

The Ethics of Personal Subjective Narrative Research

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Abstract

In my work throughout the two years I have spent in a masters program, three themes with respect to research and teaching have continually emerged. These themes are the personal, the subjective and the narrative. When I proposed a project to the Senate Research Ethics Board of Brock University (SREB), it was turned down. The nature of the questions asked by the SREB caused me to reflect upon the nature of the ethical framework that underlies its existence. In this project, I examine the nature of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, the document that spawned the SREB. I use narratives from my personal experiences both in teaching and in theological education to explain my reactions to the document and the implied world view. I explain why my vision of research and teaching is not compatible with that of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and I propose an ethical understanding based on the realities of my understanding of research and teaching.

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Table of contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND	1
The Cohort	2
Setting the Context for Research	4
Methodology	5
The Project Emerges	6
The Structure of the Project	7
The Conflict	8
CHAPTER TWO: THE TRI-COUNCIL POLICY DOCUMENT	14
Background	14
The Policy Document	15
The Ethical Framework	16
Free and Informed Consent	17
Voluntariness	19
Respect for Vulnerable Persons	20
The Ideal Research Model	23
The Assumptions of the Research Model	24
Assumptions about Life	27
CHAPTER THREE: FAITH AND WORKS	28
My Story	28
Personal Faith	29
A Higher Power	30
Integration of Life	32
Narrative Faith	39
Subjective Faith	40
CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHING AND RESEARCH	44
Embracing Subjectivity	44
Envisioning the Ideal	45
Emergent Design	47
Values-Based	48
Evidence-Based	50
Narrative-Based	51
For Teachers and Students	52

CHAPTER FIVE: A PERSONAL SUBJECTIVE AND NARRATIVE ETHIC	55
A Personal Ethic	56
Teaching as an Art	57
A Community Ethic	60
For Teachers and Students	64
Narrative Ethics	65
REFERENCES	67
Appendix A	69
Appendix B	84

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

In describing this process I proceed on two levels. My task is both practical and theoretical. I offer a narrative account of a practice, while at the same time attempting to conceptualize the nature of that practice. This is a complicated task, because I seem to speak in two voices simultaneously: the narrator's voice that presents the case and the theoretical voice that conceptualizes what is presented. Moreover, my narrator's voice tells about something very abstract.....My two voices are likely to appeal to two different audiences and may not seem very compatible. I nevertheless persist in proceeding this way because I believe. . . .(Conle, 2000)

Not only did I tell about narrative, I engaged in narrative-telling. On a practical level, I presented stories about the practice of educational research while I engaged the theories that undergird and emerge from that practice. I spoke of Christian faith and ethical practice, of liberation theology and action research. I did this because I believed that I, as a teacher, had to do my part to reclaim and re-form the educational knowledge and theories that external or "academic" researchers might claim were theirs. I did this in a way that was quintessentially mine—through the telling of my stories. Not only did I tell my stories but I made the claim that it was through the telling of stories that teachers will not only come to research and create "living educational theories," (Whitehead, 1993) but will also create the ethical context for that research.

The Cohort

This project evolved within a Master of Education program through Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, that they created jointly with the Grand Erie District School Board located in Southern Ontario. The model for the program was a cohort group made up of teachers and administrators drawn almost exclusively from the Grand Erie Board. The courses for the program were determined collaboratively by the members of the group along with the school board and the university. They offered the courses in the school board area, and brought in professors to teach the courses. Most members of the cohort took the same courses in the same sequence.

One understanding in the creation of the cohort group was that the particular focus of research would be action research, more specifically the model of action research put forward in the work of Jack Whitehead at the University of Bath, UK. Whitehead's conception of Action research developed out of questions arising from his practice as a classroom teacher. Whitehead (1993) grounded his epistemology in Polanyi's (1964) notion of personal knowledge. Whitehead drew from Polanyi the notion that "personal knowledge involved a decision to understand the world from one's own point of view as an individual claiming originality and exercising judgement with universal intent" (personal e-mail communication, March 2001) Specifically, this model of action research involved questions of the type: "How do I improve this process of education here?" (Whitehead, 1993, p. 35, 57) In this model, self-identification was central because the research was self-study. This context set the stage for the conflict out of which this project arose.

Another area of focus for the cohort group, related to, but not restricted to Whitehead's influence was narrative. Jackie Delong and Susan Drake brought stories very much to the forefront of our discussions. We spent many Saturdays sharing our stories— both professional and personal— with group members. Our reflections on readings were often as journals in which they expected us to make personal connections to the readings.

Michael Manley Casimir introduced the group to Thomas Green's "voices of conscience" (1985). Although Green's "voices" are not all internal, they are directed personally— to individuals and groups. Green also has a high regard for the place of the stories of communities in the formation of ethical understandings. His voice of conscience as membership in a group while remaining true to a story was particularly pertinent (Green, 1985). Green's ideas further embedded in my mind, the ideas of the personal and the narrative in the practice of teaching.

From Romulo Magsino I gained an appreciation for the personal qualities necessary to create leaders within an educational context. He introduced me also to the writings of Eliot Eisner, an educator whose views on the artistic nature of teaching and educational research became important to me (1999).

From the beginning, my experience in the Master's program focussed upon many realities within the world of education and educational research. These were the personal, the subjective, and the narrative. As the culmination of my Master's program, it was only fitting that this project focus on the personal, subjective narrative in the practice of research.

Setting the Context for Research

Within the cohort group, the context for research generally fell into a very narrow approach to action research. McNiff (2000) divided research into three paradigms: the empirical, the interpretive, and the critical theoretic. She placed action research in the critical theoretic paradigm, and further divided action research into three approaches: the interpretive, the critical and the living theory. I might have argued with the divisions, in that, for example, the critical “struggle against the forces of colonisation and oppression” (McNiff, 2000, p. 201) was present in the living theory approach, but I did not dwell on that point. More important, it was telling to note that the only approach from which an external researcher was, by definition, excluded, was the living theory approach — the one championed by Whitehead and McNiff. Moreover, the living theory approach was the only one in which the values of the researcher were paramount, in that the researchers tried to “live their values in their practice, recognising that this inevitably [gave] rise to contradictions” (McNiff, 2000, p. 201). As McNiff would have it, the focus of action research was to try at least to understand and aim to resolve the contradictions. This would help the researcher to work more productively and enable others to do the same (McNiff, 2000).

Although this project did not evolve into an action research project, but rather devolved from one, I attempted to remain true to the values of the living theory approach to action research. I took the contradictions that arose from my attempt to produce an action research project within the ethical framework provided by the Senate Research Ethics Board of Brock University (SREB), and I tried to understand them. That attempt at understanding was focussed

both within and without myself, attempting both subjective and objective stances. I attempted to resolve some of those contradictions by focussing upon how I might more fully live out my values within a research context. I did this so that I might more effectively carry out ethical research and perhaps, to enable others to do the same.

Methodology

In narrative inquiry, the telos is inexplicit. It is the tacit end-in-view that drives the inquiry. The writing in personal narrative inquiry is therefore not arbitrary, but develops within the writing and within the dynamic of the writer's life. One might compare it to a quest that presses for acknowledgement through inquiry. (Conle, 2000)

When I first encountered action research of the living theory variety, I knew that there was a connection to my years at seminary in theological education. I did not know how that connection would ultimately unfold. In a sense, my quest over the last 2 years was to investigate those connections. I chose narrative as the method by which I investigated the connections—through the telling of stories. However, narrative was more than the method. I maintained that narrative was the only way in which I could investigate the dynamics of my life as it pertained to theology, research, and teaching. Narrative was, therefore, also the methodological stance.

First, I wanted to examine what was the root of my reaction to the SREB. The “tacit end-in-view” (Conle, 2000) was the elusive vision that somehow the divergent parts of my life were connected. I am the offspring of a mathematician and a family therapist, a positivist theorist and an autobiographer. I started my academic career as a systems design engineer and

left that for music, theology, social work, and education. This project embodied all of those worlds. I was in conflict with positivist objective forms of ethical reasoning, and yet I used objective forms of reasoning to mount a critique. I have embodied this contradiction in my life and in my story. I am a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1993). Ironically, I maintained methodological consistency through narrative and not through critical method. I remained true to my story.

The Project Emerges

This was a project that started its life as a research project. That is, I tried to make this into a research project, but I failed. Or perhaps, it was a project with a subject of one—myself. The impetus for the project was the initial rejection of my project proposal (Appendix A). Admittedly, I wrote the proposal hurriedly and incompletely, and yet it contained the kernel of the ideas contained in this project. The questions asked by the Senate Research Ethics Board struck at the very heart of the kind of research in which I would have (and have) engaged. Plan B would have had me examine the reaction of the SREB to the proposals of my fellow students. This held promise, but came with two major drawbacks. First, I would have had to pass my research through the SREB again, and I was not sure how I felt about that. I resisted the notion, and the resistance became a block to the writing. When I decided to proceed as if I were not going back to the SREB, the project moved ahead. As part of the project, I unpacked the reasons for this resistance. Secondly, but very important, I held the words of a fellow student. She—and rightly—had reservations about allowing me to use her work in my project. If my project were to examine why one could not or perhaps should not

attempt to place personal subjective research under the scrutiny of the SREB, why would someone who was doing just that, choose to participate? Moreover, I intended to draw a connection between personal subjective research and theology, most notably liberation theologies. These were not subjects that held any meaning for my colleagues. I meant this not as a judgement of their faith, but rather as a recognition of the reality of their experiences. Liberation theologies or any other formal study of a theology was not part of their world. Theology was part of my world—part of my story—and if I wanted to tell that story, then I could not tell the stories of my colleagues. Thus, I arrived at the topic of my project. I would examine the response of the SREB to the proposal to conduct personal subjective research into my teaching practice. However, I would only use one proposal— my own. I would attempt to explain and understand my own reactions to their statements and what I believed to be the impetus for both the responses of the SREB and my own reactions.

The Structure of the Project

Every good story requires conflict, and I began by narrating the events that led up to the formation of this paper's topic. Next, the “engineer and mathematician” examined the policy document and extracted the prevailing view of how we should conduct ethical research. I then drew connections between personal subjective research on teaching and liberation and narrative theologies. This was perhaps the most difficult part of the process because the connection was so very personal and tenuous. Here I called upon the autobiographer and told some stories from my years at Seminary. Next, I moved to the present and examined the roots of the particular type of action research championed by Jack Whitehead. Here I also told some

stories that illuminated why this was an appealing methodology for me. Finally, I shared some thoughts about how we might form a personal, subjective, and narrative ethic for research.

The Conflict

Yes, there is trouble, there is tension, there is a problem and there is a solution sought.

But the solution is not the relief needed by someone who is sick or in need of care. The problem, although it may be connected to some sort of unwellness, is primarily an impetus for inquiry. In that sense, it is more like a subconscious question mark about something that is emotionally as well as intellectually interesting. (Conle, 2000)

When I first applied to Brock University's Senate Research Ethics Board (SREB) they sent my research model back for re-submission. The exchange was as follows:

I am involved in self-study. Although the study question has been defined, it will, as this is an action research study, by necessity change. It should therefore be seen as an emerging study. Nevertheless, the essential nature of the study will not change. I am reflecting upon the effect that my actions have on my class. The research participants are not doing anything that they would not do in the regular course of the year in my class. They will, however, be asked to evaluate both the class and my teaching, and that evidence will become part of the project. Observations that I make as part of my job will also form part of the evidence that I gather to document my influence within the class. The class members are participants inasmuch as they are participants in my class and have no real choice but to be there just as I have no real choice but to observe them and draw conclusions. I will be observing what I do to enable students to work

together productively. The primary focus of any questioning guides will be to determine how students feel about the classroom environment. These guides will take the form of open-ended questionnaires throughout the year(see attached) and the possible use of videotape responses made without the researcher present. Again I stress that these are normal parts of my classroom practice. Videotapes will also be used to passively record the classroom environment. The purpose of the tapes will be to determine what I as the researcher am doing to facilitate group interaction. Any further use or display of that videotape evidence would come only with the express written consent of the class members. (Application to the SREB October 2000, Appendix A)

The response of the board was terse and to the point.

Your claim that you are not doing anything beyond normal classroom practice is erroneous, as you do not normally collect information from your students for the purposes of (a) research for your own degree requirements, and (b) publication. (SREB request for re-submission, November 27, 2000, Appendix 2)

How was I to respond to this statement? I had, in fact, performed research into my classroom practice of the type suggested in the proposal, and that research had been presented and published in a limited form. True, it was not for degree requirements, but I questioned whether the impetus for the research was really central to the intent or the content. Nonetheless, something disturbed me about the way in which I felt that I was being told that I was not aware of what I was doing in my classroom and that someone or some group could define that for me.

There were also three additional areas that the SREB commented upon that again raised questions with me.

The first was the area of non-participation of students. “You need to explain what you will do with students whose parents do not provide permission to participate. What will they do while other students are engaged in activities related to the research? How will you photograph, audio-tape, and video-tape classroom activities without taping or photographing those students who are not participating” (SREB request for re-submission, November 27, 2000)?

The second area involved confidentiality. “You provide wide-ranging guarantees of confidentiality. These cannot be maintained in group-based research. Please clarify” (SREB request for re-submission, November 27, 2000).

The third area involved relationships of power. “Given the relation of power that contextualises this research, how will you ensure that students/parents do not feel coerced into participation, and how will you successfully ensure students that their participation or non-participation will not influence their academic record” (SREB request for re-submission, November 27, 2000)?

These three areas justifiably deserved careful consideration, but were the questions really appropriate to the type of research that I proposed? I had outlined a self-study research model, one in which I would self-identify, and one that was based upon my actions in my classroom. I was to be the subject of my research, but I was studying my effect upon others.

The classroom was the context of my research but not the subject of the research. The

participation of the students was fundamental to the research, and they could not refuse to participate. Levels of participation were possible, inasmuch as some students would not have their responses to me recorded, but total non-participation was not possible. Also, there were no times when the research would not be conducted. As the SREB acknowledged, it was not possible to ensure confidentiality when the subject of the research self-identifies, and this could not be resolved.

Finally, the relationships of power within the classroom were central to the research study. It was those relationships that I wanted to study. Power was at the core of any teaching relationship, whether it was power over, power to, power with, or empowerment.

In light of these conflicts, I revised my questions. My questions became: What is wrong with this picture? Why are these questions being asked about this research? Why must I fit my research into this model? Where is the source of the conflict between these two models — my research and the model suggested by the questions of the SREB? Why is it that I feel the conflict so acutely?

The statements of the SREB and the document that spawned the existence of the SREB suggested that research was best carried out apart from the practice that may be the object of the study. This was a classic objective stance. The observed was believed to be separate from the observer, and much effort was expended to ensure that the relationship remained separate. The research model appeared to favour positivist understandings. The expectation seemed to be that the research was planned in advance through a known path. Propositions were encouraged which were then proved or disproved by empirical evidence. Theories, therefore,

informed practice. In my experience, this model of research fit the understandings of traditional “high church” theological beliefs. The Bible or theology seen as a series of propositional statements expounding knowable and absolute truths about the nature of God and humanity. We may not know the truth, but — in the spirit of the X-Files — it is “out there.” Writings such as the Ten Commandments seen as prescriptions for ethical human behaviour. Faith and action separate — albeit linked — and hierarchically related, with faith preceded and in some senses superseded action or works.

However, in my experience, there were alternate ways of understanding research. Michael Polanyi (1964) — in Personal Knowledge — “reject[ed] the ideal of scientific detachment” (xiii). Jack Whitehead (1993) took the ideas of Polanyi and created a form of research where the “I” was integral to the research. Teachers and others researched questions of the kind “How do I improve this process of education here?” (Whitehead, 1993, p. 35, 57). Not only did the research reject objectivity, it was subjective both to person and place. As teachers researched their own practice, they added to the theory and knowledge base of teaching. Practice informed theory. This understanding resonated with my own theological and faith understandings as with the theological understandings of the first liberation theologians in South America, people like Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Luis Segundo, and Paulo Friere. For these theologians, reading the Bible was not something to be done with detachment, but with a thoroughly subjective eye, embracing the understandings that arose because of who we are as readers. Truth was not external to the reader, but resided with and within. For me, in this vein, I read the decalogue not so much as a prescription for action, but rather as a description of the

community of people who believed a particular narrative about God as Saviour. Faith did not call to action, but action was the evidence of faith.

The purpose of this project was to add flesh to the skeleton of these ideas, showing how the interplay between faith, practice, research, and teaching has informed my understanding of the ethical standards for research. First, I did this to understand my own beliefs and values; second, to explain to others those same beliefs and values; and finally to suggest how we might respect and value the ethics that emerge from the stories of teachers.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TRI-COUNCIL POLICY DOCUMENT

Background

My response to the request to resubmit my initial proposal for research was emotional. I resented being told what I could and could not do in my classroom. I also felt that I was being asked to water down my research to fit it into a mould that would ultimately change my questions into someone else's. I felt keenly that the nature of the created knowledge was at stake, as well the kind of theory that would be generated (McNiff, 2000). I felt pushed in a direction in which I did not want to go.

The questions asked by the Senate Research Ethics Board were also impossible for me to answer. I was going to study how I taught my students; I could not ethically not teach them because I was researching. I was going to identify myself in my research and therefore all confidentiality was de facto breached. Finally, I saw coercion — albeit benevolent — as being at the heart of teaching. It was my job to get students to do things that they expressed little or no interest in doing, and, if they refused, it would affect their academic record. I saw my job also as getting students to want to learn what they need to know. The Senate Research Ethics Board wanted to know how I planned to deal with power relationships in my research and my emotional answer was: “That is my whole job!”

Although intellect and emotion are generally kept apart in our academic tradition (Conle, 2000), I believed that — certainly for me — emotion drove my intellect. When Michael Manley-Casimir casually suggested that it would be necessary for me to look at the document that gave rise to the Senate Research Ethics Board, I was driven to examine the Tri-

Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. I needed to know why I was asked the questions I was asked.

The Policy Document

The Senate Research Ethics Board (SREB) of Brock University was set up in response to the publication, in 1998, of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans jointly developed by the Medical Research Council (MRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The document replaced the SSHRC's Ethics Guidelines for Research with Human Subjects, the MRC's Guidelines on Research Involving Humans, and the MRC's Guidelines for Research on Somatic Cell Gene Therapy in Humans. It is important to note also that the Councils would "consider funding (or continued funding) only to individuals and institutions which [certified] compliance with this policy regarding research involving human subjects" (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.1). Thus there was significant pressure brought to bear on institutions to adopt the policies of the document.

The purpose of the document was clear and undeniably important. It was intended to address "duties to research subjects," "articulate ethical norms," "harmonize the ethics review process," express the "shared principles and wisdom of researchers in diverse fields," and finally it sought "(a) to outline guiding principles and basic standards and (b) to identify major issues, and points of debate and consensus, which are essential to the development and implementation of coherent policies for research ethics" (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical

Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.2-3). In Stuart's (1998) treatment of the document she identified the approach taken by the Tri-Council as positivistic and favouring ethical objectivism, a "principled approach . . . based on the view of people as rational beings," that was "fundamental to a research paradigm based on objectivity (p. 304)." The framework from which the document arose, showed evidence of those principles.

The Ethical Framework

The writers recognized a general need for research and the benefits that it imparted. Although there was a recognition that "knowledge sometimes benefits subjects, (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.4) the concept of research as *primarily* benefiting subjects and researchers was not recognized. The benefits of research were generally seen to be for society in general. Respect for human dignity was seen as a moral imperative, and there could be no argument against this principle. However, the writers of the document applied this principle in the light of ethical objectivism and it was with the application of the principle that I experienced the conflict. The writers translated a respect for human dignity into a refusal to "treat persons solely as means (mere objects or things)," and a "requirement that the welfare and integrity of the individual remain paramount" (*Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, 1998, p. i.5). To my mind, my research had the same goals, and indeed, since the benefits of my research were to be primarily for my students, I was more respectful of the welfare and integrity of my students than this document required. Secondly, I was engaged in research that expressly dismissed the idea of objectifying subjects. My research was designed to improve the education of my

students. They were not to be objectified as test scores or tables of attitudinal responses, but rather as specific people with specific needs and feelings and responses. I held to the spirit but not the interpretation of the document. The interpretation of what constituted respect for human dignity shaped the other principles.

Free and Informed Consent

The second principle was that of respect for free and informed consent. The paradigm was that of a researcher who knew what would happen in the research. Researchers were expected to provide a “comprehensive statement of the research purpose, the identity of the researcher, the expected duration and nature of participation, and a description of research procedures” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 2.5). Consent was wrapped around degrees of transparency and/or timing of information. Researchers could have the necessity for consent waived if the Research Ethics Board (REB) saw fit, and indeed the writers recognized that some research would require manipulation or misdirection so as to disguise the true nature of the research. However, the understanding was that at some point the researchers would make it clear to the subjects what happened. In my case, I could have argued that my research posed no risk to the students and that the project (teaching) could not have gone forward without some element of misdirection on the part of the teacher and thus did not require informed consent. However, the converse was also true in that my research required the full support of all my students, and they needed to be fully aware and involved with all parts of the project. My research also emerged over time,

the only time at which the project could possibly be fully known would be at the end. I could not inform my students of that which I did not know.

In the explanation of the ethical principle of informed consent, the writers accept that gaining consent would translate into the “dialogue, process, rights, duties, and requirements for free and informed consent” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.5). I interpreted this in light of the assumption that the research was a process. Thus the dialogue, duties, rights and requirements became part of the research model and the whole project became a process of gaining consent to continue in a journey. I saw education as a process of getting students to want to learn what they need to know — a process of gaining consent. In explaining the need for a subject-centred perspective, the writers suggested that students might be “overly influenced by such factors as trust in the researcher” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.7)” and implied that REBs should be cautious in these cases because the subjects may not have weighed the pros and cons carefully enough. When I applied this to my situation, I felt that it did not take into account the realities of teaching. I felt that the writers’ interpretation was predicated on the assumption that the benefits of the research would not be for the subjects and thus they should not be unduly coerced into a potentially harmful situation. Within that interpretation, the caution was justified. However, I saw teaching as getting students to take small or large leaps into the unknown— to embrace that which they did not know— a potentially dangerous situation. The students had to trust me, just as I had to be worthy of that trust, and it was my job to gain their trust. I believed that students learned more if they trusted

the teacher and thus it would have been irrational for me to assume that they would have participated in the research for any reason other than trust in me.

Voluntariness

Included in the principle of free and informed consent was the concept of voluntariness. Voluntariness involved the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the subjects. In this research paradigm, the role of researcher was ideally seen as separate from any other role. Not only must REBs have approved the inclusion of subjects from the classrooms of teachers but in the event that those relationships existed, researchers must have separated their “role as researcher from their roles as therapists, caregivers, teachers, advisors, consultants, supervisors, students, or employers and the like” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 2.8). To have done otherwise would have been to “abuse the trust on which many professional relations [resided]” Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 2.8). Even when a researcher held dual roles, the expectation was that he/she would have “disassociate[d] their role as researcher from other roles, in the recruitment process and throughout the project” Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 2.8). Therefore, it was understood that if the researchers held multiple roles, they would create specific times when they were solely “researchers” and the other role was not in effect. These statements made it difficult for me to envision my research as organic to my teaching. I was being pushed to see research and teaching as separate entities. Hence the SREB gained validation for their claim that I was going beyond normal classroom practice because of the

dualistic conception of research and teaching. I wanted to meld the two and claim that research was integral to my practice and thus not subject to restrictions of voluntariness. More offensive to me was the notion that, by researching, I was running the risk of abusing the relationship of trust I had with my students.

Respect for Vulnerable Persons

The principle of respect for vulnerable persons revolved around the need to protect the interests of those deemed incapable of making fully informed decisions on their own. The writers placed children in a border category and recognized that they may be able to make informed decisions as their competence was in the process of development. I felt that my job was predicated on my respect for vulnerable persons, namely my students. It was my job to develop their ability to make informed and correct choices. Moreover, I was in a position of trust where my subjective conception of a correct choice was accepted. I believed that the profession of teaching relied upon the ability of all groups involved in education to trust the integrity of teachers. This was not to say that all teachers were de facto trustworthy. However, it was to say that the system could not operate in an atmosphere of mistrust.

“Privacy [was] a fundamental value, perceived by many as essential for the protection and promotion of human dignity” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 3.1). Where personal information was being shared, the policy advocated anonymity as the “best protection of the confidentiality of personal information” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 3.2). The policy stated that “data released should not contain names, initials or other identifying

information” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 3.4). I felt that this was further evidence that research was to be viewed as opposed to human dignity, having value only in its application to wider society and not to the subjects or participants. The idea that subjects or participants might demand that personal information be published did not appear to have been considered. I also felt that applying this demand stringently would make it virtually impossible to carry out any self-study research where third parties were involved.

The last important principle was that of balancing harms and benefits– non-maleficence and beneficence. The possible harms of research were generally seen to arise from the research itself, whereas benefits were seen to accrue primarily “for society and for the advancement of knowledge” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.6). This further suggested the assumption that research caused harm to subjects unless it could be shown not to do so. Also, the balance of harms and benefits pitted society against the subject. If the benefits to society (and that was where most benefits accrued in this paradigm) were great, then, with informed consent, research could inflict some harm upon subjects. As long as the researcher had attempted to minimize harm by using the smallest number of subjects with the smallest number of tests, the research was allowed to proceed. I wanted to argue for the consideration of harms arising from not doing research. If the benefits were profoundly in the subjects’ favour, would it not be unethical not to research?

The SREB clearly stated that the principles outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans were those that would guide research at Brock University.

Researchers must be guided by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans issued jointly by the Medical Research Council, The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. This document contains a detailed discussion of the procedures to be followed in research involving humans. Researchers must be familiar with the guidelines contained in this document. (Brock University: Faculty Handbook, 1999, 8.2)

The document quoted directly from the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and laid claim to the principles that were outlined above. Thus it was clear that the model of research put forth by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans was the same as that advocated by Brock University.

Taken together, I believed that it was possible to articulate the ideal research model supported by both Brock and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. The purpose of outlining this model was not to claim that the model was wrong, but rather as an exercise to show how it did not fit with my concept of research.

The Ideal Research Model

1. The researchers showed the highest regard for human dignity and weighed all the ethical principles to arrive at a balance so that, as much as possible, they protected the bodily, psychological and cultural integrity of their subjects. Care was taken to ensure that the conclusions reached by the researcher in the course of the project were reasonable and defensible.
2. The researchers knew precisely what would happen in the research and they fully disclosed the nature of the research to the subjects. In the event that the researchers did not fully disclose to the subjects, they still fully outlined the nature of the research to the REB in order to defend their position against full disclosure.
3. All the subjects chose to participate in the project/research of their own free will. They were able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or repercussions. The subjects had no relationship with the researchers so that no coercion was implied or inferred.
4. The researchers did not fulfill any role other than researcher with respect to the subjects. It would have been possible for the research to have been conducted by anyone, given the model outlined by the primary researcher.
5. The researchers went to great lengths to ensure that the research did not violate any obligations to vulnerable persons. Children, or other persons who did not have, or were developing competence, had their participation authorized by a third party who received full disclosure about the research.

6. All elements of the research were anonymous. Nothing in the data contained information that could be linked to individuals. The data that was released did not contain names, initials or other identifying information.
7. The researcher balanced the harms and benefits of the research. The benefits to society far outweighed any harms that accrued for the subjects. The harms to the subjects—if any—were minimal, and minimized.

The Assumptions of the Research Model

In my view, this was a fundamentally pessimistic view of research. The fact that decisions had to be “reasoned and defensible” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.5) showed that the “chapters [in the history of research on human subjects] on the misuse or serious abuse of research subjects” loomed large in the minds of the writers of this document Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 5.1). And indeed they should have. Nothing in this analysis should be taken to imply that the principles stated in the document were misguided. It was just that I saw them as assumptions that did not hold for all research models. There were other ways to view research, ones that did not hold to such a negative view of research relationships. I saw ethics guidelines as being set up, in part, to protect the institution and the researchers from legal action stemming from the practice of research (Tilley, 1998). Not all research models required the same degree of protection.

Ethical guidelines protected researchers because research was often seen as something that researchers do to subjects. The researchers were expected to know, as much as could be

foreseeable, what was to take place in the research. Methods, procedures, questions, and harms were known and were, ideally, disclosed to the subjects. I saw this as assuming that research was inflicted upon subjects. Thus harms had to be minimized because research was, in effect, a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. Too much harm, and the subjects would not participate. Since the subjects were seen as in control of themselves (i.e., they could leave whenever they wanted) but not in control of any elements of the research, their voluntary participation had to be vigorously protected since it was the only option left for them. On the other hand, my research required the voluntary participation of all my students as part of its design. My method of teaching centred upon negotiation. I had to negotiate a research/teaching model that was, as much as possible, acceptable to all my students since it was the only option available to me. I was not in full control of the research, although I might lead the process.

Bound up in the assumption of complete researcher control was the idea that the benefits of the research would be for society. Although the writers appeared to conceive of times when benefits would accrue to the subjects, the general situation produced benefits for society. (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. i.6) I felt that when research was seen as something that was inflicted, it was natural to assume that some subjects would experience some psychological harm simply because they chose to put some aspect of their life under the control of another person.

Along with appearing to present a pessimistic world view, this research model was undeniably objective in mode. When the document referred to the need for researchers to “disassociate their role as researcher from other roles” (Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical

Conduct for Research Involving Humans, 1998, p. 2.8) the writers showed the interplay of these two views. They recognized the inevitability of power relationships, but they did not offer a way past those relationships. Since the researcher was seen to have complete power in the research, there was no way to justify the mingling of two power relationships in the same person. The document did not appear to support researchers who were not in control of the research process, thus relinquishing the research aspect of their power.

The other danger inherent in the dual roles was conflict of interest. The answer to the problem of conflict of interest was to eliminate the conflict. The assumption here was that conflicts of interest could be eliminated through maintaining distance in the research. Subjectivity was seen as a hindrance to research, but it assumed that subjectivity can be eliminated. A view of research such as Whitehead's that harkened back to Polanyi (1964) could not be based on the assumption that subjectivity could or indeed even should be eliminated. For me, my subjectivity was the core of my research. I acknowledged my biases, but I did not try to eliminate them.

Finally, this research paradigm exacerbated the divide between theory and practice; between research and teaching. As Schön (1987) so rightly pointed out, "practice is a confounding environment in which to experiment." The writers of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans favoured a model of control because they demanded to know the research process before it began. They had to minimise any forays into the realm of practice. I felt that I could not research and teach at the same time because my teaching was my research, and my teaching was a journey with an undefined

ending, based as it was on negotiation and student input. I could not know what my students would learn before I taught them.

Assumptions about Life

In addition to the positions negating the personal, subjective narrative, two assumptions that I saw as inherent in the document held particular interest for me because they conflicted with assumptions that I held about life. The divide between research and teaching struck me as similar to theological dualism as expressed in the faith/works debate. Secondly, the movement away from subjectivity paralleled the debate between liberation theologies and systematic theologies. I disagreed theologically with the position of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and I had to explore that disagreement.

CHAPTER THREE: FAITH AND WORKS

“True evangelical Faith cannot lie sleeping, for it clothes the naked, feeds the hungry and comforts the sorrowful.” – Menno Simons

My faith cannot be separated from my life. If an action I undertake threatens to violate firmly held beliefs, then the question inevitably becomes theological in nature. This is not a statement about how the world should be, or how it is for others, but simply a statement of how it is for me. This is my story.

My Story

I am a Christian, an evangelical, and a Mennonite. I am not evangelical in the sense that I need to work only with Christians, or that I feel the need to convert all who are around me to my way of thinking. I do believe that I must show through words and actions that I am Christian. I spent 2 years studying for pastoral ministries at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (now Seminary) in Elkhart, Indiana. After I left, I worked first with Canadian Aboriginal peoples and then as a community development worker in a low-income apartment complex. I held these positions through various Mennonite church organizations. I will tell stories from these experiences that illustrate the nature of my faith. I hold to theological and ethical positions concerning the personal, subjective, and the narrative and the integrated nature of faith and practice that explain, to a certain extent, who I am and why I reacted to the statements of the SREB.

Personal Faith

Mennonites were not Protestants in the strict sense of the word. We were the product of the Radical Reformation, a parallel movement to Luther's reformation. Among other things, Mennonites rejected the notion of the State Church and advocated a radical separation of Church and State. Along with this separation came the fundamental notion that faith was not mediated but personal. They taught believers to read the Bible since it was vitally important that everyone have direct access to the revelation in the Bible. We believe in the priesthood of all believers. Mennonite churches are not set up hierarchically. There are no layers between the people and God, and no one needs to intercede for another before God. One struggle faced by my wife and other Mennonite pastors is the lack of a priestly understanding of the pastorate. We have not seen the pastor as a mediator or a conduit between the people and God. Structurally, the triangle that represents the church — if there is one — is inverted. The people are at the top, and the pastor is underneath and is accountable to the church to present their understanding of the faith. The model is one of servant leaders and not of a channel of revelation from God. No one can claim to be more ethical or holy than another. I do not need anyone to mediate my faith for me. Universities are remnants of the State Church in the middle ages and reflect that hierarchical understanding of life. They understood that the leaders of the university were closer to God than the people and understood revelation better. I do not believe this. An institution may in fact be right in the views that it expounds, but it is not more right because it is an institution. A single person has the right to question the views of the many, and, in the eyes of God, both views are on equal footing.

The SREB, backed up by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans laid claim to know what constituted ethical action. They are neither right nor wrong because of the multitude of people supporting their views. If what they are asking me to do concerns my understanding of what is right or wrong, then my understanding of what is right for me to do is equal to theirs. I am not making the claim that the views of the SREB or the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans are wrong or misguided, only that they do not work for me. Their ideas do not fit with my firmly held belief that I have the right and the ability to decide what is right for me. I made the choice not to undertake research within the university because I could not accept that the university could tell me what was ethical behaviour. To do so would mean that I would have to accept the beliefs that under girded the statements of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and those statements were also contrary to my world view.

A Higher Power

For some people that I have met, the term Mennonite conjures up images of black robed people in horse-drawn buggies. Although this image is accurate to a point — the “Old Order Mennonites” do still exist — the picture is not complete. The buggies of the Old Order Mennonites are emblematic of a belief — held by all Mennonites to a greater or lesser degree — that we are to be in the world but not of it. The understanding is that Christians are of the Kingdom of God and answer to a higher power than any of this world. In effect, this means that the actions of Christians are to be consistent with the understandings of faith first.

When I was in high school, I went on a hay ride with other youth from mine and surrounding churches. Many boys on the wagon were strong farmers, well used to throwing hay bales for hours on end. As often happens with hay rides, a car with a group of older boys chose to “buzz” the wagon, racing by at high speed. When this tactic had little effect, the car stopped in front of the wagon, and three or four drunk individuals approached us. The strangers jumped up on the now stopped wagon and went on to challenge anyone and everyone to a fight. An assailant even tore the shirt of a leader in an attempt to urge him to fight. Had my friends chosen to, they could have beaten these boys to a pulp. They amazed me: as someone that had not been brought up as a Mennonite, I found it hard to comprehend my friends’ ability to resist the urge to fight. All these boys would say was, “We will not fight,” over and over again. Eventually the other boys left because they could not get any satisfaction from their victims.

This story left an indelible mark upon me. In my mind, my friends had just cause to fight. No one would have faulted them for beating up these fools who had endangered the lives of so many people. They deserved to be taught a lesson. However, for Mennonites, there are no “just wars.” The Martyrs’ Mirror, a collection of stories of the early Anabaptist Martyrs, tells the story of Dirk Wilms who was running from two men who had accused him of being a heretic. As they ran across a frozen pond, one pursuer fell through the ice and began to drown. Dirk turned back and pulled the man from the water, upon which they arrested and subsequently burned him at the stake. Stories such as these were ingrained in the minds of my friends. The Bible said to turn the other cheek, to love your enemies, and do good to those who

would hurt you. Hurting someone was therefore not right even to the point of allowing harm to come to someone. This truth applied even if your action threatened your own life. The question was not whether the action was justified in the eyes of the world, but whether it was justified in the eyes of God.

As I reflected upon these and other stories in the light of the statements of the SREB, I realized that I had to abandon my plans to do research. I was not answerable to the university. I was answerable to God and the understandings of faith. I could not abandon those understandings of faith even to pursue academic goals. I realized that some of my colleagues might suggest that I was accusing them of “copping out” by choosing to pursue research ideals. I could not change that understanding. I can only say again that it was not right for me. I do not have a religious life and an academic life. There is only one Kingdom for me, and that is the one of faith. There is no expediency and no room for understanding that some areas of my life do not fall under the purview of faith. I believe in the fundamental integration of life.

Integration of Life

The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans was based on a positivistic view of the world (Stuart, 1998) and as such represented what Schön (1987) saw as a separation of theory and practice. Theologically, I could not hold to that fundamental dichotomy. Only one kingdom was important for me — the kingdom of God. I could not believe one thing and act oppositely. I saw the split between theory and practice as symbolic of a split between faith and works, and for me, these two are not split.

In 1987, I went to Elkhart, Indiana to study at Goshen Biblical Seminary one of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (AMBS) — since joined with Mennonite Biblical Seminary into Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Here I came to understand the nuanced view of faith and works evidenced in the quotation from Menno Simons at the head of this chapter.

Faith is often considered a personal internal system of beliefs about a deity, or about how the world should be, or about how one should act in the world. It is not generally considered to be the actions that one undertakes as a result of faith. For many, these are the works of faith, but not faith itself. For Christians, those who hold to a separation of faith and works tend to emphasize verses such as the one from Ephesians 2:9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God— not the result of works, so that none may boast (New Revised Standard Version). For the writer of Ephesians, our actions — or works — do not gain us salvation. Salvation comes as a gift from God to those who believe that Jesus Christ is the vehicle of salvation. Thus no one can be more righteous or worthy than another.

As Mennonites, we hold on to the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5-6 — the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus calls the believers to a higher standard than simply attending to the letter of the Law. The law says that we should not murder, but Jesus likens anger and insult to murder, placing them on the same plane (Mt 5: 21-23). Here we find the basis for the refusal to take oaths. Jesus tells us simply to agree or disagree. Our “yes” is a yes and our “no” is a no (Mt 5:37). All responses are placed on the same level. A verbal agreement to do something is

no different from a signed contract in the eyes of God. We have emphasized also the understandings of faith and works found in James. “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you say to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith without works is dead (James 2:14-17, NRSV). For James — and subsequently for Mennonites — there is an interplay between faith and action. While we are still “justified” by what we believe — our faith — we must show our faith through our actions in a sense to show that our faith exists.

Thus the argument sways back and forth. On one side are those who see a separation between faith and works and can be faulted for inconsistency. They may appear to contradict the tenets of their faith in their actions. They appear to separate the world of Faith from the world outside, and yet they live and act in both. Emphasis is placed upon a core of firmly held beliefs with the understanding that living them in the world is not always possible. On the other side are those like me who also hold that there are two kingdoms, one of the world, and the other of God. However, we are to live only in one. It is this radical separation of Church and State that led to the persecution of early Anabaptists for their refusal to baptise and thus register their children for baptism and the draft. Nonetheless, modern Mennonites suffer from the criticism that we emphasize works over faith and focus only on actions. Thus some Mennonites criticize the Mennonite Central Committee for removing the words “In the name of Christ” from aid packages when workers feel that those words might offend the recipients.

For me, the dichotomy became real while taking a course in urban ministries in Washington DC while I was a student at a Mennonite Seminary. The course was in two parts, in the morning we spent the time in lectures, primarily from a prominent pastor in the area, who, although he did not in fact work with some the poorer member of the urban environment, did have significant experience in evangelism and had extensive contacts in the DC area. The afternoons and evenings were spent visiting and interacting primarily with people who were poor and homeless and with those who worked with them. At one church, a rich benefactor provided practically all of the funds required to operate a large soup kitchen. Three things in particular struck me about that church's ministry. First, the pastor required the people to attend a church service before breakfast, and those that did not attend were required to wait until all had eaten before they were allowed into the meal. Second, the food was often substandard, and some of us found it impossible to serve the obviously mouldy bread. Finally, some younger members of our group felt that they could not criticize the church because the pastor was from the same racial group as many recipients of the service. Not so for me and some of my colleagues. One — a peace worker from Northern Ireland — went as far as to call "demonic" their practice of segregating the people based on their willingness to participate in the service. I remember silently cheering on one proud man who refused to cooperate with the service even if it meant getting scraps for food.

In my view, the church's insistence on the practice of faith without the accompanying belief on the part of the homeless people implied that those who refused

to believe might just as well starve. It is all very well to suggest that “spiritual food” is more important than material food, but that is easier to say when you are not hungry. In my eyes, the food from the church — food that came without cost to them — was merely being used as a vehicle to coerce empty words of faith from the recipients. There appeared to be little if any understanding that the coercive action and indeed the quality of the food was antithetical to the message of the Gospel.

The other side of the argument — if I can so term it — came from a church in an area known for prostitutes. The pastor was working with the cooperation of some members of the church and the tolerance of others. They had opened their basement as a shelter for homeless people against the cold of winter. They lined the room with cots and mattresses, and they were full to capacity every night. Nevertheless, for him, the crowning achievement was that he had managed to get the church to unscrew the pews from the floor of the chapel so that prostitutes could sleep on the floor of the room where they held communion in the mornings. His goal was to detach the pews in the sanctuary as well. This pastor was rough, his language did not fit the stereotype of a pastor, and some questioned whether he had any faith at all. Yet his actions were consistent with a commitment to bringing the good news to everyone despite their station or their expressed beliefs.

Neither of these two pictures is perfect. There are strengths and flaws in both views, and yet I find myself drawn to the side that puts faith and action together. More particularly, I felt that the morning lectures — removed, as they were, from the context

of our afternoons — became irrelevant. The lecturer attempted to codify, to reduce, to parcel ministry into a series of definable segments. Everything was to be neat and tidy and understandable. In the end, I came to the realization that, for me, the carefully chosen words of the lectures with their cogent theological arguments could not make up faith, even though they were true to the Biblical record. Faith was in the smoky church basement, sleeping with the homeless — prostitutes, mentally ill, poor — working out a messy Gospel.

There are measurable standards against which we can place our faith. We can measure the extent to which our beliefs conform to these linguistic standards, but this will not make us faithful. The test of faith is not in the statements, nor even in the intent of the believer. It lies in the actions of the person. Not what should I do, or what will I do, but what do I do.

After leaving the seminary, I accepted a volunteer position with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) working at a Friendship Centre for Aboriginal peoples in Northern Ontario. This Centre had been set up by two groups of people, one native to the area, and one from farther away. The two groups were not in agreement about how they should operate the centre. Only one group contacted MCC and requested assistance, and some members of the other group boycotted the centre as a result. When I arrived, I was not aware of the conflict. As I worked with the people at the centre, I realized that one problem was that they were not getting the necessary government funding for their venture. Very soon after coming, I found that the approval of another organization was crucial to any funding application — the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship

Centres (OFIFC). The OFIFC was a strong, Aboriginal-run organization whose mandate it was to oversee the formation of, and recognize the individual centres. It became apparent to me that since our centre had not contacted the OFIFC, and was not recognized by them, they would probably not get funding. I also felt that the OFIFC would only help the centre if they dealt with the infighting. I came to a position where I could no longer justify my presence in the Centre. I believed that I had an ethical duty to help, and, indeed, they had asked for and still wanted MCC's help. Simultaneously, I felt that my presence enabled the community to hold on to the notion that they were progressing toward the goal of a Friendship Centre without having to deal with the problems that would prevent that goal. My help was not helping. I embodied a contradiction, and once I came to that realization, I needed to find a way past it. I eventually had to leave the Centre as I could not see that way past.

To be able to say that I wanted to help, my actions had to be helpful. It was not only that my belief informed my actions; it was that my actions were my beliefs. The term "embodiment" comes closest to describing the relationship. Faith is not linguistic but embodied in a person. Thus I see theory as embodied in the practice of the person, hence the "living theory" (Whitehead, 1993). When the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans expected that I cordon my research off from my practice in discrete time periods, I felt that they were forcing a false dichotomy, suggesting that we must create theory apart from those who embody the theory.

Narrative Faith

My research had to include my stories, but how was it that narrative became an issue of faith? The SREB had raised the question of ethics, and ethics were, for me, based on stories.

One of my most meaningful courses in Seminary was one in ethics. Although we read many ethicists and theologians and became familiar with ontological, teleological, absolute, relative, and other forms of ethical reasoning, the focus of the course was essentially personal. For the final assignment, the professor required us to outline, in three to five theses, how we arrived at our ethical norm. In other words, rather than dealing with issues, we had to decide the manner in which we dealt with issues. What was the process we would use to decide what was ethical action? My first thesis was that my ethical action arose as a response to a gift from God.

I believe in a story — a story of a people of faith contained in the Bible. It is a personal story but not an individual story. It arises out a community. It is the belief that I continue in that particular story that creates within me the necessity to act in a manner true to the story. In the Old Testament, ethical norms such as the “ten commandments” are prefaced by the phrase, “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. . . .” (Ex. 20:2,3, NRSV) therefore you shall have no other gods before me. Therefore, there will be no murder; therefore, there will be no stealing, etc.. If I believe that God was the deliverer from Egypt, then I will act according to these commandments. But more, these statements describe the community that believes in the story of God as the deliverer. Rather than prescriptions, I see the decalogue as a description of the believing community. I believe,

therefore I do. My faith is a narrative faith, based on a story of the community of faith, with actions arising from the history of the people. For me, we embody ethics in the stories of the faithful community.

Subjective Faith

It seems self-evident that within an understanding of faith as personal and narrative, I should see faith as subjective. However, there is another piece of the puzzle of my faith, and that is the integration of liberation theologies.

One winter day at the seminary, we awoke to find a pile of large snowballs created by some Canadian students in honour of one of the infrequent Indiana snowfalls. The sign by the clump read “Let justice roll down like snowballs” in reference to the passage in Amos that reads: “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (5:24, NRSV).

The Mennonite Church, along with being an historical peace church, has a strong view of social justice. When I was at Seminary, liberation theologies were finding their way into the curriculum of some schools. At AMBS, some faculty and students resonated with the call for justice inherent in the formation of liberation theologies in Central America. Several students and faculty members had lived and worked in South and Central Americas, and Daniel Schipani, a professor of Christian Education — himself from South America — had worked with and written his dissertation on Paulo Friere. As a result, we encountered strong advocates for liberation theologies, ones who knew of what they spoke.

Liberation theologies were in the class of critical theology and, particularly in the earliest form from South America, paralleled some conflicts evident in the origins of Anabaptist faith. Like Anabaptists, liberation theologians moved against the authority of the church by reinterpreting scripture in the light of the experiences of the poor. There was a profoundly subjective view, reading scripture as providing a preferential option for the poor. Liberation Theology accepted that we read the Bible in ways that reflect who we are as people and our experiences. In essence, Liberation Theology put the “I” into Biblical interpretation. Paulo Friere took his faith as the impetus to bring literacy to the poor and illiterate in his native Brazil. Friere’s addition to the complex mix was his call for “praxis” or the spiral of action and reflection (1970).

Juan Luis Segundo appropriated German theologian Rudolf Bultmann’s “hermeneutic circle” to describe the “continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal (1976, p. 8). He described the preconditions and factors necessary for fashioning such a circle as:

...(1) profound and enriching questions and suspicions about our real situation; (2) a new interpretation of the Bible that is equally profound and enriching. These two preconditions mean that there must in turn be four decisive factors in our circle. Firstly there is our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion. Secondly there is the application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular. Thirdly there comes a new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, to the

suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account. *Fourthly* we have our new hermeneutic, that is our new way of interpreting the fountain head of our faith (i.e., Scripture) with the new elements at our disposal. (Segundo, 1976, p. 9)

The theologian working to create a hermeneutic circle began with the subjectivity of personal experience and used it as the impetus to construct a new understanding of the text (here the Bible). In the hermeneutic circle, action came before reflection, and subjectivity was valued. Practice, therefore, informed and created theory. When theory or theology did not match with experience, then theory changed. The relativistic nature of liberation theologies caused consternation for many students and faculty members. The idea that theology was not absolute and unchangeable was objectionable to some. However, in liberation theologies, I found a basis for subjectivity in faith. Who I was as a believer could be included as a legitimate question of faith. I began to ask the question; “What do my actions say about who I am as a believer?” This was, in effect, the praxis question. It combined both ethical action and the reflection upon that action, leading to changed action. The Liberation theologians also put the “I” into Biblical interpretation. Rather than the objective view of a theology, which suggested that knowing the essential nature of God apart from who we were as people was possible, Liberation and other critical theologies recognized a subjective interplay between the reader and the text. There was an “I” reading the text, and that “I” viewed God and revelation in a particular way, based on the story of that particular “I.”

As I approached research with this subjective understanding, I realized that the value in the understanding that I brought to the practice of teaching. My individual practice could create a theory of teaching. Liberation theologians were not speaking to the world when they created their theology. Their theology was for themselves (Segundo, 1976). Every year, a group of women in the Mennonite church organizes a conference called “Women doing Theology.” Like liberation theologians, they see theology as an action, not as a study. Individuals undertake actions; they are personal. The stories of individuals embody their actions and their beliefs and theories. Individuals do their theology; they do their theory. Theory and practice; faith and works are inextricably bound together. My faith dictated that my research should be a personal subjective narrative that embodied my theories of teaching in my practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHING AND RESEARCH

“First and foremost, we see teaching as inquiry. In other words, teaching is researching”

(Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 1,).

In classic chicken and egg fashion I tried to decide which came first — research or teaching. Cole and Knowles (2000) put into words what I had perhaps known already — that research and teaching were parts of a whole, inextricably linked. Theologically, I could not accept the division of faith and works, and as a result, I felt that the division of theory/research and practice was suggesting the same duality. I had already undertaken classroom research, and indeed the completion of an action research project marked my most successful year of teaching to date. The power of that explicit venture into research opened a whole world of possibilities for me. I realized for myself what Schön (1987) termed “reflection on reflection-in-action,” that intellectual activity of symbolizing and verbalizing the tacit knowledge and artistry that is teaching. I used the written presentation of that research as a palette with which to paint a picture of my concept of researching and teaching. I took the following passages from that presentation.

Embracing Subjectivity

What matters to me is creating an atmosphere of joy of learning in my class. I want students to feel that they want to come to school. I believe that students will choose to fulfil the expectations of the curriculum if they feel happy and safe. My goal is to make them happy and safe. I believe that I exert my personality on my class. I want to model an attitude of caring and friendship. It is only possible to learn in a class if you are

physically and emotionally present. School is about assessment and evaluation, but people are not about this. They are not assessed unless they accept the assessment. They do not learn except that they choose to learn. They must want to be there and must accept the evaluation/assessment. They will accept when the classroom is theirs and the curriculum is theirs. When they choose to learn the curriculum, there is not enough to teach. School is not about teaching, it is about teachers, individual people who have a effect on individuals and groups. I teach because I know who I am, and I pass that on to my students. – Personal journal, February 2000

Envisioning the Ideal

I envisioned a classroom where students asked “can we do math now?” I wanted to see students creating their own assignments and creating the rubrics and assessment tools to evaluate those assignments. I wanted to see a classroom where students began to work without being told. I wanted to see a classroom where students managed their time to complete the work that they needed to do within their own schedule. I wanted to see students who were comfortable in the classroom, who felt that it was part of their “real world” because we addressed issues in ways that were relevant to them. I envisioned a class where students felt that learning was a natural activity, because it was enacted in ways that valued them for who they were, and for how they chose to live. I envisioned a class where students made choices, but nonetheless chose to make learning choices. I envisioned responsible students. — Action research project presentation, June 2000

The impetus for my research was emotional in character. Polanyi (1964) made the argument for the intellectual passions. I paid attention to the issues in my classroom that held emotional sway. By following my emotions I could decide which were the paths of intellectual beauty (Polanyi, 1964). My research was based upon an emotional response, and it addressed emotional issues such as joy and comfort, but it also addressed issues of curriculum and assessment. The key was that I increased the relevance of the research— both to me and to others— because of the passion with which I could present the issues. This was not simply a passion for a subject, but a recognition that the passion enabled me to address the issues of greater importance (Polanyi, 1964). This is the first key point in the argument for practitioner research. The emotional engagement of the researcher, rather than tainting the research, makes the research more relevant to the profession.

My research was not into a curriculum area although it involved curriculum. It was driven by an emotional response to the voices in the world that would have us believe that young people are not longer responsible. I focussed on an area that I felt was a particular strength of mine — making the responsibility for learning more explicitly the students' task. Most important, I made the assertion that “I teach because I know who I am, and I pass that on to my students.” This made my teaching and my research an autobiographical project based on the belief that what went on in my classroom was an expression of who I was, my values and beliefs (Cole & Knowles, 2000). These were all personal and subjective reasons. No external researcher could have studied these issues in my teaching and arrived at the same

results because they could not be me. My research gained value because it was subjective, not in spite of its subjectivity.

Emergent Design

A spiral began to emerge in the interactions between me and my students. As they took more responsibility for their behaviour, I could become more creative in my lesson planning. Armed with the knowledge that they would choose to work, I began to structure lessons based on activities that would increase learning, not those that would maximize control. When I could see that they were choosing to work I became less concerned about social talk in the classroom. Following from my belief that the classroom is the real world, I do not often discourage talk. Times of silence in a classroom, as in the “real world” will emerge when silence is necessary and appropriate. If they can accomplish the task while talking about your pet dog, why not talk about your pet dog? By allowing talk, I feel that I have made the classroom more comfortable and welcoming. The question then became: How can I refocus the talk within the classroom? At this point, my quest for responsibility became the quest for a social constructivist classroom. — Action research project presentation, June 2000

By accepting the autobiographical nature of action research, I accepted its narrative nature and thus the end became indistinct (Conle, 2000). When I began, I did not know where I would end. I embodied the belief that “the act of knowing involves a dialectical movement which goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action” (Friere, 1970, p.13). This cyclical process was echoed in Segundo’s (1976) appropriation of German

theologian Rudolf Bultmann's hermeneutic circle and again in the action research process suggested by Whitehead and McNiff. For Whitehead (1993) and McNiff (2000), the research process was articulated as follows:

I reach a critical point in my practice;

I feel the need to act;

I act in a chosen direction;

I monitor and evaluate my actions;

I change the direction of my actions in the light of my evaluations.

What drove the research was not a goal or a known hypothesis to prove or disprove, but the tacit end-in-view, (Conle, 2000) the belief that answers existed, however indistinct. Schön used the example of the character Meno in dialogue with Socrates to illustrate that learning "a new artistry" requires that I "cannot in principle know what it is I'm supposed to be learning, and yet I must learn it" (1987). If I had defined even a hypothetical answer before commencing the research, I would have tainted the research by introducing the assumption that the question would remain the same. What answers there were would emerge through the process of the inquiry. Just as students could not know what it was they would learn before they learned it, neither could I know what I would find out before researching. The key to the research was to trust the cyclical process to illuminate the answers.

Values-Based

The second action I initiated was to check all homework. However, I did not make comment on the rightness or wrongness of doing homework, I simply noted if it was

complete. I wanted to create an atmosphere where it seemed that the responsibility for ensuring homework completion was theirs and not mine. I was simply checking to see if they were responsible. I did not accept reasons for incomplete work because many students seemed to feel that giving an excuse absolved them of responsibility. I was not going to make incomplete work my problem. This strategy followed from my belief that learning involved choice. Coercing a child to complete work would not, in my view, foster learning. Students must choose to do homework because they want to increase their learning. — Action research project presentation, June 2000

Two issues were at play in this illustration. First, getting students to complete homework was the critical point that created the necessity for action (Whitehead, 1993). I could have chosen myriad methods to achieve the goal of getting students to complete homework. I could have enlisted the support of parents, started homework journals, or taken away recess privileges. Previously, I had used these methods and more. However, I had made a claim to hold the value of choice, and this was the second issue at play. I could not implement a method that would negate the value of choice in my practice. I did not want to create another living contradiction (Whitehead, 1993). The question was not “How does one get students to do homework,” but “How do I do it?” The key point was that I wanted them to know that they must have chosen to do their homework, not simply that it was done. I wanted evidence that my values of choice were becoming evident in my practice (McNiff, 2000).

Evidence-Based

“We didn’t do as much work, but we learned a lot.”

“I like building stuff.”

“He makes it so you can have fun and learn at the same time.”

“He is kind . . . he’s not just a teacher, he is — like — a friend.”

“It’s not just talking, it’s actually experiencing.”

“He makes us not want to miss school.”

“We’re not just kind of measuring and knowing that it works, but we’re actually making them for ourselves so that we know that it works — which is fun.”

— Students’ quotes from my Action research project presentation, June 2000

At the end of the year, I solicited responses from my students about their experience in my class. They wrote reports cards for me and gave videotaped responses. I was not present during the taping of the responses, and the only instruction I gave was that I wanted them to talk about the year. I obtained written permission to use the videotape in the presentation of my project. Although the cited quotations were very gratifying to me and showed — as evidenced by their words — that I had indeed implemented social constructivist ideals in my classroom, the actual video footage was infinitely more powerful. The video was a living testimony to the impact that my practice had on their lives (McNiff, 2000). As personal evidence attached to identifiable individuals — rather than abstracted upon a page — the evidence gained the power of personal expression. When I attached my personal knowledge of the students to the visual evidence, the power increased again. I knew that the person who did not want to miss school

had missed 75 days in the previous year. I knew that some students who claimed to “have fun” in my class had not always felt that way about school. The subjectivity of the students coupled with my subjectivity as the researcher increased both the relevance and the power of the evidence.

Narrative-Based

J literally danced a jig in the classroom today. He jumped up and down saying, "wow, I'm doing work here!" He did not want to do anything except his geography project. I have insisted that he do it himself since few students want to work with him, and the ones who do, work far less than even he. I think the combination of a focussed project with a tactile component (model) along with the realization that everything that is on his paper is his work has given him a new perspective on his abilities. As my principal said, "sometimes they pay us too much." J took his project home tonight of his own accord.”

– Personal journal December 1999

The theories developed from my research were personal and subjective, and they arose out of the stories I chose to tell about my practice. This story does not adequately portray the depth of emotion felt both by me — at seeing him work — and by him. Through the story, however, I made a claim. I claimed that I had done something that had changed the situation enough to allow this student to work. This was a story about how I improved the quality of life of one student at a particular time. From this story I developed a personal theory related to how I worked with this specific student. The theory developed within me because the story was part of me. The value of the theory was less in the opportunity for others to generalize it and more in

the fact that by calling it a theory, I made the claim that I can know something about my own educational development (Whitehead, 1993).

For Teachers and Students

I tried to reinvent my classroom in a social constructivist vein. The result was a dramatic increase in enthusiasm in the class. Granted, some students, when given the choice to learn, chose to do nothing. However, if, in fact, those students learned nothing – a doubtful premise – then how could I be sure that learning would occur if I enforced “product.” By allowing choice, I often came into my class to find them working before I got there. Choice also allowed students to engage in activities that favoured their particular learning styles. When I gave choice in some areas, I found that they more readily accepted activities that did not include choice. Thus, I could expand the learning repertoire of my students by introducing them to multiple learning styles. By allowing talk, I could walk away from situations where strong students explained concepts to weak students. Direct teaching, I found, was far more acceptable from peers than from the teacher; but it was my job to ensure that their teaching was accurate. Because I used concrete materials, I saw students manipulate integer tiles when they “should have been” reading, simply because they “didn’t get it.” By using role-play and simulations and valuing the subjective side of learning, I saw students become passionately engaged in learning situations. I did not simply create a classroom where we value some learners, and others feel left out. If students chose to learn by reading textbooks and taking notes, I did not prevent them from doing so. I simply asked that those students

share their knowledge and understandings with the class. The voices in my mind were not all silenced. I still wonder whether I should have made my students sit more, talk less, and work on the same thing at the same time. Then I remembered what S., a girl who missed 75 days of school in the previous year, wrote on her report card to me. “You make us not want to miss school.” Then I believe that I did something right. S. wanted to learn what I thought she should learn. She wanted to learn what she needed to know. — Action research project presentation, June 2000

Cole and Knowles (2000) asserted that research into practice was for teachers and students. Thus, my research was predicated on specific social goals. I wanted to improve my practice in order improve the educational experience of my students (Whitehead, 1993). The benefits of the research accrued most directly to my students and to me. I gained confidence in my own teaching, and my students got a better education. The comparative term “better” relates to the education they would have received from me had I not done research, not to any previous educational experience. If it was my ethical duty to teach my students to the best of my ability — and I believed it was — then it would have been unethical of me not to do research. I researched my practice with my students not out of a need to test a hypothesis or prove or disprove the effectiveness of a particular method, but out of a need to improve their experience. The research emerged as I remained responsive to the demands put upon it by the students. The research concept was one of researching with my students, not on my students (Cole & Knowles, 2000). The primary benefit to society that they could derive from my research was

that others might find affirmation in my account, and thus they, too, might make a claim to know their educational development (Whitehead, 1993).

CHAPTER FIVE: A PERSONAL SUBJECTIVE AND NARRATIVE

ETHIC

But all this depends on there being at the heart of the school a core of people, at least a small group of people, who are prepared to create a new kind of research presence, who want to produce experiences and knowledge which is usable by teachers. I think that's the crucial feature — that their research would be usable. That it would be engaged collaboratively with teacher, that it would be conducted on line in experience with teachers, and that it would be aimed at healing the splits between teaching and doing, school and life, research and practice, which have been so insidiously effective at deadening the experience of school at all levels. (Schön, 1987).

“I wonder if research ethics (regardless of paradigm) are only as good as the people who are researching?” (S. Drake, personal communication, July 2001)

I believe that teaching is an artistic endeavour undertaken with the input and assistance of science, not based upon positivist notions of science. Much of our discussion in the masters' cohort revolved around the person of the teacher or the individual. An emphasis on journal writing and the making of personal connections to the assigned readings fostered this discussion. In this vein, we were exposed to the influence of Jack Whitehead and his insistence on the inclusion of the “I” in the conception of research into practice (1993). This is my basis for the personal in an ethic of teacher research. Further, I believe that teaching is based on personal relationships between students and teachers. It is subjective. To explain my teaching, I need to use the stories of my relationships with my students. It is narrative in nature. When I conduct

research in this narrative, subjective and personal manner, I believe that my research becomes more relevant to my colleagues.

I am not an ethicist. However, the thrust of this project has been to suggest that the creation of an ethical norm for research on teaching is not the job of ethicists and institutions, but emerges from the personal stories of teachers. I believe that there must be room for a subjective notion of ethics specific to teacher research. Any attempt to devise an all-encompassing ethical framework exacerbates the “squeeze play” of which Schön (1987) spoke. The squeeze play operates between “resurgence of technical rationality in the university” (Schön, 1987) as evidenced by the positivist Tri-Council document (Stuart, 1998), along with the current atmosphere that supports the testing of teachers. The notion of a test for teachers presupposes the notion of the molecularization of knowledge; (Schön, 1987) the belief that there is a definable set of competencies or skills within teaching that can be measured. Further it presupposes that the acquiring of those skills or competencies is necessary and sufficient to ensure good teaching practice. When coupled with a research environment that seeks to limit the subjective and the personal within university research, we arrive at a situation where the stories and experiences of teachers are negated.

A Personal Ethic

I believe that ethics are only as good as the people doing the actions. The ethical guidelines of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans still have to be followed by the researchers. At some point, REBs need to trust that the procedures outlined by the researchers will in fact be adhered to in reality. The Tri-Council

Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans supports a research process that is known from the outset. Procedures are then outlined and certified as ethical by the REB. The procedures are not necessarily dependent upon a person; anyone following the outlined procedure can theoretically carry out the research. Any changes to the process need to be passed through the ethical process again. This assumes that change is unlikely and unwanted, and, if research is considered a procedure to be carried out, they cannot allow secondary researchers to change it at will. However, when we see research as a journey with an undefined end, when a journey will go beyond what we can conceive of at the onset, then it is imperative that the notion of what is ethical must change to fit the new circumstances. To adapt to these changes, we need to hold to the belief that the agents involved in the process can determine the ethical path while they walk it. We cannot simply acknowledge that ethical actions are dependent upon people for their completion; I believe that we need to make that the foundational stance. Teaching and teacher-research stands and falls on the ethical nature of teachers. Teaching is not a procedure, but a journey undertaken by people reflecting-in-action (Schön, 1987) on the nature of the path as they travel it. I believe in the art of teaching.

Teaching as an Art

. . . if you find yourself in a university, you find yourself in an institution built around an epistemology — technical rationality — which construes professional knowledge to consist in the application of science to the adjustment of means to ends, which leaves no room for artistry. . . . No room for these indeterminate zones of practice — uncertainty,

situations of confusion and messiness where you don't know what the problem is (Schön, 1987).

Technical rationality emerged from positivism that dictated that new knowledge be created scientifically and systematically (Schön, 1987). It was the business of the university to create theory, which then informed practice, hence the split between research and practice (Schön, 1987). Knowledge was molecularized, divided into pieces only to be reassembled to form ever more complex knowledge (Schön, 1987). Eisner traced educational research back to its social science roots. What he saw as the problem with these roots was that they did not take into account what was “unique or special about schools, classrooms, teaching, or curriculum” (1999, p.83). Teaching could not be divided into essentials and then handed out piecemeal to teachers to put together and form the teacher-proof curriculum (Eisner, 1999). We needed to see teaching as an art.

Ornstein (1999) insisted on a core to teaching that consisted of practices that produced predictable results — a science. I felt that he set up a false dichotomy between art and science. He saw art as “packed with emotions, feelings and excitement” (Ornstein, 1999, p. 71) and thus difficult to analyze. This concept of art was too narrow. Eisner (1999) offered the metaphor of a conductor to describe a teacher, and I extend that metaphor to show that art is more than feelings and emotions.

Conductors are, among other things, technicians. There are a multitude of beat patterns, baton techniques, and conducting conventions to learn. Then there is the knowledge of musical conventions, chord patterns, notation, and instrument transposition. They need to understand

the history of music and the context in which the music was created. They need to have or develop an “ear” for intonation and harmony. Finally they need to “know the score.”

Conductors must have an intimate knowledge of the music they will lead. They must draw on a tremendous amount of technical knowledge. None of these elements will make them into a conductor, and all of them are not necessary to the same extent for a conductor to emerge. However, significant gaps in any of these technical areas will preclude the creation of a conductor.

The artist conductors must put it together. They “hear” the music they are leading and apply their knowledge to understand how it should sound. They must find the interplay of notes and lines and hidden patterns in the music, some by analysis, and some by intuition. They must convey their messages to the orchestra, and then translate them into wordless motions communicating with split-second precision and timing exactly what needs to happen, and then they need to change the interpretation to meet new understandings that emerge in the performance. It is in the using of the skills that the artistry emerges, but without the techniques, artistry is not possible. Once the techniques are in place, then artistry can develop.

In the conductor metaphor we can see that art and craft are inextricably linked; both are required to a certain extent. The predictable relationships that are evident in teaching can be dealt with by appealing to craft without looking for a prescriptive relationship from science. Looking for science where it does not belong leads us back to the insignificant.

Teaching has a core of practices that we can view as allowing for good technique, or as Eisner would have it, craft. Whether this craft translates into a core of predictable scientific

techniques is doubtful. In the sense that there is a science of teaching, I believe that Eisner's sense of science as providing a framework that underlies and drives the practice is more accurate. The theoretical framework is an embodied core of values that inform and drive practice (Whitehead, 1993). This conception of science/theory is appropriate because of the multitude of student-teacher variables involved in teaching. Rather than controlling for variables to determine the effect of a teacher, we must view the effect of the teacher as taking into account all the variables and remaining effective.

The ethical framework provided by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans functions in the same way as this notion of science in teaching. The framework is helpful for considering the ethical, but it cannot adequately address all the nuances of the art of teaching and researching. Rather than trying to remove the effect of the teacher in ethical reasoning, we have instead to rely upon their ethical capabilities. We must see research and teaching as a journey, a creation emerging from the relationship between a teacher and students. A procedural framework may inform the ethical character of that relationship, but it ultimately stands and falls with the ethical character of the teacher.

A Community Ethic

Although an ethic for teaching relies upon the personal qualities of the teacher, it is not an individual ethic. When I remember the discussions that we had around the tables in our cohort group, the idea of “living one's values”— or “walking the talk” to use the vernacular — comes to the fore. Although Jack Whitehead would have us acknowledge that we are “living contradictions”— simultaneously holding values and having them negated in our practice — the

emphasis is still upon the values. On one hand, it is understandable why ethicists should want to try to control for the foibles of humans in the creation of ethical statements. If people admit that they might do things that are contrary to their values while still holding to those values, then it seems natural to want to find ways to minimize the emphasis on values and move to a more concrete set of definable standards. The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans appears to have taken this route. We can, however, take another path. Hauerwas (1981) characterizes the alternative as the following:

An ethic of virtue centres on the claim that an agent's being is prior to doing. Not that what we do is unimportant or even secondary, but rather that what one does or does not do is dependent on possessing a "self" sufficient to take personal responsibility for one's action. What is significant about us morally is not what we do or do not do, but how we do what we do. A person of virtue is often said to be a person of style or class in that he or she may well do what others do but in a distinctive manner. Nevertheless, virtue is not the same as "style"; we associate virtue with a more profound formation of the self. (p. 113)

As portrayed by the title of the book — A Community of Character — Hauerwas' ethic revolves around character.

As persons of character we do not confront situations as mud puddles into which we have to step; rather the kind of 'situations' we confront and how we understand them are a function of the kind of people we are. Thus 'training in virtue' often requires that we struggle with the moral situations which we have 'got ourselves into' in the hope that

such a struggle will help us develop a character sufficient to avoid, or understand differently, such situations in the future. (1981, p. 114-115)

Thus Hauerwas' emphasis on character and virtue is also an emphasis on craft over technique (1981). We can compare this with the emphasis of art over science in a concept of teaching and researching. What Hauerwas offers then is an ethic appropriate to a concept of teaching that emphasizes art over science. An ethic of virtue is also a personal subjective ethic. Hauerwas claims, "an ethic of virtue seems to entail a refusal to ignore the status of the agent's 'subjectivity' for moral formation and behaviour" (1981, p. 116). The ethic of virtue is a narrative ethic that "requires that one live faithful to personal history," and "to a community's history" (Hauerwas, 1981, p. 116).

It is the other emphasis of Hauerwas' ethic—that of community—that makes this ethic appropriate to teacher-researchers. "Exactly because an ethic of virtue has such a stake in the agent's perspective, it is profoundly committed to the existence of communities convinced that their future depends on the development of, and trust in, persons of virtue" (Hauerwas, 1981, p. 117).

We could apply this statement to the community of teachers. The actions of the Ontario College of Teachers, along with many other similar groups worldwide, to create standards of practice for the teaching profession are evidence of this commitment. Hauerwas claims that the move to "expurgate and deny status to the 'subjective' in moral argument and justification" stems from the "tacit fear that we lack the kind of community necessary to sustain development

of people of virtue and character” (1981, p. 117). And yet this community seems that to be forming within the teaching profession, or at least, the germ of the community is there.

Once, a teacher in the cohort group told a story and mentioned the name of a teaching colleague. The teacher drew a comparison between their respective ways of dealing with students and expressed dismay at the manner of the colleague. Several members of the cohort group, including myself, were quick to point out that the story would be inappropriate for publication without the consent of the teacher. Moreover, seeing the reference to the colleague as negative was possible; and some people made the point that the guidelines of the Teachers’ Federation proscribed the sharing of information that might negatively affect the position of a fellow member. The teacher later came back to the group to acknowledge that she had shared the story in error and that it would not be used.

This is an example of the kind of understanding that can arise out of a community of persons committed to maintaining a high ethical standard within the profession. In her PhD thesis defence, her examiners asked Terri Austin (2001) to remove certain statements that showed strong and rather negative feelings about fellow teachers. I recognize the dilemma that she articulates as it is one that is present in any research that includes stories and personal emotions. She wanted to present a real account of her practice that included both the negative and the positive; however, in doing so, so she exposed negative aspects of the practice of colleagues. While I will not deal with all of the issues involved in this account, what is pertinent to this project is her dependence on community for a view of her ethical practice. She consulted

her students, asking them whether her account was accurate. She engaged in dialogue with colleagues and members of the broader educational community (Austin, 2001). Throughout the process she engaged in research of her personal practice, but enlisted the educational community as a gauge of the validity and accuracy of her claims. Research about teaching is for teachers and students (Cole & Knowles, 2000), the ethics for the research need to come from that community.

For Teachers and Students

The basis of this research is the process — the story of the events as they occurred and the interpretation and analysis of those events by the researcher. Subjecting that process to a procedural ethic — one that places strictures on how we will conduct the research — changes the nature of the knowledge that we will create. Friere asserts that “alienated men [sic] . . . cannot overcome their dependency by ‘incorporation’ into the very structure responsible for their dependency. There is no other road to humanization — theirs as well as everyone else’s — but authentic transformation of the dehumanizing structure (1970, p. 11). If we do not question the structures — here ethical structures — that limit the practice of teacher research, then we cannot be sure that the knowledge that we create is true to the nature of teaching. If I use the metaphor of the peg in the hole, I would have to suggest that the peg of teacher research and experience represents a large round peg being squeezed through a small square hole that is the Tri-Council’s notion of ethical research. I either have to carve out the hole to fit my research, or trim the research to fit the hole. If I hold with Friere, the second option is not one that “humanizes” teacher research. If research on teaching is to be relevant to teachers and

students, then it cannot be restricted by an ethic that threatens to change the nature of the knowledge.

Narrative Ethics

My colleagues and I in the Masters' program and other teachers around the world are engaged in research into their practice. We gain an understanding of the intricacies of the ethical practice of research by listening to the stories that we choose to tell about that research. No one can fully anticipate all of the situations in which we, as teachers, will find ourselves. However, what we can share is the knowledge that we will all be involved in complex and confounding situations. As we look at the stories of others, we can gain an appreciation for the artistic ways in which teachers deal with ethical issues in the everyday carrying out of their duties.

When I read Terri Austin's story, I see that the value of dialogue guided her in maintaining validity and accuracy in her research (2001). I also see the ethical struggle she engaged in when considering how to use personal journals in her account. By itself, her conflicts around the issue do not constitute ethical guidelines. However, many teachers use journals in their accounts of their practice. Many teachers have elements in their journals that fall into the questionable category when it comes time for publication. Taken together, all these stories will begin to outline an ethical context for the use of journals. The stories of teachers as they struggle with the process of remaining caring and ethical in their relationships with their students as they research with them become the "living standards" (Whitehead, 1993) by which we judge the ethics of the projects that follow.

Teacher research can take place within the context of classrooms, focussing on the actions of individual self-identified teachers researching their own practice. As long as the teachers remain true to the values agreed upon by the community of teachers — standards derived from the stories of teachers — they can be assured that they are engaged in ethical research.

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Appendix A

Project Proposal

Classroom Culture: Working Together

Letter of Information

As part of a cohort-based program formed by Brock University in partnership with the Grand Erie District School Board I will be engaging in an action research project. The action research process focuses on answering the question, "How can I improve my professional practice?"; therefore, my research primarily involves reflection on my own teaching/leadership practice.

Written records, videotapes and audiotapes:

In my position as a classroom teacher with the Grand Erie District School Board, I collect information/data about my own professional practice for the purpose of improving it on a regular basis. As part of my research project, however, it is necessary to collect data, solicit information from students, which may go beyond usual classroom practice and may be used for publication. Audiotapes, photographs and video samples will be collected for research purposes.

All written records, video/audiotapes, transcriptions and questionnaires will remain in the possession of the researcher and will not be made available to any other person, group, or organization without the express written consent of the participants (or their parents or guardians, in the case of minors) who might appear in such records.

Following the conclusion of the project, all records will be kept securely in the possession of the researcher for a period of three years, after which time they will be destroyed by shredding or erasing.

The anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy of the student will be ensured in that a pseudonym will be used in place of their name, unless written permission is given to use the name. Since the focus of this project is on improving teacher/leadership practice, data collection involving students will only be used as a measure of teacher/leadership growth. Data will be used to assess ourselves as opposed to assessing (evaluating) students.

Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell

Revised Sept 1999
Expedited Review _____

File # _____

Full Committee Review _____

Brock University Research Ethics Board
Application for Ethics Review of Research with Human Participants

A. GENERAL INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)

1. Title of Project:

" **Classroom Culture: Working Together**"

2. Faculty Investigator(s) Department Ext. # Email

(None)

3. Faculty Supervisor(s) Department Ext. # Email

Michael Manley-Casimir Education

4. Student Investigator Department Home#/Ext # Email

Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell Education

5. Nature of the Research (please check all that apply):

- Ongoing track of research () Independent Study () Masters Thesis ()
Single study (one-time only) () Faculty Research () Honours Project ()
Doctoral Dissertation ()
Class assignment (course # and name) _____
Other (please specify) **Masters Project** _____

6. Funding Status:

Is this project currently funded Yes () No (X)

Details of funding: Agency _____

If no, is funding being sought? Yes () No (X) Agency _____

7. Has this application been submitted to any other Institutional Research Ethics Boards?

Yes () No (X)

If yes, provide name of Institution, date and decision. Attach a copy of the protocol (and approval if available). _____

8. Expected project commencement date (YY/MM/DD): **Upon approval** and expected project completion date: **01/06/30**.

B SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

1 PURPOSE AND/OR RATIONALE FOR PROPOSED RESEARCH

See attached proposal

2 METHODOLOGY/PROCEDURES

I am involved in self-study. Although the study question has been defined, it will, as this is an action research study, by necessity change. It should therefore be seen as an emerging study. Nevertheless, the essential nature of the study will not change. I am reflecting upon the effect that my actions have on my class. The research participants are not doing anything that they would not do in the regular course of the year in my class. They will, however, be asked to evaluate both the class and my teaching, and that evidence will become part of the project. Observations that I make as part of my job will also form part of the evidence that I gather to document my influence within the class. The class members are participants inasmuch as they are participants in my class and have no real choice but to be there just as I have no real choice but to observe them and draw conclusions. I will be observing what I do to enable students to work together productively. The primary focus of any questioning guides will be to determine how students feel about the classroom environment. These guides will take the form of open-ended questionnaires throughout the year(see attached) and the possible use of videotape responses made without the researcher present. Again I stress that these are normal parts of my classroom practice. Videotapes will also be used to passively record the classroom environment. The purpose of the tapes will be to determine what I as the researcher am doing to facilitate group interaction. Any further use or display of that videotape evidence would come only with the express written consent of the class members.

3 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the study (apart from myself as the researcher and focus of the study) are the students in my class. They range in age from 11-13yrs old, including both males and females, and they are my 24 students. They are not recruited but assigned to me, and I am their teacher. In a very real sense, they are only participants in that they validate, through their feedback to me, whether I have achieved the educational goals I have set for myself.

4 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The study will take place with the grade 7 class at (location removed)

5 COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

The students will not be compensated for their participation.

6 FEEDBACK TO PARTICIPANTS

At the end of the year, I thank students for taking part in my class. I make the purpose of my research transparent to my students in that I am studying how I teach. Therefore, when I explain my expectations to them, I am allowing them to enter into the research.

C POTENTIAL BENEFITS FROM THE STUDY

- 1 By participating in my research, they benefit by being able to evaluate their teacher, negotiate the nature of the learning environment. In my belief, substantiated by previous self-study, a social constructivist classroom results in improved learning by students. If they are able to interact with all students in the class, then the potential for learning is increased.
- 2 I am sharing my insights and purposeful reflections on my practice with other teachers. As more teachers make their methods and practices transparent to others, we as a society will benefit from better teaching.

D POTENTIAL RISKS FROM THE STUDY

- 1 There are no risks to the participants in this study that are created because I choose to purposely reflect upon what I am doing. There are risks associated with any learning situation, but they are not, in this case, created by the research. I believe that the fact that I am reflecting on what I am doing in the classroom will in fact minimize many of the risks inherent in learning environments.

E FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT

- 1 (See attached letter)

F PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

In the reporting of the research, the school district and particular school will not be named. One ethnic group in the school is generally found only in specific areas of the province, and therefore the group will not be identified. Names will be changed both to prevent identification as well as hide association with any particular ethnic group.

Form # 02**To Expedite or Not Expedite**Researcher's Name: **Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell**

File #: _____

Title: **Classroom Culture: Working Together**

In order to apply for an Expedited Review, the Researcher must be satisfied that the proposed studies involve no more than MINIMAL RISK. Minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater, in and of themselves, than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

The purpose of this checklist is to facilitate the review process and to identify the ethical issues with which the Committee is concerned. It is meant to be an aid for the researcher and for the Committee.

CHECK HERE:

- [**X**] THIS IS A NEW PROPOSAL.
- [] THIS IS A RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROPOSAL.
- [] THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROPOSAL.

Please check YES or NO to each of the following questions:

YES NO

7. **X** _____ Will the populations studied be defined as consisting of any of the following: **Minors (under 18)**, pregnant women, prisoners, mentally disabled? (If YES, underline all that apply.)
8. **X** _____ Will it be possible to associate specific information in your records with specific participants on the basis of name, position, or other identifying information contained in your records?
9. _____ **X** Will persons participating or queried in this investigation be subjected to physical discomfort, aversive stimuli, or the threat of any of these? (If YES, underline all that apply.)
10. _____ **X** Will the investigation use procedures designed to induce participants to act contrary to their wishes?

11. ___ X Does the investigation use procedures designed to induce embarrassment, humiliation, lowered self-esteem, guilt, conflict, anger, discouragement, or other emotional reactions? (If YES, underline all that apply.)
12. ___ X Will participants be induced to disclose information of an intimate or otherwise sensitive nature?
13. ___ X Will participants engage in strenuous or unaccustomed physical activity?
14. ___ X Will participants be deceived (actively misled) in any manner?
15. ___ X Will information be withheld from participants that they might reasonably expect to receive?
16. ___ X Will participants receive any type of compensation for their participation?
17. ___ X Will a penalty result if they decide to withdraw from the study or not participate at all?
18. ___ X Will participants be exposed to any physical or psychological risks not indicated above? (If YES, explain.)
19. ___ X Does the research involve recording of data from subjects (18 years or older), using invasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice? (including exposure to electromagnetic radiation outside visible range, x-rays, blood sampling, microwaves, etc.)
20. X ___ Does the research require voice readings or **recordings** made for research purposes?
21. ___ X Does this research require study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens?
22. ___ X Can the investigation be reasonably expected to induce stress?

Considering the above, are you applying for
Expedited Review X Full Review _____

If the committee decides that Full Review is necessary, you will be informed by e-mail immediately.

Information Letter to Participants: Classroom Culture: Working Together

Researcher: Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell, Graduate Education Dept., Brock University

Faculty Advisor: Michael Manley-Casimir, Dean, Faculty of Education, Brock University

As part of my effort to improve my teaching, I will be examining and reflecting upon my actions within the classroom this year. This year, these reflections will be written into a report that will constitute a project for my Master of Education degree through Brock University. It is very important to note that I will not be doing anything that I would not do as a normal part of my teaching in any year. However, I will be examining my teaching more thoroughly this year. I will be including your child(ren) in my research because I will be asking them to evaluate my performance as a teacher. I may wish to use some of the students' responses as part of my project. This will only be done with your consent. Some responses will take the form of videotape recordings made by students. These tapes will be for my and my supervisor's viewing only. If I want to use them in any other situations, I will ask for your written consent again. Any parents who do not give their consent at that time will not have their children's portions shown.

I will also be making observations of the classroom. Again, I will not be doing anything that I am not required to do as part of my job as a teacher. No information about our school or community will be included in the report. I will change the names of all students so that no-one can be identified. Following the conclusion of the project, all records will be kept securely in my possession for a period of three years, after which time they will be destroyed by shredding or erasing. There is no reason to believe that any harm will come to your child as a result of this study. However, I believe that the process in which I am participating will make me a better teacher, and make your child(ren)'s experience of my class more enjoyable and productive. Also, I feel that sharing this information with others will allow other teachers to learn from my experiences.

Students will not be paid for their participation in the study, and there will be no negative consequences for students who choose not to participate.

This research has been approved by representatives of the Grand Erie Board, and by the Brock University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions you are free to contact the Director of the Office of Research Studies at (905) 688-5550 ext. 4315.

Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell

The potential harms and benefits of this study and the alternatives to participation have been explained. I have read the information provided, and I understand that I am free to ask questions about the research at any point. I therefore freely consent to allow my child to participate in this study.

Name of child _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

BROCK UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Informed Consent Form

Title of Study: **Classroom Culture: Working Together**

Researcher: **Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell**

Supervisor: **Michael Manley Casimir**

Name of Student: (Please print) _____

I understand that this study in which I have permitted my child to participate will require that they respond to questions about the nature of our classroom and of the teacher. They may also be asked to record their responses on videotape. I understand that the Mr Suderman-Gladwell will be examining how he teaches, and that he may videotape the classroom for his own purposes. These responses and observations made by Mr Suderman-Gladwell will be included in the report.

This research is approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board, and the Grand Erie Board.

I understand that my child's participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw him/her from the study at any time and for any reason without penalty.

I understand that there will be payment/no payment for my participation.

I understand that there is no obligation to answer any question/participate in any aspect of this project that I consider invasive, offensive or inappropriate.

I understand that all personal data will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that only the researchers named above will have access to the data.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Brock Research Ethics Board. (File # _____)

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study, you may contact me at school 875-2291 or Professor Manley-Casimir at (905) 688-5550, extension 3710.

Feedback about the use of the data collected will be available during the month of December, 2001. A written explanation will be provided for you upon request.

I have fully explained the procedures of this study to the above volunteer.

Researcher Signature _____ Date _____

Research Question

Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate

Studies in Education

Professor Michael Manley Caismir

Faculty of Education, Brock University

St. Catharines, Ontario

October 2000

Question: How can I get students to work together?

I would like to study the nature of influence in terms of my personality and the personalities of my students and how we exert pressure to create a culture of change and learning.

Background

The circle begins 13 years ago at seminary in Indiana where I first read about the hermeneutic circle that liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo appropriates from German theologian Rudolf Bultmann. This is described as the “continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal.” (Segundo, 1976) In other words, we understand the text through our experience— we are unabashedly subjective. The preconditions and factors necessary for fashioning such a circle are:

...(1) profound and enriching questions and suspicions about our real situation; (2) a new interpretation of the Bible that is equally profound and enriching. These two preconditions mean that there must in turn be four decisive factors in our circle. *Firstly* there is our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion. *Secondly* there is the application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular. *Thirdly* there comes a new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, to the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account. *Fourthly* we have our new hermeneutic, that is our new way of interpreting the fountain head of the our faith (i.e., Scripture) with the new elements at our disposal.(Segundo, 1976 ital. in original)

To understand this, is to understand the ferment from which Paulo Friere emerged, to understand the core of action research and its place in the halls of academia. I, as a teacher, ask questions about what those outside the profession, and those that would dictate my work-life, really know about what it is to teach. I do not accept the definition of my life that others would put on it. I begin with my experience as a teacher, and it doesn't match with what is deemed important by those outside the profession. Second, I apply that suspicion to the bottom-line economics that drives our country now and the ramifications that it has for teacher education and renewal more specifically. I come to the realization that much of what is driving our economy and our education system has missed out on the very heart of teaching— the teachers and our lives. Shoenfeld (1999) speaks of the necessity of creating theories of teaching but it does not seem to occur to him to *ask* teachers what their theories of teaching are, and how they “*learn* from their teaching.” I interpret my life, not through the theories and words given by others, but through my reflections on my life in the classroom and the relationship that I have with my students and with their learning. And thus the hermeneutic circle became a spiral and I begin action research.

I believe that our world operates in a non-structural way. This is to say that although we have structures (and they are necessary), the structures do not operate apart from the people within the structures. The structures only operate inasmuch as they are dependent on the people who effect the structure. The individual "I's" are of paramount importance to any process. People are "whos" and not "whats." A teacher is a person first, not simply a warm body in front of students. My job is dependent upon *me*. Only *I* can do *my* job. I can therefore study who I am by examining the influence that I have on the people around me because I make the assumption that their actions are in some small or large part dependent upon me. In a learning context, the quality of the learning is dependent upon how I choose to share my self in the classroom. In a supervisory or consultant context, the nature of the influence I have is dependent upon how I am perceived and interpreted by those within my sphere of influence. In short, I believe that a classroom is a reflection of the personality of a teacher (for good or bad) and the personality of a school is a reflection of the personality of the principal.

However, the question goes further than simply exerting my personality upon the classroom. The students also exert a force on the classroom, and if their voice is silenced then they "speak" in subversive ways. Also, the students, teachers, and the community exert an influence on the school. Therefore, the culture of a classroom, and the culture of a school is primarily dependent upon the staff of the school, but also dependent upon the willingness of those individuals to accept the influence of parents, community and students. As a classroom teacher, my primary focus will be on the classroom culture and the ways in which I enable students to create a learning culture. I value the voice of the students in the classroom, and I want to allow them to say "I want to learn." Through past action research I studied the process of enabling that voice. I found that I was establishing a social constructivist methodology within my classroom practice. Central to the social constructivist model is the notion that knowledge is negotiated in social contexts. Now I would like to address the specific issue of racism and how it negatively affects the classroom culture.

One of the "pillars of education" is "learning to live together" (Delors, 1996) My job as a teacher includes enabling my students to live with each other. When ethnic bias (or any other bias for that matter) intrudes into a learning environment, students are no longer free to make the best learning decisions for themselves. A student may choose not to work with a certain individual simply because that individual is a member of a particular group. Whether or not the individual in question can help the student is removed from consideration. Students may also deny help to members of particular groups. Therefore, ethnic bias or racism is counter to education on two counts. First, it shows evidence that students have not learned to live together, and second, it limits the learning opportunities of students in the classroom. In this study, I am not attempting to eradicate racism, ethnic or gender bias. I simply want to enable students to make the best choices for their education without having to consider race, ethnicity, or gender as well. In a sense, I want to create a "voice of conscience" that speaks out of a sense of membership in the classroom culture.(Green, 1985) That voice of conscience speaks to the students and calls on them to work together.

Research questions

Within the main question there are contained the following questions.

- What is the effect of negative bias?
- Do I focus on behavior, attitude, or both? Which, if either, precedes the other?
- What are the limits of my influence?
- Where is the balance between the rights of students to choose working partners, and the expectation that they work with others.

Nevertheless, the bottom line in any enquiry revolves around the question: **Does this action improve student learning?** I must therefore find evidence that I have somehow changed the attitudes or the behaviours and skills of my students. This involves asking additional questions.

- How can I get students to share of themselves in a classroom context?
- How do I know that sharing improves student learning and engagement?
- How can I measure students' working together?
- How can I measure the effect that the enquiry focus has on student learning?

Data Collection Process:

As with my previous action research project, my primary data will be the voices of the students themselves. These include:

- “Start Stop continue” teacher evaluation sheets
- video tape responses (open-ended, and perhaps also with scripted questions)
- observations of student choices (level of completion and polish in assignments; level of independent work; speed of completion of well-produced work; level of peer teaching; awareness of, and adherence to expectations; quality of self and peer assessment)
- surveys and questionnaires on specific experiences in the classroom (start and end of the year)
- Use of TAP groups to effect and gauge student sharing
- student journals
- personal journal

Alternate methods

- voices of colleagues (Principal)
- outside examination of video evidence

Testing the validity

Validity has always been the sticking point for me with respect to self-study. I believe that what I do makes a difference, but does my knowledge make it a reality? I lean toward the empirical when I ask the question: How do I know that my way is a better way of doing teaching? I have come to accept that the “I” in my research means that the validity and relevance of my research starts and to some extent ends with me. I am examining the best way for me to teach. I am trying to teach in a way that best exemplifies the values that hold in life. My findings are valid because they lay bare the intricacies of my life as a teacher, and my relationship with my students. If, by entering into my life, someone else can find a meaning that speaks to them and their practice then my work has achieved a greater end. However, it is enough that my research enable me to say: “I believe that I teach as the best teacher I am.” To me, this is the highest standard to which I strive. If my research enables this goal, it is valid.

More specifically, however, issues of validity address the questions (McNiff, Lomax, Whitehead, 1996):

- Do my explanations make sense?
- Is there sufficient evidence to make these claims?
- Have I communicated my values to the class and to the audience?
- Is the research authentic by which I mean does it answer a question worth asking?

Further, issues of validity address questions such as those raised by Eisner (1996).

- How will I display what I have learned? What evidence will be taken as showing that the students shared in creating the culture? How will such evidence be presented?
- What forms can I trust? Which data is too “tainted” by my influence to truly show what students feel and not what they feel I want to hear? How can I remove some of the barriers to objectivity by students? How much objectivity is necessary?
- What modes are legitimate? Is quantitative data significant in the study? Questionnaires? Is only qualitative data legitimate?
- How shall I know? Do I need to know the performance indicators before the study or will they emerge with time?

These questions will be taken up with a validation group through the course of research.

Future Plans:

- Continue with the process of using the social constructivist methodology in my classroom
- implement monthly “Choices into Action/ TAP” meetings revolving around issues of knowing and sharing oneself
- Student of the day presentations to foster a deeper sense of knowing and sharing among students (I would model for them as well)
- continue implementation of responsibility building methods (washroom procedures, homework checking)
- Survey attitudes toward classroom culture throughout the year.
- Making the research explicit to the class, not as research, but as a way of inviting the students to act with me in creating a new culture.
- classroom meetings

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Appendix B

Response of SREB

Brock University
Senate Research Ethics Board
Extensions 3205/4315, Room C315

FROM: David Butz, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Prof. Michael Manley-Casimir, Education
Geoffrey Suderman-Gladwell

FILE: 00-068, Suderman-Gladwell

DATE: November 27, 2000

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the research proposal:

"Classroom Culture: Working Together"

"The Research Ethics Board finds that a number of points/issues in your proposal require re-submission: The researcher may proceed with the work as soon as the following issue(s) have been addressed and approved by the Committee: "

*Resubmission required.

1. Your claim that you are not doing anything beyond normal classroom practice is erroneous, as you do not normally collect information from your students for the purposes of (a) research for your own degree requirements, and (b) publication. Therefore please provide a complete set of responses to all parts of the application form in the format requested on the application forms. We need to know what your specific data gathering techniques are, and how they will be employed. In re-preparing your application, please pay special attention to the following:

2. You list your methods but do not explain any of them.
3. You need to include copies of all formal surveys/questionnaires for REB review.
4. You need to explain what you will do with students whose parents do not provide permission to participate. What will they do while other students are engaged in activities related to the research? How will you photograph, audio-tape and video-tape classroom activities without taping or photographing those students who are not participating?
5. You provide wide-ranging guarantees of confidentiality. These cannot be maintained in group-based research. Please clarify.
6. Given the relation of power that contextualises this research, how will you ensure that students/parents do not feel coerced into participation, and how will you successfully ensure students that their participation or non-participation will not influence their academic record?
7. Please provide a place on parent consent forms for students to sign their consent as well. Where it states the study has been explained to the volunteer it should also indicate that the student has been given an opportunity to ask questions and assents to participate.
8. Provide much more information on feedback.

Please re-submit your proposal including a letter indicating how you have addressed these concerns.

No research with Human Participants will commence prior to receiving approval from this committee.

DB/ll