WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO DO?
A HEURISTIC STUDY OF EMANCIPATORY RELATIONSHIPS

by

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

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Doctor of Education Degree, 2001
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The question "how do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?" is explored through a heuristic research process, a qualitative research methodology, which was developed by Clark Moustakas. The theoretical framework upon which this study is based is interdisciplinary, and draws on the fields of education (humanistic, holistic, progressive education and critical and engaged pedagogy), psychology (person-centred, inter/intrapersonal studies, sport psychology), women's studies (feminist epistemology) and, sports and recreation studies (social justice issues, women-centred coaching, women and non-traditional sport). Data was collected through audiotaped informal conversational interviews with 14 volunteer co-researchers. The verbatim data was then analyzed using heuristic methodology's six phases: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination. Based on this procedure, thirty-three learnings and six themes were derived that highlight the co-researchers' shared perceptions, descriptions, and experiences of emancipatory relationships. The themes and learnings are presented in the form of individual depictions, a composite depiction, three exemplary portraits, and a creative synthesis. The study concludes with reflections on the data, the value of the research methodology, the emancipatory potential of relationships, and the researcher's experience of the study.
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Introduction to the Study

In our present... state love is indeed strange to most people. Misunderstood and shunned, it rarely takes root; or if it does, it soon withers and dies. Its delicate fiber cannot endure the stress and strain of the daily grind. Its soul is too complex to adjust itself to the slimy woof of our social fabric. It weeps and moans and suffers with those who have need of it, yet lack the capacity to rise to love's summit.

Some day, some day men and women will rise, they will reach the mountain peak, they will meet big and strong and free, ready to receive, to partake, and to bask in the golden rays of love. What fancy, what imagination, what poetic genius can foresee even approximately the potentialities of such a force in the life of men and women. If the world is ever to give birth to true companionship and oneness... love will be the parent (Emma Goldman, 1917, p. 238-239).
Chapter One

Introduction

Personal Background

The garden was particularly serene. The late afternoon August sun cast a warm orange glow onto the overgrown clematis. The adventurous vine cascaded from the top of the trellis and hung motionless in the thick air, poised and ready to latch on to an unsuspecting neighbouring snowberry. The green leaves looked almost transparent, like hundreds of suncatchers strung with thought and care. The vine had taken three years to cover the trellis and, now that it had, it seemed to be in a hurry to demonstrate its vigour. House sparrows had long ago discovered its many safe nooks, and now the squirrels were using it. My eyes too had learned to use the clematis as a refuge. I had spent many hours sitting in my garden mindfully watching the world that it hosted: sparrows, squirrels, praying mantises, lady beetles, aphids, grasshoppers, and butterflies.

For three days that summer I had taken Sister Chân Không's book, Learning True Love: How I Learned and Practiced Social Change in Vietnam out to the clematis. I sat in the garden chair, curled up with the book for hours. It was captivating. I stopped only to rest my eyes on the vine while my mind and soul absorbed her compassionate life story. I read carefully, knowing that I was in the midst of a transformative process. I got to know Sister Chân Không and was touched by her love toward all beings. She writes with deep humility and power. I felt connected with her on many levels, some I'm sure,
quite unintentional on her part and others I was not aware of until much time had passed. My work was different from hers. I was a teacher and an athlete, and I had not lived through a war. She had devoted herself to a monastic life and was content with, a piece of wood with four bricks for a bed, a thin foam mattress, a sleeping bag, and a light blanket, several boxes for our files and a lot of breathing in and out consciously to be aware of our good luck to be in peace and liberty to work for those in need (1993, p. 257).

Although I was somewhat radical in my politics, I lived a fairly conventional urban family life. Yet I felt drawn to her, and surrounded and inspired by her love. I felt supported by her. I knew that she would appreciate my teaching and my political work, that is, my contribution to making the world a better place. Her work, my work, our work is about connecting with others, and supporting and empowering them. It is about inspiring thoughtful, engaged practice.

Sister Chân Không was born in a small village on the Mekong River Delta in 1938 and has spent most of her life in the service of others. She taught children in war-torn Vietnam, distributed food to the poor, worked with the sick, and helped to bring hope to the inhabitants of Saigon. She studied Buddhism in depth and was assured that if she "practiced diligently" she would be reborn as a man, later a bodhisattva and eventually a buddha. She had been told that it was not possible for nuns to do the same work as monks, particularly in war efforts. This intrigued her and she pursued this, because she wondered why a woman could not work for peace and justice, and be enlightened. She
questioned one of her teachers who told her that women have a Karma too heavy to become enlightened. Eventually she came to think of this in terms of psychology.

Now I realize what he meant was that men's and women's psychologies are different. Women may raise difficult issues in an agitated way while men keep their problems to themselves. But we both have problems, and we both have to work steadily to transform our suffering. If this transformation was what the Buddhists meant by enlightenment, I could appreciate its practical value (1993, p. 17).

She eventually met Thich Nhat Hanh, and they collaborated to establish the School of Youth for Social Service. Together they organized around the health, educational, agricultural, and spiritual needs of the poor and victims of war. They established a new engaged Buddhism that they practiced in daily life and social justice work through the formation of The Order of Interbeing (*Tiếp Hien*), the 42nd generation of the Zen School of *Lin Chi* (*Rinzai*). Sister Chân Không eventually began to push for gender equality.

The Order of Interbeing was already upsetting the traditionalists, and, while many of the monks agreed with her, they were concerned that another radical move would be too much for the elders to handle. Sister Chân Không found this unacceptable but tried to abide by the decisions of the order. In the meantime, her social work made women's issues a priority. She was respectful but impatient. I know the feeling. As I strive to become more patient, balanced, and mindful in my living, I struggle with a great deal of impish impatience. I was thrilled to see that Sister Chân Không did not apologize for her restlessness.
Sister Chân Không's writing spoke directly to me. I found myself naturally engaged in an internal dialogue with her, and asked questions only to find them answered in the next paragraph or page. How did she know I would pick up her book? How did she know my thought patterns, my interests, my concerns, and my passions? Her writing style was magnetic and drew me into her life. I was effortlessly able to understand the life of a celibate nun from a distant and culturally foreign land. On the third day of my time with her in the garden, I sadly realized that I was nearing the end of her story. I hesitated to turn the pages and stopped often to breathe and lose myself in the clematis. I felt the joy but, deep down, I knew that this was also a stalling tactic. I savoured every last minute of my time with her. She begins the last paragraph with "Dear Readers," and I knew she was talking to me. She says,

I thank you for your patience in reading all of these pages. I am with you just as you have been with me, and we encourage each other to realize our deepest love, caring, and generosity. Together on the path of love, we can try to make a small difference in someone's life. What else is there to do? (1993, p. 252).

Yes, what else is there to do?

I am a mixed race, immigrant woman. My mother was born and raised as a Catholic in southern Ireland. She is very much aware of her Irish heritage, is extremely proud of it, and has passed this on to her children and grandchildren. She trained as a nurse and practiced in Ireland, England, and Canada. In both her family and work life, she has served others. My father was born and raised in Jamaica, except for three of his formative years, which were spent in the village of Tai Swee Ten near the city of
Gunlang in the province of Kwang Dung in Southern China. His father was Chinese and taught his children to speak Hakka. His mother, who was born in Jamaica, was part Chinese and part Black. I grew up in a home with two sisters where, despite this extraordinarily diverse cultural background, we were raised with a single religious influence and with the prevailing social norms of 1960s suburban London, England. When I was seven, my family moved to Canada. Both of my parents worked full time, and both came from alcoholic families. For most of my childhood, they struggled with alcohol themselves. I am aware that I have been deeply influenced by the many difficulties associated with growing up in an alcoholic, mixed race family. My schooling in Canada was relatively uneventful and uninspired. When I reflect back, I am aware that I was bored and alienated. I am now in a 20-year-old heterosexual relationship and have two daughters. I know that my life experiences are currently influencing my family and work. I am keenly aware of racism and other forms of oppression. I'm also aware that my difficult experiences with relationships as a child has fueled my desire to understand and create transformative relationships.

My tendency to question assumptions and consider alternatives was nurtured and sharpened during my student life at a progressive college in the United States. While at college, I came into contact with many new and exciting ideas. This is where I first encountered humanistic psychology, feminism, and Marxism, and where I first learned that education need not be oppressive. The catalyst to this transformation was the relationship I developed with my academic advisor, however. This was my first experience with what I am now calling an emancipatory relationship.
Since then I have been fortunate to experience others. I have two daughters and have thought deeply about my relationships with them. I have taught graduate and undergraduate students, and have learned that office hours are as important or more important than what takes place in the classroom. After the birth of my second daughter I decided to challenge myself physically. I began to lift weights and joined a competitive touch football team. Over the years, I have immersed myself in academic theory, but now I wanted to take the time to help my body grow. I was also intrigued with the idea of being part of a group of women, a team working together for a common goal. As my body and physical skills developed I began to integrate my head with my hands, and I applied the theory and philosophies that had become important to me to my athletics. My heart followed soon after. I became aware of the importance of camaraderie, trust, and mutual aid on the field. I also learned to be open to my own spiritual unfolding through athletics. I began to enter a meditative state while I played. I learned to be "in the zone", and I tried to understand how best to help others transform their view of athletics. Again relationships became a focal point of my thinking and practice. Football, the game, is bigger than the score. For me it has been about letting go of ego, desire, and results. It is about welcoming the unforeseen, the unknown. One never truly knows which way a football will bounce. It is about being in the present moment, knees bent, feeling the energy of the game and moving as a team according to plan, yet trusting each other's creativity: the natural flow.
In a sense I began working on this project during my first year as an undergraduate student, and I have continued through my teaching and my athletic life. From the moment I met my advisor, I tried to understand what it was about her and the two of us together that was so very powerful. In all of my classes and readings I searched for clues about what was happening to me through this relationship. I could not quench my thirst to know and continued to search. The formal research and writing of this thesis has taken relatively little time, but I am aware that it is dependent on my work, athletics, and family life for the past fifteen years.

Speaking about his Academy Award winning screenplay, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, William Goldman explains that he,

- first read about Butch and Sundance in the late 1950's, and the story of the two outlaws fascinated me... [T]here weren't many books about them then, but there were articles and I would seek them out and read them. The more I read, the deeper my fascination became... Eventually, I did all the research I could bear... so I sat down and wrote the first draft in 1966.

- It took four weeks.

- When someone asks how long it takes to write a screenplay, I'm never sure what to answer. Because I don't think four weeks is what it took to do Butch. For me eight years is closer to the truth (cited in Saltzman, 1993, pp. 76-77).

My process has been similar to Goldman's. I became fascinated with the role that relationships play in helping people to grow and become free. My first experience was
with my advisor, but I soon had others. Each one fueled my fascination. By the time I was ready to embark on the dissertation process the topic was there, waiting for me as it had been for so very long.

**Study Question**

How do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?

This study is a phenomenologically based, heuristic investigation of a question of deep personal meaning. I have found that this question surfaces and resurfaces in many areas of my life, for example, in my roles as student, teacher, and athlete. Throughout my doctoral studies, I have contemplated this question on the basis of new theoretical learnings and discussions with faculty and peers. As a teacher, I find myself reflecting upon it after encounters with students. As an athlete, I find that the question presents itself after intense experiences with teammates. Each time the question resurfaces, I find myself struggling with my understanding of liberatory pedagogy and the role that relationships play in this endeavour. This personal struggle has lasted many years, but has lacked concentrated and focused attention. As a result, significant insights have not fully blossomed. For some time now, I have wanted to immerse myself into this question in order to support the process of letting these insights emerge as significant learnings. Once the question is clarified, the task will be to collect these elusive, scattered thoughts from my previous experiences and apply a heuristic methodology to my current thinking and experiences with emancipatory relationships.
**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study the following definitions will be used.

*People* refers to those with whom I dialogue about the experience of emancipatory relationships. I have chosen to use the term "people" because it conveys a more complete sense of our uniqueness and the depth of our untapped potential. The term "people" implies a personal dimension that the more traditional research terms such as "individuals", "subjects," or "participants" ignore. These traditional terms fail to capture the full spectrum of what it is that makes us human. Phenomenology is a "philosophy or theory of the unique; it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable" (van Manen, 1997, p.7). van Manen rejects the use of detached terms such as "individuals" or "subjects" when referring to people involved in a phenomenologically based research project. People are unique and irreplaceable. The term "individual" is used to highlight similarities, but people or persons are ""incomparable, unclassifiable, uncountable, irreplaceable"" (Auden in van Manen, 1997, p.6).

The term *co-researchers* is used to refer to the people who will play a direct role in this study; that is, co-researchers will take part in dialogue and reflection. More specifically, they will be asked how they perceive and describe emancipatory relationships.

The words *perceive and describe* refer to the understanding and interpretation of the qualities and essence of emancipatory relationships. "Essence is that what makes a
thing what it is (and without which it would not be what it is); that what makes a thing what it is rather than its being or becoming something else" (van Manen, 1997, p. 177).

Co-researchers have been asked to explain the experience of emancipatory relationships through writing, dialogue, and creative expression. The data collected contributes to the creation of individual depictions, a composite depiction, and exemplary portraits (see methodology) that illuminate the experiences of emancipatory relationships.

_emancipatory relationships_ are defined as social, intellectual, and spiritual contact among people and or groups of people that results in increased self-understanding and group solidarity, spiritual and intellectual growth, and critical sociopolitical awareness.

These last terms are defined as follows:

_Self-understanding and group solidarity_ - a deepened reflexive awareness and illumination about the nature and meaning of one's being, and unselfish commitment and connection to others.

_Spiritual and intellectual growth_ - the awakening of awe and wonder, increased understanding of ideas and practice, the connection of ideas and practice, and ultimately the unity of knowing, doing, and being.

_Critical sociopolitical awareness_ - increased understanding about the operation of historical forces in social life, prevailing power structures, and cultural norms which is achieved through a rigorous dialectical process.

_Relevance of Study_
This heuristic investigation of emancipatory relationships will employ an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. It will draw from the fields of education (humanistic, holistic, progressive education and critical and engaged pedagogy), psychology (person-centred, inter/intrapersonal studies, sport psychology), women's studies (feminist epistemology) and sports and recreation studies (social justice issues, women-centred coaching, women and nontraditional sport). This study will be relevant to theorists and practitioners in the above fields who are interested in detailed descriptions of the experience of emancipatory relationships. Relationships have been the subject of numerous studies, but the emancipatory potential of relationships has not been explored in depth. A heuristic methodology allows for a deep personal look at the essence of emancipatory relationships.

Humanistic psychology/education was at the height of its popularity in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The work of Rogers, May, and Maslow was well received by many who rejected a positivist position. Each of these psychologists developed work that was scholarly, and readily applicable to psychotherapy and to the understanding of human development/potential. Their work was also transferable to education. According to Rogers (1985), it was at this time that "experiential learning and experiential knowledge," helped to change "the lives of thousands, if not millions of people" (p. 8). Intrinsic to experiential learning and knowledge are the practices of intense, conscious, and intimate forms of interpersonal communication that are characterized by 'realness', nonjudgmental and empathetic understanding, self-regulation, unconditional positive regard, honesty, and trust. Since the scholarly
contributions of Rogers and others in earlier decades, little has been written that takes these concepts and applies them to the study of relationships as vehicles of personal and social change. This study will attempt to connect this earlier scholarship of inter/intrapersonal development with the social change values of communal solidarity and democratic practice. While the teachings about interpersonal communication developed by humanistic psychologists have become mainstream and applied to such areas as organizational and corporate psychology, they are not commonly recognized as humanistic psychology's contribution to social transformation. I hope that through this study, I will be able to re-establish the connection these teachings have to humanistic psychology and document the emancipatory promise of this scholarship.

Eugene Taylor (1999) suggests that a "new generation of humanistic psychologists must define the existential-phenomenological position in the traditions of James, Rogers, Allport and May" (p. 21). Rogers (1985) and O'Hara (1985, 1997) concur and suggest that phenomenological research must challenge the positivism that often overshadows the ways in which we read the world, particularly the human world. Rogers suggests that,

experiential knowledge, no matter how valuable, cannot be communicated directly. We can communicate about it, or we can create the conditions that facilitate it but it cannot be communicated directly. Consequently, it has not become a part of the mainstream of psychological knowledge (1985, p. 8).
This inability to communicate experiential knowledge directly has made it difficult for humanistic psychology to gain recognition within academia. While humanistic practice is present in the fields of organizational psychology, social work, nursing, and education, it has failed to establish a scholarly reputation within most universities, and therefore its emancipatory promise has not been fully explored. For Rogers (1985), this explains "why humanistic psychology has had a minimal influence on psychology as it exists in our educational institutions" (p. 9). Despite this lack of direct influence, phenomenological research seems to be increasingly accepted as a legitimate method to understand human activity. This is due in large part to feminist/women's studies, critical pedagogy, and other academic fields that have established themselves (if not with some skepticism) within academia. O'Hara suggests that humanistic psychology should be doing the same.

There is an important and urgent cultural need for humanistic practitioners to reenter the fray and to elucidate our... particular understandings of the nature of human reality. In language that affirms both the deepest convictions of the humanistic tradition as well as the emergent pluralism within a postmodern polyglot world of tomorrow, we must re-articulate our worldview(s), what we believe are the foundational premises of our work... And we should not compromise (1997, paragraph 14).

Humanistic psychology, by way of heuristic research, has the potential to address this need. My efforts to make use of this emerging research method will, I hope, illuminate its intrinsic capacity to encourage reflexivity - to be aware of one's own actions. Due to
its very nature, heuristic research encourages deep thought, conscious practice, and intense reflection. In my case, this will include reflection on the political nature of emancipatory relationships. Current thinking on heuristics (Douglass, 1985; Moustakas 1985, 1990) doesn't elaborate on the sociopolitical potential of this methodology. I hope that this study begins to address this.

I feel that my work will be significant in the fields of feminist education and critical pedagogy since emancipatory relationships challenge patriarchal structures and practices. Emancipatory relationships reject the banking model of education as described by Friere (1978); in my experience this model is still the norm in classrooms. Emancipatory relationships presume that the learning process is very much in the hands of the "learner" and that the "teacher" is there to facilitate and learn alongside. The interpersonal dynamics and the day-to-day practice of such relationships provide counter-hegemonies that serve as visions of what might be. Those who experience such relationships are transformed, since the relationship itself challenges the very assumptions upon which conventional relationships are based. Assumptions such as the need for hierarchy and the inevitability of domination, for example, are called into question and become subjects of critical analysis. Any form of education that is interested in social justice should pay attention to the nature of relationships.

My studies in feminist epistemology, engaged pedagogy, and sport and social justice, as well as my involvement in sports as an athlete and coach, have led me to question how a women's way of knowing can inform the study of relationships. In particular I am
interested in how the ideas generated from the work of those that I label "caring feminists" (bell hooks, 1994; Elizabeth Minnich, 1990; Nell Noddings, 1990; Jane Roland Martin, 1997; Carol Gilligan, 1982; and Mary Belenky, 1986) can be applied in practice. What might a truly feminist relationship look like? If Martin's domestic values of care, concern, and connectedness (1997) are applied to relationships, how would such relationships be experienced? What changes would take place in the people, the classroom, the sports team? Could a classroom or a team become the moral equivalent of "home," laden with Martin's domestic values?

Elizabeth Minnich (1990) warns that feminist scholarship must avoid the problem of itself becoming a system of knowledge that mirrors the dominant system in form if not content. Feminist education, she argues, should not be reduced to an "add on," but instead should seek to transform. Likewise, a feminist or woman centred analysis of sport (in my particular case, competitive touch football) should seek to transform the game and its participants. In addition the methodology employed in such scholarship should avoid mirroring dominant research methods. In this sense, the heuristic process is itself political in that it promises to be a transformative experience for the co-researchers and for myself as the primary researcher. This methodology is also a tool used to study an inherently political process. My goal is to examine how the experience of emancipatory relationships is perceived and described; in this examination my co-researchers and I unpack our own values and assumptions and generate knowledge claims based on our lived experiences.
This study explores the question, "How do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?" and attempts to:

- connect humanistic psychology with democratic social change.
- document the emancipatory promise of relationships.
- contribute to the humanistic understanding of the nature of human reality.
- elaborate on the sociopolitical potential of heuristics.
- provide visions of what relationships might be (counter hegemony).
- challenge conventional assumptions about relationships.
- apply the work of the "caring feminists" to the study of relationships and social change.
- document the transformative nature of heuristic research for the researcher(s).
- develop and document significant learnings based on lived experiences.

Assumptions and Limitations

I embark on this study from a position that integrates anarcho-feminism, communitarian/domestic values, engaged Buddhism, critical pedagogy, and humanistic psychology. This combination of influences, which forms the "critical lens" I use to view and perceive the world, will be articulated and explored within the study. I enter this research with a series of assumptions that have helped me to formulate my research question and undoubtedly have influenced the process I use to address the question. I believe that it is important to acknowledge that my research is not a neutral process and that, while I may try to suspend the practice of overt analysis at some points, my assumptions cannot be eliminated.
The first assumption that shapes my thinking is that there is an unequal distribution of power in the human world that serves to oppress, marginalize, and dominate many for the sake of the material, intellectual, and emotional interests of a few.

The second assumption that I make is that educators, coaches, mentors, etc., have a responsibility to work for social justice and contribute to the elimination of hierarchy and domination.

The third assumption that guides my thinking is that humans have the potential to move toward self-actualization, to develop interdependent, cooperative relationships, and to make the world a better place.

I am aware that my assumptions focus mainly on humans and may be considered anthropocentric. Therefore I find it necessary to identify this human-centred bias as a potential limitation. I am also aware that, despite my studies and understanding of Buddhist thought, my perspective has been shaped primarily by experiences with ideas from European and American philosophies and cultures. In that sense, this study is limited by a Eurocentric perspective.

Given the nature of heuristic research, which is the methodology employed here, this study is limited to exploring personal truths. Ideas generated by this study may be further tested through the use of other methodologies (Rogers, 1985, p.11). Ken Wilber's (1997) call for an integral approach to consciousness studies is of particular-
interest here. He argues that while the many conflicting schools of research have much to offer, an all-quadrant, all-level approach is needed for a comprehensive understanding. Such an approach considers and tracks the various claims that specific research methodologies make and correlates their relations without reducing any of the claims or creating a hierarchy. A detailed presentation of this all-quadrant, all-level approach to consciousness studies can be found in "An Integral Theory of Consciousness", A Theory of Everything, and Integral Psychology. As Wilber points out, each of the specific approaches "deserve continued and vigorous research and development" (1997, p. 90). This present heuristic study is limited to and situated in three of the major schools of consciousness outlined by Wilber (1996): introspectionism, social psychology, and Eastern and contemplative traditions. A comprehensive all-quadrant, all-level approach is not attempted here. This study is offered as one voice in the chorus (Wilber, 1996).

The philosophical foundation on which this study is based and from which it will draw is limited to the scholarship that has had a direct and profound impact on my thinking about emancipatory relationships.

Study Outline
This study is divided into three parts. Part One provides the reader with preliminary information. This chapter includes background information, clarification of the study
question, definition of terms, the relevance of the study, and assumptions and limitations. In the next chapter, I reflect on the development of my understanding of the significance of relationships. I review experiences in my life that I feel are relevant to the study and try to integrate them with the literature that has informed my thinking. Chapter Three explains the heuristic method that this study employs. The data is presented in Part Two of the study, which includes Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven. The individual depictions are presented in Chapter Four and are organized according to themes and learnings. The composite depiction is presented in Chapter Five, and three exemplary portraits make up Chapter Six. Chapter Seven is the creative synthesis, which is presented in the form of a dialogue. Part Three, Chapter Eight, is a reflective summary of this study about emancipatory relationships.
Chapter Two

Reflections:  
The Development of my Understanding of the Significance of Relationships

The following reflection is intended to tell the story of how I arrived at an interest in emancipatory relationships. I reflect on my experiences as a student, teacher, and athlete and explore the literature that has impacted on my thinking. Fully understanding the role that this literature has played on my development is not easy. Over the years I have had many different interests, some complementary, and others, conflicting. Although at times I have tried, I have not arrived at any fixed system of understanding. I cannot proclaim what I know. Instead, I have learned to try to be open and accepting and explore with curiosity as I meander my way through the complexities of experiences and knowledge. This is probably a good thing.

My hope is that in this chapter I am able to paint a picture of how I got to this point; a picture not of absolute clarity but one with soft edges, and blended colors that invites rather than states. My understanding of my experiences and my relationship with the literature is ever changing. As I grow, read, and learn, I change and my learnings grow and develop. It has taken me some time to accept this and I am now comfortable with the pliability of my learning. I look at my growth with wonder, never quite sure what I will
think of it in the next moment. I have found that I am most fully aware and capable of
learning when I avoid rigidity. I, like Rogers,

find that when life is richest and most rewarding it is a flowing process. To
experience this is both fascinating and a little frightening. I find I am at my best
when I can let the flow of my experience carry me, in a direction which appears to
be forward, toward goals of which I am but dimly aware. In thus floating with the
complex stream of my experiencing, and in trying to understand its ever-changing
complexity, it should be evident that there are no fixed points. When I am thus able
to be in process, it is clear that there can be no closed system of beliefs, no
unchanging set of principles which I hold. Life is guided by a changing
understanding of and interpretation of my experience. It is always in process of
becoming (Rogers, 1961, p. 27).

Being With

The pivotal event in my education and the focus of this study took place when I met my
undergraduate faculty advisor. I was 22 years old and was understandably unsure of my
educational goals. She was a 74-year-old professor, cross-appointed in the psychology
and education departments who had come to the college in 1940, excited about being part
of a democratic experiment in education. The college grew out of the pre-war
progressive education movement. It was inspired by Kilpatrick’s reconceptualization of
Dewey’s progressivism through the experientially based project approach and over the
years it was influenced by: humanistic psychology, the Civil Rights movement and Miles
Horton’s Highlander Center, the anti-war movement and peace education, feminism, and
more recently, multicultural education, and critical pedagogy. She had seen many trends come and go and survived the political and economic turmoil caused by the Second World War, McCarthyism, the Vietnam era, and was currently struggling with the Reagan inspired conservatism of the 1980s. There had been many late paycheques throughout her career. She was there because "real learning happens" and "we grow together as a community in all sorts of ways." It did not take me long to realize that hers was a labour of love. She was the first teacher I had that spoke of "going home," "looking inwards," intuition, and love as key components of the educational process. As a highly-schooled, experienced student I, like my classmates, sat in the classroom waiting to be transported to what at that point had become a familiar place: to a land of theory, research and highly specialized study. But something different happened in her class. She did not begin by distributing the course syllabus and reading list. She did not speak of assignments, exams, grades and due dates. Instead she had us gather in a circle and with her very special magic proclaimed that our mission as students was to find our "way home". She spoke with elegance, charm, passion, and simplicity. Her message was captivating. It taught us to celebrate, bring meaning and understanding to our lives. She used words like "voice", "look in", "together" and she even dared to utter the radical concept, "family". She asked us to stay home. But what does staying home mean?

As I was beginning to learn, it is about self-understanding and more. It is about understanding the social role schooling has played in directing the young away from the tender embrace of the domestic sphere and into the explicitly discursive, male and rational realm of the public. It is about commitment to "being our own researchers" and
connecting with our inner wisdom, to self-reflexivity and creative, critical inquiry dedicated to discovering truth and social justice. This process can engender learnings far beyond those of any prescribed curriculum, textbook, learning outcome or self-study quiz. She led me to look inward with questions about education and I found myself dealing with the most elusive personal and political themes which seemed to originate in the tangle where culture, family, and history converge. It suggests that home is as much a state of being as it is a place, that it is a particularly rich and generous state of being, uniquely different for each of us. Our own well, to borrow a medieval theologian's image, from which each of us drinks.

As I studied psychology and education, I began with personal questions like "why is self-acceptance so difficult?" and "why and how has my schooling diminished my sense of personal power?" With my advisor's help and guidance I wrote reflective papers about my experiences as a student. I wrote essays about my visions for education reform and social change. I engaged in group discussions and took part in college governance to help make some of our visions a reality. My advisor asked many questions and, although I didn't know it at the time, these questions helped me to connect my own self-study with a deeper sociopolitical awareness. She would propose dilemmas and suggest that I explore them. She did not dictate or demand but inspired through her own passionate curiosity. She listened intently to everything I said and took my ideas seriously. This personal exploration eventually led me to the realization that it would be helpful to become familiar with the historical development of educational and psychological theories. When I suggested this to my advisor, she said "Sure. This makes a lot of sense."
It will help us both learn about the ideas that have influenced our development — women's development." She paused for a moment, looked at me with a mischievous grin and added, "I wonder how many of these ideas belong to men?" and chuckled. "Oh what fun we'll have with this." My advisor was right; we had a lot of fun. So much that, for the past 15 years, I have continued to explore theory and political questions from within the context of my own life.

In 1986, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* was published and it had a tremendous impact on my understanding of myself and the nature of my relationship with my advisor. It became the subject of much discussion and thought on campus and directed my interests toward other caring feminists such as Gilligan (1982) and Alice Miller (1986). These writers outline a feminist way of looking at developmental issues and, fueled my interest in inter- and intrapersonal psychology, adolescent development, parenting and childrearing, and issues of voice and empowerment. I began to study Freud and was fascinated by his theory of the unconscious and the significance of childhood but found myself more comfortable with the object-relations theory of Winnicott (1987), Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983), and A. Miller (1981, 1986), and humanistic psychology. In particular, Carl Rogers' work influenced my understanding of what I am now labeling emancipatory relationships. In *On Becoming A Person* (1961), he outlines the characteristics of the "helping relationship" and in *A Way of Being* (1980) he explores his philosophy of interpersonal relationships. In many respects, Rogers has influenced my "way of being" as have, albeit
to a lesser extent, other humanistic psychologists such as Rollo May (1983) and Abraham Maslow (1962).

In 1961, Clark Moustakas published *Loneliness*, one of the first published examples of heuristic inquiry. Faced with a personal family crisis, Moustakas did not set out to consciously create or follow a heuristic methodology. His initial attempt was to discover a way to cope with his situation and he employed a spontaneous process of self-inquiry. As he explains, his experiences, "in meditation and self-searching, intuitive and mystical reachings, and hours of silent midnight walking paved the way to a formation of my understanding of loneliness" (1990, p 92-93). This led to the development of heuristic research, first explained in J.F.T. Bugental's (1967) *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology*. In 1985, together with Bruce Douglass, Moustakas published "Heuristic Inquiry: The Internal Search to Know" in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. This was followed in 1990 by the comprehensive book, *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology and Applications* (1990) which presents the conceptual foundations and core processes of this methodology. Moustakas also published a number of other books that directly relate to my development and my study of emancipatory relationships, including *Individuality and Encounter* (1968), *Rhythms, Rituals, and Relationships* (1981), *Teaching as Learning: Becoming Alive and Free in Teaching* (1972), *Phenomenological Research Methods* (1994), and *Being-In, Being-For, Being-With* (1995).

*Progressive Pedagogy*
After completing my Master's degree, I received my first teaching position and found myself on the same faculty as my former advisor. My education continued. As a student I had learned about John Dewey's application of the principles of democracy to the educational process. I was now experiencing the difficulties of democratic practice within a hierarchical, disempowering social context. Dewey warned that democracy was becoming synonymous with the American idea of rugged individualism. To him, individualism threatened the true democratic spirit (Fraser in Chambliss, 1996, p. 141). I sat on a number of committees and soon saw first hand how saturated American culture was with individualism. To understand a way out of this dilemma I took part in discussion groups, worked with students to explore related issues and read Dewey. I learned that he felt that democracy began with, and was best expressed through, the cooperative association of community members who share experiences and work communally to solve problems. He felt that communication was a central component to human association. Effective communication allowed people to begin to understand each other's perspectives and the values, ideas, and experiences that they have in common to thereby create the foundation for community. The democratic spirit could only be realized through the full participation of all citizens including groups and/or individuals in the margins of society (Rosenthal, 1993). For Dewey, the educational process should not prepare the young to be efficient workers but to engage the world as democratic citizens and improve it. Schooling was to provide children with real-life experiences in dialogue, problem-solving, and social change. He rejected pre-developed subjects, teaching materials and activities, and prescribed outcomes. He favored an interdisciplinary approach where students gained experience in the scientific process of
inquiry and developed their critical thinking capacities. I also began to learn about the history of progressive education and learned that Dewey's instrumentalism developed in response to the mechanistic standardized curriculum proposed by Bobbitt, Charters, and Tyler.

Bobbitt saw curriculum as the vehicle by which to engineer an efficient society. He equated the student with the worker in an industrial factory who was to be molded to suit the needs of the industrial machinery. Bobbitt's work emerged from the ferment created by the business community for efficiency and attempted to transform it into a scientific discipline (Bobbitt, 1918). He was influenced by Frederick Taylor's (1911) studies of labour, production, and his conclusions that workers should be paid according to production levels (Doll, 1993). Bobbitt (1918, 1924) and Charters (1923) argued through the first part of the century for very specific, sequential learning objectives with corresponding activities. They attempted to link the aims of education with measurable outcomes. Objectives that could not be measured did not form part of their efficient, scientific curriculum. Charter's student, Ralph Tyler, developed this 'curriculum as production' metaphor further (Lincoln, 1992). He was concerned with the scientific development of learning experiences, selecting corresponding objectives accurately, methods of organization, and rigorously evaluating students at regular intervals to determine the extent to which the objectives "are actually being realized by the programme of curriculum and instruction" (Tyler, 1949, p. 106). Like Bobbitt and Charters before him, Tyler incorporated an industrial/militaristic vocabulary, to his
application of curriculum using terms such as "superintendent", "cost-per-pupil ratio", and "chain of command" (Lincoln, 1992 and Clark, 1985).

This production metaphor, later labeled "the cult of efficiency," (Callahan, 1962) is rooted in a linear, reductionistic worldview that seeks social control through classroom management. It grew out of logical positivism, which has dominated human understanding since the 16th century and has in some ways served as a tool of liberation from archaic, faulty beliefs. Positivist thinking seeks to achieve an objective, quantifiable understanding of a phenomenon. It is not merely a theory but a reductive activity that in the end only makes use of scientific or mathematical truths. All others are considered illogical and are discarded. Procedures are clearly laid out, allowing the results to be replicated or refuted by future researchers. Clarity and precision of the research procedures enables proponents to proclaim neutrality and when results are replicated, validity.

Dewey's response to this "cult of efficiency" was to expose the political function of schools. He argued that the curricular process should be used consciously by teachers as a tool for democracy. Public education was the means by which to restore community-based democracy. He was influenced by the New England town meeting model where democracy took place in face-to-face encounters between equal groups and individuals. He felt that schools could play the role of embryonic democratic communities providing students with direct, real-life exposure to democratic practice. It was not enough to learn about democracy in a classroom; it needed to be experienced (Dewey, 1916). He felt that
by involving students in problem solving activities or projects, teachers would lay the groundwork for a commitment to democracy and active citizenship. It was necessary to allow students to actively participate in developing the curriculum in association with teachers. It was equally important to expose students to schools whose structures and governance modeled participatory democracy. Dewey has been called the "most important advocate of participatory democracy" (Westbrook, 1991, xiv).

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a form of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience... it is the name of a way of life of free and enriching communion in which free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication (Dewey, 1916, p. 81).

For years I had known that my advisor was extremely helpful to me but now I began to understand how her work was political. Indeed, I was now myself exposing students to democratic practice. Participatory democracy has been the central component to the College's mission since its conception. Democratic approaches to teaching and learning are found in every programme and are central to discourse in the teacher education programme where I am a faculty advisor. As well, there has historically been a commitment, albeit tenuous at times, to model democratic practice in the governance of the college. Academic and non-academic committees have been cooperatively designed and managed. Community members work side-by-side providing students and teachers with a democratic "lab" experience from which new ideas and practices about interpersonal communication, group dynamics, counseling skills, facilitation skills, multiculturalism, and ethics are generated and explored. In the recent history of the
college, the struggle for democracy has been particularly difficult but it is generally recognized within the community that democracy is not an ideal to be achieved but a continual struggle.

Within the teacher education programme, the community works democratically to evaluate courses, faculty, administration, and the programme itself. Participatory, community based decision-making takes place to determine programme direction and introduction of new specializations such as school leadership. The programme faculty recognizes that democracy in the classroom must be guarded from radical individualism. At the height of the progressive education movement, democracy was often interpreted to follow a student's interests alone. In the teacher education programme we feel – like Dewey – that teachers play an important role in directing students to understand foundational knowledge and to develop strategies for critically examining it as well as their own interests (Dewey, 1938). Although Dewey welcomed the break from the traditional, mechanistic curriculum he was concerned that a pure child-centred approach lacked purpose and method (Doll, 1993, p. 138). In 1928, Rugg and Schumaker echoed this concern in The Child Centered School. They stressed the need for teachers to pre-plan curriculum and outlined a cooperative process whereby curriculum specialists of all types would come together to develop child-centred activities. William Kilpatrick (1918) applied behavioral psychology to Dewey's progressive education. This was in sharp contrast to the child-centered approach critiqued by Dewey, Rugg, and Schumaker. Kilpatrick's project method (as it became known) gave structure to pragmatism. Each project or activity was to begin with an idea or proposal followed by a plan of action, the
activity, or experiment itself, and an evaluation. The process was cyclical and unending with each evaluation leading to a new proposal. The fourth component of this process sets pragmatism and progressivism apart from the more mechanistic models. It employs reflection to overcome the dualism of thought and action. It critically examines experiences: one's own and those of others and weaves meanings together to form the basis of further action (Collings, 1923, 1928; Kilpatrick, 1918, 1933).

**Beyond Dewey**

My experience in the teacher education programme has taught me that democratic pedagogy is built upon a social critique of undemocratic, hierarchical social structures and institutions. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills need to help students do more than creatively adapt to the world — they need to help students change it. The long-term vision is about social transformation: allowing for greater participation in decision making by marginalized people and freedom from hegemonic cultural forces. The roots of this perspective are clearly in Dewey's work (1916, 1938) however; critical theorists have also influenced me as well as my colleagues. There has been a slow evolution toward a transformative pedagogy, which has much in common with progressive education but "is informed by a coherent vision of the kind of society it hopes students will promote" (Cummins and Sayers, 1997, p. 154). Dewey's work on democracy and education falls short of lasting change and social reorganization because he stopped short of a critique of capitalism (Brosio, 1994, p. 538) and the consumerism, sexism, and racism that it supports. Brosio suggests "two cheers for what has been done," and reserves a "third cheer" for education that overcomes the problem of capitalism (p. 539).
We are working toward that third cheer and have started to focus on a critical assessment of the technology and practice of curriculum and the conceptual systems and metaphors upon which a curriculum is based. It is felt that a rigorous analysis and uncovering of the conceptual systems used to organize curriculum will awaken us to what have been mostly unconscious hierarchical processes aimed at control rather than liberation. Some, like William Pinar, have argued for an autobiographical process. His work is grounded in existentialism and situates the problem of liberation within the individual. Through self-analysis, students come to understand their own development and unquestioned acceptance of prevailing ideologies and sociopolitical conventions within the institution of schooling and the process of curriculum (Pinar, 1988, 1975). Paolo Freire's 'education as banking' metaphor exposes the passive receptor role students play in traditional models (Freire, 1970, 1985). Teachers, who administer curriculum as technicians, act upon students. Instead he proposes a problem posing process where problems that emerge from the real life, direct experiences of the students be subjected to a cooperative, communal analysis. Critical theorists such as Stanley Aronowitz & Henry Giroux (1991), Ira Shor, (1992), Kathleen Weiler (1988), and Michael Apple (1993) have also paid close attention to the power dynamic previously hidden by the cloak of mechanistic curriculum. They have engaged in an analysis of voice and have argued for pedagogic practices that help students find and express voice from the perspective of their own class, gender, and culture. The study of curriculum for reconceptualists or critical theorists aims at critical reflection and envisioning a new educational and social order. Students come to realize themselves as political beings that have been shaped by a worldview that is controlled by capital and empowers the few at the expense of many.
My interest in women's development had a strong impact on my work as a faculty advisor and I often revisited the insights in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (1986) to inform me. Most of the students with whom I worked were women and most of them were pursuing careers in education. Quite often we found ourselves converging on works by feminist theorists (Martin, 1992; Noddings, 1992) who paid attention to gender politics and issues of care and domesticity. bell hooks (1994), Elizabeth Minnich (1990), and Maxine Greene (1988) have argued that process is more important than content. Liberatory practice requires the collective formation of questions that would not have been asked before — that could not have been asked because assumptions had been too firmly held. We explored these questions of radical sweep and depth that take curriculum "development" from the hands of experts and situate it in a communal process. As Minnich (1990) has advised, feminist education should not be regarded as an "add-on", teaching about women's history, etc., but should challenge the reductionistic patriarchal model with the process contesting dominant systems in form as well as content (Hekman as cited in Pratt, 1994, p.19). Feminist education seeks to celebrate women's experiences by liberating feminist epistemology or women's ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Voice is central to the process and is both the means for expression and articulation of experience and the content or subject matter of analysis. Martin (1992) and Noddings (1992) in particular focus much of their analysis on women's experiences with domestic life, relationships, and care. By focusing their analysis on the lived experiences of women, they arrive at an understanding of curriculum which is laden with domestic values of care, concern, and connectedness.
(Martin, 1992). Noddings is unapologetic about her assertion that the primary goal of schools and curriculum should be to help students develop into caring people (Noddings, 1992, pp. 9-10, 174-175). She proposes a process built on strong, caring relationships within schools based on cooperation as opposed to control and hierarchy. Special care should be taken to make time for difficult personal, ethical, or spiritual questions to be explored as they arise.

The rise of post-modernism has also been influential to my thinking. Although extremely difficult to define and categorize, it stresses the complexity and pluralistic nature of curriculum and the need to explore it using a multiplicity of perspectives. Theorists such as William Doll (1993), Patrick Slattery (1995), and Michael Peters (1995) have argued that curriculum studies must take into account its fluid and emergent nature. Questions of content, structure, and process are explored, deconstructed, reformulated, and deconstructed again. The process is continually renewing itself with educators and students struggling to weave together threads of understanding and the corresponding, ever-changing curricular practice. As Slattery has explained, the curriculum process focuses on dialogue about social realities rather than on the development, structure, and implementation of curriculum (Slattery, 1995, p. 152). In short, post-modernism views curriculum and the epistemological process upon which it is based as dependent on circumstances and the life situations of those who create it. Knowledge is subjective, indeterminate, and seen as resulting from relations of power between diverse groups. Postmodernism relies on problematizing and deconstructing knowledge claims in order to understand curriculum.
I have come to realize that education is clearly political. I try to expose the politics of the educative practice and social forces by which we are all influenced. I seek egalitarian social relations but my work is situated within a worldview that sees education as a process that imparts objective knowledge and politically neutral skills. While I work in a programme that is an alternative to traditional teacher education, I am currently struggling with going beyond Dewey. From this revisionist position of progressivism, social problems are assessed and presented to students and each other. I not only try to help students understand the nature of social problems but through relationship and a dialogic process, develop the tools needed to challenge, negotiate, and recreate the structural dimensions of problems. I ask questions and pose problems. "Only an education of question can trigger, motivate, and reinforce curiosity" (Freire, 1997, p.31).

My interest is to work toward an alternative social vision. Understanding this vision has proven to be difficult.

Within our programme, there are many debates about what our social goals are. This process is draining, tense, and morale has often been low as a result. I feel that we at times fall into a trap of rigidity rather than the open-ended inquiry Dewey's vision of democracy entailed. Henderson (1999) has described Dewey's democracy as "different from precise belief. It is an organizing ideal that forever remains open to diverse perspectives" (p. 5). Greene agrees (1988). She explains that "there are multiple vantage points" and no single assessment of problems is ever adequate. "There is always more. There is always possibility" (128). I feel that as a faculty we can be proud of and
committed to our politics but in the interests of our students and of the democratic mission itself, we need to get better at exposing the components of our critique which may masquerade as "truth" and escape analysis. We need to remind ourselves that by presenting oppositional perspectives we strengthen democracy.

Like students everywhere, the teacher education students with whom I work face many problems dealing with contemporary cultures' obsession with consumerism, the ecological peril in which we find ourselves, and the problems associated with living in a fragmented, pluralistic society. Many of our students choose our programme because it allows them to explore the cultural and political dimensions of their own identities. Questions about gender, sexual orientation, race, and class are often the focal point for the study of traditional teacher education topics such as curriculum design, classroom management, and assessment. I feel that a learning process that begins with an exploration of the students' identity helps students to experience "moments of grace". O'Sullivan (1999) explains this concept as expressed by Berry (1988) as moments in which we "take danger and turn it into opportunity... decadence and turn it into creativity" (p. 16). To tell one's own story can be a political and personally transformative process. When students situate their own dehumanizing experiences within a study of culture they empower themselves. They learn to see themselves as potential actors in society and create opportunities for their own students to move from passivity to action. This requires an understanding of the social forces that act on them as well as an understanding of education/social change skills such as democratic leadership, cooperative planning, mediation, conflict resolution, and skills that touch the inner
personal dimensions and are ignored by traditional education, such as meditation, mindful practice, reflective writing, and other inter/intrapersonal skills.

I struggle with ways to facilitate a process that would help students acquire the state-mandated competencies for teacher licensure while learning to live in the world in a life-enhancing, sustainable way. Lately I have been more consciously asking myself questions about how popular culture, the media, and technology help to shape the prevailing ideology in which schools function. When we work in schools it is difficult to temporarily escape their gravitational lock. Critical questions about how schools and our own identities are shaped can help students break through a myopic perspective. I have also started to explore how to help students consciously investigate alternate life possibilities including right livelihood, present moment living (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1991, 1993; hooks, 1994, Batchelor 1997, 1990, 1994; Chödrön, 1991; Sizemore and Swearer, 1992; Dresser, 1996; Tsomo, 1995; and Jones, 1989) and reintroducing the domestic values of care, concern, and connectedness into our personal and professional lives (Martin, 1992; Noddings, 1992). Confronted with the stresses of contemporary life including the ecological crisis and the continued polarization of the "haves" and "have nots," education for a civil society helps to develop personal awareness, democratic, multicultural sensibilities, and the practical skills needed to move toward community self-reliance.

I feel that my primary responsibilities are to facilitate a collaborative classroom process and to advise in the Rogerian sense (Rogers, 1961). My interactions with students are
person-centred and I try to model unconditional positive regard, empathy, and active
listening skills. I do not see my role as expert of the subject matter but as a collaborative
explorer, experimenting with ideas and practice. I try to remain cognizant of the political
nature of my role. This requires that I challenge students' assumptions about teaching
and learning to a certain degree and that I provide an alternative, attentive ear. I ask, as
Doll (1993) suggests, "to suspend disbelief" (160) in my perceived authority as teacher—an
authority manufactured by traditional schooling. My hope is to act as a counter-
hegemonic example. If it is possible for teachers to work collaboratively with students,
admit that they don't know, and have been wrong, then perhaps there might be more than
one possibility—perhaps many, and certainly more than one way to teach. I try to
remember that when I am with students I meet not only their selves and their histories but
hegemony. That is, a system of alliances often masquerading as common sense—that set
of implicit assumptions so deep it is not to be doubted—a bedrock of unexamined
convictions that blunt the concerns of students, slowly and methodically reducing the
power of their voice. I recognize that this can be a source of solace and security. It
makes things comfortable. It tells us how to act and builds for us the illusions we need to
live in a society that rewards the unaware and punishes the thinker. I am aware that I
challenge students. I ask difficult questions and propose alternatives they likely have not
considered. However, I agree with Moustakas (1995), Rogers (1969), and Freire (1997)
that in the end, relationships are of critical importance for achieving authentic
understanding of the self, without which the ability to identify with others is not possible.
Self is related to other and self-understanding, awareness, and authenticity are the
precursors to change in thinking and behavior. An authoritative relationship "violates the
nature of human beings, their process of discovery, and it contradicts democracy" (Freire, 1997, p. 99). I struggle to create emancipatory relationships with students and pay close attention to their democratic potential.

In my work I try to help students become producers of culture by encouraging them to address spiritual and ecological sensibilities as well as their intellectual and practical development. Expressive, creative dimensions of the student as a "whole person" are explored through the arts. Besides academic writing, students are encouraged to tell their stories and convey their ideas through visual arts, music, sculpture, dance, and expressive writing and are challenged to incorporate these processes into culminating studies. I encourage students to become producers of culture rather than merely consuming that produced by others. Augusto Boal's (1985) work on the theatre of the oppressed has helped me to integrate these concerns.

I try to remember that social problems rarely have a single cause. Students are expected to draw upon various disciplines and a multiplicity of perspectives to understand and solve problems. Drake (1993) calls this a transdisciplinary approach and suggests that this kind of process draws our attention to essential factors that influence our lives in the present and the future. Students move from their own local concerns through the relevant disciplines, integrating their own needs throughout. In this sense the curriculum is self-designed and emerges through a joint process of self-reflection and dialogue with peers and advisors.
Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of relevant theory and by applying it to practice (through community-based classroom internships) and, reflecting on their experiences, become their own researchers and develop their own "experienced knowledge" (Hunt, 1987, 1992). Each semester students are asked to identify the social and personal relevance of their proposed study. Student progress is evaluated on not only intellectual development but also on commitment to social action and personal growth. They are expected to share their learnings and activities with peers to demonstrate their contributions to the field. Knowing, doing, and being are equally important.

I have learned that democratic education rejects a competitive, mechanistically measured assessment of a student's progress. In the tradition of the "project method" (Kilpatrick, 1933), we, in the teacher education programme, employ the use of narrative evaluations composed by both advisor and student. This is the place where the student "stops" to reflect on ongoing research, writing, dialogue, and community action. The narrative self-evaluation addresses their original goals, learning activities, and future plans. Beattie (1995) refers to Dewey's notion of self-evaluation as reflection on, the ongoing, daily flow of events, happenings, and routines [that] come to us through our images, the constructs of which provide us with frameworks through which we reflect on them, give them meaning, and project their possible implications into the future – involving the learner intellectually, bodily, morally, and aesthetically in all acts of knowing and learning (p. 73).
I find the evaluation process somewhat stressful. I try to remain wary of top-down, autocratic proclamations and recognize the importance that a collaborative process affords. I do my best to combine an empathic understanding of the student’s study questions, motivations, and passions with my perspective on how well the student has been able to communicate and articulate ideas, apply critical thinking, identify and solve problems, demonstrate original thinking (experienced knowledge), and make theory-practice connections. In the teacher education programme we use portfolio assessment for teacher licensure. These extensive portfolios highlight theoretical, practical, and personal understandings of six areas: teacher as person, inquirer, counselor, facilitator, colleague, and citizen. Students are charged with the task of making them a unique representation of their teaching, aesthetically engaging, and reflexive in nature.

**Spirituality, Holism, and a 117-pound Linebacker**

During the almost 10 years of involvement in this teacher education programme, I have tried to integrate my own spirituality into my work and relationships with students. I have also found my involvement in a touch football team and weight lifting to be a spiritually powerful experience. I have tried to maintain an awareness of the transformative potential of athletics and have integrated my studies of education and spirituality with my athletics. My personal search for meaning inspired by humanistic psychology and bell hooks led me to explore Buddhism and eastern philosophies. In 1997, I attended a retreat with Sr. Chân Không and Thich Nhat Hanh. The Vietnamese social activist Thich Nhat Hanh’s concept of Engaged Buddhism has in many ways, been the wellspring of my spiritual development. I have been inspired and healed by his

Playing football has challenged me in ways that I could not have previously imagined. It has provided me with a site for my contemplative practice. Each moment spent on the field requires deep concentration and a commitment to living in the present moment as taught by Nhat Hanh, and Chân Không. The Buddhist concept of impermanence, *anitya*, has helped me to understand my self as a team member. "All is impermanent," according to Nhat Hanh (1995, p. 39). "Everything is in a state of perpetual change. Nothing remains the same for two consecutive *ksanas*" (p. 39). The ultimate goal in a team sport is complete interdependence. I play left outside linebacker but I can only do so provided that the middle linebacker, left defensive back, and rover work with me so that I can fulfill my responsibilities. My responsibilities are theirs and theirs mine. I am a linebacker insofar that I am with the others. "Nothing in itself contains an absolute identity" (p. 30). During the flow of each play, positions merge with each other, freely forming relationships as the natural bounce of the ball dictates. I have learned that in the
end, the sporting experience is about freeing oneself from desire; it is about unity, and interdependence. Just as living a full life requires letting go of the fear of death, so does fulfillment through sport require a letting go of personal goals. Indeed we require competitors as well as team members. The *I Ching* teaches that we need each other, competitors, and teammates alike, to succeed. To compete, as Jerry Lynch and Chungliang Al Huang (1998) explain, means to "seek together". In fact, the Chinese character for competitors depicts a group of people cooperating to complete a task (p. 185). My spiritual understanding of sport has been aided by *Working Out, Work Within: the Tao of Inner Fitness Through Sport and Exercise*, (1998) by Lynch and Huang; *Sacred Hoops: Spiritual Lessons of a Hardwood Warrior* (1995) by Phil Jackson and Hugh Delehanty; *In the Zone: Transcendent Experiences in Sport* (1995) by Michael Murphy and Rhea A. White and; *The Tao of Sports* (1997) by Robert Mitchell.

Football and weight training has also led me to a critical analysis of femininity and physicality. I have been especially influenced by Helen Lenskyj's work, *Out of Bounds: Women's Sport and Sexuality* (1986) and "Combating Homophobia in Sport and Physical Education" (1991). Susan Birrell's *Women, Sport, and Culture* (1994) and Susan Cahn's *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in 20th Century Women's Sports* (1994) reinforce the concepts developed by Lenskyj and helped me in my analysis of my experiences as a female athlete in sports traditionally dominated by men. More recently I've been making use of the unpublished doctoral dissertations by Amy Crafts, "Women who Run with the Boys: A Critical Perspective on Women's Physicality and Involvement
in Sport" (1997) and Maria Kwiatkoski "Sporting Femininity: Perspectives of Femininity and Homophobia Within the Sport and Recreation Experiences of Women" (1998).

Holistic education has helped me integrate my spiritual development, my athletics, and my teaching. Kathleen Kesson has helped me to understand the application of theory to practice. Her work has pushed my understanding of the connections between critical theory and holism, aesthetics and social justice, and Deweyian theory and democratic practice. Her most recent work, Understanding Democratic Curriculum Leadership (1999) is co-authored with James Henderson. I have also been influenced by Parker Palmer's To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey (1983), James Moffett's The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual Awakening Through Education, (1994) Ron Miller's What are Schools For?, and The Renewal of Meaning in Education: Responses to the Cultural and Ecological Crisis of Our Time (1993). This present work is more directly influenced by the works of John P. Miller and Edmund O'Sullivan. I routinely find myself returning to J. Miller's The Holistic Curriculum (1988) and The Contemplative Practitioner (1994), and an early draft (1994) of O'Sullivan's recent work, Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century (1999), to energize myself as a teacher. O'Sullivan's work introduced me to Thomas Berry's The Dream of the Earth (1988), David Orr's Ecological Literacy, and Gregory Smith's Education and the Environment, which have helped me connect my teaching and "way of being" to my natural surroundings. I have also been influenced by Murray Bookchin's philosophy of social ecology. The Ecology of Freedom (1982) provides an incisive analysis of the emergence of hierarchy and the legacy of domination. In particular, Bookchin's
libertarianism helped me to understand the importance of early critical theorists such as Gramsci (1971) to critical pedagogy.

My development as scholar, teacher, athlete, and person, particularly over the past 15 years occurred as a result of my ability to integrate theory and practice. The two are undeniably intertwined. Even more significant in my mind, has been the relationship I shared with my advisor. Her approach to education made room for me to take ownership of my learning, to follow intuitive signals, to live my ideals, and to be a conscious citizen. Not all of the books listed above were books she read. In fact, many of them were written after she died in 1995. They do however, represent the continued interest I have in what made our relationship so rich and loving.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter Two reviewed the literature pertaining to emancipatory relationships. In this chapter I describe heuristic research methodology by briefly exploring its philosophical foundations and its connection to humanistic psychology. I also explain my own process in identifying the heuristic model and Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture as most fitting to explore the experience of emancipatory relationships. This chapter begins with a description of the philosophical foundations of heuristic research; the focus is on the qualitative and phenomenological traditions. I then move to an examination of the connection between heuristic research and humanistic psychology. This is followed by a detailed outline of the heuristic model, including procedures followed and my rationale for selecting this model as an ideal method to study the experience of emancipatory relationships. This section also includes demographic information about the co-researchers. Finally, I discuss the ethical considerations involved in carrying out this study.

Philosophical Foundations

Heuristic research is a qualitative methodology that places the responsibility for giving meaning to reality upon the individual. It is a relatively new methodology first described by Douglass and Moustakas in 1985 when they outlined a preliminary framework for heuristics as a methodology. Moustakas then comprehensively documented it in 1990 in *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Application*. Like other qualitative models such as ethnography, case study research, naturalistic inquiry, narrative inquiry,
hermeneutics, and grounded research theory, it was developed in response to the quantitative research tradition. To understand the philosophical roots of heuristic inquiry, it is therefore helpful to begin with the quantitative model and the tradition of logical positivism.

The quantitative model of scientific research developed out of the philosophy of logical positivism. The basic premise of this approach is that philosophy is an activity and not merely a theory. The Vienna Circle first espoused this in the 1920s. They based much of their thinking on the work of Wittgenstein, and asserted that the role of philosophy is to clarify the meaning of statements and determine which are scientific and/or mathematical and which are not, and are therefore of little value. The intent was to arrive at an understanding of statements as logical or scientific. All other apparently philosophical statements were cast aside as illogical, polemic, or emotional. Research, according to logical positivism is objective, linear, causal, and quantifiable. It is based on a reductive process whereby identities are discovered and expressed. There are very specific procedures and objectives, which include forming hypotheses, statistical analysis of data, the development of an experimental process, and producing results that are measurable. Procedures are clearly laid out that allow the results to be replicated or refuted by future researchers. Clarity and precision in the research procedures enable researchers to proclaim neutrality and validity, particularly when their results are replicated. Quantitative research is seen as being equally valid when applied to inanimate objects or to humans.
Logical positivism (and the quantitative research methods that it has spawned) has dominated human understanding since the 16th century. It has in many ways been a tool of liberation from faulty, archaic beliefs. Because of its ability to expose the traditions of the past, logical positivism has remained the driving force of culture for some time. The Frankfurt School, however, pointed to the horrors of the First and Second World Wars and the Holocaust in particular to demonstrate the failure of positivism and its worship of reason. Reason in particular had and has been used to serve private property and the market economy. Despite claims of neutrality from the quantitative scientific community, research is potentially biased and political. Although research questions might be very specific, focused, and not overtly biased, they inevitably compromise their neutrality through their focus, wording, questions, and the questions they leave out. Given that the questions are created and undertaken within a particular political circumstance, they are inevitably influenced by it. In fact, reason itself has been a political tool. "The modern world," according to Murray Bookchin, "has... reduced reason to rationalization, that is to a mere technique for achieving particular ends" (1982, p.10).

In qualitative research, the scientific researcher acts as the main data collector and measurement instrument. The researcher investigates a phenomenon to which s/he is committed and plays an active role in the entire process. Qualitative methodologies allow researchers to make choices as they carry out the study. There is a fluidity in the process that is based on the researcher's interpretations and analysis. Kirby and McKenna (1989) describe this as the emergent quality of empowering methodologies. It
is "not cast in stone" (p. 170). They explain that "as you use the method you will contribute to how the method develops... it is continually unfolding" (p. 170). The researcher is charged with the power to engage in an ongoing evaluation and adapt the study accordingly. Although the researcher has not necessarily experienced the phenomenon being studied the researcher who uses qualitative methodology is asked to be personally committed to searching for understanding about the research topic. The researcher's personal qualities and passions fuel the process and s/he is transformed by the process itself and the results of the study. In reference to his integral all quadrant, all level approach, Wilber claims that a "change in consciousness on the part of the researchers themselves is mandatory for the investigation of consciousness itself" (1997, p. 90). For example, Susan Maloney (1996) had struggled since childhood with self-acceptance. She was often alone and took refuge in playing her piano. In her adolescent years she realized the need to accept herself unconditionally and learned to experience comfort, ease, and freedom without using the piano as a crutch. From this very personal experience, Maloney developed an intense interest in understanding the experience of self-acceptance. This led her to an in-depth heuristic research project where she interviewed adolescents about their experiences with self-acceptance. She developed insights into the phenomenon being studied, her own experiences with it, and changed her work as a psychotherapist accordingly. As she developed self-understanding and grew intellectually, she became aware of the social implications of her work (p. 158). It was her own familiarity with the topic and her need to understand her very personal experiences in adolescence that led her to this study.
In qualitative research, the research process has value in and of itself. The researcher is active and learning about the phenomenon and him/herself throughout the process, and also working toward final results or conclusions that emerge as a result of the study. The researcher attempts to remain alert to the elusive dimensions of the experience. The process is undertaken with a sense of adventure and wide-eyed curiosity, yet all movement remains within the boundaries established by the methodology. It challenges conventional research methods that deny the importance of lived experiences, "occurrences of every day life," (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p. 4) and see research experts as the only ones capable of developing theory. Questions of being and existence are included in its scope. The emphasis on personal experiences at once "confronts the idea that one person or set of people have the right to impose definitions of reality on others," (Stanley and Wise, 1991, p. 281) and empowers researchers by allowing them to use their lives as subjects, and their own questions as the focus of the research. Stanley and Wise (1993) have argued that the "very nature of women's oppression and empowerment are best suited to a more phenomenologically based approach" (p. 170).

Whereas quantitative researchers make use of numeric data and statistical analysis, qualitative researchers focus on descriptions of the quality of the phenomenon. A qualitative process does not assume that results are absolute, fixed, and universal. Instead it struggles to describe a phenomenon, always seeking to clarify it, knowing that truths about it cannot be fully captured. It attempts to be interpretive and to provide descriptions that are rich and in some ways more meaningful than those provided by quantitative methods. The subjective nature of the descriptive process in qualitative
research exposes the researcher to the possibility of focusing on him/herself at the expense of a more accurate description of the human subject's experience. The struggle for the qualitative researcher is to embrace the ambiguity in the process of describing the phenomenon and to remain cognizant of the subjective pitfalls of this process.

In *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, Michael Quinn Patton (1990) identifies phenomenology, hermeneutics, and heuristics as the three main descriptive research models. Moustakas identifies five that stand out for him: ethnography, grounded research theory, hermeneutics, empirical phenomenology, and heuristics. He describes their common bonds this way:

1. recognizing the value of qualitative designs and methodologies, studies of human experiences that are not approachable through quantitative approaches
2. focusing on the wholeness of experience rather than solely on its objects or parts
3. searching for meanings and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations
4. obtaining descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews
5. regarding the data of experience as imperative in understanding human behavior and as evidence for scientific investigations
6. formulating questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher
7. viewing experience and behavior as an integrated and inseparable relationship of subject and object and of parts and whole (1990, p. 21).

Other variations of nontraditional methods come out of politically based movements. Taylor points to the influence of European social critics on the development of phenomenological methods. He suggests that human science ideology refers to "a distinct lineage of European social critics, Marxist scholars and politically motivated social psychologists," who have, "penetrated the fringes of academic psychology influencing more interpretive approaches in psychology than methods grounded in laboratory research" (p. 17). Feminist methodology also rejects the traditional, rational and empirical research methods. It has been characterized as "contextual, inclusive, experiential, involved, socially relevant, multimethodological, complete but not necessarily replicable, open to the environment, and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced" (Neilson, p. 6).

While the models identified by Patton and Moustakas and many of the nontraditional, politically based methods make use of the passions of the researcher, heuristic research seeks to describe the experience from within the experience itself. The primary researcher has experienced the phenomenon in her or his own life. For example, the heuristic researcher seeks to illuminate and describe the experience of tranquility while gardening from the perspective of the gardener who has experienced such tranquility him/herself. The particular heuristic methodology I am proposing is informed by this emphasis on the personal, a critical social perspective, and a feminist sensibility. I
recognize that while the research process attempts to understand the phenomenon, true or
complete understanding is not attainable. Instead I seek to illuminate emancipatory
relationships by describing their complexities.

**Heuristic Research**

After a lengthy period of inquiry and reflection I concluded that a heuristic framework
best addresses my study question and complements my style of investigation and
learning. Carl Rogers and the theory of humanistic psychology have influenced my
education in many ways. I find myself continually using humanistic theory to inform my
interactions with students, peers, colleagues, family, etc. I am aware that there are
similarities in the way I immerse myself in relationships with people and the way I relate
to ideas. I strive to be a compassionate teacher. I try to approach ideas with compassion
for the theorist and assume that they are motivated in some way to do good. I approach
my own academic or theoretical explorations in a similar fashion.

The heuristic research method is firmly rooted in the tradition of humanistic psychology
which "grew out of American academic psychology as a reaction to psychoanalysis and
behaviorism" (Taylor, p.16). Taylor regards the humanistic movement as "uniquely
positioned to address the centrality of the person not only within psychology but
throughout the sciences generally. The phenomenology of the science-making process
itself places the person at the center of all scientific activity" (p. 17). According to Ardra
Cole and David Hunt (1994), "[I]n the sixties and early seventies, most theses were
conducted using the scientific paradigm of controlled experiments derived from a logio-
deductive approach, the quantitative approach, if you will" (p. ix). They go on to explain that the "alternative to this traditional approach variously called qualitative, phenomenological, heuristic or, simply non-traditional has been adopted as the guiding philosophical and methodological base until it is now the rule rather than the exception" (p. ix).

Rogers and other humanistic psychologists have historically grounded their work in personal reflection. Humanistic psychology characterizes the learning process as follows: it has the element of personal involvement; it is self-initiated and intrinsically motivated; it is pervasive; the learner evaluates it; its essence is meaning (Rogers, 1969, p.5). Elements of the heuristic methodology are scattered throughout humanistic psychology and exemplified by the 1961 publication of Loneliness by Moustakas. Humanistic contributions to the heuristic method also include Abraham Maslow's (1956, 1966, 1971) work on self-actualization, Martin Buber's (1958, 1961, 1965) analysis of dialogue, Sydney Jourard's (1968, 1971) exploration of self-disclosure, Michael Polanyi's (1964, 1966, 1969) explanation of the tacit dimension, and Rogers' (1969, 1985) work on human science research (as cited in Moustakas, 1990).

The heuristic methodology is a scientific process of discovery. The term "heuristic" comes from the Greek word heuriskein, which means to find out or discover. It is closely related to the term "eureka" meaning "I have found it!" and has much in common with the notion of insight used by psychotherapists. It is the insight, realization, or "aha" that one experiences when meaning about a lived experience unfolds and comes to
consciousness. It is enlightening, transformative, and empowering. In Heidegger's words, "something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms, and transforms us" (Heidegger in Moustakas, 1995, p. 139).

A heuristic methodology places the researcher at the centre of the process. It differs from quantitative and other qualitative methodologies in that the subject matter is located in the personal experiences and interpretations of the researcher. The focus is internal and subjective and, although elusive, it respects the tremendous reservoir of layers of consciousness. The process of looking inward and examining one's experiences, perceptions, and intuition derives insights and learnings.

Rogers (1985) describes heuristics as,

a philosophical and conceptual orientation out of which grows a special type of inquiry. While close to a phenomenological approach, a heuristic search is characterized as a passionate, highly personal, self-searching commitment to inner truth. It has its own criteria and its own process. It is, in my judgment, a disciplined but intuitive search that explores, by every possible subjective means, the essence of personal experience (p. 11).

In reference to the process of heuristic inquiry, Moustakas explains that it originates from a dilemma with which the researcher is struggling. It begins with,
a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer.
The question is one that has been a personal challenge and puzzlement in the
search to understand one's self and the world in which one lives. The
heuristic process is autobiographic, yet with virtually every question that
matters personally there is also a social — and perhaps universal —
significance (Moustakas, p. 15).

The Heuristic Method
Moustakas (1990) identifies six phases of heuristic research: initial engagement,
immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and culmination. The following is a
detailed description of each phase as it pertains to this study.

Initial Engagement - According to Moustakas, there is a question or concern within each
researcher "that represents a critical interest and area of search" (p. 27). I have been
aware of my interest in the role relationships play in the emancipatory process since I
began my undergraduate studies. I began to ask questions such as, "why do I do well in
courses where I dislike the subject matter but like the professor?" When I started my
teaching career, I realized that it was not always the most intellectually competent
students who succeeded. Often, those who benefited most from my classes seemed to be
the students who had developed strong relationships with me. I have also wrestled with
similar questions with respect to my involvement with sports. On more than a few
occasions, I noticed that the most talented athletes were a detriment to the team.
Although they possessed better physical skills, they did not develop at the same rate as
the other athletes who felt "part of" the team. When I look back on my interests in liberatory pedagogy, women centred coaching, humanistic psychology, and feminist epistemology, I realize this topic is a unifying theme in my life.

The initial engagement phase requires that the researcher begins with passion and addresses a question of deep personal meaning. This phase "invites self-dialogue, an inner search to discover the topic and question. During this process one encounters the self, one's autobiography, and significant relationships within a social context" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 27).

In the spirit of humanistic psychology, this is a process that demands patience, the use of intuitive skills, and trust in tacit awareness. Eventually this contemplative practice sees the question take "form and significance" (p. 27). My question has emerged as follows: "How do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?"

**Immersion** - After the research question has been clarified during the initial engagement phase, it becomes ever present in the researcher's life. The researcher becomes intimately aware of the question on many levels of consciousness. Unlike traditional forms of research and, indeed, some forms of phenomenological research, the researcher during the immersion phase is responsible for making use of elusive, not directly observable ideas, insights, concepts, and questions. Emphasis is placed on emotions and the researcher is expected to "come to be on intimate terms with the question - to live it and grow in knowledge and understanding of it" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 28). The researcher's
role is to develop a heightened sense of awareness by unraveling hidden insights in all aspects of the researcher's life that have to do with the question. The researcher needs to become aware of the many areas of life to which the question is connected. Stories about the researcher's encounters with the question serve as raw material for the research project. The researcher then lives with this material, is completely immersed into it, and maintains a "sustained focus and concentration" (p. 28).

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) suggest that,

[t]he tacit dimension plays an important part in heuristics. Knowing more than can be articulated shrouds discovery in mystery, lending intrigue to immersion in the theme or question. In actually obtaining data, the tacit dimension is the forerunner of inference and intuition, guiding the person to untapped aspects of awareness in nonlinear ways that elude analysis or explanation... Tacit knowing operates behind the scenes, giving birth to the hunches and vague, formless insights that characterize heuristic discovery (p. 49).

After my study question had been refined, I was alert and aware of the question in all of my encounters. I found myself thinking, feeling, and living this question while teaching and advising, on the football field, during discussions with colleagues, and in my meditation practice. I went through daily chores and practices with an acute awareness of the question.
During the immersion phase, the researcher is charged with the responsibility of determining the organization of data collection methods and procedures. This system includes a combination of open-ended processes that serve to address the research question.

This study makes use of the following forms of data collection:

**Co-researchers** – Co-researchers are people who have some experience and interest in the research question. As the principal researcher, I located co-researchers I felt were able to help me to draw deeper meaning and insight from this question than if I embarked on the task alone. Moustakas suggests that the informal conversational interview (dialogue) is most consistent with a heuristic methodology, "in that it aims toward encouraging expression, elucidation and disclosure of the experience being investigated" (p. 47). Informal conversational interviews (see p. 69) rely "on a spontaneous generation of questions and conversations in which the co-researcher participates in a natural, unfolding dialogue with the primary investigator" (p. 47). For the purpose of this study, I identified co-researchers from the following pool of colleagues, former students, and associates:

- teaching and coaching mentors.
- community college graduates whom I have taught in the past, including students who took courses in the philosophy of education, psychology, child development, interpersonal communications, and socialization.
- undergraduate and graduate alumni whom I have advised as a faculty member in a
teacher education department at a progressive private college in the U.S.
- peers with whom I have worked and studied.
- women's competitive touch football teammates.
- those who have experienced emancipatory relationships and who were referred to me
  by colleagues, former students, and associates.

Each of the potential co-researchers will share the following common characteristics:

1. They have read a brief description of this study including the study question and a
definition of emancipatory relationships.
2. They have experienced what they believe is an emancipatory relationship(s).
3. They were willing to articulate how they perceive and describe the experience of
ever emancipatory relationships.
4. They were willing to act as co-researchers in this research project. (Please see an
example of the Informed Consent Form in the appendices.)

Within a heuristic research study, there is flexibility about the number of co-researchers a
study might involve. Freedman (1992) worked with eight co-researchers to study the art
of creative risk; Maloney (1996) collaborated with six co-researchers to study self-
acceptance; Karpinen (1998) worked with 10 co-researchers to study esoteric healing;
and Wylie (1998) interviewed 10 co-researchers to study successful couples. Moustakas
(1990) explains that,

although in theory it is possible to conduct heuristic research with only one
participant, a study will achieve richer, deeper, more profound, and more varied
meanings when it includes depictions of the experience of others—perhaps as many as 10 to 15 co-researchers (pp. 46-47).

From the pool of potential co-researchers, I selected 14 with whom to collaborate.

1. 30-year-old male elementary school teacher; graduate of a master's program (in education); also has extensive coaching and competitive athletic experiences (semi pro)
2. 33-year-old female graduate of bachelor's program in education; identifies herself as a deschooler; is involved in the Quaker community (former student of primary researcher).
3. 65-year-old semi retired male professor; former dean of a graduate school program; clinical psychologist; has been involved in the civil rights movement; former college competitive level athlete.
4. 45-year-old female community college professor; graduate student; involved in the Caribbean-Canadian community.
5. 51-year-old female daycare centre supervisor; has background in business; active member of a number of community organizations (former student of primary researcher).
6. 21-year-old female undergraduate student; community college graduate; (former student of primary researcher).
7. 42-year-old female substitute teacher; holds a master's degree from Europe and a community college diploma from Canada; (former student of primary researcher).
8. 50-year-old female elementary school teaching assistant; community college graduate; extensive experience with children with special needs; (former student of primary researcher).

9. 22-year-old male former competitive athlete; coach of a girl's recreational hockey team; community college graduate; (former student of primary researcher).

10. 43-year-old female elementary school teaching assistant; community college graduate; experience as student/community activist; recreational athlete; (former student of primary researcher).

11. 44-year-old female middle school teacher; graduate of a master's degree program (education); member of a number of community organizations; (former student of primary researcher).

12. 50-year-old male professor in a teacher education department; former academic dean; basketball coach; former high school teacher; extensive counseling experience.

13. 24-year-old female dancer and daycare teacher (former student of primary researcher).

14. 54-year-old female high school English teacher; graduate of bachelor's program in education; (former student of primary researcher).

Demographic Summary

Gender: 4 males, 10 females

Age range: 21 – 65 years of age

Former students of primary researcher: 10

Colleagues of primary researcher: 3
Experience as athletes: 6
Experience in coaching: 4
Experience as educators: 14
Early childhood – 8
Elementary – 6
Middle school – 1
High school – 2
Community college – 1
Undergraduate – 2
Graduate – 2

Data was collected from the co-researchers in a number of ways, including audiotaped recordings of interviews, written responses to reflective questions and related journal entries (personal journal, class journal, meditation journal), other written material (essays, papers, etc.), and artistic pieces relating to the subject matter that co-researchers chose to share.

Separate informal conversational interviews (dialogue) were conducted with each of the 14 co-researchers. These interviews were spontaneous conversations. Co-researchers were encouraged to tell stories that might be pieced together to form a more complete sense of their experiences with emancipatory relationships. These interviews were audiotaped and lasted from one hour to two-and-a-half hours in length. The audiotapes were then transcribed and follow-up interviews of one half hour to one hour in length were conducted in order to clarify issues and themes identified in the initial interviews.
As the primary researcher, I reflected on the interviews immediately after they ended and took notes on my learnings about emancipatory relationships as a result of the interviews. I listened to the audiotapes and read the transcriptions before the follow-up interviews took place. To supplement the interview-related data, co-researchers were invited to share personal documents such as diaries, journals, papers, poetry, or other artwork.

**Primary Researcher** - As the primary researcher, I drew from my experiences with emancipatory relationships. While engaging in a self-search and collaboration with co-researchers, I paid particular attention to the social realities that influenced emancipatory relationships. As an undergraduate, I developed a relationship with a professor that transformed me in many ways. I felt connected to her in a way that I had not felt with other teachers or mentors in the past. There was an intellectual and spiritual playfulness between us. I grew spiritually and intellectually and also developed personal, social, and political awareness. I now believe that she grew as a result of the relationship as well.

Since then I have experienced similar relationships in varying degrees of intensity with some of my own students, colleagues, and teammates. I took advantage of these experiences and reflected on them in meditation journals, in papers, and in other activities, including process art. Such reflections made use of my personal history (for example, family, ancestral, body, as a woman, etc.) community (neighbourhood, workplaces, team), places (bioregions, my garden, sports fields) and other themes that were relevant during the immersion phase. I also drew on my thoughts about works I have read and that fuel my thinking, experiences, and reflections. This list includes but is not limited to works by the following authors: bell hooks, Jane Roland-Martin, Thich Nhat Hanh, Paulo Friere, Elizabeth Minnich, Nel Noddings, Susan Birrell, Susan Cahn,
Ira Shor, David Hunt, Jack Miller, Mary Field Belenky, Carol Gilligan, Maxine Greene, Thomas Berry, Royce Pitkin, Chân Không, Murray Bookchin, Parker Palmer, Carl Rogers, and Clark Moustakas.

**Incubation** - Once the intense data collection period is over, the researcher is expected to retreat from the concentrated focus. The incubation phase is a natural follow-up to the exhausting and intense phase of immersion. According to Moustakas, "incubation enables the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities" (1990, p. 29). The incubation phase is similar to the chrysalis stage of a butterfly. To the outside world it may seem that little is happening, but within there is major transformation occurring. During this phase, the researcher makes a conscious attempt to leave the question and to allow the elusive inner qualities of the phenomenon to develop and organize themselves in a meaningful way. In a sense, incubation allows for the spontaneous emergence or birth of a unique perspective that at once allows us to view and reveal the essence of the phenomenon. On one level the researcher is detached from the question; yet on another there is a unique perspective offered by this perspective that allows for a growing understanding of the phenomenon being researched. "Incubation", for Moustakas (1990), "is a process in which a seed has been planted; the seed undergoes silent nourishment, support, and care that produces a creative awareness of some dimension of a phenomenon or a creative integration of its parts or qualities" (p. 29).

After I collected the data described above during the immersion phase, I suspended any conscious attempt to understand the experience of emancipatory relationships. During
this phase I refrained from reading interview transcripts. I allowed the seed to dwell in a nourishing, fluid environment, trusting that my study of and experiences with emancipatory relationships were ready to germinate.

**Illumination** – The phase of illumination is defined as the point at which the richness of the data becomes organized into recognizable yet preliminary themes in the researcher's awareness. This is not a consciously forced process but one that unfolds. Themes originating from the data begin to arise and bubble up to consciousness. The illumination phase provides the space for "misunderstood or distorted realities" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 30) that would normally escape the conscious awareness of the researcher to take their place in the panorama of the subject matter. Often certain realities are missed or distorted by the researcher. This may be because these make the researcher uncomfortable or because, despite intense and exhaustive focused attention, they are missed because familiarity and assumptions render them invisible. Epistemological assumptions are often so firmly rooted that they masquerade as common sense and escape notice. These implicit assumptions are so deeply embedded they form a bedrock of unyielding and unexamined convictions that heuristic methodology challenged. Ultimately, themes imbued with previously missed realities are organized intuitively by the researcher and allow for the integration of my personal experiences with co-researchers' experiences.

During this phase of my investigation, I reacquainted myself with the transcripts and taped interviews and tried to integrate the tacit learnings that had started to germinate during the period of incubation. I remained open to my own intuitive process and found
that as ideas emerged organically a structure of themes and learnings slowly began to develop. I began by identifying learnings and then clustered these learnings into themes. Eventually six themes emerged; each supported by a number of learnings.

**Explication** - This stage is similar to the illumination stage but has greater intensity and draws out details. For Moustakas (1990), "The purpose of the explication phase is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to understand its various layers of meaning" (p. 31). Approaches such as indwelling, self-searching, and self-disclosure assist in the explication process. Polanyi's term "indwelling" is particularly useful here in that it implies an intuitive process of making sense of a particular phenomenon. Further as Rogers states, "the knowledge gained from this deep and empathic indwelling can then be organized in logical and meaningful fashion, so as to yield new discoveries, new approximations to the truth" (Rogers, 1986, p. 13). During this phase it is necessary for the researcher to remain "self-contained" with ideas and thoughts, and allow the "nuances, textures, and constituents of the phenomenon, to rise to awareness" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 31). Meditation and other contemplative practices are useful here. During the process of meditation one moves from rational analysis and as Miller (1994) describes it, "ego chatter" to "a place of spacious awareness" (p. 27). This contrasts the mechanistic models of inquiry by situating the locus of inquiry within the researcher where "additional angles, textures, and features are articulated; refinement and corrections are made" (p. 31). In an attempt to articulate a comprehensive explication of the themes illuminated, the following depictions are created:
Individual Depictions of the research participants are created and presented as data. These depictions make use of verbatim material taken from the informal conversational interviews. They are organized according to themes and specific learnings. The active voices of the co-researchers are used to "avoid transforming the acting and thinking human being solely into an object of study... Moreover seeing persons as active agents in their own lives, will not view them as totally determined or lacking in comprehension of the social world" (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld in Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 145).

A Composite Depiction of the totality of the research experience is developed "through a process of the immersion into, study of, and concentration on the experience of the phenomenon as presented by each researcher" (p. 68). The goal is to create a depiction that portrays the common qualities of the experiences, highlighting the "core themes and essences that permeate the experience of the entire group" (p. 68). It accounts for the primary researcher's and co-researcher's lived experiences and attempts to "reveal the underlying relations that eventuate in the daily lives we are studying" (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld in Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 146). In the composite depiction, I present the voice of the group as a whole. It is written as a declaration of perceptions, experiences, and learnings.

Exemplary Portraits are then created that tell the unique stories of a number of co-researchers. The primary researcher returns to the individual depictions and illustrates the exemplary experiences of a few co-researchers; the material from the individual depictions is supplemented with autobiographical, demographic and other related
material. These "profiles," Moustakas explains, "are unique to the individuals yet characterize the group as a whole" (p. 50). The creation of portraiture is a transforming and empowering experience for the primary researcher. "Once we have encountered seeing and thinking in the aesthetic realm, our ability to think and see more generally is altered" (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p.35). Co-researchers are also transformed and empowered by reading portrayals of their own experiences. They are moved to "think of their lives and works in terms of relationships, context, emergent themes, voice, and coalescing aesthetic whole" (p. 35). The researcher and co-researcher having viewed themselves and their experiences in artistic portrayals, move to deeper forms of self-understanding and social connectedness, touch the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of their lives, and develop awareness about their sociopolitical circumstances, and are more likely to actively change their lives. I have developed three exemplary portraits that tell the co-researchers' stories in narrative form. I attempted to maintain an artistic disposition while writing and to use expressive language that helps create vivid portraits and, in each case, capture the whole person.

**Creative Synthesis** - Making use of tacit, intuitive awareness, the researcher prepares "an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meanings of the phenomenon" (p. 52). Moustakas (1990) explains that the researcher as scientist, artist... taps into imaginative and contemplative sources of knowledge and insight in synthesizing the experience, in presenting the discovery of essences – peaks and valleys, highlights and horizons. In the creative synthesis, there is a free reign of thought and
feeling that supports the researcher's knowledge, passion, and presence; this infuses the work with a personal, professional, and literary value that can be expressed through a narrative, story, poem, work of art, metaphor, analogy, or tale (p. 52).

In heuristic research, the creative synthesis brings together the themes and learnings identified in the explication stage into one cohesive, creative piece. Douglass and Moustakas (1985) explain that the creative synthesis represents the "quest for synthesis through realization of what lies most undeniably at the heart of all that has been discovered" (p. 52). It presents the phenomenon from a fresh artistic perspective. As art, it is provocative and challenges us to explore possibilities. As Greene (1988) and Kesson (1999) have explained, art is political and "crucial for the development of an interdependent democratic spirit" (Kesson in Kesson and Henderson, 1999, p. 99). As the primary researcher, I find this particularly intriguing. I took time to explore the possibilities and found myself returning to the many empowering conversations I had with my professor with whom I first became aware of the emancipatory potential of relationships. I was excited about the idea of incorporating my experiences and learnings into a creative piece. I soon knew that my relationship with my professor would be part of this process. The overall essential theme in this heuristic investigation is presented in the form of a dialogue between a student and a professor; the dialogue is loosely based on and inspired by my relationship with my professor.

Rationale
This method of research has provided me with the opportunity to concentrate fully on this study question, which holds deep personal meaning. It allows me to integrate my experiences, politics, assumptions, and to examine my biases. It encourages me to honour the personal as well as the social implications of emancipatory relationships. Moustakas (1990) explains that, "There is no substitute for direct, comprehensive, accurate first-person accounts of experience, for the importance of self inquiry and self dialogue in discovering the nature and meaning of one's own experience and that of others" (p. 90). I have struggled to make sense of the special liberating relationships I have experienced for some time. In a sense, the heuristic process started for me many years before I formalized this present study. After an exhaustive search of the literature (caring feminists, liberatory pedagogy, women in sports, humanistic psychology, spirituality in education), I learned that the results suggested and shed light on much, but were not definitive. The literature danced around emancipatory relationships and focused on themes such as caring, personal and political liberation, enlightenment, and group or relationship structures or process. The literature that most closely addressed emancipatory relationships was humanistic psychology's theoretical writing about therapeutic or person-centred relationships. This lacked, however, the social-political elements of emancipatory relationships. As a woman and teacher interested in an engaged pedagogy, I felt it was important to make use of and validate my lived experiences as well as those of others. It became clear to me that heuristics was the ideal approach to the study of emancipatory relationships. The heuristic methodology I am proposing is imbued, as I have stated earlier, with a feminist sensibility. In such, I have struggled with the idea that the heuristic process leads to the essence of a phenomenon.
The meaning of heuristics as "I have found it!" implies that there is a single "it" to be found. In this study I struggled with the "essence" or "it" of emancipatory relationships and felt that the best I could do was to dance around the multiplicity of understandings of the so-called essence, "it," or "aha". Co-researchers were involved to inform the struggle from different perspectives in an attempt to get closer to an accurate description but I recognize that the fluid and emergent nature of the phenomenon is uncontainable. Questions about the experiences, structure, process, and politics of emancipatory relationships are explored, deconstructed, reformulated, and deconstructed again. For me, the process continually renewed itself as I struggled to weave together threads of understanding. In short the learnings that were developed through this study were based on my own and co-researchers' life situations. In the end, the learnings are a subjective dance around the "it" that I understand I can never fully know. Heuristic research is a personally transformative and empowering process that allows researchers to tell their stories in collaboration with others. Questions of deep personal significance also have, as Moustakas explains, "universal significance" (1990, p. 15). "There is power in being able to tell your story and hearing others tell theirs" (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 170).

**Ethical Considerations**

This study was subjected to an ethical review conducted by the University of Toronto's Office of Research Services, Student Education Ethics Review Committee (SEERC) – (Human Subjects). It qualified for expedited review by SEERC and was approved. This study involved adult human subjects who were invited to participate voluntarily. They were initially contacted by email or letter (see Research Project Introduction, Appendix I)
and were asked to indicate an interest in taking part in this study. Fourteen co-
researchers were selected from those indicating an interest and were sent a letter with
instructions, an informed consent form, and a study description (see Appendix II). They
were fully informed about their role, which included taking part in an informal
conversational interview (one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours), and a shorter follow-
up interview (one to one-and-a-half hours), sharing personal documents (on a voluntary
basis) such as artwork, journal excerpts, etc., and reviewing their individual/composite
depictions and exemplary portraits as necessary. The co-researchers were clearly
informed that they would not be involved in the analysis or interpretation of the data or in
the writing of the manuscript. They were also informed that they could withdraw from
the project at any time and that their interviews would be audiotaped, transcribed, and
coded in order to eliminate names (i.e., co-researchers, individuals identified, names of
institutions, organizations, local communities, etc.), and any other information (i.e.,
specific identifying events, situations, dates, etc.) that would identify co-researchers. Co-
researchers were informed that the audiotapes would be maintained in a locked cabinet
and destroyed a year after the study is completed.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout this study, and this document does not
identify the co-researchers. Signed informed consent forms were secured and maintained
in a locked cabinet. The demographic information presented provides a general
description without the potential for tracing individual identities.
PART TWO

Presentation of the Data

I would like to express to you the significance of your continued commitment to teaching the way that you do. You seem passionate about education and dedicated to teaching that touches the souls of your students. You are right. It is really hard to teach this way. Why on earth would you want to go through all of the emotional and psychological "disequilibrium", among other things, when you could just walk into class, throw up an outline, give us a test, and say, "Arrivederci!"? Perhaps because, after an entire semester of turmoil students will turn to you to shake your hand, to give you a hug, and to share some tears. Perhaps, at the end of this phase of their journey something happens that brings about the realization of what has transpired through this teacher. They may realize that they have worked with an "authentic" teacher, genuine in commitment to them, his work and to the vision of how things could be. In that wonderful moment, they may see — and for some it may be a fleeting moment — that the teacher is a rare treasure who works from the soul out. And if this awakening can alter them, and their teaching, even in some minute way, then the struggle seems less difficult. Even if they remain closed to the process, so be it. The potential is always there. Hope is always there. Continue. The worth of your work cannot be measured. [Daniella – letter to a teacher]
Introduction

This section of the study presents the data gathered through the interviewing process according to the procedures I outlined in the methodology section. I present the co-researchers' experiences with emancipatory relationships through individual depictions, a composite group depiction, exemplary portraits of three of the co-researchers, and a creative synthesis. Six core themes emerged from the transcriptions of the interviews with the co-researchers and these are first presented in the individual depictions. Each of the core themes is followed by specific learnings. The composite depiction is written in the voice of the group as a whole and attempts to capture and present the experience of the group. The exemplary portraits that follow focus on three of the co-researchers and present them as whole people with their experiences of emancipatory relationships integrally related to their being. My goal in presenting the data in this manner is to explicate the nature, meaning, and essence of the co-researchers' experiences with emancipatory relationships.

Throughout this process I immersed myself in the transcriptions of the interviews and tried to become intimately familiar with the co-researchers themselves and their experiences with emancipatory relationships. I also made use of written contributions that individual co-researchers chose to share with me, as well as poetry and other artistic pieces. I then set aside the data to allow for a period of incubation as described by Moustakas. Although during this period I did not directly encounter the data, I was aware of the profound effect that it had on my thoughts about the subject and indeed about my life. This new awareness allowed me to return to the data with a fresh
perspective. While reacquainting myself with the data, I was able to integrate these tacit learnings with what I learned from the co-researchers. As a result of this immersion-incubation process, I was able eventually to integrate the detailed stories and metaphors of the co-researchers with my own experiences and thoughts on the subject. During this process of illumination, I remained open to intuition and tacit knowledge and allowed for a ripening of learnings into conscious awareness. I moved from individual co-researchers and specific experiences to the group, and identified learnings about the perceptions and descriptions of the essence of emancipatory relationships. I then clustered these learnings into the six themes. Verbatim excerpts from the interview transcriptions are used in order to remain as true to the co-researchers' experiences as possible. For more detailed verbatim accounts for each learning/theme, please see Appendix B.

Having completed the individual depictions, I allowed for another brief period of rest and incubation. I then immersed myself in the individual depictions to ensure that the themes and learnings that I had gathered and presented represented accurately the co-researchers' experiences. These individual depictions were shared with specific co-researchers when necessary in order to confirm that the true meaning of their experiences was captured.

Once I made the individual depictions final, I prepared the composite depiction in the voice of the group as a whole. My hope was to represent the core themes that embrace the experiences of all of the co-researchers.
Although the individual depictions and the composite depiction make use of the specific experiences of the co-researchers, they are presented with little autobiographical and contextual material that would present the experience of emancipatory relationships holistically. The exemplary portraits that follow tell the stories of three co-researchers, with their experiences and feelings about emancipatory relationships presented in the context of their lives. The attempt was to capture each co-researcher as a whole, feeling human being, bringing into play many of the variables that may impact on their perceptions and descriptions of emancipatory relationships.

Part Two concludes with a creative synthesis written in the form of a dialogue between myself, the primary researcher, and a character I created based on my personal experiences in an emancipatory relationship.
Chapter Four

**Individual Depictions**

Introduction

After immersing myself in the material (interview transcripts, artwork, journals, reflective writing, etc.) for some time, I was able to explicate learnings about the experiences of emancipatory relationships. It became apparent to me from the very beginning of my contact with the co-researchers that the interviews I conducted with them would provide a rich mélange of stories. As I proceeded with this heuristic investigation, their stories became part of me, and I found my own life journey influenced by all that I was learning. I took time to examine this awakening fully and made use of heuristic processes (focusing, indwelling, self-searching, and self-disclosure) in "pursuing a full elucidation" of these learnings (Moustakas, p. 34). I identified 33 learnings in total. These learnings were then clustered into themes. Six core themes were identified:

1. **The Centrality of an Ethic of Care**
   - The intentional search for shared experiences
   - Knowing each other beyond situational roles
   - Open and active display of acceptance and trust
   - Physicality as an expression of care
   - Artistic Forms of Expressing Care
   - Shared experiences of beauty as a vehicle
   - Play as a vehicle
   - Self-Nurturing
   - Intuitive dimension as catalyst
   - Contactfulness

2. **Dialogue, Transgressing and a Philosophical Disposition**
   - Conventions and Risk-taking
   - Personalizing and Transforming Knowledge
   - Spontaneity and Fluidity of Form and Content
   - Engaged Discourse
3. Radical Consciousness

*Transparency, Reflexivity and Socio-Political Awareness*

*Egalitarian Process*

*Alternative Perspective*

*Disequilibrium*

4. Self-Reflexivity

*Internalized Locus of Evaluation*

*Personal Empowerment and Growth*

*Transforming Painful Experiences*

*Awareness of Spiritual Experiences*

*Mindful and Contemplative Practice*

*Receptivity*

*Congruence*

5. Communal and Democratic Process

*Voice and Reciprocity*

*Politicizing the Encounter*

*From Individualism to Interdependence and Community*

*Leader as Facilitator*

6. Active Citizenship

*Advocacy*

*Self-Advocacy*

*Recognizing and Confronting Injustice*

*Self-Transformation*

In the individual depictions that follow, the six core themes are presented and structured according to the specific learnings about each theme. The presentation includes examples from the experiences of the co-researchers, and from their stories and metaphors. These are taken verbatim from the interview transcripts and other supporting material.
The Centrality of an Ethic of Care

The importance of care in the emancipatory relationship was raised in some way by all of the co-researchers. While they seemed to agree that an emancipatory relationship requires a "carer" and a "cared for", they also indicated that these roles are not stagnant or fixed. There is a reciprocal relationship between the carer and the cared for person. As well the co-researchers feel that the nature of the care is situational and depends on the individuals involved. Because of this flexibility in the caring relationship and its dialectical nature, I have used the notion of an ethic of care in describing this theme. An ethic of care is meant to imply a reflexive disposition, whereby caring actions are determined through dialogue with self, others, and the world.

The intentional search for shared experiences

Colin and Anthony both coaches and teachers in their 20's, helped me become aware of the value of shared experiences in building emancipatory relationships. They and other co-researchers felt that by highlighting common experiences the opportunity to get to know one another was heightened. Colin explained how he went out of his way to familiarize himself with the popular culture in which his players were interested. This seemed to give the relationship a safe haven from which to start.

Colin
Even in the change room before and after the games, we will joke around. A lot of them last year were into wrestling and WWF. At the time I really wasn’t into it, but I heard them talking about it. So every once in a while I would turn on the TV and watch it myself so I could talk to them about what’s going on. We would start doing some of the lyrics and stuff that the wrestlers do in the change room. The kids would go, "Oh my
Anthony's advisor recognized that the complicated world of undergraduate studies was foreign and threatening to Anthony. By situating the discussion within the context of sports they engaged each other on a turf they were both familiar with.

Knowing each other beyond situational roles

Faith, Rachel, and other co-researchers made it clear that a relationship is deepened when people move beyond pre-conceived roles in order to make personal contact with others. Faith describes this through an example of a brief and unexpected encounter with a professor. She was moved by the effort that he made to get to know her. Rachel recalls a time when she broke what seemed to be the conventional rule amongst her peers when she approached and shared her thoughts with the keynote speaker of a national conference.

Faith
Most people judge on first impressions. But sometimes you just have to take that extra step to go deeper beyond the surface... I liked going to Spenser's class because every time he came in the room, he would have this loud voice and say "hey everybody!" He would have a smile on his face and he is very enthusiastic about what he is saying. No
matter what or how you thought, it wasn’t wrong. It was just a different interpretation of what he is saying, which is why I like philosophy. It was just the way he carried himself too. It was the beginning of semester and I was sitting at the desk reading and everyone else would be doing their assignment and Spenser sat beside me and said, how are you doing? I don’t know what it was that made him sit down beside me or why he picked me out of everyone else. After the class was over, he came up to me and talked to me by myself. He made the effort sit down and talk to me. It just felt good that he sat down next to me in that brief moment. I still don’t know why. I don’t know what it was that made him come to me like that.

Rachel
...why can’t you go to people and just treat them like people? To me she was a woman, who obviously is very knowledgeable and she’s got degree upon degree upon degree and she is a doctor. She is bright, she is brilliant and she is terrific in her field. But she is still a human being who felt comfortable chatting, had a smile on her face, and thanked me for taking the time to come over. So what is more important? Putting the person on the pedestal and feeling you can’t approach them or making them feel like they are human? This is what teachers need to do with children.

Open and active display of acceptance and trust

There were extensive references by co-researchers in our interviews, their journals, and their artistic pieces to the impact of trust in the emancipatory relationship. Many recalled intricate details of moments in their childhood relationships where they had glimpses of trust. As this learning rose to consciousness, I felt a sense of deep excitement and connection to the co-researchers and their experiences. Natia describes such an experience with her grandmother in Poland and credits this relationship for her happiness today.

Natia
When I was three or four years old, adults started to ask me: "Who would you like to be when you grow up?" (This kind of a question seemed to be their favorite one). And I always said, without any hesitation: "A teacher. I would like to be a teacher." Later, thanks to my grandma, I slightly changed my answer from "I would like to be a teacher" to "I will be a teacher". Grandma believed in a power of human mind. She always said: "If you want something to happen very much, from the bottom of your heart, and you think about it, imagine it, work on it, put your heart into it, it will happen." [Journal excerpt]
Faith, Michelle, and Warren speak of the impact of reciprocal trust in emancipatory relationships in the following excerpts.

**Faith**
I think that one of the most important qualities in any kind of relationship is trust. Without it, I don’t think that we have any basis for any deep relationship. You have to have some level of it, otherwise, in my opinion you don’t have much of one. I now think it’s the same way between students and teachers. If a student doesn’t feel that he or she can’t put their faith or trust in their teacher, someone they might look up to as a mentor or a role model, then they are going to be very discouraged and very cautious when opening up to others or even communicating on a deeper level with others. [post-interview email]

**Michelle**
Throughout the whole course it was like it was… (I am trying to think of the word). The faculty were honoured to be with us. They showed that they really were lucky that they were working with us, that they thought so much of us. They really, really showed, they always did, but they showed how much they cared and through that I think we overcame so much. Through everybody’s guidance and their patience and their trust and their caring, we really all worked through it and came through with flying colours. They all modeled that. I don’t think there was one person that didn’t.

Where are those things? Are they just going to disappear with time because computers are around?

**Warren**
I think that when you talk about the risk factor, what I found was that people would move through this process of self-development and personal growth and they would inevitably stumble on this personal decision they have made about going to the next level in their lives. It was never anything I was directly raising with them about examining their relationship with their spouse or their family relationships. I would only be the sounding board by which they would sound off and hear themselves make some decisions on what they were going to do... They had trusted the relationship enough to really risk going into that level of reflecting some sort of personal introspection about their situation and hearing themselves talk about it.

**Physicality as an expression of care**
Care can be expressed in many ways in an emancipatory relationship. Co-researchers described the value of a respectful form of physical contact during our interviews. This was particularly apparent in Daniella's stories of her work with children and in her
descriptions of her family. She spoke of the reassuring nature of consistent physical contact in an emancipatory relationship.

Daniella
I like to be able to connect with the children in that way so if they are close to me or even if they address me or even if they are engaged in something, I will make sure somehow there is a physical contact to let them know I am there physically. I guess that’s what I want from them to be able to know that whether they stand or fall, I’ll be there and that when they do fall, we are going to pull something good out of it even if it’s been difficult for me. Recently we had this child with so many emotional issues and he completely erupted and the whole scenario went quite out of control but at the end of it, we managed to pull out a little bit of a laugh or a little bit of not such a tense moment and we went to lunch. So I guess I want them to know that no matter how bad things get, I am going to be there and we are going to get through it. I think that’s really something I bring to the environment.

In Rosalind’s description and critique of teaching trends, she poignantly reminded me of the potential pitfalls of technology in the human service field. She makes it clear that physical contact is irreplaceable. My feelings about physical contact were challenged beyond the highly intellectualized, often sterile boundaries I had predetermined as "appropriate".

Rosalind
...we need to be mindful of our jobs and our professions and no matter how computerized this world gets, we must remember that what we are imparting to our students, is how to hold the baby – no matter how sophisticated you think we are going to get... We are teaching them how to hold a baby. How to care, how to diaper, how to feed, how to be sensitive, how to understand, how to impart, painting and playing in mud. That’s what we are teaching our students to do. So as long as we remember once we start talking about computers, that the bottom line is the students are going to be holding a baby, then please go ahead with the computer.

Artistic Forms of Expressing Care

In these excerpts, Daniella and Rosalind alerted me to the idea that care in emancipatory relationships can and often is expressed in creative, non-linear forms. I was particularly
moved by Daniella's description of shared inspiration and of the links Rosalind made
between teachers and artists.

Daniella
My best friend has this amazing way of finding these really artistic interesting ways to reflect myself back at me and she does that a lot. She is this constant... like one of those pick-me-up tapes you throw in, except live. It is like we reinforce each other’s positive side. She has also been a great creative influence and allows me to think in all these different ways. Now I bring that to my teaching.

Rosalind
I keep reminding myself and many others that teaching is an art. An artist sometimes knows what he wants to paint the same way a poet or writer knows what they want to write about, whether or not they are able to find words to articulate from the writer’s or poet’s point of view, what they want to do. In teaching, a lot of what is created is not being written and not being said.

Shared experiences of beauty as a vehicle

Dialogue about aesthetic beauty has often acted as a starting point in a relationship co-researchers described as emancipatory. In a story that brings two unlikely people together, Natia illustrates the benefits of genuine dialogue about aesthetic beauty. This seemingly simple contact led Natia to see the moment more clearly and to think deeply about her health.

Natia
Today, I had a wonderful experience. I went to the hospital and I still had a few minutes left before my appointment so, I went outside to smoke. Somebody was sitting on the bench. I couldn’t see that person because there was a wall. I was sitting and smoking and suddenly I saw the man sitting in a wheelchair and he started a conversation with me. It wasn’t a conversation, it was just a few sentences. He said, "It’s a beautiful day". I said, "Indeed. Today is going to be very, very warm. It is going to be 14 degrees." And he just rose his hand like that (motioning to the sky) and that moment touched me very, very deeply. I felt tears in my eyes and I realized that maybe I have to focus on my health.
Play as a vehicle

Co-researchers often referred to experiences in their lives where playfulness enhanced the relationship. Playfulness was described as a spontaneous and joyful presence where a people acted in the moment and seemed worry-free. For many, the emancipatory nature of a relationship was heightened by its playful nature. Natia describes how her grandmother's childlike sense of adventure broadened Natia's vision of the adult she would become.

Natia
My grandma was amazing. I loved to travel. I loved going by bus and when we went by bus, it was a holiday. It was something unusual, it was a special event. Sometimes in the morning I would ask my grandma, grandma please, let's go by bus. There was a very small city 24 km from my hometown and I wanted to go over there because it was something like... the end of the world. My grandma would say, I don't know. Let me think about it. I was whining and eventually, she always said, okay we will go but wait patiently. I will cook and clean first and don't tell your mom anything. She cooked first. It was amazing. At that time I didn't know any adults who would do that stuff. We would go and we would come back in 3 or 4 hours and I never said anything to my mom. She was a strange adult. She played with me. No one played with me – not my mother or my father. I wouldn't be here, I am convinced, if it wasn't for my grandma – her patience and her love.

Faith's encounter with one professor who was joyful and playful convinced her that such a disposition can enhance student interest and learning.

Faith
Every time she walks into the class she is very happy. She smiles with the whole class and she is ready to teach. She encourages us to think beyond what we are supposed to. She is amazing. It is in her tone of voice and the way she reads. When she is reading a story she adds voices to make them more interesting and she has these fun activities for us to do. She is just a nice teacher. Some teachers have that personality that can spark a classroom.
An element of caring for oneself seems necessary to be able to build emancipatory relationships with others. Natia explains that there are times when she feels the need to break with convention and get down on the floor and play like a child. This nourished her and, she believes, makes her a better teacher.

Natia
I enjoyed going to that level on the floor with the children and I allow myself to be a child. I can benefit from that as well. It doesn't mean I don't pay attention. When we have to bark, we bark. When somebody needs help, I excuse myself and go and help... I believe if I don't benefit and if I don't nourish myself, I won't be able to nourish someone. I need to be a child, if I feel like being a child. I need to relax in this way. It gives me pleasure. I can cuddle and I could child-talk.

Intuitive dimension as catalyst

There seemed to be a shared sense amongst co-researchers that there are many times in an emancipatory relationship where there is a felt sense of what is the "right" thing to do. This sense didn't seem to be directly based on a conscious awareness of historical factors, previous experiences, or a sound theoretical foundation but rather an intuitive understanding of a situation. I found Faith, Michelle, and Rosalind's descriptions particularly enlightening.

Faith
I should say that you and Carmen are probably the only teachers here that I remember and I feel like going to the classes. There are certain teachers that you feel comfortable with and you learn a lot from the way they teach. Some people have this certain aura about them that you can trust automatically. That's how I felt being with you guys.

Michelle
This young boy who I am working with now, really never spoke. He started speaking at the end of last year and it was with me. I share work responsibilities with someone else.
We work with him together and the other girl is very academic with him and I am very touchy-feely; very close to him. We really go on a lot of intuition too, but he is really trusting and now he is talking and saying words. I believe it's because of the trust and it's because he knows we care first. I really believe that comes first before anything else.

Rosalind
Your entire being says a lot long before you open your mouth and long after you shut it. So it's all those unwritten and unspoken things that you take with you that you can't document. It comes through in everything – the written part of it, it comes through the sensitive, the caring, the touching and the being there part of it; the understanding and the flexibility.

Contactfulness

Gloria and Michelle helped me to understand just how indispensable a sense of genuine contact is in an emancipatory relationship. Gloria described this kind of contact as an in-the-moment intimacy where each person was accepted unconditionally and there was a concerted effort to understand each other and their ideas.

Gloria
Amanda has been a true friend, a true non-judgmental person in my life who I admire for her abilities to hear. Not just to listen but to hear and she taught me that. I still have to remind myself because it is new to me to be able to listen and hear. Not to say I am listening but to hear. That was a gift to me from her.

Michelle journaled her thoughts to a professor who she felt lived and demonstrated his pedagogical beliefs. She explains that he helped to build a community within the classroom through his contactful approach. I was at once uplifted and saddened by her description. I was able to find similarities in my own life and found that reassuring yet felt disappointed that such contact seems to be so rare.

Michelle
You lived up to your name "teacher", you pushed and you pushed and you pushed us like hell! You not only taught your philosophy but your lived it weekly in our class. Every evening the more I sat back and observed the more I was in awe of your teachings. It was true of you, "That which we are we shall teach." You lived your philosophy. the
readings we reflected on, you showed us how to draw from each other and no matter how much we frustrated you, you continued on with patience and understanding. You cared. You drew us together, like a family. We began working together, "Holding hands walking together, helping each other up the hill." It's like you turned a light on for me. Things seem so much brighter and clearer. What would it be like to step into your shoes and feel the internal satisfaction you must receive by empowering others as you do? What could be more fulfilling? [excerpt from reflective essay]
Dialogue, Transgressing and a Philosophical Disposition

Four of the learnings were clustered to form this theme. These learnings indicate that, within an emancipatory relationship, there is an attitude of curiosity and a willingness to search relentlessly for meaning. This requires playing with conventional boundaries and a commitment to some form of communal discourse. Because of the dialectical struggle implied by these learnings, I have used the notion of a philosophical disposition to describe this theme. By this I mean an ongoing process of questioning, and critical intellectual and personal analysis.

Conventions and Risk-taking

The experience of sharing discussions with co-researchers led me to realize that those involved in emancipatory relationships are consciously choosing to distance themselves from unimaginative, limiting relationships. Instead, they seek experiences that leave room for growth, playfulness, risk-taking, and questioning. Rosalind is not interested in falling into what she feels would be confining boundaries. She avoids learning the "rules" and enjoys the reactions that come from that.

Rosalind

Because I don't understand some of the boundaries here, it doesn't scare me. I don't want to learn them. I am happy not knowing them and as a result I take a lot of risks, sometimes not knowing and it's not until you are in then you are thinking, why is everybody looking at me like that? Then I think oh yeah, I should not be here or I should not have done this. So I think it's that kind of on-the-edge that keeps me buzzing - that kind of risk taking. I sometimes like it because students don't really know, and not just students, colleagues too. They don't know what to do with you.
Daniella lives up to her label as an atypical teacher with great pride and hopes that she will inspire others to relate to the children in ways that at once help distinguish their varied personalities and move them away from stale, overused language.

**Daniella**  
I am atypical and I will do things in the classrooms that the teachers I supervise would never, never have the gall to do because they haven't reached the level of comfort where they feel they are worry-free. If they use the regular phrases, they feel they are safe and if a parent hears them, it's safe. But when I come along and I do something in a totally off-handed manner, they look at me and say, it works. Aren't you afraid if a parent is here. What? Because I am using my face with facial expressions. I will make facial expressions. I will throw myself down on the floor and I will sob. The kids understand. It is not a problem. It is a relationship. You can relate with the children. Those catch phrases don't always work.

Colin likes to blur the boundaries of the student-teacher, coach-athlete relationship. He refuses to artificially dichotomize himself as teacher or learner. While his many mentors in coaching and teaching have emphasized the need to separate oneself from one's students, Colin prefers to blur the boundaries as an active participant in the process.

**Colin**  
I am not just an instructor/teacher/coach I am also a participant. So I will do something and show them, okay this is how it's generally supposed to be done but now you do the way you feel. I have always done that. My experiences with other teachers has been: set it up and let the children do what they want. Just sit back and observe. For me that's hard to do. I can observe much better while participating. For me a lot of times, I am not really too sure about what teachers are expecting to get out of sitting back. I can observe better while participating so I just block out the teacher's advice.

*Personalizing and Transforming Knowledge*

I came to realize the sheer power of knowledge that has gone from being external and distant to personally owned. A personalized understanding seems to bring with it a sense of buoyancy and a buzz of energy and, quite often, the desire to go further. Rosalind's
strong connections to her students provide her with a window into their development - a view of their transformative moments.

Rosalind
I can't exactly explain it to you but it's the look on the student's face. There is a look in their eyes that tells you that the light has gone off - that learning happened and they owned it. An example of that took place a couple weeks ago in a class where we did some role-playing based on a classroom situation... By the end of the class they sat there with their eyes wide open and you could see that if I had lectured on the subject, if I had spent all evening talking about this, they wouldn't get it. But the fact that they actually played it out... I didn't have to explain anything.

I never see students as blank slates. They do have their own experiences. They do come with their own thoughts. They do come with some level of understanding about whatever it is that we are talking about. They are not just empty because I honestly believe in the idea that they are not just empty. I don't treat them as though they are empty.

Vanessa describes the shift that took place in her ability to develop and articulate her thinking in a larger, socio-political context. This, she believes transformed her view of herself as an apolitical individual. She became comfortable in her abilities to place herself as a deschooling parent into a larger political and social context.

Vanessa
I learned the value of defining things. It's important because now I find myself often saying, can you define that because it's such an individual thing. It really is and I learned all about my own politics which initially, I didn't think I had any and I remember some of your questions very specifically and that really helped me be more comfortable in my choices. I had the freedom to say, "I think that's bogus. Why are you asking me that?" That would have been okay too because I think of the way you offer yourself to your students is more open and non-judgmental, which I think is really important as an advisor... It was important for me to answer the questions because it helped me define my own answers and my own politics and at that point that was my foundation.

Spontaneity and Fluidity of Form and Content
The emancipatory relationship demands a form of patience - one where experiences and needs unfold organically. Co-researchers explained that this requires a great deal of trust in process and cooperation. For Colin and Daniella, dialogue, contact, and decision-
making emerge best when the groups’ interests and developmental needs act as the wellspring of inspiration.

**Colin**
I had no idea what I was going to do at hockey practice until I got there. I said to myself, okay let’s see what’s going on today… who is going to be there? So it’s sort of an ongoing spontaneity in a lot of ways. Being very creative in a sense because you don’t know what is going to happen that day.

**Daniella**
I just wait for things to emerge — to grow out of whatever. I like the little things. If they are involved in some kind of activity and they completely change paths and they are intrigued by this little speck of something or this little seed that happens to fall off one of our counters near our pool or organic plant area, then we get into all that. I guess it’s a great thing to let that happen. Of course, as I’m describing this, it may sound like you just go wherever and there is no planning or flow. I don’t think it’s about that. I leave things open… It doesn’t necessarily have to be exactly planned.

**Engaged Discourse**

For the co-researchers the practice of fully participating in dialogue that was open, honest, challenging, and thought provoking was a vital component of the emancipatory relationship. Rachel discusses the impact that engaged discourse had on her learning process and her sense of belonging. I was taken by the detail with which she described a class I facilitated seven years ago She explained that she felt comfortable to be herself and to experiment with her thoughts out loud.

**Rachel**
Everything that came out of your mouth - you talked, you analyzed, you made us think and you caused us to have conversations about nothing. You never had a piece of paper with a plan? You just said a sentence… You handled your classes so well Geraldine, you made us think and then we took over for two hours. Then every once in a while, there would be a lull, if we weren’t sure where we needed to go, you would make another half a statement. Then all of a sudden we were going. So I think it was because of the relationship, the comfort zone and the free to be you and me (to use another song). It’s okay to that this and it’s okay to go there and it’s okay to express yourself and it’s okay to be honest in Geraldine’s class even though she may not like hearing it. But we are
being honest. Those are all of things. These are all of the steps on the ladder, why you can begin to grow and to feel good about yourself.

Daniella’s enchanting description of the children sitting on tree stumps and participating in deep, mindful conversation awakens me to the grossly underrated listening skills that children possess. She demonstrated a trust in them to be able to carry out such discussion, and they responded.

Daniella
We have tree stumps around this river and the children would sit on a stump. Usually that’s where we will meet and chat. They sit down and they will say their stories and one day a child said, "I really would just like to talk about..." Well the children just went and did whatever activity or type of work they wanted to do and we just sat on the stumps and I said, "Tell me about this." We started talking and little by little we had quite a swarm of children sitting down just listening... She was going on and on. I guess that really stuck with me... It just stuck with me because it is so much a part of the way I am at home and the way we work. I brought it to the class with me so now they know that they can do that. They sit and talk or whatever. They are very open that way.
Radical Consciousness

The following learnings were clustered to form this theme. They indicate that being part of an emancipatory relationship can and often does lead to what I refer to as a radicalization of consciousness. I use the term radical to imply a shift in consciousness that is aimed at identifying and understanding the root cause of the phenomenon. These learnings indicate that the co-researchers were inspired to understand why things are the way they are, and, if changes are needed, how they can be made so that they have a significant impact. The co-researchers indicated that this can be a difficult and often painful process, but, by being exposed to alternative models, they were able to go beyond previously fixed ideas. A number of co-researchers repeatedly gave examples of their own intellectual growth and change in sociopolitical awareness. Although they did not always directly relate this growth to the emancipatory relationships they had experienced, the cumulative evidence would suggest that the emancipatory relationships contributed to both the shift in awareness and their awareness of it.

Reflexivity and Socio-Political Awareness

Emancipatory relationships encourage people to contemplate a multiplicity of viewpoints. I learned through the varied experiences of my co-researchers that when there is room for introspection and personal and social confrontation, there arises a deepened ability to read the world. Based on Colin's experiences in an inner city neighbourhood with children who are often at odds with authorities, he now consciously thinks about his use
of power in his roles as teacher and coach and has adapted alternative practices that encourage players/students to "see through the crap".

**Colin**

The way I see it, if you don’t have a positive relationship with player/coach, teacher/student, neither one of you are going to really learn anything. More so the student or player, they aren’t really learning anything from you. He or she will just listen and do what the teacher or coach wants them to do until the class, game or season is over. It’s just a matter of doing what the authority wants for the time being. It's not about you, the authority. It's about helping them see that so much of what they've learned from so-called authorities is bogus. They have to learn to see through the crap. That's not easy.

Natia shared with me an example where she confronts the disengaged reaction of a co-worker to an infant by simply listening to the child's pain, vocalizing the pain and thereby politicizing the moment.

**Natia**

Adults, I believe, forget how it was to be a child. Some, I am not saying everybody, but it just amazes me. When a child is crying, there must be a reason the child is crying and sometimes adults deny that. I heard an infant crying and the teacher was saying, "Oh don’t cry, don’t cry. You are okay, don’t cry." That child was crying because she was missing her mom. What can be more disastrous? Most of the teachers didn’t see this but because of what I went through I saw it clearly.

Anthony compares his experiences at two philosophically different institutions and concludes that the personal relationship with his advisor at one allowed him to learn not only in the conventional sense but to critically examine his beliefs and expand his awareness of himself as a social being.

**Anthony**

The college I went to was a small school... but the majority were from the surrounding areas so they knew your names and they knew quite a bit about you, I thought. Sometimes people going in were prejudged and I don’t think that’s a good idea... At Greenview the only thing they know about you is what you write on your application and what you talk about when you go there. I think the professors there try to bring the most out of you whether it’s good or bad. It doesn’t matter and I think that helped a lot. They really get to know you. I felt very close to my advisor. There were sides of me, when I
first went to Greenview, that I thought were really important and when I listened to other people and started thinking after listening to them, I realized that some of the things I believed really weren’t true.

_Egalitarian Process_

The engaging tales of cooperative decision making, collaboration, and partnerships that co-researchers shared led me to consider the power dynamics in emancipatory relationships. Within the emancipatory relationship, power seems to reveal itself as a non-oppressive energy and those involved in the relationship seem to draw on the strengths of each other in order to realize possibilities. Daniella describes the transformative effects of such a relationship that she shared with a high school teacher.

_Daniella_
I think the person that helped my theatrical approach to life evolve was my drama teacher. What was neat about our relationship was that it was also egalitarian. Because I was so involved with choreography and dance, I usually was the co-director or the choreographer of our performances, so I guess that’s where I started to feel or experience the teaching that goes beyond that kind of sterile relationship with your teacher. It was just so much more equal. We shared academic thoughts about education or how to approach teaching theatre, just the act of creating something artistic. So I guess he was an inspiration that way because he allowed me to see the potential that there is for teaching in itself and to be more true and more real so that we can get to where we need to go: that place where you say, "Aha! Now I get it! what people think is right, is false... it's a façade."

_Alternative Perspective_

Many co-researchers believed that one quality of the emancipatory relationship was voicing a different (and often less abrasive, more inclusive and accepting) position. I came to this learning based on co-researcher accounts of oppressive incidents where the experience was transformed by an alternative voice. Natia and Anthony's excerpts describe such accounts.
Natia
When I worked with children in Poland... others felt that I am too soft for children. Let’s say the child hit me, it happened actually twice. In Poland... children didn’t express their feelings. They weren’t allowed. It wasn’t nice. So, for example I had a new child in my group and she was crying and I was trying to comfort her. The mother was in a hurry and she had to go to work so I closed the door. I was holding her and she hit me. What was expected from me was to punish her to teach her how to behave towards an adult. I didn’t do it. So that’s why I think some people would say at times I am too soft. Unless I feel good and again, I am starting from myself, I don’t do anything wrong and I don’t allow anyone to hurt the child I am responsible for. Besides, when I act this way, other people might learn from it. I hope they might think twice.

Anthony
When I first got up to Greenview, I was... pretty outspoken and didn’t hold back on my opinions. I wouldn’t actually come out and express them because I don’t like to hurt people’s feelings... but there was one student up there and... when I first saw him I would joke with some friends of mine who were also students. We would make comments but never to that person. By the time I left there... I got to know him not extremely well, but I got to know him fairly well. I never ever thought that would have happened and it wouldn’t at any other time or any other school that I was at. Because I just would have stayed that way. But I got to know a lot about that person. I grew just by listening to the things people, especially my advisor, were talking about and it made me open up a lot and made me realize the first perspective I had about this person is completely wrong. In a traditional school without the amazing kind of relationship I had with my advisor, you would never be able to change your mind because you wouldn’t get to know people. So it was a two-way street in that relationship because he learned how to educate people and make them more aware... He learned a more subtle and open way to explain and model things to you.

Faith explains how this alternative perspective has helped her to confront years of internalized oppression. I was moved by the extent to which the professor’s simple gesture touched Faith.

Faith
One professor that I admire is very out-spoken. She doesn’t take any crap from anybody but she is also fair and she will listen to you. No matter what she will try to understand where you are coming from. It was hard when you are so used to acting a certain way or thinking a certain way and then to switch and then say, "Maybe I am not so bad after all." Especially when you have been conditioned to think like that and you’ve been told all your life that you are not the ideal.... It was nice to see that there was someone out there who says that no matter what, you are somebody and I like you for who you are. Especially coming from a teacher.
Natia's life was filled with tumultuous experiences and she has responded with a wide array of emotions. Her thoughts on emancipatory relationships pushed me to think of the liberating potential of the unexpected and the human ability to cope, adapt, and change in response to difficult experiences.

Pain can bring beauty after a while, but sometimes especially when people are weakened, too much pain is just disastrous. It will destroy. Some people believe misery will make you beautiful human beings. It’s not necessary like that. When there is too much trauma in your life you would become a person who wants to survive only. It was like in the Concentration Camps, some people lost so much. There was one priest and he went to the gas chamber instead of one man. He said, "Save him." He was a Polish priest. He said, "I will go and I will die. Let him live." But some people, I read many stories, became spies. They collaborate with the Germans. So sometimes with too much misery, you won’t just survive. You don’t want to be hurt anymore.
Self-Reflexivity

Seven learnings that I identified through the experiences of the co-researchers were clustered under the heading of Self-Reflexivity. These learnings indicate that, as a result of their experiences with emancipatory relationships, the co-researchers developed the propensity to filter (and refilter) experiences and ideas through a personal lens. This involves a transformation of how they previously remembered events and a conscious commitment to their own growth and development.

Internalized Locus of Evaluation

The interviews and other data that I collected revealed to me that co-researchers have come to recognize the importance of evaluating the world from an internal position. Both Rachel and Daniella expressed the importance of looking inward for answers.

Rachel
If you are not happy from within, how can you be happy about life? You look to blame things on different aspects and different sources so you can lay blame... If you fail an exam, it was a stupid teacher’s fault. If you didn’t do a good job in the classroom, it was because you were harassed by the director. If you weren’t good at this, it was so and so’s fault. If something happened, it was the other person’s fault. If you are not comfortable with yourself and if you don’t feel good about yourself, you are going to blame other people. The reverse of that also, not the reverse, but another way of looking at it is the only way to make yourself look good is to keep on saying how bad everybody or everything is around.

Daniella
My inherent desire is to teach in a way that is not so structured or lecture-oriented – that kind of thing. But its presence has always been in my life whether having been through your typical schooling or dance. So those things, now that I think of it, kind of integrates in my experience. I was either pulled in one direction or the other for whatever reason but always managed to go in a direction that I felt. I think now I have come to the state of saying, this is what I believe in no matter what. I think at the time you started teaching it was another jolt. I guess that’s what I tell myself in the journey of teaching.
Personal Empowerment and Growth

Co-researchers experienced growth as a whole persona as a result of emancipatory relationships. Like Anthony, they found that they were able to express emotions that they had previously hidden and that they developed and expressed personal power as social beings. As Gloria explained, the emancipatory relationship she experienced at Greenview led her to believe that she had a right to her voice.

Gloria
I still think it goes back to recognizing the fact that I was aging, that I had aged and that I was no longer that 30-year old that I had always seen myself as. I think it still goes back to my experience at Greenview. I would never had found these things out about myself if I had not been there and had I not experienced the people that I experienced there... I guess emancipated in that I just finally said it is time in my life that I should be able to say and recognize these things... That I had a voice... That I had a right to my voice and that I no longer had to be in the shadow of someone else and this was at 50.

Anthony
I grew as a person. There was tremendous movement for me as a person and as a member of a community... It's amazing the feeling comes over you... I never thought I would cry in front of people... but that's the type of person I have become – very gentle and very sentimental.

Transforming Painful Experiences

Shadows of dark, uncomfortable moments in my own childhood seemed elongated as I heard and reflected on Rachel's grade four experience. She experienced profound humiliation yet she has grown to reject the tactics employed during her childhood. Rachel credits her experiences in emancipatory relationships, which served as models for her own teaching and confirmed for her that what happened to her in grade four was politically, professionally, and ethically unjust.

Rachel
I repeated Grade 4. When I was in my first Grade 4, it was the beginning of October and the teacher called me to the chalkboard. The Grade 4 teacher called me up to the chalkboard and it was the beginning of October and I had missed three days particular days for Jewish holiday: two for New Years and one for Yom Kippur and she wanted me to do division. In division they used to use the old sign. I didn’t even know how to make the sign and of course I couldn’t do anything on the chalkboard. She turned around and said, "If you weren’t absent because of your holidays, you would know what to do." The same teacher when I chewed gum made me put it on my nose and go from class to class. That wasn’t a learning experience. It was embarrassing. It was excruciating. I ended up failing Grade 4... They are great learning experiences but while they were happening they were awful. At some point during my relationships with my professor, I was able to sort this through. I don’t know how but for the first time I realized that what happened to me in that fourth grade class didn’t have to be a ball and chain any longer. I could learn from it. I could learn from what happened and move on.

Like Rachel, I too was inspired by my relationship with my advisor to take difficult childhood experiences and learn from them. I remember feeling as if a weight had been lifted off of my shoulders and how I had a surge of energy to make sense of how I had been influenced by my past and how I was changing. In a reflective essay written about her relationship with her professor, Michelle describes an unfolding that occurred during the development of their emancipatory relationship. Michelle’s fears centred on the challenges with which her professor was confronting the class. She describes how the challenges tapped into her fears and insecurities developed at an earlier age through her contact with teachers who tried to "control" her. Her experiences with her professor helped her change the way she felt about herself. The introspective reflections of this 'pain' reveal to me the benefits of building emancipatory relationships.

Michelle
I was ambiguous when I was told you would be our professor for curriculum. There was something about you that made me feel uneasy and uncomfortable. Your ways and ideas were unfamiliar, definitely not the "norm". They seemed too deep and I was unable to grasp them. I felt like the fish that was unable to feel the water. As the course started to develop (readings, reflections, and your teachings) I have found myself (whether I wanted to or not) searching back into the past and going through some agonizing feelings, I guess, as you would call it, "going inside". At this time I did not understand
how they were connected but it began to happen. I had no control over it. It just began… I've been questioning all parts of my life, (as a Mom, a student, a wife, career) I've been distracted at times, having difficulty sleeping, and other times I have found myself trying to fight off tears. I am beginning to see. If my past teachers hadn't tried to control me and make me into what they thought I should be, I might have been different. I might have felt better about myself and see that I had something, which was worthwhile. I became a puppet in many areas of my life, conforming whether right or wrong to others, as it was easiest… Over the past couple of months your teachings have altered beliefs that I have always felt of myself [excerpt from reflective essay].

Awareness of Spiritual Experiences

In my work as a professor, I occasionally experience moments in the educational environment where it feels to me as though the group gels as a community, accepts each other for who they are, and if only for a few moments, are connected to something beyond ourselves – beyond the walls of the classroom. These moments are completely unpredictable and there is not a pre-packaged formula that I can use to achieve this type of communal bond and transgression. Anthony reminded me of these feelings when he described his experience at a church gathering. There seems to be something significantly different about an experience when those present are consciously, willingly and joyfully present. This type of experience enhances a sense of community and for Gloria, a sense of self.

Anthony
I have never been one to be religious, but I sit back and we go to church once in a while and there is… a closeness that I never felt before. I guess I realized that there is more out there than I ever thought. For example, we just went to a baptism today. Just that feeling of being together in a group like that makes you feel different, more positive. We should go more, we really should… The priest after the baptism would carry the baby up and down the isle and show everybody and I was sitting there crying my eyes out. I just felt something there for me – for them.

Gloria
I don’t like to use and I don’t want to use the word magical, but it was a spiritual thing. I really truly think I was drawn to the college and I did not know why until I got there. The why became very evident to me when I started discovering that I wasn’t there just to be a teacher but I was there to become. I believe that and the people that I met there were people who were driven and people who have a great deal of purpose. I miss it.

Mindful and Contemplative Practice

The emancipatory relationship as I have come to understand it, encourages patience and a willingness to be open to what is occurring in the moment. Such relationships allow layers of meaning to naturally unfold when they are intertwined with reflective practice.

Gloria learned to be more contemplative with her professor and seeks to build on this.

Gloria
I need to be become more mindful... I need to become more quiet with myself and I need to find more solace in myself. I feel that’s true of all of us wherever we are. I have never known that until now. That’s what I’ve learned.

Natia's lovely account of the wondrous beauty she experiences reminds me of the need to live in the moment. Her experiences in emancipatory relationships have taught her to pray, to seek calmness, and to take pleasure in nature.

Natia
When I pray, for example, I start to feel calm. Maybe those words which are repetitious. Some sentences you just go back to it. It's like a Mantra. I think that it is very important to have this faith and to believe in something. It helps us, it gives us this inner calmness but it also I think, helps us in relationships with others. I think that through prayer you become calm and in some ways you are able to look into yourself. This is my experience. I am not saying that everybody feels the same.

Maybe it will sound and crazy, but very often during the day, I just stop and I look around and let’s say the sky is so beautiful. It’s not a prayer, but I start to talk that I am so thankful and it’s so beautiful. It was wonderful because I don’t remember when I started to have those conversations. It wasn’t a conversation because God (or whatever) didn’t talk to me. The more I talked, the more I started to appreciate and to see beauty. We have beauty around us. The more often I experience those moments they give me a sense of calmness.
Daniella’s experiences growing up with her aunt have helped her to ground herself and to slow down. While this is at times challenging for the active Daniella, she has learned to appreciate the way the time spent with her aunt has alerted her to the drama and potency of each moment.

**Daniella**

We have an aunt… who has Downs Syndrome. It just makes me think about how I take things for granted. I do things much slower. Everything is painstakingly slow – the same with the child that I work with. The one that has cerebral palsy, even more so with him because his mobility is even more limited. Just getting a spoon in his mouth, it is really… I find I am going, come on, come on. I guess humility in a sense that you never know what life will bring and would I one day find myself in a situation where my mobility would be limited or my capabilities be diminished by an accident. I guess it just makes me more aware of my humanity.

**Receptivity**

Faith’s life is filled with the opportunity to learn and she is taking full advantage of it. As a student and developing teacher, she finds herself in a landscape that is fertile. She learns from classmates, students, and professors and recognizes that she contributes to their growth. She thinks, writes, and in this case, discusses the value of remaining open to learning opportunities and the importance of facilitating them. While she does not experience such openness from professors as often as she might like, here she discusses what she believes is an ideal situation.

**Faith**

If you are in a classroom and somebody new comes in, be open. Learn from that person and let them know what you are learning from them and let them know what maybe they can learn from you. No matter what you learn you are going to pick up something new everyday and you never stop learning. When you are more open to give yourself to teachings, you discover there are a whole lot of areas you haven’t explored yet. That’s my motto for teaching: be open and give yourself to teachings.
Daniella, who is a dancer, adds a different dimension to my learning with her discussion of a physical receptivity. She opens herself to the communicator's physical gestures and movements, which for her can potentially enhance her learning experience.

_Daniella_
It may sound strange to say this, but I am going to say it anyway. I enjoy watching the presentation and who they are come out in this physical way. I really react positively to a teacher that takes that risk and does something kind of physical in their presentation of themselves. That is when you really got me. I guess because I really watch the physical body as a communicator. That connects me. That’s my bias though. Now I'm so open, I don't resist.

_Congruence_
Throughout the interview process, I felt as though the co-researchers spoke of their roles as coaches, teachers, counselors, partners, parents, etc., as an extension of who they were becoming. As they sought to define their professional roles, they were also developing personally. There was an obvious distaste for the practice of separating their different roles from the "self". Daniella explains how at this point in her life, it is impossible.

_Daniella_
I have a problem with separating that and people who advocate separating love from my teaching and I guess that’s why I’ve really embraced that holistic type of approach to teaching because I don’t separate all those things. They are all together. I don’t think I could separate those things, certainly not for a long time. It would be very superficial and then it wouldn’t be true. Like I said before, that’s really important to me that I be true to who I am and to the relationship whatever it may be. So, that wouldn’t last very long – teaching separate.

_Communal and Democratic Process_
When reflecting on their experiences with emancipatory relationships, the co-researchers shared stories about how their relationships in some way led them to a more democratic sensibility and practice. I was able to identify and cluster five learnings in order to create this theme. These learnings indicate that emancipatory relationships inspire a particular
type of leadership style that honours personal voice and stresses passionate dialogue. They facilitate the creation of democratic skills and democratic social, political, and physical environments. In addition, they foster movement from a myopic attention on the individual to a complex, interdependent communal life.

*Voice and Reciprocity*

Several co-researchers identified equality and respect as cornerstones of the emancipatory relationship. Such relationships were further characterized as those that hold deep reverence for voice: especially the voice of those often disenfranchised/disregarded in conventional relationships. Colin describes what he felt was a significant experience with a professor who facilitated the class in a way that acknowledged everyone's thoughts, feelings, and cultures.

**Colin**
I was coming from a class where the students were very familiar with each other and there was maybe four or five people who wouldn’t say anything, but everybody else was very participative... We knew what limits we had with certain people. ... you would also get different feedback from other students – different ideas. You might be having problems with something... say a placement at school, and another student will say, "Well I have done this with a similar situation, so try that." So you get different ideas that you can float around in your head, rather than the teacher saying this is the only way. You can get more stuff out of it by participating. This is the way Spenser conducted classes. We felt equal. Our opinions were just as important and everyone had a right and a responsibility to participate.

Faith envisions the way she might facilitate a mentor-student relationship based on her own experiences in and out of emancipatory relationships.

**Faith**
If I become a mentor teacher I would just make sure that... even though we have different backgrounds and ideas... There would be no pretences. No one would be better than the other. I think if we had this rapport with each other instead of seeing someone as more knowledgeable... We would have better communication and understanding between each other... we would learn from each other, instead of one having this smugness about them.
Politicizing the Encounter

For Colin, many children grow accustomed to an autocratic style of coaching and are uncomfortable with his democratic approach. In this excerpt, Colin discusses the dilemmas he has as the children adapt to his style and he tries to show his athletes that there is more than one way to operate as a team.

Colin
My very first practice every year I always tell them, "Look, I am here because I want to be here, not because I am forced to or because I am being paid. I am doing it on my own time. All I expect from you is respect and I will give it back to you." Because of their age I can explain more to them abstractly that is a two-way street. "We can have fun. You work with me, I'll work with you. We have some fun and we will do some learning. If you don't want to have fun, then I will, if necessary, go to the dictatorship and say, we are doing this, this and this. No choices. If you don't like it, too bad. If we co-operate, we can have a blast and have a great time, otherwise it's up to you." I basically tell them what I expect and I leave it up to them what they want to do. If they want to fool around, then I will go to the dictatorship. If they want to co-operate, that's where I participate with them... At first they are not too sure because I see a lot of their coaches, from observing the practices before and after me and even the one during (we are on half ice) and things are done differently. A lot of them do the drills, they do different set-ups and different activities but the coach is always standing to the one side, just watching them. So they have always been used to that except for the few players who I have had over the years. They are used to my way of doing it. So at first they are not too sure and they try to test me. This year a few players have already been like... "What the hell is this guy doing?" When I ask them to put the pucks in the net, they are shooting the pucks round. Now we've got to the point where now it's, you want to fool around, then fine. After all the pucks are in the net, then I will dictate for five minutes and they will have to do what I ask them to do. Then we will go back to doing the fun stuff, the stuff that they enjoy. Otherwise it's this way and you have no choice. I let them push a bit but then I set my limit and they understand that that's my limit and that's as far as they can go. Gradually my limit gets smaller and they realize that and then they participate more co-operatively... This is one way that I'm taking from what I learned in my relationship and applying it to coaching and hockey. You have to take a stand otherwise they'll just keep doing what they've always done and they'll think it's the only way.

From Individualism to Interdependence and Community
Many co-researchers described incidents where people did not see themselves as members of the immediate community (family, school, team, neighbourhood, etc.). It seems that in such cases facilitators did not seek inclusive, interdependent relations amongst its members. Co-researchers now define emancipatory relationships in part, in response to this negative model. In addition to this reaction, Daniella makes use of what she feels are the positive, intergenerational, loving examples she experiences in her own family.

Daniella
Everyone has their space but those spaces are not islands. They are not separate. They overlap. So no, I would like to be able to pass on to the children the idea that your space isn’t separate from other spaces. We can have those moments but we are going to integrate them so we need to know how to deal with that too.

Building Democratic Skills
Vanessa, Daniella, and other co-researchers spoke in depth about the way emancipatory relationships have impacted their lives. There seemed to be a distinct connection between seeing such practices modeled and thereafter, expecting and creating them in other areas of their lives. They also asserted the importance of teaching others to practice and expect democratic processes.

Daniella
I am trying to texture the environment and get to be more real... There are no tables. It isn’t the science area, the water just sort of emerges from the sunlight in the windows when it comes out. We are trying to do it with the rest of the room... I am thinking about the entrance when they come in. We’ve already got ideas and plans for a couch and getting a new carpet. A home space that you walk into that invites everybody that comes in. Everyone owns this space. It’s not just a class. It can be that real... I guess that’s part of this whole truth thing... it’s not just the space itself and being real or true to their experience, but being true to who they are. The physical environment has to be thought of if all the kids are going to participate and share in the process. You can’t just hope it happens.

Vanessa
I think it is important for them to make their own choices. Of course if it is going to cause psychological or physical harm, no. I outrank them. I guess the way I see it is at least in Pennsylvania or many of the public school and private school systems, the kids don’t have a lot of choices and given the chance, they can make really, really good choices and they have a lot of good insight on their own and common sense. They need to practice these skills or it’s just not going to happen. But once you continually take that away from someone, they kind of become paralyzed and I don’t want my kids to be non-functional or dull.

Leader as Facilitator

I have long struggled with issues of power and control within the emancipatory relationship. As I continued to chip away at these overwhelming concerns, trying to carve out some kind of understanding, I read and re-read Rachel’s description of what she believes makes a leader a facilitator. Each time I read it, it brought a new wave of clarity and solace to me. Her metaphor is one that I now think of often.

Rachel
You never taught or spoke to people as if we were in boxes. We weren’t stereotyped and we weren’t in boxes. You didn’t have any preconceived ideas of what we should do or where we should go. You nodded a lot, like you are doing now. Your eyes would open up and your mouth would open up almost in surprise and I think you would go with the flow of what you were hearing and getting a good feel of where that person was coming from, where that person was now and where that person wanted to go. It’s the confidence that just exudes throughout a lecture and makes a person feel so good about doing what they are doing.

I wasn’t able to speak with my other teachers or I didn’t have a rapport with them, but we were the students in the class and they were the teacher and there was a division... It wasn’t in a nasty way because most of the people standing up there had smiles on their faces, they were polite, and they would answer your questions. There was a schmaltz that was missing. Schmaltz is chicken fat. In Jewish cooking, although it is not healthy and why we are on cholesterol pills, it was always very important... Your chicken soup and your schmaltz and it’s what kept everything together and congealed. It is the same thing that happens here.
Active Citizenship

The interviews with co-researchers seemed to demonstrate that emancipatory relationships lead to some form of active citizenship. I identified four learnings that were clustered to form this theme. The new activism includes advocacy and self-transformation. There seems to be a link between personal and social change.

Advocacy

Through the data I collected, I have discovered that there is a propensity amongst people who have experienced emancipatory relationships to act to empower and protect people with whom they are involved. The strength and confidence that they exude is quite often a newfound quality that propels them to advocate for others who are oppressed or not in a position to advocate for themselves. Michelle, who was recently invited to act as a representative for teaching assistants on a provincial reassessment committee, spent much of her life feeling helpless and insignificant. She believes that her experiences with emancipatory relationships have helped her to move beyond the preconceived ideas she had of herself. With this newfound confidence Michelle seeks to empower the students with whom she works and to advocate for positive change – in and outside of the school community.

Michelle

I have let go of many areas of my past. I now celebrate it and feel I can use it as a key to affect the futures of students positively to make it successful for all. I feel that I have more strength in myself and I'm still working on the self-confidence thing. My past experience has been crucial in helping me come to the realization the impact "teachers" can have on a child for the rest of their life. I am a product of this. [excerpt from reflective essay]
Colin is mindful of the potential impact his brand of democratic coaching and teaching will have on the lives of children. He described with great emotion the circumstances that keep him aware of the need to develop emancipatory relationships. He realizes that he is one of many people in the lives of these children who should think carefully about the significant role they play. For him, every act should be a responsible, supportive, and caring act.

Colin
What we are doing will help them to become good individuals and citizens. I would like to hope that that is possible or that does actually happen. I think every little step along the way and every person that has the privilege of having contact with kids, helps to develop someone over the course of their life, whatever road their life makes them travel.

The shooting over the summer was just south of where I live. I went to school with the guy who got shot. He was one of my classmates. It was so close to home. I haven't spoken to him for maybe eight years, but just the fact that I knew him. It was like, oh my goodness, I can't believe it... Especially when they also shot his 3 year-old daughter. That really turned my stomach. For all we know she could have been the next prime minister or the next whatever. When I'm working with kids I can't help thinking about that and I go to bat for every kid. Just because other people don't listen to them, it doesn't mean we shouldn't. We should make people listen.

Self-Advocacy

I felt a sense of connection to many co-researchers when they described the difficulty they have advocating for themselves. While they recognize that they are compassionate, dedicated people who are doing socially significant work, many of them found that they could be their "own worst ally". Michelle explains that the combination of a new and respectful administration and her experiences with professors who were supportive and encouraging, has allowed her to become more celebratory about her achievements and to recognize that she is doing "good". As a result of an emancipatory relationship, co-
researchers seem to move from being their own worst ally to taking care of their own needs.

**Michelle**

At work it is better now just even with change of administration. I have moved schools in the last three years. Actually, the same time I started the course, I changed schools and administration is much more respectful. They look to us for ideas and they really respect the fact that they are going to school and they respect the fact that we know more when it comes to children with special needs than they do. The experiences at school have been very positive. Before they hadn’t but I think that was my fault in some ways too. I would walk around maybe putting myself down and not putting enough credit into what I thought and felt and just that the course behind me has made me realize that I do have good things to say. But more than that it was feeling accepted and cared for by Spenser.

**Recognizing and Confronting Injustice**

Co-researchers shared stories of experiences they had where they watched injustices occur and felt powerless to do anything. For many, now that they have experienced, or are in the position of building emancipatory relationships and taking a leadership role in such relationships, they are finding it easier to challenge and oppose such injustice.

Rachel strongly believes that it is important to build relationships with staff that are based on honesty, and a genuine care and concern for each other. For Rachel, this includes confronting issues of bias in up front and face to face encounters.

**Rachel**

When I first came here to work one of the staff members made a comment that I was Jewish so I was rich and I turned around and I said, "And you are black. Does that mean you don’t have a brain?" She looked at me and I said, "Don’t go there. Stereotyping is the worst thing in the world. You don’t want it and I don’t want it. I am Jewish, I am not a millionaire and we are not all rich. You are black, you are clever, you are smart, you are wonderful, you are clean and I adore you. I am not stereotyping you. You don’t want to be stereotyped, but neither do I. Don’t stereotype." That takes guts. If I am talking to someone and in the conversation the subject will come up; if I am talking to someone who is of a different background than me or a different colour than I am, I am not afraid to acknowledge that they black. They can acknowledge me that I am white, why can’t I
acknowledge them that they are black? Why do I have to look away and pretend that they are someone else? There is nothing about me that's against anybody. So why should I hide and pretend and be afraid to say something to them? Why? So they should think otherwise? So much time is wasted on how am I going to say this and how am I going to do this? They might take it this way and they might take it that way. Why think about how they might take it? You are going to waste your whole life.

Self-Transformation
When discussing the transformative effects of an emancipatory relationship, co-researchers described everything from subtle to shocking differences in the way they perceived and were perceived by friends, co-workers, and family. Ways of relating that may have once been acceptable are rejected and replaced with more caring, egalitarian, and mindful approaches. Michelle grounds her transformation in the courses she took and the relationships she developed with professors. She believes that despite all of the work, pain, and uncertainty she and her family experienced, it was well worth the journey.

Michelle
I would, definitely go tomorrow and start this course all over again. It was really one of the best experiences I have had in my life. Now along with it comes a lot of difficulties because I have changed but my household hasn’t really changed that much. That was really frustrating and I am learning now that a little change is good and I just try and work through that all the way along. It is working better. With my youngest son, I see a lot of benefits coming from just being with him now because it’s not... I have changed so much in my attitude even in situations like going and doing a sport. There's no pressure any more. It’s not, "what’s your goal tonight?" etceteras. I'm more apt to say, "Go and have a good time." "How did you feel about that?" He is more honest with himself and he is honest with me... You can see he is getting it more from inside now instead of all these external pushes. I didn’t’ know any of that before.

Reading and re-reading the data I collected was transformative for me. I found that the experiences of my co-researchers often reminded me of experiences I had at various moments in my own life beginning with childhood and ending with the day I read the material. Their perceptions and understanding of emancipatory relationships helped me
to build on my own understanding which is now richer and based on a collective understanding of the concept. The learnings and themes came together for me as I sifted through the piles and piles of conversations, journal entries, artwork, emails, notes, and phone messages. It is soothing to be able to more clearly define and explain the concept which I now see is based on an ethic of care, a philosophical disposition, a radical consciousness, self-reflexivity, a communal and democratic practice, and active citizenship.
Chapter 5

Composite Depiction

Introduction

After immersing myself in the data, I have prepared this descriptive and integrative depiction. The process of constructing composite depictions, according to Moustakas, requires an immersion into, study of, and concentration on the experience of the phenomenon as presented by each co-researcher. At some point in this process the qualities, core themes, and essences that permeate the experience of the entire group of co-researchers are understood and a universal depiction is constructed (Moustakas, p. 69).

The intent of this composite depiction is to document the experiences with the core themes outlined above in the voice of the group of co-researchers as a whole. It is written as the groups' proclamation of learnings that have resulted from their experiences with emancipatory relationships and from the reflective analysis carried out as part of this study. Each of the co-researchers received a written statement outlining the intent of this study prior to the interviews. This statement included the study question: "How do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?" It also included definitions of terms that helped to explain the parameters of the study and spark preliminary reflection. The co-researchers were asked to compile related written or
artistic material. This also served to spark reflection and thought. The interviews themselves not only allowed for the collection of data, but also provided a collaborative forum whereby the co-researchers, together with the primary researcher, could explore their experiences with emancipatory relationships.

This proclamation or composite depiction contains the learnings derived from the lived experiences of the co-researchers. I have tried to retain the essential elements of the raw data in order to uncover the essential whole of the group's experiences. In transforming the individual voices and experiences into this group proclamation, I found it necessary to open myself up to transformation. I immersed myself in the data, and tried to remain open to new possibilities offered by the group perspective. As I wrote, I became aware that, at times, points were understated while, at others, they were embellished. I stayed immersed in this process until I felt the voice of the group was heard. The following proclamation summarizes the groups' learnings and provides a succinct depiction of its collaborative insights. The verbatim quotations that are included were collected after co-researchers read a draft of the depiction. Their responses are used here to summarize the group's learnings and once again emphasize the value of the co-researchers' perceptions and descriptions.

**On Caring**

We are different, but we share experiences and we can learn from each other. We understand the importance of looking deeply at each other and recognizing our common desires, frustrations, and successes. We come to relationships as complex beings, playing
and having played many roles in our travels. We have learned that to trust and to be
tested is a difficult thing, but worthy of our attention. We have come to know the
importance of slowly building relationships; of taking time to lay the foundation for
trusting each other. This is not simple and shouldn't be rushed. It requires that we are
flexible in our relationships and give the space needed for ourselves and others to make
mistakes without reprimand or disengagement. We have learned that it is equally
important to give ourselves this flexibility and to accept our own flaws and strengths; this
creates a nurturing environment for our development. We need to be willing to go inside
and search the deep spaces of our beings in order to understand and accept ourselves, and
also to change as necessary. This process is elusive and foreign to the common Western
understanding of self. It requires an indwelling of deep proportions whose language is
artistic and expressive as well as focused and analytical. We have learned that it is
important to share these aesthetic spaces and to invite each other into our own and joint
processes. We have learned the importance of the body in building emancipatory
relationships. We use our physical natures to communicate with and support each other.
We have learned that play is a communicative, expressive vehicle that strengthens
ourselves and our relationships, and frees us to become individuals in relation to others.

Gloria
What comes to mind for me is... giving a gift. We give of ourselves but just like any gift
that we give... we find that we receive just as much back. I truly believe that it's not just
a one way street. The more we take care of ourselves and grow and develop, the more we
are helping other people in our lives. When we care for each other, we connect in ways
that are difficult to describe. It's almost like closing the gap between the individuals to
become one because we're so connected in that moment. The funny thing is that I find
the more I "go inside" the more I'm connected with others. You might think it would be
self-centred to focus on your own development but it's really not... The more we look in,
the more we grow outward and connect.
On Thinking

We have learned that what we have known to be true requires challenge and focused attention. Conventional wisdom has in many ways served us well, but we need to free ourselves from stubborn, reified thinking patterns and to explore new perspectives and possibilities. This requires a willingness to risk and to place ourselves and our relationships at the focal point of the investigation. It is wise to unravel knowledge claims, and to take an active role in the re-creation process, even when we know that, while we are creating new challenges, ideas, and perspectives will cause further unraveling. This process requires contact, talk, and challenges from different perspectives. It requires an engagement between self and other that leads to personalized understanding and collective wisdom.

Vanessa

The kind of thinking that takes place in emancipatory relationships can be a little unsettling. I remember thinking, "whoa! My perfect little world is falling apart here!" At first I refused to let this happen but the more I let challenged and exposed my old thinking patterns, the more insight I developed and the more connected I felt with myself and with the other person. I remember thinking that my beliefs were in question but what actually happened was that those beliefs I held dear – that meant so much to me – were strengthened because I looked at them and challenged them. Obviously, some changed but it wasn't so much changing as it was... evolving. And now that I can step back a little, I can see that they really needed to.

On Understanding

Conventional worldviews are socially constructed and serve the interests of some while they hinder the development of others. We need to open ourselves up to looking beyond and through what is, uncovering political positions, and searching for depth and patterns. We have learned the importance of an analysis of power, and of choosing personal power and power to create change. This involves rejecting "power over" in the hierarchical
sense. Relating to each other as equals is the cornerstone of personal and political growth. This process is unnerving and confusing. Such disequilibrium is the precursor to growth.

**Vanessa**
What comes to mind is how strange it felt to be in this kind of a relationship with someone who is supposed to be my superior. I felt weird about how equally I was being treated. I rejected it at first. I thought I was being disrespectful but that wasn't the case at all. There was more respect in my relationship with her than there was in any other I'd had with a professor. We took the traditional teacher-student role and changed it around completely. I was able to see that if I could be an equal partner in this relationship, maybe, just maybe with a little luck and a lot of work, we could build a society where people were truly respected and dealt with each other in fairness and with justice. I know that sounds like a big dream but it makes a lot of sense to me.

**On Reflecting**
We have learned that we perform as a result of sociopolitical forces. A liberatory movement is fuelled by a person-centred assessment which employs focused indwelling, reflection, and contemplation. This inward search for meaning, understanding and assessment brings us into contact with core elements of who we are and disrupts long held views. The process is intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual. It is a more truthful process whereby, as individuals, our actions and demeanor correspond with our internal emotional and spiritual state. We are open to accepting ourselves and others' perceptions of us, and changing accordingly.

**Anthony**
I'll never forget the freedom I felt when I realized that I could learn by looking at my own life — at parts I didn't really want to face... at my spirit. I was so used to going to books, classes, teachers, and authorities to get answers but when I realized that I could sit and think, and reflect and examine my being, to learn and to make sense of things, it was one of the most liberating things I ever could imagine. As I started to understand myself more, I found that I was becoming more compassionate... I was able to understand others more. I wasn't as judgmental as I had been — both of myself and of my family, friends,
and whoever else I met. Talk about a transformation. There are people I know that can't believe how much I've changed.

On Being With

We recognize the existential dilemma of life: we are born alone and die alone. We do, however, understand that we are social beings and interdependent. Emancipatory relationships help us move from isolated existential angst toward camaraderie, cooperation, and love. We realize that our individual voice has value not only as an expression of individuality but also as an integral element of the collective. We give to the group and receive from it. Communal relationships are dialectical. We recognize the politics of our interactions and choose to examine and subject this dialectic to ongoing reflection. This requires a commitment to democratic process and to appropriate, inspired leadership that assumes an inclination to mutual aid.

Rosalind

There's so much competition in our world. We compete for money, for grades, success. We even compete for road space on the highway. My experiences with emancipatory relationships turn this inside-out for me. Why? Why on earth do we compete with each other? Why are we so determined to squash our fellow human being? Wouldn't we be more productive by cooperating? This is what I experienced. There I was cooperating. But I don't mean cooperating in the shallow sense. I mean really caring about the other person and seeing myself as part of something bigger than myself – part of the relationship and the community we belonged to. It's not like being a cog in the mechanism. That's too mechanical. It's more like... being the nutrients in the soil, or the sunlight, or the water that allow the plant to grow. We all need each other. It's about growth really and being together, cooperating allows us to grow individually but that's only possible if we're all growing alongside. We must stop pushing each other away.
On Making Change

Through emancipatory relationships, we learn to care and advocate for ourselves and others. We understand that there are well-rooted historical forces that act to oppress and/or direct us away from inner and social freedoms. Our relationships inspire us to denounce these forces and formulate visions of mutuality, support, and conviviality. It is a joint process of personal and political transformation.

Warren

I don't separate my personal process and development from my "political transformation". I've been thinking long and hard about this since I read the depiction and the more I think about it, the more I'm convinced that they are one. You don't grow in pieces, you grow as a whole, at least with the kind of growth we are talking about here. Who I am and how I see myself is connected to my world and how I view it. It's one and the same. Advocating for myself was necessary when I was in my teens. There wasn't a lot of interest in the success of a Black student but there were a couple of people along the way that sustained me and helped me to develop my voice and not be afraid to express it in public. Speaking up for myself also meant speaking for other people, for change, and for doing what I could to make this world a more livable place. I think once you get on this path, you don't have a choice. You want to make a difference.
Chapter Six

Exemplary Portraits: Knowing, Doing, and Being

Introduction

Early in the process of developing the following portraits, I became aware of the unease I felt as I struggled to balance my desire to control the content of the co-researchers' stories with my desire to breathe life into the portraits and set them free. I grew to know the stories in a personal way. They were with me when I went for walks, when I listened to music, when I transplanted that stubborn perennial that, after three years, still demanded more sunlight. I had been touched by the lives of the co-researchers and there was no looking back. When I sat to write their stories as exemplary portraits, I struggled and stopped repeatedly. I was trying to share the experiences, learnings, passions, and stories of three vastly different, compelling individuals but found it difficult to do justice to them. I felt I knew these co-researchers and with this "knowledge" came a disposition to over intellectualize and control the stories as if in an attempt to spoon-feed predigested portraits to the reader. I systematically constructed categories and compartments that needed to be filled; I was painstakingly deciphering the stories, dissecting them according to themes, and categorizing with vigor. Something was missing. I also sought autonomy for the portraits. I wanted them to live on their own – to tell their own stories but they needed me to set them free and, despite my intentions to do so, I found my involvement restrictive and controlling. My need to seek a balance became clear. I had been gardening as a calculating research horticulturalist who was removed from the beauty and wonder of the garden.
Some time ago I learned that there is an artistic quality to gardening, and I now found myself learning about and struggling with the artistic nature of portraiture. I had come "face to face with the tensions inherent in blending art and science, analysis and narrative, description and interpretation, structure and texture" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 243). I decided to explore this tension and found myself in a familiar place. As a teacher, I am often preoccupied with the technology of teaching. What is the best way to determine how many grades an assignment is worth? How shall I deal with attendance and participation issues? How do I distinguish between required readings and recommended readings? It is relatively easy to lose sight of teaching as an art particularly under the pressures and constraints of technocratic institutions. The systemic concern is to address the head and not the heart. I then sought to write for the heart and develop the "aesthetic whole," and I found solace in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) assertion that along with structure, portraits require form.

For the portraitist, form is the texture of intellect, emotion, and aesthetics that supports, illuminates, and animates the structural elements. Standing alone, the scaffold is stark, bare, unwelcoming – unconvincing in its abstraction. But form – expressed in stories, examples, illustrations, illusions, ironies – gives life and movement to the narrative, providing complexity, subtlety, and nuance to the text, and offering the reader opportunities for feeling identified and drawn into the piece (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, p. 254).

I began to acknowledge that expressive language and an artistic disposition were necessary to piece together vivid portrayals of the complex realities that made up the co-
researchers' experiences. I found myself seeking a balance between form and structure, art and science, head and heart; a balance that would create credible portraits. I sought "face validity" (Kidder in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, p. 246), and "truth value" (Miles and Huberman in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, p. 246); portraits that would spark a "click of recognition" (Kidder in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, p. 246) when read by the co-researchers. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis suggest that along with believability and this click of recognition, a "rich portrayal" is needed, that will have resonance (in different ways, from different perspectives) with three audiences: with the actors who will see themselves reflected in the story, with the readers who will see no reason to disbelieve it, and with the portraitist herself, whose deep knowledge of the setting and self-critical stance allow her to see the "truth value" in her work (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 247).

I have attempted to create portraits that reflect "truth value" by using expressive language to illuminate the analysis and by relying on my own relationships with the co-researchers. I have known these co-researchers in different ways, but I feel that my relationships with them are guided by similar qualities: acceptance, empathy, commitment, and concern for each other. I want to know them and believe that they genuinely want to know me. This has required a "letting go" of fixed patterns and recognition on my part of polarities in thought and action. I have tried to remain open to new perspectives, experiences, and risks within these relationships and use them as the basis from which to develop the portraits and the means for clarifying and eliciting subtleties. In building these relationships, I have tried to remain aware of them as tools for seeking understanding.
Relationship building is at the centre of portraiture. It is a complex, subtle, dynamic process of navigating the boundaries between self and other, distance and intimacy, acceptance and skepticism, receptivity and challenge, and silence and talk. And it is the challenging process of negotiating the often-conflicting demands and responsibilities of ethics, empiricism, and emotion (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 158).

Through my interviews, I discovered that by creating an open and empathetic environment, room was made for a reflective, honest discussion where weaknesses were unveiled, and ambiguity and self-doubt were exposed. I have tried to remain conscious of this and focus on positive qualities. This effort, I hope, is reflected in the portraits. The co-researchers are presented in a positive light that hopefully honours their struggles and learnings; this was done with the knowledge that this generosity, a documentation of "what is good," invites a truthful depiction and deeper understanding. As the portraitist, I am seeking the "complex truths, vigilantly documenting what supports and distorts the expression of strength" (p. 159). Within the portraits, I searched for "what is good, for what works, for what is of value – looking for strength, resilience, and creativity in the people, cultures, and institutions," even while I acknowledged that this "generous stance opens up a space for the expression of the weakness, imperfection, and vulnerability that inevitably compromise the goodness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 158).

The following exemplary portraits are written representations of co-researchers' experiences with the phenomenon being investigated. The intent in providing these
portraits is to tell the unique and very personal stories of the co-researchers' experiences with emancipatory relationships. By including autobiographical and other background material, the goal is to portray these individuals as complex, multi-dimensional, whole beings (Moustakas, 1990). Where possible, I have included verbatim excerpts from the interview transcripts and direct quotes from written material to ensure that the portraits remain as true to the co-researchers' experiences as possible.

In this chapter, I present portraits of three individual co-researchers whose experiences exemplify those of the group. Because of the complexities involved in the experiences of emancipatory relationships I have structured these portraits according to the focus of each story. The first portrait centres on the way emancipatory relationships are understood or "known" by this co-researcher. The second portrait centres on the practice or "doing" of emancipatory relationships, and the third on self-reflection, transformation, and being. These portraits are created from the raw data (including autobiographical material and creative contributions) collected during the interviewing process and follow-up interviews.
Exemplary Portrait One: Paul

Knowing: Thoughts from Experience

New England winters are cold, harsh, and relentless; the summers are hot, thick, and muggy. The locals take pride in their well-crafted weather complaints. "If you don't like the weather, wait a minute." "We have five seasons: winter, spring, summer, fall, and mud season." Nestled in the hills of northern New England is a small, progressive college whose history and politics echo the weather's volatile moods. Conceived years ago as a democratic experiment, it has, through the years, been a hotbed of political activity. Idealistic activists of all stripes are drawn to it and soon find themselves swept into the turbulent political winds of the college.

At 35 years of age, Paul enthusiastically joined the faculty with the hope of putting his dreams about social justice education into practice. Now, fifteen years later, a little battered and bruised, he sits working and thinking quietly at his cluttered desk, which is unobstructively tucked in the back corner of the room; he is as committed today as he was then to his ideals. The office walls seem heavy and tired from having supported years of quirky, offbeat professors and their dusty shelves, tattered posters, and unused thumbtacks. Still, like Paul, the office is warm and inviting. It is decorated to welcome, always with two or more chairs around the rug; it is a place for meeting, conferring, dialogue, and contact. Soft lights carefully placed project a warm glow onto the meeting area, defining it as an important space. Members of the college community know that Paul can often be found in his office listening carefully to a student or colleague.
Unwitting passersby may suppose that they are inadvertently overhearing a monologue, but they are not. They are witnessing a compassionate advisor patiently listening and hoping to learn more. The cadence is odd. The Western ear is used to interruptions, the raising of voices, and debate. From Paul's office, there is a flow; a gentleness that explores the internal hopes and rhythms of one's struggle with the world. Paul's patience and attentive eyes cannot be heard, but they are part of the conversation. Having listened intently, he leans into the public space, using his body to ask permission for the privilege of speaking. Granted, he commences with his art; that of reflecting, mirroring, and active listening. He experiences the world of the other in the present moment and, only after careful consideration, does he share his own views; always in a calm, articulate, non-aggressive voice that invites listeners to consider — not to accept blindly. Paul's politics are important to him, so important that he refuses to compromise, since he believes that the ends do not justify the means.

Prior to accepting the faculty position at the college, Paul worked as a high school teacher, guidance counselor, diversity/social justice trainer, community education consultant, and had extensive experience in the mental health field. His tumultuous tenure at the college has, through the years, caused him to question whether it is the right place to be. There have been long hours, many political disappointments, and a good deal of stress on him and his family. It has been hard to give the time he would like to some of the things he values most: his family, friends, and his own personal growth. Paul has served as a faculty member in psychology and education and held a number of administrative positions, including director of teacher education, presidential assistant for institutional research, and dean of academic affairs. He has taken an active role in
politics, focusing primarily on preserving and strengthening the democratic governance tradition of the college. More recently, he has served as the faculty representative on the board of trustees and has organized and spearheaded a campaign to create a faculty senate. Throughout his career, Paul has "sought ways to facilitate human and organizational development in ways that recognize and address the connections between the two."

Paul arrived at the college with an interest in men's development and social justice education, and his teaching, scholarship, and political work have reflected this.

My focus... has been on education and organizational development for personal growth and social justice, and on the creation of educational experiences and organizational structures that foster psychological development and that help people learn the skills needed for effective communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, and community building.

Paul has taught courses on a variety of anti-oppression education issues and has developed a reputation as a skilled and caring facilitator. Students are quite willing to talk about the impact he has had on them. They speak glowingly of their professor's ability to listen and take their ideas, interests, and concerns seriously. They smile and perhaps unknowingly fall into Paul's verbal patterns as they explain how he has helped bring out parts of them that were hidden deep down and helped them recognize their own roles as oppressors and oppressed. He has worked hard to create, "classroom
communities that support the uniqueness, diversity, and full voice of all their members... helping [students] become sensitive to issues of oppression and social justice."

His published works also demonstrate his commitment to his students. He readily makes use of their experiences together to draw conclusions. He has written about democracy and education, nonexist education, and men's development, and has carried out an extensive study of John Dewey's work and of the progressive education movement of the first half of the 20th century.

Paul is quite clear about his goals as an educator. He wants to help students become compassionate and active citizens. Progressive educators have, for years, been emphasizing the needs of the individual. This was in response to the behaviouristic model that sought to mold students to fit a predetermined ideal. By creating a student-centred, individualized process, some progressive educators hoped that, with the emphasis on the self, a student would be able to actualize his/her potential. Increasingly, educators have been using student-centred tools such as self-evaluation, personal biographies, individualized study plans, and journaling. In fact, the educational process of the college involves a combination of, "short intensive residencies with individualized learning plans through which students can explore issues and questions of deep concern to themselves while also addressing core knowledge areas and required competencies."

Paul recognizes that, while this emphasis on self-development has led to a heightened sense of personal meaning for students, there has been an unfortunate disregard for issues
of solidarity and connectedness, even at this progressive college. He wonders whether this emphasis on the particularities of the individual has left us less likely to recognize our shared concerns, commonalities, and social responsibilities. Paul feels his work as an educator has to do with helping students develop the desire and ability to be responsible, democratic citizens. This requires that students critically examine their own lives in the context of their social circumstances. His hope is that a rigorous, critical analysis of self, other, and society will inevitably lead to a democratic sensibility. A desire for democracy is not all that is needed, however. There are very specific skills necessary for democratic practice to flourish. Paul sees great value in helping students learn the skills necessary for curriculum planning, consensus decision making, authentic evaluations (of self, peers, teachers, institution), active listening and the techniques of civil discourse and public problem solving. These skills are not developed haphazardly. Paul feels that teachers need to think seriously about how they relate to their students and how they themselves model democratic citizenship. To listen deeply to others is a skill that cannot be taught through lectures and readings. It is modeled every day in his office, in his classes, and in his walks through the snow with students on the way to lunch. It requires trust, time to practice, an ongoing, supportive evaluation process, and a commitment to one's own and each other's growth.

His colleagues agree with the students that Paul has maintained a high level of integrity in his work at the college. The community has grown to trust that seasoned values and not personal gain or situational benefit motivate Paul's actions. When he was dean, the community grew to depend on him to speak for the rights of students and democratic
practice. He worked to decentralize the decision-making process wherever he could.

When he found himself unable to continue the process of democratization due to conflicts with senior administrators, he prematurely resigned as dean in protest. For this, he received wide support from the community.

His experiences as a teacher and counselor have taught Paul that emancipatory relationships have an impact on both a personal and political level. There is a freeing process that takes place. Emancipatory relationships help people break away from internal psychological constraints. On a political level, they provide the space and support that allow for an awareness of social/political restrictions to develop, a process that ultimately leads to elimination of these restrictions. Paul explains that emancipatory relationships,

help people get free of something. I think I tend to think about that in two ways: freed of any forces whether internal or external that limit people's options and limit people's ability to control their own lives and to grow and develop. And some of those are internal to them - ways of thinking about things, about themselves or other people. The other aspect is structures in society that limit them. So I would define emancipatory learning as helping people to get freed up from those internal blockages. As well, it is learning more about how to work with other people to transform the social context that they are living in.

In practice, emancipatory teaching has to do with transforming the way traditional roles are perceived. It is the teacher's job to help, "people through a transition from seeing you
as an authority figure to developing their own inner sense of authority; their ability to evaluate themselves and set their own directions."

Paul feels that the perceived role of the teacher as an authority figure can and perhaps should be used by the teacher in much the same way that a psychoanalyst would use the transference process in a psychotherapeutic relationship. Students readily rely on the teacher as expert. They sit passively, waiting to be told the answers and the correct course of action, or instead, they rebel against authority. An emancipatory relationship allows students to move away from this dichotomized model of teacher-student interactions. As Paul says, at first students are,

(e)ither explicitly asking for directions or else already trying to reject my directions, but definitely see me as an expert and as the authority and the source of knowledge. So it is interesting to see their way of dealing with that, because I think a lot of them are kind of passive-aggressive towards me in some ways. For one, this is a required class that we have which... sets up a certain amount of resistance that is interesting to work with. But I see some people who are kind of in a place of being dependent on me and trying to please. Others either aggressively or passively resist, and it is just a few who are at a more emancipated place in terms of their own selves as learners and don't seem to have authority issues. They just see me as a resource and aren't that worried about whether they please me or make me mad, but just relate. I really see a lot of it as involving the dynamic of the relationship itself, and a lot of the emancipatory learning comes through the process of their seeing themselves in a different relationship to authority figures and to teachers.
Developing emancipatory relationships takes time and focused attention. Emancipatory movement is a slow, developmental process that is often made difficult by the realization that previous relationships were in some way manipulative. Often the anger associated with this awareness is directed toward the person who is providing a new model of relating. Ultimately for Paul, the goal is to help students work through these developmental phases at their own pace toward an "internal locus of evaluation."

I like the term developing an "internal locus of evaluation" instead of an external one, and trying to always turn things back to the students in terms of how they would assess themselves or what they think about that, or helping them to see that their opinion is important and their sense of their own goals for their learning and their assessment of how they are getting there is more important than mine. So I see that as one piece in terms of that developmental process. I think another is having them become more aware of how they are relating to their peers and their teachers in that respect. [I want] to really talk to them consciously about this kind of thing and to help them develop a sense of their own relationship to authority and development of their own inner voice. I think that if students had that and were able to maintain it, then we wouldn’t need to have emancipatory learning, because they wouldn’t need to be emancipated. I think one of the problems is that they lose that internal sense because they are always told what to do and that they don’t know anything, etc., and that the source of wisdom and knowledge is outside of themselves. So that’s why they need to rediscover that sense. I think sometimes students don’t want to do that, they resist it. Maybe there are things
that are uncomfortable for them to look at, or it is much easier to say, "Tell me the answer and I will write it down, I don’t really want to do this soul-searching."

But I see creating a holding environment in which people can do that growth as part of what we are trying to provide. Some people don’t want to do that, but then they don’t really want to be emancipated. They tend to resist opening their eyes to how they are in some sense oppressed or engaging in systems that oppress other people and working with that. I think an issue there is trying to accept where people are, when that’s where they are... raising questions and helping people see things but not pushing too hard on them. People will kind of close down. I think all you can do is introduce people to different perspectives and have them work on their own understanding. But if you push too hard then people are going to push back. If a student feels that, as a white person, he's not prejudiced and doesn't understand why we are discussing racism, you have to start from there. It’s a personal thing. Just to hear that and accept and not judge what people are saying at the same time... read other perspectives of where people are, and it is up to you to decide how to deal with it. So I think giving people the freedom and the space in which to struggle with some of these things and come to it when they are ready is part of that process. I think it is where this emancipatory teaching gets trickier. I think it is important to see people at different places around a lot of these issues and to recognize that sometimes it takes a while of struggling with some of the contradictions that people see between what their view of the world has been and this new information, and they can’t come to a new... in a way it’s a new sense of themselves, and you need to give that kind of supportive
environment in which people can struggle, and, at the same time, it should raise questions and contradictions and also provide different models and ways of thinking. If you provide all three of those things, I think eventually people will come to a new equilibrium about it or else they will reject everything and go back into their old way of seeing things. That’s okay, but maybe later on when they are ready they will go further with it.

For Paul, true education is more about process and relationship than about the subject being studied. Within emancipatory relationships, he feels that we can help each other arrive at our own conclusions. While students do need to complete certain requirements that demonstrate that they have achieved a particular level of understanding, it is more important that they understand that there is not one way of thinking about a subject. "It is really," as Paul says, "a process of interacting with the questions and materials and developing one's own knowledge."

This type of movement requires that individuals genuinely get to know each other. Basic counseling and listening skills foster a deeper understanding of self and other, and provide a model for relating which in turn fuels the relationship. These skills are used and recycled back into the relationship itself.

I really think that all teachers should learn to be counselors in the sense of being really focused listeners and active reflective listeners. They need to empathize with other people's frames of references and be able to understand things from students' perspectives and therefore help them to understand themselves better. So to me, that should be required, and all teachers should have to develop that
way of thinking because it puts the focus on the learner, not on you or the content. One of the things that results in this is that it asks people to do some self-reflection and self-analysis because things are reflected back to them. These things seem trite and obvious, but the importance of really listening well to students and helping them clarify, reflect, and dig deeper into their own thoughts and feelings is a really important role of the emancipatory teacher: to help students really think things through and get in touch with their own perspectives and feelings about whatever is being explored. Another quality I would like to think that I try to embody is showing that I am also human and that I make mistakes and I am vulnerable in some ways. This makes it easier for students to admit their own mistakes and ask their own questions, and not see that they need to try to be perfect in some sense or to do the right thing, whatever the right thing is. They then come to the relationship in a more genuine, honest way. I think those are probably the two most important things.

Reflecting on his own development as a teacher, Paul is aware of moving away from a didactic position to a relational, process based pedagogy. He knows that, even though his politics have historically been clear to him, his methodology often worked against his goals. Instead, he is now more interested in the mutual process of discovery that takes place as a result of his teaching.

I think to go way back to when I started as a high school teacher... I was more interested at first in transforming people’s perspectives on the world and their framework and ways of thinking about society and social and political issues, and
more about the content of their knowledge. In some sense, emancipating or freeing them up from the dominant world view that they lived in and questioning that, but I think, the more I teach, the more concerned I am just about... the more I think about the process of the learning and the less about the content because people forget the content. I also look more to the quality of my relationships with the students both one-to-one and in a class session. I think I tend to reflect more on that than I did before. I think those are the main changes that I see.

Paul believes that his pedagogical style takes a "whole person approach to education integrating both theory and practice and intellectual and personal development... one that learners often use as a means toward powerful transformation and growth." He feels extremely gratified and excited when witnessing the transformative nature of this type of work. "It is almost like witnessing a birth of some kind. You can almost feel viscerally that... the light in their eyes and their face and the transformation, the confidence in their voice. It is a very powerful thing."

For fifteen years, Paul has concentrated on his mission to change the world through teaching. He has helped to transform the college and has been transformed by it. He has worked every day to help students transform themselves, and they have helped him with his own transformation. The hub of his work is his rustic New England office but the effects radiate for miles.
Portrait Two: Elizabeth

Doing: A Teacher in Action

When a truck pulls into a small town school of 300 or so students with a delivery of textbooks, it creates quite a stir. The first to greet the beeping truck as it reverses to the shipping and receiving door is Mr. Peterson, the mild and friendly caretaker. To him, it seemed as if it were only yesterday that his own kids attended the school and brought home fresh, new textbooks. Yet that, he admits to himself, was some time ago. Now there were 120 new textbooks to unload and deliver to the English teachers. He thought for a moment about his lower back but remembered that he had a brand new dolly with inflatable tires to aid him. He also knew that it wouldn't be long before the truck's beeping reverse signal would draw others to the site. He was correct. Mrs. Bennett, the principal, arrived before the driver turned the engine off. She was followed by Mr. Cole, the science teacher, who felt that this was the perfect opportunity to remind Mrs. Bennett that the science lab in the back corner of classroom 2B could use a delivery of its own. Recognizing this, Mrs. Bennett acted quickly and put the two men to work while she signed for the shipment and chatted about the early spring with the driver.

Elizabeth Morris arrived in time to hold the doors open for the second dolly run. She thanked the men as they made their way down the hall to her classroom. She had been an English teacher at the school for less than a year but had already learned the importance of staying on Mr. Peterson's good side, particularly considering the mess that her unorthodox lessons often left behind.
"Excited about your new books?" asked Mrs. Bennett as the truck roared away.

Elizabeth smiled, appreciative of her principal's sarcasm. It was nice to hear a little humour from a principal, even if it was a bit of a jab.

"Well I am looking forward to finding creative ways to use it," said Elizabeth.

"I bet you are."

The two women walked down the hall knowing that there was still much to talk about, but choosing to avoid the discussion. "This is your first year here," said Mrs. Bennett. "I know you have a lot of new ideas – very good ideas – but take your time."

"Yes, you're right. I guess I'm just anxious to put my ideas into action. I'm not a typical first year teacher out of college. I was 38 when I started teaching. You know I came to this school because there would be more possibilities to change things. I just want to get on with it."

"You will. You will. See you at the discipline committee meeting at 3:30."

"I'll be there," answered Elizabeth as she turned to head to her favourite lunch hour retreat – an old, cracked Adirondack chair, abandoned at the end of the corridor by a window overlooking the west side of town and the river that runs through it. Mr. Peterson had tried to throw that chair out a number of times, but something always stopped him. Now, to see Elizabeth's slight build nestled in the chair with the afternoon sun streaming in to warm her, he realized that it was here to stay; at least as long as Elizabeth. She ate her lunch in the chair, collecting her thoughts and thinking about her
role in events that meant that the English department got the textbooks before Mr. Cole's science equipment.

Elizabeth thought about how she came to the school after four years of butting heads with the administrators of another middle school. She didn't like the fact that they were micromanaging classroom instruction without consulting the teachers and students. As a mother, she had learned the importance of building relationships with children and learning alongside them. She felt that curriculum should be generated within the classroom community. She didn't believe that it was right to impose the process on students. This was wrong educationally, psychologically, and ethically. "How can we expect kids to learn about and understand democracy if they grow up having their lives managed for them?" she wondered. Elizabeth felt teachers need to get to know students and help them to find ways to get to know each other. By beginning with the individual and relationships, students would then be able to understand their roles in society and the potential for changing it. She felt that citizens in a democracy should have a voice in all levels of government. She wanted her students to feel empowered, voice their opinions, and be consciously aware of what they think and feel. That's why Elizabeth made sure that she paid close attention to gender issues in her classroom. She didn't play a role in other areas of their lives, but, in her classroom she could make it safe for all to express themselves. The best way to do this was to build community. She couldn't, after all, force a democratic, caring perspective on students. All she could do was share what she knew and felt and provide the space, opportunity, and support for the students to build a democratic community of their own. All students should have the right to share,
question, and listen, and be given time, attention, and information according to their needs.

A few months before the textbook order went out, and Mr. Cole stormed into the principal's office upon hearing the news, Elizabeth taught a unit on persuasive writing. It was a long and detailed unit, and she was proud of it. It involved a field trip to the local newspaper, student interviews with journalists, peer opinion interviews, and much debate, discussion, reading, and writing. It seemed quite simple at the time; her goal was to tap into the individual students' interests and the class energy. She knew that she was accomplishing this when during in-class discussions, ideas would fly around the room, each one contributing to the sense of excitement. Students practiced persuasive writing and were given the opportunity to present and explore their positions in small groups. Elizabeth's classes were active and noisy. She knew that learning was taking place. The students understood the concepts of comparing, contrasting, analyzing, justifying, evaluating, and critical thinking. Still, it was risky. She could have finished the unit with a lecture, a few in-class assignments, a reading, and a test, as was the norm. She wanted more. This topic, if done well, invited students to learn about themselves. This was an opportunity not to be missed. She allowed the process to emerge from the students' interests, experiences, and visions. Still, learning outcomes could not be neatly packaged, and it was difficult to predict where things would end up. During the course of this process, Elizabeth worked closely with students in small groups and individually. She spent as much time on learning about the students' positions as she did on grammar and the structure of the writing. She asked them how they came to their positions; that is,
what led them to believe what they do. She learned about their families, economic circumstances, educational goals, peers, and role models. Elizabeth created an environment where students felt comfortable expressing themselves. She carefully facilitated discussions that allowed students to piece together what they felt and why they felt it. Unfinished thoughts fell into place. They often laughed together and were sometimes moved to tears.

The process eventually led the class to the realization that newspaper editorials are a form of persuasive writing. They begin with a stated position, support that position with appropriate evidence, identify and respond to opposition, and they also begin and close with strong statements. Elizabeth decided that she would ask the students to write their own editorials. She had been working to prepare students for the state's educational assessment test and thought this would be a good way to meet the standards in a way that was meaningful to students. They wrote editorials on Internet access in the schools, smoking policies, pollution, overcrowded middle schools, the need for a new high school building, and problems with the school cafeteria. Class time was allotted to write and edit the editorials which were reviewed according to the four criteria of editorial writing and not according to standard English conventions. Elizabeth felt their passion jump from the pages as she read their work and chose not to dampen it with her red pen. She was particularly pleased one morning when she overheard students in the cafeteria debating the merits of the position taken by one of the editorials. She knew at the time that this was a sign that the students saw this as more than an academic exercise or busy work. The students were committed to their positions and were seeing themselves as
active participants in a public process. In the next class, Elizabeth had envelopes and addresses of local papers ready for anyone who wanted to submit her/his editorial. A week later a quiet, soft-spoken, serious young female student told Elizabeth that her editorial was in the paper. They hugged and both were proud for their own reasons. The editorial was read aloud to the class straight out of the newspaper, and there were murmurs of agreement about the inadequate gym, crowded classes, and cold lunches served in the middle school cafeteria. A few other students said they would mail their own editorials in as well. The entire class was on a high, but it didn't last long. Before the afternoon dismissal bell rang, the newly published writer was in tears. She had been called to the vice-principal's office to meet with the cafeteria supervisor, who told the student that her accusations were unfounded and her comments hurtful.

Elizabeth remembers the next few hours clearly. She sat with this young woman listening to how she went from feeling "grown up and respected - like an adult," to feeling like "a little kid." They unpacked the feelings, labeling them, and even writing them down as they spoke. Elizabeth waited and allowed for moments of silence and tears. She labeled her own feelings, admitting that she felt confused and partly responsible for what happened. At the right moment, she disclosed her own struggles about publicly expressing her voice. Elizabeth was careful not to focus on herself, but found that her story inspired or at least gave permission to the student to recount her own. In the end, they agreed that what they had done was risky. The student realized that "it doesn't matter what you say or do - it's risky."
Yes, it had been risky. It seemed that the whole school was talking about this incident. Meetings were called to discuss and "clarify" the English curriculum and, by the time things had settled down, there was a new textbook on order complete with teacher's guide, self-study quizzes, and an entire section on persuasive writing. As Elizabeth recounted the layers of incidents, they seemed to her to have happened at a dizzying speed. Yet poor Mr. Cole still didn't have his lab equipment.

Elizabeth looked down the hall to room 2D: her room. She noticed that some of the poems displayed in the hall around the door had fallen. An entire winter's worth of heating had dried the tape as it always did. She wondered if she had enough time to deal with the fallen poems before class, but the bell rang before she could look at her watch. She picked up the poems and met the students in 2D.

"Hey Mrs. Morris. You like my poem so much you're going to take it home?"

"Sure am Jason. I have a bird cage at home waiting."

"She so got you Jay!"

"I sure did. I always do. Now so get in there and answer the journal question that's on the board. Remember you have ten minutes."

"Oh Mrs. Morris," Jason read from the board, "what would you do if you won a million dollars? That's easy. I'd buy a newspaper for your birdcage."

"I can't wait. Now let me read all about it."

Elizabeth always began class with a ten minute writing exercise. It did help settle the kids down after lunch, but it also gave her an opportunity to get to know them. She liked
to give them questions that would help them to figure out their role in the world and to articulate their concerns, values, and dreams. As the students began to write, she reminded herself to check in with Amanda about her brother. He had been having a difficult time in elementary school, and Amanda felt her parents were being unfair to him. She also remembered that she should send notes home with Sara, Brenda, and Stephen, letting their parents know that their hard work had paid off and that the students' grammar and spelling had improved tremendously. Then she thought with dread about having to sit through another discipline committee meeting. Six years ago when she went back to college to become a teacher, she did so to work with students, not to sit on committees, haggle over curriculum and textbooks, or hash over policy matters that couldn't be changed anyway. Still, her participation had been worth it. At least she had been able to convince the committee that the code of conduct it developed needed to be stated in the positive – that is, the code spoke of the right to learn and grow in a safe, encouraging environment. The initial idea had been to state expectations for behaviour and corresponding punishments. Elizabeth felt that, ideally, such behaviour guidelines should be developed for specific classrooms. Each class should establish its own standards and, while doing so, take part in genuine relationships and democratic decision making. She had been doing this for some time in her own classes, but agreed with Mrs. Bennett that change takes time. For now she would have to feel good about the small victories, even while knowing that there would be more compromises, more textbooks, and more discipline committees to have to stomach.
Jason's watch alarm sounded exactly 10 minutes into the writing session, just as it had after the first 10 minutes of class all semester. He liked to time things and, although she worried that he might one day get the idea to time her lecture, she felt it was a great way for Jason to show off his watch, feel good about himself, and keep the class moving along. When the class stopped writing, Elizabeth picked up a copy of the new textbook and said, "Before we begin today's grammar lesson, I want to show you the new textbook we'll be using as of next week. I'll be preparing lessons from it this weekend."

"What's that picture on the cover?" interjected Tammy.

Elizabeth flipped the book over to take a closer look. "I'm not sure," she answered. "I suppose it's a painting of some sort."

"My brother can paint better than that!"

"And he's in kindergarten!" Laughter erupted, and Elizabeth knew the grammar lesson would have to wait.

"I have an idea," she said. "Since we seem to agree that the cover is a little, well... strange, why not come up with our own?"

"If we do, can we glue them to these covers?"

"How about using them as book covers instead? You can include graphics of some sort and, on the inside flaps, a persuasive essay explaining why your cover is appropriate for this textbook."

"I knew there was a catch!"

"There always is in English class. So what will we need...?"
Portrait Three: Rita

Being: An Account of Personal Transformation

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the steps were covered with students: some reading, some studying (or pretending to), many smoking, and a few romancing. What else did she expect on a spring day on campus? Obviously overdressed for the casual setting of a community college, she pressed at the wrinkles in her dress that she developed during the 45-minute drive from her suburban home. She made her way up the steps, carefully maneuvering around the midday squatters. The knapsacks, textbooks, and Tim Horton travel cups drew her attention to the many obstacles she had overcome to get this far. At this point, a few concrete steps with some lethargic, sprawling students were a cakewalk. Reaching the top she turned, looking over her shoulder to examine her latest accomplishment. What path had she taken? She could pinpoint no openings, no gaps, but somehow she had made it to the summit. Her eyes met those of a young student steadying herself for a trek down the steps. They exchanged smiles – genuine smiles. Rita knew that her young friend would make it. She might have to stop, stumble, shuffle, and retrace her path a few times, but she would make it; after all Rita had made it up, and, after spending most of her life thinking she was stupid, she was about to enter the college to receive an award.

The room was magnificent. She had been to the auditorium before and, on the surface, it didn't look much different (a few extra flowers and a refreshment table), but today,
through her eyes, it radiated a sense of euphoria. For a moment she stopped to take it all in. Each breath felt perfect: deep and steady. Her back was aligned and at ease with none of its usual aches and pains. Even her vero cuoio shoes didn't seem to scrunch her toes the way they normally did. A much younger but seemingly more educated woman clad in a salmon pink, tailored linen suit welcomed Rita with a big, toothy smile, a handshake, and a copy of the programme. The woman said something to her, but Rita didn't hear. She couldn't listen and look for her name in the programme at the same time. She had to find it — to see it in print. When she received the phone call a few weeks earlier, telling her that she had been nominated for the Joycelyn Michaels award for perseverance and dedication, she thought they had mistakenly phoned the wrong Rita.

"Yes, I do attend the college but you must be looking for Rita Leone," she told the baffled awards administrator. It took some doing, but cross-referencing birth dates, her surname, and her 11-digit student number finally convinced Rita to go along with this just in case it was true.

She was too polite to point out the great blunder that the awards administrator must be making. Yet now there it was — her name — in print for her to see, right beside the words "1998 Recipient." The usher repeated herself, bringing Rita back to the present, inconceivable moment. "Is your son or daughter receiving an award today?" Rita paused and mumbled, "No." She was looking away from the usher, not wanting to offend her. She knew that another question would follow so she pointed to her name in the programme to shorten the anticipated discussion and minimize the embarrassment. "Oh my! I'm so sorry. Congratulations! Let me show you to your seats. We've reserved four
for you, as you requested." It was true, she had requested four: one for herself, and one each for her son, her husband, and her mother, but would she need all four? Hoping to blend in with the neighbouring family, Rita shuffled through the maze of legs to see her son seated and waiting for her. She would not be alone, and, although his own adolescent preoccupations diverted his attention elsewhere, he did love his mother and he was—or one day would be—proud of her. "Hi Ma. Did you see the food?"

"Yes, we can have some after."

"I already took three cookies."

"Is your father here?"

"Nah. He says he couldn't get out of work." Rita expected as much. She also knew the answer to her next question, but asked it anyway. "What about Nonna? Did she call for a ride?"

"Nope. I came by myself. Don't forget I need you to write me a note for school tomorrow."

"Of course."

Rita wondered why she had reserved four seats. Things had been going so well. Maybe she was getting spoiled. It was silly to think that her husband and mother would come, but then again, she would have never believed that she would learn to read and write, complete college, and receive an important award and the $500 that goes with it.

Born in postwar southern Italy, Rita had an erratic early childhood. Her mother had not wanted Rita. During an argument, her mother confessed that she had cried night and day from the moment that she discovered she was pregnant. She prayed that her child would
not live or that she would have the courage to strangle the child at birth. Thankfully she didn't, but Rita has felt emotionally strangled all her life. Burdened with this emotional turmoil, the family struggled to make ends meet and took solace in the fact that one day they would have a better life in "America." There were medical examinations to complete, visa matters to deal with, vaccinations, and the emotional tension created by not knowing if and when they could set sail for a new life.

The pressure of coping with a mother who was very tough, overbearing, and belittling played a formative role in Rita's development. Her mother had made it very clear that Rita had to resign herself to the fact that she would never amount to anything and that some people were born to wash toilets and floors and to serve. Others are born to be served and respected. Rita, in her mother's eyes, was a toilet cleaner and the sooner she accepted that, the happier she would be. Rita was told she would end up in misery if she denied her fate. She believed it. What else could a young child do but believe a mother who helping to prepare her child for a harsh life?

Teachers confirmed that Rita was not smart. In fact they gave Rita a label that stayed with her most of her life. Rita remembers being told that she was stupid, and she had little reason to doubt it. She wondered whether she was born that way, but she did feel a tinge of anger. "It's not fair," she would think to herself. "Why can't I be smart?" There were things she didn't understand, and there was no one to consult without fear of being mocked. It would be a waste of time. She remembers picking up books but not knowing what to do with them. Reading was difficult and spelling was a nightmare. Still, despite
some guilt that she was betraying her mother, she wanted to learn. In moments of
strength, she would pick up some books and present them with prayer to God, asking for help. It didn't help. Once, her mother grabbed the books out of her hands and slapped her saying, "Who are you trying to kid? The books are not for you, and, if I see you picking up a book, I am going to sink my teeth into you." Rita remembers the unnaturally harsh tones of the otherwise rhythmic Italian dialect. It was terrifying. The books were thrown into a corner, and Rita was grabbed by the hair and hit. This assault, like many others, was a relief in some ways. At least she did not have to endure the verbal and emotional attacks. It was easier to take a blow than to have the attack spoken. Still Rita prayed to learn. She wanted to resolve the mystery of reading. She wanted to understand. "It must have something to do with being stupid. I deserve to be hit," she thought. "If I could read maybe she wouldn't think I was stupid." But no matter how much she tried, she just didn't get it. She couldn't read or memorize things like the other kids. The praying continued. It had to. After all, only praying could bring a miracle. If she prayed hard enough, God would eventually hear, and a miracle would happen.

Born to serve, Rita was raised from a very early age to do dishes. A chair was needed to reach the sink. Perched on a chair, but still straining to reach, she learned the process well: soak, soap, wash, rinse, and dry. She felt like a little servant before she really knew what a servant was. The same chair raised her to the stove where she made spaghetti sauce regularly. The pot was particularly difficult to reach when other pots were boiling. It was her job to strip the floors, apply the wax, do the wash, and make the beds. It felt as
though she had to do everything. Some days when the housework had piled up, Rita would be kept home from school to finish her chores. Her mother was particularly proud of her young daughter’s housekeeping skills. On many occasions, she would hand Rita an extensive list of chores to complete and a vague excuse for being out for the day. Rita was expected to complete each task before her mother returned. Sometimes Rita would freeze. She would cocoon, immobilized by the work ahead of her. It was overwhelming, but there was no point protesting. Stillness would give way to panic and she would use it and an as yet unacknowledged anger to fuel her work. She would get it done.

The school complained once. A note was sent home saying something about a doctor, Children’s Aid, and missing too much school. The details are sketchy. Rita remembers a neighbour being called to read the note aloud to her mother. With the Italian, the broken English, and the big words, Rita was, for the most part, lost. She hoped that maybe this was God answering her prayers. Maybe the note would change things, and she could go to school with her friends. The next day her mother told her that she was to tell the doctor that she had a sore throat. She was trained not to lie and not to disobey. She chose to obey. Her aunt, who spoke some English, took Rita to the hospital, and Rita did as she was told. She repeated her mother’s words to the doctor and was given a yellow liquid and a note to take to school. On the way home in the streetcar, Rita asked her aunt about the note and burst into tears when she learned that it said she should stay home from school another two days. Her aunt was bewildered. Why would an 8-year-old cry about staying home from school?
The punishment for this bout of tears was one Rita knew all too well. She would be taken out on the veranda with a comb and a container of water. Her mother had insisted on very long hair for Rita. It came down past her shoulders, covering her back, but it did not belong to her. The hair was her mother's. Rita would have to kneel in front of her mother waiting for the comb to be jabbed into her head. Her head would snap back, but Rita knew that, if she moaned in pain, she would be smacked. Not recognizing the severity of the pain, neighbours would half heartedly protest saying, "You're hurting the child! Let the poor dear go and play." Each comment meant increased pain, and Rita would again turn to her only hope. She had learned that it was too much to ask God to change her mother so instead prayed that the neighbours would mind their own business. This prayer too went unanswered so she endured, knowing that the braiding would be even worse. It was torture for the young Rita, who felt as though her "brains were being tied."

Rita was not allowed to do homework. She had to sneak it into the house and do it in the dark. She would go into the bathroom and do some homework in the hope of keeping her teachers at bay. If she were discovered, she would have to deal with her mother's rage. By the age of 12, there was little time for sneaking off. She was left to babysit five young children. She would have to cook, clean, watch, and entertain them. She would invent games for them. In the evening when the adults returned home, Rita would have to serve espresso. This was the ritual. Homework was out of the question.
There was something nagging inside of Rita, saying, "This is not right. It can't be right."

She remembers thinking,

Okay God, if I was born stupid then whose fault is that? Is it your fault God? Am I allowed to say that to you? If you're there, Mother Mary, I ask you, since you are the mother of God, you be my mother. You guide me. If my mother is not a good mother, you be my mother.

Nineteen days after her 16th birthday, Rita was married. She was tricked into it. A stranger who had seen her at her cousin's place sent word that he was interested in her. One day, her mother took her aside and told her that someone was going to phone her to tell her that there was a man who was interested in meeting her. This made little sense to Rita. She was told what to say and to respect her mother's wishes as Italian tradition dictates. Again, Rita obeyed but she didn't want to. She was too young for and had not been exposed to anything like this. She had no sexual desires or interest in romance. Besides he didn't speak English and Rita spoke little Italian. He was much older; they were from different worlds. After going through with the initial meeting, she tried to protest. This was a bold step, but it didn't seem to help. Her mother told her that she was tired of having to care for her. She was too simple and stupid to care for herself. Hopefully, this young man would be willing to look after her. Besides, her mother reassured her that they would simply request that he return in a few years when Rita was old enough to make her own decision. Rita settled for this. The next time she saw him he brought gifts and roses for her and carnations for her mother. Rita felt sorry for him. "Why was the poor guy being put through all this?" She was moved when he showed her
a "learn-to-speak-English" record he borrowed from the library. "He was doing all this for me." The night proceeded much as her mother had rehearsed it. Rita sat at the table with them but did not make eye contact. Such boldness was unacceptable. She knew that her mother would be watching her every move. She did not dare try but began to wonder what it would be like to look into his eyes. "Was he as nice as he seemed?" Then it happened. Somehow, when all was said and done, she was engaged.

Over the next little while, Rita's life improved. She spent time with her fiancé and they learned how to speak to each other. She learned that he worked hard all day and sent most of his money home to his family in Italy. This was touching. Maybe getting married wouldn't be so bad. He was never inappropriate with Rita. He didn't frighten her. They met in September but it was not until Christmas that he asked permission to kiss her. "I said yes." Rita remembers it vividly.

[H]e kissed me on the cheek. I swear to God... the temperature! My face went scarlet red. I thought I would never breathe again. I had to run out of the room.

It took a long time for my heart to stop pounding and my normal colour to return. They were very careful about kissing after this. They took their time and it was very nice. Rita started to like it. Besides, ever since he had come around, the beatings had stopped.

Marriage brought relief, but there were many things Rita did not know. It took a long time to learn about sex and even longer to understand it. After six months Rita was pregnant. It felt right. All the people on television got pregnant after they were married.
She wanted to do everything right but she had to figure that out on her own. It was hard to talk with her husband, let alone really communicate. Besides, he was a man. It wasn't until she was in labour that she started to learn the mechanics of birth. The nurses realized that she didn't understand what was going on, so they tried to help. These were smart women who had gone to college and had important jobs, and they cared about Rita. They showed faith in her and this made her feel great. Because she had experience babysitting, parenting came fairly easy, but financial pressures meant she would have to leave the first safe home she had had to go to work.

For two years, Rita worked in a factory making television parts, and, for ten years after that, she made parts for mobile radios. She worked wiring and soldering all day long, and, while others complained, Rita for the first time felt competent and satisfied with something other than domestic duties. She received praise from her employers because she worked hard and didn't complain despite calluses and discomfort. She started to believe that she could be good at something. Even though she couldn't read, she could follow drawings and felt powerful. They treated her like a real person at this factory. They gave her a chair that swiveled, an ashtray, and her name on her very own workstation. At monthly meetings, the boss would treat the employees to donuts, coffee, and tea and he would tell them that he appreciated their work and that, if they continued to work as a team, they would go far. "No person alone is more important than anyone else," he would say. "Everyone is part of this team." That meant Rita too. She enjoyed the work. It made her happy. The music piped in through the PA system was icing on the cake, and one day she told her boss that she felt she had "died and gone to heaven!"
It was too good to last. Rita realized that she was limited by her inability to read and write. She received a highly coveted promotion and realized that she would need to read reports to know which parts of the machinery needed to be changed. She was also to record the changes she made. "If only they would let me tell them," she thought. "Now they're going to find out how stupid I am." The shame and worry was too much for her, and it took its toll physically. Eventually she had no choice but to leave work, and she found herself in therapy.

The therapeutic process brought her face-to-face with her childhood and, for the first time, she began to understand that maybe she was not to blame. She worked to uncover the traumatic events of her childhood and started learning about the coping mechanisms she had developed.

I was lucky – I created a doctor who protected me. In therapy a lot of times they would ask me why I was not bitter or a drug addict, an alcoholic or... They wanted to know what made me different from these other people that ended up in jails and abusing their own kids. I thought about it, and the only thing I could come up with was that I had a natural mechanism that I created – the doctor – so when things got really bad and I was really hurting, I was able to go in myself, in my mind, in a place where... I was very good at it. I could draw myself into this special room which I had made for myself. At first it was all blank. There was nothing but a bed in a hospital room. I had never been in a hospital when I was a child, but I created this room and no one was allowed to come into it. I was all by
myself. To justify it, I had to come up with something that would be workable for me to accept. I created a contagious disease so that my family or anyone couldn't come close to me. I was under quarantine. I put this in my mind...and in this hospital room, quarantined, I was alone and nobody could do anything about it. There was a slot in the door where my food would be put through, and I wouldn't have to deal with anyone. It was such a peaceful feeling. I was exhausted from all the beatings and physical labour, and this room gave me a chance to rest. Only when I was feeling better, more comfortable, and more refreshed would I come out. I improved the room as I got older. I hung a beautiful framed picture. Much later, I had a television. I had a bookcase. I don't remember reading any of the books in the bookcase, but I did have books and a bookcase. Nobody was allowed in. I remember imagining times where my mother would say, "No! I have to see my daughter," but the doctor was very clear. He was my guardian angel. He would say, "No! She is contagious and no one is allowed to see her." It made me feel so good, unguilty, and very relaxed. I could withdraw into this room whenever I needed to.

The more I learned in therapy, the freer I became. It was a beautiful feeling. I was never able to get into the room again, but it's okay because now I realize I can make my own room. I can make my own space and I have a right. I don't need to have a contagious disease. I just didn't know that before.
She also realized that she now needed to reconstruct her image of herself. The psychologist she worked with was kind, nurturing, and patient. She gave Rita a special emergency number just in case, and this helped Rita feel connected. She received reassurance that she was okay and her feelings were perfectly normal, considering what she had gone through. Mostly, it was just enough for Rita to know that the psychologist was there for her. Rita felt cared for and started to play with the idea of what she might become rather than being stuck with what she was. This was an exciting time. She learned all sorts of things about herself. She had a learning disability — she wasn't stupid, and there was actually something to be done about it. She worked one-to-one with a learning disabilities specialist who taught her a special way to look at words, that is, by taking them apart and spelling them piece-by-piece. Rita was thrilled. One day when Rita returned to class with 10 pages of homework completed when she had only been assigned one, the teacher jokingly complained that she was moving much too fast. They shared a laugh, and deep down, both of them knew that, now that Rita finally had permission to do homework, she would complete 10 pages again the next day, and perhaps more. The day that Rita learned to spell "anniversary" was a big breakthrough for her. She wrote it over and over again on whatever piece of scrap paper she could find. Looking it over she would check it, and double check it; she marveled at its beauty and the fact that she remembered. She loved the feeling that learning gave her. It was a natural high.

Rita remembers the thrill that learning to read brought her in a story she tells about a family vacation to Disney World.
It was something that I had always dreamed of. I never thought I would ever end up there. We were going to Disney World, the Epcott Centre – a fantasy vacation come true. Too many good things were happening. I was so excited I couldn’t sleep at night. I was scared to death. I was afraid someone was going to break into the hotel room. I thought something bad was going to happen because this was too good to be true. The beauty of it was the things that I had learned about the history of the Industrial Revolution and the Renaissance in school were all there at Disney World. It was like, "WOW! I know what that means." It was such a thrill. My kids were young and it was nice for me to be able to say to my children, "Look. I could read a lot of the words that I couldn’t read before. See that sign? It says..."

She had learned to read, but her teacher, psychologist, and imaginary doctor had taught her much more. Rita was worthy of learning, and she had a right to feel safe. She had a right to be able to read the signs at Disney World and share the joy with her children.

Rita quickly outgrew the literacy programme and she was encouraged to register in a 6-month early childhood education assistant program. She was attracted by the promise of the one-day-a-week in-class work where she would be able to feel like a student. She decided that this would be a great place for her to continue to improve her reading and writing skills and signed up immediately. It didn't take long for Rita to realize that this programme had much more to offer her than literacy skills. Teachers were holding discussions about the importance of listening to children, respecting children, and treating them with love. For Rita, these discussions went far beyond the preschool world that she was entering and a great deal fell into place. Rita finally realized that she was not to
blame. "It was wrong the way my mother raised me. The beatings and the insults and the mistreating. She had no right... All of a sudden, it was not my fault." Rita completed the programme and received her certificate. She felt satisfied. One teacher approached her and suggested that she continue in a college ECE diploma programme. Rita hesitated. She didn't think she would be successful. After all, she had missed out on so much in her education. She was raised to be a toilet cleaner, not an educator! The teacher insisted, telling Rita that she had "something special." Rita was afraid to disappoint the teacher and, deep down, she was intrigued by the teacher's faith in her. She registered for the course. She realized that there was something special about her relationship with this teacher, and that awareness convinced Rita. Soon Rita was excited at the thought of being a student again. She imagined herself sitting in a college classroom, referring to herself as a student, and purchasing textbooks in the college bookstore. It all sounded great. Rita maintained her intense study habits - ten pages to everyone else's one - because she wanted not to disappoint the teacher who had so much faith in her. She was successful once again. She will probably remember the grade that she earned in that course forever - 85%.

Rita used each course as an opportunity to find ways to make herself a better teacher and, more importantly, a better person. In a course she took on child abuse, she realized that children need to be educated to speak to adults about abusive situations. She knew this from first hand experience. It didn't happen in her life. Nobody told her that her mother was wrong. "The system let it go. The system did not help."
Many students took two or three courses in a semester. Rita decided to take one at a time. She wasn't in the course to get a pay raise; there was no hurry. She took it to better herself, to educate herself. She learned to pay attention to her learning style and difficulties, and to go slowly. Besides, she convinced herself that this would allow her to call herself a student for much longer. She savoured each course and the teachers that offered her insights into ways of being.

She was amazed when one day a teacher suggested that each person share his or her ideas. He believed that, by doing so, the students would develop new perspectives, stronger arguments, and support for their own ideas. He insisted that he too learned from his students. This took Rita by surprise. How could a professor – a doctor of philosophy – possibly learn anything from an uneducated, lowly teacher's assistant? His classes were a joy to attend. She would listen fervently to him speak and would be sure to chat with him before or after class. His honesty and the way he presented himself moved her. He felt comfortable about opening up and he shared his own hopes and fears. Rita was particularly impressed by the way he spoke about his wife and family. He obviously loved and admired them. She knew she could trust him. Rita looked forward to Tuesday nights, that is, the nights she had a chance to share what she had learned, and to have it respected. Rita noticed that she raised her hand to speak much more often in this class and that the teacher quickly learned her name. She was fascinated with the way he used her stories about her own children and her work as an educational assistant in a public school to teach educational theories. Her experiences mattered. They had depth and meaning, not only for her but for others in the class. She was an important part of the
learning process. Rita did not share all of her stories with the class. Late one evening, after a lesson and discussion on Freud and defense mechanisms, Rita had a vivid recollection of a childhood experience.

I remember when I was very little, in a Grade 2 or 3 class, one of the children in my class died. The teacher had given permission forms for us to go to the funeral to take home. So I asked my mom if I could go. She said, "No way." Under no circumstances was I allowed to go. I felt this was unjust. This was a classmate and I felt I owed it to her to go. She died. I felt like I had to go. I didn't know about death, but the priest and teachers said, "You have to say your goodbyes." I didn't understand the whole concept of it all but I knew that I had to say goodbye. It was my obligation. But my mother -- no way. I was not allowed; not even allowed to bring up the subject. That upset me a lot. That was the first time in my life that I disobeyed her and somehow found a way to go with a few girlfriends. I told the teacher, I was allowed to go... We were allowed to leave class early. I don't know how we got there -- if a parent dropped us off, or what -- that part is blank. But that night I do remember seeing myself in the funeral home; I see the dead girl's mother in a black kerchief with her head down and thinking to myself, "Why isn't she angry? Her daughter died, she should be angry," because my mother always reacted with that anger. "She should be angry but she is not." She was very subdued. I saw this coffin with the little girl in it all dressed in white and the spotlights were on her face and hands. Remember, I am very nervous and scared because I am there against my mother's will. I remember a statue of Mother Mary sitting on a rock and the material that was
supporting the coffin. There was lots of material and it was pleated. It was white satin material. Those pleats just stuck in my mind. I could see the mother with her head down and we were supposed to get closer to the coffin. I was scared to death. Not of the dead girl, because she looked like she was sleeping, but because I went against my mother’s will and I was there without her permission. I started to giggle. The more I heard myself, the more I tried to stop. I couldn’t. I started to laugh. I felt so bad, but it was a hysterical giggle. We ran out of the funeral home. I just started laughing and laughing, and I couldn’t stop laughing. It wasn’t a nice laugh. It was awful. I thought, my mother was right, I did a wrong, bad thing. I couldn’t deal with it. I never did tell my mother. I felt like this was very wrong of me. This was very inappropriate.

That night in class, the teacher taught us that one theory says that we have mechanisms that we put into place to protect ourselves from some kind of fear. We react totally different from what the situation calls for. I finally realized that I was just a little girl and I was scared to death. I didn’t know how to react so I started giggling. The guilt that I laughed at such a sad occasion... Here it was a classmate. She had died and someone should have talked to me about it. I should have been able to express something but inside of me I was so guilty because I did wrong. I betrayed my mother by going to the place and then I giggled very inappropriately. Learning about defense mechanisms, I realized that it's okay for the child to react that way because she is scared. She needs comforting, and needs love and support – understanding.
The next Tuesday before class started, Rita approached the teacher and described the memory. She asked for permission to use this story to write her final assignment for the course. She felt she had to explain the way she would use the theories discussed in class plus additional sources to interpret her experiences. The professor smiled. He didn't seem too concerned about all the theories. When he gave her "permission," Rita couldn't help but notice the excitement in her teacher's eyes. He seemed just as enthusiastic about the assignment as she was. They talked for some time about her experience. He really wanted to know. At that moment her education seemed whole. She was learning about ideas, making use of them, and growing in many ways as a result. Rita carefully wrote down the resource he recommended and then returned to her seat, eager to partake in the evening's scholarly — or was it personal? — journey.

Rita realized that there was more to "knowledge" than she had thought. Being smart had more to it than just the mechanics of reading, writing, and memorizing. It was learning about what is inside, about profound questions of truth and beauty, justice and love. The more time she spent in class with her peers and teacher, the more she felt better about herself. It was true that "the head is connected to the heart; the brain does need love." Rita had changed. She did not just want to study. She wanted to discover and create. She wanted to put her ideas — yes they were her ideas — into practice and change things for the children she was involved with at work. She worked hard to give choices to children in her care. Time was set aside to hear what the children had to say. With her own children she tried to break the patterns she had inherited from her mother. Rita explained to them that, despite all the changes she had made, she was still influenced by
her childhood. She should have been more open with them when they were younger, she told them. There were difficult, heartfelt discussions. They all persevered. Her daughter marveled at her. "How can you keep at this?" she would ask after hours of honest talk.

"Ma, you are weird," she would say, and a smile would sneak up on both of them.

"Well," Rita would say,

Someday you may get married and I think you should make your own choices instead of me or anyone else putting any pressure on you. Now I know that it's your decision. You decide. You talk it over and you don't have to do anything I had to do. I was raised to serve my husband. I had no idea who I was. When he came home, I had to run to him and bring him something to drink. My job was to make the house very pleasant. I had to serve. In a way I didn't mind doing it. I liked helping. I got and still get pleasure from helping people. I just don't like to be forced by my own brain, or mistreated and abused by others.

Now Rita's work with children was about justice. She found herself using that word more and more. It was her goal, and she was able to recognize when things were not just.

So much of my life now has to do with trying to make things just and fair. I see injustice everywhere and I hate being powerless, like I can't do anything about it. I have a lot of difficulty with that. The school system is a perfect example of this. Everyone talks about education, but they don't care about the kids. I have to be content with the little changes that I do make. I'm an education assistant so I don't have much formal power, but I have internal power. Everyday I change things,
little by little. I work in a grade 5 class, and there is this teacher who only cares about tests and marks. I sit in the back of the class and I hear things that are scary! She is belittling the kids in all sorts of ways. I try to find ways of approaching her to educate her if I can. I remind her of the learning disabilities, family problems and that children should not feel like failures. Mostly I try to model how to be with kids. Some of it rubs off – little by little but I am always trying to find ways now not to let it drag me down. It's not easy but if I just give up and leave the school system, it's not really fair. I am not fixing anything.

Meanwhile I am at the bottom of the totem pole, I am an EA, and even the principal herself will send notes saying, "If you could spare Rita, I could use her."

Excuse me, I am a human being! Right on the notes it will say, "Can you lend Rita to me?" So I am sort of like property. I know what that's about. I would love to collect these notes and photocopy them. This is not right. I am treated like property. It's not, "do you mind?" They ask the teacher if it's okay because they could "use me."

This is not good for me because I have worked so hard to get my self-esteem up.

My professor opened my eyes. He's more than my teacher; I know him and he knows me. We have a relationship. I've changed. There has to be justice for me now. There is a strong thing in me... justice. I don't like or I can't tolerate injustice anymore. I can't live with it. Something eats away at me – I have to find some kind of fairness – I have to fix it somehow. I have to do something. I help the kids but I get that back 100-fold because I am learning too. It helps to
heal me. I have the power to help and to encourage children, to make school life happy. It gives me a natural high. It's so amazing. I feel like I'm not really stepping on the ground. It's a total excitement. It's like you feel this light shining from you, and you want to take a deep breath, and you want to get in more of it.

It is so intense that I feel it's addictive - I want to do more. The thing that always gets me confused is why it bothers people when they see other people happy. I don't understand this. If I see somebody happy, I want to be happy with them. I want to applaud them and be happy for them. I get happy when I see other people happy. So now I am in a position where I keep at it, trying to help, little by little.

One step at a time Rita keeps at it. Sometimes it takes a toll on her emotionally, but it is not too much work. When she is tired and feeling down she reminds herself that the work, the real core of the work, is not difficult. It is about admitting to herself that she is no better than the children with whom she works. Teachers do not have any natural powers that allow them to disrespect and control children. There are no special rights; teaching is a privilege. When Rita takes a moment out of her busy, hectic day and sits with a child, she can look deeply at the child's life and at her own life through a shared moment. She understands at such moments what a privilege it is to be able to teach.

When she makes genuine contact, she knows it. She listens carefully, with more than her ears. She takes it all in as if her entire being is open, ready to accept without censorship or discrimination. She feels it in her body and sees it in the child's eyes. The tightness is gone. A lightness surrounds both of them. Movements are fluid and relaxed. Thinking is unhurried and yet flows. Laughter is common. There is openness and a safe
vulnerability, respect, and care. It is a natural high. This is the core of her work, with each of these genuine moments coming together in the service of making the world a better place. As Rita explains,

they are completely integrated with the whole, the idea of justice, the child's right to respect, and a good life. You don't just do it because you want or like to, there is something bigger than that: justice. I need to do this. I can't deny it. We are not going to improve the system unless people are willing to speak up and do something. The only way I can actually live with myself is to keep working for justice.

The award ceremony was underway. A round-faced toddler sitting a few rows ahead climbed her mother's shoulder and looked from the stage with proud defiance. She had brown, bright, wide eyes and she had already determined that the action at the front of the auditorium was stuffy. She would need to entertain herself. She played with her mother's hair, tried to pull the ribbing off the well-worn auditorium seat, and flashed buoyant, breezy smiles at her own admiring audience. Rita was lucky enough to catch one of her gems. Knowing from years of experience that kids cannot resist her pirate's telescope routine, she proceeded to roll up her programme. The toddler's eyes widened. She looked around the room, wondering if anyone else was aware of the exciting turn of events. Nobody seemed to have noticed. Their eyes were staring beyond her to the droning murmurs at the front. "...And this year, the award for perseverance and dedication goes to Rita..." Rita caught sight of a salmon pink fluttering arm out of the corner of her left eye. She was being called to the stage. Good thing she was not
wearing her pirate eye patch! She shuffled through the aisle, hoping that this would calm the usher's flailing movements. With a gentle nudge, she was directed to the podium to receive the award. The college president congratulated her and extended his right hand. Rita reaching for the award, shot out her left hand. Awkwardly, he retreated his right and handed her the award. Rita blushed and reached to shake his hand. They both smiled. He grasped her right with both of his hands, firmly sandwiching her award in between.

Rita heard the ring of applause, somewhat distant, as she turned and headed back to her row, now thankful for the usher guiding her back to her son. "Way to go, Ma. Check it out, 500 bucks." "Yeah, 500 bucks..." She noticed the toddler who was ahead, waiting for more contact. Rita waved, still clutching the award and the cheque in her hand. She placed them in the empty seat beside her, feeling both proud and relieved. She was dedicated – she knew that. She had persevered – it was true. She looked beside her and smiled because she knew that the seats next to her really were not empty. Her mother was with her, always. She felt as though a sense of peace blanketed their relationship. That felt good. She also knew that her professor was right alongside her. In fact, he had become part of her. So too had the psychologist, her other teachers, and her classmates; these were now her friends. She could not have achieved this without them. Rita thought of herself – her self – no longer different, no longer the outsider. Those she was destined to serve were now her peers, colleagues, partners, associates, that is, her equals. She cared for them, respected them, and understood them, and she knew they felt the same about her.
Chapter Eight

Creative Synthesis

Introduction

In the creative synthesis, the experiences of all the co-researchers and the primary researcher are brought together in a creative piece that expresses the phenomenon as a unified whole. According to Moustakas (1990), the creative synthesis goes beyond the individual and composite depictions in that the primary researcher having become "thoroughly familiar with all the data and its major constituents, qualities, and themes," uses "tacit and intuitive powers," to illuminate the phenomenon. This is occasionally expressed as a "poem, story, drawing, painting" but more usually in the form of a "narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples." (pp. 31 – 32). This creative synthesis is written as a dialogue, a vignette, that tells a story of a brief encounter within an emancipatory relationship. Since I carried out the 14 interviews and allowed them to incubate, I have found myself consistently reflecting on the interviews with my co-researchers. I expressed my thoughts and learnings in a detailed, systemic way in the depictions. In the portraits, I tried to paint a picture of three co-researchers' unique experiences. Since then, I have played with these learnings and have noticed that many ideas unexpectedly bubble up to consciousness. They have found their way into my dreams, abstract sketches, watercolor paintings, and poetry. I have made connections and have had realizations while playing football and during yoga classes and weightlifting sessions. I have also found that I have been flooded with memories of my undergraduate advisor, and the relationship I shared with her. This was the relationship that sparked my
interest in this topic. The following dialogue "Double Butter, Double Pecan" is based on
the relationship we shared and synthesizes the data that I have collected in this part of the
study. Its intent is to paint a picture of the phenomenon allowing the reader a glimpse at
what an emancipatory relationship is like.

"Double Butter, Double Pecan"

I had arranged to spend a day with Dora. I hadn't seen her for years and I was excited to
see my undergraduate advisor again. Now it was time to go. I was ready to embark on
the three-day trip: one day to get there, one for the visit, and one to drive back. Nothing
about this had been easy. Incredibly it took four months to plan and prepare. Schedules
had to be coordinated. She had classes, committee meetings, doctor's appointments, and
her volunteer work at the health centre. I had classes and committee meetings too. I also
had games and tournaments, weight training, graduate school, and childcare to arrange.
It seemed crazy that it was so difficult for two people to spend time together but there
was no way around it. I tried to take care of everything. I didn't want to concern her with
the details. I wanted to make things convenient for her and even though I knew she
wanted to spend time with me, she felt a bit guilty about the time, money, and energy it
would take me to travel so far. I tried to reassure Dora that it was not too much trouble.
"Besides," I said, "I'll be in the area visiting some friends." I didn't really have friends to
visit, nor am I ever "just in the area," which is over 800 kilometers from home. It was a
little white lie; one that I had secretly prepared in case she felt as though she was
inconveniencing me. Besides, she was my friend, and I would be in the area – visiting
her. The little white lie, I convinced myself, was for the best. Why emphasize that my
single purpose for driving eight hours, staying in a musty hotel and leaving all of my responsibilities behind for three days was to spend a few precious hours with her, especially if it was going to stress her out?

I wondered whether she could ever fathom her impact on me. I had tried to tell her a number of times and she seemed to hear and appreciate it but still, could she really know? She told me that I was important to her too. Yes, I suppose I could see how, but still, there was a difference. She transformed me, not in any prescribed manner, but by being herself and choosing to be with me. She provided me with a living definition of relationship. I cherished everything about our relationship and, despite the 800 kilometers between us, she was with me all the time. Still, I wanted more. I wanted to be with her and see her smile. I wanted to see her caring blue eyes, to touch her hand, to reaffirm my memories of everything she meant to me. I grabbed my keys, slid into my seat, reversed out of the driveway, and headed off. After two stop signs, I pulled over. I knew I couldn't travel eight hours at this level of intensity. I turned the radio off, took a deep, conscious breath, and centred myself in the present moment. The joy within me became calmness and understanding.

The route to the college was ingrained in my mind and was almost as familiar as a trip to the corner store. Over the years, the drive had been modernized with quick access to gas and food. Instead of entering the small towns with real communities, travelers were now treated to mega-stations with one-stop shopping for all their modern disease needs. The circular buildings were carefully planned to encourage travelers to tarry in the maze of
convenience shops where they could play human roulette with their health with just a few purchases: cigarettes, candies, greasy French fries; all washed down with a caffeine boost from Tim Horton's. Resolved to resist the temptations I quickly used the washroom and walked swiftly by the Smarties in the glass faced machine, trying to convince myself that the desire was not real, and found my way back into my car and onto the highway.

I passed a farmhouse and looked over the many acres of growing crops. I remembered this very farmhouse from my other trips. Once an ice sheet covered that same farmland and reflected the sun so brightly that it was almost impossible to see the road before me. That was the time I tried to bring home a carton of Ben and Jerry's strapped to the roof of my car and learned that despite the frigid temperatures, ice cream melts in the sun. I remembered how much Dora loved Ben and Jerry's. "What's the point of eating ice cream unless it's rich and fattening?" she would ask? I rebutted with facts and figures about cholesterol, healthy eating, the psychological messages behind cravings, and the dangers of sugar but relented to her invitations to have one whenever I went to see her. We once stretched an argument about which flavour was the best through an entire semester. We were like two puppies play-fighting; neither of us concerned about winning but both loving the challenge. We laughed our way through debates about chunk sizes, preservatives, artificial flavours, and swirls versus layers. Years later I realize that this was part of her teaching. It was something about herself that she shared with me. I wondered whether she played similar games with her other students. Probably, I thought and made a mental note to pull off at the next convenience stop to
buy two packages of Smarties – one for me and one for Dora. If I was lucky, maybe they sold *Ben and Jerry's* too. In the meantime, I thought about the middle path.

Walking down the hall toward Dora's office I noticed tiny pebbles and sand swept into the corners, the occasional dustball floating along the aged wooden floor, and the chipped and smudged walls. I felt my heart pounding with anticipation and decided that these were hardly the appropriate surroundings for such a special person's office. Where were the elegant oak doors? Where were the ornate etched nameplates? Where were all the signs of respect that Dora, who had been teaching there since the 1930's deserved? The best the college could do was to provide an office close to the parking lot and bathrooms, with only a few stairs to climb. I remembered how Dora had to argue for this office. I knew they didn't get it. How could they understand the importance of her work like I did?

Dora's door had a 3 ½" by 5" file card in the bottom right hand corner of the frosted glass window. Carefully inscribed on it was her name, printed out in her own shaky but neat handwriting. I could recognize her handwriting after all the letters I'd hungrily received from her over the years. I looked carefully at her name and was reminded of Dora's age once again. "Learn from her while you can," I thought to myself. I put down my knapsack, took a deep breath and tried to calm myself. It didn't work. I felt too anxious to settle down. I knocked on the door even thought I didn't feel ready. I spotted movement through the frosted glass - bright pink on the top, blue at the bottom. The door opened and I gazed into those deep blue eyes.
Dora - Come in dear!

I smile and embrace my advisor. She hugs me back. She has a firm, snug hold on me. I don't think I'll ever get enough of these. Before I catch myself, I awkwardly start to talk in a businesslike way about college affairs.

Dora - Now just a minute! We can get to all of that soon enough. Please let me enjoy this hug for a few more moments... Now then, tell me all about those girls of yours and how is your football team coming along? Did you bring photographs? Are you still working out everyday? What about ice cream? Have you tried the new Orange and Cream flavour yet?

My shoulders drop about three inches and my anxiety seeps away. I'm home.

"You probably won't get to work with her, so think of a 2nd choice. You don't want to be disappointed." This was the counsel I received from a fellow student during my first day at the college. I was in line outside Dora's office, waiting for my scheduled 5-minute meeting with the most sought after advisor. The line of students before and behind me was proof of this. There was a rumor that she only worked with the "best" students, and another that she didn't work with undergraduates. She was in such high demand and too highly qualified to do so. I casually flipped the pages of the catalogue of faculty members, wanting to give the impression that yes, I was looking for a second choice. My eyes stared into the pages, but focused on nothing particular. My heart was leading me, and my heart was set on working with Dora.
The process was confusing. New students were supposed to meet with potential advisors, interview them, discuss interests, study needs, and research ideas. Then after talking to as many advisors as possible, students were to fill out a form identifying the three advisors they would most like to work with. This form went to a mysterious faculty meeting where it was all sorted out, leaving the students waiting and rumbling about whether this was or was not a democratic process. Of course, those who were confident that they would get their first choice believed that it was democratic. New and previously disappointed students weren't so sure. I chose to sit on the fence, not willing to make a decision until the faculty made theirs.

Finally it was my turn to meet with Dora. I edged into the seat across from hers. The two chairs were close to each other; so close that our knees almost touched. Somehow it felt good to be close to her. She looked straight at me and her blue eyes shone. She took my hand and said, "Well, hello. I'm sorry it took so long. You must be tired from waiting." I mumbled something about it not being a problem. "I'll have to ask you to speak up if that's okay. I'm Dora". I responded quickly with my name, major, and rank (lowly undergrad – uh oh! Did I let that out too soon?). I was hoping to use the five minutes allotted to sell her on the idea of working with me but would I be able to overcome this undergrad thing? Had I blown it? I felt for a moment what it might be like to be a politician offering hollow promises: "Choose me! You'll be glad you did!"

Dora – Yes, that was horrible, wasn't it? I never did like that advisor selection process. It was as though we were lining up cattle for branding. Horrible.
Geraldine - It was nerve-racking but so much of that first year was. Being away from home, the classes, and adjusting to a different approach to education.

Dora – You know, it’s true. Students really did go through a lot. It was confusing.

Geraldine – How did you deal with that?

Dora – Oh my dear, that was the hardest part of my job. I suppose I tried to help ground them in our group and individual meetings, and in each seminar, class, presentation, and workshop they attended. You could see that they were trying to reaffirm their identities, even to themselves. They had to vocalize who they were and what they wanted out of life. They would talk in soulful ways about who they were and what was important to them. So yes, it was confusing but there was a lot of value in it. It was a grounding experience for us all and we grew as a group.

Geraldine – So, why did you choose to work with me? You had a group of graduate students and me. Why?

Dora – I don’t know how I got the reputation of wanting to work with graduate students only. I do remember speaking with you on that evening though. You were so young! The youngest in my group by far. I think I identified with you. I was young and eager when I came in the 1930s. Maybe I wanted to protect you but you were also so confident!

Geraldine – Me? Confident?

Dora – Oh yes! I could see it in your eyes and in the way you expressed yourself. You had ideas about teaching that were beyond the ordinary. You were going places – exciting places and I thought "why not tag along for the ride?" I could sense that your passion would carry you and it was thrilling to see your excitement. You were too busy soaring to worry about grades, exams, and degrees. The ideal student for a non-
conformist who loses her grade book at least once a semester. Those dimples were irresistible too.

I smile self-consciously, trying not to draw attention to my dimples. She knows this but chooses to draw attention to them anyway and points to one of the many pictures on the wall behind her desk. It is a picture of us at graduation with the words, "Me and Dimples" written on it. We laugh and I ask her about her family. "Of course! How could I have forgotten to tell you about my grandchild?" She breaks into a story about "the big beautiful dimples on her rosy cheeks." I realize there is no escaping. But then again, why would I want to? The story of her granddaughter folds into others and I momentarily lose track, choosing to absorb the joy instead of the words. Her stories are always full of joy with messages about care and love. She moves freely from one to the other and I notice she reacts, happily to my raised eyebrows, look of anticipation, and laughter right on cue. She is sharing a simple story but I am relearning the importance of voice, of learning from one's own experiences, of collaboration, trust, and respect, of the need to risk and to be understood. I sit and listen, gazing into her eyes. Without any plan or effort, profound learnings seep into me. I don't try to learn and she doesn't try to teach. There is so much trust between us and we feel so connected to each other, that the boundaries between teacher and learner, speaker and listener, and the words and their meanings become fuzzy. She pauses for a moment to catch her breath.

Dora - Wow. This certainly is a lot of fun.
Geraldine - You're an amazing storyteller.
Dora - Are you kidding? I get the who's and the where's all mixed up.
Funny. I didn't notice.
Many classes that first semester took place in Dora's home, which was walking distance from the campus. None of us had been to a professor's home for a lecture before. Her decision to hold classes in her home was conscious. She wanted her students to see her in ways that defined her beyond academic. She enjoyed our reactions as we entered and saw the family photos, her antiques, her wacky kitchen gadgets, her record collection, and the many quilts draped over chairs, the couch, and a rocking chair. She directed us into the kitchen to tend to the whistling kettle, to slice the banana bread, and to fetch napkins, spoons, sugar, milk, and if anyone preferred, honey and lemon. The class would begin with a check in. Everyone had a chance to speak for a few minutes about what was happening in their studies and beyond. Dora pencilled notes onto the 3 ½" x 5" index cards in her lap. There was one for each of us. Based on the check in and her own sense of our needs, she suggested an agenda for the day and asked if anyone had anything to add.

I don't remember ever seeing anyone check their watch. Time seemed to stand still. No one was worried about the outside world, other responsibilities, or getting to the next seminar. We were all fully involved in her class. She wanted us to say what we felt, to explain how we knew what we knew. Dora didn't speak for more than 10% of the class time; our voices, she said were what made the class. She came in after we had our say to summarize and validate our ideas and feelings. She had a wonderful way of connecting what we said with theories, and current thinking. We scrawled names of books and authors into notebooks, adding short comments like, "relates to my ideas about curriculum reform" and "agrees with my definition of authentic assessment." With Dora,
we weren't students, we were a community of scholars. During one particularly drawn out and detailed student response, Dora fell prey to a mid-morning drop in energy and dozed off. Two or three of us noticed this immediately but said nothing. The speaker was oblivious to Dora's state and continued to share her experiences. Dora's breathing became quite rhythmic, heavier, and she was beginning to get louder. Still the student carried on. Just as the story was coming to an end, Dora's eyes popped open. The student, who was facing in another direction looked toward Dora. She concluded her story and waited for Dora's feedback. Dora's response was masterful. "I'd love to hear the group's thoughts about this." We offered a generous dose of feedback while Dora perked herself up and stretched a few limbs. She then proceeded to give a condensed summary of the student's story, highlighting the most significant moments. She followed it up with some thoughtful empathic feedback. The student glowed. Those of us who thought she had been sleeping, were no longer so sure.

*Geraldine* — *How do you always know the perfect thing to say to a student?*

*Dora* — *Oh well my dear, I never know what to say, I feel it!*

*Geraldine* — *Okay then, how do you feel it?*

*Dora* — *How do you taste Strawberry Supreme?*

*Geraldine* — *With my tongue?*

*Dora* — *(laughs)* *Exactly! You just do. The trick is to do it with all your heart and passion; focusing on it and only it at that very moment. To shovel in two scoops of*
Strawberry Supreme mindlessly misses the whole point. You've got to savour it; to taste every bit, each and every second. As long as you savour being with another person, a student, and really listen with care, you can't help but say, what you my dear have called, "the perfect thing".

Geraldine – So listening to others is dessert?

Dora – Makes for a great way to enjoy life, doesn't it?

Geraldine – Come to think of it, listening to you is pretty sweet... Butter Pecan

Dora – (laughing) Oh no! Double Butter, Double Pecan!

Geraldine – With whipped cream...

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Geraldine – I'm sure I wasn't the first or last student to think you were special; to see you as a mother-figure. Are you aware of the nurturing effect you have on your students?

Dora – Oh I think so! Keep in mind that when I studied psychology Freud was all the rage. I believed that students who depended on me were trying to satisfy their unmet needs. At first, I thought this was bad but then I thought, "what's wrong with it? Don't I get something in return?" Freud's detachment was much too male for me. I want to see their eyes, touch their hands, smile with them. I think that in part, his theories ring true, even today, though so much of what he says is problematic. So there was transference... So I was the mother figure... I might as well be a good one! Counter-transference was there too.

Geraldine – What about independence?
Dora — I've always cared so much for my students and I want them to know that. I want to nurture them into independent learners.

Geraldine — So the independence is not forced.

Dora — Yes, that's right. Independence comes from security. My students depend on my encouragement and my care and support — especially new students. Eventually they find it in themselves to be able to read, write, work, and reflect on it all without someone hovering over them, watching every move. They are more willing to take risks and become critical, creative thinkers. They work from the inside out. That's the kind of independence I am happy to nurture in my students. Strangely enough, I think the key to it is becoming fully invested in the student. When I read their work, I pay close attention to it. I show the student that I care about the things they are thinking about, and the important work they are doing in their studies and their communities. I try to know what matters to my students. Sometimes that isn't easy to juggle. At times I feel like an outsider and that's when I know things aren't going well.

Geraldine — I don't believe many students think of you as an outsider. Most of us bring you "inside" because you add so much to our understanding.

Dora — Well, thank you. I try to understand the struggles that my students face. When students realize that the work they do matters to me, and that they matter — that they really matter — they respond. That care is contagious. Not only do they learn to care more about others, they see themselves and the work they do as important. My students go from depending heavily on my opinion to realizing that I am interested in theirs!

Geraldine — So this is how students move from trusting experts to trusting themselves.

Dora — Yes, by focusing on their experiences, on their lives, and of course, someone there to confirm that what they know in their hearts is of value. Once the principal has set down the rules, and leaves the room, the teacher is there — left to do the caring, the
nurturing, and all the hard work that goes with that. I can't tell you how many of them find that it's simply a matter of trusting what they know is right. Once they trust their intuitive sense – their internal locus of evaluation – they realize that they know what they are doing.

Geraldine - You mean trusting their lived experiences?

Dora – Yes. What they've learned in their lives, their families, their relationships, their cultures.

Geraldine – When you put it that way, it makes so much sense.

Dora – Did I ever tell you about the time Carl Rogers was here?

She had, a number of times but I loved hearing about it. Rogers spent some time at the college over 40 years ago and had a tremendous impact on Dora and her colleagues. Numerous speeches have been made at the college; many by equally innovative thinkers and practitioners but Dora always finds herself referring to Rogers. She found him caring, genuine, and smart and she took pleasure in telling us about his "gorgeous" blue eyes. "He could hug you with his eyes," she would say.

Dora – His speech freed us way back then. We were young professors worrying so much about the mechanics of schooling that we were forgetting about being with our students and for that matter, with each other. One of the first things we did in response to his speech was spend time together as a faculty. We realized that there was a lot about each other that we liked. We started supporting each other more and we tried to be less competitive. We didn't always succeed (laughs) but we tried. With students, we tried to spend more time listening and less time instructing. I remember one faculty member saying that his job was getting easier. He went from spending hours and hours preparing
lectures and assignments to listening to students and having lunch with them. I'll never forget the look on his face when he said, "and the darn thing is, the less I do, the more they seem to learn!"

Geraldine – So less is more.

Dora – Strange isn't it? Do you find this too?

Geraldine – I think so, yes. Sometimes it's what I don't say that makes things work. It's the space and the time – the moment of tranquility that allows the sparks to go off – the lightbulb.

Dora – But why are we afraid of the space, the silence?

Geraldine – We want to earn our keep, I guess. We have to act busy.

Dora – It's our own insecurities too, isn't it?

Geraldine – I know about that! When I started playing football I could not for the life of me get the hang of playing a zone defense. My job was to make sure the opposing players didn't catch the ball in a certain area of the field – my zone.

Dora – Yes, yes...

Geraldine – But I was so insecure, so scared, I used to run around aimlessly trying to look like a football player. I eventually realized that if I calmly sat in my zone looking with my eyes wide open I would react to the ball, and get there in time. I learned that it takes time for the ball to travel from the quarterback to the receiver. By sitting and watching I could leave my spot and get to the ball in time.
Dora – And I bet you did. Isn't this what we do with students? We observe, listen, and get to know them.

Geraldine – Yes! In football, this is called reading the quarterback's keys. In other words, get to know the quarterback.

Dora – And react accordingly.

Geraldine – I never thought of the parallels before.

Dora – Less is more.

Geraldine – Of course! If I react to the first player who runs through my zone, I leave 90% of it unprotected. If I don't take time to get to know my student, I'll react to something that might be less significant in her life and education.

Dora – So we read the quarterback's keys, the student's keys... and react. I like it. The starting point is the student. Oh! I'll have to come and watch you play.

Geraldine – That would be great.

We get up and take a walk around the building. Dora needs to stretch and move around as often as possible. She asks me all sorts of questions about football. I tell her about my team, my statistics, about the personalities on the team, and I even share my propensity for pass interference penalties. "Who could blame you?" she asks. "They come into your zone, looking to show you up." We reach the end of the hall and Dora takes my hand and says, "Come, I want to show you something." She tells me as we enter a classroom that a few weeks ago her class decided that they were being too dependent on experts and since then have been working on a "Real Experts Project." The walls are covered with
different sized and colored papers. The students have written poetry, drawn images of
their experiences, and have written songs to document their ideas.

Dora – You see my dear? This is dessert. I patiently sit and then react – just like you. Most of my students are women and almost all choose to be teachers because they are helpers, they're good listeners, they are caregivers. They come to my classes with such wisdom. Unfortunately they've been told all their lives that there are experts out there who know better. Sure, we can learn from them but what about ourselves? At the health centre, I can see that nurses know that touch and soothing voices do so much to heal a patient; often more than the medicine but no one there prescribes touch. Nurses do it on their own. In this class, we're trying to honour what we know and celebrate it. Look, look at this drawing. Good teachers know that a hug fulfills a hunger in some children. They know that caring is as important as math. Look at these walls. It's obvious that these practitioners have an untapped well of knowledge. They are real experts. They know from their lives and if they were only respected for their ideas, this world would be quite different.

Geraldine – You really care about your students, don't you?

Dora – What would be the point of playing linebacker if you didn't do it with all your heart?

Geraldine – Or teaching.

Dora – Yes.

Geraldine – It seems pretty straightforward to me. Why is this type of teaching and relating still seen as strange, or even radical?
Dora – I think people are used to... they feel comfortable depending on others – on experts – so in a sense, going inward is radical. Every time we help students judge for themselves, we're helping them to know, to be strong, to read the world from their own perspective and to work to change it as they see fit.

Geraldine – So social justice and change begins with an internal locus of evaluation.

Dora – Spoken like a true Rogerian.

Geraldine – So is this new, or radical?

Dora – It might not be new but it's radical – quite radical. For the life of me I can't understand why others don't agree with me that Rogers was radical.

Geraldine – So changing the world begins with changing ourselves.

Dora – Absolutely. And that begins with being with; togetherness; relationship.

Geraldine – It's not what you say or do as a teacher; it's the contact between the two people that transforms.

Dora – Yes. And it gets very fuzzy and difficult to explain, doesn't it?

Geraldine – Is it about feeling what the other feels?

Dora – Maybe feeling "with" the other.

Geraldine – And the unity is transformative.
Dora – What is that lovely saying from Margaret Mead? "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

It was getting late and we remembered that we had reservations at a local eatery, well stocked in traditional favorites and vegetarian delights. Dora asked me whether I would break my strict eating regimen so that we could indulge in some Ben and Jerry’s. "Well Dora, this is football season and I am in training..."

"And," Dora interrupted, "we'll share the biggest bowl."

"Sounds good to me," I said, and I handed her the box of Smarties I'd purchased for her. During dinner I showed her pictures of my children. She pointed to my daughter's cheek.

Dora – Just as I suspected, dimples. Just like her mother. Do your girls still like to hear you read Dr. Seuss?

Geraldine – They sure do. Now it's Dr. Seuss and J.K. Rowling.

Dora – Wonderful! Do you remember the game we used to play in...?

Geraldine – ... in the seminars? I love the Seuss game! I play it with my kids a lot. I'll start... when there’s just a hint of lime

Dora – it isn't really worth your time,

Geraldine – you might say that curry and peaches don’t go,

Dora – but until you taste it you just never know! I think I'm getting better at this. I'll go first now: The nuts make the chips happy,

Geraldine – The chips make the nuts snappy
Dora – Oh, let me think for a moment... Oh – *Its purpose is not to give you a quick fix*

Geraldine – *It’s all about what makes a good mix*

Dora – *After all of the mixing, combining, and mingling*

Geraldine – *You create something that leaves the heart tingling.*

Dora – *(laughing)* *We could collaborate on a few books and give Rowling a run for her money!*

Hearing our contagious laughter, the waiter comes to the table and asks if he can cheer us up with some dessert. "Double butter..." I start to say, "...double pecan, please!" Dora finishes.
Whenever I do anything, I see the eyes of my parents and grandparents in me. When I worked with villagers, I always had the impression that I was doing the work together with them and also with the loving hands of those friends who saved a handful of rice or a few đồng to support the work. My hands were their hands. My love was the wonderful love of the network of ancestors, parents, relatives, and friends born in me. The work I have done is the work of everyone. It is not just my work ... you can see that act of love as the collective work of thousands of hands and hearts. All of us, indeed, inter-are (Sister Chân Không, 1993).
Chapter Eight

**Emancipatory Relationships: A Reflective Summary**

**Introduction**

Melville's Ishmael begins his cetology by promising,

nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty. I shall not pretend to a minute anatomical description of the various species, or — in this place at least — to much of any description (Melville, 1988, p. 135).

Neither his experience nor his hours of study have fully prepared him. Complete knowledge of the whale has escaped and will continue to escape him. The task is enormous. Ishmael stands before the whale to ponder ways to make it more manageable. It is too much for human comprehension when taken as a whole. The study is compartmentalized according to biology, behaviour, habitat, mythology, art, poetry, superstition, etc., yet in the end, the picture of leviathans remains hazy. The whale is lost in a focused study of its component parts. It escapes the myopic view of the zealous investigator, who is trapped by the very methodology that purports to enlighten. Ishmael "swam through libraries and sailed through oceans," but still cannot fully comprehend and explain the whale. He has "had to do with whales with these visible hands," (p. 135) but when it comes to outlining an accurate description of the whale, the best he can do is promise to try.

This present study is my attempt — admittedly incomplete — at understanding emancipatory relationships. I have struggled to understand the differing components of
emancipatory relationships while trying to maintain a sense of the phenomenon as a whole. I have employed a methodology that encourages a holistic view of the subject. This has engendered moments of clarity and I have felt, on fleeting occasions, as if I have known emancipatory relationships. Inevitably, the complexity of the phenomenon has proven too great and these moments have dissipated and given rise to more questions and uncertainty. "Dissect him how I may then," says Ishmael, "I but go skin deep; I know him not and never will" (Melville, p. 388).

For the past 15 years, I "swam in libraries," and touched emancipatory relationships with my hands. As this study concludes, I realize that my exploration of emancipatory relationships is in its infancy. What I have learned has been deeply personal and has great significance for me. I do not pretend to know whether it will be of significance to others. I offer this study as a window into my process with hope that others might, in some way, be sparked or inspired by it and embark on their own. This has been a personal journey of discovery and I feel that just as I have learned from theorists, my co-researchers, and my advisor, others might extract learnings from my work and apply it to their own lives. What they might choose to extract is an entirely personal process for them. Rogers (1961) states that "when another person has been willing to tell me something of his [sic] inner directions, this has been of value to me, if only in sharpening my realization that my directions are different" (p. 16). I offer the themes and learnings, depictions, and portraits in Part Two, and the following general reflective statements of what I have learned in hope that others might in some way find my "inner directions" of value.
When I am involved in a caring relationship, I am more inclined to experience growth and help others grow. This growth seems fueled by the recognition that many possibilities for action, behavior, and attitude exist. Trust in each other provides the comfort and security needed to bring these possibilities to awareness. I am aware that this growth is multi-layered, effecting my spiritual, emotional, intellectual, political, creative, and social development. In emancipatory relationships my growth seems to go beyond the realm of the intellect, which is otherwise the focus of my concern. In caring relationships I am aware that I grow in many ways and have the time, opportunity, and safe environment to explore my development. Sometimes I am aware of the connection between the relationship and my growth in the moment, and other times I become aware of it only after further reflection. I am aware of my accepting disposition and my willingness to suspend judgement. I sense that this invites others to openly explore their lives and proceed to explore new possibilities. I have come to believe that there is great value in the caring relationship and I consciously seek to nurture such relationships in my contact with other people, whether it is a casual acquaintance or a formal association. Emancipatory relationships have been the central component of my development as student, teacher, and athlete. In my experiences as a student or classroom observer, I find myself curious about the way a teacher facilitates the learning process. I am conscious of the importance of relationships in the learning environment, particularly the development of teacher-student relationships. I am aware that as a result of my relationship with my undergraduate advisor and the learnings developed out of this study, I am much more cognizant of the characteristics that make a relationship work; that is, emancipatory.
Relationships help me to learn about myself as a person and citizen. Through my contact with others, I learn about myself in relation to the world. I am aware that my self is situated within the context of my social and natural environments. While I personally have a tendency to prefer "alone time" and make use of many intrapersonal ways of thinking, I recognize that it is through my genuine contact with others that I am most human. In moments of reflection, I find that my conversations with others, my experiences "with", and my participation "in" are what allow me to develop clarity around issues that are of interest and importance to me. In my contact with students, colleagues, teammates, my family, and others, I am able to more fully understand, articulate, and act on my philosophical positions, my skills and talents, and my social obligations. I am motivated to engage the world fully. My actions are conscious and purposeful and there is a feeling that my actions are meaningful and that they can make a difference. In my experiences with children and some adults, I am often reminded of Alice Miller's idea of the enlightened witness. She describes the enlightened witness as an individual who makes a significant difference in an abused child's life by making it clear that the abuse is wrong and that there is another way of being. I have come to believe that emancipatory relationships expose past injustices, heal, and act as visions of what might and indeed should be.

I have found that the emancipatory potential of relationships is dependent on collaborative, democratic contact between two equal parties. I have come to realize that emancipatory relationships must be based on a willingness to cooperate with and learn
from others. This might seem unachievable in some situations, such as relationships between teacher and student, parent and child, and coach and athlete. In my experiences however, I believe that the notion of equality lies in the belief that both parties make valuable and necessary contributions that allow the relationship to blossom. Each contributes what they can, according to their skills, talents, and level of expertise and receives from the relationship according to their developmental needs. In this sense, I see the relationship as being equal when participants recognize and act on the relationship's interdependent nature. I believe that it is incumbent on the individual in the position that traditionally holds power (teacher, coach, and parent), to continually reflect on the potential misuse of power, and to contemplate and use democratic, collaborative problem-solving practices.

*Experiencing emancipatory relationships feels good.* I have, for many years now, been unable to describe the physical "rush" I experience during moments of genuine contact with others. I expect that there is a comprehensive biological explanation that details the release of adrenaline or some other such hormone in moments of contact, yet it is unlikely that such an explanation can address the sense of oneness felt. There is a feeling of intimate and intense connection and in that moment there is a sense of personal and collaborative power. I find that these incidents provide me with a sense of deep satisfaction and happiness. I tend to seek out emancipatory relationships for the camaraderie, support, care, and energy that fuel my work and my growth.
Emancipatory relationships inspire me to make the world a better place. I have found that the collaborative nature of emancipatory relationships keeps me on my "political toes". In such relationships, there is an abundance of dialogue and authentic concern for each other's rights and needs. Recognizing our own rights and needs helps us to become conscious of the needs of the earth and all of its inhabitants. Questions, challenges, and a genuine openness to the ideas of others permeate such relationships and lead to the desire to "do good". I experience a deep concern for those with whom I am in a relationship and become aware of the social forces that make life difficult for them. I recognize that my freedom and well being is dependent on theirs. Knowing what needs to be done to make the world "a better place" is usually not overtly evident. I do believe however, that emancipatory relationships provide a forum in which people can honestly and genuinely explore what constitutes peaceful and democratic movement.

I can never fully understand emancipatory relationships, myself, or others but it is important for me to continue to pursue understanding. Over the past few years, I feel as though my understanding of emancipatory relationships and its ancillary concepts have grown at a monstrous rate. I believe that I have opened up a door to a lifetime of research and new questions. This is, on one hand frightening but on the other, exciting and heartening. My understanding of emancipatory relationships is currently based on my readings, my experiences in such relationships, my collaboration with co-researchers, and my personal reflections. With this study complete I will continue to study and reflect on my understanding of others, my own development, and the phenomenon of emancipatory
relationships. I have come to think of education as a life-long pursuit, which is very much outside of institutional borders. This is something that I am aware of as a teacher as well as a student.

*Situating my studies within the context of my life allows me to reach the deepest level of understanding possible.* In writing this study, and basing it on a question of deep personal meaning, I was fueled with an incomparable concern, interest, and passion. I discovered that the question entered my being and was reflected in almost every aspect of my life. I considered the transformative potential of relationships as I helped my daughter brush her teeth, when I paid for groceries, and even when I argued with referees about the miscall against my team. There was nothing artificial about this study; each part, chapter, paragraph, sentence, and word reflects the way I have integrated the concept of emancipatory relationships into my thinking, my actions, and my way of being. I pursued the research with openness and delight. It was with great pleasure that I collaborated with my co-researchers to search for meaning.

*Engaging others through stories and dialogue helps me to understand myself and others and to develop my own theory.* I found that when I was able to share stories with co-researchers, my understanding of emancipatory relationships flourished. I was energized by the descriptions of such relationships and by the rich examples my co-researchers shared. Their stories of family, teachers, athletics, mentors, leaders, and friends complemented my own and sharpened my understanding of the concept. Perhaps most exciting was the opportunity to reminisce with co-researchers about shared experiences.
I found that comparing perspectives – mine and theirs – about a particular situation, allowed us to penetrate traditional roles and to view the situation in new ways. We were able to collaboratively apply our unique analysis to and interpretation of the phenomenon and begin to develop new knowledge claims.

Through its unapologetic commitment to lived experiences and its ability to liberate and honor personal voice, the heuristic process is potentially both personally and politically transformative. I believe that there is an intimate connection between the personal and the political. It is because of this firm belief that I found the heuristic process so valuable. As the researcher, I began with a question that held personal meaning – a question that I had to and would have explored regardless of whether I had embarked on this formal study. The heuristic process exposes the philosophical and political stance of the researcher and the dynamics of the research question. Using heuristic inquiry, I was free to explore my assumptions, biases, and beliefs and knew I had a responsibility to expound upon them. The process also allowed me to collaborate with co-researchers in a way that led me to respect fully and deeply their ideas and experiences. Together we explored the assumptions that formed the base of their ideas and uncovered the social roots of what they had come to think of as truths. The very way in which our interviews were carried out and interpreted allowed me to develop a more contextualized understanding of emancipatory relationships. This contact led to a deeper understanding of emancipatory relationships for the co-researchers as well. My experiences have taught me that there is a ripple effect that occurs and there is a more conscious approach to relationships that are equal, democratic, and caring.
Emancipatory relationships are a central component of the mentoring process. I use the term mentoring here in reference to my work in teacher education and my experiences in athletics and coaching. I have found that the degree to which I am able to develop emancipatory relationships with my students is directly related to the social critique they develop and the social action in which they take part. The depth and quality of the relationship allows us as students and teachers to go beyond traditional teacher education topics like curriculum design, classroom management, and assessment and instead explore questions of identity. This allows for the exploration of gender, race, sexual orientation, and class issues. As an advisor or facilitator of the process, engaging in emancipatory relationships allows me to remain aware of the political nature of my role. Within the safety and security of the relationship I challenge students to explore unexamined assumptions and to challenge mine. This allows for a democratization of the process where students are seen as producers of culture employing a transdisciplinary approach (Drake 1993) to create their own theory through action and reflection. Assessment is authentic and based on a communal process.

The teaching and coaching environments are both guided by an ethics of care, whereby success is not achieved at the expense of camaraderie, health, or morality. Instead winning on the field or academic success is seen as a by-product of teamwork and cooperation. Through emancipatory relationships, students and athletes learn to respect the safety needs of themselves and others. Such an approach to coaching allows athletes to listen to their bodies and become aware of their abilities and their limitations.
Likewise in a classroom, there is an understanding that participants require an emotionally safe environment with time for nurturing activities and peaceful resolution of conflicts. This redefinition of success confronts the capitalist notion of success that is connected to wealth, aggressiveness, and power over others. This is most directly seen in the democratic and egalitarian structure of the classroom and team.

The heuristic research that I carried out helped to clarify and highlight what I felt I knew: that the nature of the relationship matters. The theoretical base upon which I base my thoughts is wide and while this particular combination of thinking might seem peculiar to some, these thoughts and ideas come together for me as a whole and inform the way I teach, coach, and live. Rita, who may never read the work of bell hooks, exemplifies hook's words in her work as a teaching assistant.

Progressive, holistic education, "engaged pedagogy" is more demanding than conventional critical or feminist pedagogy. For, unlike these two teaching practices, it emphasizes well being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students. Thich Nhat Hanh emphasized that 'the practice of a healer, therapist, teacher or any helping professional should be directed toward his or herself first, because if the helper is unhappy he or she cannot help many people' (hooks, 1994, p. 15).

I feel compelled to offer Rita and other students just as much as a professor, and in my estimation, I can best achieve this by engaging in emancipatory relationships.
At the end of her book, Sister Chân Không reminds us that "together on the path of love we can try to make a small difference in someone's life" (1993, p. 252). I trust that in my relationship with my advisor, I made a difference in her life as she most certainly did in mine. I also trust that this study has made a difference in the lives of my co-researchers and readers. To make a small difference in someone's life has been my goal. What else is there to do?
References


Kilpatrick, W.H. (1918, September). The project method. Teacher's College Record. 319-335.


Research Project Introduction

Geraldine Lyn-Piluso
(home phone number) XXXXXXXXXX
(home email address) XXXXXXX
OISE/UT Curriculum Department

Date:

Dear,

I am currently in the process of completing my Ed.D., at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. I have chosen to carry out a qualitative research project using the heuristic methodology developed by Dr. Clark Moustakas (1990) Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications. Sage Publications. My doctoral committee supervisor is Dr. John P. Miller.

My goal is to illuminate or answer the question: "how do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?" By emancipatory relationships I mean relationships which result in increased self-understanding and group solidarity, spiritual and intellectual growth, and critical social/political awareness. In short this means powerful relationships that cause profound change.

This methodology requires that I interview people who have experience with the subject matter. As the primary researcher I will develop depictions and portraits of people's ("co-researchers") experiences with emancipatory relationships based on these interviews. If you feel that you have experience with emancipatory relationships and are interested in exploring the possibility of taking part in this study as a co-researcher, I ask that you contact me by email (XXXXXXX) or letter (self addressed stamped envelope is enclosed).

Participation will require a maximum of 6 hours of your time, which will include the interview, a possible follow-up shorter interview and reviewing the depictions and portrait in order to verify that your identity has been concealed to your satisfaction. As a co-researcher you would be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you are interested you will be sent more information which describes the study, the process, your role if you choose to participate, instructions, and an informed consent form.

Thank you,

Geraldine Lyn-Piluso
Appendix A

Instructions to Research Participants

Date:

Dear,

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on the experience of emancipatory relationships. I value the unique contribution that you can make to my study and am excited about the possibility of your participation in it. The purpose of this letter is to formally invite you to participate in this study and to secure your signature on the informed consent form, which you will find, attached.

The research model I am using is a qualitative one through which I am seeking comprehensive depictions or descriptions of your experience. In this way I hope to illuminate or answer my question: How do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships? The terms of my question, as I am using them, are defined on the attached narrative.

Through your participation as a co-researcher, I hope to understand the essence of the phenomenon as it reveals itself in your experience. You will be asked to recall specific episodes or events in your life in which you experienced emancipatory relationships. I am seeking vivid, accurate, and comprehensive portrayals of what these experiences were like for you; your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, as well as situations, events, places, and people connected with your experience. You may also wish to share personal logs, journals, or other ways in which you have recorded your experience – for example, in letters, poems, or artwork with me.

I value your participation and thank you for the commitment of time, energy, and effort. If you have any further questions before signing the release form or if there is a problem with the date and time of our meeting, I can be reached at XXXXXXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Sincerely,

Geraldine Lyn-Piluso
Informed Consent Form

I agree to participate in a research study of emancipatory relationships as described in the attached narrative. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and am participating voluntarily. I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing an Ed. D. degree, including a dissertation, any other future publications (i.e., journals, books, etc.) and/or conference presentations.

I understand that

- I will participate in an initial audio taped interview of 1 ½ -- 2 ½ hours, and will be available at a mutually agreed upon time and place for an additional 1 to 1 ½ -hour interview, if necessary.
- names (i.e., my name, other individuals identified, names of institutions, organizations, local communities, etc.) and any other information (i.e., specific identifying events, situations, dates, etc.) that potentially identifies me will be deleted and replaced by codes during the transcription process.
- information included in the raw data not relevant to the study will not be used.
- audio tapes of the interview will be maintained in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed one year after the study is complete.
- transcriptions of interviews and photocopies of other raw data I may voluntarily submit will be maintained in a locked cabinet and/or a secure hard drive file and destroyed one year after the study is complete.
- I am free to decline to answer questions during the interview process.
- I will have the opportunity to review my own individual/composite depictions and exemplary portrait and verify that my identity has been concealed to my personal satisfaction. This review process will require approximately 1 hour.
- In total my involvement in this project will require a maximum of 6 hours of my time.
- I will not be asked or expected to take part in any analysis or interpretation of the data or to write or in any way prepare the manuscript.
- I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation, sanction, or prejudice to pre-existing entitlements or future rights.

______________________________   ________________________________
Research Participant            Geraldine Lyn-Piluso, Primary Researcher

______________________________
Provincial Location

______________________________
Date
Study Description: Emancipatory Relationships

This study of emancipatory relationships will employ an interdisciplinary theoretical framework and a qualitative, heuristic methodology. This research methodology was pioneered and outlined by Dr. Clark Moustakas in 1990. *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology, and Applications*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

I will draw from the fields of education (humanistic, holistic, progressive education and critical and engaged pedagogy), psychology (person-centred, inter/intrapersonal studies, sport psychology), women's studies (feminist epistemology) and sports and recreation studies (social justice issues, women-centred coaching, women and non-traditional sport). This study will be relevant to theorists and practitioners in the above fields interested in detailed descriptions of the experience of emancipatory relationships. While relationships have been the subject of numerous studies, the emancipatory potential of relationships has not been explored in depth. A heuristic methodology allows for a deep personal look at the essence of emancipatory relationships through the development of individual and composite depictions and exemplary portraits of co-researchers' experiences.

**Co-Researcher's Involvement:**
1. Once you have expressed an interest in participating and have signed the informed consent form, you will be contacted to set up an interview.
2. A 1½ - 2½ hour informal conversational interview (dialogue) will take place (with the primary researcher, Geraldine Lyn-Piluso) at an agreed upon time, date, and location.
3. This interview will be audio taped and, as soon after as possible, transcribed (audiotapes will be destroyed one year after the study is complete). During the transcription process, names (i.e., your name, other individuals identified, names of institutions, organizations, local communities, etc.) and any other information (i.e., specific identifying events, situations, dates, etc.) that potentially identifies you will be deleted and replaced by codes during the transcription process. Computer disks with transcribed interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet. Hard drive files will be kept in a secure file. The raw data will be used to create a composite depiction and possibly an exemplary depiction. This raw data will be destroyed one year after the study is complete.
4. You may be contacted for a follow-up interview of 1 - 1½ hours.
5. You will be invited to share photocopies of other relevant documents of your choice and selection. For example, excerpts from diaries, logs, journals or artwork.
6. Copies of your individual and composite depictions and exemplary portrait will be made available to you as they are completed. This will allow you to verify that your identity is fully concealed to your personal satisfaction.
7. You will not be asked or expected to take part in any analysis or interpretation of the data or to write or in any way prepare the manuscript.
8. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time.
**Study Question:** How do people perceive and describe the experience of emancipatory relationships?

**Definition of Terms:** For the purpose of this study the following definitions will be used.

*People* refers to those with whom I dialogue on the experience of emancipatory relationships. I have chosen to use the term people because it implies a more complete sense of our uniqueness and the depth of our untapped potential. The term people implies a personal dimension which the more traditional research terms such as "individuals", "subjects", or "participants" ignore. These traditional terms fail to capture the full spectrum of what it is that makes us human. Phenomenology is a "philosophy or theory of the unique; it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable" (van Manen, 1997, p.7). van Manen rejects the use of detached terms such as "individuals" or "subjects" when referring to people involved in a phenomenologically based research project. People are unique and irreplaceable. The term individual is implied to highlight similarities but people or persons are "incomparable, unclassifiable, uncountable, irreplaceable" (Auden in van Manen, 1997, p.6).

*Co-researchers* is used to refer to the (8-15) people who will play a direct role in this study. That is, co-researchers will take part in dialogue and reflection. More specifically they will be asked how they perceived and describe emancipatory relationships.

*Perceive and describe* refers to the understanding and interpretation of the qualities and essence of emancipatory relationships. "Essence is that what makes a thing what it is (and without which it would not be what it is); that what makes a thing what it is rather than its being or becoming something else" (van Manen, 1997, p. 177). Co-researchers will be asked to explain the experience of emancipatory relationships through writing, dialogue, and creative expression. The data collected will contribute to the creation of individual depictions, composite depictions, and exemplary portraits (see methodology) which illuminate the experiences of an emancipatory relationship.

*Emancipatory relationships* are defined as social, intellectual and spiritual contact between people and or groups of people which results in increased self-understanding and group solidarity, spiritual and intellectual growth and critical sociopolitical awareness. These descriptors are defined as follows:

*Self-understanding and group solidarity* - a deepened reflexive awareness and illumination of the nature and meaning of one's being and unselfish commitment and connection to others. *Spiritual and intellectual growth* - the awakening of awe and wonder and an increased understanding of ideas and practice, the connection of ideas and practice, and ultimately the unity of knowing, doing, and being. *Critical Socio-political awareness* - the increased understanding of historical forces on social life, prevailing power structures, and cultural norms through a rigorous dialectical process.
Appendix B

The intentional search for shared experiences

Colin
Even in the change room before and after the games, we will joke around. A lot of them last year were into wrestling and WWF. At the time I really wasn’t into it, but I heard them talking about it. So every once in a while I would turn on the TV and watch it myself so I could talk to them about what’s going on. We would start doing some of the lyrics and stuff that the wrestlers do in the change room. The kids would go, "Oh my God!" They didn’t realize that I knew as much as I did. We had fun with it and they got a connection to that.

After the last game of the season, we all went to McDonald’s. We lost and the season was over but we still said to them, "You want to go? We’ll go." There were about 16 players and each brought at least one parent. So there were about 30 to 40 of us who actually went and we all had a great time.

Anthony
When I was doing my undergrad work my advisor, used sports analogies to relay to me work-wise what I needed to do. He did that because that’s what I could relate to – sports and similar situations. He always related my schoolwork to something around sports, so it made it a lot easier for me to understand and I noticed that with him and some of the other professors there… is that you see what each person is about and you direct them in the way that they want to go but you direct them by the way they talk and their background and so on to make it easier for us.

Knowing each other beyond situational roles

Colin
I try to make a point of sort of getting to know a little bit about the players I have. The way I see it, if you don’t have a positive relationship as player and coach or teacher and student, neither one of you are going to really learn anything.

Natia
When I was a teenager, I loved when adults talked to me almost like with a partner. I liked when they share their memories from their childhood or when they were teenagers.

I had this wonderful professor in high school. She was my Latin teacher. Professors in our high school didn’t use our first names. They used our last names. It was very official. That professor knew our names and used our first names and when she was using our last names she transformed them in a funny way so it was so nice to our ears. She was hard in terms of her expectations. She wanted us to do our homework. She wanted us to learn and to study. During each class we had to write down what we had
learned before and we had to be prepared. There was always a huge space between each student. We were supposed to sit straight. If you looked back or you looked at the student sitting next to you, you are out and you had 2 (the worst mark that you could get at that time). That woman was predictable. She came in and she wanted us to greet her in Latin. Her last name of Salva. In Latin, good morning or I greet you is Salvee. So it was Salva, Salvee. She was very funny. She made jokes about herself. She was always wearing long boots and long skirts and she was saying that her legs looked like cigarettes. She didn’t pretend. She was making jokes about herself. She wasn’t afraid to do that. Then we were supposed to sit with spaces between us. We had to write and work a lot but it was predictable. She was very fair. I was one of the best students, there were very few and she called her best students buttermilk. It is something which is nutritious and good. She would use nice names. I remember once the time came for a test and we sat with spaces between us. I don’t know if it was glare on my glasses but she thought I was looking on another student’s paper (cheating). She said, "Put your pen down." She was mad. I put the pen down and my face was red. I was so ashamed. I couldn’t talk and I couldn’t help myself and the tears started to flow out of me. The next class she was giving back our papers and I got 5 (best mark). I didn’t look at the other student’s paper during that test. I was always prepared. I don’t know why she thought I looked... Sometimes you have to give people credit. I remember when I was teaching Polish in Poland in high school. I gave my students an assignment and one student gave me her assignment and it was plagiarism. We were not so particular in high school about citations and stuff like that. I gave this assignment back to her and I didn’t mark it. I didn’t give her the worst mark I could, I asked her to write it again. I thought, she is so young. She is just learning how to write. She just made this mistake. I should give her a chance. Maybe she would understand. At that point I thought about my Latin teacher. Maybe my Latin teacher gave me a chance. Maybe she was still convinced that I was looking at that student’s paper.

Faith
Sometimes there was the rare teacher who went beyond that and asked how I was doing and took the time to get to know me instead of measuring what I knew on the subject matter. Most of the time though, it was about the subjects they were teaching.

I define respect as accepting someone. Accepting someone as they are without judging them; which I know some people do a lot. Most people judge on first impressions. But sometimes you just have to take that extra step to go deeper beyond the surface. There have been some people at university where when I first saw them, I wouldn’t have dared talked to them but when I found them in a different setting, I started talking to them. I found that most of them had the same interests that I had and that they like the stuff that I do.

I liked going to Spenser’s class because every time he came in the room, he would have this loud voice and say "hey everybody!" He would have a smile on his face and he is very enthusiastic about what he is saying. No matter what or how you thought, it wasn’t wrong. It was just a different interpretation of what he is saying, which is why I like philosophy. It was just the way he carried himself too. It was the beginning of semester
and I was sitting at the desk reading and everyone else would be doing their assignment and Spenser sat beside me and said, how are you doing? I don’t know what it was that made him sit down beside me or why he picked me out of everyone else. After the class was over, he came up to me and talked to me by myself. He made the effort sit down and talk to me. He looked like one of those teachers that would turn more towards the students who participated more than ones who didn’t. In most cases, the teachers ignore the ones who tend to blend into the background, which is what I did. I would sit in the back and I wouldn’t raise my hand. It just felt good that he sat down next to me in that brief moment. I still don’t know why. I don’t know what it was that made him come to me like that.

Rachel
When I went to the conference last I thought I need to start getting educated about the project approach and Reggio Emelia. So I went to the opening… I come out of the lecture and I am ready to leave and I find out one of the workshop facilitators (and some of her colleagues) nervous because the keynote speaker had entered her lecture and listened for the whole two hours. So I am looking at this keynote speaker who is now also out of the lecture sitting there on a chair waiting to be brought back to the hotel. I think, why are they nervous? Then I thought, you (the keynote speaker) are sitting all by yourself. I said, "Excuse me. I am Rachel and I would like to introduce myself. I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed and it’s a good start for me. This is the first time I heard someone speak on the topic". That’s what people are afraid to do. They are all discussing why the teacher was so nervous, it was her first lecture, she was so nervous because this woman who is on such a high pedestal, who is so knowledgeable about the project approach has actually come into the class. Meanwhile this poor woman was sitting in a trench coat looking like she didn’t have a friend in the world, sitting on a chair and waiting for who knows what. I went over and introduced myself. They all looked at me like, how can you do this? Why not? We both come from the same place. We won’t touch that one because everyone has different opinions of how we evolve. However, why can’t you go to people and just treat them like people? To me she was a woman, who obviously is very knowledgeable and she’s got degree upon degree upon degree and she is a doctor. She is bright, she is brilliant and she is terrific in her field. But she is still a human being who felt comfortable chatting, had a smile on her face, and thanked me for taking the time to come over. So what is more important? Putting the person on the pedestal and feeling you can’t approach them or making them feel like they are human? This is what teachers need to do with children.

Rosalind
So there has to be something else that I am bringing along with the information that they can read for themselves. There’s got to be something else. And again, I am thinking it’s me. It’s the integrity of the profession. It’s the caring and sensitivity – the understanding. The flexibility and the uniqueness of each person in the room and what they are also bringing to the table and what each of us is going to learn from the other person. There is just so much to learn. There is just not much incidental learning that happens. I very often I ask the students about the teachers that they had in schools and one particular thing that they remember that they have learned from that teacher. Very,
very seldom does a student say I learned to count. It’s always, "She is always so nice. She is always so caring. I remembered one day I didn’t have bus fare and she gave me a bus ticket." So it’s always those personal and human things.

I am quite an emotional person. So if there is stuff happening with students, I cry along with them, so they know you are human. They do have this perception that you are a 'super-person' or you don’t do anything wrong or you don’t make mistakes. I really would hate for students to believe this about me because I am just another person and I hope they will see me that way. You need to open yourself for that and sometimes you open yourself and you get hurt, but that’s the risk that I am prepared to take. Because if you are saying to them you need to open yourself with the children that you are working with, then I should be prepared to be open.

I won’t say them, "Frankly I don’t want to be here with you guys tonight." I will say to them, "I am doing this program and I am so tired and I can guess that you are tired too." I do not have to say any more than that and they start telling me how tired they are. We talk about our tiredness for about 5 to 10 minutes and I would say, "You know what? We are all very tired but guess what? There are things that I’m being paid to do and we have to get it done tonight." It is amazing once you start doing that, you get people’s attention for whatever length of time it can last because you are validating whatever it is that they are feeling. You are saying, "Yes, this is life and along with that feeling this is what is happening." This is how you can treat this situation even though you are feeling this way and be respectful of it.

I would get very exhausted if you have to pretend to be one person today and pretend the next day. I can hardly manage to keep me together never mind the series of me... We were talking about same-sex families and one student actually asked me how I felt about the issue. I am sure she felt comfortable enough to ask what were my opinions on same-sex families. I said to her "It doesn’t matter". She says, "Yes, it does matter so please tell us." I said, "As an educator I will have to give you both sides and help you to understand that same-sex families should be treated with respect like other families. But personally, my mind is of such that I can hardly keep up with the man/woman relationship that I know. Ever since I was a child that is what I grew up with. Human beings are so complex and I can’t even begin to fathom how that works and that seems complicated. So with all the complications, I don’t know even to look at same-sex and giving you the information as an educator to be open and honest and be respectful to all families whether they are same-sex or otherwise. But if you are asking me," I said. "things are so complicated as it is." They respond, "Well, thanks for your honesty." I am being very honest about it, but I can’t be otherwise. It’s too draining. It is taxing on your system to be many people and I keep saying, it’s the same me here, the same me I try to take into my class and it’s the same me I try to take to my church. There are some students that go to my church and there was one student who was in my class that goes to my church. So she sees the other side of me at church that she thinks she would see in class and her friends are asking, "Is she just the same way?" And she would say yes because I would talk to her just like the next person. They are saying, "Oh she is just the same in church as she is in class." It’s too hard to be too many people.
Anthony
I can use my background to get across to them. I’d say, the only way you are going to get better is to practice and you can use that and say, the only way you are going to do better in school is to study and you relay the two together... I am up front with them and I say, "I was in the same boat as you are right now. I used to be that way. It took me a long time to get over it and realize it." I can push them in that direction and they can see it first hand.

Warren
I met so many people in Philadelphia who had backgrounds similar to my own. The fact is they were coming into higher education in a different way that I got to higher education. I went to a traditional college and here we were capturing these people in their 30s and 40s and they are coming into higher education with a great deal of experience from the community, from organizations that were community based and things like that. Literally, these were my peers as well as my students. They have seen me work in the community with community groups and so they have long been modeling behaviour of mine prior to becoming students... I wasn’t interested in the Guru effect. I wanted people to really find out what their parameters were and to develop their skills within those particular parameters and to personalize them. We were able to do that. You can almost tell my students when they were starting with me and those who were ready to graduate or go to the next level. They were more personalized than the ones who were starting with me. The ones who were starting with me were modeling more or less my behaviour as they’d seen it coming into the institution.

Open and active display of acceptance and trust

Daniella
No matter what they had been through and no matter their age (that’s a stereotype) but my grandfather would always hug my grandmother and hold and kiss her. In almost every picture I have of them, they are hugging or they are kissing... That’s what I believe I really got from them too – just being open with affection.

My grandfather didn’t say much but those few words meant a lot. It’s hard to put it into words – he would just be there. His presence was constant and he was just so supportive in everything no matter what we chose to do it was okay. He would say his word if he disagreed, but he was just supportive no matter what. I guess he communicated to me I have his love no matter what.

My grandparents are there no matter what and they will pick us up when we fall – my brother and I. We have and they have been there... They are great. They don’t hold grudges and they certainly don’t stay in a stuck place... we all come together, we get over the issue, and we move on.

My mother often writes notes, little notes that will go in my bag. She will slip it in before I leave for work. She will send notes or cards just to pick me up or these little philosophical things she will come up with. It’s like a constant guidance.
Vanessa
I guess for me the definition of acceptance would be... I can’t say unconditional because I don’t believe that I unconditionally do a lot of things. I unconditionally love my children, my husband, and my family. I have a great deal of respect for them. I think I try to accept Soren for who is as a person and know that he is pretty different from me even though we share a lot of similarities. I try to accept him on the days when I think we are really at odds. Does that make sense?

Natia
When I was three or four years old, adults started to ask me: "Who would you like to be when you grow up?" (This kind of a question seemed to be their favorite one). And I always said, without any hesitation: "A teacher. I would like to be a teacher." Later, thanks to my grandma, I slightly changed my answer from "I would like to be a teacher" to "I will be a teacher". Grandma believed in a power of human mind. She always said: "If you want something to happen very much, from the bottom of your heart, and you think about it, imagine it, work on it, put your heart into it, it will happen." [Journal excerpt]

Faith
In one course I'm taking, is a late class and everyone comes in so tired but... the people are nice and friendly. Everyone has basically the same interest. They like talking about everything. There is no judgement. They just all have a passion for the same thing and I feel comfortable in that class. They don't show any preferential treatment. They aren't judging me because I like to read and they like to read themselves. In other classes they will think you are a brainer or something.

The first thing I noticed when I met Carmen is... She has this presence. She comes into this room and she expects silence and we weren't exactly the right class for that. I felt apprehensive about her at first. I didn’t know her background. It wasn’t until the communications class that I had with her when we got to discuss our feelings. We started talking and she encouraged me a lot to be who I am and to accept myself the way I am. She just took the time to make me feel better about who I am. She would smile at me or she would say encouraging things that made me feel comfortable with myself. It was just the way that she spoke. She was so convinced of what she was saying... It was just the way she carried herself. She said, "No matter what, don’t let anyone think that they are better than you."

I think that one of the most important qualities in any kind of relationship is trust. Without it, I don't think that we have any basis for any deep relationship. You have to have some level of it, otherwise, in my opinion you don't have much of one. I now think it's the same way between students and teachers. If a student doesn't feel that he or she can't put their faith or trust in their teacher, someone they might look up to as a mentor or a role model, then they are going to be very discouraged and very cautious when opening up to others or even communicating on a deeper level with others. [post-interview email]

Michelle
Throughout the whole course it was like it was... (I am trying to think of the word). The faculty were honoured to be with us. They showed that they really were lucky that they were working with us, that they thought so much of us. At first I think they were very frustrated with us because everybody was so panicky about marks, about work assignments and all sorts of stuff. But after awhile, they really, really showed, they always did, but they showed how much they cared and through that I think we overcame so much. If I had seen at the beginning, if I had a picture, a window to look through and see all the assignments and all the work we have, I would have never thought that I could have done it. But through everybody’s guidance and their patience and their trust and their caring, we really all worked through it and came through with flying colouurs. I didn’t think I would even stay in it. I really didn’t. But they all modeled that. I don’t think there was one person that didn’t. There was a daycare that Carol and I went to close to our home, that was a very poor daycare and all we had to do was say to the two instructors, the way the teachers were treating the kids was not right. They were there the next day and they were seeing it too. It was like they trusted what we said. It wasn’t like, "they are not experienced." "They don’t know." But they came, and we documented, and we worked through getting things changed in the daycare and it was really a rewarding experience to see that we could make change there too. So that was another experience that we went through. It was hard. The whole thing was very hard. People will say to you, "What do you get at the end?" and "Where are you going from here?" and "Will it change your life and your job and everything else?" I get really mad when they ask me. I say, "I don’t get anything huge at the end of this. I will probably still stick with my job, but if I had to do it over again, I would do it in a second. It was such a great learning experience." They just don’t get it. They just look and you and think, "Wow. She did it for nothing."

Rachel
We have one child at the centre who has great difficulties with emotional issues and becomes physically violent. The other thing is, of course, she very often does this at sleeptime. I would say, we are coming out of here. I have to get her out and it is very difficult to get a child who is just kicking out of here. I get her into the hall and then I usually bring her to my office and I clear the chairs and I put her in the middle. There is usually another teacher with me because she could hit her head on the cement floor or she can hurt her head on the chairs, so we watch her. I said, "now just sit. She will get over it. Just let her be." I let her go for a few minutes and I said, "It’s time. I need to wash your face. I am very worried." She is screaming and I just go into the bathroom and I get a towel and I use warm water, not cold water, although grandmother said they use cold water at home. I don’t. I am not interested in shock effect. I am interested in, let’s get the sweat off her face. Her face is now totally red. I already have a bucket on the floor because I am waiting for the vomit to come up. So I want to wash her face. I want to get some of the sweat off but I don’t want to put her into shock with cold water. That’s not my place to use cold water. I never even discussed it with them. I just told them I use a warm towel. While I am washing her face, I am rubbing her head and after I am finished and she is still angry, I give her a big hug and I say, "You know, I love you. I really love you. Now let me know when you are finished."
There are parents that will come in during one of these and they will come and say, "Poor child!" I will hold up my hands and say, "Poor me!" There is no problem here. I am smiling. There is no problem. It will be over. We are so close. Don't be afraid to try something. I am not trying anything that is illegal. I am being me.

I think probably that's when Alvin really, really started to learn about who I was. He knew me for me a few years, since I was 16. But I think he really started to get a good idea of who I was and how important this was for me. He of course started to encourage me about how clever I was and how I could work in an office and how I had all kinds of qualities that others didn't have. He did all of the appropriate things. But it was over a period of years, after we got married... Years of always making me feel like I was bright. He always referred to examples. He would say, book-smart, street-stupid. He would give me examples. He would refer to someone in our family who is brilliant, a professor, who is just brilliant but is incapable of saying, "Hi. How are you?" Absolutely, can't say, "Hi. How are you?" I don't mean just how are you? I mean how are you and wait for the answer: I am fine or I am not. Because half of the people ask it and they are out of the room before you answer. Alvin always taught me no matter what, I was intelligent. I was able to do good things. He wasn't talking about the wife and mother. He was talking about things that I was able to do myself and how I did it with my family together and how my input counted. I never knew I had learning disabilities. Alvin never talked to me about something like that... So how did I get the guts? I had the encouragement all the time at home. Alvin always, always encouraged me. He didn't sit down and give me a lecture about how I was bright. He just made me feel I was bright. Why? He never referred to me as stupid. He never said, "you don't know anything." These are all things, of course, that I hear from other people: "You are stupid. You don't know anything. Who do you think you are?" How could you say something like that? There were always gestures, there were always words and there were always ways that he would make me know that I was clever. When I decided to go to school, I of course, spoke to him about it. He is the only one that would help me. He was my biggest supporter. He was the one that helped give me the guts.

So I went to school and I was taking a course, it was either my psychology course or my philosophy course (it was one of them), there wasn't a paper I did that my husband didn't read. I did them, no questions. But he always looked at them and he always corrected and made sure the grammar was proper. I gave him one of my psychology or one of my philosophy papers and we were sitting in the kitchen and he read it. He just looked at me and I said, "It's good isn't it". He said, "yeah. It's good." I said, "so why is it four pages longer than everybody else's will be?" He says, "because that's how you are and that's what you do to get there." I said, "You know what Alvin, I am going to tell you something." I said, "I have a couple of learning disabilities". He says, "really?" I said, "yes, I have two of them". He says, "and what do you think they are?" I said, "one of them is I can't get to the point quickly." I said, "the story goes around. It takes a detour. My stories are interesting but they take a detour." He said, "Yes. What's the other one?" I said, "The other one is you can't give me a list of instructions more than three or four at a time otherwise I need my paper and pencil." He said, "Right". He gave me the name at the time what that was - the headings. I said, "Am I right? Do I have them?" and he said, "Yes." I said, "Then how long have we known?" He said, "For years." I said,
"How many years - right back to way at the beginning when you met me when you went through what happened at college?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Why didn’t you tell me? Is this like the shoemaker who has no shoes?" My husband is a Special Ed. Teacher. He said, "Why, to label you? You got along just fine, after you got past the shock, you got along just fine. What would it have done you to know?" I said, "Well maybe I wouldn’t have thought I was dumb." I said, "Had I realized I had learning disabilities 20 years ago, then I would have realized I wasn’t dumb. I had to spend all these years and do this and get these marks to realize that I am not dumb." So of course that was a whole different conversation. I understood why he didn’t label me and I understood why we didn’t label my son who has learning disabilities. But I think I started to get the guts, the stamina and the strength that I have to express myself has an enormous amount to do with my husband. Not that I couldn’t manage without him, I don’t want to, but not that I couldn’t. But that he helped me all along making me realize that I was an important and I was a clever person and I could do it.

We included our children in everything. It was always a relationship where we could talk about anything... One time in particular when Sarah was going to a party that she didn’t know if she wanted to go to. Alvin said, "Listen, I don’t care what time it is..." She was supposed to get a lift with somebody to come back and he said, "I don’t care what time it is. I don’t care. But if ever you feel uncomfortable and you don’t want to come home with who you are supposed to come home with, you call me." There was one time she did. He said, "I don’t care. You always have to feel comfortable." You feel that you have a connection with your kids and that you can speak to them about anything and we did speak to our kids about anything. There was no reason to hide anything. The other thing we always made very clear to the kids, "If you have a question we would rather you asked us. Even if you think we might not like hearing it. If you are going to smoke pot or smoke or drink," obviously this was when they were older, "we may not be happy but we want to know about it." One of the things that used to really annoy my children was that their friends would come over and have these wonderful visits with us... They had a little bit of difficulty understanding why their friends liked us. Like, what is it about you? I go over there. I am not interested. I talk to them for a few minutes. I am not interested. They come to visit us and they are sitting at the table. It took them a while to understand this.

Anthony
The faculty at Greenview was tremendous. It didn’t matter who you were coming in there and I think that was extremely important. I wasn’t one of those who would just sit down and do school work – open a book and do X-amount of pages. But I have always been one that needed guidance, you need to do this and you need to do that. I think that was a lot of my problems early on with school – that someone always told me what to do and after a while I got sick of it. So when I came to Greenview, the faculty just welcomed you no matter who you were or where you were from and I thought that was extremely important. They don’t know a lot about you but by the time you leave they know just about everything about you. I thought that was really important, where at
traditional schools I don’t think you have that relationship at all with any of your professors.

**Warren**

Right now that is one of the things I still get into with my students are these personal crises that they go through. I go with it because I find that it affects their academic work. I go with it to the point and I try to direct them if I felt there is a need for them to get into personal therapy. I have a student who is in South Carolina and her daughter was suicidal. I stay in contact with her as she is moving through… She just went back to a situation where her husband was violating her daughter. She knew that and when she sent me a letter she said, I know you are going to disagree with but I am going back with my husband. Four or five months passed and we talked on the telephone and she said she finally made the decision she is going to make a clean break and she and her daughter had moved out and they felt safe. I think that when you talk about the risk factor, what I found was that people would move through this process of self-development and personal growth and they would inevitably stumble on this personal decision they have make about going to the next level in their lives. It was never anything I was directly raising with them about examining their relationship with their spouse or their family relationships. I would only be the sounding board by which they would sound off and hear themselves make some decisions on what they were going to do… They had trusted the relationship enough to really risk going into that level of reflecting some sort of personal introspection about their situation and hearing themselves talk about it.

I want my students to understand that they are in a real college. This is a real college program even though it may not look like it. The building doesn’t look like it, the people that are here calling themselves faculty, don’t look like it and they don’t talk it. The fact is you are in a real college program. We are in fact truthful when we tell you that we want you to study what you want to study and we are going to match what it is that you have already learned and we are going to say, we are not going to duplicate any of that. We are going to use that. So who you are coming into the program is very important to us. We have to find out who you are and how you are going to use that stuff to do something that you really want to do. We want to be very clear on what it is that you want to do. One of the reasons I set my own model up for working with the students is that they have to convince, not to me, but the advising group (their peers) that what it is that they do is really what they want to do. Then they are fertile. They are ready now to look at themselves. I do that with them mostly by looking at what it is that they really want to do. I might give them an assignment and ask, "What areas in your own personal makeup are preventing you from doing this? What is it you have to strengthen in order to do it? I know you can do it because your passions say you want to do it." Then they say, "I don’t know enough about this..." and they literally start mapping out those areas in which they need to strengthen in order to do what it is that they want to do.

*Physicality as an expression of care*

**Daniella**
I like to be able to connect with the children in that way so if they are close to me or even if they address me or even if they are engaged in something, I will make sure somehow there is a physical contact to let them know I am there physically. I guess that’s what I want from them to be able to know that whether they stand or fall, I’ll be there and that when they do fall, we are going to pull something good out of it even if it’s been difficult for me. Recently we had this child with so many emotional issues and he completely erupted and the whole scenario went quite out of control but at the end of it, we managed to pull out a little bit of a laugh or a little bit of not such a tense moment and we went to lunch. So I guess I want them to know that no matter how bad things get, I am going to be there and we are going to get through it. I think that’s really something I bring to the environment.

I use a type of therapy called Sensory Integration with a special needs child in the classroom. The other kids see that I am stroking him with brushes and rubbing his feet or back. So everybody takes off their sock so they can get their feet stroked. They are rubbing each other’s feet. They are asking, "is this too hard?" They are so conscious of these things that I don’t necessarily think would be there if we weren’t so high-touched or so involved on that physical level, which is kind of a dying thing in today’s world.

Rosalind
Because when I’m going to my classes I really think about what I want to do. I think about what I want students to understand and what I want them to leave with. I have often said, they can always read the information from the book. It’s the other things that as a teacher you are not able to document and that gives you that special high when you go in.

I don’t know if you were at the meeting that day when they were talking about computer this and computer that and computer the other and everybody has something to put on computer. I didn’t want to seem as though I am the one that’s putting the wet blanket over things, but I said I was that we need to be mindful of our jobs and our professions and no matter how computerized this world gets, we must remember that what we are imparting to our students, is how to hold the baby – no matter how sophisticated you think we are going to get... We are teaching them how to hold a baby. How to care, how to diaper, how to feed, how to be sensitive, how to understand, how to impart, painting and playing in mud. That’s what we are teaching our students to do. So as long as we remember once we start talking about computers, that the bottom line is the students are going to be holding a baby, then please go ahead with the computer. I find very little room in Early Childhood Education for computers. What’s going to happen? It’s not enough to stick your kids in front of television and buy them a computer? You put them in the child care centres or into nursery school and it’s going to be computers taking care of them? Where is the personal touch? Where are the smiles and the understanding? Where are those things? Are they just going to disappear with time because computers are around?

*Artistic Forms of Expressing Care*
Daniella
My best friend has this amazing way of finding these really artistic interesting ways to reflect myself back at me and she does that a lot. She is this constant... like one of those pick-me-up tapes you throw in, except live. It is like we reinforce each other’s positive side. She has also been a great creative influence and allows me to think in all these different ways. Now I bring that to my teaching.

Rosalind
I keep reminding myself and many others that teaching is an art. An artist sometimes knows what he wants to paint the same way a poet or writer knows what they want to write about, whether or not they are able to find words to articulate from the writer’s or poet’s point of view, what they want to do. In teaching, a lot of what is created is not being written and not being said.

Shared experiences of beauty as a vehicle

Natia
Today, I had a wonderful experience. I went to the hospital and I still had a few minutes left before my appointment so, I went outside to smoke. Somebody was sitting on the bench. I couldn’t see that person because there was a wall. I was sitting and smoking and suddenly I saw the man sitting in a wheelchair and he started a conversation with me. It wasn’t a conversation, it was just a few sentences. He said, "It's a beautiful day". I said, "Indeed. Today is going to be very, very warm. It is going to be 14 degrees." And he just rose his hand like that (motioning to the sky) and that moment touched me very, very deeply. I felt tears in my eyes and I realized that maybe I have to focus on my health.

Play as a vehicle

Natia
My grandma was amazing. I loved to travel. I loved going by bus and when we went by bus, it was a holiday. It was something unusual, it was a special event. Sometimes in the morning I would ask my grandma, grandma please, let’s go by bus. There was a very small city 24 km from my hometown and I wanted to go over there because it was something like... the end of the world. My grandma would say, I don’t know. Let me think about. I was whining and eventually, she always said, okay we will go but wait patiently. I will cook and clean first and don’t tell your mom anything. She cooked first. It was amazing. At that time I didn’t know any adults who would do that stuff. Go and play and we would go and we would come back in 3 or 4 hours in and I never said anything to my mom. She was a strange adult. She played with me. No one played with me. Not my mother or my father. I wouldn’t be here, I am convinced, if it wasn’t for my grandma – her patience and her love.

Faith
She says every time she walks into the class she is very happy. She smiles with the whole class and she is ready to teach. She encourages us to think beyond what we are supposed to. She is amazing. It is in her tone of voice and the way she reads. When she is reading a story she adds voices to make them more interesting and she has these fun activities for us to do. She is just a nice teacher. Some teachers have that personality that can spark a classroom.

**Self-Nurturing**

**Natia**

I enjoyed going to that level on the floor with the children and I allow myself to be a child. I can benefit from that as well. It doesn’t mean I don’t pay attention. When we have to bark, we bark. When somebody needs help, I excuse myself and go and help... I believe if I don’t benefit and if I don’t nourish myself, I won’t be able to nourish someone. I need to be a child, if I feel like being a child. I need to relax in this way. It gives me pleasure. I can cuddle and I could child-talk.

**Intuitive dimension as catalyst**

**Faith**

I should say that you and Carmen are probably the only teachers here that I remember and I feel like going to the classes. There are certain teachers that you feel comfortable with and you learn a lot from the way they teach. Some people have this certain aura about them that you can trust automatically. That’s how I felt being with you guys.

**Michelle**

This young boy who I am working with now, really never spoke. He started speaking at the end of last year and it was with me. I share work responsibilities with someone else. We work with him together and the other girl is very academic with him and I am very touchy-feely; very close to him. We really go on a lot of intuition too, but he is really trusting and now he is talking and saying words. I believe it’s because of the trust and it’s because he knows we care first. I really believe that comes first before anything else.

**Rosalind**

Your entire being says a lot long before you open your mouth and long after you shut it. So it’s all those unwritten and unspoken things that you take with you that you can’t document. It comes through in everything – the written part of it, it comes through the sensitive, the caring, the touching and the being there part of it; the understanding and the flexibility.

**Contactfulness**

**Anthony**
My wife and I communicate extremely well and if we don't like something we will talk about it. I think we've had maybe one argument in the six years that we've been together and I think that's because we communicate a lot. We are very proud of that... At one time, I wasn't a communicator. I have always been very competitive, which when I was that way it allowed me to be outspoken. I wasn't a good communicator because I was the one to say it's this way and it has to be this way. It took me a long time to realize that it's not always this way and you have to listen... I was just a doer but I have learned from all these different people, everywhere whether it was in college, whether it is in the community... that is the best thing to do sometimes: just sit back and watch. You can learn so much from doing that.

I think when you communicate and you don't agree with somebody, I think you have to approach them in a positive way. For example, if I don't agree with something that you are telling me or the way you see it, I am going to say, "I understand what you are feeling and this is the way I see it. You don't have to agree with it and if you still don't we can discuss it and maybe we can come up with another solution". Whereas I see too many people saying, it's this way and it's only this way and they're not willing to listen. I think people do a lot of talking and not enough listening... It took a long time for me to learn that. I think it's so important nowadays to let the kids know when they are doing things right. They don't hear it enough, especially in their home life a lot of them. They are getting yelled at. They don't hear the positive side any more. For example, I coach with this one woman in soccer and unfortunately, she doesn't know how to communicate very well with the kids so she is always yelling at them. Once in a great while she will encourage them. Where three-quarters of the time I am encouraging them, even if they are doing something wrong I find something good about it and show them or tell them they can do something else to build on what they are doing wrong.

Gloria
Amanda has been a true friend, a true non-judgmental person in my life who I admire for her abilities to hear. Not just to listen but to hear and she taught me that. I still have to remind myself because it is new to me to be able to listen and hear. Not to say I am listening but to hear. That was a gift to me from her. I really admire her... I know her life has not been real easy and she is a very hard worker and she is a caring understanding person. You know how sometimes you see people and you meet people and there is a surface to them and you come away from them thinking well that was just a put-on, that was just a face? Not with Amanda. Amanda was through and through what you saw... The person that you sat down with at the edge of bed or the person you sat down with in the library, the person you sat on a stone wall or the person you rode in a car with for hours was the same. It was right through to the bone.

I am able to give to the children the things that I said that I wanted to be to them... I think I am able to give them a sense of self. I want to give them a sense of joy and who they are. I work hard at that by recognizing their accomplishments. I try to recognize things that they are even poor at. "I know that what you are doing now is your best." I try to carry with me a smile. For all of my children that's been my goal. My goal in working with them has been to greet them with a smile. I try to always have that on my face and I don't want it to be an artificial one. It has to be a joy of celebrating who they are. I try to
celebrate each child as who they are. I walk into the school and I... try to put a glow about myself. I try to think of myself as having a glow and in some way I try to touch those children everyday with something other than just a math problem. I don’t want it to be the math problem, or the English subject. I want it to be in some other way. I want it to be in a personal way. That’s really important to me to do that. I sometimes wonder that if I did have a full-time teaching job and had to be devoted bureaucracy, if I would be able to do that. So maybe I am where I need to be.

The students smile back. They come by and they speak to me in the hallways all the time. I don’t look for that, it just happens. I can look across the room at somebody when another teacher is teaching and I don’t have to get up and go to that child and know that they are okay where they are. They can look at me and they give me wink or we do the thumbs up and I know that it’s all right. They know that I am there and they know that if they need me all they have to do is give me the wink, point of a finger or come back after school. I know that I am doing what I need to do for them when they just smile at me. They don’t smile at all the teachers... and when they come to me and share an experience then I know that I mean something to them. I don’t want to be their mothers, but I do want to be their friend. I also think that I am respected as that. My relationship with them is not like buddy-buddy, but it is a respectful sharing, caring relationship.

Natia
My grandmother was my first teacher to inspire me. She not only taught me how to eat with a fork and knife (I did it on a daily basis at the age of three) or when to say the words: sorry, excuse me, please, but also taught me that a decent person had to remember his/her old traditions and to live according to a set of certain norms, values, and rules. At the same time, she was telling me that it was not important where one came from, but it was important where one is going. She recited old poems to me, read books and children’s magazines, taught me the prayers and hymns, and told me many interesting stories about my grandpa, great grandmother, cousins, uncles, and aunts. She was my only real friend who always found time to listen to me and talk with me, respecting my opinions and not being judgmental about my points of view and my behavior. At that time, she was the only adult in my life who was not afraid of saying, "I am sorry," and admitting that she was wrong. This fact made her even more human and beautiful. Believing in the power of the human mind, my Grandma was always telling me that knowledge made people free. Believing in the power of the human heart, she was always saying that it was important to forgive, to love, and to hope. [journal excerpt]

Rosalind
That's what I am talking about having that personal touch with students because I was able to see that that learning had happened and that they had absorbed... I felt very good and I felt empty. Empty in a good way. I came in filled with all this and when I saw the look on their faces I realized it was gone. They got it. There was that good empty feeling. Do you ever feel tired and you did a good day's work? You are tired but you know exactly why you are tired?
What bothered me once was he said, "I can hardly understand what you say; your accent is so thick"... But that made me understand and realize when I started teaching that my own presence, the things I say, my own caring, sensitivity and understanding is what I need to impart to students because of my own experiences.

Michelle
You lived up to your name "teacher", you pushed and you pushed and you pushed us like hell! You not only taught your philosophy but your lived it weekly in our class. Every evening the more I sat back and observed the more I was in awe of your teachings. It was true of you, "That which we are we shall teach." You lived your philosophy, the readings we reflected on, you showed us how to draw from each other and no matter how much we frustrated you, you continued on with patience and understanding. You cared. You drew us together, like a family. We began working together, "Holding hands walking together, helping each other up the hill." It's like you turned a light on for me. Things seem so much brighter and clearer. What would it be like to step into your shoes and feel the internal satisfaction you must receive by empowering others as you do? What could be more fulfilling? [excerpt from reflective essay]
Dialogue, Transgressing and a Philosophical Disposition

Four of the learnings were clustered to form this theme. These learnings indicate that, within an emancipatory relationship, there is an attitude of curiosity and a willingness to search relentlessly for meaning. This requires playing with conventional boundaries and a commitment to some form of communal discourse. Because of the dialectical struggle implied by these learnings, I have used the notion of a philosophical disposition to describe this theme. By this I mean an ongoing process of questioning, and critical intellectual and personal analysis.

Conventions and Risk-taking

Rosalind
Because I don’t understand some of the boundaries here, it doesn’t scare me. There are boundaries, but again I keep saying because I wasn’t brought up in this country, the boundaries I don’t know. I don’t want to learn them. I am happy not knowing them and as a result I take a lot of risks, sometimes not knowing and it’s not until you are in then you are thinking, why is everybody looking at me like that? Then I think oh yeah, I should not be here or I should not have done this. So I think it’s that kind of on-the-edge that keeps me buzzing - that kind of risk taking. I sometimes like it because students don’t really know, and not just students, colleagues too. They don’t know what to do with you.

I have been saying to my students, "You must have a strength. If your strength is singing, sing every damn thing. It’s amazing when you sing, people sometimes don’t notice that you are not talking. If storytelling is what you are good at, tell stories all the time. If painting and drawing and being creative is what you are good at, paint and draw all the time. Whatever you are doing make sure that it incorporates painting and drawing in it and move from that safety net into unknown territories and come back to it. You’ve gone out there, you’ve done something different, bring it back to painting. This is where you strongest point is. So you need to take from there and bring here." It’s amazing once you start doing that how you develop your own self and doing a number of different things apart from your strong area... and once you start doing that, people start saying, "I can tell stories..." "I could write poems..." "I could sing..." "I could paint..." and once you start saying to them, "This is what I can do, what can you do?", it’s amazing that they find interesting talents that they have. I would say, "Let’s start from your talents then." All of a sudden there is something they can do and something that they forgot that nobody, or they themselves didn’t think it was important. One student, she was able to make crafts things out of net and she did it in one of my classes. It was just so wonderful. We talked about it forever and they know when I am excited about something. My eyes pop and I speak very quickly and you can’t understand me. I am so enthused about
whatever is happening. I said, "Take it to your placement." She takes it to her placement and before you know it, she was making all the stuff for all these placements and they were expecting her to be charging them for making these things. I am thinking, never mind the charge. Use it with the children. Impart this to them. This is what you are strongest at and it’s amazing your best comes out with this because you are good at it. Your eyes sparkle when you talk about it, people want to hear from you and your confidence soars so high. This your strength, this is what you do best.

Once they realize that they know something... "No I am not stupid, I know." "Yes she says it’s right and I know," it’s amazing how we draw from it. It’s amazing how they start connecting and transferring the information not just reading a story but the story can be read in the art sense and the story can be read while the children are resting. The story can be read here, it can be there and it can be read all over.

Rachel
The other thing was, I remember friends being appalled... They came for dinner one night. On Saturdays we invited friends to dinner at our home because that’s all we could afford to do. We certainly couldn’t afford to go out so we invited over. Sarah at the time was in the butler (it wasn’t a highchair) and we had this huge table cloth underneath her. She had a little fork and she was eating and half of it was going in her mouth and half of it was going everywhere else. They could not believe that we weren’t feeding her and getting every morsel in her mouth. Because she dropped everything, they couldn’t believe that after her meal we would pick up the butler and took the plastic table cloth and we dumped it in one corner outside... we would have a pot to hold all of this stuff. They couldn’t believe that we went through this rigmarole as opposed to just taking a spoon... They said, why are you doing this? We said "because when she is 15 we want her how to eat." They said, "Oh, she will know how to eat." We said, "No. We don’t think so. This is just what we feel is right and this is what we are going to do." These friends later moved to Calgary. The mother came back to visit with her son who was 18. They came for dinner and we had chicken. My husband and my stomachs still turn from how this 18 year-old was eating chicken. We vowed we would never invite him for dinner again because we couldn’t physically watch what was going on at the table. This is what happens when you don’t let your 2-year-old use a spoon and a fork. Then a little bit later we gave her a knife. She cut her food and it flew. That’s how it was supposed to be. It just flew.

Vanessa
One of the things that I did at Greenview was I studied my own learning process by starting something new. I took up riding and I had wanted to go back to ceramics... I had studied ceramics for a couple of years. Anyway, the long and the short of it is I have a studio out in the garage and I have a deposit on a used kiln and I have two wheels... and it’s like, God Vanessa. The thing is getting me out to the garage is that now I know what I am doing and I am saying "No, you haven’t really given yourself a good enough shot at this. Okay, so you’ve discovered through 5½ years of riding that you are (a) a pleasure rider, this is a really big deal, and (b) you would rather spend your money and time doing other things like practising yoga, volunteering and doing ceramics." So ceramics fell
third again. It's one of those things where I am realizing it so to me that's at least getting me out there eight hours a week, whereas before I would throw for three weeks and not do anything else but throw pot. So now there is a little bit of fear there. It's like, oh God, I could be really successful at this. Anyway, I am doing it. It kind of is. It's weird though. It's making me grow in really good ways. It gets a little bit frustrating because I think, God you are so old... for playing this game. I guess I think that I should know exactly what I am doing now. I have had enough therapy... Maybe it is fear. I don't know what it is. It's just uncomfortableness. Not really being comfortable.

Daniella
I am atypical and I will do things in the classrooms that the teachers I supervise would never, never have the gall to do because they haven't reached the level of comfort where they feel they are worry-free. If they use the regular phrases, they feel they are safe and if a parent hears them, it's safe. But when I come along and I do something in a totally off-handed manner, they look at me and say, it works. Aren't you afraid if a parent is here. What? Because I am using my face with facial expressions. I will make facial expressions. I will throw myself down on the floor and I will sob. The kids understand. It is not a problem. It is a relationship. You can relate with the children. Those catch phrases don't always work.

Colin
I guess with me I have always been one who gets right in there -- if I am teaching or whatever I'm doing. Whether it's early childhood, summer school programs, coaching hockey, it's not, "okay well this has be done so do this, this, and then this." I am not just an instructor/teacher/coach I am also a participant. So I will do something and show them, okay this is how it's generally supposed to be done but now you do the way you feel. I have always done that. My experiences with other teachers has been: set it up and let the children do what they want. Just sit back and observe. For me that's hard to do. I can observe much better while participating. For me a lot of times, I am not really too sure about what teachers are expecting to get out of sitting back. I can observe better while participating so I just block out the teacher's advice.

Personalizing and Transforming Knowledge

Rosalind
In one of the courses that I teach... creativity is one of the topics and there are some quotes from several theorists that I put on the overhead, as it relates to creativity and then I ask them, "What does that mean to you? Read it and give me your take on it." It's amazing how concrete in their thought processes these students are. They will tell you exactly what is written but in terms of interpreting what the writer says and seeing themselves in what it is, they are not able to do it. I am thinking well, maybe they don't understand. But then when you ask them to define the word creativity, you hear things like, oh when you can paint and... Then I am thinking well, not even the word creativity means anything to them. For them creativity is something that I tell them to do. It's not just helping them to get through it. Yes, that's part of it, but the other part is helping
them to understand that they can think openly, not for this particular course, but because I am asking them to think like that. They can be master of their own fate and can develop that thinking capacity that work for them rather than being told how to think without limits – for themselves. It seems like this is what has been happening in the schools that they are told how to think.

My whole intention is to liberate them and their thoughts and their thinking and hopefully they can take this leadership, because even though they think it’s not being a leader, yes they are leading children and they are influencing the minds, behaviours and activities of children... I am just wondering: how do I get them to that stage? How do I take them from this stage to this stage of thinking in such a liberal open way that helps them to be creative, the very same word that they have no concept of the meaning?... It can happen. I honestly feel it in my heart that it can happen. The downside to that is when they get to 19 and 20 and they come to you, the formative years and a good part of their life where things are happening and they are identifying with people and experiencing new things, is not there anymore. It's gone and it is filled with all these structures. It becomes harder because you have to break down these barriers and replace them with new seeds. That process is a little harder.

I can’t exactly explain it to you but it’s the look on the student’s face. There is a look in their eyes that tells you that the light has gone off – that learning happened and they owned it. An example of that took place a couple weeks ago in a class where we did some role-playing based on a classroom situation... By the end of the class they sat there with their eyes wide open and you could see that if I had lectured on the subject, if I had spent all evening talking about this, they wouldn’t get it. But the fact that they actually played it out... I didn’t have to explain anything. I just said "This is what is going to happen in this scene," and they had to deal with everything that happened. So the academics and the curriculum that they planned, didn’t get done... because they had to deal with the things that were happening in the room. I asked, "How else could you have handled this?" They said they would have to think because they weren’t prepared for all of that. I am thinking, "Yeah." Believe me, after all of that, they sat there and I said, "I think you better go home now," and they said, "Yes..." Everybody seemed heavy and seemed that they had absorbed all they could.

I never see students as blank slates. They do have their own experiences. They do come with their own thoughts. They do come with some level of understanding about whatever it is that we are talking about. They are not just empty and because I honestly believe in the idea that they are not just empty. I don’t treat them as though they are empty.

Rachel
To me it’s all spaghetti and you are going to take each noodle and each noodle has a little web.

Vanessa
Appendix B

I learned the value of defining things. It's important because now I find myself often saying, can you define that because it's such an individual thing. It really really is and I learned all about my own politics which initially, I didn't think I had any and I remember some of your questions very specifically and that really helped me be more comfortable in my choices. I had the freedom to say "I think that's bogus. "Why are you asking me that?" That would have been okay too because I think of the way you offer yourself to your students is more open and non-judgemental, which I think is really important as an advisor. You are kind of just sitting on the fence and saying, "have you thought about that" or maybe not saying anything and saying "Yeah, okay, well, it sounds like you're comfortable with that", so not questioning. But it was important for me to answer the questions because it helped me define my own answers and my own politics and at that point that was my foundation so I was really happy to decide in my own head what was important for Vanessa.

Spontaneity and Fluidity of Form and Content

Rosalind
One teacher had described it as the teachable moments. You never know what's going to happen, who is going to get a revelation about what. While you are there, you need to go through that moment with a student. That cannot be duplicated, no matter how intelligent you are in documenting it. It cannot be duplicated... It can't be planned either and that is why it is so important, for me to have students in class because sometimes when these things happen they are very unexpected.

For me it doesn't matter. I find a lot of the students want to know, what is this course for? How does this relate to being an early childhood educator? Sometimes I feel I have to justify that kind of question. Other times I have decided not to. For me, it doesn't matter what the course is, because I have said to students over and over, "the books are there. There are tons of books all over the place. Please read them and use them to educate yourselves on any particular subject."

Colin
I had no idea what I was going to do at hockey practice until I got there. I said to myself, okay let's see what's going on today. One player had to leave early so I went to the change room when he got off the ice and the other coach took over and he did what he wanted to do. I said, that works for me. I really had no plans. I have a general idea how I want to progress over the season and I have already started to do that. The first couple weeks I want to do conditioning and then more plays. Later on in the season it is going to be more strategy and as I progress then I have a better idea of what I want to do in practice and also because you don't know how a player is going to be that day because they are human. Also, who is going to be there? What's going to happen because you get different players over the course of each year, you have to work with different ability levels. This year we have three players with difficulties stopping and turning. So with those people I have to focus on doing those things. With other players I have to do other things to keep them challenged at the same time. So it's sort of an ongoing spontaneity in
a lot of ways. Being very creative in a sense because you don’t know what is going to happen that day.

Daniella
I just wait for things to emerge – to grow out of whatever. I like the little things. If they are involved in some kind of activity and they completely change paths and they are intrigued by this little speck of something or this little seed that happens to fall off one of our counters near our pool or organic plant area, then we get into all that. I guess it’s a great thing to let that happen. Of course, as I’m describing this, it may sound like you just go wherever and there is no planning or flow. I don’t think it’s about that. I leave things open... It doesn't necessarily have to be exactly planned.

Engaged Discourse

Rosalind
You can't take notes for a classmate who is missing class. Classnotes don’t cut it because there are all the experiences that happen in class and for me interactive learning is of paramount importance, much more than my lecturing. People very often don’t understand half of what you are saying. And there you are standing there talking and talking and hoping that somebody is understanding you. What I find out is that people never understand what you say the way you had intended it to be. It’s not until there is a discussion happening that you then understand that, all this time you have been standing here talking and nobody understands.

Whether they are first semester students or whether they were there last year or the year before, my classes are interactive. This I say to them since day one, whatever it is I say if you don’t understand, I do expect people to say, "I don’t understand. If you do, I do expect to hear your opinion on why and how you understand what it is that I am saying. If you have an experience that complements the information in your mind and in thoughts, I need to hear about it because that’s how the other students are going to hear about." So then they can look at their own experience and say, "Oh yeah, that did apply to me. Oh yeah, I had that happen." And so the information then isn’t new once you start doing it. What it is doing now is validating for you that yeah, I knew that. I say, "Of course you knew it because you’ve experienced it and those theorists in your books have big words just to say the same thing...." Then I say to them "That’s amazing!" You are empowering students when you say, "Of course you know it, I was just using a different word and I am happy that you are able to connect with it with your experience, with your sister’s experience and with the experiences that you’ve had with children, with teachers or with the community."

I ask for an evaluation from students and one of the things I hear consistently, if I might dare say, is "you allow us to speak in class and not every teacher does this." I think people all have a story to tell and it is that story that they have to tell which connects them to the rest of the world. It connects them to what they already know and connects them to what they need to know. They are very concrete learners and they need to
identify... with something around them that is familiar. We think it is just the children that you teach from the known to the unknown. But a lot of the adult students they learn that way and they do need that connection of the known — connecting unknown to the known. They really need that kind of connection to get any understanding; to get any bearing; to interpret anything and to conceptualize whatever information that you are giving them. Unless they are able to do that they dismiss it.

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**Rachel**

Had I not been in that class and had I not had the... Why did I pick learning disabilities in your class? Because everything that came out of your mouth - you talked, you analyzed, you made us think and you caused us to have conversations about nothing. You never had a piece of paper with a plan? You just said a sentence... You handled your classes so well Geraldine, you made us think and then we took over for two hours. Then every once in a while, there would be a lull, if we weren’t sure where we needed to go, you would make another half a statement. Then all of a sudden we were going. So I think it was because of the relationship, the comfort zone and the free to be you and me (okay to use another song). It’s okay to that this and it’s okay to go there and it’s okay to express yourself and it’s okay to be honest in Geraldine’s class even though she may not like hearing it. But we are being honest. Those are all of things. These are all of the steps on the ladder, why you can begin to grow and to feel good about yourself.

**Daniella**

We have tree stumps around this river and the children would sit on a stump. Usually that’s where we will meet and chat. They sit down and they will say their stories and one day a child said, "I really would just like to talk about..." Maybe another teacher would have said, well I will listen to you but we really need to get on with. Well the children just went and did whatever activity or type of work they wanted to do and we just sat on the stumps and I said, "Tell me about this." We started talking and little by little we had quite a swarm of children sitting down just listening... She was going on and on. I guess that really stuck with me. I have thought about that in the last couple weeks because I have never seen it before in any other rooms I have worked in and I never sat with anyone before. I hadn’t reached the point that I did. I guess feeling now the way that I do about the curriculum or letting children be... It just stuck with me because it is so
much a part of the way I am at home and the way we work. I brought it to the class with me so now they know that they can do that. They sit and talk or whatever. They are very open that way.
Radical Consciousness

The following learnings were clustered to form this theme. They indicate that being part of an emancipatory relationship can and often does lead to what I refer to as a radicalization of consciousness. I use the term radical to imply a shift in consciousness that is aimed at identifying and understanding the root cause of the phenomenon. These learnings indicate that the co-researchers were inspired to understand why things are the way they are, and, if changes are needed, how they can be made so that they have a significant impact. The co-researchers indicated that this can be a difficult and often painful process, but, by being exposed to alternative models, they were able to go beyond previously fixed ideas. A number of co-researchers repeatedly gave examples of their own intellectual growth and change in sociopolitical awareness. Although they did not always directly relate this growth to the emancipatory relationships they had experienced, the cumulative evidence would suggest that the emancipatory relationships contributed to both the shift in awareness and their awareness of it.

Reflexivity and Socio-Political Awareness

Colin
The way I see it, if you don’t have a positive relationship with player/coach, teacher/student, neither one of you are going to really learn anything. More so the student or player, they aren’t really learning anything from you. He or she will just listen and do what the teacher or coach wants them to do until the class, game or season is over. It’s just a matter of doing what the authority wants for the time being. It’s not about you, the authority. It’s about helping them see that so much of what they’ve learned from so-called authorities is bogus. They have to learn to see through the crap. That’s not easy.

Daniella
The interdependence/independent thing - this is a big one because I have had staff say to me, “Don’t hug that child because they need to be independent.” To me that’s just garbage. I don’t see how hugging a child could stop them from being independent. I feel that’s what children can get from me – they can come to me for some kind of physical affection. So they will come to me. They do that, they have their moments of physical contact and then they are off... I don’t think it’s invading on their independence or limiting their ability to grow in that way. I don’t know why they cloud the issue with such wrong-thinking. So I think what I bring from my experience is the belief that we can have all of that and continue to grow in our own way. Now I know how to recognize and ignore the things that are plainly and simply wrong.

Natia
I think people in order to gain power or to become rich, create a religion which is suitable for them which would help them to gain power... For example, if I were a priest and I wanted to gain power and I would love to manipulate people and want them to do what I want them to, I would just create a philosophy which suits me. My religion didn't teach me this but I see it now.

Adults, I believe, forget how it was to be a child. Some, I am not saying everybody, but it just amazes me. When a child is crying, there must be a reason the child is crying and sometimes adults deny that. I heard an infant crying and the teacher was saying, "Oh don't cry, don't cry. You are okay, don't cry." That child was crying because she was missing her mom. What can be more disastrous? Most of the teachers didn't see this but because of what I went through I saw it clearly.

In Poland you have to memorize lots of stuff. I have professors or teachers they want it exactly. They gave us definitions and later they wanted us to write down or say the exact words. I remember that. I hate learning this way. It's just like, "Do this without thinking. You have to focus on this word." Learning is more than this. It's about learning the truth about the world. When I was in high school, oh my! It was the hardest four years in my life. We had eight classes. We started at 8 and finished at 4 and I remember I would go home, eat and had five hours of homework. I was sitting up all night sometimes. It was too much. Besides, the way the professors treated us was just outrageous... They were calling us names. They were rude. Some of them were very nice but most of them weren't. I remember I cut my hair because I had very long hair and I coloured it so I could change the colour of my hair. In Poland you don't do that. If you want to be a good girl you don't do that. I did that and oh my God! The professor who was in charge of us in terms of our behaviour, she was shouting at me. "What did you do? You had such beautiful hair. I am going to talk to your mother." It was like an invasion. It is my business. When you are 16 or 17 you want to experiment with yourself. I was pushing against the norm. Now I know that's good – not bad.

I do regret one thing: The cleaning lady came out of the room dragging this child. It was strange, the cleaning ladies were sometimes more important than teachers. She was dragging the boy... I remember this boy very well. He was very interesting. We had this aquarium and he killed one fish. I thought this was interesting, maybe he wanted to sink them. Maybe it happened by accident. She was dragging him and she took a huge knife from a drawer and she was screaming and shouting at him and she started to wave this huge knife. She was saying, "I will do the same to you with this knife!" The supervisor that I was sitting with, didn't react in any way. I was new. Nobody did anything. The boy was just very, very afraid. He was crying and I regret that I didn't stop her.

Vanessa
I think of deschooling as people coming out of the system. I think we are past that at this point... We are unschooling.
We decided to start an alternative school... it would be child-guided learning. It would not be structured and pre-determined. It wouldn't be the teacher "yes Ma'am ing," and "no Ma'am ing". It would go by each kids' interest. Then I found all these great books and all these other alternatives. I thought, "why are we doing this? Why don't we unschool the kids and just be here as resources instead of, 'let's work on handwriting?'" Oh sure, you can work on handwriting by writing your story. To me that's an alternative. That's coercion in a different way. I started to become more and more angry about how the adults were coercing the kids into doing things. It was a lot nicer than school systems, public or private. It was a lot friendlier and a lot more gentle but it was still coercion no matter what you called it.

Faith
Everyone says you meet these great new people, it is a different atmosphere and it's a bigger school. It is more sociable, the teachers are nicer and you get to do so much more than you do in a college. That's not the case. It is a fashion school basically. They don't go there to learn, they go to socialize... I see people spending more time in the washroom than they do in the classroom. It's like they don't care about the learning... They are always talking during classes... It was like they cared more about what they did over the weekend than the lecture and it is sometimes annoying. Even though I don't talk much in class, I am there to learn but it is annoying sometimes,

Michelle
You could walk in a class and really see everything negative, everything that is not following ECE. But there are a lot of positive things that happen in the classrooms too. I can see why the teachers are frustrated in a lot of ways but on the other hand, I can see how they can really hurt kids. As a teaching assistant, it's really hard to be in there and not have any control over things like that because you see what they are doing and you can't do anything about it. Before I took classes with Spenser, I just went around doing my job. Now I see so much more.

The teachers (at the school where I assist) are into the marks, they are into their kids achieving highly and they don't see lack of socialization as a problem. Many kids get what they need in that respect from the efforts of their parents, but there are many kids that don't and those are the ones that are struggling in the class. There is this little girl that came to our class (I am in a grade 2 class also) and she's got some needs and I think they are going to address some of her needs, but she came in from a different school and she says, "We don't get to play at this school. In my class, we always played, why can't we play anymore?" I felt so bad for her. She was so young and she wasn't ready for all this work but they are just shoving it on them because they have to meet their needs and they have to have this for their report cards, etc. So I felt really bad for her and most of the kids. They are stressed and they are unhappy. They are not kids anymore.

Rachel
Our grads from pre-school, half of them or a third of them are my centre's school age kids. I will go down the hall and those children are all calling their teachers by Ms. and I
am Rachel. Those are my children that we have in the afterschool program. Lack of self-respect, lack of self-esteem and self-concept. It's just awash, the minute they are out of childcare. It is one set of rules from the Ministry of Social Services who gives us our license, the schools have their license from someone else. They wonder, "Why do we have to consider the child's self-esteem, self-respect and self-concept?" This is the "put the gum on your nose and let's walk around the school" attitude.

I raised my voice to a child yesterday. I wanted to raise my voice. I wanted that child who decided they were going to take a walk and disappear to know I wasn't happy, but I didn't scream. More of what came out were the expressions on my face, which I knew made that child stop and think. I don't think he's ever going to disappear again. But there is a way to do it. I've developed a very comfortable sense of myself and that developed during my class and beyond, with you. I know that I can recognize when things are not just. Sometimes some things are wrong. I have the confidence and the ability now to recognize it. It boggles my mind that the three Grade 1's are on this side of the hall and there is one set of rules. The minute they come out of class at quarter to four into my lunch room, there are another set of rules. another perfect example is if they ask to go to the bathroom from their classroom, no one watches them. They are in the bathroom and 12 minutes they are coming back. They had enough time to walk to the nearest major street and back. We watch them go to bathroom... There is something very wrong with that. It's like being incarcerated for 20 years and the next day you are out. No parole, no halfway house and no time to breathe. There is something very wrong with that.

Rosalind
I decided to take a course in Canada because I really wanted to understand how the system works. I have never been outside of Jamaica. I was doing this Grade 13 English course. The teacher in the class knew nothing about me and needless to say I was the oldest student in the class. I was the most recent student outside of Canada in the class - he didn't know this. I had already finished university in Jamaica. I had already worked as a teacher in Jamaica and so when I asked the questions in a way that he didn't expect a student to be asking these questions in night school, he became quite offended and asked me to leave. Writing essays are something, as a student I was good at, and when I would give him the assignment he would give them back. I still have them, since 1982. He would write on them that this work is not yours. You didn't write these papers. I am thinking to myself, "This man knows nothing at all about me. How dare you say the work that I have given to you I didn't do it." He said it was evident that I was not the writer of these papers. I was quite offended. I left the class. I quit and never went back... In hindsight, I keep thinking I should have gone back and explained to him and I said, no. I don't want to because it doesn't matter that I am a mature student and thinking that a teacher's job is not to be there to look at what you've told me and how I can tell it back to you, but how well I am able to think within that capacity. That really bothered me because he was teaching a concept, whatever it was that he was teaching. His way of measuring whether or not I had learned that concept was to regurgitate to him what he told me. Never mind whether or not I was able to use that concept into other situations, transferring the information into other situations. For me, that is learning. Students can
always read a book and figure things out from the book. I think it's the integrity of teaching and learning that teachers bring to students. Not necessarily this particular concept.

**Anthony**
The college I went to was a small school... but the majority were from the surrounding areas so they knew your names and they knew quite a bit about you, I thought. Sometimes people going in were prejudged and I don't think that's a good idea... At Greenview the only thing they know about you is what you write on your application and what you talk about when you go there. I think the professors there try to bring the most out of you whether it's good or bad. It doesn't matter and I think that helped a lot. They really get to know you. I felt very close to my advisor. There were sides of me, when I first went to Greenview, that I thought were really important and when I listened to other people and started thinking after listening to them, I realized that some of the things I believed really weren't true.

**Egalitarian Process**

**Daniella**
I think the person that helped my theatrical approach to life evolve was my drama teacher. What was neat about our relationship was that it was also egalitarian. Because I was so involved with choreography and dance, I usually was the co-director or the choreographer of our performances, so I guess that's where I started to feel or experience the teaching that goes beyond that kind of sterile relationship with your teacher. It was just so much more equal. We shared academic thoughts about education or how to approach teaching theatre, just the act of creating something artistic. So I guess he was an inspiration that way because he allowed me to see the potential that there is for teaching in itself and to be more true and more real so that we can get to where we need to go: that place where you say, "Aha! Now I get it! what people think is right, is false... it's a façade."

**Natia**
There was one relationship, an awful relationship. He was like a monster and what amazed me is how monstrous he became in a flash. This person was so nice. Monsters want to gain your trust. When you are weak, as I was at that time, you start to become dependent. You think, "I cannot do this without him or her," because monsters just make you believe, they so good, they can help you anytime you need them. At the same time in a strange way, the monster is telling you that you are so weak. You cannot do anything. So I was in this kind of relationship, but sooner or later you will know, this is a monster. I took the strength to break up and not to see him again. At some point I promised myself I won't allow anyone to hurt me the way he did. I think it was one of the milestones. I hate when people try to control me. I would say I have problems with authority. I think so. I just hate to be controlled and the more you push me the more I become stubborn.
Alternative Perspective

Daniella
I guess my drama teacher was the first model for me of how I would like to teach because at the same time that all this was going on, I was in training with the absolute opposite. My dance trainer... taught dance in a very traditional way. So in our interactions together we certainly weren’t co-constructing anything creatively. We were on the opposite ends of the scale. It was interesting to have those two things opposing each other at the same time in my life. Hers is the negative example of this. I have been teaching children since I was 14. I taught dance since then, so she kind of molded that in her way for a period of time until I was about 17 or 18. Then with so many other experiences... my perspective of teaching broadened and then she and I had a falling out. It’s interesting that, because I was young she was such an influence in my life, that I began to see that I was teaching in those ways. I think that’s why my stance is so firm now about how I would like to teach because I did a 360, the fastest 360 you’ve ever seen. I really reassessed that and I guess having had that experience with my drama teacher and our rich interaction that I was able to see that it is doable and there certainly are other options. He was that kind of influence in my life in terms of teaching. I think I label her as trainer because I feel that’s what she felt or certainly that’s what came out of our work together — the trainer and that’s it. You do this and that’s it. I really didn’t feel connected in any other way and I guess I do define teacher as more than just fulfilling those basics, passing on the academics, whatever it be. Whatever the area of learning or the information that needs to be passed on. I think in order to be called a teacher in my point of view you have to go beyond that. It wasn’t conscious but now that I think of it. It has meaning because I didn’t feel that she gave any of that at all. Now I know how important it is to have alternative models; otherwise I might be a trainer today.

Why do people not teach this way? That’s the question of the century. I can’t answer that one. I have my ideas. I think it’s more difficult. I think it hurts because it involves your whole self. I have taught that way. I was very young, teaching the children that way, just do this and that’s it. It’s easy. You just walk in, do it but then there is none of that richness and depth. I don’t care what it is, whether it’s dance or whatever. It’s still creative. I don’t think you really can get into that, the core of that creativity without letting that depth be there. I think having gone in-depth in that way in my interactions with children or in any kind of endeavor creative or otherwise, I think that’s allowed me to become even more creative and critical in my thinking. That’s who I am.

At the point that you were teaching it was really the first time I had ever been taught in a way that... well the way that you and Spenser do teach, which allows so much of the students to recover and take that path together and have all the things evolve. I think even though I wasn’t letting myself be myself I did take that in and noted that. I think it was jarring, not in a negative way but in such a way so that I realized how often in the past this had not happened, if ever... So I can say that that was a life changing experience. You were too. I mentioned that to Spenser – both of you have reopened
those doors that I have closed for one reason or another. They are definitely opened with stoppers now.

Natia
When I worked with children in Poland... others felt that I am too soft for children. Let's say the child hit me, it happened actually twice. In Poland... children didn't express their feelings. They weren't allowed. It wasn't nice. So, for example I had a new child in my group and she was crying and I was trying to comfort her. The mother was in a hurry and she had to go to work so I closed the door. I was holding her and she hit me. What was expected from me was to punish her to teach her how to behave towards an adult. I didn't do it. So that's why I think some people would say at times I am too soft. Unless I feel good and again, I am starting from myself, I don't do anything wrong and I don't allow anyone to hurt the child I am responsible for. Besides, when I act this way, other people might learn from it. I hope they might think twice.

Faith
Some teachers I have are narrow minded. There are some conclusions that they haven't even thought of. In university, there is one opinion, especially with the teachers I have. It is their opinion. They are very close-minded in the courses that I am taking. At the university I'm attending now... It's true when they say you're reduced to a number. They don't even know your name. I could go to ask a teacher something and I could spend a few moments with them on a question and the next day you say hi to them it's like they don't even know who you are... Some teachers take the time but there are others who do not care at all. When you find they don't care, you just don't bother anymore. I have two of them like that and sometimes I just don't even want to go in their classes because I don't see the point... except that my parents paid for it and I feel guilty if I skip it. I am there to learn. I feel bad for my parents because they have spent a lot of money. I wouldn't have known there was anything wrong with this if I hadn't had you as a teacher.

One professor that I admire is very out-spoken. She doesn't take any crap from anybody but she is also fair and she will listen to you. No matter what she will try to understand where you are coming from. It was hard when you are so used to acting a certain way or think a certain way and then to switch and then say, "Maybe I am not so bad after all." Especially when you have been conditioned to think like that and you’ve been told all your life that you are not the ideal.... It was nice to see that there was someone out there who says that no matter what, you are somebody and I like you for who you are. Especially coming from a teacher. That hasn't happened since your class.

Anthony
When I first got up to Greenview, I was... pretty outspoken and didn't hold back on my opinions. I wouldn't actually come out and express them because I don't like to hurt people's feelings. I wouldn't do that at all, but there was one student up there and he still goes there. When I first saw him I would joke with some friends of mine who were also students. We would make comments but never to that person. By the time I left there...
I got to know him not extremely well, but I got to know him fairly well. I never ever thought that would have happened and it wouldn't at any other time or any other school that I was at. Because I just would have stayed that way. But I got to know a lot about that person. I grew just by listening to the things people, especially my advisor, were talking about and it made me open up a lot and made me realize the first perspective I had about this person is completely wrong. In a traditional school without the amazing kind of relationship I had with my advisor, you would ever be able to change your mind because you wouldn't get to know people like that. This just opened a new door for me. I am like, "Wow. Everybody really is the same but can feel and act different." I thought that was wonderful for me... What I noticed in that relationship too is that this person also grew because he learned new tools to educate people and found ways to open you up to consider what you were thinking and saying. So it was a two-way street in that relationship because he learned how to educate people and make them more aware instead of just throwing "it" at you. He learned a more subtle and open way to explain things to you and model things to you.

_Disequilibrium_

**Natia**
Pain can bring beauty after a while, but sometimes especially when people are weaken, too much pain is just disastrous. It will destroy. Some people believe misery will make you beautiful human beings. It's not necessary like that. When there is too much trauma in your life you would become a person who wants to survive only. It was like in the Concentration Camps, some people lost so much. There was one priest and he went to the gas chamber instead of one man. He said, "Save him." He was a Polish priest. He said, "I will go and I will die. Let him live." But some people, I read many stories became spies. They collaborate with the Germans. So sometimes with too much misery, you won't just survive. You don't want to be hurt anymore.

**Gloria**
When we use the word emancipate, I see that it's freeing. It's a relationship that frees you from something or frees you from a journey or a path you are taking. That's exactly what happened to me when I developed relationships with you. It was freeing but at first it was very difficult. I started to look at things that were painful... I do believe we have to be emancipated within certain relationships. We have to be or we drown. I think we can drown. I think I could have allowed the interpretation I had of my mother and my grandmother's relationship to drown me. It could have ruined growing old with my mother. I had to break away, I had to get out of place of seeing my mother as disliking my grandmother. I had to totally, totally say, I will no longer have anything to do with that relationship. I finally did that. I said, "I will not look at that. I will not be a part of that, if that's the way my mother needs to talk to my grandmother, I don't like it. It makes me feel so bad. I don't like my mother because of the way I hear her speak to my grandmother." I had to say, "I will no longer hear that. I will no longer see that and I will no longer judge my mother for that because that is theirs and I can't be a part of
that." I had to take myself out of that picture. Because if I had gone on disliking my mother, I would go with her to her grave— in hurt and in heartache. But once I just said, "I’ve got to have this other path with my mother and I and it can’t be connected to her and her mother at all," I truly had to do that. Once I did that, then it opened up the possibility I think for me to develop a relationship with my daughter. I still have to vary my path with her because I still go back to what perhaps my mother is in me. A part of me is my mother. It is still there. I can’t, and I have to acknowledge that, I can’t do this magic trick and there is no more of my mother in me.
Self-Reflexivity

Seven learnings that I identified through the experiences of the co-researchers were clustered under the heading of Self-Reflexivity. These learnings indicate that, as a result of their experiences with emancipatory relationships, the co-researchers developed the propensity to filter (and refilter) experiences and ideas through a personal lens. This involves a transformation of how they previously remembered events and a conscious commitment to their own growth and development.

Internalized Locus of Evaluation

Rachel
If you are not happy from within, how can you be happy about life? You look to blame things on different aspects and different sources so you can lay blame... If you fail an exam, it was a stupid teacher's fault. If you didn't do a good job in the classroom, it was because you were harassed by the director. If you weren't good at this, it was so and so's fault. If something happened, it was the other person's fault. If you are not comfortable with yourself and if you don't feel good about yourself, you are going to blame other people. The reverse of that also, not the reverse, but another way of looking at it is the only way to make yourself look good is to keep on saying how bad everybody or everything is around.

Michelle
Music was the only class I never skipped. I loved that class. If other teachers were like him, I probably would be a nurse or a teacher right now. I think I might have kept on with school. You can't take it all back now but you need to learn from it. You need to take control.

Natia
I think some people are not able to pay attention to beauty because they worry. They are hurt, they experience such awful moments in their lives they don't want to see. They stop believing. Once I spoke to my cousin. She is older than I am and we talked. I don't remember about what but I said, "You know what?" I started to share my feelings about something and suddenly her face was like a stone and I felt that she was pushing me away. Her voice was very cold and she said, "I don't see it like that." I know that she was very hurt. Her life was miserable, maybe that's why she decided to be like a stone. A few years ago it might have hurt me but now I understand who I am.

Daniella
My inherent desire is to teach in a way that is not so structured or lecture-oriented - that kind of thing. But its presence has always been in my life whether having been through your typical schooling or dance. So those things, now that I think of it, kind of integrates
in my experience. I was either pulled in one direction or the other for whatever reason but always managed to go in a direction that I felt. I think now I have come to the state of saying, this is what I believe in no matter what. I think at the time you started teaching it was another jolt. I guess that’s what I tell myself in the journey of teaching.

**Personal Empowerment and Growth**

**Gloria**
I still think it goes back to recognizing the fact that I was ageing, that I had aged and that I was no longer that 30-year old that I had always seen myself as. I think it still goes back to my experience at Greenview. I would never had found these things out about myself if I had not been there and had I not experienced the people that I experienced there... I guess emancipated in that I just finally said: it is time in my life that I should be able to say and recognize these things... That I had a voice... That I had a right to my voice and that I no longer had to be in the shadow of someone else and this was at 50.

**Anthony**
I grew as a person. There was tremendous movement for me as a person and as a member of a community... It’s amazing the feeling comes over you... I never thought I would cry in front of people... but that’s the type of person I have become – very gentle and very sentimental.

**Rachel**
You heard the teacher when I came back from the washroom saying Bonjour Madam ... Those teachers here are fine with me but my teachers here at the childcare centre say they don’t feel comfortable. One of the reasons why they don’t feel comfortable with these teachers is in their heads, they are not the same type of teachers. Why do I feel every bit as good? Everyone of these teachers have at least their BA or their B.Ed. Half of them have their Masters. Some of them have their doctorates. Their education as far as paper goes, is far superior to the education I have. Why do I not have a problem? Because I finally came to realize that I am 53 years old that I’m good at what I do and it only started to happen when I was in my 40s. So there was a whole lifetime. But it’s not a waste. It would have been a waste if nothing happened. It would have been a waste if I didn’t do anything about it.

**Faith**
After getting to know you, I thought since I am almost 21 I should make that small effort. To me it is not easy because I just feel very shy around people. I just feel that people won’t accept me. I don’t know why but I just feel that. I guess it has to do with self-esteem. I feel people won’t accept me because I am not really into fashion or anything like that. I may not like the same styles or the same kind of music they do. For me, it is very difficult. I’d like to have more confidence about myself. Sometimes I don’t take that step because I might get rejected... I was in a Christian Bible Study class. We started talking and after a while I was saying, oh my gosh! She likes the same things that I do. I would never had know what because she was dressed a certain way. Sometimes I wish that other people could do that with me, because some people think that I am this... I am
quiet. It just takes me a little bit longer than others to open up. It just takes a while for me to get used to someone before I start to trust them but I've grown so much.

Transforming Painful Experiences

Rachel
I had reached the point in my life where I did one course at a time so that I could excel. Learning had always been a difficulty for me, going to school was difficult and I went to school not to get my ECE or to be a teacher. I went to school to prove that I could be a success, I could do it and I was no longer a failure. That's why I went to school. Being ECE was something that I thought I would like to do, but I had to go to prove to undo everything that was in my head as far as my persona.

And all of those books that I read. Talk about an eye-opener when I read that book Dumbing Us Down. I do what’s natural. My mother did it. Yes, I got hit and we’ve had all of that discussion. There are certain things that would be different but it still is natural. I felt the love. I absolutely felt the love and I want the children to love. It is incredible. There are still to this day, a lot of parents who would say to me, she needs a good slap. I don’t even go into it. I just don’t go into it. I just make it very clear that this is just not what we do. I don’t go into history. We don’t talk about how it was 20 years ago or 30 years ago or whether or not I was slapped, whether or not I did it. We don’t have that discussion. That’s what they do at home and I can’t change the whole world, but this isn’t how we believe things are done. I think that one of the big things that you have to learn in a classroom is to be natural and be yourself. I think it’s just growing. I grew so much because of relationships I had and when I think about who I am now, you know what? I like it!

I repeated Grade 4. When I was in my first Grade 4, it was the beginning of October and the teacher called me to the chalkboard. Because this is being taped I am going to omit all of those teachers’ names. But I want you to know that I know all of their names. I remember my teachers’ names. They probably aren’t even alive but in fairness to them I won’t mention their names. I have learned to forgive. The Grade 4 teacher called me up to the chalkboard and it was the beginning of October and I had missed three days particular days for Jewish holiday: two for New Years and one for Yom Kippur and she wanted me to do division. In division they used to use the old sign like this [Rachel draws symbol in the air]. I didn’t even know how to make the sign and of course I couldn’t do anything on the chalkboard. She turned around and said, "If you weren’t absent because of your holidays, you would know what to do." The same teacher when I chewed gum made me put it on my nose and go from class to class. That wasn’t a learning experience. It was embarrassing. It was excruciating. I ended up failing Grade 4... They are great learning experiences but while they were happening they were awful.

Michelle
I was really fearful of school. I really had a fear and I am not sure whether my parents or teachers knew. I do remember in grade 1 and, I don’t know how clear my memory is, but
I remember actually going to school, being in the school yard and getting really scared and going home without telling anybody. I remember my mom telling me to go to my room when I got home because the school had phoned looking for me. I was so young, but that was how nervous I was. I use to cry at the drop of a hat. Grade 3, I remember the marks were really bad and I just couldn't get past that. I had a couple of teachers that I remember to this day that really tried to work and help towards building me into a better person. I was weak in math so they really worked on a math program with me and I had a music teacher that I wrote about that I still to this day think about because he was so kind. But other than that, it was very strict and I just wasn't of the personality to be able to work in a classroom with these people. I just wasn't there.

I was ambiguous when I was told you would be our professor for curriculum. There was something about you that made me feel uneasy and uncomfortable. Your ways and ideas were unfamiliar, definitely not the "norm". They seemed too deep and I was unable to grasp them. I felt like the fish that was unable to feel the water. As the course started to develop (readings, reflections, and your teachings) I have found myself (whether I wanted to or not) searching back into the past and going through some agonizing feelings, I guess, as you would call it, "going inside". At this time I did not understand how they were connected but it began to happen. I had no control over it. It just began... I've been questioning all parts of my life, (as a Mom, a student, a wife, career) I've been distracted at times, having difficulty sleeping, and other times I have found myself trying to fight off tears. I am beginning to see. If my past teachers hadn't tried to control me and make me into what they thought I should be, I might have been different. I might have felt better about myself and see that I had something, which was worthwhile. I became a puppet in many areas of my life, conforming whether right or wrong to others, as it was easiest... Over the past couple of months your teachings have altered beliefs that I have always felt of myself [excerpt from reflective essay].

Daniella
I never did well with that, "I am the lecturing teacher and you are the student" - type approach. I automatically just pull back. I am uncomfortable with that... teachers are people and they have so much more to give and share and we can have a richer type of work together if we know them as people and they know us as people.

Awareness of Spiritual Experiences

Anthony
I have never been one to be religious, but I sit back and we go to church once in a while and there is... a closeness that I never felt before. I guess I realized that there is more out there than I ever thought. For example, we just went to a baptism today and there were some faces that I saw and I didn't know they went to church. They were going each week and I never knew that. It's not a thing that we've ever talked about. We don't see each other a lot but I know who they are and what they do but it's never talked about when we are together. Just that feeling of being together in a group like that makes you feel different, more positive. We should go more, we really should... The priest after the
baptism would carry the baby up and down the isle and show everybody and I was sitting there crying my eyes out. I just felt something there for me – for them.

Gloria
I don’t like to use and I don’t want to use the word magical, but it was a spiritual thing. Not religious-spiritual but spiritual in that the people that were drawn there. And I do believe people are drawn to Greenview for whatever reason it is and I am not sure if some of them even know what those reasons are until they get there because I didn’t. I really truly think I was drawn there and I did not know why until I got there. The why became very evident to me when I started discovering that I wasn’t there just to be a teacher but I was there to **become**. I believe that and the people that I met there were people who were driven and people who have a great deal of purpose. I miss it.

I can only tell you that walking from the auditorium, I don’t even remember which dorm it was. It was the second time I was there. It was in the winter. To experience that feeling that I truly felt there was some spirit or something there and to watch that shadow of myself in front of me and then watch me walk into that shadow. My eyes would not have seen that before there. I would never have seen that and I know it was a shadow. I know it was the way the light was playing on the moon and the way I was walking. My logical mind tells me that but I would never have experienced that had I not been there with all the energy that was around me. I really believe that. It became symbolic... I was walking and I was quiet. I was experiencing a time alone that I think I had never experienced before. It was a quiet moment in time and I think maybe we can still have those no matter where we are but because I was in the situation that I was, I was away from family, I was away from my usual surroundings, I was able to see it and feel it. I don’t know how to do that in my daily surroundings. I haven’t found a way to do that yet. I am not sure you need to need it. I think it’s something you have to experience. Maybe I shouldn’t be looking for it. Maybe it should just happen. I think if there was something I took from Greenview, it was a deep respect for myself. I am sure I had it along I just maybe didn’t know how to find it.

I miss that community of people and that’s why I have to go back and remember evenings sitting in a dorm with these people around me who are saying I see your need, I see your karma, I see your focus and I see your spirit when you are talking and I truly believe there were people there that could do that. I truly believe that there is something about the number of people that are drawn there for the reasons that they are drawn there and when you put all of that spirit together I think something magical happens. Something spiritual happens. It may not be that way. I don’t know if it’s that way when it’s there with the young people but I definitely feel it’s there in the residencies.

Natia
What I think now is that there is something... Not only relationships with people can enrich us, but the relationships with um... I don’t know if I can call it like that... something I cannot name. Some people call it God, some people call it... I don’t know
how to say it in English and I do strongly believe that there is something we don’t understand, we don’t even know how to name it.

_Mindful and Contemplative Practice_

_Gloria_
I need to be become more mindful... I need to become more quiet with myself and I need to find more solace in myself. I feel that’s true of all of us wherever we are. I have never known that until now. That’s what I’ve learned.

I was thrown into an environment that was totally new to me. Totally strange to anything lived. The same thing happened to me when I was doing my writing and I went to the ocean by myself for five days. So I think for me I need to be able to that and I don’t find the time to do that for me. I need to do that. I realize now that it’s important to create the space to touch the things we usually ignore.

I often think about the... schoolhouse quilt I made. Maybe it’s not a schoolhouse, maybe it’s a home. Maybe, symbolically, that’s what it is. It was a schoolhouse pattern, but maybe it’s home... I appreciate the fact that when I was a new student that first quarter you said to me, "think about doing something that’s yours, something you’ve always wanted to do and find a way to incorporate it into your studies." I appreciated that. I did something that I would probably never have done... Yes. I would never had. I have always wanted to do that but I probably never would have done it but because it was within the realm and within the context of, "this should be part of your study, now you go back, you are not done until you find a way to fit this in. I am not going to sign this study plan until you’ve said what you are going to do." It took me two years, but I did it. I have that now and it’s a daily reminder to look inside.

_Michelle_
Today, I was looking through some of my writing that I wanted to bring and I was looking through and it was like, already I have gone away from the excitement of the learning and it made me really feel sad that the excitement is already disappearing. Although I have had some pretty hard times in my life since the course ended, I was thinking, will I ever experience it again or will it ever come together for me? This is probably the closest I will ever get to a doctorate: working alongside with somebody like this. I think it is a really neat experience. Little things just keep pulling you along and doors keep opening so maybe it will happen. But it is sad. It is like a death, now that it’s over.

_Natia_
When I pray, for example, I start to feel calm. Maybe those words which are repetitious. Some sentences you just go back to it. It’s like a Mantra. I think that it is very important to have this faith and to believe in something. It helps us, it gives us this inner calmness but it also I think, helps us in relationships with others. I think that through prayer you become calm and in some ways you are able to look into yourself. This is my experience. I am not saying that everybody feels the same.
Maybe it will sound and crazy, but very often during the day, I just stop and I look around and let’s say the sky is so beautiful. It’s not a prayer, but I start to talk that I am so thankful and it’s so beautiful. It was wonderful because I don’t remember when I started to have those conversations. It wasn’t a conversation because God (or whatever) didn’t talk to me. The more I talked, the more I started to appreciate and to see beauty. We have beauty around us. The more often I experience those moments they give me a sense of calmness. A few years ago, it wasn’t calmness inside. I don’t know how to describe it.

Daniella
Maybe if I had paid attention more when I was younger I would have understood how important my grandmother’s words were at the time. I might have spent more time with her. I guess you can always say that looking back. Now I look at it all the times there were just a few words. She really wouldn’t really go on and on. We would take walks and she would say things like, you really need… (I am trying to translate because it is in Italian). The essence of it is, be a good person and present yourself in a way so that people will appreciate you.

In my opinion you are presenting yourself… I think it’s inevitable. You transmit who you are. I think that’s also part of who I am. I am a performer so I like doing that. I think that’s a great way of connecting with the people you are with. I can’t even help myself. I just become this theatrical person when I am put in front of a crowd. I don’t do it for its own sake necessarily - like look at me - but more in a way to try to engage the group and maybe just give them a bit of that theatrical thing to enjoy. Hopefully they are enjoying it. I guess I mostly feel everything in my guts. It’s a comfortable feeling but it is also an excited feeling. It’s like I feel charged and I probably mirror that in some kind of body language. I don’t know because I don’t watch myself. There are times when I can be relaxed and sit back. It’s just a seating thing. I usually like to stretch my legs but even if I am in whatever physical state inside I can just leap off the seat and really engage in what is happening – the lecture, the dialogue or whatever. I will tell you the reverse when I am feeling it is not working. I have this immense feeling in the pit of my stomach. I just feel like I need to get out. There have been a couple times when I have had to physically remove myself. I am talking more when I was a student and there was a teacher because I would have to just totally disassociate with that situation. A lot of times because I am feeling that physically, I am not getting any of it. It’s absolutely going over my head… I haven’t heard a single word. If it’s there on paper I have to probably reread it 10 times because I haven’t heard it and I haven’t taken it in. I am having a hard time describing the physical thing that I feel.

We have an aunt… who has Downs Syndrome. It just makes me think about how I take things for granted. I do things much slower. Everything is painstakingly slow – the same with the child that I work with. The one that has cerebral palsy, even more so with him because his mobility is even more limited. Just getting a spoon in his mouth, it is really… I find I am going, come on, come on. I guess humility in a sense that you never know what life will bring and would I one day find myself in a situation where my
mobility would be limited or my capabilities be diminished by an accident. I guess it just makes me more aware of my humanity.

Receptivity

Faith
If you are in a classroom and somebody new comes in, be open. Learn from that person and let them know what you are learning from them and let them know what maybe they can learn from you. No matter what you learn you are going to pick up something new everyday and you never stop learning. When you are more open to give yourself to teachings, you discover there are a whole lot of areas you haven’t explored yet. That’s my motto for teaching: be open and give yourself to teachings.

Daniella
It may sound strange to say this, but I am going to say it anyway. I enjoy watching the presentation and who they are come out in this physical way. I really react positively to a teacher that takes that risk and does something kind of physical in their presentation of themselves. That is when you really got me. I guess because I really watch the physical body as a communicator. That connects me. That’s my bias though. Now I’m so open, I don’t resist.

Congruence

Daniella
I have a problem with separating that and people who advocate separating love from my teaching and I guess that’s why I’ve really embraced that holistic type of approach to teaching because I don’t separate all those things. They are all together. I don’t think I could separate those things, certainly not for a long time. It would be very superficial and then it wouldn’t be true. Like I said before, that’s really important to me that I be true to who I am and to the relationship whatever it may be. So, that wouldn’t last very long — teaching separate.

Colin
You can never be too involved. You should always be right in the middle of it. The way I see it, I am either 2 feet in or no feet in. I know it’s not possible, but I give 110%. It’s an old cliché but either I am going to be right into it or I am not going to care about it. That’s not just my teaching and coaching, that’s how I take life. If I am not going to 110% then I don’t want anything to do with it. I expect that from people I am interacting with as well. If you are not going to give me 110% of your attention, your participation, whatever the case maybe, whatever the relationship is with people, then I don’t want it. That is sort of how I go through life and that’s what I try to bring to the classroom to the rink as well. Even if a player in hockey, if they can’t stop the player from scoring on us, I don’t care. You show me you’ve tried and you gave an honest effort, that is all I care about. Same thing when I work with children. It they can’t figure out 2 + 2, I don’t care, as long as you show me you are trying. I may have to help you figure out the answer but
as long as you give an honest effort and you show to me that you are trying, that's all that matters to me. Give the effort.
Communal and Democratic Process

When reflecting on their experiences with emancipatory relationships, the co-researchers shared stories about how their relationships in some way led them to a more democratic sensibility and practice. I was able to identify and cluster five learnings in order to create this theme. These learnings indicate that emancipatory relationships inspire a particular type of leadership style that honours personal voice and stresses passionate dialogue. They facilitate the creation of democratic skills and democratic social, political, and physical environments. In addition, they foster movement from a myopic attention on the individual to a complex, interdependent communal life.

Voice and Reciprocity

Colin
I feel you can learn a lot if there is some kind of participation even if it's three or four people but generally speaking there was nothing until one day in class when we talked about the abortion issue – whether you were for it or against it. That was the only time I actually saw full group participation. Aside from that, it was pretty much lame. It was basically the teacher dictating the class and that was it because of lack of participation. For me personally, it was very hard to learn in that atmosphere. I was coming from a class prior to that where the students were very familiar with each other and there was maybe four or five people who wouldn’t say anything, but everybody else was very participative… We knew what limits we had with certain people. We would push it but to a point. With the other group I don’t they were together the whole time. We built our little cliques within that whole class originally. But in the other group, where it was very quiet, they hadn’t done that, which makes it difficult for participation… you would also get different feedback from other students – different ideas. You might be having problems with something... say a placement at school, and another student will say, "Well I have done this with a similar situation, so try that." So you get different ideas that you can float around in your head, rather than the teacher saying this is the only way. You can get more stuff out of it by participating. This is the way Spenser conducted classes. We felt equal. Our opinions were just as important and everyone had a right and a responsibility to participate.

Vanessa
Coming from a community college where I had to take specific classes to get a degree, I end up in a place where I had to fill in all of my own blanks and have a broad set of guidelines. I had so much freedom and that to me was what I wanted to offer my kids. I didn’t realize it until halfway through being at Greenview. It was like, "Oh no. You’re kidding!" I got to take charge of how I was going to meet the standards for a degree and
when you do it like this, you find yourself really showing how well you know information — like you're teaching the advisor what you know.

Natia
I hate it now when any relationship is one-way only. I don’t believe in it. It doesn’t work that way. As I said, in order to give something, we have to receive as well. Even with children. I love talking about relationships between adults. It’s the same, maybe different quality, but it’s same. I had so many beautiful moments with children.

Faith
If I become a mentor teacher I would just make sure that… even though we have different backgrounds and ideas… There would be no pretences. No one would be better than the other. I think if we had this rapport with each other instead of seeing someone as more knowledgeable… We would have better communication and understanding between each other… we would learn from each other, instead of one having this smugness about them.

I like the group because even though everyone was different we were all the same. I can honestly say with some of the children if we weren’t in these organizations we would never have interacted with one another. But through that I have met some very interesting people and I have some very close friends today because of them. I guess it is more of a bonding with each other, a sisterhood and we get to know each other. We talk to one another and we accept one another no matter what. That was a nice experience.

Rachel
Teachers with young children or teachers with older children who are at college, I think you need to share. You need to be able to speak to each other. This is a perfect example. People use the word “communication”. A chunk of people don’t have a clue what the word “communication” means. If you have communication then you can say anything you want. You can feel comfortable enough about yourself and the other person that you can deliver your feelings and your feelings can be received without ruining whatever relationship there is. Being able to say it and not having to worry afterwards about what you’ve said to feel guilty… If you are going to feel guilty about what you said, then obviously there is something lacking in a relationship, which means there is something lacking in communication.

You can go into the room and you can hear a teacher saying something and you can think, I don’t think that’s right. Something has to be fixed with that. What is it? Then sometimes you realize, you talk that way too, or you might say it that way too. So you sit together and it’s an eye-opener and you revisit the situation and you talk about it and you help each other look at a situation in a different way.

Politicizing the Encounter

Colin
My very first practice every year I always tell them, "Look, I am here because I want to be here, not because I am forced to or because I am being paid. I am doing it on my own time. All I expect from you is respect and I will give it back to you." Because of their age I can explain more to them abstractly that is a two-way street. "We can have fun. You work with me, I'll work with you. We have some fun and we will do some learning. If you don't want to have fun, then I will, if necessary, go to the dictatorship and say, we are doing this, this and this. No choices. If you don't like it, too bad. If we co-operate, we can have a blast and have a great time, otherwise it's up to you." I basically tell them what I expect and I leave it up to them what they want to do. If they want to fool around, then I will go to the dictatorship. If they want to co-operate, that's where I participate with them... At first they are not too sure because I see a lot of their coaches, from observing the practices before and after me and even the one during (we are on half ice) and things are done differently. A lot of them do the drills, they do different set-ups and different activities but the coach is always standing to the one side, just watching them. So they have always been used to that except for the few players who I have had over the years. They are used to my way of doing it. So at first they are not too sure and they try to test me. This year a few players have already been like... "What the hell is this guy doing?" When I ask them to put the pucks in the net, they are shooting the pucks round. Now we've got to the point where now it's, you want to fool around, then fine. After all the pucks are in the net, then I will dictate for five minutes and they will have to do what I ask them to do. Then we will go back to doing the fun stuff, the stuff that they enjoy. Otherwise it's this way and you have no choice. I let them push a bit but then I set my limit and they understand that that's my limit and that's as far as they can go. Gradually my limit gets smaller and they realize that and then they participate more co-operatively... This is one way that I'm taking from what I learned in my relationship and applying it to coaching and hockey. You have to take a stand otherwise they'll just keep doing what they've always done and they'll think it's the only way.

From Individualism to Interdependence and Community

Daniella

It's important that students know that we are people... They know about my life. I could talk to them about my life and what I do and who I am. We often see each other through the community but also I have no problems with them knowing how much I interact/depend (I say that positively) on my family. We are so close. This whole structure that we built - this river structure – they tried it out and it was too tall for them. I said to my dad, "I know you are busy but if you have a chance can you come in and cut it down please?" So he came in one day to cut it down. The children were like "Wow! This is her dad!" They all pulled up a chair and said hi. The children were still talking about it a week later - "Remember when we met Daniella's dad"? They know that I am a real person and it's not just something that is situational... With a lot of my co-workers, it's like, "How long have you been living in the house?" A few times I have been at the centre and I forgot to bring in this or that - apples, we have so many apple trees so we are going for really organic and real material so I would say, "Let's get some apples into that home area," but I forgot them at home. My mom was just leaving and I caught her and I
said, "Can you drop them off before you leave please?" She dropped them off and people were like, "Oh so your mother has to drop off apples. Does she do everything?" People really seem to be upset by that – the fact that our family is very close. I come to think of it as people must feel that there is no independence when there is interdependence. You must be isolated from your family to be independent and that seems to gain you points somehow. I have had other people try to take that away… that’s not going to happen no matter how uncomfortable it makes them.

Everyone has their space but those spaces are not islands. They are not separate. They overlap. So no, I would like to be able to pass on to the children the idea that your space isn’t separate from other spaces. We can have those moments but we are going to integrate them so we need to know how to deal with that too. I guess someone who walks into a room might feel uncomfortable with that because it is a space that intermingles. There is no problem with that. We haven’t had a problem.

Michelle
I think about the course, our discussions and the way Spenser facilitates classes so much of the time. At home, we might be watching a show and I will turn to my husband and he will make a remark and I base my reaction on a discussion from a class. The whole course has been great but the last year has changed me. When I went through this big change in between January and June, you could see that he was probably feeling a little threatened. The phone would never stop ringing. We would be talking on the phone for hours over something that happened in class and it was like, home was just until next Tuesday. I am sure he felt that and that was really hard for him. I really felt bad. I know I was being a selfish person at that time, but it was something I just didn’t want to stop with and it was so neat and the group was so tight and so together. I would go out with my other girlfriends and I would come back and it was like I didn’t fit in there any more. The girls from school say this is happening to them too. A few of them had experienced the same thing. I love my other girlfriends and I care about them, but you just can’t talk to them about this stuff. They haven’t been there and they haven’t experienced it. So at least I can share that with the students in the course, because they felt the same kinds of things. So it’s just so exciting but it’s almost freedom that binds you in some ways too.

Building Democratic Skills

Daniella
I am trying to texture the environment and get to be more real… There are no tables. It isn’t the science area, the water just sort of emerges from the sunlight in the windows when it comes out. We are trying to do it with the rest of the room… I am thinking about the entrance when they come in. We’ve already got ideas and plans for a couch and getting a new carpet. A home space that you walk into that invites everybody that comes in. Everyone owns this space. It’s not just a class. It can be that real… I guess that’s part of this whole truth thing... it’s not just the space itself and being real or true to their experience, but being true to who they are. The physical environment has to be thought of if all the kids are going to participate and share in the process. You can’t just hope it happens.
Vanessa
I think it is important for them to make their own choices. Of course if it is going to cause psychological or physical harm, no. I outrank them. I guess the way I see it is at least in Pennsylvania or many of the public school and private school systems, the kids don’t have a lot of choices and given the chance, they can make really, really good choices and they have a lot of good insight on their own and common sense. They need to practice these skills or it’s just not going to happen. But once you continually take that away from someone, they kind of become paralyzed and I don’t want my kids to be non-functional or dull.

Leader as Facilitator
Vanessa
In a lot of ways I think I am showing my kids that that’s something that they can do for themselves... I think that’s very healthy and because when I am with them, I am not only a facilitator in their education, but I am modeling a lifestyle that I hope that they will have when they are older.

Rachel
I remember one of the first questions you asked when we were talking. In school you threw out a question and it tested honesty right away. "Did any one of you ever slap your children’s hands?" I think the conversation just started from a very open-ended way, we started off with honesty and we started to talk. Then we started to listen to you, the teacher, and to see where you were coming from and how you were going to work with us and how you were going to give us a chance. You never taught or spoke to people as if we were in boxes. We weren’t stereotyped and we weren’t in boxes. You didn’t have any preconceived ideas of what we should do or where we should go. You nodded a lot, like you are doing now. Your eyes would open up and your mouth would open up almost in surprise and I think you would go with the flow of what you were hearing and getting a good feel of where that person was coming from, where that person was now and where that person wanted to go. It’s the confidence that just exudes throughout a lecture and makes a person feel so good about doing what they are doing.

I wasn’t able to speak with my other teachers or I didn’t have a rapport with them, but we were the students in the class and they were the teacher and there was a division... It wasn’t in a nasty way because most of the people standing up there had smiles on their faces, they were polite, and they would answer your questions. There was a schmaltz that was missing. Schmaltz is chicken fat. In Jewish cooking, although it is not healthy and why we are on cholesterol pills, it was always very important... Your chicken soup and your schmaltz and it’s what kept everything together and congealed. It is the same thing that happens here.
Active Citizenship

The interviews with co-researchers seemed to demonstrate that emancipatory relationships lead to some form of active citizenship. I identified four learnings that were clustered to form this theme. The new activism includes advocacy and self-transformation. There seems to be a link between personal and social change.

Advocacy

Michelle

I have let go of many areas of my past. I now celebrate it and feel I can use it as a key to affect the futures of students positively to make it successful for all. I feel that I have more strength in myself and I'm still working on the self-confidence thing. My past experience has been crucial in helping me come to the realization the impact "teachers" can have on a child for the rest of their life. I am a product of this. [excerpt from reflective essay]

I think my first really negative experience was when I got a C+ in my first assignment in a Children's Literature course and I had not been used to that at all. People in our work community... They would be coming to us and saying, "We hear everybody in ECE is wiping up and they are all getting As. This must be a really easy course." So I started thinking, "Well this is real life. Maybe I am not that clever after all." I was starting to build and then she knocked me down again. But because of all of my experience in the ECE with the really good teachers and instructors and especially with Spenser building and really being supportive, it shone a different light on that class. It was like, I could see that the teacher wasn’t way up here anymore. She was the one making the mistakes. It wasn’t seeing it as me anymore. It wasn’t my fault. My past was not to blame. It was a really good feeling to know that it wasn’t totally me. I know I made wrong choices, but it wasn’t my fault completely. That’s when I decided I wanted to do something to help everybody else in the class because they were all struggling and I felt bad. I was able to overcome it just by realizing that I could do this and that she wasn’t the bad end all and I had to do everything she said. So that’s when I decided to make change happen and write the letter... I wrote the letter and I ended up having an meeting with someone at the college. From the time that the letter was written, you could see an absolute change in the teacher and she was much more empathetic. She would explain that she felt that this and this wasn’t right – not just that the student was all wrong – but you could see that she was really shaken. She was told about it, there was no doubt. She did an about-face with the rest of the class. The administration decided that they were going to be changing the curriculum for the course because they felt that it was a high English program. So my letter brought a lot of points to everybody’s attention. I really felt empowered by this. Just the fact that you can make change happen over a simple letter like that. At the point
that I wrote it, even the mark, it didn’t matter to me anymore. It was such a vital learning experience for me. I didn’t care if I walked out of that class… Sure I would have wanted my credit, but I didn’t care where I was in the class at that point because I saw some of the other ECE students. They were struggling and with you behind them and Spenser behind me and it just felt that we were one and we were really battling for it and things seemed to work out for all of us. It was so different. Marks weren’t a big a thing after that. Everything changed after that. It was more the learning that was important. It wasn’t just getting through and just finishing the course and getting on with my life... You couldn’t wait for school on Tuesday nights and it was just a really neat experience. I felt good helping, not just the students I knew well but all of them. I felt really bad for all of them and at that point I really felt like a teacher, it was almost something that I had to do – just to protect them. I remembered that I was there once and nobody was there for me and nobody stood behind and said, "She can do this. Why are you making it harder for her? This is something that she really can do," and that’s just what they needed, a little bit of support behind them to get through. But she was making it even impossible to do that… I just felt like I had the power to do something and that people were actually looking up to me for that help. It made me feel like I was… I am not saying that in my school I don’t feel that, but everything goes against that. You don’t call yourself a teacher when you are an educational assistant. You’re not just looked upon that way and because of the way teachers have always been up on a pedestal to me, I couldn’t even imagine being up there. So this was actually a time that I really felt that way. I felt that I was better than she was in some ways. The teacher was also young and immature and I think I was helping her in a sense because she did take an about-face. I think that because of that maybe her teaching will benefit years to come. She will think about what she is doing next time and other kids will benefit from being in her class after an experience like that. I felt really, really bad for her and I think what I did was radical and I think the letter maybe was sent to a few too many people, but it was just out of my control. I was just not myself at that point. Anyhow, I hope it did make a difference for her. Things got better after that. Things just started clicking. It was a really awesome experience.

Anthony
In the area that I live and teach… we are seeing more and more kids coming from tougher backgrounds. There are a lot of single parent homes. When I came to Greenvue, I met a lot of people and listened to their stories. I heard about where they are from and what they are about. That helps me understand a lot more about these kids – what they are going through and where they have been and how to approach them. I am not afraid to take a student aside and say, "Johnny, I know things aren’t that great at home but there is always a safe place to come and that’s here if you ever need to talk about something." I never hesitate to call a parent and say, "I think this might be going on with Johnny. I could be wrong but can you come in or if that’s inconvenient for you, I’ll stop by the house and I think we need to talk about it." I don’t know if I would have done that before. I’ve just learned so much from my advisor and other people at Greenvue that it allows me to do that and come out of my shell like that.

Colin
What we are doing will help them to become good individuals and citizens. I would like to hope that that is possible or that does actually happen. I think every little step along the way and every person that has the privilege of having contact with kids, helps to develop someone over the course of their life, whatever road their life makes them travel.

In the area I grew up in, I had gone to school with people who are at university, college, drop-outs, people who have been shot and who have been jailed. I haven’t seen it all, but I have heard a lot of it or I actually know people who have been through it. I knew how they grew up and their life when they were younger so it’s like, wow! Just seeing how things were when they were younger shows you how it can affect you in the long run. I think we have a major responsibility. The shooting over the summer was just south of where I live. I went to school with the guy who got shot. He was one of my classmates. It was so close to home. I haven’t spoken to him for maybe eight years, but just the fact that I knew him. It was like, oh my goodness, I can’t believe it... Especially when they also shot his 3 year-old daughter. That really turned my stomach. For all we know she could have been the next prime minister or the next whatever. When I’m working with kids I can’t help thinking about that and I go to bat for every kid. Just because other people don’t listen to them, it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t. We should make people listen.

**Self-Advocacy**

**Rachel**

I failed two courses. Of all courses, I failed Home Ec. How could anyone fail Home Ec? It was the written portion obviously that I failed, not the sewing or the cooking. I also failed history... by three marks. I went and attended summer school and did it. The Home Ec. teacher was no problem. She was just very strict and we always did exactly what she told us to do because she scared us. My history teacher, I had told him I was going to summer school and do my history because I wanted to go to Teachers' College. Basically he said, "Why bother? You are not going to do it. You didn’t do it all year and now you want to go to college?" *Excuse me.*

I went to summer school and I passed the two exams. Of course, I only had two courses now instead of eight. At the end I passed the two exams and I wasn’t interested in going back to the Home Ec. teacher but I did want to speak to my history teacher. I didn't expect to go back but something - some kind of transformation happened and I had to go back. I knew I had to go back. I went back the last two weeks of August when teachers are there to prepare their classrooms. I knocked on the teachers' room door and I said "I want to speak to Mr. so and so." They said, "He is busy right now, he is in a meeting." I said, "I don’t care. Bring him to the door, I need to speak to him now." I was never going to see this man again. I was an adult now. What could he do to me? He was no longer a threat. So he came to the door and I said, "I am sorry to disturb you but I need to tell you that I passed my history. The other thing I need to tell you is that I think if you would like to influence children in the future and you would like them to feel good about themselves in the future, perhaps you could be a little positive and give them a little encouragement and not assume that they are dumb. If you had taken the time to know
me, you would have realized that I am not dumb. I have some difficulties. I don’t have a
clue what they are. You obviously don’t know either and I don’t think anyone around me
knows what’s going on in my head, but one day, I’ll know what they are." I said, "You
know what? For the sake of the next ones that come along, don’t assume. Now, you can
go back to your meeting." That’s what I did. Did I know I was talking about my learning
disabilities at the time? Did I have a clue? No.

Michelle
At work it is better now just even with change of Administration. I have moved schools
in the last three years. Actually, the same time I started the course, I changed schools and
Administration is much more respectful. They look to us for ideas and they really respect
the fact that they are going to school and they respect the fact that we know more when it
comes to children with special needs than they do. The experiences at school have been
very positive. Before they hadn’t but I think that was my fault in some ways too. I
would walk around maybe putting myself down and not putting enough credit into what I
thought and felt and just that the course behind me has made me realize that I do have
good things to say. But more than that it was feeling accepted and cared for by Spenser.

Recognizing and Confronting Injustice

Rachel
When I first came here to work one of the staff members made a comment that I was
Jewish so I was rich and I turned around and I said, "And you are black. Does that mean
you don’t have a brain?" She looked at me and I said, "Don’t go there. Stereotyping is
the worst thing in the world. You don’t want it and I don’t want it. I am Jewish, I am not
a millionaire and we are not all rich. You are black, you are clever, you are smart, you
are wonderful, you are clean and I adore you. I am not stereotyping you. You don’t want
to be stereotyped, but neither do I. Don’t stereotype." That takes guts. If I am talking to
someone and in the conversation the subject will come up; if I am talking to someone
who is of a different background than me or a different colour than I am, I am not afraid
to acknowledge that they black. They can acknowledge me that I am white, why can’t I
acknowledge them that they are black? Why do I have to look away and pretend that
they are someone else? There is nothing about me that’s against anybody. So why
should I hide and pretend and be afraid to say something to them? Why? So they should
think otherwise? So much time is wasted on how am I going to say this and how am I
going to do this? They might take it this way and they might take it that way. Why think
about how they might take it? You are going to waste your whole life.

Michelle
I thought that I definitely want to do something. I want to take this further and I don’t
know that education to keep going on would be worth it. I know it is still great. But to
go on to be a teacher, with my political circumstances, it’s not something I can probably
do at this point. So I don’t want to just leave it and go back and continue my life without
using what I have got positively. I never really sat and thought about what I was doing at
the time. I know that just from writing the one letter, to the media and all the attention it
got. Now I know my letter made maybe that little bit of difference, but if that’s the case, then we should all start working towards some of the things that we want to see changing in the future.

**Self-Transformation**

**Michelle**
I would, definitely go tomorrow and start this course all over again. It was really one of the best experiences I have had in my life. Now along with it comes a lot of difficulties because I have changed but my household hasn’t really changed that much. That was really frustrating and I am learning now that a little change is good and I just try and work through that all the way along. It is working better. With my youngest son, I see a lot of benefits coming from just being with him now because it’s not... I have changed so much in my attitude even in situations like going and doing a sport. There’s no pressure any more. It’s not, "what’s your goal tonight?" etceteras. I’m more apt to say, "Go and have a good time." "How did you feel about that?" He is more honest with himself and he is honest with me... You can see he is getting it more from inside now instead of all these external pushes. I didn’t know any of that before. I made so many mistakes with the other two kids and with him because I didn’t know and now that I know I am at least trying to change things with him.

I just see so much going down the tubes for the kids. There is so much out there. There are so many people not looking out for them anymore. They are thrown into a high school with 700 other kids. How many adults are there? What are their influences going to be everyday? It is what they see. They start becoming desensitized by watching people get closer and closer taking drugs. All of a sudden one of their friends starts and I don’t think parents are aware of how difficult it is in the school for the kids now. I just think that people need to be more aware. The more change that we can make now, it will be a difference for other kids in their future. Just by the letter that I wrote – change happened there so I thought the more you speak about it... It’s hard. It’s hard not to... At first you are embarrassed. You think it is your fault and I think that if I hadn’t met Spenser and taken this course, I think I would have probably blamed myself for the rest of my life that I totally messed up as a mom. Even what you taught us in class about the whys and the push and pull and internal and external forces and stuff like that, I think it helped me realize that I am just one person. Look at all the other elements that did make a difference in his life and how hard it was to get past that.