very different from his in many other ways, Culver's description of having been "called" to the profession of teaching, was particularly meaningful to me.

At the tender age of forty years, I got my first teaching job, and completed my first year of public school teaching during the 1993-94 school year. I was hired to teach U.S. History, English, and ESL in California, in Joaquin (not the town's real name), at a large public secondary institution I will refer to as Esperanza High School. In many ways, Joaquin is typical of many California cities, although one might characterize it as semi-urban (or semirural), given the fact that it has both an agricultural economic base and a demography typical of many California metropolitan
areas, including a population of over 100,000. Certainly, the demographic profile of Esperanza's student body is not uncommon; over 90% of the students there are of Mexican origin, although different students and their families have been in California for varying amounts of time. Some are immigrants themselves, some were born there or brought there by their parents, and some come from families who have been in California for three or more generations.

Very few of these students' families would be classified socioeconomically speaking as above "lower middle class;" a very significant percentage have experienced at least some—if not a great deal of—scholastic failure. Few of them have the luxury of being able to reflect in any depth on what their future goals might be (i.e., of "exercising freedom," in the sense of the expression that Greene, 1988, alludes to), usually because the immediate demands of the present are so pressing for them. And if these students do define goals for themselves which involve material wellbeing or other forms of success commonly associated with the more remote, predominantly white middle class parts of Joaquin to the north, west, and south, they face significant institutional and other socioeconomic obstacles in reaching them.

By contrast and as I have described, I come from a community which was almost entirely white and middle to upper middle class, and have enjoyed in my life many of the benefits and advantages associated with that status—and with a historical period of arguably greater affluence generally—in terms of opportunities for advancement and access to certain privileges related to it. I did very well in my school career, both academically and extra-curricularly. I speak Spanish pretty well,
or so I've been told and been able to "prove" on certain proficiency tests. I had been trained for my job at one of the most highly regarded teacher training programs in the U.S., and am very familiar with the major tenets of current theory related to second language acquisition and cultural difference in education. Nonetheless, I felt critically deficient as a teacher in terms of knowing how to deal with the primary challenge I now faced: bridging the vast experiential gap between my students and me so we could establish a common ground upon which to base a mutually agreeable set of educational objectives.

As suggested above, there are important socioeconomic, cultural/ethnic, and generational/historical dimensions of this experiential gap, and it is not easy to identify with any degree of certainty to what extent these dimensions of difference interfere with learning in the context I have described (i.e., where such gaps exist between learners and those charged with "educating" them) although, as my experience demonstrates--and as I will describe--they are substantial. Many others (among them Giroux, 1992; Simon, 1992; and hooks, 1994) have spoken far more eloquently and persuasively than I could about the potential obstacles such differences pose in teaching and schooling, as well as about the importance of both acknowledging it and overcoming the barriers inherent in them.

The purpose of this chapter, however, is to examine these and other dimensions of difference as they manifested in the individuals and collectively in the learning environment and educational interactions in my classroom. Specifically, I want to consider the extent to which doing so can both shape and augment my
personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), and how this newly configured knowledge might inform a transformation in my praxis (Freire, 1973) as a teacher-educator in multicultural educational settings in general. It seems important to initiate this analysis of my observations and reflections in my own classroom at Esperanza, for it was from this place on the "professional landscape" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995), and from this perspective that most of my experiences were filtered and made sense of.

At the same time, I believe it is equally important to describe my thoughts and actions as a human being operating in this environment, both in terms of how I identify myself and in terms of how I perceive my role. (The latter needs to be accomplished while I develop a sense of how others perceive me.) I feel the urge to travel this particular road in my inquiry because of my training as an actor. It is a maxim of the naturalistic style of acting which comprised a significant proportion of my training in that field that, in order to do justice to what Gallop (1995) would call an "impersonation" (i.e., as a teacher, in this case), you must be able to "put yourself into that character's shoes." To do this, one approach is to begin your exploration from the outside (through an examination of the actions, physical characteristics, and behavior of the target character, an exploration of her/his mask), while also "feeling your way into the core" of the personality (e.g., the why's and how's of the behavior). The ideal result is a seamless portrayal which artfully blends the two perspectives into a whole, believable characterization of the person the actor is meant to be during the performance.
This kind of approach to knowing accurately captures the bidirectional nature of what I mean when I use the term "the epistemology of acting," by which I mean "an actor's ways of knowing"—about him/herself, about others, and about the world. Therefore, while I focus in depth on self-exploration in the following sections, the approach applies to my thinking about and getting to know my students, as well. The notion of masks is a useful one for considering the perspective I have on how my students may have viewed me as I went about my work and, as an important dimension of this epistemology of acting, it bears important similarities to Goffman's (1959) notion of the presentation of self in everyday life, Gallop's (1995) notion of impersonation, and even to Peirce's (1995) notion of social identity (although in the latter case, the concept is used to refer to the social identity of learners). At the same time I attempt to identify masks I might wear as a teacher, in these senses, I want to explore my feelings about doing so, in keeping with Diamond's (1991) goal for teacher development—of enabling me to experience "perspective transformation"—as I go about the work of considering how I would become more effective as a teacher in this setting, and expanding my personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988).


It seems important to consider thoroughly any preconceptions I had, many of which I was not even aware of having at the time, about what Esperanza would be
like as a place to do my work. More specifically, before I started teaching there, I was wondering how I would actually like, respond to, and deal with the students at Esperanza. My most central presuppositions were that the vast majority of these students had had difficulty in their formal school experiences up until the time we met (and for many of my students, the reality was that the difficulty continued), that they were mostly no wealthier than lower middle class in terms of socioeconomic status, and that few were very literate in English (and fewer still in Spanish). In sum, I assumed that it would be hard to persuade this particular group of learners of the value in learning U.S. history.

These initial impressions were founded on a combination of personal and political knowledge of Central California and on attitudes about the historical treatment of this group of residents of Mexican ethnic origin in all its demographic diversity. A few probably even had to do with some personal prejudices of my own (although I profess myself an enemy of racism and ignorance about people). Many of these preconceptions were confirmed or negated on the basis of experiences I had which occurred intermittently throughout the year with various students, school faculty, staff, administrators, and even nearby residents and community members not directly affiliated with the school in this eastern part of Joaquin known as Joaquinito.

The data upon which I have based my preliminary hypotheses about my year at Esperanza is therefore, by its very nature, anecdotal and episodic. Certain outcomes of my year at Esperanza were definitely a consequence of my expectations helping to create them. The ways in which these preconceptions and my impressions
were confirmed and denied will be discussed in greater detail below.

First, it seems important to investigate the influence of my "greenness" (i.e., being a first year teacher) on experiences at Esperanza; its impact seems profound, in retrospect. Most of this first year was spent setting up systems for grading and otherwise evaluating student performance, and on the other hand, trying to get some idea of administrative expectations for my performance so I could try to synchronize the two. Interestingly, this was among my primary concerns, since I wanted to make a good impression on my supervisors and it was obvious that unemployment was not a viable option for a middle-aged husband and father-of-a-two-year-old. I know there were many other teachers at Esperanza who shared such concerns.

Related to this (and compounding the very real economic pressures), there was a "work slowdown" in effect by the beginning of the second semester (in January of that school year), called for by the leadership of the teacher's union in response to the fact that there had not been a new contract signed between the teachers and the District to replace the one that had expired a year and a half before. This involved "working to contract," which meant that teachers cooperating with the union effort would only do the work required by specific contractual arrangement and minimize the amount of time to be spent doing reading, preparation, paper management, and extracurricular activities (typically beyond contractual requirements), which most teachers attend to without additional compensation. While Esperanza had among the most active union chapters of all the faculties in the district in terms of participation in the job action, it took almost five months of "being slowed down" for the district and
the union to come to an agreement that the rank and file could reasonably ratify.

The atmosphere in a situation like this is difficult to describe, from the point of view of a first year teacher. In some respects, it is as one might imagine it would be to have to walk through a minefield, trying to avoid getting "blown away." While "learning your job" in a simpler, more traditional sense, you are also having to get your bearings politically in a much more acute way than a teacher in a school with a calmer labor-management relationship would need to do. This anxiety-producing relationship between teachers and administrators was further exacerbated by the fact that this was the new principal's first year, too; Mr. Dominguez had taken over from a man who had been principal for almost the preceding twenty years. He was for the most part an unknown quantity within the district, although he apparently had filled the position at Esperanza with the encouragement and backing of the district superintendent; she knew him from the time they had worked together in San Jose, where he had been an assistant principal. He would definitely have his hands full during his first year, as well.

These were some of the prominent features of what was taking place on the campus surrounding my classroom, at least with respect to the relationship between teachers and administrators. But before continuing the description of those parts of the school, it is crucial that the ways the "greenness" factor directly affected my classroom environment be explored further. Not having paperwork management regimens in place, nor grading systems, discipline guidelines, schoolwide policies and practices, is a constant drain psychically and emotionally for the beginning teacher.
It certainly undermines one's authority and the effort to build a sense of trust with her/his students, but it also takes its toll on one's self-esteem and the sense of dignity and decorum one might ideally like to project during that all important first year on the job. It is hard to say precisely what the impact of such teacher anxieties is on one's relations with supervisory staff, and this fact just adds to the pressure one already feels to be at her/his best.

Secondary students, at least, really "hone in" on green teachers because, as is apparently normal, they enjoy finding out what they can get away with and/or pull over on the teacher. The more rules the students themselves unilaterally set, the better it is for them, of course, and this seemed almost to presage a competitive atmosphere for control in each of the classes, with the attendant potential for winners and losers. It was not necessarily that one sought control consciously from the outset; it was more that one became suddenly very keenly aware that control and who had it was one of the issues that would have to be resolved very early on in the school year.

Was this a byproduct of some verity of the public schooling process, or the verity itself? Was the control at stake here a symbol of the larger issues of control which need to be resolved in many areas of these students' relationships to schooling and other social institutions dominated by a culture from which most of them definitely felt excluded? It is still not entirely clear to me from where this awareness of the power struggle in my classes initially emerged; did it have its roots in the volunteer work I had done in San Francisco's inner city schools, in my training and student
teaching, in my memories of how it had been for me to be a high school student with a new teacher? Or was it in my reading of newspaper articles about the public school in general—the vast majority of which helped to create a negative public image of most of these schools—which had led me to assume that these young people were "going to be trouble, for sure?" It is hard to say for certain, but the answer is probably, "In all of these." And the "control at stake here" very definitely seems to be related to issues of cultural domination which have their roots well beyond the school grounds. As Casey (1992) puts it, "In conjunction with the larger social structure, the educational organization generates problems, which are then blamed on its victims. (p. 192)"

While the fact that this was my first year on the job was an important factor in my experiences, I do not believe that my newness to teaching was the overriding influence on my year at Esperanza. Regardless of whether I am right about this, though, I do know that I found myself struggling for control of my classes and in the process discovering a whole new "authoritarian persona in relationship to [my] students" (Casey, 1992), with which I was not entirely comfortable. Like the teacher described in Casey's work, I found that "developing an alternative style [was] difficult for me as a beginning teacher. (p. 200)," and the barriers to my establishing substantial authority (in the more generic sense) in the eyes of my students were formidable. Almost every time I attempted to do so, I was reminded of the differences between my life experiences and those of my students. As mentioned earlier, we were of different ethnic origins, of course, but these differences did not seem as
problematic as the gaps I felt related to socioeconomic status and generational differences; the latter differences seemed to be intensified by—as well as probably the major contributor to—the apparent chasm in our values and ways of looking at the world.

"The Old Guy," "The One without a Clue," "The Mediator," & "The Innovator"

It first crystallized in my mind that I was operating in a sort of "time warp" and experiencing severe culture shock in the community of my students when I participated in a seminar on school safety with a couple students (in addition to several staff members, other faculty, and administrators). The first difference one was struck with was that there was an issue of student and teacher safety at all. The idea that someone might be carrying a gun on campus was not likely nor a common threat in my day, but in Joaquin that year, the proposed use of metal detectors to help keep deadly weapons off campus was getting very serious consideration.

The students and personnel at Esperanza were justified in their concerns; there had been several shootings in the Joaquin Union High School District schools including Joaquin the past few years, involving both student and teacher victims of armed assault. There was an active gang culture in town, fighting turf skirmishes and killing and maiming many (mostly very young) people in the neighborhood. The number of gang members on campus was proportionally small (at most 10% of Esperanza's students were anything more than aware of who was in and/or out of the gangs), but they packed a disproportionate wallop, in terms of the fear and
intimidation they were able to unleash on the community as a whole. At the same time, not surprisingly, gang members generated a certain mystique which both repelled and attracted many of my students, who were in the process of developing their own senses of *style*, which Ogbu (1987) defines as "a specific feature of secondary cultural difference."  

At this workshop, we were asked to break into groups of three or four, and come up with a visual representation, or at least (for those of us less visually inclined), a description of a "safe school." The two students present were in the same group, and this group's members thought it would be interesting to have the students' view guide that particular group's effort; it seemed to me that this intuition paid off handsomely. The group's drawing was the only one to show an enclosed campus surrounded by high fences topped with barbed wire, electronic surveillance and warning devices of various descriptions, and protected by armed security guards with Doberman pinscher dogs patrolling the grounds. This seemed like safety for these students; it sounded like a police state to me.

The other groups' images of safe schools were very different from the "student group's," and seemed to be based on a rather idyllic notion of how safe schools would be if there were sufficient resources available to fund school athletics, performing arts, student newspapers, debate teams, etc. Track stadiums, the latest in instructional technology, lots of windows looking out on broad grassy fields,  

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36 He defines "secondary cultural differences" as those "that arise after members of two populations have come in continuous contact or after members of a given population have begun to participate in an institution controlled by another population, such as the schools. (p.322)"
theaters, student governments, and arts supplies abounded. I could not help but be aware of how these visions had been determined generationally, and by virtue of the socioeconomic status of the individual members. How could I ever penetrate the fear these students and their colleagues in my classes felt, enough to create a safe and productive learning environment?

This was one of the heavy weights many of these students brought from their worlds outside the school. The purpose of mentioning the events at the safe schools seminar was to highlight the distance I felt from my students at that point in particular, and the awe I began to feel at the immensity of the tasks I faced each day. Additionally, I was dealing with the fact that, from my own point of view, I lacked a comfortably sufficient knowledge of my subject matter in teaching U.S. History. This was true to a lesser extent in teaching my non-ESL Freshman English class, also. To be sure, I was certificated to teach these subjects, and knew enough about the methodologies and content in these two courses to do a serviceable job of it. But I would definitely be refreshing my own knowledge while trying simultaneously to develop some innovative teaching approaches to the material "on the run;" once in a while, I would simply have to fake it. It was a case of living one of the maxims of the modern day teacher: "Always keep one step ahead of your students." At times, one step was about all that could be managed. Again, as Casey (1993) puts it so well, for me it seemed that "in the 'normal activities' of the society in which [I] live [i.e., that of the school and profession in which I found myself] the 'realm of necessity' has precedence over the 'realm of freedom.' (p. 89)"
As mentioned earlier, one of my assumptions had been that my students were going to have to be "sold" on the notion of studying history, so I initially focused my efforts on persuading them that history was important to their lives, that they were connected to it in very critical ways, and that not learning history would prove to be a very costly mistake, in terms of their ability to develop their own potentials. As one of Casey's (1993) teachers puts it, in the context of classroom teaching, "I sort of figure if I can make some of them feel as if they have some kind of power in the world, I'll be happy. (p. 88)" I emphasized that they needed to work at being victors over, rather than victims of, the past. The first assignment they were given (which was also intended as a diagnostic tool for me to use in the analysis of their writing abilities) was to interview their parent or guardian or another adult they knew who had immigrated to California. The idea was to get them to understand that nobody was native to what is now the U.S., that, according to current historical theory, everyone who had ever resided within its modern day borders (and, for that matter, in the Americas in general) either had ancestors who had immigrated, or had themselves immigrated. As the American expression puts it, "We are a nation of immigrants." Their own relatives and friends would be their direct links to history.

The motivation for this is probably clear; it was my intention to try to develop some thematic "common ground," for me, for my students, and for the historical figures and phenomena we would be studying throughout the year. The format for these parental interviews was to be based on a journalistic model of inquiry, which seemed like a reasonable way to introduce "historical methods" to students who
probably had not been exposed much to the metacognitive aspects of learning history. I encouraged them to use "the five W's and one H" ("Who, what, when, where, why, and how?") journalistic rubric to do their interviews; it was an approach to historical inquiry which would become more central to my instructional objectives as the year wore on.

The part of my effort I felt most confident about was the development of such strategies for getting at the important issues and meanings of history. Another example was the grid developed in response to the realization that most of my students had very little concept of, or ability to evaluate, the relative importance of a series of historical events, let alone their interrelationships. I asked them to use the following three questions to assess the importance of a given event, person's life, social movement, or historical process:

(1) What was its effect on other events/social movements/historical processes?
(2) How big was the effect/how many people were affected?
(3) How significant was its impact on the way individual people lived their lives?

This happened about the same time we were discussing three major social/cultural transformations in the United States which all reached their peaks during approximately the same four decades (1860-1900); these three were industrialization, explosive immigration and urban growth, and westward expansion. So, since it was also important to get a sense of how these phenomena fed each other in a sort of vicious cycle, I put them on a grid with the three questions vertically along the left side, and these three big processes along the top; the boxes which
formed the grid were drawn indicating the intersecting spaces defined by looking along the page to the right of each question, and downward from each of the three processes named across the top. Students were asked to fill in as much information as they knew or could find out from their textbooks in response to the three questions with respect to each of the three processes.

"The Juggler" (or "The Day the Masks Melted Together")

These were reasonably well-conceived exercises, and no doubt would have reaped some interesting results, if they had been given a chance to work. This was not to be, however, and for a number of reasons. One was that I did not have enough faith in my own impulses in, and approaches, to the teaching of history—particularly vis-a-vis the State of California’s curriculum framework for U.S. History. Also, there was limited time to prepare my own lessons as the paper correcting mounted and periodic grade reporting deadlines loomed. I became increasingly reliant on the textbooks I had and on other people's materials and strategies for "covering the material," appearing to be "on top of things" in consideration of the classroom management consequences of not being so, and generally succumbing to many of the other pressures I felt building up on me from outside my classroom walls. By the end of the year, in fact, I had most of my classroom systems in place, but at the cost of being increasingly beholden to the textbook and increasing student

37 Ironically, these systems are probably of little value to me now, given how radically I have changed my view of what needed/would need to go on, if I were to return to Esperanza to teach U.S. History again. (Further description of how this is true follows in subsequent chapters.)
dependency on it as the main source of information, as well as at the expense of
developing more imaginative and/or emergent approaches. Teaching was beginning
to seem like one big juggling act to me, and I saw myself dropping the balls all over
the place.

Last, but certainly not least, my students didn't seem to be interested in much
of what I was trying to do. This, of course, was actually central to any hope of
success in "closing the sale" of U.S. History to my young customers. Yet it was not
simply a matter of them buying a version of history with which they might be
uncomfortable or in disagreement, either. At least on an explicit level, I had
emphasized that the textbook was not necessarily "the Truth" about U.S. History, but
just "a winner's version" of what had taken place. I invited critical interpretations of
events, if students would make an effort to develop them; in retrospect, however, I
would argue that many of the messages implicit in my day-to-day practice of teaching
as described here contradicted this.

One way this happened is that I stressed individual responsibility in the
completion of and involvement in tasks. This philosophy definitely pervaded
everything that was done in my classroom, and grew steadily during the year as my
ability to put much energy into taking responsibility for many others became more
severely worn. If a student was motivated to take up my system and do well enough
to at least pass my class, I was usually greatly appreciative and went out of my way
to support their efforts. If s/he was not, however, it may have seemed as though I did
not care. And for the great majority of my students, motivation was a problem.
It is important to note the way this last statement is phrased: "motivation was a problem." It is intended specifically to avoid the issue of blame or trying to pinpoint responsibility for this situation, but it is at the very core of my concern for these students and my reasons for pursuing this analysis. The question for me, then, is why do my students lack motivation for doing the kind of schoolwork they are faced with in my class and in many others?

Perhaps, by identifying some of the answers to this and related questions, we can really address the failure I experienced, which seems endemic to those who allow themselves to remain open to the feelings of related frustration and anguish that accompany such emotions. And, in addressing the reasons, we may be able to change the equation to allow for a different result. Without such an inquiry, however, it is unreasonable to seriously expect that public secondary teachers (or those at other levels) will be able to plumb the depths of such students' inertia.

It is also important that it not sound as though the failure rate was overwhelming, but it was substantial; in my classes, over half my students failed, even when they remained in my class for a second term after having failed the first term. My standards seemed reasonable to me, too; I had to downgrade my standards of performance a little because I had just come from teaching for over two years at the university level. Because my grading system was based half on homework and half on tests and non-homework projects, I made it possible for students who were not good test takers (and not even necessarily literate) to pass the course by being diligent completers of homework and performing minimally on tests. For those who
were quick studies and good at taking tests, only a minimum amount of homework was required, if they could do well enough on tests without completing it.

The major weakness in my curriculum was that it was so textbook-based, I believe, especially given the rate of literacy in the school; having just finished my training in TESL, however, I figured I could rationalize my sense of needing the textbook to teach by focusing on teaching reading and study skills/strategies, using the text as content. My students were not thrilled with the idea. There is no question that many modifications could have been made right in my classroom, like using the textbook less centrally and relying more on my own ingenuity, personal, and school resources.

This certainly would have happened if I had stayed at it over the next several years. But there is also no question that I would have easily burnt out within five years if I had been expected--by myself or others--to continue to dedicate myself to my work the way I felt I had to during that first year. The toll such a commitment would have taken on my family and personal life, my physical and emotional health, and my enthusiasm and optimism about the future of public schooling seems astronomical to me, now. You could not have paid me enough to keep at it for five years, given the way I felt at the end of "Year One."

This is one issue about which I'll probably never know how much agreement among my colleagues there was or is, since it is often such a private matter and not the kind of discussion of which careers are made. As in most other lines of work, there were teachers who loved it 95% of the time, and there were those who have
made a career of teaching although they rarely have a good word to say about it, except with respect to the vacation benefits. But there is consensus that it is a very difficult, if sometimes (or is it often?) rewarding way to make a living.

When I would leave my classroom, during my "prep" period--50 minutes each day, lunch, and before or after school, I sometimes visited with other teachers in the teacher's lunchroom mid-campus, occasionally with my social studies colleagues or other fellow ESL teachers in their offices or rooms at the far ends of the school (when I wasn't in union meetings), frequently in the main office or teacher mailroom making copies or filing papers, and once in a while with some of my students or assisting advising certain extracurricular student clubs' activities. So I was exposed to a pretty wide range of opinions, outlooks, and types of people among the faculty at Esperanza in many settings; mostly, I was grateful for the variety.

One thing that can be said for certain about the Esperanza faculty as a whole was that they were pretty committed to pushing the district to come to an agreement with their union concerning a new contract. As mentioned earlier, this particular group of teachers had been the most supportive of any in the district about making a dramatic stand, if necessary, to force the district's hand. They succeeded in early May, after over four months of labor tension and job actions. The result was at least a symbolic victory for the rank and file; a 2% cost of living raise was given and incorporated into the permanent pay schedule, and no health care or other benefits were sacrificed or cut back. Most importantly, the teachers did not experience a freeze on wages with respect to the "step and column" schedule of regular education-
and years of service-related pay increases under which they had originally been hired. In this particular year, with the California economy in a deep recession, not losing ground had to be considered a victory.

One of the groups of teachers I associated with most was the younger—about twenty-four to forty year old—Latino teachers at our school, whether they self-identified as Latinos, Chicanos, Mexicanos, or Americans.\(^{38}\) There were about fifteen such faculty members out of about eighty-five teachers, and a definite majority of these were men. There did not seem to be any great differences between their success rates and mine, from what I knew, and based on the ways I heard many of these colleagues talk. My "numbers" placed me in the lower end of all teachers, while not at the extreme.\(^{39}\)

One of my colleagues, Esteban, a young Chicano man who I counted among my closest friends there, had an almost identical success and failure rate in his classes, although, by comparison to me, he seemed much more knowledgeable about teaching and confident in his approach. This was true both with respect to the teaching of history as subject matter, and to his use of strategies for varying the modes and media of learning he incorporated into his instruction. For the school as a whole, I heard the following statistic referred to as epitomizing the current situation

\(^{38}\) For a further explanation of why I have used a multiplicity of names to refer to people who might be considered part of this ethnic category, see Ogbu (1987) and the following chapter of this work.

\(^{39}\) It should be noted here that my sense of how the success/failure rate of my students compared to those of other teachers is entirely impressionistic, based as it is on informal discussions I had with various colleagues about the topic; these statements do not reflect anything resembling a systematic collection of data.
at Esperanza: of the average 600 freshman students being admitted over each of the last several years, 250 were graduating. Even this figure probably included many who were taking five years to complete their studies, rather than the intended four. So I was in an "acceptable" range—of at least with respect to the prevailing averages of the school as a whole—although it did not seem very acceptable to me.

But essentially what I gathered from these colleagues was that being a Latino teacher was not necessarily an advantage, in terms of being able to anticipate greater cooperation from students in general, although it is equally true that it meant a great deal to some of their (and my) students. In terms of characterizing the qualities of those teachers who seemed least perturbed by the challenges they faced, what appeared to be a lot more important than being seen as an "ally" by one's students (in the sense of being "of common origin," ethnically) was experience, not to mention the confidence, the "bag of tricks", and the ability to take things in stride that come with it. It also seemed—both from what I saw and heard elsewhere, and from what I experienced in my own classroom as I got more comfortable during the year—that I heard students complain the least about the teachers who I knew possessed these qualities.

Some interesting lessons were in all this for me, although they were lessons I had already learned many times before; authority was acknowledged by my students where they sensed it really existed, not where they were told it existed. So, even though I was officially "the teacher," I had to be tested in various ways to see if I deserved this designation. Related to this, I also began to realize once again that
authority is born of respect, and a deeply held one, at that--not one that is *spoken of*,
but one that is *lived*.

Then there was the issue of the value of the bodies of knowledge (in my class
and others) my students were being told they needed to know in order to graduate.
This was considerably more problematic, and it put a strain on teachers' efforts to
establish authority, as well. The main reason the students who were motivated to stay
in school did so (whether or not they were making reasonable progress in their
graduation requirements) seemed to be social; most really thrived on being able to
spend the day with their friends. If they were committed to graduating, this was often
a response to family pressure and, with the exception of the small percentage (10-
15%) who saw themselves as "college bound," most met requirements with far less
than unbounded enthusiasm for their work.

Having said this, I cannot add that these characteristics were unique to this
time and place; the student body where I went to high school in the late 1960's, in a
suburban, largely white middle class neighborhood in southeastern Los Angeles
County, may well have been very similar in its composition with respect to these
matters.\textsuperscript{40} So, perhaps the ratios of engaged or "invested" learners (Peirce, 1995) is
a universal characteristic of North American public secondary schools across time
and geographical location, and nothing can really be done by the schools (in and of

\textsuperscript{40} If so--as it seems to have with my students at Esperanza, the explanation may have had more
to do with differences in socioeconomic status (i.e., "blue collar" vs. "white collar") between
households, and commensurate relative levels in the valuation of schooling within those households,
in the town where I went to high school. This is what Ogbu (1987) has essentially argued in his
discussion of the "postschool opportunity structure" and its relationship to motivation in schools.
themselves) to increase the number of students who are actively engaged in what they are studying in school, given the socioeconomic structures of which the schools are a part.

Nonetheless, the issue of students' involvement in their education seems critical, maybe because of the pervasive sense of economic contraction which currently fills the air. I want very much for these students to have a better than even chance to be able to help provide for themselves and their families as they approach adulthood. Maybe this is not ultimately my business; perhaps I am projecting my images of what constitutes a more just, egalitarian society, with more of the rewards of participation in the society being made accessible to them, without sufficient regard for their visions—a state of affairs that cannot possibly create a more just, egalitarian, or accessible world.

Related to this last point, there is one last issue which I feel very uncomfortable addressing in this context; that issue is the gender roles commonly accepted in this/these culture(s). I suspect the discomfort lies in my relative lack of background knowledge of the subject, its historical and cultural dimensions, and in the fact that it certainly did not appear explicitly in any distinguishing behaviors characterizable as/ascribable to gender identity. It also is uncomfortable for me to discuss because of my unwillingness to impose my views about gender equity in a situation where I know as little as I do about other aspects of students' lives. Nonetheless, I am sure there were some instances of sexism. Perhaps the reason I was not more acutely sensitive to such potential differences was that my eyes were
on all of the students as a group most of the time, but as is often the case, this probably translated into a disproportionate amount of my time and energy being devoted to the behavior and the needs of the young men in my classes.

Thus, while I am aware of gender issues in education in a more general sense, until I began to read sociolinguistic studies like Uchida (1992) and Goldstein (1992), I had not considered the subtleties of this issue in regard to Esperanza High, and most of what may have been taking place was not so pronounced as to make it seem prominent, from my perspective. In spite of this, I suspect that further research would undoubtedly lead to some fascinating and worthwhile observations and generalizations, especially related to the roles young women like those in my classes are expected (or refuse) to play—in their homes, among their friends, and in the classroom, with respect to issues of silencing, the meaning of seeking success outside the home, and community attitudes about self-assertive behaviors on the part of young women.

This was about where things stood for me, in terms of my reflections on my first year at Esperanza, when I began packing boxes in anticipation of our move to Toronto in August, 1994. I had, of course, done some preliminary and informal analysis of why things had seemed so unsuccessful and unsatisfying for me there. But it was still a largely unsystematized patchwork of thoughts about what could have happened differently in my classroom, and institutionally (in the school, the district, the community, teacher training programs, etc.) that might have changed feelings about the outcome, for my students and for me. I could see the ripples of the splash
made in my classroom--by my arrival in it?!--spreading through and beyond all these levels of social structural hierarchy, even as far as state and federal-level policymaking; I felt myself trapped in a much larger web of potential obstacles and areas which needed to be addressed, if I was to achieve the objectives I had set out for myself with respect to my students in Joaquin.
Chapter 5: Bridging the Gap Between Our Students and Ourselves

Looking behind the masks

"E per si muove." [Nevertheless, it does move.]
--Galileo Galilei, 1633 ..."as he arose from his knees" at a hearing in a court of the Inquisition, where he had been forced to recant his declared support for the Copernican (heliocentric) system of astronomy (Columbia Encyclopedia, 1952, p. 741).

It is idealistic and even presumptuous, I realize, to assume that I can have any significant impact with regard to affecting "revolutionary change" (which is precisely the kind of impact I hope that I can have in my career, and which I hope to propose in this paper) from within an institution like the educational system. The dilemma, as posed by some of the late 60's-early 70's political activists of my generation in the U.S. (e.g., Bobby G. Seale and Huey P. Newton, co-founders of the Black Panther Party), has been stated thus: "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

While there is truth in this argument if we think of revolution as something sudden, violent, and disruptive of the existing social order, we can alternatively define revolution as something gradual, deliberate, and transformative of the existing social order. As Cornel West pointed out in a recent keynote address to the annual convention of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in New Orleans (March, 1996), the word has not always had such violent connotations; in the astronomical context, it refers instead to a returning to where you once were—a meaning which totally belies its radical connotation in the political domain.

In this sense, then, revolution as in "scientific revolution" (Kuhn, 1962) occurs
when scientists are persuaded of the viability of alternative paradigms until a "critical mass" is reached in the numbers of those who identify the new paradigm as a more complete or accurate explanation of a phenomenon, at which point the dominant paradigm shifts, sometimes radically so. Change of this nature, while occasionally or even often catalyzed by sudden drastic shifts like violent revolutionary struggles leading to the replacement of monarchies as governing entities by representative assemblies or other types of coups d'etat, and precipitated by what Marx might have called "the inherent contradictions" in a social system, are not always effected violently.

The replacement of the Ptolemaic view that the Sun revolved around the Earth (geocentrism) in the sixteenth century by the assertion of Copernicus, and later by Galileo that it was in fact the other way around, is one example of such a revolutionary shift; it was not only perceived as potentially violently revolutionary by those who understand how a new paradigm such as Copernicus's threatened their own status in the then-existing social order (as well as perhaps by its proponents), but usually and most profoundly in retrospect, by subsequent generations. While this "paradigm shift" (Kuhn, 1962) was initially revolutionary only in the context of astronomical science, and clearly viewed as potentially socially revolutionary by the Roman Catholic Church, it did not lead to any direct or immediate transformation in the prevailing relations between social classes, or in the Church's role in those relations, that has been documented. Its impact does not appear, within the period of a single day or even a single lifetime, to have had a profound affect on the way
people lived their lives.

Nonetheless, over a period of centuries, a heliocentric paradigm to explain the relationship of the various planets of our solar system to the Sun and to one another had important consequences for changes in human understanding about the shape of the earth, and obviously for contingent exploration and development of the world as a result of ocean travel, global trade, and European colonialist expansion. The heliocentric paradigm can also be linked to changes in the way human beings thought about all our knowledge, the way people in the Western world began to question their own cherished beliefs (e.g., geocentrism), the way they started to think about where control over "the wisdom of the ages," historically seen as embodied in kings and certain religious institutions, actually resided (Brecht, 1966). But does this mean that Copernicus or Galileo were revolutionaries, or that they were in favor of revolutionary change in the prevailing social order of their times? There is no evidence to support such a contention. Nonetheless, as we have seen, Galileo's work--based as it was on what he was certain were some objective, scientifically provable truths, as Phillips (1990) defines them--could reasonably be characterized as revolutionary in its effects.

Galileo, who was tried by the Inquisition in 1633 for his refusal to cease promoting and teaching of the Copernican system, could not privately abandon what he understood to be "the truth," simply because his life was threatened. Publicly, though, he was "brought to the point of abjuration of all writings and beliefs that hold the sun to be the central body and the earth a moving body revolving with the other
planets about it" (Columbia Encyclopedia, 1952). My own personal identification with Galileo has something to do with the fact that if he had been alive during the latter half of the twentieth century, his personal automobile would probably have sported the popular antinuclear bumper sticker of the 1980's which admonishes us to "Question Authority."

The motivation in making a strong commitment to questioning authority is not to stir up "trouble," although as we have seen, it has the potential to do so; questioning authority, in fact, is the very basis of scientific inquiry. This is a fact which Galileo and Kuhn both seem to have understood very well, but which at times seems to elude many of us in academia and elsewhere in the educational systems of which we are a part. As we have seen from the above example of Galileo's dispute with the Roman Catholic Church, one person's trouble is another person's truth—in this instance, in fact, it seems to have been seen to be true bidirectionally as a truth.

The challenge of learning, of lifelong education, of teachers and other educators is demanding that we constantly remember to challenge ourselves as learners and knowers, even as we demand this of our students. In assuming the mantle of authority that comes with our status as professional educators in our society, it seems to me that it is our responsibility constantly to test our own deeply held beliefs, however threatening this might seem, to make sure that any "objective reality" (Phillips, 1990) we can agree to be guided by remains worthy of such status, and that we are thereby worthy of the social status that has been conferred upon us.

Part of making such a commitment is identifying what our "objective reality" is,
and doing this involves at least a nod of the head to those who argue that there is no such thing. I am moved to disagree with such a position in its most absolute sense, though, just as I have come to disagree with what many of the leaders of the countercultural movement with whom I shared a range of opinions during the 1960's and 1970's--and with whom I suspect I still do, Eldridge Cleaver (1978) and Jerry Rubin (1976) notwithstanding--used to say about being either "part of the solution" or "part of the problem." My use of the expression "objective reality," much as it does for Phillips (1990), extends only to a relatively limited set of observations of my world which seem virtually immutable (e.g., "The sun rises in the morning," "I will die--physically, at least--someday," "I am limited in my power to control everything that influences my life," etc.).

Underlying this assertion is a recognition that, while I consider myself to be a postmodernist in many ways, I do not consider myself to be a radical relativist. I do believe that the possibility exists that someone will be able to "prove" Copernicus and Galileo wrong, although I concede that--partly because I am not a scientist in the conventional sense of the word, i.e., not an astronomer, mathematician, or physicist--it is difficult for me to imagine what such a proof might look like or how it might influence my day-to-day existence. I know from my knowledge of human history and personal experiences that such a possibility exists.

The limits of the traditional academic (read: positivist/empiricist) view of what constitutes knowledge of the last several hundred years is that we frame so much of our knowledge in dichotomies, in continua, in bipolar and seemingly mutually
exclusive opposites. Part of my "objective reality" is that, while it may at times (even often) be useful to consider matters and phenomena within such frames and measure them somehow along such continua, only a small portion of "what I know to be true" actually fits neatly within/along such representations of reality.

For those who operate utilizing the modes of classification and categorization inherent in academic models as their way of knowing, the obvious implication of my distrust of them is that I must, based on what I have said so far, be instead an "experientialist" or a "phenomenalist." But this is precisely the trap of such "either/or" thinking. While it is true that I am a great believer in experience as a teacher, I am also a great believer in analysis, reflection, and consideration of experience as a critical component of learning. After all, it is this latter belief that has, to a great extent, led me along my career path as a student, political activist, revolutionary, actor, scholar, teacher, and writer, and eventually "educator," a title which I see as inclusive of all the preceding titles.

Simultaneously, though, my own esoteric career path is one of the most important ways in which I rebel—by eschewing the limitations imposed by being named. Essentially, my sense of myself in relation to the professions I have chosen thus far in my life is one of moving into and out of the centers of participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) with respect to each of them, alternating between the role of participant and observer, and at times doing a little of both almost simultaneously. Sometimes I am simply the spectator looking down upon the field of play from the edge of the arena, operating completely outside the conscious awareness of the
players; at other times I am fully submerged in the activity of my profession-of-the-moment (Schechner, 1988).

There are times where I consciously position myself in this way, when I manipulate my identity insofar as I am either of a certain profession or outside it, and at other times where I effortlessly slip from one state to the other without even being conscious of it myself. I usually enjoy this fluidity, much as I enjoy slipping in and out of conversations that alternately interest and bore me, but am nonetheless mindful of. This may seem like a very mild form of rebellion, indeed; as I have already indicated, though, I do not conceive of it as being so, any more than I think of the Copernican system of astronomy as being less than revolutionary.

All this discussion of Copernicus, Galileo, and revolution is not intended to aggrandize myself nor to over-romanticize the ideals of that subgroup of my generation which was once identified with the label "counterculture." It is simply to say that, however sheepish various former members of that subgroup may feel about their participation in that movement twenty years or more later, for me there is no shame in it. It is just one of the more recent instances of a proud tradition of such rebelliousness and questioning of authority, both in the history of the U.S. (at least as I described certain dimensions of it I see as relevant, in the previous chapter) and throughout that of humankind itself.

My commitment to my journey, as I have attempted to point out, is as much about keeping the ideals and knowledge I carry with me readily recognizable and available for use, and about viewing the world through this lens which I have
constructed from my experience and understanding, as it is about striving to reach my goal. For me, the two are inseparable, and I will not survive the journey, intellectually speaking, without my ideals and knowledge to sustain me. As Greene (1988) says, "We shall be concerned with intelligent choosing and, yes, humane choosing, as we shall be with the kinds of conditions necessary for empowering persons to act on what they choose. (p. 4)" Other aspects of the ideology which color my vision (and at times cloud it, no doubt), will be presented here as they become central to the unfolding of my story.

**My students as learners**

Few challenges facing North American schools in the last few decades have been more intransigent or affected a greater number of individual learners than those related to the question of how best to provide formal education and educational opportunity to learners coming from widely divergent cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This question has been critical in urban schools in the United States and Canada for decades, and it is now becoming more of an issue in rural, semirural, and suburban settings, as well.

This problem is complicated by the fact that the vast majority of professional educators in school settings in these environments do not share the cultural and/or linguistic backgrounds of their learners, in spite of the limited inroads made in the past thirty years as a result of admissions policies and employment legislation (e.g., Affirmative Action and the Equal Opportunity Employment Act in the United States),
whose explicit common objective is to allow for the establishment of a professional work force whose membership is proportionally more representative of the demographic mix of the larger population. Looking outward from my classroom, I saw many things happen which seemed to have their roots in events and places far beyond my schoolroom's walls. This impression was confirmed when I began to read some of the literature from the field of sociology in education and from sociolinguistics, in particular. These materials provided a theoretical and conceptual framework which extended beyond the confines of my day-to-day reality at school and in my classes, to begin clarifying and solidifying hypothetical connections I had begun making to the world beyond the Esperanza campus.

Mehan's (1987) description of the institutional pressures felt from within the classroom as the result of "... not [being an] autonomous configuration (p. 116)" is extremely relevant here, for example, particularly as it describes the interconnections within the public education apparatus above and beyond the teacher and her classroom. As Mehan suggests, these kinds of pressures not only work to define teaching duties and create language and interaction which reproduce culturally acceptable social relations inside the classroom; they also reinforce what he sees as a school's central societal function of social stratification in and outside of schools.

But the process of making sense of the mess I had found myself in at Esperanza, and of investigating ways to begin "unsticking myself" from this web, sociologically and politically speaking (and for my purposes as a doctoral student), really began to develop primarily from an even more distant perspective, with the
assistance of two readings from the field of educational anthropology; these were Ogbu (1987) and Erickson (1987). Until I am able to return to Esperanza and do a more systematic sort of ethnographic research, however, it is the synthesis of my experiences, my impressions and intuitions about them, and the research and publications of others which I will put to use in understanding my experiences. Perhaps, through these reflections, I can add in some worthwhile ways to the considerable relevant work which has already been done in these areas.

Ogbu’s (1987) article is one of the pieces which provided the foundations for the construction of this framework for understanding. Ogbu’s work was helpful because it made me aware of how and why one of my preconceptions (i.e., that since almost all my students were “of Mexican origin,” they were very homogenous in terms of how they could best be “reached” by me) was destined to disintegrate the moment I set foot in Esperanza. He calls attention to the "postschool opportunity structure," and I think this concept is key to understanding the way many of my students valued (or devalued) what was happening in their classrooms. I would venture to say that the vast majority of my students were not immigrants themselves—probably 70% or more—although, in most of these cases, it was either their parents or grandparents who were immigrants. So they were not very far removed from this experience, either, in several respects. Ogbu (pp. 318-319) uses a typology of three main minority categories (autonomous, immigrant, and castelike/involuntary), in order to emphasize other qualities members of these subgroups within minorities have in common—especially with regard to their attitudes and/or relationships to the dominant ideology.
of American society—which he feels are more salient in explaining why they behave the way they tend to when participating in interactions in social institutions dominated by "white American ideology."

The latter two of Ogbu's three categories are useful in describing one of the important determinants of the likelihood of success for these teenagers; for the 20-25% of students in my class who were first generation immigrants from Mexico, it was true that almost none of them were defiant of my authority (or of anyone's, for that matter) in the classroom or the school; they were almost never disruptive in any sense, generally preferring to sit quietly and listen to what was going on in class, work quietly by themselves or in small groups with others of the immigrants, and accepting at face value both the form their education took and the notion that they would have to work hard to earn the rewards they were confident would result from becoming educated.

There are limits to the usefulness of the third of Ogbu's categories. It either needs to be recognized as limited in its applicability, or has to be augmented with another category which can more accurately be said to fit a substantial number of Esperanza's students. He defines castelike or involuntary minorities as "... people who were originally brought into United States society involuntarily through slavery, conquest, or colonization." The Chicano Movement's interpretation of history asserts that Chicano people were dominated in the latter two ways, on their own home

41 This movement would also, incidentally, certainly identify these students, as well as their parents and grandparents, as "Chicano." This is related to one of the reasons classifying these people ethnically by one of the various labels referred to in this paper is so problematic; it has to do with labels that have been ascribed to members of these groups which are either considered offensive
territory, *Aztlan*, which comprises large parts of what is now the American Southwest.

While their parents or grandparents are/were immigrants, *they* exhibit many of the:

. . . secondary cultural differences . . . that arise *after* two populations have come in continuous contact or *after* members of a given population have begun to participate in an institution controlled by another population, like the schools. In other words, secondary cultural differences develop *as a response to a contact situation*, especially a contact situation involving the domination of one group by another (1987, p. 320).

Ogbu's definition either corroborates the Chicano Movement's interpretation of the history of what transpired over geopolitical and territorial matters between the Mexican and U.S. governments, or there needs to be a further clarification of the distinctions between these two groups. Another explanation might be that those of my students who fit into the "involuntary" category are simply the first generation of their respective families to do so. If this is the case (and while the distinctions Ogbu makes here seem useful), several other interesting questions also arise, as a result. For example, at what point does contact become "continuous?" At what point and how does "participation in an institution controlled by another population" transform an *immigrant* into a member of an *involuntary* minority? A significant number of my students and their families behaved more like immigrant minorities than castelike or involuntary ones, even if they had been "in continuous contact" or "participated in an institution controlled by another group, like the schools," for more than one year because of the terms' origins in relation to their association with groups which have been dominant over others of them in the past (e.g., *Hispanic, Mexican American*), or which are too broad to be meaningful and/or respectable, from their points of view (e.g., *Latino, Chicano*, etc.). For a reading of the history of what is now the southwestern United States which reflects some of the analysis that characterizes the Chicano perspective, see Camarillo (1984) and Calderrama (1982), among others.
I believe Ogbu hit the proverbial nail on the head when he said, "For the schools to succeed in educating children of a given segment of American society, school credentials must play a positive role in the people's folk theory of getting ahead. (p. 319)" He argues that, as long as there appears to be a "job ceiling" for (in this instance) Chicano youth, it will be difficult if not impossible to engage them in what schools have determined is important for them to know. The extent to which the effect of this job ceiling and lack of access is more directly true for their parents and/or grandparents than for my students makes drawing the line between Ogbu's categories a little vague. But there were definitely echoes of an awareness of it in the students' comments overheard in my classes, as well as reflections of it in the absence rates, which averaged over 20%. At least it can be said that regular attendance did not seem to be valued by the students themselves as a group, whether or not this reflected parents' attitudes. 42

As with almost all high school students, these teenagers loved any excuse to get out of class. But they also did not seem to be convinced of the value of staying in class when it might serve their larger objectives to pass their classes and/or

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*As a corollary to this, attendance would routinely drop off when the middle and/or elementary schools were closed and Esperanza remained open. It was generally presumed this was a result of increased demand for childcare of younger siblings at these and other times, when only the older children in families were available to look after younger brothers and sisters. So, it was not simply a matter of attitude explaining attendance patterns; it sometimes reflected the necessity of what may have been difficult but clear prioritizing of options on the part of those forced to allocate scarce family resources.*
graduate, either, nor were very many aware of when lack of attendance might put their goals in jeopardy.

In an effort to establish their own style, which—as pointed out earlier—Ogbu defines as "a specific feature of [another] secondary cultural difference," many of my students also engaged in what he calls cultural inversion.

Cultural inversion is the tendency for members of one population, in this case involuntary minorities, to regard certain forms of behaviors, certain events, symbols and meanings as not appropriate for them because they are characteristic of members of another population (e.g., white Americans); at the same time, the minorities claim other (often the opposite) forms of behaviors, events, symbols, and meanings as appropriate for them because these are not characteristic of white Americans. Thus, what the minorities consider appropriate or even legitimate behaviors or attitudes for themselves are defined in opposition to the practices and preferences of white Americans. . . Involuntary minorities . . . appear to develop a new sense of social identity in opposition to the social identity of the dominant group after they have become subordinated, and they do so in reaction to the way the dominant group members treat them in social, political, economic, and psychological domains. (1987, p. 323)

Besides feeling that Ogbu captured many of the sociological realities that influenced my students behavior, I also sensed that Esperanza students seemed to have a lot in common with the Native American students in Philips' (1972) ethnography of a school in Warm Springs, Oregon. This was particularly true with respect to their failure "to participate verbally in classroom interaction because the social conditions for participation to which they have become accustomed in [their home] community are lacking (p. 392)." Another of Philips' concepts which might prove extremely productive in describing and explaining some of my students actions was that of oppositional behavior. There seemed to be a close correlation between those consistently doing most poorly—in terms of passing or doing well in their
classes—and those who most actively and frequently engaged in oppositional behavior; they, like the Warm Springs children, "consistently show more interest in what their fellow students are doing than in what the teacher is doing." (1972, p. 376).

On the other hand, I am not convinced that this is unusual for high school students, regardless of background.

In its current state, the connection between my students and these two notions is more an explanatory hunch about a difference observed than it is a statement of fact that these terms accurately describe the phenomena seen to have existed in my classes, but this hunch certainly merits further exploration. It seems completely reasonable to surmise that my students and their antecedents have more in common with many Native American tribes, both genetically and culturally, than they do with white America.

Notwithstanding the importance of Philips' contributions to interpreting the behavior of many of my students, it was Erickson's (1987) work which provided some explanations which seemed comprehensive enough in their scope to explain more of the origins of the problems my students and I were experiencing. This article is also useful for its critique of some of the shortcomings of certain other researchers cited elsewhere in my analysis, particularly of the adequacy of what he calls Ogbu's (and others') "perceived labor market argument."

As Erickson asserts, this argument "has two chief weaknesses." The first of these is that it is so completely "economic determinist" that "the general social structure drives the action, perceptions and sentiments of particular actors in local
scenes of action. In such a view there is no room for human agency. Such a social theory, when applied to education, implies that neither the domestic minority students nor their teachers can do anything positive together educationally. . . . The second major weakness in the labor market explanation," according to Erickson, is that it makes the argument on "very shaky . . . empirical grounds. (p. 343)" He adds, in a way that both builds upon and diverges from some of Ogbu's premises:

. . . [I]n schools, deliberately taught learning seems to be a problem. It is differentially distributed along lines of class, race, ethnicity, and language background.

Students in school, like other humans, learn constantly. When we say they are 'not learning' what we mean is that they are not learning what school authorities, teachers, and administrators intend for them to learn as the result of intentional instruction (Gearing and Sangree, 1979). Learning what is deliberately taught can be seen as a form of political assent. Not learning can be seen as a form of political resistance.

Assent to the exercise of authority involves trust that its exercise will be benign. This involves a leap of faith--trust in the legitimacy of the authority and in the good intentions of those exercising it, trust that one's own identity will be maintained positively in relation to the authority, and trust that one's own interests will be advanced by compliance with the exercise of authority. In taking such a leap of faith one faces risk. If there is no risk, trust is unnecessary. (p 344)

It is clear to me that there were many questions of trust and risk in the culture of Esperanza High School at all levels, and that the stakes were perceived as high for failing to accurately predict the extent of the risk one was taking. Not many students were even willing to risk performing well by the standards prevalent in my and many of my colleagues' classes. And even though I developed a sense of trust with many individual students, there was a definite sense that I was not to be trusted on a certain level because of what I stood for to my students. As Erickson goes on to explain:
Legitimacy, trust, and interest are phenomena that are both institutional and existential. As institutional phenomena, they are located in the social structure and in patterns of role relationships that recur over long time spans and are differentially allocated according to access to monetary capital and cultural capital. But legitimacy, trust, and interest are also existential and emergent phenomena that are continually negotiated within the intimate circumstances and short time scale of everyday encounters between individual teachers, students, and parents. The institutional legitimacy of the school is affirmed existentially as trust in face-to-face encounters between school staff and students and their parents. (p. 345)

Shortly thereafter he makes a critical distinction between what he calls cultural boundaries and cultural borders:

Cultural boundaries can be thought of as behavioral evidence of culturally differing standards of appropriateness—in this instance, two subculturally differing ways of pronouncing final consonants. Boundaries—the manifest presence of cultural difference—are politically neutral phenomena; no difference in rights and obligations accrues to persons who act in either of the culturally differing ways. In situations of intergroup conflict, however, cultural boundaries can be treated as cultural borders, that is, the features of culture difference are no longer politically neutral phenomena; rights and obligations are allocated differently, depending on whether a person is revealed as possessing one kind of cultural knowledge rather than another . . . Different groups with different interests at stake can treat the existence of behaviorally similar items politically as opportunities for cultural boundary work or border work.

From here he proceeds to describe a situation which sounds very much like both Philips' oppositional behavior and Ogbu's cultural inversion:

The culturally distinctive oral performance of working class black children was initially present in both kinds of classrooms. In the latter kind of classroom the speech style of the students did not become an occasion for stigma and resistance. In the former kind of classroom, however, the use of black English vernacular became an occasion for stigmatizing border work by the teachers and for resistance by the children. As that happened, and as the year progressed, the speech style of the children became more and more different from that of the teacher. This meant that cultural difference was increasing in a situation of cross-cultural contact. This is an instance of a more general phenomenon--progressive cultural differentiation across time as a means of symbolic distancing between competing groups that are subsystems
of a larger system. That phenomenon has been called *complementary schismogenesis* by Bateson (1975), who sees it as a basic process of culture change (pp. 347-48) . . . Fine nuances of cultural performance are being attended to as salient, not large cultural differences, such as those between immigrant students and American students. These are secondary cultural differences, according to Ogbu's taxonomy (1982). The cultural differences are small, but they are not trivial as Ogbu has claimed (1987b) because they are not being treated as trivial by the actors themselves. On the contrary, [students seem] to be treating such cultural differences as a powerful political symbol. (p. 350)

Erickson's whole analysis, as represented by the excerpts above, rings true in explaining the behavior of many students at Esperanza, and helps contextualize some apparent contradictions--e.g., the fact that it seemed in many ways that my Latino colleagues were not necessarily feeling any more successful than I, in spite of the assumption I made that they would be more likely to succeed because of a sense of commonality with respect to cultural origin--in the events and behavior I observed at Esperanza. It also helps account for a generalized ambience of frustration, among many members of the community surrounding Esperanza High (including the parents of many of my students) that pervaded much of what took place there during the 1993-94 school year.

In concluding these reflections on my experiences at Esperanza, I wish to leave the reader with one last quote from Erickson, with whom I find myself in essential agreement on many matters. The article I have cited and described at

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*This is typical of the kinds of assumptions I made before analyzing these issues from a more disciplined sociological perspective. What has become clearer to me as a result of doing such an analysis is that a suitable definition of culture—one which enables us to legitimately generalize across a group—is still somewhat elusive. Therefore, I would hesitate to use this expression in this way now; instead I would be more inclined to use it as a description of "fragments of common background."*
length here, seems in its totality to be an argument for the notion of human agency, as well as a refutation of the limitations inherent in Ogbu's (1987) work:

If education can be no more than an epiphenomenon tied directly to the requirements of an economy, then little can be done within education itself. It is a totally determined institution. However, if schools (and people) are not passive mirrors of an economy, but instead are active agents in the processes of reproduction and contestation of dominant social relations, then understanding what they do and acting upon them becomes of no small moment. For if schools are part of a 'contested terrain,' . . . then the hard and continuous day-to-day struggle at the level of curriculum and teaching practice is part of these larger conflicts as well. The key is linking these day-to-day struggles within the school to other action for a more progressive society in that wider arena. [Apple and Weis 1983:22] (p. 351)
Chapter 6: Putting my understanding to work

Gaining understanding about the sociopolitical and socioeconomic influences on my students—and how these affect the experiences we had—is a critical piece of what I need to know, as a professional at work in this educational setting, in order to make sense of what was going on at Esperanza for my students and me during the 1993-94 school year. As is probably obvious from my description of the complexity of the situation (one which is not particularly uncommon, I would venture), this level of analysis of my experience began well before I even finished my work there in August, 1994. In retrospect, one might even say it began unconsciously on the first day I set foot in my new position there, nearly a year before, which is why the sociological analysis I embarked on upon my arrival at OISE the next month helped to clarify my understanding.

But to me, it is only one facet of the work I need to do to be an effective "curriculum planner" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) and educator. At this point, therefore, I must continue pondering how to achieve the construction of classrooms that "... might incorporate strategies appropriate for all the children in its confines," as Delpit (1988, p. 286) advocates. In view of the story of my Esperanza experiences, I will argue in this chapter for some dramatic changes in the ways teachers define their work and their responsibilities.

The first of these has implications for the way teachers allot their time on the job: how they view curriculum, assessment, and decisionmaking about it; the role their
students' voices and their knowledge of their students' lives plays in this
decisionmaking; the depth of understanding of--as well as of integration and
experimentation with--theoretical research in pedagogy which is established in their
teaching; and last (but certainly not least) the willingness to advocate for the
institutional accommodations necessary to accomplish this redefinition. In bridging
between our sociopolitical awareness and our "personal practical knowledge"
(Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), "understanding the forces that influence the
interactional choices we make in our classrooms and thinking critically about the
constraints that are imposed on those choices is central to how we define our roles
in our schools and the society beyond the school" (Cummins, in press).44

In other words, as a teacher attempting to make sense of my experience
at Esperanza, and trying to make the most of my emerging awareness of what was
taking place so that I could use that transformed understanding to inform practice in
a very immediate way, I should ideally be engaging in a "seat of the pants" variation
of action research (Kelly, 1985; Cohen and Manion, 1989). There is nothing
particularly unusual about this, and there are a number of scholars (e.g., Eisner,
1992, and Huberman, 1993, among others) who would argue that this immediacy of

44 In the same book, Cummins lays out the four elements he sees as either implicit or explicit in
"educator role definitions," the characteristics of which reflect "the extent to which (1) students'
language and culture are incorporated into the school program; (2) community participation is
encouraged as an integral component of children's education; (3) the instruction promotes intrinsic
motivation on the part of students to use language actively to generate their own knowledge; and (4)
professionals involved in assessment become advocates for students by focusing primarily on the
ways in which their academic difficulty is a function of interactions within the school context rather
than legitimizing the location of the problem within students." The approach I outline in the current work
shares this framework for understanding how we as educators might realign ourselves with respect
to our students' educational objectives.
feedback between what is observed, the processing of it through some epistemological frame by which a teacher has been trained, and the improvisation of an appropriate pedagogical response form the very essence of a teacher's work.

Also, as this suggests, the whole notion that "teacher" and "teacher researcher" should be thought of as distinct lines of work is called into question. As Diamond (1991) argues, there are few in the privileged position to appreciate the context(s) in which teaching takes place as well as teachers themselves, and therefore formulate/articulate the "personal practical knowledge" which Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and I see as being at the very core of improvement in teaching practice. This seems to imply that meaningful teacher improvement must of necessity take place "one teacher at a time," although I am not prepared to argue at this point that this is necessarily the case.

What I am prepared to argue here is that a more comprehensive analysis is required of my year at Esperanza than I might have been able to achieve had I stayed on the job there, as opposed to taking this time to do my doctoral work. This is a major problem, it seems to me, in the way teachers' work is institutionally structured; basing evaluations of teacher performance on models of efficiency that come from the private sector, manufacturing models of producing capable, socially productive individuals--what Freire (1983) would have called the "banking" model of schooling--is extremely misguided. It stresses productivity over satisfaction, selection over inclusion, and reproduction over innovation and imagination. Most importantly, it either compresses or eliminates the reflexivity required of teachers (particularly
those that find themselves in cross-cultural crossfires of expectation) who need the kinds of opportunities for reflection that I have had for the last two years.

As Noddings (1992) suggests, caring is a critical part of teacher improvement, and her work paints a picture—an accurate one, in my opinion—of systemic lack of caring in our institutions of education, which takes the problem well beyond one which can be resolved within the realm of teaching improvement alone. It would be safe to say that, at least during their preservice and at the starts of their careers, the vast majority of teachers care a great deal about the quality and effectiveness of their work, as well as about the experiences of the learners in their classrooms and beyond, as far as it is possible for that care to influence what happens to these students beyond the four walls that delimit the site of their teaching.

But when teachers are forced to justify substandard performances of students in terms of an externally imposed norm that does not pertain to their students, and pressured to get their students to produce to that norm even when it is not reasonable to expect this (as I did of my U.S. History students at Esperanza), the result is bound to be failure—or, at the very least, perceived failure—at all levels: for the learner, the learners' families, the teacher, the school, the school system, and for public policy in education generally. There are many examples of teachers having relationships with their students which we could identify as "caring" that have been cited in the literature. They cut across ethnic, class, race, sex and "demographic difference markers" of all kinds, and indicate the synergistic relationship between caring, learning, and the desire to learn. Gallas's (1994) book is one of the most
recent of these.

And it is inconceivable that the majority of parents of learners in settings of the kind I have been describing don't care what happens for their children educationally. Although there are undoubtedly some exceptions to this truism, it is arrogant in the extreme to assume that the parents of one dominant group or another hold a monopoly on caring about what happens to their children in, through, and because of their experiences in formal educational settings; any assumptions about this being the case must immediately be viewed with great skepticism with regard to the underlying bases of judgement—or, in the worst cases, motives—of those who express them.

There is evidence that teachers' attitudes change during the course of their careers, as much of the so-called "teacher's life cycle" research (especially Huberman, 1989, and Raymond, Butt, and Townsend, 1992) seems to indicate. What is clear from this body of research is that it is not at all surprising that teachers react with a sense of discouragement, frustration, or "burnout" in the face of the complex tasks they are responsible for accomplishing; they are at the very fulcrum of the pressure "from above" and that "from below," within the educational system. And who is closest to the teachers in this pressure vice? It is of course the students, about whom we all are (or at least claim to be) so concerned, and it is these students who are least equipped to cope with and most vulnerable to the damaging effects of this pressure.

As Noddings (1992) goes on to point out, we have let our concern with our
students' wellbeing become too much tied up with how they perform with various standardized forms of learning assessment, so that at least from the learners' perspective, the perceived message is that, if they fail, we won't or don't care about them as individual human beings. It is little wonder in such a context that so many students cannot cope with such pressure, or simply refuse to play this sort of a game by engaging in any of a wide range of resistance behaviors (Erickson, 1987); why should they risk losing when the psychic, emotional, and material stakes for them are so high? Why should these learners buy into a kind of competition in which it is becoming steadily and increasingly true that "it's not how you play the game, but whether you win or lose?"

Do not public and educational policy decisions like the ones we have been discussing here conspire against students like mine in achieving any more enduring or worthwhile sorts of success? Are not the very real adult anxiety about economic security, their own equally real concerns about physical safety--as well as the prospect of growing into adulthood in a world where these forces seem much more highly motivating than the desire to have something resembling a "happy, natural life" which might somehow allow them to transcend such concerns--conditions which undermine our efforts to provide meaningful education for our students? From that Spanish class in my third year of high school, Mr. Davidson's bulletin board message haunts and taunts me still: "No es justo, no es justo, no es justo . . ."

One important moral of my "high school suspension story" for me as a teacher was its reminder to me about what it was like to be a high school student: that it felt
good to rebel, that I felt wholly justified in my rebellion, and that regardless of whether it was "appropriate" for me to express my disagreement with my school's dress code in the particular manner and setting in which I had done it, I had done so in good faith that it was the right thing to do. In fact, part of the reason it felt so good was the certainty with which I acted, I suspect, and it felt very good also to have my parents confirm that--at the very least--I was within my rights and was justified in exercising them. My father's lessons about the importance of learning about history (and indirectly about politics, of course), had met with some success, it seemed.

This link between youthfulness and the exhilaration of righteous and/or rightful rebellion, then, is one of the messages from my own personal history which reverberated back to me at Esperanza from twenty-three years before. It is the phenomenon of which Ogbu's (1987) "style" is a variation, and in developmental terms, it is interwoven very tightly with adolescence, I believe. Adolescents, more than any other age group, it seems, need to feel they belong somewhere, that their families, their friends--in short, the people who mean the most to them--love and care about them, recognize their individual qualities, and value their participation in these groupings. These impulses were at the core of my desire to be a student body officer, to do well in school, and perhaps especially of my acts of rebellion in high school.

As Peirce (1995) suggests, when you add to this the complex issues surrounding trying to establish one's identity that many of my students were working on in their lives with respect to membership in the various "communities" by which they found themselves surrounded (i.e., their families, their groups of
friends/compadres/comadres, sometimes their gangs, their neighborhoods, that community signified by their Mexican origins, their generational ties, the Joaquin area as a whole, California, the U. S., etc.), it is little wonder they are experiencing great pangs of bewilderment, frustration, and resistance. This is a confusion that is contagious, one which often serves to undermine everyone's best impulses--not just on their own parts, but on the parts of those who interact with them educationally, about how to "negotiate identities" (as Cummins, in press, puts it), how to penetrate the facade and make contact with the person underlying the "mask of indifference" which is used to conceal these feelings. It is my intention here to consider how my classroom instructional practices might begin to accomplish this, to spiral back upon my classroom experience at Esperanza with the insights gained from almost two years of reflection, study, consideration, and reformulation of what a more liberatory learning experience might look like for my students, as well as for me.

One of the first things I would do is to work at trusting my intuition more; as I have suggested elsewhere, if there is anything I have expertise in, it is knowing how to make contact with people, to penetrate their defenses against being affected by others. This is something many of my students were very good at: shielding themselves within a mask of indifference that they themselves had molded. I would venture to say that there were very few of them that disliked me, but there were many who had developed a certain amount of "psychic callous" when it came to teachers as authority figures, and to their grades in school; they had failed often enough, in many cases, that they had learned to project indifference in the face of further
rejection of the scholastic type. And in so many of these cases, where the callous had hardened sufficiently, perhaps there really was a lack of concern about scholastic success. As a result, my biggest challenge was often to do the thing which demanded the most of my expertise, in terms of penetrating their "masks of indifference."

It is hard to think of anything that a group of teenagers cares more about than their own immediate and very personal lives. History textbooks, which might be difficult for many of them to read in the first place (even at the level of decoding), and which might have facts in them that seem worlds away from their own realities, exacerbate the feelings of difference and indifference students might feel exist between their teachers and themselves; they create many more anxieties than they do "narratives"--in Gallas's (1994) sense--for the establishment of a mutually valued curriculum. If texts are to serve this purpose (i.e., as "scaffolding" between teachers and students which allows for work in the "construction zone" [Wells, 1986]--or what Vygotsky termed the "zone of proximal development" [Cole, 1985] where new learning can take place), then initially the texts to be used cannot themselves in any way be perceived as impediments to new "construction."

This ties in, too, with Peirce's (1995) notion of students' "investments" in their learning, and forces the teacher into the role of researcher with respect to identifying and evaluating the applicability of those strategies, subject matters, and/or even spectacles which might best persuade their learners to invest or engage in learning.45

45 Eisner's (1968) linking of "qualitative intelligence" with teaching, which is described in greater detail in Chapter 8 of the current work, is based on a comparison of precisely these qualities of teachers' and researchers' work.
Further, it calls on educators to acknowledge the equality of importance between Piaget's affective and cognitive domains, when we evaluate the relevance of educational psychological theory for our classroom practice. Based on my data, I am prepared to assert that the schema for affect and for cognition are interconnected in certain important ways which have critical implications for teaching, although I am not prepared to state what these interconnections might look like.

Thinking about all this naturally led me to reflect on the role I played in making education not work for my students, as well, and as this writing indicates, I found plenty to consider in this light. In different learners, for a multiplicity of reasons the exploration of which is far beyond the scope of the present work, various relationships in this "circuitry" might exist; for one learner, any affect, positive or negative, might be adequate to ensure what we would identify as learning; for another, minimal or indiscernible affective processing of information might be required; and for still others, it might require tremendous surges of positive affect to overcome deeply ingrained inertia with respect to learning, especially when this inertia or resistance is rooted in a long personal history of disincentives to invest or engage. I believe a great number of my students at Esperanza had such an aversion to classroom learning, and that it expressed itself as "an active resistance to learning" (Cummins, in press). This aversion has its roots in socially, sociopolitically, socioeconomically, and ultimately, scholastically reinforced identities which are thrust upon them, and which they often therefore take upon themselves, in the taking up of identities as failures in school and in society.
A psychologist would call this process "internalization," I believe. Regardless of the terminology, however, it was a palpable fact in my classroom at Esperanza. There were plenty of bright teenagers in my classes, some of average intelligence, some exceptionally sharp, and others struggling to keep up with the average, but these were present in essentially typical proportional numbers, in such a way that the standard bell-shaped curve would almost certainly apply to their rankings on a culturally and linguistically-neutral IQ test, if such a thing were devisable. So why were about half these students failing my class and so many others, and "at risk" of flunking out of high school?

The key to explaining this is standardization of criteria. Just as a standard of English is almost impossible to pinpoint or to find in actual practice, so too is the identification of an educationally meaningful standard of what it is reasonable to expect of the "average" student in multicultural/multilingual contexts (let alone a description of the "average" language or "average" culturally/socially valued knowledge!). Again, for the moment, I wish to avoid the issue of whose interests such standards serve, although my analysis leads to the conclusion that this cannot be done indefinitely. As Cummins (in press) so eloquently states, "Inter-group power relations in the broader society are reflected in the organization of schooling (curriculum, language of instruction, assessment practices, tracking, degree of parental participation, etc.) and in the mindset that educators bring to the teaching of culturally diverse students."

For example, how does one evaluate the comparative intelligence, fitness for
productive participation in society, and rights to access to the material resources of a society (in short, the "prospects") for three different learners: a white, middle-class young woman who has foregone academic success for a shot at being the first female major league baseball player, a Somalian refugee student who has an extraordinary aptitude for mathematics but arrives in a North American school just as he should be about to graduate from high school based on his chronological age and scholastic progress in his native country, but who has little knowledge of English, and a child of Mexican origin who grows up in the streets of Joaquin, California, who values above all else helping her family struggle to subsist economically, even at the expense of her own dreams and aspirations to travel and to become a doctor. What should happen in terms of evaluating these three students when they are about eighteen years of age and at the point of departure from high school?

The value each has as a potential contributor to society is virtually unknowable based on the facts that I have presented, and without some comprehensive analysis of where the future might be leading us economically, as well as of who might be leading us there. Nonetheless, we impose standards that assume that we all agree about what a potentially valuable contribution might be, or even about who "we" are. And while these standards may not be intentionally racist or sexist in and of themselves, they are unquestionably rooted in a set of values which have a definite ethnicity-, culture-, and class-based center.

Given this fact, and assuming that we want to promote merit and meritocracy, how do we decide which one of our learners in this hypothetical situation should get the
opportunity to attend the university and pursue their career and/or economic dreams? Surely, there is a lot of merit associated with each of these students, and according to a range of measures. So, is "the market" to be the determinant of what constitutes merit? This seems a particularly fallible and fickle indicator of social worth, given the rapidity and acceleration of changing demands on the workforce in the "global economy." And if not the market—if we instead acknowledge some pluralistic form of merit—what might that entail? Is it possible to determine such an "average" level of merit? Who might determine what this new average is, in fact? And who might be the adjudicator of this new norm, in terms of deciding who is operating above, at, and below it?

Again, the focus shifts to the classroom teacher, if we want there to be some social/collective mediation of this process, and this mediation will only be equitable if the teacher is able to maintain a measure of neutrality, of detachment from her own standards of what constitutes merit enough that she can acknowledge the existence of parallel forms. I realize that this is an extremely tall order to make of anyone, let alone a classroom teacher operating under the customary day-to-day pressures of her workplace in the schools. But who, frankly, is in a better position to assess and evaluate the relative merits of our three students?

It is clear, for example, that overemphasis on mathematics performance as a standard skews our norm unreasonably toward the Somali student, accentuation of gender equity tilts it in favor of the ballplayer or the would-be doctor, and academic merit might shift it toward the student who happens to share a teacher's passion for
a particular discipline, whose priorities match those of the teacher, or simply the one who has a better personal relationship with the teacher. It is not that these may not be indicators of success and residual value of the individual to "society" as a whole; it is just that a teacher properly trained to be mindful of the range of influences on school performance stands a better chance of making a fair judgement about the prospects of these students than does a standardized test. And equally important, the teacher is in a position to make qualitative, wholistic verbally-descriptive assessments rather than quantitative judgements which create arbitrary cut-off points, averages, and percentile rankings, and which take none of the variables involved in performance on assessment instruments into consideration, anyway. What is equally clear is that broadly-imposed standardized norms of performance are hardly the scientific approach to summative measurement of one's "potential" that they are promoted as being, especially where crosscultural gaps exist within the school milieu. So, where does this leave teachers in such situations?

A particularly relevant way of measuring scholastic progress, one which takes into consideration "where one is coming from, where one is, and where one might be going," is portfolio assessment. This type of evaluation requires that students take responsibility for their own work, and it can be introduced and utilized in a way which allows for demonstration of a certain mastery of conceptual and curriculum framework information which is satisfactory (again, as determined by a teacher's knowledge of a student, and her/his status developmentally at certain points in the school year); it requires that the teacher establish a fairly comprehensive repertoire of diagnostic
tools—one which allows for expression which correspond to the range of intelligences
Gardner (1983) outlines—with a thorough description by the teacher of what sorts of
materials might be ultimately acceptable for inclusion. These might include specified
numbers of pieces demonstrating an appropriate range of media of expression (i.e.,
written, performed, orally presented, drawn, composed, photographed, possibly
recorded on video or audio tape, etc.).

Details concerning the contents of the portfolio, i.e., the subject matter, the
density/breadth/volume—in short, the quantity and quality of effort to be exhibited—in
each of the components of the portfolio can be emergent, as can the standards, to
a certain degree. These standards can emerge from the teacher's developing sense
of who her students are over the course of a term, as long as the teacher is
constantly reviewing, refining, and clarifying them with students as they are taking
shape. Using portfolios demands that the teacher provide individualized feedback
often enough that the standards which are established in the give-and-take process
of periodic portfolio submission, critique, and post-critique debriefing sessions be
reasonable, of course. These standards (and the performance levels reflected in
them) can be individualized, as well, to the extent that the teacher feels comfortable
doing so—and can justify it, instructionally and theoretically—in her efforts to balance
individual fairness and whole class equity concerns. It is a delicate balance to
establish, but it is my sense that it can be accomplished, with a certain amount of
experimentation and patience.

Since such assessments will require only periodic review by the teacher, the
number of these scheduled to be turned in at any one time can be limited, and the
schedule for submission staggered, which can help to balance a teacher's paper load
and distribute it more evenly over any instructional period. With a certain amount of
planning (which is always necessary in teaching anyway, of course), the teacher can
also balance the amount of time spent in whole and split-class lessons, small group
work, and individualized instruction, depending on instructional needs which will also
become evident to the appropriately trained and sensitive educator in the process of
constructing such a learning environment.

Of course, this model of what learning activity looks like immediately calls into
question the image of classes sitting in uniform rows, facing all in one direction
toward the front of the room, with the teacher as the focal point of attention. This
notion of what a classroom should look like has long been questioned through
researched and lived experience which belie its effectiveness, in some cases. Even
though I was aware of this well before I was hired at Esperanza, and started with
three- and four-seat clusters, I soon settled on a more traditional, regimented
arrangement for classroom management reasons; I felt I needed the mnemonic aid
of a seating chart so that I could read it readily when it came time to assign seating
and start putting names and faces together in my mind, and my mapping out of the
"swirled cluster" arrangement I had devised was hard to decode because it
corresponded so poorly to the arrangement itself.46

46 This was one of a number of areas in which I allowed my concern about the "appearance of
consistency," to take priority over "the genuine article," in my teaching, and it was a mask that became
transparent to my students, over time. It was not that it became apparent that I did not value real
consistency (I did, on a number of other fronts, too), but just that I sometimes chose the wrong context
Often, for first year teachers who are concerned about issues of classroom management, for example, or for students who are more comfortable with the routine and familiarity which such spatial arrangements connote, I believe it may be worthwhile having such a physical layout as the starting point. Later, as a more conducive arrangement emerges and the environment is defined (e.g., as a result of the collective personality of the class inhabiting it, and the personal/educational interactions which characterize it), adjustments in the physical space can be made which further foster learning. But this is not always the case; the important thing, it seems to me, is that the teacher be as aware as possible of striking a balance between that which is "pedagogically sound" as determined by "the experts," what he is comfortable with himself, and what will work well with the students in his classes. As with most things, the teacher's sense of this may change over time, and the teacher himself must have (or develop) the confidence and flexibility to adapt; neither "one size"--nor one time--"fits all."

There is a wealth of literature which suggests that the teacher should no longer be the "center" of classroom focus, and I would agree that this is true, in most situations. Nonetheless, I did not adhere to this principle in my teaching at Esperanza. The ideal instructional interaction is, I believe, centered in the midst and inclusive of both student(s) and teacher(s); in this way, such transactions can move/be moving in which to demonstrate it. In this case, it very literally undermined my judgements about and achievement of good teaching; the result was that, in the interests of appearance, I sacrificed some of the respect my students may have had for me and my teaching if I had chosen my symbolic stances more carefully, and limited them to the ones that more directly served my instructional goals.
for the participants. The proof that this is so is lodged deeply in my "learner's memories" of good teaching, and in my glimpses of having been engaged in it as a teacher myself. And as the interaction--and the learning--move toward a renegotiated center, such motion can (and should be allowed to) transform the physical space, as well. This is especially true for pre-adult learners, in my experience. Although it was not initially my desire to be the source nor the primary locus of learning, I realize now how I positioned myself as such, as a result of the way I structured my and my learners' experiences. In short, I have come to appreciate more tangibly the fact that "instruction that creates conditions of empowerment . . . will aim to liberate students from dependence on instruction in the sense of encouraging them to become active generators of their own knowledge" (Cummins, in press).

In committing to such principles, I find myself freed of many of the limitations imposed by masks which the students sometimes projected onto me, and which I sometimes consciously (and unconsciously) don myself, as forms of protection--as ways to hide my vulnerability in the classroom and in other public contexts. After all, teaching is frightening at times, especially for first year teachers, and one often feels the need to protect oneself--particularly if one cares about doing a good job, about being effective, and about developing the relationships with one's students that will eventually enable these things to happen.

The issue of "text" (and I use the term broadly here to refer to instructional materials of all kinds, rather than solely in the limited sense of textbooks themselves), is a major area of concern with respect to identifying the "centers" of learning, too,
as Gallas (1994) so aptly pointed out in her discussion of "narratives." For me, it is critical to distinguish between the text as center and the text as a tool to be used in the construction of a center, as Gallas uses it. Vygotsky's (1978) discussion of the mediation of learning through the use of such tools is also apt here, I think. But the relationship which is formed around what can be seen as highly intricate and complex learning activities, in one sense—between "expert" identifying the ZPD and working within it, and "novice" having his/her ZPD moved and/or extended through such activity—is as critical a part of the activity as is the exercise itself; it is within the delicate ecosystem of this relationship and the specific interaction which is intended to produce it, that learning is centered. The text simply—and importantly—helps to enable learning to grow and develop; it is not the learning itself.

This characterization of text takes nothing away from its importance, as I see it. Indeed, the wrong text can destroy learning just as surely as the wrong instructional strategy, the wrong participant mix, the wrong sequence of augmentation of the ecosystem, etc., and these can be wrong for a range of reasons--some of which are in the teacher's control, and some of which are not. This is one sense in which teaching is like science, or like cooking, incidentally; if the scientist (or the chef) makes a mistake (i.e., adds certain ingredients at the wrong time or in the wrong proportions), the result may very likely be failure of the experiment (or the recipe). Depending on the scope or cost of the experiment (or the size of the company for whom the meal is being cooked), however, the consequences of failure may not be

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7 For all intents and purposes, my use of the term "text" and Gallas's use of the term narrative are interchangeable here.
as high as we are sometimes worried that they are. As Diamond (1991) says about such an approach to teaching, "In such an open system, errors must occur, but people are not bound to them because they are able successively to correct them. (p. 59)"

So, while there is more room for momentary or occasional error in teaching vis-a-vis overall or long-range success, there are relatively few opportunities to recover from repeated error in terms of maintaining the commitment and interest of learners, with whom a relationship of trust is so critical to achieving such success. This means that our choice of tools has to be very well-considered, which in the case of my experience at Esperanza, it was not. I treated my U. S. History text as a life preserver tossed to me on an open sea, and at times I grasped at it as if I were drowning. Unfortunately, it had been tossed to me by my department head, who held the other end of the rope to which it was attached, if anyone held it at all. Certainly, in this case, my students did not. And not terribly surprisingly, I felt embarrassed to ask my department head to haul me in; my mask of expertise might just slip off on my way back aboard. This was yet another area in which I allowed the appearance of something substitute for the more substantial reality of the thing itself.

What I would do now is follow through on one of the most creative impulses I had had up until that point in my teaching, one which came to me as a result of my exposure to the theory of "content-based" language learning, and for which I had made the practical link-up through my own imagination; it represented my first tentative attempt to translate theory into practice. As a student-teacher, two and a half
years before I started at Esperanza, I had been assigned to a class of seventh-grade ESL students whose first language was Spanish, and I was asked to teach a combined English-Social Studies class for their benefit.

I spent some time getting to know my students before I really started "teaching" them (as I was still given to conceive of teaching at that point). This was really a first putative attempt on my part to diagnose the state of their knowledge--about English, about social studies, and about their knowledge of English within the discipline of social studies, one of what I had recently learned were several varieties of English for Specific Purposes (or "ESP," as it is known among teachers of English to native speakers of other languages). After a brief period of diagnosing my learners in this situation, I realized that they were working with social studies textbooks that were designed for seventh graders while learning English from readers designed for third or fourth graders. I decided that it was time for me to devise a "text" for them that brought the two subjects a little bit more into balance, so that their development in one was more connected to their development in the other, and so that one was not being held back by the other.

It seemed obvious to me that this (i.e., their being held back) was likely in the case of these learners' reading ability in English and how it might affect their ability to grasp the concepts presented in the seventh grade-level social studies text. As it turned out, I was right; they were bored silly with their English readers. They had been unwilling to admit this fact to their regular teacher, whom they had what seemed to be a healthy combination of fear, respect, and admiration, and they were quite
intimidated by their social studies texts. I determined that my objective with this particular group of learners should be to enliven the social studies content while making their English learning more challenging and thereby interesting, as well.

The vehicle for this was a class magazine; we held a vote to decide on a title, after several nominations had been made, and the name selected was "Para Mi Gente Latina [For My Latino People]." It was bilingual with two vertical columns per page, and as nearly as possible the translations were lined up symmetrically so that the texts in Spanish and English were parallel to one another. The content included biographies of popular sports heroes, students' favorite pop musicians, interviews of favorite teachers and "celebrities" on the campus, opinion pieces concerning the problems and challenges students decided to write about from their own experience, a games page, and artwork that they had done. In June, at the end of the term, each student got two copies of their magazine to take home with them.

I had finished my student teaching requirement two weeks before the end of school but my wife, Laura, and I had decided it would be nice to do "a really professional job" of producing the magazine. This meant that I would have to take all the articles they had given me, and with major assistance from her, put it on the computer using Page Maker software. Laura completely typeset and laid out the whole thing. Because the project was so much more involved than both of us had initially anticipated, however, I had to return to the middle school with the originals, print them all up, look through the school's office records to locate where they all might be on this particular day (the next to the last day preceding summer vacation,
when a nonstandard "minimum day" schedule was in effect), and then wander around
the school from room to room so I could put the copies in their hands. But the
reaction I got from most of them made all this effort seem worthwhile. It encompassed
shock and surprise (that this was what "they" had produced, and that I would go to
all the trouble I had to follow through on my promise of getting it to them before
school was out), excitement and pride at how professional it looked, sheepishness,
humility, and gratitude—as well as, in some cases a little embarrassment—when faced
with my presence and with their actual magazines.

A couple of weeks later, during my summer school studies, I was told by one of
my professors that I had used "the Foxfire approach" (Wigginton, 1972).48 This is just
one of a variety of ways to make the students' lives and pre-existing knowledge the
core of the curriculum, of course, but the notion of doing this seems as though it
ought to be central to my considerations with respect to all text selection and
curriculum development decisions. For the great numbers of our students who do not
buy into the system of extrinsic motivation symbolized by good grades, the chance
at a high quality postsecondary education, or the better job opportunities that are
supposed to result from better, more thorough, and higher learning of the content
promoted as "the necessary information" by the institutions of formal education, it is

48 It turns out that the idea of a student-generated newspaper or journalism approach had been
documented in educational studies literature as a worthwhile curriculum idea about two decades before
I "invented" it, in schools located in the Appalachian mountain region of the Eastern U.S., and had
been tremendously successful and meaningful for the poor rural, almost exclusively white students
involved in it. The source of my pride was in having made the theoretical-practical connections that
helped me recognize this as a good teaching/curriculum development approach at such an early stage
in my teaching career, and that it was one corroborated by scholars/practitioners in the field.
critical to identify the intrinsic factors that will motivate learning. I submit that what we as educators can offer that television viewing, computer games, and other forms of mass electronic media can't is the immediacy of our human presence, coupled with our knowledge as professionals about what makes learning happen, judiciously and discriminately applied as it will help those individuals with whom we come in contact.

I am not suggesting that state frameworks, all U.S. History (or other subject matter) textbooks, culturally-valued knowledge, or other manifestations of potential collective wisdom be abandoned in such cases, even if I could get away with it. I am simply stating that there are many situations in which some of these materials should be put on the shelf, and treated as "background resources." The centrally-established/imposed guidelines for what it is important for all U.S. citizens, all Ontarians, or all Californians to know should be treated as just that: guidelines. If we give it a moment's thought and some frank analysis, I would be willing to wager that most of what any of us (who have been successful in attaining various degrees of success through being good students in high school) retain from the experience has far more to do with metacognitive, analytical, critical, and social skills we developed--however unwittingly or deviously we may have done so--than with any body of knowledge we may have mastered at that level.

It was my failure to acknowledge this very fact that instilled in me the abject fear of letting go of my textbook for my history classes; as I had done when I postponed becoming a teacher the first time I had the opportunity to do so, I equated teaching
with "possessing knowledge." In this case, I thought of knowing history as mastery
of the knowledge of dates, facts, and figures, rather than with "historical ways of
thinking." What I did have, and should ideally have kept at teaching (beyond the
putative attempts I made at it), was the ability to conduct some sort of historical
analysis, about which I have supreme self-confidence. Had I clung to these instead
of to my textbook as my life preserver, I would have felt safe no matter where the
tides of my students' lives or interests might have caused me to drift. As a
concomitant, my students would have been drifting wherever-it-was with me. And
regardless of where it was we were drifting to, it would have been a far more
inhabitable, agreeable place for all concerned than the place I left behind me after
that year at Esperanza.

Nor am I suggesting that students like mine, who were only rarely what in my day
would have been called "college prep"-track students, should not have the opportunity
to experience college, if this is a goal they choose to pursue. I would in fact
encourage teachers to identify and attempt to promote as many as possible of those
who have been prematurely relegated to options that do not appeal to them in the
way a college education (and the freedom and opportunities it seemed to represent)
attracted me when I was their age. Rather, I am arguing that unless our students are
offered a legitimate chance to develop their learning, thinking, and analytic skills in
ways they can "take away with them" into the rest of their lives beyond school, there
will never be any possibility of them having equal opportunities, anyway. As Cummins
(in press) puts it:
Many workers today employ literacy skills in the workplace that are far beyond what their parents needed. In a context where information is doubling every five years or so, employers are looking for workers who know how to get access to current information, who can think critically about what information is relevant and what is not, and who know how to collaborate creatively in problem-solving activities across cultural, linguistic, and racial boundaries. What few workplaces need are workers whose heads are full of inert and soon-to-be obsolete information. (p. 222)

The cards are decidedly stacked against students of lower socioeconomic status, and those of nondominant racial, ethnic, and linguistic origin anyway, as I have tried to point out in various ways in this work. But I am arguing here that failure to provide the kinds of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor experiences (and opportunities to develop skills in these domains) surely seals their fate. As teachers, we may not be able to radically transform students' chances of having a life lived in freedom, in Maxine Greene's (1988) sense of the term, but if we can reach seven students instead of one through the techniques I am describing, we can in some very small measure change the way business as usual takes place in institutions which tend to perpetuate and reproduce by enlarge conditions of inequity and injustice, and we can thereby increase the odds that at least some of them may do so by a significant factor.

Ruiz (1991) takes issue with the notion that empowerment is something which can be given to someone. He argues that by its very nature the concept requires that students take it up of their own interest and free will, if it is to have sociopolitically transformative potential; he distinguishes between teaching subordinated learner groups language and allowing them to discover their voices. My own recommendations are based on my own recognition of this important distinction, and
of the fact that I share this objective with Ruiz. What I have been arguing through my discussion of developmental theory and my description of learning processes as I understand them at the present time, is that providing my students the opportunity to discover their own voices is pedagogically sound in addition to being compatible with my own particular political beliefs.

Of course, there is at least the potential for a "Pandora's box" effect associated with all of this, too. If I truly provide the openings for student voices, I run the risk of allowing them to get themselves into some serious trouble, and possibly this might lead indirectly to some threat to the wellbeing of their peers, as might be the case when newly-freed voices come into conflict, particularly immature ones. As I have pointed out elsewhere, in present day American schools, at least, this seems a very realistic concern.

But as my "safe schools story" suggests, I would argue that very little of the school violence seen today is a result of students having too much freedom, control, or voice in their own lives and education. On the contrary, as I have suggested, most of the school violence I have witnessed or heard about seems more closely related to students' reactions to having silence imposed on them from a myriad of external social pressures originating from many different sources of our society. Rarely (if ever) has a shooting taken place, to my knowledge, which is the result of students being exposed to what Simon (1992) calls a "pedagogy of possibility," and it is essentially this that I am arguing for here.

Nonetheless, the only way I as a teacher might deal with such a potentiality is to
acknowledge my need to act responsibly in allowing students to empower themselves by modeling respect for others, by treating everyone involved in these processes of empowerment with such respect, and as I see it emerging in them, by doing what I can to instill the awareness that personal power must be balanced with sensitivity to its potential for being abused. Furthermore, I have a significant amount of control over this in the context of my own class if I have modeled genuine respect in my classroom behavior, and the alternative (i.e., that they continue to live their lives in silence) is far less acceptable to me than the risk that something which takes place in my class may lead to an abuse outside it.

If we wish to give students back their voices, to help them to find ways they can articulate their visions of how they see their worlds now and in the future, and of what hopes they might have for themselves (or whether they do have any feelings of optimism or positive senses of their prospects in those worlds), we need to bring their life stories to the position of text in our teaching. These are the canons of knowledge--as far as our students are concerned--in a great number of cases.

I do not believe a teacher can demonstrate to teenagers like those at Esperanza that concepts about economics or the other social sciences, mathematics, or "the great works" of literature are important for them to know, if they cannot be brought to seeing them at work in the context of their own lives. This has been proven repeatedly by a great many educational research studies, but it does not mean that--as so many Hollywood movies about teaching would have us believe--we as teachers need only to use more "culturally sensitive" textbooks, or learn how to do a particularly moving
or relevant interpretation of Shakespeare's sonnets. Nor can we come to them with a prepared list of such concepts, assuming there will be agreement about our judgements of what is important for them to know.

It is an indictment of my teaching at Esperanza that to this day I do not know what my students would have liked to learn about. In spite of my limited efforts to define some of these interests, I abandoned my search for such gems prematurely, in the face of perceived pressure from "above." This is one of the reasons I resist the temptation to blame "the system" for my failure, too; I suspect and have good reason to believe that, if I had plumbed it more deeply—in the form of experimenting more with how I went about my work, I may have found a greater level of support than I had imagined for experimentation in my teaching. It seemed to me that Esperanza was one of those places where there was enough homogeneity in terms of economic class (and in terms of ethnic heritage) among the students, that I would have had the freedom to do a range of things I had not yet considered doing that would have provided a more empowering, enabling environment for my students, if I had been willing to try them. But unless I return to teach there next year or further into the future, I will never know for sure.

There were so many of my students who were model citizens. Within their families, most took care of their younger siblings, did their share of household chores, and did their parts in other ways to support the wellbeing of their families (including working part- and fulltime after school) on a routine basis. They were respectful of those around them in their neighborhoods and in school. Yet they were failing their classes
and slowly flunking out of school entirely, so I could not help but question my own standards, and those of many other teachers in the school.

Given what is reasonable to expect under the circumstances in which I found these students (and in which they found themselves), my learners who fit this description were being asked to do too much. In retrospect, I feel that without taking the time to get to know them and their families better, their living environments as a whole, and assessing them on their scholastic development in the context of some standard by which it would be fair to measure their efforts, that I was imposing standards which only rubbed their noses in the unpleasant fact that "no es justo, no es justo, no es justo." Not only this, I was doing it at a time when these young people were most vulnerable to internalizing this failure, to blaming themselves for it, to questioning the value of all the facets of "good citizenship" which they had embraced in good faith. How could this enterprise of education I was engaged in be construed in any sense to be a constructive, positive activity, regardless of how much it may in fact reflect the "cold cruel world" they would face when they left school?

It would be one thing if I had been preparing them to deal with a world characterized in this way by giving them examples of how I would deal with choices they were facing, of modeling the kinds of thought processes and reflective techniques (i.e., "critical thinking"), and by facilitating their considerations of their actions and the implications of those actions for others' behavior in response. By giving them the tools—and the instruction necessary to make use of these tools—to struggle against the injustices they perceived when they found the need to take them up, I would have
been enabling them to achieve their own empowerment (Cummins, 1986 & in press). This is how I have always envisioned education, although I distinguish it from "schooling" here, as Mark Twain did, in the quotation which appears at the start of the present work, and which adorned my high school graduation announcement.

As a teacher generally, and especially as a teacher of social studies, I conceive of myself as a bridge between cultures, between the worlds in which different languages are imbedded, between the lifestyles related to membership in different social classes, between the "actual minds" and "possible worlds" of my learners (Bruner, 1986), between the manifest and the "yet to be imagined." I cannot describe or define very usefully my students' perceptions of their real worlds, their feelings or reactions to these realities, nor determine how they can be transformed, but I can facilitate them doing these things for themselves, encourage them to do so, and try to persuade them of what I see as the value in undertaking such struggles.

My U.S. History text books are my world, not theirs—no matter how multicultural or sensitive to the contributions of various ethnic, cultural, and/or racial groups the versions of history described in them might actually be; they still represent a way of knowing, an epistemology which has been prescribed to them as an antidote for their problems. But the curriculum of which these texts are a part does not reflect the lives they know in ways which convince them of the value of learning what is inside these tomes. I must find ways to make these links for them, to be their bridge to others' knowledge and experience, and to finding the value (or the lack of value) in it. Too many of our pedagogical and related professional decisions create impediments rather
than openings, and too many of us, I suspect, act as stone walls rather than as bridges; this is certainly what I was guilty of during my first year at Esperanza. Making my students' lives the texts (i.e., the tools with which they learn) is giving them voice (Ruiz, 1991), enabling empowerment (Cummins, 1986), utilizing a pedagogy of possibility (Simon, 1992), and creating new levels of freedom (Greene, 1988) for them simultaneously.
Chapter 7: At the interface between school and community: resurrecting the support system

Ogbu's (1987) classification of minorities into the three categories mentioned earlier (autonomous, immigrant, and castelike/involuntary), and particularly the intersection of the characteristics linked with each of these and their generational status in terms of their relative distance from the actual immigration experience, is a fairly useful way of conceptualizing some of the layers of miscommunication and noncommunication between schools and parents, and/or between parents and their children after one or more of these generations has come in contact with the apparatus of public schooling in urban North American settings and many smaller towns like Joaquin.

In essence, as is often the case with first generation immigrant parents, holding a very idealized view of what education will bring for their offspring leads them to pressure their children to learn English; the most recent example of this is the East Los Angeles parents (mostly of Mexican origin) protesting to their school boards about the use of Spanish in their local schools (Los Angeles Times, February 23, 1996), and demanding that their teachers use "English only" in instruction.\textsuperscript{49} It seems that English has become such a powerful symbol of (and in practice is, in fact, a key to) access to material resources--in a language variety identified as its "standard" form\textsuperscript{50}--that

\textsuperscript{49} Ironically, their counterparts in the 1960's and early 1970's had been the first to speak up for the availability of Spanish-language and bilingual Spanish-English instruction.

\textsuperscript{50} "Standard" English has been a troublesome thing to define and identify, even for the ablest of linguists and applied linguists, as it turns out. The nature of the difficulty becomes clear when we consider the constantly evolving nature of the symbols, forms, and specific words which comprise language, and which move back and forth along a continuum of obsolescence-common usage/convention in our "worlds of linguistic experience." Language changes resulting from the information revolution are simply the latest example in a long history of such influences. The terms
both English-speaking and non-English-speaking parents have identified it as critical to childrens' success. It is a fact that more highly refined theory about second language acquisition, education, and literacy development has been relatively recently developed and is not yet widely understood outside certain academic circles.

But it is also a measure of the state to which various politicians and public policymakers have pandered to the ignorance surrounding issues of language difference, and to which universities, schools, and professional educators throughout this infrastructure have "let things slip" that there is such a preponderance of mis- and disinformation (Cummins, in press) about the facility with which students can reasonably be expected to learn second languages, as well as about how they might best go about developing literacy therein. This is also, of course, an indicator of the still-inflammatory nature of the debate which continues to rage over how ESL and other L2 learners can best achieve proficiency in the second language.

So, my obligation as an educator includes acting on many different fronts in tackling the "savage inequalities" (Kozol, 1991) that are at the core of so many of our problems in multicultural/multilingual school settings. But at the same time as I acknowledge that there are some powerful sociopolitical forces at play in this field of endeavor, I want to propose they are not immutable or immovable forces, either, that

"debugging," "cyberspace," "wordprocessing," "email," etc., all are part of a sort of standard, for instance, but almost as quickly as such an assertion is made, the question comes to mind "Whose standard?" Additionally (and probably more importantly), value judgements begin to arise about people who have not mastered and/or are not aware of these emerging standards; these judgements--based as they are on nothing more than material access to their use and the varying degrees of need to know them--in turn serve to stigmatize those who have not yet mastered them, in the very same way that non-native English speakers are more than likely to speak a variety of English that indelibly marks them as just that: non-native and therefore non-standard.
as Erickson (1987) has argued, there is a role for human agency in this struggle. Like Simon (1992), it is my intention to create some openings as an educator for a pedagogy of possibility, for constructive and progressive social change within the institutions of public education. And I am particularly motivated to do so in the arenas within which the dimming of hope—that is to say, despair—have the greatest corrosive effect on the stakeholders most directly affected by our schools as they currently operate.

In the previous chapter, I have suggested that there are many ways I can and could have operated more effectively as a teacher, through the way I structure the day-to-day interpersonal relations between my learners and me. Now I want to discuss how I might start to bridge the gaps between my students, their families (and communities), and me (as representative of the school), that would be far more rewarding for everyone involved. I will argue that these are pedagogically sound, theoretically justifiable ways to reconsider what school is, what the role of a teacher is, and what some of the "masks" might be that are available for teachers to wear. This chapter is a discussion of some of the institutional implications of my approach, how and to what extent that approach might go "against the grain" (Simon, 1992), and the risks and limitations involved in choosing and/or not choosing to pursue this approach. Perhaps most importantly for me, in terms of my own professional direction, I want to address the implied conception of what teaching is or should be and the related implications for what teacher training might be.

I have already referred to the pressures I felt to hold to a pretty narrow definition
of social studies curriculum, and to the fact that the stories I heard from my colleagues who were experimenting did little to convince me that innovation in the context of the classroom alone would reap dividends. What I realized in retrospect is that the range of definitions of what constituted innovation even among the most imaginative of my peers, was actually very narrow (i.e., innovation was defined only within a very limited view of which aspects of our job descriptions might be experimented with, for the most part). I needed to extend my search for innovation beyond the texts I selected for use in my class, to include not just the ways I evaluated my students' progress (as with the use of portfolio assessment), but also the relationships I had with my students' families.

I still kick myself for not having taken my students' first assignment (parent interviews about their migration/immigration experiences en route to California) as a lead in this; I can only say that the swirl of concerns I had about establishing credibility, gaining control, and demonstrating consistency—all at a pretty superficial level—blinded me to the more important, meaningful things I should have been working to create. It could be argued that these were first year teaching mistakes, and perhaps many of them were. But the number of teachers who gave me the impression that they had allowed themselves to accept this sort of arrangement as "the way things are" led me to believe that this was not simply a novice's folly, nor even, as I have indicated elsewhere, a particularly limited phenomenon.

It is not that there weren't teachers at Esperanza who were doing great things; I am certain there were. This certainty was based on a variety of sources of data, too:
off-the-cuff and anecdotal student reports about innovative teachers and their techniques, the aura of self-assuredness and satisfaction many of these teachers exuded, the apparent efficiency and ease with which they conducted their routine business, the comments they themselves made about their classes, and the tone of voice they adopted when talking about their work. Not coincidentally, these were often the same colleagues who exhibited the least evidence of fatigue or burnout; I think they were usually energized by their contact with students, in fact, something which I wished at that point I had experienced more often myself. Even the personal likeability of the ones I most admired bespoke a kind of professional success, and I never suspected in the slightest that their work or their students suffered from a lack of sufficiently high expectations. But I am sure that these qualities, apparent to me in the bearing of these teachers when I saw them out in the public areas of the school, were based both on deeply held feelings about their own abilities and on real successes inside their classrooms. While I wished to emulate their approach to teaching, I had my own ideas about what I needed to do in order to achieve this for myself.

Besides its value in reminding me about the rebelliousness of my own youth and the sense of righteousness I associated with it, my own high school suspension story (cf. Chapter 1) and my subsequent reflections on it held another important lesson for me as a teacher. It was a story which sprang to mind early and often in my time as a high school teacher, particularly at times when I was feeling perplexed and seeing no satisfactory resolution to an important contradiction I saw "staring me in the face."
It demonstrated clearly to me how much my parents were supportive of me getting an education, how important that support was and, most critically, how--notwithstanding their disagreement with school policy in the context of my high school suspension experience--they worked primarily in conjunction with the schools I had attended to see that I got an education.

As I have suggested, however, at Esperanza, I felt undermined by what I perceived distinctly as a lack of such a common understanding or agreement among the stakeholders, as well as by an unspoken coincident assumption on the part of various individuals involved in various ways in "the school's efforts" that such an understanding did exist, in fact. This was an omission which, although I viewed it as potentially fatal to everyone's noblest efforts and intentions, I did not see as any one party's fault, especially. It was very clear to me that all parties involved had to share responsibility for it, with some perhaps being more justified in their oversights than others.

I did not--after a brief temptation to do so--see much value in ascertaining who was to blame for this situation; it seemed clear to me that putting my energies into the ascription of blame would only bring to the surface antagonisms, resentments, and frustrations in a way which would be destructive of any effort to build consensus which might produce more constructive results. It seemed to me, too, that blame assignment (and its close variant, scapegoating) would only lead me to isolation from those from whom I could gain the most support, and further along the path towards discouragement, frustration, and burnout--those principle occupational hazards of my
profession. It was obvious to me that what I needed instead was support, in the form of community and communication. I resolved to reflect on how I could contribute to an improvement in the communication process between the three main players in the education game—students, parents, and schools. I kept wondering what might happen if we all transformed our at times seemingly inexhaustible energy for finding fault in one another's efforts into a force for a more constructive and cooperative effort on the students' behalf, instead.

As a result of my determination to maintain a constructive stance toward my work in this context, I turned my attention to what seemed to be working at Esperanza. I realize now that in order for me to emulate those colleagues who seemed to be having success, promoting enthusiasm for social studies would necessarily entail students studying the human beings in their own environment and linking their observations and reflections about what they see to the concepts being taught. This seems a bare minimum as a point of departure for the study of those human beings and cultures more geographically and/or temporally remote from them. Given that this is true, who fits such a definition of "subject matter" more readily than their own families, and the residents of their own neighborhoods and members of their own communities, however broadly defined?

In this case, then, part of "the content" that I would base my course on if I were to return to Esperanza, and the people whose help I need to enlist if I am going to be a catalyst for meaningful learning opportunities for my students are one and the same. The time I don't spend writing or grading examinations based on book chapters that
don't get read, which are then administered to students who don't care about the tests and learn as a result of repeated failure on them not to care about the school's labeling of them as failures, can be much more productively spent getting to know the families and communities of these students instead, developing learning contracts between students, parents, and me, being a resource for these parents, allowing them to be a resource for me, and developing the trust that grows out of genuine (or at least accurately assumed) collaboration and partnership.\footnote{There is a large and growing body of education literature about projects and models whose intent is to resurrect these kind of partnership in the schools, through emulating the educational environment that exists within the learners' home/community (including Gallas, 1994; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Goldenberg, 1991), as well as through various forms of school contact with nonmainstream learners' own homes, neighborhoods and communities (Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez, 1992; Ada, 1988a; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; McCaleb, 1994; Heath, 1993; Heath and McLaughlin, 1993).} As Cummins (in press) says, "By refuting the myth of parental apathy, . . . [we can] expose the exclusionary structures that have prevented culturally-diverse parents from productive involvement in their children's education."

This is not a panacea, nor am I so naive as to believe that it will work in all cases, or might not take a long time (in some cases, longer than I can provide for the purpose) to overcome the distrust of the schools and of me as a representative of them that has been bred of--again, in some cases--generations of neglect of the needs of these families in the past. Nonetheless, the families of my learners--or at least a significant percentage of them--are as critical to the success of this plan of mine to recreate school and revitalize interest in learning for my students as are they themselves; I cannot do it alone. As Cummins (in press) asserts, "Even simple initiatives that permit parents to participate actively in aspects of their child's education
can have profound effects." I believe this is one way in which the implications of Greene's (1988) definition of freedom relate to schools, and in which I can "teach for freedom."

Of course, it is absurd to think that we can lay responsibility for the many major changes which will be required in transforming multicultural/multilingual schools into sites of "pedagogies of possibility" (Simon, 1992) entirely at the feet of teachers. As a professional educator concerned about the vitality of public schools in North American public schools, I see that part and parcel of my role in advocacy is getting all stakeholders to recognize the limitations of what can be done by any one entity in this collective effort, and to appreciate the critical necessity for collaboration. As a future teacher educator, I will be advocating for teachers and for learners, for their families and for the viability of our schools. The quintessential articulation of this is the African proverb "It takes a whole village to raise a child." This is as true for the towns and cities of North America and for "the global village" as it is for any in Africa.

The changes I have outlined so far in how I would rewrite my own job description, and reconstruct my own practice and understanding about "what my job is," and which I am about to describe in terms of the ripple effect of what I am proposing upon the rest of the school and the surrounding community, then, are all dimensions of my desire to transform our institutions of education into places where the pedagogy of possibility is the norm. Underlying them is a profound belief in the power of equality and democracy to transform the quality of life for everyone involved, and that this belief ought to guide our decisionmaking about how we construct our classrooms and
schools, as well as about how we teach and learn. Again, this constitutes my attempt to reconstruct the triumvirate of players which I saw as critical to my own scholastic success, to which I have already referred: the school, my parents, and me.$^{52}$

I believe that these plans and those described in the previous chapter about how I would go about changing the way I manage the everyday procedural elements of my teaching represent a first step in the right direction toward this goal. And, utopian as it may sound, I do not believe that I am laboring under any illusions about the constraints that threaten these possibilities. Nor am I prescribing any universalizable solutions to surmounting the obstacles to teaching for freedom which I experienced at Esperanza. I am merely describing a way I can see to work, one classroom at a time (mine, in this instance) to make my career as an educator meaningful, rewarding, and creative, through doing the same for my students' schooling, in the hope that success in my own efforts might enable my colleagues who wish to do so, to experiment in similar ways. Ideally, through the cumulative effect of our successes (i.e., those of the students who I manage to assist in getting moving in more positive directions for themselves, their parents, and my colleagues who are willing to participate in some of these ways), it is my hope that I can help to create a "ripple effect" which might permeate and transform, in some small way, the concentric social entities which envelop the school and within which my classroom is situated.

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$^{52}$ A related but distinct triad is outlined in Cummins (in press). He argues that educators' role definitions, in the form of their "interactions with students are constantly sketching a triangular set of images: . . . an image of our own identities as educators . . . an image of the identity options we highlight for our students . . . [and] an image of the society we hope our students will help form." The whole of my work in this dissertation has been guided by an understanding of and agreement with this notion.
As I mentioned earlier, because of the unique characteristics of Esperanza and the surrounding Joaquinoto community, there are ways in which I actually see that I have more freedom to experiment than I might if I were operating as a teacher in a different school or community; this is why I shy away from the urge to be prescriptive. In each situation (comprised of hundreds of distinguishing variables of social circumstance which interlace in ways creating even greater numbers of possible permutations), the opportunities and openings for, and obstacles to transformative acts that might lead to a pedagogy of possibility will differ. But I refuse to allow the possibility that I will encounter further obstacles (an inevitability, in my opinion) to keep me from experimenting. It is actually empowering to me, therefore, to know that there are limits to the way I can effect systemic change, precisely because it allows me to turn my attention to those things I can change.

For those teachers attracted to my approach as a potentially liberating and liberatory way of redefining themselves and their roles as educators, it seems necessary to share a couple of thoughts. The first of these is my reporting of a conversation I had with my mentor teacher at Esperanza one day in the middle of my year there; I was feeling--as I did many times that year--"at my wits' end" with respect to the amount of work I had to get done,\(^{53}\) and I asked him how he managed the sheer volume of the work which seemed to be required of teachers in general. His reply was that he had "a rule of thumb; I always keep in mind that the State of

\(^{53}\) It is significant to note, I think, that very little of it was work that I considered intrinsically interesting to me, or valuable to my learners; a major proportion of it I consider "busy work," in retrospect.
California may hold a lot of sway over my professional life, but I don't let it have control over my personal life." I interpreted his meaning to be that he had learned through his own hard-won experience to know how to put limits on his professional expectations of himself. I can testify that he had not done this in a way that was detrimental to his students' learning; he was definitely among those who possessed the characteristics I ascribed earlier to those teachers I identified as being successful, and was thought of highly by almost everyone at Esperanza High.

This issue is important to address beyond the extent to which my mentor's aphorism addresses it, however. It is one that Hargreaves (1994) discusses at some length, and which epitomizes the most universal dilemma teachers face: finding the time to do one's work as a teacher. It is true, I believe, that teachers get better at managing their time as they gain experience, a phenomena to which my little story alludes. It is less clear how they do this. It seems that individual teachers' struggles to master the secrets of time and work management vary widely, and their decisions about how they do so have tremendous implications for the future success of their careers, as measured by anyone's terms who comes in contact with them. Partly because I see it as so critical, partly because I am at that crossroads point in my teaching career when I need to give it thorough consideration, and partly because it seems to be a point of concern with which teachers universally must come to terms, I want to investigate this issue in much greater depth.

Some teachers manage to avoid burnout by making some rather arbitrary choices about what they will and will not do (similar to some of the decisions I made in my
efforts to keep my head above water in my first year of teaching); others prioritize the individual tasks that comprise their work with an eye to what will be most efficacious in terms of this widely-perceived success of which I have spoken. Those who choose the former path persistently and consistently throughout their careers risk developing "callouses on their souls," so to speak, a condition which in turn can be a primary contributor to the formation of institutions that have ceased caring, as Noddings (1992) puts it.

This is not surprising, if one considers that teachers who have been trained according to one model of what teaching is (which accounts for the vast majority, if not all, of working teachers today), find it hard to consider their models as malleable, and which of necessity must evolve over time to address changing extrascholastic social conditions. Getting tangled up in the so-called "wheels of progress" in this way has vast implications for the duties traditionally associated with our profession to teach values, new/marketable skills, and master and critique new paradigms for understanding the world in which we all live. And it is, of course, impractical (even if it were desirable) to replace the teacher corps every few years as a way of keeping teaching methodology and practice current.

How can we design a system for training and retraining teachers, then, that is flexible enough to address and adjust to what seem like increasingly rapid and complex changing conditions in the world to which schools have such a symbiotic

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54 The transformation of a substantial percentage of North American urban parochial and public schools into multicultural and multilingual educational settings is a prime example of such an "extrascholastic social condition;" the advent and continuing development of the computer age, in the form of educational technology, is another.
relationship? My answer is that in many instances, the system is already in place, if we are willing, as educators, to commit to using the resources of time, people power, expertise, and personal generosity and enthusiasm wisely and judiciously. In all working environments—as elsewhere in the range of activities defined by the term "human endeavor"—there are people who will resist change. (In this group I mean to exclude those who automatically question the value of any kind of change, and focus instead on those who honestly want to analyze "to a reasonable extent" the value of a change, before committing to it). But I cannot bring myself to spill too many tears or too much ink on behalf of those few who simply resist or refuse change on the face of it (i.e., simply because it is change), particularly in education, since change and transformation are inherent and essential aspects of my definition of education. Again, I am not arguing that everyone should "do as I do," but rather that there need to be institutional and organizational spaces opened up for them to continue their development, and to experiment with other alternatives that might be as appealing to them as mine are to me.

I will describe an example of the kind of change I am talking about. As I was preparing to leave Esperanza to begin my doctoral program, the new principal, Mr. Dominguez, wanted "to shake things up a bit," perhaps to make his own mark on the school, but primarily—and although there was plenty of concern about what motivated him, and what his vision for the school might be—there was no reason at this early a stage in his tenure to doubt that he wanted to improve things in some generally agreeable ways. While he had spent his first several months "sequestered" in his
office and in developing the relationships with the district office that he apparently felt he would need to establish, he did not seem mean-spirited in any sense, or as if he needed to overcome feelings of insecurity by overstating his authority—or his own identity with authority—in any public way.

Mr. Dominguez did spend his first several months at Esperanza dealing with automation around his office and around the main office in the school (something which, by all appearances, he was particularly interested in and concerned about). And he had chosen to communicate with the larger faculty primarily through personal (fairly regular, from what I could tell) contact with department heads, and only intermittently through written communiques and personal interactions with the rest of us. Perhaps it could be said that he chose the school's main office as the first place to make his influence felt because it was an area in which he felt most comfortable, or because he had identified it as the site in the school which had the most immediate impact on his own effectiveness. Regardless, unlike certain of my colleagues, I could not fault him for this decision; it was apparent to me that I might have done the same if I had seen computerization of the office as central to the establishment of my vision, and had arrived for the first time as principal in a new school where the kinds of problems which existed at Esperanza were in evidence.

I would agree with some of these critics that the first thing I might have done as a new principal (knowing what I knew about the situation at that time) would have been to visit lots of classes and talk to as many of the faculty as possible, as a way of conducting a sort of "state of the school" ethnographic research and
reconnaissance project. Yet I was not prepared—particularly as a first year teacher, and although a former business owner and operator myself—to fault him for his own priorities, even if I had thought I had the time to figure out how he could improve his performance in addition to my preoccupation with my own. And, truth be told, I was often grateful for being left alone, for the most part—especially by figures in the central administration—as I struggled to gain some sort of control over my new job. In this way, in fact, I saw myself as having a fair amount in common with this new principal, rather than as having lots of unfulfilled expectations of him, or as being at odds with him.

Regardless of whose perspectives and opinions about the new principal were most accurate, he did seem to want to make his mark, whether for altruistic or selfish reasons. One of the first public ways (i.e., beyond the immediate domain of the central office) he felt he could do so was to try to develop a consensus among the faculty for instituting "block scheduling," a change he hoped to implement by the following school year. And although it was manifestly clear that there had been cries for years from the faculty for changes at the school, there was a core of faculty members who were dead set against this proposed change, regardless of any compelling rationales the new principal might provide for it.

Admittedly, part of the resistance from these teachers might have been based on the way in which Mr. Dominguez handled his decisionmaking processes. He often appeared to make some of his decisions unilaterally, then worked to promote support for them from certain influential faculty members, as a way of creating the appearance
of consensus, so he may have been guilty of such behavior in the case of implementing block scheduling. But he did at least allow for systematic, substantive, and widespread review of the proposal, through regular faculty meetings and "planning days," related to whether/how the transition should/would be implemented, and facilitated the articulation of concerns arising from this proposed change in scheduling. In any case, it was not clear at all how much he himself was responsible for the decision to institute block scheduling, anyway, nor to what extent this decision had been handed to him as a "fait accompli" by the district superintendent's (or assistant superintendents') office, and whether he simply had been left in the position of having to "sell" it to his faculty.

Because of the history at Esperanza (and in the Joaquin Union High School District) of relations between the previous principal and some of the faculty, there was a predisposition to distrust any decisions which appeared to have emanated from either the principal's office itself or the administration at the district level. It seemed to me that Mr. Dominguez was being unfairly "tarred with an old brush," however little care he had taken to make sure there was some acetone around with which to clean himself up should this occur. Once again, the prevailing attitude from many quarters, in a great many organizational decisionmaking processes at Esperanza, seemed to be that it was easier to place blame and point fingers at perceived perpetrators than it was to use those hands and fingers to wipe the slate clean and start anew.

This ties in with one of the central elements of a definition of teaching (and indeed, of the jobs of all educators) which I want to pose, in opposition to the one which may
have been part of the problem in the case of implementing block scheduling. I think it is important to conceive of teaching as being as much about being part of a collaborative enterprise of which our individual efforts are a part. This stands in contrast to a more commonly held perception that teaching is a largely autonomous activity and of necessity done in isolation (Johnson, 1990; Little, 1990). While it is true that the amount of time a teacher spends alone with her students is often the lion’s share of time spent in the typical school day, in the "average" classroom, developing an awareness about what other teachers and school functionaries at a variety of other levels of the hierarchy in the traditional educational system do needs to be a more important part of what we do as teachers, as well.

Yet again, I must reiterate that, keeping in mind Hargreaves' (1994) description of the "Faustian bargain" with time that most teachers must make to operate, this cannot be a unilateral concern. Teachers must demand the opportunity to be well-appraised of such proposals and developments, to take part in the decisionmaking processes, and to keep themselves well-informed of their colleagues' practice (where there is mutual desire to avail themselves of it), as well as of theoretical and research developments relating to their own practice. Administrators, in turn, must be willing to provide opportunities for such exposure for their faculty, and to advocate it to the district administration where necessary—even to the point, at times, of "shelving" other projects being handed down to them at the district-wide level. In turn, district administrators must be willing to develop the ability to accurately determine the rate...
at which various changes can be made, and to acknowledge and explain the limitations of these large institutional apparatuses, with respect to absorbing and articulating change systemically.

If such commitments can be made at all these levels, and provisions can be made to enable them to be carried out, then an opening for trust exists, and to the extent that people follow through on these commitments, this trust can be maintained. It may cost more money to set up such a system, but in terms of the efficiency of the existing arrangements which predominate in many school systems, and in terms of the resulting structures and systems devoid of care (Noddings, 1992) for everyone involved in our schools and their goals (as well as the consequences and hidden/deferred costs of not providing such a system), it may well cost less. We will never know if we don't try to make such an approach reality, and maintain a commitment to a pluralistic vision of a school working for all its participants, open to and fostering the contributions of all.

If we factored in the costs of the human misery which results from the current system and its highly disproportionate rates of failure among certain ethnic and racial groups and social classes, we would be astounded at the price we pay for a relatively inefficient inhumane school system driven by a "manufacturing model" or "banking model" (Freire, 1983) of education and schooling, which results in an unconscionable amount of wasted of human potential and human life. And if we must consider this tragedy from an economic perspective, we must ask ourselves what these missed opportunities cost even those who benefit in the short term from the status quo, in
terms of other social costs (e.g., higher crime rates, the perpetual discontent and justifiable anger of those who find themselves arbitrarily and repeatedly "sorted to the bottom of the deck," and the resultant tendency/compulsion on all our parts to distrust those who are "different" along a whole range of descriptors). As Cummins (in press) says, the facts "suggest that coercive relations of power have reached a point of diminishing returns, even for those socially advantaged groups whose interests they are intended to serve. The fiscal and social costs of maintaining the current structure of privilege and resource distribution far outstrip the costs that would be involved in shifting to more collaborative relations of power."

Nor am I arguing that everyone will "succeed" in an ideal school system, at least not in terms of everyone getting well-paid, challenging, fascinating professional work that they will be happy about committing to for the rest of their lives. But I do believe that, if the openings for freedom—as Greene (1988) defines it—were somehow more widely distributed among the populace, if we were taught to make conscious and definite choices about how we live and how choices we make about these things affect those around us (in our neighborhoods, in our work, in our schools, in our communities, and in the world), we would stand a better chance of spreading other forms of wealth and wellbeing, as well. As long as we delude ourselves about the objectivity of the current system, however, and about its assessment mechanisms

56 As Cummins (in press) points out (citing Hodgkinson, 1991), "There is a huge correlation between dropping out of school and ending up in prison—more than 80 percent of prisoners are high school dropouts, each costing taxpayers a minimum of $20,000 a year to contain, much more than it would have cost to educate them... In order to increase economic performance and decrease the accelerating costs of incarceration, we need to enable more low-income young people to graduate from high school with the possibility of more than a below-the-poverty-line job."
being ones which universally reward those who work hard or who have come to
deserve these rewards at the expense of others (while fooling ourselves into thinking
that it is a system based on a color- and class-blind, nondiscriminatory, mutually
agreed-upon definition of merit), we cannot progress towards such a vision.
Chapter 8: The Epistemology of Acting and Its Use in the Training of Teachers

"The heart of improvisation is transformation."
--Viola Spolin (1983, as cited by Wolf, 1996)

How I experience the world

Schechner (1988) talks about theatrical and other forms of ritual performance as having a basic structure which consists of "gathering, performing, and dispersing:"

The basic performance structure . . . underlies and literally contains the dramatic structure . . . The bottom line is solidarity, not conflict. Conflict is supportable (in the theater, and perhaps in society, too) only inside a nest built from the agreement to gather at a specific time and place, to perform - to do something agreed on - and to disperse once the performance is over. The extreme forms of violence that characterize drama can be played out only inside this nest. When people "go to the theater" they are acknowledging that theater takes place at special times in special places. Surrounding a show there are special observances, practices, and rituals, that lead into it and away from it. Not only getting to the theater district, but entering the building itself involves ceremony; ticket-taking, passing through the gates, performing rituals, finding a place from which to watch: all this - and the procedures vary from culture to culture, event to event - frames and defines the performance. (pp. 168-169)

I relate most of Schechner's description as much to the rituals of schooling as to those of which theater is comprised. The question, in the case of multicultural-multilingual schools, it seems to me, is what happens inside the "theater," once the audience has gathered. We have in North American society a broadly-based common acceptance of the idea that "an education" (in the formal sense) is important for our offspring, but within this "basic structure," I have been arguing that there is wide variation on what sort of "performance" (i.e., the means by which education is realized) is appropriate. As Schechner's comments indicate, the answers vary widely from culture to culture within this basic frame. He locates the "essential drama" (as does
Spolin, 1983, in the quotation at the start of this chapter) in *transformation*, in three different places—in the story, in the performers, and "in the audience where changes may be either temporary (entertainment) or permanent (ritual)" (p. 170).

Transformation is such a key word in all that I have attempted to address in this work, and I have touched on it in many forms. There is the transformation of my professional identity, of my understanding of what it means to be a teacher over the course of my life, and there is the sense of urgency so many professional educators feel (at least in the United States) to transform the institutions of schooling to make them more effective. Furthermore, I have argued that there needs to be a transformation in our understanding of what school means and what it is like for students who do not share our assumptions about school (which so many of us who share a common experience of what school was for us take for granted as "universals") so we can get them more effectively and meaningfully involved in the "performance rituals" which take place in them. Finally, there is Diamond's (1991) notion of "perspective transformation in teacher education (PTTE)," and my transformation of it into a tool that is applicable in the specific context I have been describing: the transformation of teacher perspective which might arise from the use of acting training techniques in teacher training. As Courtney (1988) says, learning is all about these types of transformations. For me, then, theater and education are inextricably linked through this central concept.

Diamond, in describing his notion of transformative teacher education, in fact, uses a theatrical metaphor to describe an alternative view of human interactions and expectations:
[One] philosophical view insists that there is "one way" and defers to a master plan for mankind, with people comprising a conforming theatrical group with their roles preordained according to some shadowy, pre-existing script. However, it may be that people are not involved with a predetermined script on a preset stage but are part of a constant improvisation in which each member of the troupe must be a spontaneous actor, playwright, member of the audience, and critic. The parts are neither prescribed nor assigned. Forgotten lines, miscues, late entries, and hasty exits are inevitable, yet an infinite number of combinations await the players. (p. 59)

As is obvious from all that has gone before in the current work (and indeed, in my choice of narrative inquiry as a form for the present study), I share Diamond's view that there is more than one way to consider the world and our roles in it, and this is particularly true for classroom interaction and teacher education. What I want to propose in this chapter, therefore, is a kind of curriculum change that is based on a conception of curriculum similar to that which Connelly and Clandinin (1988) use; I would describe this essentially as the interactions between and experiences of teachers and their students in the classroom.

If we accept the notion that curriculum in this sense is most effective (i.e., that learning occurs most productively) when there is a shared background between teacher and learner—and hence a shared frame of experiential reference and assumptions about what is important to learn—and/or if we accept the idea that second language and "second culture" learners may not only be marginalized by not sharing the dominant language in which school business is conducted (Ogbu, 1987; Delpit, 1988, etc.), but by having different sets of activities and/or expectations through which learning is best promoted, then it is clear that something must be done to bridge the experiential gap between teachers and their students in such multicultural/multilingual
Many different models are being investigated and/or have been proposed that offer hope for educators who wish to bridge this gap, but almost all of these call for major shifts in the way teachers' roles and responsibilities are defined at the institutional level (i.e., in the way schools are conceived of and perceived socially and institutionally). In other words, the implementation of any of these approaches will most likely require a flexibility, a willingness to experiment, and institutional and public support for many of these proposed innovations which have not been characteristic of schools or school systems in the current sociopolitical/economic climate. Contrary to what Diamond suggests above, though, many of the school change initiatives being implemented today seem to be calling for more of the same: top-down, centralized control and reform (Hargreaves, 1994).

Regardless of where these proposed reforms originate, however, one thing seems clear; those which deal with improving scholastic performance on the part of nondominant cultural and linguistic learner groups have thus far had neither a systematic nor a systemic impact. Perhaps no approach can realistically be expected to. It is heartening to know, for those of us concerned about this issue, that people are tackling the matter from a variety of different starting points at many levels of the social institution called "public education," both within and outside the "curriculum" itself, as it has been defined here. Nonetheless, for teachers about to enter the classroom for the first time, and especially for those in the classroom right now—who

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57 See, for example, Moll et al, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Ada, 1988a; and McCaleb, 1994.
see efforts to acknowledge and accommodate differences in language, culture, ways of learning and knowing, and experience as an essential starting point in negotiating a different model of learning with their students--there is a sense both of frustration and urgency.

On the personal-professional level, we see large numbers of students from nondominant/nonmainstream language and cultural groups, disproportionate to their numbers in the general population, struggling to meet performance standards that, more often than not, neither they nor we have had any decisive hand in establishing. As I have described in the case of my own teaching, for lack of our awareness of how we are doing so, we sometimes inadvertently reenforce the standards we see as/known to be unjust and inequitable.

The dilemma is often characterized as follows: we, as teachers, face the hard choice of "lowering" our standards, or alternately, sticking to ones which are completely irrelevant to the circumstances in which we teach, thereby adding more weight to the already crushing burden of scholastic failure many such students bear by the time they reach the upper reaches of our compulsory education systems. It is painful to watch and to be part of; many teachers resent being put in such a position--of having to be "damned" either way--with little or no structural support for trying to negotiate a middle ground between these two equally unacceptable alternatives. How can the task of choosing either alternative be thought of as a useful endeavor for ourselves or for the society of fellow human beings we are committed to serve?

In many ways, coming to terms with issues of this nature on the grand scale at
which it faces us in contemporary classrooms is a crucible of our professional commitments and values, of our very reasons for being teachers; most of us who have chosen to work as teachers (or as teachers of teachers) have done so because we believe, as does Courtney (1988), that "it is people who, objectively, most affect the student." Or as Cummins (in press) puts it, "human relationships are at the heart of education."

But I have also tried to make the case in this study that "in terms of social institutions, it is the family life, social organizational patterns, language and similar elements that affect the creation of mental structures (Courtney, 1988, p. 120)." If we, as teachers, are the arbiters of success and failure that we have been cast in the role of being, then--and if such casting is justifiable--is it proper, just, or even accurate to use the same standards by which we were ourselves were measured decades ago, in entirely different times, under completely different social, economic, and political circumstances? Are we in "the education business" to (a) pass judgement on those who walk through our doors, using outdated standards; (b) transmit "the canons of knowledge" (whose?) and/or the lessons of our experience to them (if the latter were even possible); or (c) help them "get where they are going," while hoping that their destination represents an improvement for them over their current situation as they perceive it?

I happen to be committed primarily and almost exclusively to the last of these alternatives, though it is an ephemeral and elusive goal under the best of circumstances. It becomes nearly impossible when we realize how many of our
students are bright, intelligent, thoughtful people who are held back not because they lack the ability to succeed, but because—as indicated in some of the works cited at the beginning of this paper—of a number of personal, familial, institutional, and social circumstances or pressures over which they have very little control.

There have been volumes written about the role and importance of drama in education (Heathcote, 1984; Courtney, 1988; Wagner, 1976, to name a few). It has widely been seen by those who promote its use in the classroom as an extremely useful tool in efforts to get learners to appreciate, internalize and synthesize the thoughts, ideas, and feelings underlying great works of art and literature, as well as to begin developing an appreciation for the value in even undertaking to do these things to begin with. Surprisingly, though, the principles underlying such approaches have not been used in any systematic way as a means of training teachers to appreciate, internalize and/or synthesize the art of teaching.

There have undoubtedly been drama techniques used and theatrical allegories drawn intermittently and sporadically in the training of teachers, such as the occasional role play and perhaps visualization, metaphors drawn from theater such as the concept of improvisation, and even the characterization of the role of the teacher as that of a performer (with the attendant description of the teacher's performance and its component parts), but this has never happened in any systematic way that has been widely publicized or documented. Even for teachers of drama itself, the focus seems to have been primarily on how to use drama and acting techniques on/for/with learners in pre-university level school settings, rather than on how teachers might
increase their own self-knowledge, awareness of their classroom environments and the role they play in them, and increase their sensitivity to their learners' lives and needs through the utilization of such techniques. It is in this sense that what I am proposing here is most closely linked to narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Diamond, 1991; Witherell and Noddings, 1991) as a form of teacher development.

In almost any classroom, the focus, intent, and success of the learning activity are dependent on strong and vital connections (of various kinds) between learners and teacher, as well as between learners and their own peers. One useful metaphor for these relationships is that of an electrical circuit. It is one of the teacher's central functions to foster and promote the vitality and strength of these connections--to keep the circuit closed--so that the electricity between the terminals can continue to flow. Another analogy for this phenomenon is the childhood game played with a balloon in which the object is to keep the balloon from touching the ground, while it is batted in the air from participant to participant. If the balloon is allowed to reach the ground and come to rest, the game is lost.

These images are just as applicable/appropriate in theater, if not more so; once the play has been rehearsed and the playwright, designers, and director have done their jobs, the actual performances and their dramatic potency are almost exclusively dependent on the actions and connections between the actors in the drama, on their ability to keep the circuit buzzing, the balloon afloat. While it is true that there is an additional factor in this theatrical equation (the audience), in the classroom the
participants alternately play all the parts being enacted in this particular theater: performer, audience and, of course, critic.

And how do actors develop the ability to maintain the "electricity" that characterizes live theater, to keep their audiences engaged and interested? They use a variety of techniques, ranging from "sense memory," "emotional recall," and "object memory" exercises, to visualization and theater games, not to mention some of those which are more familiar to teachers and other educators, such as improvisation, role plays and enactments of various kinds.

For the actor, the reason for stretching and strengthening these particular groups of conceptual muscles is to increase the range of mobility, and the flexibility with which one might be able to slip into or between a range of characters that on the surface may seem impenetrable and impossible to play. In other words, it is the actor's job to be able to "put her/himself in the shoes" of any character s/he may be called on to portray, however different from her/himself that character may seem, at first glance. Is this not at least one important aspect of the role of the teacher with respect to her/his students--a particularly challenging one in the multicultural classroom--as well?

The objective in doing so is clear and can be appreciated especially in the context of the multicultural/multilingual settings I have described earlier; in the absence of sufficient experiential "common ground," where there is a lack of common language where, to use Wells's (1986) expression once more, the "construction zone" in which the teacher and learner can work productively in meeting educational objectives is difficult to identify let alone assess. The kinds of knowledge, sensitivity, and
awareness development (of both the "other" and of oneself) that are common objectives of most acting training programs seem to me to be crucial elements in the teacher's repertoire of skills, as well.

Theater, like its cousins in the arts--music, dance, the visual arts--provides us with another mode of expression, another language, and therefore with another way of being heard, as well, for an actor's work is as much to evoke as it is to emote. For children/teenagers/adults who have lost their voices because--for whatever the reason--they do not share the lingua franca of the classroom setting (variously called the dominant language, mainstream language, standard English, and so forth, depending on the political, disciplinary, and/or geographical perspective of the speaker), a teacher still has various alternatives for making connections with students. But all of them require the effort and the ability to establish communication in at least one of these "languages." Otherwise, no exchange of ideas, thoughts, or feelings can take place; there can be no productively educational interaction.

In general terms, I have been arguing that, as Gallas's (1994) story of her experiences in her elementary classroom so poignantly illustrates, the ability to improvise is critical to success in teaching, as is the willingness to allow transformation of one's personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) to take place, in the process of transformation. It is this belief that motivated me to place Spolin's quote at the beginning of the current chapter; Spolin, for me, makes the simplest yet clearest link between the transformative power of improvisation and of education. In essence, I understand this connection in yet a different way when I rearrange the
syntax, so that the sentence reads: "The heart of transformation is improvisation." And all education is—or should be—about transformation, whether for teachers or learners (to the extent that we define who is who, using such labels).

As Courtney (1988) puts it, "When we 'put ourselves in someone else's shoes' we understand the Other through the Self and the Self through the Other—and the resulting meaning is greater than either. (p. 125)." Through this process (i.e., "putting ourselves in someone else's shoes"), too, "when we re-present ourselves, there is a Knowing ABOUT; but in the now of presentation there is a Knowing IN—a tacit, often unconscious, way of knowing within the living event. Then, as Polanyi puts it, "We know more than we can tell" (p.126). Courtney continues:

We also understand the social world in terms of roles. Our self-presentation is as "the costumed player," an externalized Self that is conceptually distinct from the interior self: a role of "me" distinct from the inner "I." When we dramatize others we understand them in their social, moral and ideological implications. (p. 128)

I must agree with Courtney, and using his words, reiterate that:

Learning is the result of such processes. It occurs when there is a qualitative change in a person's understanding of experience in a two-fold way: first through apprehension—an innate or tacit grasping; and second through comprehension, which is a cognitive understanding . . . [I]t . . . is grounded by transformation, identification, and impersonation. (p. 127)

According to Wolf, Edmiston, and Enciso (forthcoming), Heathcote (1984) also believes that the transformation which Spolin refers to above "is often personal, suggesting that improvisation means putting yourself in other people's shoes, and by using personal experience to help you understand their point of view, you may
discover more than you know when you started."

Obviously, grappling with these questions (i.e., what learning is and how it takes place) is integral to teacher training—even more essential than exposure to methodology (although I am not arguing that methodology is unimportant), and it is precisely the idea that teachers-in-training need to develop the capacity to put themselves in their learners' shoes that motivates my desire to link acting and teacher training approaches. In my own teacher training experience, methodology—such as cooperative learning techniques, classroom management and assessment strategies, and instruction on how to write lesson plans to achieve observable outcomes in the form of conditioned student behaviors—was emphasized at the expense of time spent getting to know oneself and one's own personal and professional priorities (i.e., identifying one's own "constructs," in Diamond's [1991] terms), and mastering techniques for getting to know one's learners as a key to how one motivates students to learn when extrinsic factors cannot do the job. This fact was a major contributor to my alienation and the sense of culture shock I experienced during my year at Esperanza, as I explained in preceding chapters.

As a teacher trainer, I would reverse these priorities and, elaborating on Gallas's (1994) notion of the "arts as epistemology," I would explore my own ways of knowing—which I call the "epistemology of acting"—and the ways they contribute to making me a more effective teacher, as well as how they have made the analysis in the current work possible. I would use exercises and approaches gleaned from my own acting training to do so. This application of acting training theory/practice provides a direct
link to contemporary teacher development theory.

Eisner (1968) has drawn out some of the parallels I see between acting and teaching quite well. His discussion in the work cited initially focuses on some of the superficial factors (e.g., "the symbolic meaning of his language, . . . the rhythm, tempo, pace, and timing of his speech and actions" p. 362). He then discusses a little more deeply some of the characteristics I see as even more critical to the "delivery" of effective teaching:

Teachers, like actors, attempt to communicate to groups of people in an audience-like situation, and while the ends of comedy and instruction differ markedly, both the actor and the teacher employ qualities to enhance communication; both must come through to the people with whom they work. . . . What I am suggesting is that the acts of teaching and acting have important and significant parallels and that teaching, while concerned with some ends that are not relevant to acting, is concerned with many other ends that are. Intelligent control of qualitative elements necessary in acting is also necessary in teaching insofar as teaching is partly a task of acting and achieving communication between teacher and individual and group. The qualitative controls that teachers employ can enhance teaching and can be instrumental to theoretical ends embodied in certain subjects and can also be used to achieve qualitative ends incorporated in other subjects. Teachers who are able to control qualities intelligently are probably better able to produce the kind of classroom atmosphere that will facilitate the type of learning that they value. (pp. 362-363)

The purpose of almost all acting training, in the broadest sense, is to develop self-awareness, for the purpose of broadening one's self-identity. When actors learn how to "build a character" using the naturalistic approach to acting advocated by Stanislavskii, by putting themselves in the shoes of a fictional or historical character they will portray on stage, for example, the "raw material' from which they work is their own life. This is the purpose of the sense memory, emotional recall, deep relaxation,
beat analysis, and other exercises mentioned in Chapter 3: to transcend the superficial impressions of who someone (including oneself) is, as a way of getting at the "emotional truth" of a life to be portrayed by making personal connections to the reality of that life. For those who practice this "Method" approach to acting, the extent to which an actor is able to do so determines the viability and believability of her/his performance. Caricatures are antithetical to this approach, just as stereotyping learners is anathema to effective teaching; in both cases, knowledge "from the inside out" is the objective if the intent of the performance is to have the most profoundly transformative effect possible, in all three of Schechner's (1988) areas--the story, the performers, and the audience.

Particularly in multicultural/multilingual classrooms, characterization work from naturalistic approaches to acting like Stanislavskii's would be valuable, because in exploring how a human being "is put together" in this way, the artificial barriers that separate us from those who appear to be different from us begin to crumble and we begin to merge identities with them, at first in our imaginations and then--at least potentially--in our everyday realities. Under such circumstances, we cannot help but cease problematizing a child's understanding of the world or her way of looking at it, or thinking of them as less than a "whole person" (i.e., stereotypically, or in terms of deficits they have), whoever we or they may be.

58 It seems worthwhile pointing out that this goal (i.e., to achieve some degree of "emotional truth") is hardly unique to "the Method:" many other training techniques and schools of thought in acting both see this as one of their central goals and have techniques for getting at it. It is just that "the Method" was historically the first to set this out as an objective, and is one of the most widely known for being able to produce "true" results on a wide and systematic basis.
While some rewording is required to make the precise fit, I have already indicated a parallel to "the Method" in teacher development literature and among teacher researchers; proponents of narrative inquiry characterize their approach as a germaine and fruitful way of looking at teachers' practice; they argue that this type of research is relevant to teacher development in essentially the same way proponents of "the Method" do about the achievement of emotional truth in acting. Without exposing teachers and prospective teachers to their own belief systems, to how they construct and view their worlds, and to how these constructs (Diamond, 1991) guide their teaching practices, there may be severe constraints on the extent to which teachers may be able to develop (i.e., refine those practices they like and want to retain in their work, and more substantively alter or omit from their practices those which they feel undermine their teaching objectives). Both narrative inquiry and Method acting training require an openness to continued growth, as well as consideration of alternative courses of action to those which normally delimit one's identity, and which stultify or preclude the potential for behaving in ways which at first glance seem "impossible."

When viewed in this way, the possibilities for transfer of techniques normally thought of as useful only in acting training to the realm of teacher training seem unlimited to me, in complementarity with more explicitly narrative approaches (such as keeping response journals or generating reflective discussion about training episodes which incorporate them), or simply as uncommented upon "collective reflections" on the complex realities of the teaching profession. I believe that it is only by such an understanding (i.e., of how we are "put together," and also by implication
of how our students are "put together," of what their lives are like, and of how this influences their lives within the context of the classroom)--especially in multicultural/multilingual and intercultural/intergenerational situations like the one that is the basis for the current work--that we can provide meaningful, worthwhile, and socially constructive educational experiences for our learners in our schools.

At the core of this is the belief that if we can experience first hand what makes both ourselves and our students "tick," we can help them keep their "learning clocks" wound. An "acting-based" training for teachers might be one useful strategy for achieving this. I would argue that the fact that I have had such a training (although I have developed it and customized it throughout my life to meet my learning needs and to accommodate the specific professional development and career path I have taken) has played an instrumental role in enabling me both to reflect on my own personal and professional development as profoundly as I have in the current work, and to experience the success I have had to date in my teaching career.

Another type of work which was part of my acting training--which comes from a more experimental notion of what acting is about than "the Method" was--is typified by the "mirror exercise," in which two people face each other, one is designated the leader and the other the reflection, and the latter attempts to reflect the facial expression, physical posture, and visual appearance of the former. Initially, the leader begins moving and her/his movements are duplicated by the partner as precisely as possible. Because the eyes of the person "reflecting" the initiator are not supposed to watch the movement of the latter unless s/he happens to be doing so at the moment,
the follower is required to develop a peripheral awareness of the leader's movement without (necessarily) directly witnessing it (i.e., exactly as would one's actual reflection in the mirror).

At the same time, the leader is supposed to move in such a way that s/he doesn't "lose" her/his reflection, so that the exercise is not simply a matter of one person leading and another one following the movement; successful involvement in it requires attentiveness between one and the other participant, and a willingness to take both "direction" and initiative, while alternating fluidly between the two. Usually, there is a pause between attempts at the exercise, during which the roles are reversed so that the initiator in the first "pass" at the mirror exercise becomes the reflection, and vice versa. Often, as the exercise progresses, the distinction in roles between the leader and the follower dissolves, so that the participants become aware of--or "lose themselves" in--a seamless synchronicity of movement, of which there is no discernible initiator, even to the participants themselves. For me, mirroring (and all it implies, as summarized in the above description of it) is one potentially valuable metaphor for teaching.

Pinar and Grumet (1976) describe a similar kind of theater exercise:

We discovered within a particular series of movement and gesture called transformational exercises, archetypes of classroom interactions. Because words are banished from the communicated content of the exercises, there is no place for the hidden curriculum to hide. It is more difficult to disassociate gesture from its emotional, intentional content than it is to sever words from our thought and feeling: false gestures are patent when false words escape detection. Transformational exercises require that one person receive a gesture and/or sound from another, that he mirror it or respond to it and then that he extend the gesture and transform it into a gesture of his own that he then brings to
another. The exercise requires concentration and receptivity to the gestures and intention of another and then acknowledges the participant's specificity as he allows the gesture to grow to size and makes it his own. As the exercise proceeds students participate in actions that closely parallel the dynamics of the teacher student relationship and dialogue that evolves in the classroom. As participants mirror a gesture, they imitate the actions of another, immerse themselves in another's perspective, metaphor, structure. As they extend a gesture or transfer it to a recipient, they amplify its essential character and intensify the intention that directs it. As they transform the gesture, they identify their own intentions, accept their own inclinations. If the transformation occurs as the gesture is passed to another, the transformation reflects that particular relationship of the initiator and the recipient and the intention of the initiator may be instantaneously transformed at the moment of confrontation. Within these exercises reside the dialectics of both theatre and education: one and many, activity and passivity, leading and following, freedom and contingency, abstraction and particularization, self and others, giving and taking, assimilation and accommodation. (p. 82)

While in an acting class these kinds of exercises might often go uncommented upon (since sometimes the visceral experience itself is the reason for the exercise, and since "mirroring" is one highly viable metaphor for the interactions between performers on a stage), as a teacher educator I would rarely pass up the opportunity to comment and reflect upon the discoveries, difficulties, and other sorts of reactions that pre-service teachers might have in response to these sorts of exercises, at least to a certain degree. The mirror exercise and, as Pinar and Grumet suggest, the transformation exercise are examples of activities whose intent is help to develop participants' awareness of their physical environment, the other people in it, and their relationship to these, providing a valuable focal counterpoint to the exercises described earlier which are based on "the Method."

Another drama activity that would be very useful in a teacher training situation is what O'Neill (1995) calls "process drama." Process drama has its roots in Spolin's
(1983) improvisational theater games, as well as in the work of Dorothy Heathcote. In this technique, the instigator/director of the drama (the teacher trainer, in my hypothetical case) lays out a scenario for a kind of role play—not directly, but by assuming a character who has a particular conflict with which s/he needs assistance. This character describes her/his situation in terms of a decision or action which needs to be made by the other participants (i.e., the teachers-in-training). Very few details are made explicit by the instigator; there are no role definitions assigned, the location of the action is only suggested, and the course of the action to be taken by the participants is left almost entirely to the discretion of the participants themselves.

It is a very purely collaborative form of drama, in which no predetermined outcome is to be reached, in which participants must balance originality/imagination/creativity and a concern for maintaining a "dramatic tension" with a connection between the collaborators, in an effort to come to some sort of satisfactory resolution (i.e., "denouement") of the dramatic conflict introduced by the leader. The potential usefulness of this technique for teacher training is profound, I believe; it has a virtually unlimited applicability to a wide range of problems related to the handling of "difference"—of all kinds—in the classroom. And since teachers' interactions with their students—and with the dramas of their lives—often constitute real "high drama" (especially at the secondary level, it seems!), process drama can be useful precisely because it gives us a chance to stop, rewrite, rework, reconsider, and otherwise reflect upon more ideal resolutions to these dramatic conflicts than the undesirable ones which sometimes result.
Mask work/play (as alluded to earlier) might also provide opportunities for exploration of conceptions and preconceptions about what teaching is and what teachers are or might ideally be, particularly if teachers start to develop their own masks over the course of their training, and have to give thought to the masks they might wish to make use of and/or discard in their teaching. In my own work studying *commedia dell'arte* in clown school, we spent many hours exploring the way masks we donned defined, extended, and in some ways limited our psychic and physical self-portrayal, as well as the freedom a mask could give us to explore and express parts of ourselves which we might otherwise feel inhibited about displaying in public. In inspecting and responding to the masks, we considered how the appearance of the masks might affect how people perceived us while we wore them, and how we could exploit the switching from mask to mask to present different qualities and attitudes we wanted to explore.

These are but a few of the ways in which mask work/play might have some utility for teachers in training. It seems clear that in the profession of teaching, where the identity projected is such a critical element of both the teacher's intent and her/his accessibility to and communication with students, that these sorts of explorations could be extremely valuable. To my knowledge, the richness of mask work has rarely been explored for its potential to help those training for the teaching profession to make connections between their internal and external selves.

My acting training, like many other parts of my professional background, has been broad and eclectic, and as I am at the beginning of defining my identity and of working
as a teacher educator, I feel uncertain to what extent I will wish to explore the abovementioned theater games and activities (as well as others) in teacher training environments. My intention in describing them here is merely to indicate the depth and range of possibilities I have to draw from in doing so as I embark on this new phase of my professional journey, and to identify the many forms "the epistemology of acting" I have been discussing might take in contributing to the field of teacher education and development.

Finally, I cannot help but see this current work as a powerful example of the vital role the arts and arts education might play in public education in a postmodern society. There is already a long and rich tradition of behavioralist and "scientistic" approaches to teaching and teacher research, as Eisner (1992) has pointed out, so it seems appropriate that there has recently been a resurgence of interest in more phenomenological, qualitative investigations and descriptions of what teaching is, "given the particularity, the phenomenological density, and the dynamic complexity" (Eisner, 1992, p. 267) of teaching. Earlier, I cited the imagination as a fertile ground for the nurturance of realities as yet unseen, those which are yet to be harvested, which allows us to envision solutions to conundrums—logical, personal, social—that seem otherwise impenetrable; I see this artistic way of knowing as an important feature of the perspective on teaching and learning I hope will distinguish my contribution to the field of teacher education and multicultural education. I also see that this is the type of gift all the arts can provide for us: a space within which to work under even the tightest of predicaments, and the creativity and imagination to develop
solutions where none seem to exist.

This space (for individual freedom in a social context) is directly akin to what Greene (1988) meant by freedom. It explains why such a scholar, known as she is for her work in the philosophy of education and in arts education, has been able to address these two issues simultaneously and so profoundly in her work generally, and particularly in the text I have so often referred to in this work. Arts education in this sense helps provide educators access to "the whole learner," whether that learner is the student or the teacher. We as a society cannot afford to forget this, and as a future teacher educator I am committed to doing everything in my power to see that no teacher I train ever does.
Bibliography


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