

All We Are Saying:
Teachers' Narratives of Lived Classroom Experience
by
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ABSTRACT

Accounts in the media often demonize teachers and misrepresent what is happening in schools. Meanwhile, teachers' voices are largely absent from the national and international debates on school reform. This dissertation privileges the voices of nine participating Kindergarten through second grade teachers from a variety of public schools, including affluent schools and schools receiving full and partial Title I funding. Through observations and interviews teachers shared their narratives of classroom joys and challenges while also describing how policy has affected these experiences. A preliminary discourse analysis of these narratives was performed, identifying narratives related to nodes of the activity system of schooling. Further discourse analysis of these identified narratives revealed how these teachers' classroom experiences position them within an activity system strongly influenced by tensions between maternal relationships and the patriarchal project of schooling. A critical feminist theoretical perspective is utilized to respond to these tensions and to describe possibilities for future studies in education and the future of education in general.

DEDICATION

To my great-grandmother, great-aunt, and grandmother: the teachers

To my grandfathers: my family's first professors

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTIONS

I can hear the throbbing of my blood in my ears. My heart is pounding. My stomach is a giant knot as bile rises in my throat. My fingers tremble over the keyboard poised to pound a retort. “Stop!” I tell myself. “Breathe deep. Let it pass. They just don’t know.”

Time after time this sequence plays out as I read news articles about education on the Internet. I see an article on some kind of educational issue. It doesn’t really matter what the issue is. The article could be on a current school reform measure, budget allocations, or even a particular school’s success story. At some point in the article teachers will be “blamed” for the “failure of public education” in the United States. Even if the blame doesn’t happen in the article, read down a little further into the reader responses. Everyone who’s ever been in school knows exactly what schools are like today...or so they think! As you read through the comments about teachers “only working until 3 o’clock,” “having summers off,” “grading papers,” and “babysitting” you begin to realize that misconceptions abound.

These misconceptions, often held by policy makers, educational researchers, school administrators, and much of the general public greatly hinder the debates on education. While I can’t purport to know what happens everyday on a daily basis in every classroom, one set of voices have been pushed aside if

not completely silenced. Those are the voices of the classroom teachers themselves.

This project privileges those voices as they describe what in their work with children brings them joy, what in that work challenges them, and how policy affects their daily classroom experiences. What do these teachers do to meet the needs of the children and families while also meeting the demands of policy so as not to be deemed “failing”? It privileges the voices of nine kindergarten through third grade public school teachers at five different elementary schools. To better understand their classroom experiences and to appreciate their willingness to invite us into their lives, it’s important that we have some insight into who they are and where they teach. The following paragraphs introduce the teachers, utilizing pseudonyms that they created (all other names for persons and places within this dissertation are pseudonyms created by me to protect the anonymity of the actual persona and places mentioned in narratives).

Wrigleymama and Kinderpal both teach at an affluent suburban school that has declared itself to be a “leadership academy” implementing a leadership curriculum based on the book *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* (Covey, 2008). Wrigleymama has been teaching first grade for seven years and, despite some recent health concerns, professes to “love every day” of the “something new and different” working with children. Wrigleymama is a slender young woman who has that quiet grace and serenity about her that immediately has you breathing deeply and calmly in her presence. Her classroom feels more like a living room that happens to have small tables and chairs as well as an overstuffed large sofa

and coffee table. There are several lamps glowing, white holiday lights strung along the top of the chalkboard, and various green silk plants scattered about. The overhead fluorescent lights are kept off in favor of natural lighting glowing from the overhead skylights. This is definitely a children's place with children's artwork and projects on the walls, additional tables set low to the floor with pillows for seats, and learning materials organized throughout the room for easy access.

Walk through the maze of hallways in the school to a very different classroom space. This is the busy kindergarten classroom of Kinderpal. Like many kindergarten rooms, there is a plethora of materials in Kinderpal's room. There are dramatic play areas, displays of books, containers of manipulatives, and a large group-area rug. On the wall in the corner of this classroom is a big, smiling "green monster," Kinderpal's classroom mascot. One can't help but notice the similarities between this big, smiling creature and the classroom teacher, a rather large man with a big smile and twinkling eyes who can still become quite stern and demanding when needed. A self-proclaimed addiction to "getting a kid to realize that all those thoughts they had about themselves were wrong and that the real treasure inside of them is something they can find if they just know how to look for it" has kept Kinderpal teaching kindergarten for over twenty-five years.

Over the freeway and down the road a ways is another kindergarten classroom in this same district. This classroom is in another affluent school in that district, but it has a special distinction. This classroom is filled with children

from throughout the district boundaries whose birthdays didn't fall within the district cut-off date for regular kindergarten enrollment. These children's fifth birthdays fell between the first of September and the end of December of that school year. This special "kinderkid" program offers these children the opportunity to attend kindergarten with the understanding that if, at any time during the first few months it becomes apparent that the child is not ready for these classroom experiences, they will be removed from the program and attend kindergarten the next year. If, however, they perform successfully in the school year, they will advance to the first grade the following year. Juliecarol is a teacher who somewhat reluctantly began teaching in this program this school year. Previously Juliecarol, a teacher with over twenty years of experience, had been teaching first and second grade at another fairly affluent school in the district. She had been looping with her classes for eighteen of those years. She would teach the same group of children for two years as they completed first and second grades. At the end of the previous school year, as she was finishing her second grade year with one class and getting ready to return to first grade with a new group of children, her principal informed Juliecarol that she would no longer be looping with students and that she was going to be a second grade teacher. This was very upsetting to Juliecarol as she had previously told her principal that if she were ever to stop looping with students she didn't want to be "stuck" in second grade because she'd miss the whole literacy and early development of those children. Feeling a great sadness and that this could be retribution for some of her previous outspokenness, she reluctantly decided to return to kindergarten,

the grade in which she began her teaching career, and pursue becoming a “kinderkid” teacher at a different school site.

While she battled with the appropriateness of this program in the greater educational good and her concerns for the development of children, Juliecarol came to realize that “This is just the way the world is right now. This is what we’re dealing with. Well, of course, they should be with me...I can’t worry about what happens to them in third grade, and seventh grade and in high school, because the fact is they are – and we know what a huge difference that few months makes.” Juliecarol is the kind of teacher that strives for making huge differences in children’s lives whether it is in her classroom with young children or in her teaching literacy methods courses for education undergraduates for the local university or in her advocacy for teachers and children as a leader in the local education association and on various school district committees.

Janecrayon teaches in a very different kindergarten classroom in another suburban school district. This small, crowded classroom is filled with between twenty-six and twenty-eight kindergarten children, nearly all of whom are Hispanic and come from homes qualifying for the free-lunch program, making the school a full Title I qualifying school. According to Janecrayon, the school’s demographics have changed a great deal in the past ten years to include children of different nationalities and families who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina and decided to stay. Additionally, the school has lost over 300 students this past year. The school staff believes this loss to be due to families moving away over fears of the state’s anti-immigration laws and “round ups” of undocumented

immigrants by the local sheriff's office. However, Janecrayon describes the school's importance in the neighborhood as a community resource providing food boxes, helping with utilities and medical care, establishing library cards, and offering computer and English classes at night for parents and older family members. Janecrayon has been in education for twenty-eight years, the last six and half of which have been at this school site. She began here as an instructional assistant adding more and more duties until she became a classroom teacher. She is a small, very busy woman often hustling and bustling from one child to another from table to table in the room, striving to meet the needs of everyone all the time. Watching her throughout her day often left me sympathetically out of breath and frazzled.

Janecrayon's school district has also chosen to include Montessori programs as part of its offerings to the community. MariaM8311875 teaches first through third graders in one of the seven Montessori classes at one of the district's school sites, which also qualifies as a fully-funded Title I school. This classroom is arranged much as any other Montessori program (Lilliard, 1996; Malloy, 1974; Montessori, 2008, 2002). The materials are organized on each shelf in each area of the classroom following the specifications found in all Montessori classrooms. Each work material has its assigned spot on the assigned shelf. Throughout the room at small tables, on floor mats, and lapboards the students in the class work independently, in pairs, or in small groups completing both assigned and self-chosen materials, meeting with MariaM8311875 and her instructional assistant as needed. MariaM8311875's commitment to Montessori education is reflected in

the name she has chosen for herself with Maria Montessori's name and birth date. Despite her older age, MariaM8311875 nimbly moves around the classroom often crouching on the floor as necessary, quietly redirecting and modeling a child's interactions with learning materials or meeting with small groups for a mini-lesson, much as described by Maria Montessori when she stated, "The instructions of the teacher consist then merely in a hint, a touch – enough to give a start to the child" (2008, p. 22). Often you can see MariaM8311875 merely sitting back and observing the children. Yet on closer view you can see the purposeful way she is watching children make meaning from their learning and quietly making notes on their progress. When gathering the class together on the rug at moments of transition, MariaM8311875 simply goes to her spot on the rug and sits quietly waiting for the rest of the class. If a particular class member is not settling down quickly enough, she looks in the direction of that child to catch his eye or to catch the attention of another nearby child who would then quietly redirect the unsettled child. There is no doubt that MariaM8311875 is the quiet authority figure here.

The remaining teachers are in the same suburban area and the same district as the two more affluent schools. However, this school is not nearly as affluent. In fact, during this academic year, the school had nearly 60% of its families qualify for the free lunch program. Furthermore, it is historically a very ethnically diverse school with nearly one-quarter of the student population Hispanic, 22% of the student population African American, forty-percent of the population White, 6% American Indian, 6% Asian, and the remaining 1% listed

as Unspecified (www.greatschools.net, 2011). Additionally, over half of the students attend this school from out of the school boundaries. In fact, the school district transports two school busses of children from a more impoverished and lower-performing school district approximately ten miles away.

Artshopper is a kindergarten teacher at this school. This is her third year teaching, with all three years at this same school site. This is her second year teaching kindergarten as her first year she taught first grade. Much as her name implies, she is very artistic and her classroom is filled with artistic touches, from the hand-painted paper mural to her guitar propped in the corner ready for a sing-along to the way she encourages children's individual self-expression in their everyday interactions and work. During our time together for this project Artshopper found out that she was expecting her first child. She often reflected on how her pregnancy affected her classroom experiences and her concerns for her child. Yet she was always exuberant and excited for the future.

Redminne is one of the first grade teachers at this school. While Redminne has been teaching for seven years, this is her fourth year teaching at this school and her third year teaching first grade. Redminne has a quiet passion for teaching and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to excel in school. She is a leader in her school's movement towards Cognitively Guided Instruction in math (Carpenter, Fenema, & Franke, 1996) and implementing Response To Intervention strategies (Barnett, Daly, Jones & Lentz, 2004). Her classroom is a constant hive of activity. Students are encouraged to interact with each other in

problem solving and literacy activities as they move around the room using various posters, charts, and other resources.

neivxs (she has requested no capitalization of her name) is another first grade teacher at this same school site. She came to teaching as a second career after a career in the business world. It was a strong calling to work with minority children and to ameliorate the differences in educational experiences for children that drove neivxs to become a teacher. While she began her teaching career in a high-poverty area of an urban setting in a different state, she now works towards this goal in her current school setting. At times this drive takes an emotional toll on her:

I do my very best to try to meet every child's needs, but I can't. I usually can't, and that's really (pause) I'm gonna cry. (Said through tears) It's really hurtful to me, because that's my job. My job is for every child to learn. (neivxs, Interview #1)

As we'll discuss later, she struggles to find a balance between her classroom life and her personal life. She brings this passion to her classroom where activities are constantly being refined to meet individual student needs and where even her room arrangement changes throughout the year pursuing just the right arrangement for everyone's optimum learning needs.

There is one final teacher who has been at this school site for over 23 years. That is me. I have been a classroom teacher for nearly twenty-five years. My goal has always been to create a learning space where "each child is free to explore the world, to learn about and from others, to share himself or herself, to

find the thrill and excitement of learning, and to help guide the child down the path to fulfilling all dreams” (Gaches, 2011). After teaching first grade at this school for ten years, two colleagues and I co-created a multi-age program in 1998 where we worked to put into practice many Montessori, constructivist, continuous progress, and social learning principles (Grant, 1996, 1995; Grant & Johnson, 1994; Grant & Richardson, 1996). Furthermore, I have endeavored to advocate for children’s rights and children’s needs through active participation in school district curriculum and program adoption committees and as a leader in our various school curriculum, policy, and school reform committees.

As a sister classroom teacher I bring my own insights and experiences to our discussions. Often our “interviews” were more in the nature of two colleagues chatting and sharing child stories, what had worked for us, and where we each had challenges. In fact, several of these teachers and I have a history well outside of this particular project. Juliecarol and I first met at the school district’s “new teacher orientation” when we were young beginning teachers over twenty years ago. We’ve stayed in touch through shared professional development activities, district committees, and our work at the university. Artshopper was a post-baccalaureate pre-service teacher in one of the first university classes I ever taught. Our relationship continued as she began her teaching career as a first grade teammate at my school site. Both Redminne and neiiivxs have been more recent first grade teammates at my school site. We have daily discussions as we help each other navigate through policies and curriculum adoptions and support each other’s work with children in our classrooms.

Kinderpal and Wrigleymama worked with me on a previous project (Gaches, 2009). While that wasn't an extensive project and we only met and conversed briefly, there were already the beginnings of a relationship built on a shared purpose and passion for children and their rights. It made returning for this project more comfortable. We'd already shared pieces of ourselves previously, now our conversations became even more friendly, relaxed, and collegial. While relationships with MariaM8311875 and Janecrayon were new, it was evident from our first meetings that we, too, shared that passion working for children as they grow and develop.

Pointing out these relationships is important. It brings to light not only our common ground, but perhaps blind spots as well. After all, while in this current context I turn a theoretical eye and analysis to our conversations and the experiences these teachers share, I am firmly imbedded as "one of them." I still view those experiences as an involved fellow classroom teacher rather than a semi-interested third party (Bakhtin, 1986; Pillow, 2003; Zizek, 1991). By not stepping outside my relationships with these teachers, I run the risk of being "played for a sucker" (Zizek, 1991, p. 63) by turning a blind eye to information from which alternate interpretations would be more appropriate. However, I can not truly step outside of myself, so even as I choose stories to share and analyze their meanings, there will always be bit of "classroom teacher" seeping in (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Holt, 2003; Pillow, 2003; Reed-Danahay, 1997).

As I write this, I am now a "former" teacher at this school having decided to leave the daily primary classroom teaching to work as a teacher educator. It

was a difficult decision but one that was closely related to the core of this project. I will be working with future classroom teachers helping to prepare them for THEIR classroom experiences. In that work I hope to be able to meld the voices and experiences of classroom teachers with the more traditional teacher preparation experiences of the university.

Throughout this dissertation these teachers will share their experiences, their feelings, their joys, and their challenges. Chapter 2 will provide a common language and a theoretical lens, in which I have situated these teacher narratives, to bring into focus the themes and commonalities as well as the diversity of perspectives, within these teachers' stories. I will also share how these stories came to be told and how I've chosen which portions of the excerpts are presented in this dissertation.

In the next sections, teachers' narratives about their experiences come to the foreground. In Section 1, the focus is the maternal-type relationship that teachers have with students as well as teachers' own struggles and tensions to maintain those relationships. In Chapter 3, the role of "care" in the teacher-student relationship will be explored. Teachers convey their experiences in working with children, what that actual work entails, and finally where teachers struggle in their relationships with children. They then share their personal feelings and experiences as they care for the children while dealing with forces outside their classrooms in Chapter 4. The focus of the next three chapters in Section 2 shifts to a discussion of how external influences associated with "time"

affect the classroom experiences of teachers and children. It is in this section that some key elements from our theoretical lens will unite and a new theory on classroom experiences will be proposed. In Chapter 5 teachers share how they address the requirements of “fitting in” all the state and district required curriculum. Chapter 6 expands this challenge further, with teacher narratives about how requirements of the school’s master schedule affects classroom experiences. In the final chapter of this section (Chapter 7) teachers describe how they balance and prioritize these demands from outside the classroom in their work with children.

Finally, I hope to provide some final reflections and thoughts on these experiences and leave you, the reader, with a keener insight as to the public’s influences and what happens inside those private spaces of classrooms.

Chapter 2

THE STUDY

In 2008 I stood before a small room full of educators and educational researchers in Victoria, British Columbia and read an autoethnography of one day in my life as a teacher and teacher educator. As I stood at the podium, slightly trembling with nerves, I shared my frustrations trying to get school leaders to recognize the strengths and talents of a young girl instead of only seeing her deficits as measured by one-minute tests. I described how as a classroom teacher and as a teacher educator, I felt stuck in the middle between the mandates from administration and my work with children.

One year later while conducting research on teachers' understandings and views on children's rights (Gaches, 2009), some of the teachers participating in the research expressed frustration at the manner in which their "hands were tied" when working with children and how they were restricted to certain resources and certain instructional strategies. This research also pointed to the tension between adult control of curriculum and a stated desire of teachers for students to become empowered in the classroom and in their own learning.

In both of these instances teachers were positioned between the world of adult control and accountability and the need to care for and nurture the children in their charge.

I believe that there are two theoretical perspectives from which to view those tensions. Furthermore, I would like to discuss them not as separate

perspectives, but as potentially complementary. One of these theoretical perspectives is a feminist theory as outlined by Madeline Grumet (1988). The other is activity theory as explicated by Engeström (1999), which builds upon the earlier socio-cultural historical theories of Vygotsky and Leont'ev. I aim here to show the potential complementary nature of the two perspectives and how they may be used as theoretical lenses through which to view those intersections of primary school teachers' experiences with contemporary policies and local practices governing their professional lives.

At the most basic level, both of these theoretical perspectives are based on relationships. Grumet's (1988) "fundamental argument" is that "knowledge evolves in human relationships" (p. xix). She describes these relationships using object relations theory. In her view, a primary relationship exists between a mother and her child. It is a mutually constructed relationship originating in the biological relationship between them. The child has shared the same body as the mother, has experienced the transition of birth with the mother, and has been nurtured and fed with milk from the mother. The mother, too, is intricately tied to the child having felt the child as part of her body and having nourished the child. However, using psychoanalytic theory, Grumet explains that as the child grows and matures, she is further influenced by the relationship with her father. The driving force in that relationship is to break apart the dyadic relationship between the child and mother and to "claim the child...moving to a two-term, cause/effect model, where the father is the cause and the child is his effect" (p. 16).

In curriculum this is translated into a patriarchal project¹ to “claim the child and teach him or her to master the language, the rules, the games, and the names of the fathers” (p. 21). This patriarchal project takes form in today’s standards-based classrooms, where teachers are to manage classrooms so that children efficiently learn to read, write, and perform mathematics. If performed effectively, students will achieve the requisite scores on high-stakes tests and the district, school, and teacher will be deemed of acceptable quality. Meanwhile, Grumet (1988) described curriculum’s maternal project as “to relinquish the child so that both mother and child can become more independent of one another” (p. 21). This echoes the teachers’ desires for students to become empowered in the classroom and to have choice and agency in their learning. It opens the door for ambiguity and a more fluid timeline of learning.

While I believe this is an over-simplified binary, it is reminiscent of Tobin’s (2000) discussion on how binaries can point to power relationships, where one pole of the binary will be more oppressive and the other pole will be more subservient and less valued. Historically and at the current time, the powerful stance is that of the patriarchal project. What are being valued in schools are the content standards that manifest in high-stakes testing, the proficient acquisition of English by all students, and the ability to follow the rules and regulations of school and society.

Engestrom’s activity theory is also based upon relationships (Engestrom, 1999), however it breaks away from the dichotomous nature of Grumet’s feminist perspective. This theory is based upon the socio-cultural historical context of

human experience where Vygotsky (1978) stated, “human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (p. 88). Here, too, there is a strong dialectical relationship between subject and object. However, the subject and object relationship is mediated through the use of tools, specifically language and signs (Figure 1).

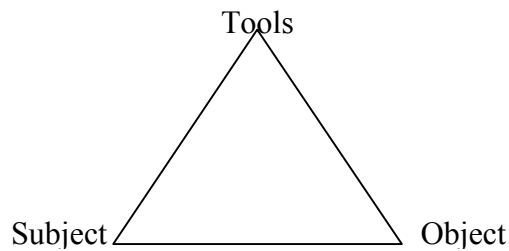


Figure 1. The basic schemata triangle of Vygotsky

Expanding this relationship, Leont’ev pointed out that there are greater cultural and historical contexts, which also influence these actions (Barab, Evans, & Baek, 2004; Wells, 2002). To further explain these greater cultural and historical contexts, Engestrom (1999) expanded Vygotsky’s rather simplistic relational triangle to include rules, community, and division of labor. All of these elements relate to each other within an activity system (Figure 2) whose purpose is described as an outcome.

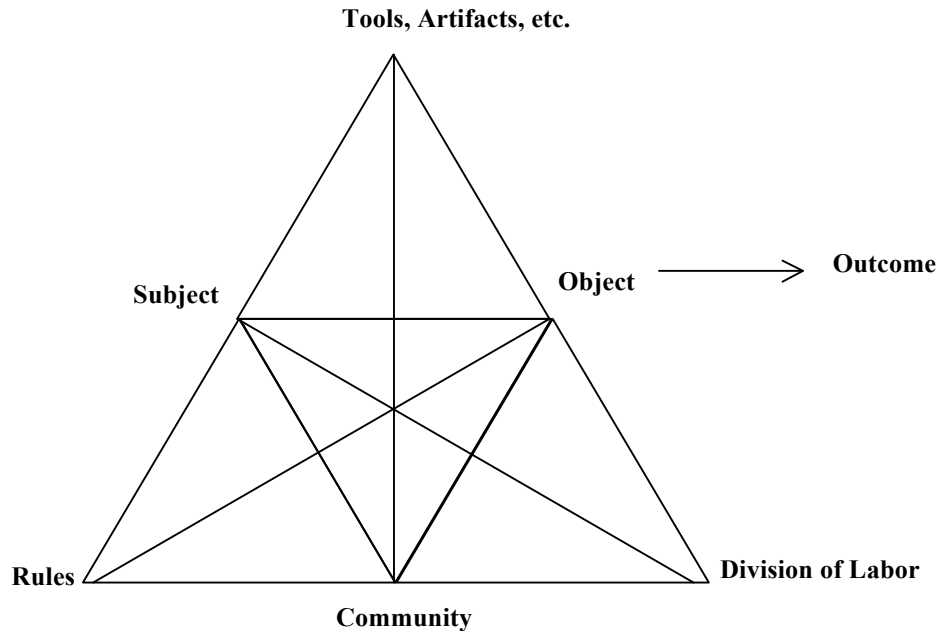


Figure 2. The basic schemata of an activity triangle (Engestrom, 1999).

The subject is “a member (or better yet, multiple different members) of local activity, through whose eyes and interpretations the activity is constructed” (Engestrom & Miettinen, 1999, p. 10). In the case schools and of this study, the subject-object relationship is that experienced between the teachers and the students with the activity directed towards the outcome of “learning” (Barab et al, 2004). The school curriculum, adopted curriculum programs, instructional strategies, tests, and so forth, comprise the tools and artifacts through which the teachers and the students mediate the learning outcomes. Engestrom’s extension of the triangle can be seen in the rules and policies that govern the schools, the community of the school and the greater community of parents, taxpayers, and other stakeholders, and the division of labor “both horizontally in the division of tasks between community members and the vertical division of power and status”

(Engestrom, 2002 cited in Wells, 2002, p. 47). Furthermore, each element, or node, on an activity triangle is a part of their own activity systems where they also produce activity (Figure 3).

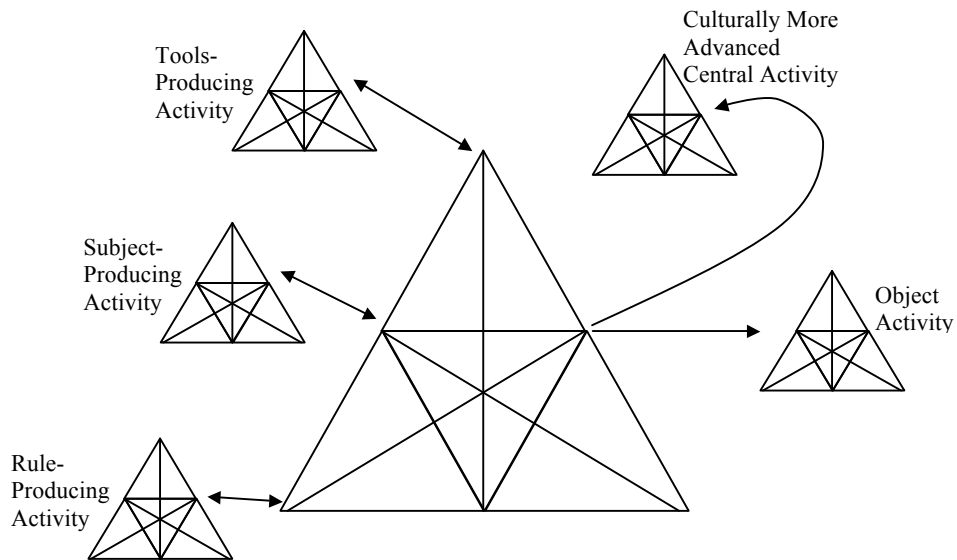


Figure 3. The interrelationships between basic schemata of activity triangles (University of Helsinki – Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, 2004).

Thus an activity system is never static. It is always affected by changes in other activity systems with which it has a relationship just as it affects changes in those activity systems.

This brings up another area of similarity between the two theoretical perspectives. Both theories focus not only reproduction of society, but even more importantly for this study, on transformation of society (Barab et al., 2004; Engestrom, 1999; Engestrom & Miettinen, 1999; Grumet, 1988).

Activity theory seeks to describe how change occurs at two levels: internalization and externalization (Engestrom, 1999; Engestrom & Miettinen, 1999). Internalization is responsible for the reproduction of culture. As human's relate to each other through the various nodes of the triangle, they are enculturating each other to a socio-cultural historic way of being. Externalization occurs as the related activity systems of the primary activity triangle's nodes attempt to exert their influence and change upon that primary activity. For example, new tools are created and new rules are implemented. Those new tools or new rules are interconnected to all elements of the triangle, thus affecting change throughout the system. Not only is there a dialectical relationship between the subject and object in activity theory, but also that dialectical relationship exists between the various elements (internalization) and between activity systems (externalization) as the new tools are created, new rules implemented, etc. Furthermore, there is a dialectical relationship between the processes of internalization and externalization, as humans seek to simultaneously maintain and transform their current socio-cultural historical systems. The impetus for these transformations can be described by analyzing conflicts that occur both within the activity system and between activity systems.

Conflicts occur at four levels (Barab et al., 2004; Engestrom, 1999; University of Helsinki, 2003). At the first level, conflicts occur at each node within the primary activity system. One contemporary school example is a conflict at the point of "rules" between the group accountability requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or the "No Child Left Behind"

(NCLB) Act and the individual accountability requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (McLaughlin & Thurlow, 2003). Conflicts occurring between constituent elements of the activity system represent the second level. A conflict of this nature can be seen in the study previously mentioned (Gaches, 2009) where teachers (subjects) felt that their hands were “being tied” with the restrictions on which materials and instructional strategies could be used with their children. Here there are two simultaneous conflicts: (1) between the teachers and the rules for which materials could be used and (2) between the teachers and the tools they felt they were required to use. The third level of conflict arises “between the object/motive of the dominant form of the central activity and the object/motive of a culturally more advanced form of the central activity” (Barab et. al, 2004, p. 204; University of Helsinki, 2003). A child’s desired outcome from the activity system of school may be to have a good time with his friends which would put him in direct conflict with the “culturally more advanced” desired schooling outcome of mastery of the required school curriculum. Finally, the fourth conflict occurs as contradictions arise between the primary/central activity and those adjacent related activity systems described in Figure 3. These are the sites of conflict as other activity systems, such as the legislature, adoption committees, professional development, and school population shifts, interact with the classroom activity system.

As can be seen from this description of the four levels of conflict possible within and among activity systems and the examples provided, activity theory opens an organizational lens from which to view the intersections of primary

school teachers' experiences with contemporary policies and local practices governing their professional lives (Barab et al., 2004). In fact, while these teachers' narratives could illustrate interactions at all of these levels, this study will focus primarily on agreements and conflicts at the first level (within the teacher-node of the triangle) and on the interactions between constituent elements of the activity system representing the second level.

Grumet (1988) takes the phrase "reproduction of society" as a literal interpretation. She argues, "what is most fundamental to our lives as men and women sharing a moment on this planet is the process and experience of reproducing ourselves" (p. 4). We do this biologically through procreation. We do this socially as we re-create society through transmission of social and cultural ideologies, values, and practices (similar to activity theory's "internalization"). And we do this critically, as we attempt to create for our children a better childhood than we had, a better life, and a better way of being (similar to activity theory's "externalization"). I believe that it is this critical element of reproduction that is the spirit of school reform. Education reform's publicly-stated agenda has been the attempt to create for children of today a better childhood and a better life with more opportunities than other children "like them" have had in the past. However, Weiler (1988) has pointed out that previous (and current) projects actually seek to reproduce society as it currently stands, maintaining the power of the patriarchal domain and more specifically the current social structures not only of gender, but also of race and class. Perhaps its best contemporary example is a national project whose stated goal is to change that status quo.

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) Act, has as a stated primary purpose to close the achievement gap between minority and white middle/upper income children (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2005). To this point, most of its emphasis has been directed towards accountability for results and the emphasis on teaching methods that work. The control of these elements has been very much in alignment with the paternal project, as described by Grumet (1988). A key component is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on high-stakes tests. Stress has been placed on the basics, most especially reading and math (Garan, 2004; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). High priority has been given to those teaching methods that have followed the traditional scientific process that demonstrate cause and effect. Given these controlling aspects that have been traditionally used to reproduce society and maintain the status quo, one has to wonder how they can now be used to affect change. There are, in fact, many critiques of its ability to do so (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Freeman, 2005; Furumoto, 2005; Haas, Wilson, Cobb, & Rallis, 2005; Hursh, 2007; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Ravitch, 2010; Welner, 2005).

Both Grumet’s feminist theory and Engestrom’s activity theory have noted that transformation of society, especially within the schools has been a one-sided process to this point.

Before detailing that one-sided process, I want to note a connection between Grumet’s delineation between the private and public worlds in feminist theory and the relationship between the primary activity system of the classroom

and constituent related activity systems. In feminist theory it has been noted that women's experiences with children have traditionally been relegated to the private domains, as they were responsible for the upbringing of the children at home. Even when they were seen as the "best suited" to educate children in school, it was because of their "domesticity, self-sacrifice, and submissiveness" (Cannella, 2002, p. 141), not for the work they had been accomplishing for centuries in homes. Furthermore, traditionally it has been women who work everyday attempting to negotiate back and forth between these public and private worlds. Women nurture children at home and then send them off to school to become enculturated into the patriarchal project. I believe that this is similar to the work that women teachers (subjects) do within the primary activity system of the classroom. It is that primary activity system which has been a private domain where teachers toil and interact with all of the related elements to work with students (objects) and for the outcome of learning which are being influenced and controlled by the public patriarchal structures.

From a feminist standpoint, therefore, the emphasis on school reform has only been through the theoretical father's public practices of science, calculation, and best practices. What has become of the maternal project as teachers care for and nurture the children and work to create learning environments where children have choice and are empowered? In schools, teachers have fulfilled the objectives of the standards while attempting to create caring communities of learners.

The practices of this private activity system of the classroom have remained just that, private. Women's work in schools has been "work that is hidden" and that there is something about that work that has "prohibited our speaking of it" (Grumet, 1988, p. xi). Grumet and others (Kozol, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Miller, 2005, 1990) call for teachers and their lived experiences in the classroom to be the agents for change in transformation of the schools. Additionally, Engestrom (1999) calls for researchers to enter "actual activity systems undergoing such transformations" (p. 35) to uncover how transformation is taking place. He states that it is only through understanding what is actually occurring in these activity systems that those outside of it can work to co-create links between them.

Some teachers' voices have been heard and the use of teacher narratives is well established in the past. The narratives of Catholic religious, Jewish secular, and African American women who have given their lives to teaching in working for social change are shared by Casey (1993). Ayers (2001) writes about his experiences teaching and what it means to be a teacher with all of its complexities, weaving together threads of curriculum, policy, and the lives of children. Paley takes the reader into her classroom, relating story after story of her work with children as she learns to work with children different than her (1979) and in helping children work through issues of gender, play, and power (1986). Ladson-Billings (1994) uses her three voices of an African American scholar, an African-American teacher, and as an African American woman, parent, and community member to share teachers' stories and experiences with culturally

relevant curriculum in their work with African American children. As Miller (1990) worked with teachers in their graduate studies, the group decided to further explore how those graduate studies impacted their daily practice as teachers creating a narrative of collaboration. Some teacher stories are presented to the public as inspirational stories of “teachers who overcame”. Often they are portrayed as helping students overcome poverty and poor schools or they themselves have had to overcome rigid administration and challenging student behavior. In this genre Gruwell (1999) turned her narratives and those of her high school students as they related literature to their lives into a popular book that was then turned into a Hollywood movie. Nieto (2005, 2003) sought to respond to news stories that were critical of teachers and teaching, as well as some of these inspirational stories. Initially she worked with groups of teachers in Boston to find out what keeps those teachers teaching “in spite of everything” (2003, p. 6). This was followed by another book where teachers shared their own narratives of why they teach (2005). However, there is limited literature on the effects of current reforms in the lived experiences of today’s classrooms.

On an international scale, Day (2002) cites that school reforms have five general effects: (1) changing learning conditions so that students can achieve higher and the country will benefit economically, (2) fragmentation of personal and social values in society will be addressed, (3) a time of instability as teachers change their practices, (4) an increase in teacher work load, and (5) teachers’ identities ignored resulting in issues with motivation, job satisfaction and

effectiveness. I am most concerned with the last three items, because as Day states

the relationship between external reform, teachers' commitment, identity, the environments in which they work and the quality and effectiveness of their work is absent from the policies of those who believe that it is possible to steer the daily activities in the classroom from the centre. Nor has it been the subject of extensive research. (p. 688)

The stories of these relationships and activities are those stories that have been silenced to this point. These are the stories that must be heard for curriculum spaces to be mediated and for policies to become better balanced.

Kathleen Casey (1993) made it a point in her work to “move the most prominent speakers in the contemporary struggle over education to the edges” (p. 3). Instead, she brought the voices and life histories of “ordinary anonymous authors” (p. 3) to the center. This was done as a response to the purposeful suppression of these voices in the national public debate. In her work, the private voices of teachers and why they have chosen to devote their life to social change through the act of education of children has been privileged. Even here, though, the focus is on teachers' life histories, not necessarily their current experiences with school reform and how they negotiate their travels between public and private. Additionally, Casey's use of Bakhtin's relational analysis to

explore how the teachers' narratives intersected with those of dominant traditional education discourses is useful.

It is past time that the silenced voices of teachers are heard. It is past time that relationships between external reform and the hidden work of teachers are exposed. My dissertation then seeks to address the questions: How do teachers mediate between contemporary policies and local practices governing their professional lives? What do teachers do in their daily lives that help them to navigate between the public spaces of curriculum, policy, the community, division of labor and the private spaces of their classroom activity systems? What are the sites of conflict and how do teachers negotiate and/or resist those conflicts?

Design and Methodology

Teachers and Schools.

To address these questions I used multiple data sources based on teacher narratives. First, I continued my own autoethnographic project (Gaches, 2008). Where my previous project was based on reflections surrounding one day in my professional life, I journaled throughout the entirety of this research project. This journal contained daily reflections and narratives regarding both my own experiences as a classroom teacher and my experiences as the researcher exploring and analyzing teachers' narratives (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2003; Pillow, 2003). As a classroom teacher I was faced with some of the same tensions and

conflicts as other teachers participating in the study. This provided me with an insider perspective with specialized knowledge of the issues. Yet this also positioned me as a person in a power position since I control the ultimate end product. It is a position in which I must be ethically conscious, so as to not prioritize my stories over those of others (Miller, 1990). Also, recording my experiences as the researcher on the project brings a level of transparency to my research project and added another level of analysis as I navigated not only the intersections and conflicts within the local activity system of the classroom, but also as I navigated the various activity systems of each of the research sites and the research process itself.

Secondly, I recruited teachers from two school districts. I have already introduced the group of eight other primary grade (Kindergarten through third grade) teachers. The method of recruitment I used with teachers varied. Four teachers were recruited based upon our previous research work together (Gaches, 2009). Two teachers were recruited based upon other professional relationships we have. One of those teachers is a current teaching colleague and I have worked closely with the other teacher in numerous school district committees and activities. For teachers in the other school district, I sent flyers to all teachers at schools that have been labeled as Title I schools in that district (for reasons described below). After sending out more than 100 flyers three teachers contacted me. Two of those teachers share their stories and experiences in

this project. The third teacher decided not to participate further a few weeks after the first interview. When she contacted me by email she stated that it had been a rough year and that she wasn't going to have time to participate (an interesting comment given our focus later in this project).

In my previous children's rights research (Gaches, 2009), I worked with teachers at two school sites within the same school district. One of the school sites' student population was predominantly upper-middle class, white students with very little cultural diversity and virtually no English Language Learners. This school regularly ranks very highly in the state achievement labeling system. The other school site was the school in which I teach. It is a school that has a great deal of cultural, as well as socio-economic diversity. There is some linguistic diversity, but a great number of the school's English Language Learners receive proficient scores on the state English language test each year. It receives some federal Title I funding, but is located in a school district that is well funded by bond over-ride money. This school's state achievement-score ranking fluctuates from year to year, generally based on a few points variance on the state labeling formula. During the children's rights study it became apparent that teachers at the two participating school sites had different experiences regarding the amount of external control from administration. While the teachers at the partially Title I funded school described having their "hands tied" by policy and practice, feeling a great deal of

instructional rigidity and an inability to not deviate from the provided curriculum path, the teachers at the more affluent school did not mention any of these concerns. Their concerns were based more on the home-school connections. Based on these different teaching experiences, I believed that it would be important in this dissertation to continue to have diverse teaching and learning environments represented.

Therefore for this study I returned to these two school sites, but included three other school sites as well. The first school site that was added is in the same school district as the previous schools. This fairly affluent school houses the “Kinderkid” program where children whose birthdays fall between September and December of that school year, but were not yet five years old by September 1st could provisionally attend the program. This program pulls children from throughout the district and all but one child lives outside this school’s boundary, but Juliecarol feels that the composition of her class is similar to that of the rest of the kindergarten classes at the school.

Finally, I desired to work with schools that work entirely with lower-income families and receive full Title I funding. Additionally, given the current issues surrounding English Language Learners, it is important to have another school in which this issue is represented. Furthermore, as I believe that the pressures of accountability and school labeling play a key role in the daily lives of teachers, I desired a school site which had been receiving one of the “lower” school labels (“failing”

or “underperforming”). To that end, as discussed previously, I sent out flyers to all teachers in schools fitting this description in another nearby school district. MariaM8311875’s school fits into this category. I was concerned at first due to the nature of her program drawing children from across the school district. However MariaM8311875 stated that the program has always served children identified as eligible for the free lunch program. Furthermore, I felt it would be advantageous to include a public school Montessori program to the diversity of classrooms represented in this project.

Our last school site, however, clearly falls firmly within the previous description of a full Title I funded school with largely ethnic minority population and where a high number of students are English Language Learners. For the 2007-2008 school year (the last year statistics were available from www.greatschools.net) 92% of the student population was Hispanic and 98% of the students came from homes where Spanish was the primary home language (98%).

This diversity of classroom types was important to determine how the teachers’ experiences could be different and the similar. What types of conflicts and agreements within the various levels of activity theory to they each experience? Do different school sites experience these conflicts and agreements similarly or are there wide ranges of experience?

Data Collection.

Data was collected from these teachers in three ways. One method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. In these interviews teachers were invited to simply, “Tell about your classroom joys and challenges.” These prompts opened the doors for teachers to provide stories about their daily-lived experiences, which helped to illustrate intersections of contemporary policy and practices with their professional lives. These stories included instances of negotiating the tensions, challenges, and joys. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

It has been my experience that it doesn’t take much prompting to get teachers to talk about their classroom experiences, especially with other teachers. This has been true for other researchers, as well. Using an open-ended question such as, “Tell me the story of your life”, proved very successful for Kathleen Casey (1993) as she gathered life histories from women teachers. In fact, because of the in-depth answers she received, she found that her original interview strategy was unnecessary. This open-ended format is also what created the essays in Sonia Nieto’s book *Why We Teach* (2005). In that instance she simply asked teachers to write a response to that very question (Why do you teach?). The end result was twenty-one diverse essays.

However, I believe that richer data can be obtained with more than one interview experience. Thus, the initial interview was followed by two

observations/interviews. For each observation I spent half of a day shadowing the teacher, getting a feel for his or her daily experiences. These observations provided an opportunity to see interactions within the activity system and see how teachers negotiated those interactions. Informal notes were taken during the observation that was expanded upon directly afterwards. These observations were then used as a springboard for discussion in a follow-up interview further discussing the teachers' classroom experiences, especially focusing on his or her joys and challenges. These interviews were also recorded and transcribed for further analysis. This additional time with the teacher, getting to know him or her and experiencing a day or two in their lives, provided one layer of trustworthiness in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lastly, at one point I had considered working with these teachers as a focus group. Focus groups have become increasingly utilized in feminist research as one way to address the dichotomous nature and power dynamics of one-on-one personal interviews (Madriz, 2000). However, given my own experiences attempting to get a group of teachers together for many other functions, I felt that the time dynamics would not make focus groups a viable research method. Therefore, I turned to this new century's method of social interaction – blogging. Blogging shares some of the same characteristics as focus groups. It offers individuals the opportunity to be heard, yet it provides a certain amount of comfort

because you are interacting with a group of people coming together for the same purpose.

The blog in this study was a secure “private” blog. It was available only to those who are invited by the “administrator” to join, much as a research participant would be invited by a researcher to participate in a focus group discussion. As the researcher, I was the identified “administrator” and invited teachers participating in this study to join. As has been found in focus groups used in other feminist research (Madriz, 2000), it was hoped that through this level of informal discussion, teachers would feel even more at-ease sharing their stories and would use one another’s stories as springboards for further narratives, thus creating richer narrative structures and experiences. In fact, Gurak & Antonijevic (2008) describe blogs as blurring the private and the public. They state that this enables the formation of both individual and group identities.

Additionally, Luehmann and Tinelli (2008) analyzed the blogging contents of a group of 15 science teachers to determine how blogging supported their further learning about reform-based practices. After content analyses of the teachers’ posts and comments were completed, three over-arching categories of responses were found: cognitive work regarding pedagogical issues, affective work taking the form of “sharing emotions” or “advocating,” and social work which included “mentoring,” “sharing materials,” and “commiserating”. This work by Luehmann and Tinelli is significant because its’ analysis of blogging is consistent with

the analysis of other forms of narrative research, including interviews and other, more traditional written texts.

It is hoped that through the triangulation of using three methods of data collection, interview, observation, and blogging, another criteria for trustworthiness of this research will be met (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Analysis of data.

As stated previously, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Observation data was expanded upon as necessary and transcribed in a manner consistent with the interview data. Finally, the blog contents were printed and formatted in a manner consistent with the other data.

For the actual analysis of the data I used the methods employed in my children's rights research (Gaches, 2009) and discussed by Gee (2005) and Tobin (2000). I began with Gee's twenty-six task questions, most specifically those dealing with activity. This particular set of questions was helpful in relation to our activity theory triangular lens (Engstrom & Miettinen, 1999; University of Helsinki). Gee's three "building activity" questions (p. 111) guide the discourse analyst to determine the "larger or main activity", the "sub-activities", and the "actions". These parallel Leont'ev's three levels of activity: activity, action, and operation. Activities would be those actions by the greater community towards the object. In this project, that would be those larger or main activities directed by the greater community (school and outside of school) toward the students. Actions would those sub-activities which teachers, specifically in this project,

would do as they worked towards the goal of children learning. Often times in teachers' descriptions of the classroom lives, their actions or operations would be revealed not as some purposeful decision they had made, but rather as those actions carried out as part of their routine or in disruption of their routines. Therefore, the preliminary analysis of the data sought to uncover these building activities. This was primarily done at the middle level of sub-activities or actions. Since we are focusing on teachers' classroom lived experiences within the activity triangle of the classroom, instances where teachers discussed different nodes on the activity theory triangle were noted and recorded as being in agreement or conflict with the node or in some instances both in conflict and agreement. It was also during this portion of the analysis that some overall themes and key stories emerged.

Next, I identified larger subsets of the teachers' narratives that seemed particularly illuminating, especially as it pertains to the research questions. I then examined each of those portions of data looking for particular linguistic details that appeared important in the situated meanings of that text. This analysis also included "looking awry" at the text (Tobin, 2000; Zizek, 1991) searching for such elements as aporias, performative texts, intertextualities, slips, binaries, and enthymemes. Gee's twenty-six building task questions were further used as guides in discovering patterns and themes within that particular text. These patterns and themes were then analyzed along side the guiding theoretical perspectives discussed earlier.

At this point, hypotheses were formed regarding each portion text and its relationship to the research questions and the previously identified common themes. These working hypotheses will then be compared with the context and other elements of the text until the hypotheses and data have run their course.

I then returned to the larger set of data to see how typical that small piece of data was and if the newly emerging theory could be supported or refuted. The task was then to find and analyze other examples and counter-examples in the larger data. This process was continued until analysis reached redundancy and no new theories, examples, or counter examples could be found in relation to the research questions of this project.

When analyzing data in this manner, questions are often raised as to the validity of the interpretations and analysis of these lived experiences. First of all, it must be acknowledged that regardless of the research I conduct I will be bringing to it my own biases. In this project, I am going to be directly addressing those biases as part of the data that includes my autoethnographic experiences as both a participating teacher and as the researcher. While this by no means makes my work un-biased or can even claim to directly address all biases, it does address the issue of researcher bias more than many positivistic studies.

Secondly, according to Gee (2005), validity within discourse analysis is based on four factors: (1) convergence – whether or not the different aspects of the analysis support each other to be compatible and convincing, (2) agreement – whether or not our analyses are supported by similar work from other researchers or other members of the same Discourse community, (3) coverage – whether or

not the analysis can be applied to other situations within the situation or in other similar situations, and (4) linguistic details – the more the analysis is tied to linguistic structures of the data, the more valid the analysis. Ultimately, though, given the social interpretive nature of language, “validity is never ‘once and for all’” (Gee, 2005, p. 113).

This method of analysis of teachers’ narratives, their interviews, their actions, and their own blog writing provide insight into how teachers negotiate and mediate relationships within their activity system of the classroom, how they also negotiate and mediate any conflicts that occur within that private activity system as well as conflicts when the more public-based activity systems interact with the classroom activity systems, and identify any actions of resistance or compliance within those conflicts.

Let us now turn to these teacher narratives and discover what is happening in the public and private spaces of their classroom lives.

Section 1

THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP



Figure 4. Mother and Child (Picasso, 1922).

Sometimes I can't even believe what I'm seeing. To look at each little soul and try to figure out, "How am I gonna connect with this? How am I gonna make them feel special today? How am I gonna make them feel successful?" and so that's the good news that that's never changed in my teaching and it's always brought me joy. When I am in that classroom with nobody else around, that's where my happiest time is as a professional, truly. It truly is.

(Juliecarol, Interview 1)

At first it appears that the mother in the picture has come to life and is describing her thoughts as she gazes with serene amazement upon the child in her lap. You can sense her longing to connect to that child's very soul, searching within her to find the pathway to her special child's success. You can almost hear the mother saying to herself, "The child is mine. This child is me." (Grumet, 1988, p. 10). Grumet goes on to explain, "The maternal ego reaches out to another consciousness that is of her and yet not in her, and self-knowledge grows in this process of identification and differentiation with this other, this child, 'my child.'"(p. 11).

Yet it is not the mother in the picture whose words we read. They are the words of a teacher, who like a mother, strives to reach out beyond the consciousness to the very soul, of her students. As she repeats "How am I?" you can hear how she's emotionally reaching within herself and extending out to another being. Yet, at the same time, this is not a child that has been connected with her in a biological sense. There is not the primordial connection that the child has with his mother. Perhaps that is why the teacher seeks this connection at the level of the child's soul, seeking a spiritual connection as a substitute for the biological. However, like a mother whose self-knowledge and personal identification grows in her relationship with her child, the teacher is joyful and "at her happiest" seeking this connection with the children.

The joy that Juliecarol describes was shared by several of her colleagues. ...the kids and their individual personalities, and getting to know them and them getting to know you and just how it becomes something really

special. Do you know what I mean? Just interacting with them and being able to predict what they do and being surprised all the time, that's my greatest joy. It's just really interacting with them and getting to know them and just being in awe of them all the time, like what they can do and what their personalities are evolving into and everything like that.

(Artshopper, Interview 1)

For Artshopper the joy is in the teacher-student interactions themselves as she gets to know the children. On one hand she plays an active part, predicting their actions. However even more so, she is reacting to the children as they “do” and evolve. She is both surprised and awed by them.

That sense of awe and absorption of children's development is shared by Redminne as she emphasizes how, even on challenging days, she can sit back and connect to how “hilarious” her class is:

I guess overall like I have my days where I'm like, oh my God – oh my God this class! Then when I just stop and like listen to them, like they are HILARIOUS. Like they are such a funny group of kids. Like they are hilarious, like ALL of them! I'm like whatever! (Redminne, Interview 3)

It is unclear to what her “I'm like whatever!” final statement is referring. Usually that vernacular phrase is used to imply an indifference to the previous actions, so that in this usage she appears to be showing indifference to the children being hilarious. However, by repeating “they are hilarious” and juxtaposing these statements to the previous idea fragment of “days where I'm like, oh my God!” it seems more likely that Redminne is confused trying to

understand how they can be challenging her yet she finds them so entertaining and funny. It's as if she's surprised by their humor.

That surprise and sense of the daily unknown is one of the ways Wrigleymama connects to her children and finds joy in her work with them:

Gosh, every day it's something that's different. You walk in and you don't know how the kids are going to feel, what they're going to say, what they're going to do. So I love every day. It's exciting because I know it's going to be something new and different and then just seeing when a child struggles with something and then finally that light bulb moment when it clicks. (Interview 1)

Beyond that excitement and sense of the unknown, though, Wrigleymama's final lines here bring out a well-known turn-of-phrase: light bulb moments, where student learning begins to click. This statement is part of the larger Conversation (Gee, 2005) associated with the charge that teachers have been given as they use their maternal influences to guide children towards the outside public world (Grumet, 1988). There is a break here where the maternal connection is put aside and the role of the father becomes prioritized. The teacher-student relationship becomes focused on making light bulbs click, on attaining the skills and knowledge to become successful in school and beyond.

Thus Grumet explained, in citing Nancy Chodorow's relational triangle, the influence of the father, immersed in the public world, breaks the primary dyadic mother-child relationship and draws the child into tensions maintaining relationships with the mother and father. These tensions are visible as teachers

describe how they both develop relationships with the children and how they work to make lessons meaningful for the children.

I'm really just trying to figure out what I can do in my lessons and stuff that make them excited and make them totally into it and really – I don't know. They're so cute at that age and so cool to teach with the younger kids because they get so excited by the smallest things because they've never seen it before.

I just try to make sure that I am always trying to look at it from that perspective to make sure that I'm not, "Oh, this is boring. Everyone knows this. This is easy-cheesy," but really like "This is really cool," and trying to structure my lessons in all the center activities and everything on that because when you see it in their faces, then it's like, "Okay. Yeah, this is great. This is really going how I want it to go."

They're excited and I'm excited that they're excited. Tomorrow is gonna be exciting and they're excited to come. It makes it more fun to come every day when you know that the day is gonna be scattered with those little moments. (Artshopper, Interview 1)

Artshopper has two themes in this passage. First, she wants the school lessons, the knowledge and skills of the public world, to be meaningful and enjoyable to her students. The school word "structure" and the use of "center activities" point to the formal school nature of these lessons. However, just as important, if not more so, is that children become excited by the way she delivers those lessons. She even play-acts the desired child and self-responses for emphasis on this

importance. She follows these imagined reactions with a very clear statement on the intersubjective relationship she envisions: “They’re excited and I’m excited that they’re excited.” In fact, the word “excited” appears five times in two sentences in the last paragraph indicating strong feelings yet her inability to find the exact words to describe those feelings she wants children to have towards her lessons (Tobin, 2000). This is reinforced by the opening sentences of the passage where after stating the excitement and getting children “into it”, she even gives up on the exact desired words and states, “I don’t know.”

In these passages Artshopper is balancing between required learning and maintaining her relationship with the children. This struggle to effectively balance is evident in the following passage from Artshopper as well:

Each one’s totally an individual and you have to learn little tricks and you develop little relationships with each one that work and some that still don’t work. I just like spending time with them and being silly while teaching, but, too, like having that personal relationship and know how to like tweak things, and what they think will be funny and making story time special and stuff like that. (Interview 2)

This passage is filled with breaks and tensions. First she states that each child is an individual. The passage breaks there as she adds “AND you have to learn little tricks.” Are the little tricks for getting to know students or are they tricks for helping them learn? It could be either but the use of “and” seems to make this phrase a different idea especially when it’s followed by the next passage, “AND you develop little relationships.” Again, “and” is pointing to the now new idea of

developing relationships. Then there's the idea that "some work and some still don't work." What is it that's not working, the tricks or the relationships? Later in the passage she talks about having that personal relationship to know how to "tweak things" which is then followed by "making story time special and stuff like that." Could "stuff like that" be the other types of lessons and learning activities? This leads to the possibility that those "special tricks" learned in her unique relationships are used for "tweaking" lesson delivery. There's an additional aporia (Tobin, 2000) in this passage when Artshopper changes thoughts in mid-sentence: "I just like spending time with them and being silly while teaching, but, too, like having that personal relationship..." Here again she is prioritizing the relationships by "spending time... and being silly" but then she adds on "while teaching" which goes along with "story time and stuff like that" to bring that patriarch back into the room. However, she immediately senses that intrusion by shifting "but, too" and returning her emphasis on the personal relationship. In the interview she left this tension unresolved and turned to a discussion on sharing stories of what happened at school today with her family, interestingly moving from one private setting (the classroom) to another (her family).

Finally, Redminne describes this tension between the teacher-student relationship and the influence of the outside, more patriarchal, school world as one of a teacher's biggest challenges:

I think probably one of the biggest challenges is, as a teacher you have, I think, the strongest connection with the child. The relationship you have

with the child in the school setting, as the classroom teacher, you really do feel like you know the kid: their personalities, their academics, their social skills. You are the one who really knows them and it can be really difficult sometimes when you think you're doing what's best for them but maybe it's not what other higher administrative decision makers... (trails off) (Interview 1)

Redminne makes it very clear, repeating it twice in short succession, that it is the classroom teacher who knows the child best, not only their academics but also their personalities and social skills, areas not always associated with "school." With this parallel to the Western idiom "Mother knows best" Redminne is aligning the classroom teacher with the mother. Furthermore, the challenge here of "doing what's best" for the child is in conflict with the desires of "higher administrative decision makers." Throughout education history those administrative officials were males (Apple, 1998; Cannella, 2002; Grumet, 1988; Spring, 2008), the personification of the patriarch in education. So here in this short passage by Redminne is the illustration of the historical (and current) maternal relationship between teacher and students and the patriarchal influence from outside that private space of the classroom challenging that maternal bond (Grumet, 1988). The teacher has developed this relationship with the child, but now she must hand this child over to the administrative decision makers. The teacher-mother must prepare the child for success in the world/school.

The following two chapters expand upon these themes regarding ways in which teachers maintain the maternal bond with children and the challenges

teachers experience in doing so. Chapter 3 explores how the role of care helps teachers mediate between maintaining the teacher-student relationship yet insuring the child's success in the patriarchal project of school. However, this mediation is not without its challenges and the teacher narratives in Chapter 4 will describe the physical and emotional toll they experience.

Chapter 3

THE ROLE OF CARE

From the very beginning, from the very first day when I knew that something would be a challenge, I knew that I would have to nurture him and I wanted him to be able to trust me. I wanted him to know that I care. (neivxs, Interview 2)

In the section introduction Redminne described the tension between the teacher-student relationship and the influence of the patriarchal project of schooling. On one hand she feels the need to maintain and utilize the relationship she has developed with a child. On the other hand she must also prepare the child for success in the more patriarchal influences of schooling. One manner in which she does this is through her care for the children. This is not simply “care” in the form of warm smiles, a kind voice, and ensuring safety. Rather, this is a caring relationship such as that described by Nel Noddings (1984, 1992). It is rooted in the traditionally feminist perspective that views women’s ways of knowing as based upon relationships, particularly a “mothering” relationship (Gilligan, 1982; Goldstein, 1998). There are strong parallels in the way that Grumet and Noddings describe this maternal-child relationship. In describing the very basis of the maternal relationship, Grumet (1988) cites Strasser in explaining that “the very possibility of my thought, of consciousness, rests upon the presence of a ‘you’ for whom I exist” (p. 7). Similarly, Noddings calls upon Buber’s I/Thou dialogical

relationship as the basis for her ethic of care (Johannesen, 2000; Noddings, 1984, 1992).

Three conditions of care

Building upon Buber's ideas (Johannesen, 2000), the ethic of care rests on three conditions: engrossment, motivational displacement, and reciprocity.

Engrossment goes beyond empathy and understanding another's perspective. As Noddings describes it "I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality." (1984, p. 30). The engrossment may be fleeting or it may be a sustained time, but what is important is the full attention given and mutual trust developed between the one-caring and the cared-for. This engrossment is evident in Redmine's previous narrative when she talks about the strong connection teachers have with students and states, "you really do feel like you know the kid; their personalities, their academics, their social skills. You are the one who really knows them."

When Redmine explains that she's "doing what's best for (the children)," she is putting aside other curricular possibilities, her own activity choices, and going against the desires of administration in favor of the needs and project of the children. By putting the needs of the children first *motivational displacement* has been achieved (Noddings, 1984, 1992). At this time, though, the one-caring (teacher) does not completely relinquish herself, but rather uses her energies to support the project of the cared-for (students). This does not, however, mean that the agenda or project is completely set by the cared-for. In fact, the cared-for may

not even approve or understand the one-caring's rationale for the caring action, but the one-caring may have other knowledge or responsibilities that effect their motivational displacement. This is often the case in the unequal relationships between parents and children, teachers and students. In these situations the teachers, especially, must take on a "dual perspective: their own and that of their students. They must try to see the world as their students see it in order to move them from a less to a more satisfactory view. Good teachers do not reject what students see and feel, but rather, work with what is presently seen and felt to build a stronger position for each student" (Noddings, 1992, p. 107).

Wriglymama struggles with this dual perspective as she works with one little boy who's own agenda didn't fulfill the requirements of the school tasks at hand.

Yeah, and I've got a couple kiddos that really are off-task, like almost they need to be glued to my side... You probably heard me say – I was trying not – I try not to say their names too much where they're always hearing their name for negative reasons, but I don't know. That's why at the end, the little boy, Cody, who I've talked to a bunch today, said his name, said his name, and at the end I just took his hand, took his book. I said, "You're sitting here," without any words... Yeah, and I know they don't like being singled out like that, but it's like I don't know how else to do it.

(Interview 2)

Her inner battle is heard in her aporia where she interrupts and then repeats her statement to say "I was trying not – I try not to say their names too much..." On

one hand Wrigleymama is striving for the child to achieve academically, yet in trying to get Cody back “on-task” she is wary of causing him other personal discomfort by singling him out. She feels for him in that moment, yet is striving for his long-range academic good (Goldstein, 1998).

Wrigleymama continues this debate within herself on behalf of her students shortly after this when considering the overall demands of the classroom

And sometimes I think, “Okay. Is this too much for them to be doing? Are we losing focus?” I mean, a lot of the things relate to each other but there’s so much to manage in trying to meet all their different levels as well as trying to meet all the different goals or the objectives for that day or for the week. So I don’t know. I know it’s – to me it kind of feels like a lot, but I don’t know. (Interview 2)

Wrigleymama is attempting to view the classroom academic demands from her students’ perspective as she states, “to me it kind of feels like a lot, but I don’t know.” As she attempts to meet all the different levels of learning needs, it could be that she is feeling the pressure of attending to those needs. However, by performing the questions of “Is this too much for them to be doing?” and “Are we losing focus?” I believe she is reflecting larger societal questions and tensions (Tobin, 2000) regarding the balance of academic demands and student emotional well-being.

Nel Noddings’ third requirement in a caring relationship is *reciprocity* where the caring relationship is completed in the response from the cared-for to the one-caring. This response can be a grunt of acknowledgement, the return of a

smile, or perhaps a student progressing and learning. If, in fact, the cared-for does not complete the caring through reciprocity of some kind, feelings of guilt and courage can develop in the one-caring (Noddings, 1984).

While the reciprocity element was missing in the previous narratives, reciprocity as well as the other two elements of caring are evident in the following narrative from Juliecarol.

On Friday we did a silent cheer and dance around the room that nobody cried today – I’m serious – because there’s a lot of crying whether it’s, “Somebody bumped me or I didn’t get this toy.” Honest to God, at the end of the day we were doing a little thing of, “If you had fun learning in the computer lab today, clap your hands. If you had fun working with your partners, stomp your feet.”

Somebody goes, “Miss J, nobody cried today.” I said, “You’re right, children. Let’s do this.” I couldn’t help myself and I started moving. I turned around and they’re all behind me. We danced around the room and celebrated that nobody cried today.

I tried to bring it back because I’m imagining them going, “Miss J did a dance because nobody cried today.” We brought it back to, “What a wonderful day of learning.”

That’s been fun going back to kindergarten where that stuff, I can act like a child and the joy of it, too. I come home and share the happy stories. (Interview 1)

In this narrative Juliecarol demonstrates her engrossment with the students through her awareness of the frequent student crying. To call attention to the happier aspects of school life, she works with her children at the end of the day to help them focus on the positive parts of the day. When a student points out that nobody cried that day, Juliecarol demonstrates how much she feels in synchrony with her children by the desire to literally dance with joy. Her frequent use of the word “we” when describing the actions of the class also point to her affiliation with the students as a part of her.

There is no doubt in this narrative that Juliecarol’s ultimate goal is for fewer tear-filled days. However, this is not just to fulfill schooling requirements for a more orderly classroom. Juliecarol puts aside this adult, administrative desire when she encourages the more child-focused celebrations of clapping hands, stomping feet, and dancing around the room. In fact, when Juliecarol states, “I tried to bring it back because I can imagine them going, ‘Miss J did a dance because nobody cried today...’, you can see her acknowledging that the dance was outside her required classroom protocol and the grown-up parents’ expectations for the classroom (both the crying and the dancing).

Furthermore, reciprocity was demonstrated when the children responded to Juliecarol’s suggestions for expressing joy by clapping and stomping. The child who responded to Juliecarol by noting that nobody cried today was returning her prior care for crying children. Finally, the children responded to Juliecarol by joining in their dance around the room in celebration. Thus, the caring relationship is shown in its completed circle.

Creating caring children

Caring teachers also work to create caring children through acts of modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings, 1992; Owens & Ennis, 2005). Juliecarol demonstrated these activities in her joyous dancing around the room. Beyond her modeling of finding the good things that happened that day, the opportunity for dialogue and practice was apparent as the little boy shared his own joy and care for his classmates that no one had cried that day. In this act there was also the confirmation that “sometimes we cry,” but that the crying can be overcome and there is potential in all these students to have no-crying days.

Modeling and dialogue plays a very important role in Wrigleymama’s caring relationship with one of her students.

Like one little girl, I don’t know if you noticed, she came in and she was really pouty this morning and on the verge of tears. Well, the rest of her group got started on their rotations and I pulled her aside and she had an argument with mom this morning.

So I said, “How about...do you want to draw a picture for mom and tell her about it?” So she sat at her table during that rotation and made a card and wrote and explained how she felt and then I saw her go put it in her backpack and then she joined with her group. So I’m starting to – because before that would’ve escalated into this crying tantrum and I wouldn’t have seen it. Now I kind of know to look at her face. Then I tell her we’ll talk because she wants to talk right then and there when she comes in the door and tell me what happened. (Interview 2)

Wrigleymama models caring actions by looking at the little girl's face every morning acknowledging her and checking in with her. Then she provides time with the child to dialogue with her, perhaps not right at that moment, but they will find time to talk. This is followed by more overt modeling and providing time for the little girl to practice her caring skills by dialoguing through pictures and writing in a card to the mother.

Kinderpal's dialogue with his students was overt with many discussions and conversations, yet there was always a great deal of communication through engaging looks and facial expressions between Kinderpal and students. During one of my observations I noticed Kinderpal and David exchanging several knowing looks while the class was playing a number bingo game. Between these knowing looks, David would turn and very quietly say a few words to his tablemate. Even though Kinderpal had reminded the class several times that they needed to be quiet to hear the numbers being called and Kinderpal was obviously aware of David's talking, his talking was never addressed. All along though, David and Kinderpal continued to exchange looks, David would talk with tablemate then look to Kinderpal with a questioning look. Kinderpal would return the look with either disapproval, approval, or a questioning look himself.

Confused by this interaction, during the interview I asked Kinderpal about it. He explained that he had been working with David on the "circle of influence" and related this exchange and following experience:

...I said, "David, I want you to watch something." And he said, "What's that?"

I go, “Watch what happens the next time you talk when you should be listening.”

He goes, “Okay,” and he had this look on his face like, “What you’re saying is it’s okay if I talk,” and I go, “Well I’m not saying it’s okay, I’m just saying I know you’re gonna do it.”

So a couple of minutes go by and he looks at the person next to him and he starts talking to him and being silly or whatever. Two people talk, three, four, now we’re up to ten. It’s noisy in here and I said, “So, question, David. What kind of influence did you exert? Now currently, I’m preparing to show you something as a whole class and work through something with you on my document camera. Are we ready to listen?”

He goes, “No,” and I go, “Why would that be?”

I said, “You and I are in the circle of influence. I’m trying to influence people positively and even if you didn’t mean to, and more often than not you won’t, you influenced somebody negatively because they had another option that wasn’t the one that was in their best interest, so let me do this, ‘cuz he’s doin’ it.”

I said, “Now think about it. If you’re gonna influence someone, do you wanna do it positively or negative?”

I go, “And the funny thing is, the choice is always yours and I gotta tell ya, it’s a pretty strange thing when you think about it, I mean it really, really is, the fact that you could do something and someone will be affected by it.”

He totally got it because later on we were transitioning between something and he sat on the floor and his buddy John who sits one or two spaces from him started getting silly and David went [gesturing by putting finger to lips and holding up the class quiet sign].

It's important to note that this is Kinderpal's version of this exchange and it would be interesting to have David's perspective on it. Also, since this is Kinderpal's telling of this exchange, most of David's side of the dialogue is either very brief, one or two words, or it is implied by describing David's facial expression. However, it is an exchange very much as Noddings (1984, 1992; Owens & Ennis; 2005) describes as nurturing the ethical ideal. Kinderpal has observed David enough to understand that David is going to talk and he wants David to understand that talking is not a bad thing, it just a matter of how it influences others. Helping David to see that talking effects those around him, Kinderpal offers David the opportunity to see this influence and then provides David with follow-up dialogue to understand what he's just experienced. David further practices this newly found caring skill by implementing a different social skill at the next group time. Furthermore, there is evidence of reciprocity of Kinderpal's care in David's behavior change and in his later response to Kinderpal. During our interview, Kinderpal explained that he felt that David's quietly talking during the bingo game was David's acknowledgement that he had to talk, but he was trying to do it in a caring manner that wasn't negatively influencing the class and that he was seeking out Kinderpal's non-verbal cues as to his success with this strategy.

Meeting individual's unique needs

As teachers become engrossed with their students they acknowledge that students are different from each other and often have different needs in their development (Noddings, 1992). In order to meet those needs, teachers interact differently with students or groups of students. Both Wrigleymama and Redminne describe these differences in how they meet with different small groups.

The reading groups – they're getting better at being focused. I can have them maybe 15 minutes tops, that's even pushing it with my, like the three, first three groups. That's like pushing it even cuz they can't – it's like anything past even like probably 12 minutes, it's like they can't focus anymore. It's like I just try to get them reading because that's what they need. They need reading more than anything. They're not getting it in their focus group. They're not getting it at home. (Redminne, Interview 3)

I don't know if you noticed my last group I met with for reading was longer than the others. Those kids need – I should really be meeting with them even longer than I did today. They're my intense. They're my kids that go to reading club. So I try to balance it out and it works to have them come last because that's when everyone else is kind of wrapping up, finishing what they need to do.....Like my first group, I didn't even specifically meet with them. I don't know if you saw, they were all sitting on the C-circle reading. They're all reading Cam Jansen books and I got

them started on that the other day where they have to write a thinking question and then that's their focus on their bookmark that they're thinking about...Also figuring out what to do with the kids that come from extended resource, we decided to break their rotations up a little bit more where they have laptop time. They work first the do a little bit of laptop. So that way they're not doing the paper and pencil the whole time, or we had Legos the other day where they got to work first and then they got to play with the Legos second.

It's neat to see the rest of the class is not affected by that. They understand that it's okay that they get kind of a reward and they're okay.

They understand that. So that's cool. (Wrigleymama, Interview 2)

While in these passages Redminne is primarily describing the amount of time difference each reading group may receive, Wrigleymama goes into more detail mentioning not only the time difference, but also the content difference. The first group doesn't require much time because they are independently reading and preparing to discuss a more challenging book. However, her last group receives the most amount of time and even requires more. It is important to note that her use of the word "intense" as the signifier for the children of one group is troubling. Used in this manner, based on descriptors from the DIBELS program (Good, Gruba, & Kaminski, 2001; Goodman, 2006), it points to how the children are now identified as problematic; in need of "intensive intervention" in order to become successful readers as defined by this assessment. This is a move that has

the potential of limiting the teacher's options in the variety of ways she can continue to work with students identified in this way (Gaches, 2009).

Additionally, Wrigleymama explains how she utilizes more motivating activities for the extended resource students in order for them to experience success in the classroom. The routine use of a variety of learning materials and learning times provides good modeling for the students, as is apparent by their acceptance of one group's opportunity for more play-type learning (use of laptops and Legos). Through this variance students understand that everyone has different strengths and learning needs.

However, there are also signs of how it can be a challenge to maintain a caring relationship, as well.

The challenge to care

Noddings (1984) points out that within each of us is a natural sentiment to care. It is when we go beyond that initial instinct as we remember the feelings of being cared-for and the good feelings as the one-caring, that we strive to commit ourselves to caring for another, the feeling that "I must" respond. "When we commit ourselves to obey the 'I must' even at its weakest and most fleeting, we are under the guidance of this (ethical) ideal" to care (p. 80).

In the previous narrative, Wrigleymama also states that she's "figuring out what to do with the kids that come from extended resource." On one hand she is demonstrating how she is striving for the identified children to be successfully participating in her class by finding activities that they would enjoy in a ways that

are positive for them. Yet on the other hand, the wording of “what to do with” and pointing out how the rest of the class is not affected by these students’ “special activities,” she’s setting the extended resource children apart from the rest of the class. In fact, elsewhere in our interviews she explains that when the students from extended resource are in the room she struggles to balance her attention “because if those boys are not on task and do what they’re supposed to do then it’s hard to keep the rest of the class” (Interview 2). Again, Wrigleymama refers to the extended resource students as THOSE boys, indicating they are separate from her other students and that they make it hard for the “rest of the class.” However, as disassociated it appears that these children are from her regular class, she feels that “I must” do something. She is still struggling with “what to do with” the boys, but the drive is still there to do so.

This same frustration is seen in neiivxs’s feelings towards one of her students, Jordan, who began the school year with a great many behavioral challenges. In the opening quote of this chapter, neiivxs clearly states that one of her first acts with Jordan was to make sure that he knew that she cared and as neiivxs notes elsewhere in our interviews, Jordan has made a lot of progress, but there’s no doubt that his presence or absence greatly affects the rest of the class. However, in this passage there is a sense of desperation or even helplessness for her relationship with Jordan.

Joy is that Jordan’s gone for a couple days. That’s been really nice and the reason why that’s nice is Jordan’s a great kid. I like Jordan. Jordan’s got a great heart. I’d love to, in some sense, get to know him better and

work with him. That will never happen in this setting. It might in an after-school setting or something like that but it won't happen in the classroom.

neivxs began this passage with contradictory statements. It's nice that Jordan's been gone but he's a nice boy who she really likes. This doesn't make any sense by itself. It's only with the knowledge of how his presence effects how she can respond to the rest of the class, that his absence could be a positive thing. It is positive in that she can now meet the needs of the other students in her class. As she states elsewhere in interview 3, "I knew that I could get my testing done this week without him here." With this statement she's expressing her care for the rest of the students in her class whose needs may otherwise go unmet. However, the "I must" sentiment for Jordan is still there, but in a rather dormant state. She is sufficiently engrossed with him that she sees his great heart, she wants to work with him, but she doesn't believe that she can provide that care in school. It even appears that perhaps she's given up entirely. This has a tremendous affect on neivxs as will be discussed in the next chapter.

There are times, though, when teachers reject the caring relationship and "shift from 'I must do something' to 'Something must be done'" (Noddings, 1984, p. 81). In contrast to Wrigleymama's search for what she could do for her special education extended resource students, Janecrayon is searching for solutions outside of her classrooms and control.

...but these three boys are a handful every day. It's like it never lets up unless somebody is not here, and I think honestly until they get diagnosed

and get their situation, their meds or whatever, and we're in that process, it just takes time to make it all happen. (Janecrayon, Interview 2)

In this instance the Janecrayon's solution for the boys' behavior issues is with a diagnosis, which would include either behavior-altering medication or some other unidentified remediation. Janecrayon's viewpoint is a pathologizing, medical view that would require the involvement of someone else (potentially the medical profession) doing something (Heydon & Iannacci, 2008). She continues this type of discourse when she discusses her work with another child:

In some cultures it's like, okay, we'll take you to the doctor and we'll get it fixed and get it addressed and life goes on. In other cultures I found out that one of my students is deaf. She is five years old because this is kindergarten, and nothing has been done to help this child. No cochlear implants, no appliances, no testing, no surgeries and the mother was still sobbing just trying to tell us in the health office what was wrong with this child. There is definitely an impairment because you ask her to do something and a lot of time you have to [gesturing] because you think that you're making a communication for everybody and she has no idea she's being spoken to. We've got audiology set up for that. (Interview 1)

In this passage Janecrayon is pointing out that not only is this a medical problem that audiology will be handling, but that this little girl's "culture" should also have been the ones to do something about her hearing loss before she ever came to school. Since this is a middle-class, Anglo teacher passing off the obligation for care to a culture different from her own (lower-income Hispanic), it is particularly

troubling. Furthermore, there are many within the deaf community who would also question Janecrayon's call for external technology as the solution for what needs to be done (Valente, 2011). Still another time, Janecrayon was concerned about a child who was "so overweight he couldn't enjoy recess, he would sit on the sidewalk and pant because he was so out of breath walking from the classroom down the sidewalk a short ways" (Interview 1). Her concern led her to have someone do something about it; in this case, she contacted the health office who contacted the family.

It's difficult to say why a teacher would adopt a less-than-caring relationship with her students. However, one possible answer involves the potential imbalance between maternal care and the patriarchal project of schooling. As teachers get pulled increasingly towards the paternal roles, other more measurable and objective practices become more prevalent. For instance, given Janecrayon's attitudes involving "Someone ought to do something," it's not surprising to see the role that behavior modification plays in her classroom.

That somebody's able to stay in their chair, that they are able to complete a task, learn their letter names or learn their letter sounds. Those are like huge – I really try to focus on their behavior and we do the popcorn jar. You get a scoop when you're being good; when the jar is full we have a popcorn party. Those kind of things....right now I'm trying to get them to do their homework and bring it back. They got a little lollipop if they brought their homework back, but then they had to put it away until they got out of school to eat it." (Interview 1)

It was very interesting, one of the other days the little girl, all on her own, went around and picked up the trash, the paper snips that had been left under the tables or by a chair or something. I let her go to the prize box and commended her for it. The next day was, “Did you know I picked up two pieces of trash?” Just noting those positive behaviors gives the rest of them something to look forward to. (Interview 1)

Both of these passages are demonstrating relationships built on control and reward, as opposed to care. In the first passage, children are being rewarded by food treats (especially troubling given Janecrayon’s previous narrative regarding the overweight boy). The focus of learning, the focus of “being good,” and the reason to clean up the room become what external reinforcer will be received because of the appropriated behavior. When the treats go away, does the learning continue? Will children continue to take care of their classroom?

However, would it be fair to say that Janecrayon doesn’t “care” for her students? Noddings (1982) states that

The observer, then, must judge caring, in part, by the following: First, the action (if there has been one) either brings about a favorable outcome for the cared-for or seems reasonably likely to do so; second, the one-caring displays a characteristic variability in her actions – she acts in a nonrule-bound fashion in behalf of the cared-for. (p. 25)

Janecrayon’s actions do bring about a favorable outcome for her students, at least for the short-term and she does act variably based on her students’ needs. The

hearing-impaired child is receiving help from audiology and Janecrayon provides at least some extra classroom assistance through gesturing and extra attention. She has altered the seating in order to minimize distractions for the three boys who she believes will need some extra medical attention. According to Nodding's ethical ideal for caring, these actions will not be sufficient to help foster children as caring people, but that has not been the goal for the patriarchal project of schooling. Janecrayon, then, is demonstrating a teacher-student relationship based more on the paternal rather than the maternal influences.

Conclusion

The teacher-student relationship is a constant tension between the primary caring relationship and the interruptions/influence from the demands of schooling, reflecting the traditional maternal bond while simultaneously handing the child over to the patriarchal project. Often this tension can best be seen in the struggle teachers feel in motivational displacement in their caring relationships. On one hand teachers are pulled through their engrossment with the children to make schooling meaningful and exciting for them. On the other hand, teachers also are pulled to ensure each child's success in school. In other cases, as we have seen, teachers are influenced more predominantly by the patriarchal project, setting aside some of the elements of the caring relationship under the pressures of the increasingly high stakes teaching environment.

Chapter 4

AND YET THEY KEEP GOING: THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL TOLL OF TEACHING

I try my best to do what I am asked to do but not sacrificing what my kids need and going to people that I feel I need to speak with if I have a problem. Which being a classroom teacher, the school administration is the first level where you need to discuss things like that with. I feel comfortable in doing that, in voicing my concerns but that does not mean that it can change. It's kind of one of those situations where you feel helpless a lot of times. I think just having a relationship with other teachers and colleagues in being able to discuss things and figure out ways that if policies are put in place, ways that we can work with it so that we can still do what we think is right and do what we're supposed to do which is always kind of the tricky part. I think that we do the best that we can but there is a lot—I just feel like pressure. It's like ever since I started teaching, every single year it has gotten more and more. It's like a pressure cooker. It's just like, what's next? I think, once again, it just trickles down, and it ends up affecting the kids. It has to because we are with them all the time. (Redminne, Interview 1)

In the previous chapter teachers described some of the tensions they experience between the maternal care for children and the paternal project of

schooling (Grumet, 1988). In this narrative Redminne begins by stating that she does what she's asked to do (by administrators guiding the patriarchal project) but doesn't "sacrifice" her children's needs. These needs could include not only academic needs but emotional and social needs, as well. Support for student needs to be of a social and emotional nature is found in this narrative from Redminne:

They're not – they don't know how to handle their emotions. They don't know how to problem solve. They don't - maybe five of them do. Out of 25 that's not really that great, you know. Then part of me thinks too like I shouldn't – I don't expect them to come to first grade knowing necessarily – totally knowing how to do that. I mean to some extent. That's where I feel like I should be doing something about it. (Interview 3)

While she doesn't expect children to have a complete grasp on their social and emotional skills, she feels it needs to be addressed. Yet, by stating she "should be doing something about it," she's implying she's not doing as much as she would like to be doing.

Putting that statement alongside the statement above that she's doing what she's asked to do but not wanting to sacrifice children's needs, supports the supposition that what children need are social and emotional skills. Social and emotional skills are not generally considered academic topics that are part of the patriarchal project of school but rather are associated with caring relationships. Once again the tension between maternal and paternal projects is evident.

Yet, the first narrative goes deeper into the issue. Redminne begins to describe the effects of this tension on her colleagues and herself. First, there is a feeling of helplessness that the teacher cannot do anything about problems that may arise in trying to mitigate the tension. While Redminne feels comfortable approaching administration about her concerns, she doesn't feel that it will make a difference and the troublesome policies will continue. Her only recourse is based once again on relationships – this time, her relationships with other teachers. These teachers will, together, as indicated by the frequent use of “we” in this part of the passage, find some way to mold it, “work with it,” to do what they think is best for their students. Since this is going to be “the tricky part,” this molding process is rather like magic, rather diminishing the hard work that teachers will be putting forth to make it work.

Furthermore, Redminne contends that this work is filled with pressure. In fact, there is so much pressure increasing every year that it resembles the metaphorical “pressure cooker.” With Redminne's following statement, “It's just like, what's next?” there is an anticipation of that pressure cooker exploding and bits of teacher flying everywhere. In fact, the exploding teacher is then portrayed as exploding into the classroom and trickling her remains down upon the children. Redminne doesn't specify in what manner it would affect the children, but a pressure cooker explosion of teacher is a rather gruesome portrayal sure to affect children negatively.

According to Juliecarol, some teachers feel crushed under these pressures:

I've always thought that the pressures outside crush some teachers. It crushes their creativity, crushes their spirit, crushes their desire to spend time on what's important. I do. I think it's crushing. (Interview 1)

While Juliecarol does not identify herself as one of these crushed teachers, this passage has a similar feel to Redminne's pressure cooker. However, rather than the explosive effect of the pressure cooker, the negative effects of Juliecarol's crushing pressure is a portrayal of a certain kind of death – a death of creativity, spirit, and desire. Could the death of learning (or even children) be far behind?

Redminne's final statement is about the probable affect the pressure cooker would have upon the children, "It has to because we are with them all the time." There is a beleaguered quality to that sentence. Redminne cannot decrease the pressure, cannot take a break from the pressure, because the pressure is always there as she works with the ever-present children.

However, it's interesting to note that MariaM8311875 felt somewhat differently about how teachers under pressure affect the children. When discussing the challenges in keeping up with frequent curriculum changes from the state, MariaM8311875 states, "So do the teachers feel pressure? Yeah, you better believe it. Do we try to pass that onto the kids? No." On one hand this would indicate that teacher pressure does not affect the children. On the other hand, MariaM8311875 doesn't state that there is no affect on the children, but rather that teachers don't "try" to pass the pressure onto the children. Trying and doing are different. One can do without trying. So perhaps there is not conscious

effort to pass the pressure onto the children, but there is still the possibility for it to happen.

While there are likely further costs to children due to the tension between the maternal and paternal projects of schooling, the focus of this chapter is the toll this conflict takes on the teachers.

The exhaustion and exhilaration

Three of the participating teachers discussed the physical toll that this job takes upon them. Juliecarol describes working with the children as both exhausting and exhilarating.

I try not to look at the six kindergarten classes around me. There's one other kinderkid class and then five others. I try not to look at the other children because they're huge compared to my children, the physical size when you think that some of them are more than a year older. I try not to think too deeply (laughter) about the differences on the surface because the fact is, this is who I am teaching and they are sponges. They are testing every single thing I know about teaching and learning. They are making me exercise everything I know about literacy development. I'm sitting here thinking, "This is what I've been teaching these college students for seven years about how language and reading and writing develop and it's right here in front of my face every single day." In that, that's where the exhilarating comes from.

The exhaustion comes from, “Oh my gosh! Here is your district writing sample the third week of school. Would you please take a writing – give your students this writing assessment?” I’m dealing with the same thing that I think all district teachers, all teachers, deal with – the pressures from the outside. I’m a little bit protected in that it’s kindergarten or that it’s kinderkid, but that has been the exhausting part, even more than keeping up with these little tiny kids. (Interview 1)

Juliecarol finds it exhilarating to be professionally challenged or in her words having “every single thing I know…” tested. She delights in her professional knowledge being put to use plus the acknowledgement that what she has been teaching college students is, in fact, what is happening in her classroom. What has been coming from within her and shared with her students, both young and old, is working. However, once again “pressure” is present in the form of expectations from the district office to have kindergarten children complete a writing assessment during the third week of school. For Juliecarol this pressure creates exhaustion, even more exhausting than keeping up with young children.

In this next narrative Juliecarol describes not only how keeping up with children is exhausting, but also describes how, like Redminne, she takes responsibility to “make it all work” and how that process, too, is exhausting and exhilarating.

I have just been thrilled with how nicely it is going. Once, like I said, I took some breaths, realized I know what I am doing, and have just continued to find little ways to make it all work. I have to laugh – there are days I do

not sit down and, not that I sat down a lot in first grade or second grade, but especially in second grade, you had moments where you could do this (sits back in chair) and just enjoy. Kids could truly – and that isn't here. Every single thing – it continues to be exhausting and exhilarating. This is what – how I have been describing it to people – exhausting and exhilarating. Every single thing – well, you heard me say the floating and sinking thing was a disaster. The same freakin' lesson I have done 50 times with first and second graders and it was a disaster and I realized not only were they so excited, I had way too many steps. You got to see part of what I condensed it to. There are three things you have to remember – predict, guess, record. You know what, they did fine today. I also limited the space and the number of items and even though it was done yesterday, it was too many things. Done today, few words, same basic process – they did great! I am enjoying that process. That keeps my teaching fresh. Taking what you know works and then going (whirling noise) down for a four and a half, five year old group. (Interview 3)

Physically standing and complete engagement with the children all day creates a certain kind of exhaustion for Juliecarol. She misses the opportunity to sit back and “just enjoy” the children. However, the need to make something work also creates exhaustion for Juliecarol. While it could be questioned why Juliecarol is doing the same lesson with her kindergarteners that she's previously done with first and second graders, the key point for the discussion here is that she recognized that the previous day's lesson was a “disaster” and found another way

to approach the lesson. Juliecarol implies that while attempting to teach the lesson the previous day may have been physically exhausting, as “disasters” usually are, she was mentally exhilarated through the process of modifying the lesson to better fit her particular students’ learning needs. Once again, Juliecarol’s exhilaration is based on the use of her professional knowledge and skills, this time not only for the benefit of her students but also for herself as it helps to keep her teaching “fresh.”

Wellness and Guilt

Where Juliecarol pairs “exhausting” with “exhilarating,” Wrigleymama just finds exhaustion. For Wrigleymama teaching is hard work, as demonstrated by her use of the word “hard” no less than six times in the following passage, a repetition that tells us how emotionally charged the topic is for her (Tobin, 2001).

It’s hard. It’s really, really hard. This job requires so much energy, especially first grade, the young ones, when you teach young kids. They require so much. Over the course of the years that I’ve been teaching it’s hard to keep up the energy, to keep up with it. I have a passion for it but sometimes it’s hard. Some days are better than others.

I love it. I love coming here every day and love being here with them and hearing the things that they have to say, and what they do and how much growth they have throughout the year, it’s always fun, but it’s hard. It’s exhausting compared to other professions. I mean I don’t know, I’ve only been a teacher, but they can kind of turn off for a little while. It’s hard to

turn off when you're here. You're from bell to bell. You're on, so to speak. (Interview 3)

There is another tension in Wrigleymama's narrative, the tension between the physical toll of the job and her passion for working with the children. She juxtaposes how "hard" the work is with her love of being with the children, hearing what they say, and seeing their growth. It's that love that keeps her coming back each day, even though she imagines that other jobs would allow her to "turn off" some during the day, a sentiment similar to Redminne's stress of being with the children "all the time."

However, due to some health issues during this school year, Wrigleymama has not been able to always be at school. Furthermore, these health issues otherwise impact how "hard" teaching can be.

Challenges, personally, as a teacher, when you're not 100% feeling well it's very hard to do your best, to be on your game and to plan and to prepare and to just—I mean it's like running a marathon otherwise. If you're sick or you don't feel, if you're not in great health, it makes it very difficult. I've never really been faced with that up until this year where I've had some challenges, personally, so it's affecting—you realize how much the success of your class depends on how you feel. It's hard to come in here when you don't feel great, but you have to.

If you're not here you feel guilty not being here because you're at home and you're trying to take care of yourself and feel better, but yet, you're

just worried sick about what's going on at school. Then, you have the guilt factor. You feel guilty for not being there. (Interview 3)

Wrigleymama is so focused on caring for her children that she has difficulty caring for herself (Noddings, 1992). She has come to realize how physically demanding teaching really is and how not being well is affecting her students. However, according to her repeated statements, Wrigleymama feels great guilt in staying home to care for herself. According to Noddings (1988), guilt occurs when there is a conflict in caring. In the case of Wrigleymama's guilt, she is ill but she still feels that she must care for her students. If she is gone from school she is "worried sick," potentially afraid that her class will feel abandoned and think she doesn't care for them. Also, through my own experiences with this school district I know that there has been a great deal of teacher absence regulation with frequent emails informing teachers that there will be an anticipated high-absence day with probable lack of substitute teacher coverage, reminding teachers of impending "restricted use" days, and recent contract negotiations restricting acceptable absence reasons. Given that climate, it is very possible that Wrigleymama feels threatened being absent from the classroom and, according to Noddings, this combination of lack of caring reciprocity with feelings of being reprimanded for not caring enough, leads to these feelings of guilt.

Family Effects

During the course of this study Artshopper found out she was pregnant and was making conscious choices in her classroom to care for herself and her child.

I've been trying to just stay calm and pick my battles just because I'm pregnant. I'm trying to just remain calm, keep things in perspective to a certain point. Today there were some things that I was ignoring to a certain extent because I couldn't tackle all of it. (Interview 3)

By stating that she is “trying” to stay calm she is admitting to herself and the listener that she knows that she is not always successful in doing so. Additionally, if she were picking her battles now, based on her pregnancy, why would she not do so otherwise? What kind of decisions would she be making otherwise? A clue is in her use of “to a certain point” and “to a certain extent.” These phrases were used in conjunction with keeping things in perspective and ignoring, respectfully. Since she doesn't feel she can “tackle all of it” she is finding ways to compromise so that she can care for herself and her baby while maintaining care of her students.

However, Artshopper does not just worry about how her school experiences affect her child, but also how they affect her relationship with her husband even though he is also a teacher.

I really, really love teaching. I just think I get overwhelmed. Like I, how I said that there's so many things going on. If there's anything in your personal life going on and I guess I just feel that more because [husband]

and I are both teachers too. When we both have a lot going on it's like your personal life suffers. We're both coming in on the weekends and you're so tired when you get home that it's just like you make dinner, hang out, go to bed, wake up, do it all over again.

I'm grateful that we both love it. We both find so much joy out of working with kids. It's just hard. I just feel like it's constantly a gray line that you are like weaving back and forth over trying to make everyone happy and teach your kids a have a life outside of work. (Interview 3)

In the first paragraph, Artshopper tells us how much she loves teaching, but her personal life “suffers.” In this section the fact that both her husband and she are teachers is an issue for Artshopper. She's sees both of them being very busy, both of them working at school on the weekends, and both of them feeling so tired when they get home as the effects of the stresses at school. Yet her description of home life after a day of school (“make dinner, hang out, go to bed, wake up, do it all over again”) sounds fairly typical for most middle-class families without children. Since, Artshopper is still fairly young and new to the professional world, I wonder if she would feel the same way about the daily demands of any job.

Where in some ways both spouses teaching is a stress, in the next paragraph she states how “grateful” she is that they both love working with kids, creating an interesting mixed metaphor. Her life is a “constant gray line.” The use of “in a gray area” usually denotes unknown boundaries, rules, or parameters. In this passage Artshopper is creating a “gray line” between her school life and

her home life. She is uncertain of the boundaries, of where to draw the line to have a personal life. Furthermore, she adds the phrase “weaving back and forth over trying to make everyone happy.” Usually weaving back and forth over a line is used to describe how an intoxicated person walks a straight line in a roadside test to stay out of trouble with the law. Since Artshopper is weaving back and forth over that undefined space between her personal and professional life, she is in trouble, not with the law, but rather with “everybody” (family and friends) as she tries to make them happy. Once again this is “hard” work with which she is not feeling successful.

Inner Turmoil

Artshopper’s weaving on this gray line begins to point to the inner turmoil teachers feel. neivxs shared a great deal of this inner turmoil with me, probably more so than any other teacher. Part of this is due to the close relationship we developed as she became a daily collaborator with me at my school site. However, she believed that the deep feelings that she shared with me were important not only for her to share and for me to know, but she wanted others to know so that they could learn from her experiences to make teaching and learning better for everyone.

It’s been a rough couple of years for neivxs. She’s came to the school as an involuntary transfer because of staffing challenges within the school district. However, she was given a choice of a two schools and did choose to be at a Title I school over a more affluent school. This choice was based on her passion for

working with marginalized minority children. In fact, due to her experiences in an urban school setting as a young child, she has a great deal of “white guilt” (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003; Steele, 1990; Swim & Miller, 1999).

On the same – our street dead-ended into whatever the street was, and over here was the white high school. It was brand new. It was a beautiful building. Across the field was the old, brick, black high school. From the black high school, continuing on, whatever direction that would be, to my right, were the black homes – the homes that most of the black people lived in. It was only lived in by black people. It was your stereotypical, ratty, old, screen door, and a wire fence that was falling apart, and gate, and dirt in the front yard, not really any grass. There was an old cemetery. It was the other side of the tracks.

My father was in the service, so we weren’t an affluent family, by any means, but my life was certainly different than their life. I did not understand that. I wanted to be black. I wanted to trade places. I don’t think it was so much that I wanted to know what it was like to be black. I think there was an element of that, but I think it was more of “why am I so fortunate to have a life like this and you aren’t? I didn’t do anything.” Subconsciously – “just because I’m white?” I didn’t understand the history.

That really is kind of the – underlies why I teach, why I do lots of things, because of the injustices that I see in our society and how I can overcome that in the classroom and impact a child’s life. (Interview 1)

She has based her teaching career and, as she stated, why she does “lots of things,” on her drive to make up for her perceived privileges growing up. Yet this drive and her passion for working with children have been disheartening. In our interview at the end of a school day I asked neivxs how much the day was a representative sample of a day in her life. This was her response:

It was probably pretty average in the sense that the kids weren't totally on track. They aren't every day. They were on the noisy end but not the noisiest they've ever been. I think it was kind of normal for this class this year. I wasn't exactly happy and I wasn't exactly fully rested, and I wasn't exactly thrilled to be here today and that's typical for this year.

(Interview 2)

There certainly isn't much passion for teaching or working with students in this statement about an “average” day. The statements about the children's behavior were made in the negative tense even the seemingly positive remark, “not the noisiest they've ever been” so that the general feeling is that the children have negative behaviors. This is directly followed by neivxs's statement of her personal lack of happiness linking the children's behavior to her happiness. Yet neivxs lays some of the blame for her happiness on herself as she “wasn't exactly fully rested.” The reasons for her lack of thrill for being at school, though, are left undefined but we know that is her general sentiment this school year.

However, immediately after this statement neivxs shares her biggest joy for this school year:

The greatest joy this year probably is that I have a student, Jordan, whose behavior has just turned around immensely to be positive, in the positive way. Although he's still a challenge, but administration, parents, other staff members recognize that he's improved. It's not everything that I did, but it's just nice to know. It's nice to get a compliment because we don't always do things really well and even if we do, we don't always get acknowledged for it. (Interview 2)

This joy is taking her back to her original purpose for teaching as Jordan is one of the few African-American students in her class and there is little doubt that she's making a difference in his life, even though she acknowledges, "it's not everything I did." Then again, in this instance, her joy doesn't appear to stem from Jordan's success as much as it stems from the compliment she receives from administration, parents, and other staff members. The recognition from those outside her private classroom is especially meaningful to her.

That is juxtaposed by the anger she describes when those outside forces interfere with her private classroom space. This anger then leads to frustration, despair, then finally resignation.

On the other hand, that's teaching. We have to be flexible. We always have to be flexible. I know that but it's hard. There's some times my mood, whatever, that I don't deal with it well.

Then I was really insulted, I guess the word is insulted, I took it very personal the other day when Diana came in and showed me the attendance list for one of the reading groups. One of my students was late every day

for reading group. I had to take a deep breath to not get mad. I do my darndest first thing in the morning to get my attendance done, to get my kids on task. Maybe I look at the clock and its 7:55 a.m. Maybe I look at the clock and its 7:57 a.m.

I try to know when it's 7:53 a.m. because I ask them always to put their work away, push their chairs in; and if it's 7:55 a.m. or later, then I'm like "oh just go." I don't want to do that but now I'm afraid to make them late because I know it's going to take them a little while to put their work away. They need to do that. I could set an alarm. I thought the kids all leave at the same time, why is one kid late?

I was thinking how dare you? I would like to start my class on time, too. I'm always getting interrupted. I have to do bus evacs in the middle of my lesson. I have to drop everything when the announcement—yeah, this is a typical day, not a great one. Like I said, this year is not filled with a lot of great days. (Interview 2)

First, there is anger. neivxs is angry to be confronted by the special education teacher who coordinates the groups. This anger is built upon the frustration neivxs feels trying to get her students settled and then a few students out the door to their small groups with reading assistants. The maternal project to care for the children and the paternal project to get academics started immediately violently collide in those moments between the first bell of the morning (7:40) and 7:55. This frustration returns to anger when neivxs performs the passage beginning with "...how dare you?" and then proceeds to list everything interrupting her time

with the children turning the time element (to which I will return in the next chapter) right back onto the now-absent reading specialist. *neiivxs* then directly ties these feelings to the year “not filled with a lot of great days.”

Furthermore, feelings of despair surface when *neiivxs* is asked how she deals with these challenges.

neiivxs: I get sick. I get tired.

Sonya: You have been sicker this year?

neiivxs: I have. I just want to cry right now. I don't cry, but I say I don't think I want to be a teacher anymore. I'm probably not dealing with it. I ask a lot if the kindergarten classes are any better. We talked about it at lunch today. I think there's a conscious “oh my gosh am I going to get relief next year? Am I going to have to do this again because if I am, I'm out of here!” It's just really hard this year.

There is despair in *neiivxs*'s substitution for a desire to cry by the thoughts of quitting teaching. Yet she doesn't say she wants to quit but rather the softer “I don't think I want to be a teacher anymore.” She places her hope in next year's first graders where just previously the issue was with the school special education teacher. Yet her future employment rests on the children when she pairs next years group with the statement “oh my gosh, am I going to get relief next year? Am I going to have to do this again because if I am, I'm out of here?” She was correct when she stated “I'm probably not dealing with it” because she's not sure

where to turn her attention, to the children or to the outside forces (special education teacher, interruption today).

The impact of outside forces

There is support for her bigger issues being with the outside forces. In our third interview when talking about neiivxs's increased preparedness for lessons she does touch upon other ways these outside forces frustrate her.

I guess I'd have to say administration has been a challenge in that it's not clear to me exactly what's expected and I feel like they're starting to become – this is only my second year at this school, but we used to call them Open Court cops because we did Open Court instead of Harcourt...I just feel like the pressure that's coming down is not compatible with good teaching or management practice. That it's just kind of sterile. I don't feel like I can say anything.” (Interview 3)

neiivxs had experience with Open Court cops (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Kohl, 2009) while she was teaching in California. Her mention of them here points to an underlying anxiety based on experiences similar to those described in a case study of two novice teachers by Achinstein and Ogawa (2006). Each novice teacher found the scripted lessons of the Open Court literacy program as restricting their ability to best meet student learning needs. They both felt their ability to use their professional knowledge and judgment was stifled, as was their creativity. One of the novice teachers moved to a school not using the Open Court program the following year but the other novice teacher was “released” by

her school and district at the end of the year. The only reason provided by her administration and mentor teacher was that she was not a “team player.” Being a “team player” meant not questioning and complying to rigid use of Open Court and “not working with the system” (p. 42). For some teachers this kind of high-stakes teacher compliance expectation invokes feelings of fear whether their school is using Open Court or other programs where absolute fidelity to the program is required.

In the end, if you’re not using the resource the way you’ve been asked to use it and your kids aren’t making progress, then you’ve gotten yourself into a kind of problem. I think there is fear in that. Fear that you need to use this resource. You need to do these lesson maps exactly the way they are written. If your kids aren’t making progress, we’re going to question how you’re doing that. It just leads to, I think, it makes me nervous even just talking about it. Feeling like you are under a microscope. Where I feel it should be more of a supportive, more of a professional development approach which I think that word is used but it’s not really done in that way. It’s done in “You’re going to do this. We’re going to watch.” It’s just not a comfortable—professional development has that comfort feeling like you’re all learning together. You’re going to help each other. You’re going to not feel like you’re being slapped on the hand. (Redminne, Interview 1)

Redminne tells us what she wants. She wants to work with her colleagues in a supportive, collaborative, non-violent manner to ensure student success. This is,

once again, a relationship-based mode of problem solving. Juxtapose this, her Foucaultian description of “feeling like you are under a microscope,” with her narrative performance of supervisors stating, “You’re going to do this. We’re going to watch” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983; Foucault, 1977, 1980; Kohl, 2009). She even includes the visual imagery of getting slapped on the hand if her student data indicates that perhaps she is not completely faithful to the resources “exactly the way they are written.” Her fear is so great that she is “nervous” even talking about possible non-compliance. Foucault describes the power of this gaze, in this case from the patriarchal authority figures of the special education teacher and principal, as “an inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself” (Foucault, 1980, p. 155). Thus Redminne has interiorized the gaze in the form of fear.

Kinderpal described interactions with power structures in a different manner. Kinderpal described himself after a staff meeting or training dealing with new curriculum and programs as feeling “a little brow-beaten. It’s not that anybody’s doing anything to you but you know that whole diminishment of your soul, ‘Well I thought I was doing okay and now you’re telling me I gotta go somewhere else’” (Interview 3). He had interiorized that he was doing the right thing and that he was in compliance. However, he found that despite those good intentions, he was found lacking. Yet he found this to be “a blessing and a curse.”

The blessing is that I had to constantly challenge myself to think differently this year, which I don’t mind doing. The only complaint is

basically I remember making to one of my colleagues this is year, is that I said “There’s nothing wrong with change. It can stretch you and take you in directions you never thought you were capable of going, but all the while you’re embracing that change, you need to have at least one foot on something that’s solid. It can’t be both feet into the change because you’d never be effective, so you have gotta have one foot here in the real world and then the other foot that’s being lofty with the dreams and with the new curriculum and all those things.” So if there is a challenge this year it’s been marrying the two. (Interview 3)

Again, as other teachers have mentioned, personal growth is an opportunity, or in this case the blessing. However, Kinderpal feels he’s cursed in attempting to “embrace” change and “marry” the way he’s been teaching with the lofty dreams of new curriculum and “all those things.” It’s interesting romantic imagery of blessings and curses, embracing and marriage that takes on a fairy-tale quality that makes this marriage seem almost too good to be true. And yet, Kinderpal concludes this passage with the statement, “Then somewhere in the process, I’ve just decided to embrace it.”

Coping

And often, despite the physical and emotional toll, teachers do embrace these challenges and find ways of coping. One way that Kinderpal copes is through strategic use of his memories.

If you do this job and you're around children like I am, you're happy as can be; but, when you deal with outside sources and influences that constantly have an opinion about your profession as a whole, I think that's when I dig into my little memory bank and remind myself of what I do that matters. Then, when some of those things people say and do outside of the classroom get to weighing on me, I've got a whole set of memories I can go back to, recent and previous memories, that I can go back to and I can do affirmations with myself and go, "You know buddy, you've helped a lot of people and you've made a difference in their life and that's just chatter, and yeah, some of the educational profession doesn't work.

That's not you; that's not where you work, but they're talking in generalities and you're dealing in specifics, so it's not the same thing." I kind of use it that way. (Interview 1)

Kinderpal's self-reliance for positive feelings towards his profession is demonstrated as he performs a peptalk he gives himself when "outside sources and influences" weigh heavily upon him. While Kinderpal doesn't explicate these "outsides sources and influences," directly after this passage when discussing his greatest challenges, Kinderpal cites budgetary concerns, the related loss of kindergarten instructional assistants, and changes in the curriculum that he feels has been "dummied down." There is another performance occurring here as well. Kinderpal is playing out the larger societal Conversation that pits teachers against policy makers. Like many teachers Kinderpal is working to "make a difference" (Gaches, 2010). This portrays him as benevolent and as a teacher-advocate for

social reform. He positions this against the “teacher-bashing” Conversations, those narratives with which the general populace is so familiar that they then perceive as truth (Gee, 2005), citing teachers as the root of needed school reform (Dudley-Marling, 2005; Karp, 2010; Spencer, 1996). Kinderpal wants to remind himself (and his listener) that he is not one of “those” teachers who needs reforming by specifically stating, “That’s not you.”

Similarly, Juliecarol takes an active stance in making herself focus on the positive. Her weekly practice of positive emails and phone calls home to families are not just for the benefit of the child, but also for her benefit as well:

It’s a way that I can celebrate what the children are doing. I always end my phone calls or emails with, “Please let Samantha know that Miss J called and we’re so proud of her.” I’ve made that part of my practice for a long time because wouldn’t we go crazy otherwise if we weren’t celebrating those things?

It also makes you stay positive because if I dwelt on William and the troubles and the struggle, I would be insane because it has been hard—or Brittney’s screaming and acting like a baby and rolling up like a roly-poly bug.

I mean if I dwelt on just those challenges, I’d be giving up. Yes, there are definite things that I’ve always tried to do to focus on the joy of it.

(Interview 1)

Juliecarol fears for her sanity without her conscious effort to find some positive to report to families. In fact, without making that conscious effort she’d be “giving

up.” Whether she’d be giving up her job, her sanity, or her ability to reach children is left unknown. Yet there is a tone of desperation that points to the importance of this task.

When neiivxs was reprimanded by both a parent and her principal for being too “mean” to the students through her facial expressions and tone of voice, it “shook her up” and she realized that not only were the stresses of the class effecting the children but they were effecting her work with colleagues as well.

I just kind of dug inside. I kind of retreated and I thought I really need to be nicer to other adults around me and how I respond. My sighs, my shortness and sometimes refrain from saying something and try not to complain so much. This is a job and everything’s not perfect but just not to get into that rut with teammates of just always talking negative, negative, negative.

I did make some improvement of the tone of my voice and the sighing and trying to overcome the poor-little-me. I’d like to say that I didn’t feel that way, but I’m sure I did. (Interview 3)

Again, help for neiivxs came from inside of herself. While the parent and principal drew her attention to the problem, it was up to neiivxs to find support. However, it’s concerning that she had to “retreat” within herself instead of having external resources for assistance. Once again, there is no care for the one-caring and she is left caring for herself (Noddings, 1988, 1992).

neivxs found other ways of caring for herself, too. Sometimes it was simply making herself leave school by a certain time and “allowing” herself to have personal time. Other times it’s by making allowances for herself.

I cry. I talk to teachers when I can, sometimes complaining, sometimes looking for help. I go to administration, but I try to go with a resolution – I don’t like to be a whiner. Again, I just try not to beat myself up. I make mistakes. I have bad days. I do bad lessons sometimes. I have to just shake it off and hope that I’m gonna reach one child this year. I want to reach them all, but I just keep – hear that old – I don’t like it, but if you can just reach one this year, it’d be great. (Interview 1)

She will allow crying. She will allow complaining. She will allow mistakes, bad days, and bad lessons. Yet there is still a note of violence in her actions to herself. By stating that she will “not” beat herself now she leaves the impression that she has been beating herself for bad days, bad lesson, and mistakes in the past. She strives to go beyond “reaching one child,” but at this point she resigned to one. Perhaps that is enough to keep her going.

Finally, for Janecrayon coping with the stresses from the outside world and battling the tensions between the maternal role of caring and the paternal project of schooling the answer lies with a smile:

Life goes on. You mire in all that stuff and it affects you as a person and it affects your outlook. I think you have to—like I tell the kids, I said, I like to smile at you, so let's think about good student behavior, let's try our best. Then I can smile. (*Laughter*) Never realizing that that's such a huge

thing. One of my former preschool students is now in the upper years of high school and his sister's in eighth grade or something like that. I was visiting with all of 'em. The aunt came along and she said, I know why those kids thought the world of you because you smile. (*Laughter*) I thought, well thank you, that was very nice of you to say. You just kind of get burrowed down sometimes and you forget, yeah, they don't always wanna see [makes stressed face], (*Laughter*) so let's look at a smile and try a little harder. It kinda works. (Interview 3)

Conclusion

As these teachers have shared, teaching is hard work. It is simultaneously exhausting and exhilarating. They describe feeling the metaphorical physical abuse of being “brow-beaten,” hand-slapped, and pressure-cooked. These teaching stressors impact their life away from school with their families. When times are especially challenging they dig inside themselves for happy memories, focus on the positive, forgive themselves, and finally, “smile and try a little harder.” They advocate for their students and for themselves. They persevere, working through all these personal physical and emotional challenges, to “make a difference” as they care for their students inside their classrooms.

Still, dealing with forces from outside the classroom, such as administrative policies and demands, state and district curriculum expectations, and school schedules, also creates feelings of helplessness, despair, and guilt. The next section further explores the impact on these teachers’ classroom experiences

of these “outside forces,” usually associated with the paternal project of schooling.

SECTION 2

TIME: THE PATRIARCHAL PROJECT'S DRIVER

Paperwork, time - there's never enough time - not enough time to collaborate, dealing with other colleagues, not enough time to plan a lesson plan, whether it's a day or a unit, not enough time to call parents. (neiivxs, Interview 1)

Time. There never seems to be enough of it, as neiivxs emotionally states repeatedly. Whether it is those elements that neiivxs shares, or it is the way that instructional minutes are allocated in the classroom, or it is children's need of time to grow and learn, time was a common theme raised by every one of the participating teachers.

When asked in the first interview, how current policies, the rules that govern the work of schools affect her daily classroom experiences, Artshopper responded with the following passage in which time plays a key role.

Artshopper: My classroom activities, just that all kids need to be performing in a certain level by this date, whenever mid-DIBELS assessment is given. I don't wanna teach to the test or anything like that, but it does drive a lot of the activities obviously that I've planned which is good because those are the standards I'm supposed to be teaching anyway. I think it plays a part in everything (pause) and just everything is just so rigorous now that I feel like things have to be a lot more fast-paced

so that I can fit everything in. Do you know what I mean? It's kindergarten. You don't really feel like it should be that way all the time. I feel a lot of things should be—don't take it the wrong way. I mean kindergarten is automatically faster-paced because they have short attention spans, but it's like I almost feel anxiety when I look at the clock and I'm like, "Oh, no. I'm running 15 minutes late. I need to be able to do this now because of block schedules, or minutes or even like all the things that I'm expected to get in by a certain point or by the end of the year." Do you know what I mean?

It's like constantly keeping yourself in check, which causes some anxiety, and maybe causes me to be more anxious and then it's like I can't do my job as well because I am in the state of being anxious about everything. That doesn't translate well when you're already in a room full of chaos. If you're short-tempered, or feel like you're under some clock requirement, or regulation or whatever, it increases your anxiety already when you're in a room of 25 five-year-olds. I don't know. I went on a tangent. I don't remember what I was talking about.

Sonya: We're just talking about how education policy affects the daily classroom.

Artshopper: I think it's hard to make sure that you—to a certain extent, I'm a rule follower, you know what I mean. I don't like to openly go against what's considered by administration, or by the state or

whatever. I wanna do what's best for kids, and I wanna do what's expected of me, and what's laid out as good practice and everything by the people above me. But at the same time, it conflicts sometimes with what I think might be best for a student, just developmentally-wise, you know, try to keep things really developmentally appropriate and make sure that every—you know just making sure that there is play based centers and they're really good and rich centers and that they are—but it's more and more difficult.

Sonya: So how do you go about making that decision? Which strategies, which materials that you do use in the classroom—since it sounds like that is an area where you're kind of feeling conflicted that here's what you're being told to do, here's what you should do, here's what you feel you should do—how do you make that decision?

Artshopper: I think in my mind, I'm always having this conversation with myself, where if someone came into the room and questioned me I'd be ready, to be like, "Oh no. This is what they're working on. Look, that's the standard and this is how it aligns to what Harcourt is telling me what to do." I'm kind of always constantly having that conversation in my head, which is good anyway to make sure that I'm not just having them do some rinky-dink craft or something that doesn't align to anything. But I don't know that that's good that I feel like that might happen to me, do you know what I mean, that someone might walk into my room and automatically assume that I'm not

doing what's best for my students academically because they might be working with playdough or something. It's like I'm constantly having that smart remark ready to go, which I don't wanna sound that I'm pulling attitude or something, but being like, "No. Look, this is what they're doing. This is what this child needs because they struggle with this," and being able to verbally explain it to someone who might not be used to walking into an early child classroom and seeing that stuff going on.

In the beginning of this passage, the activity system nodes of rules and tools are intertwined in a complementary manner. The DIBELS assessment (Good, Gruba, & Kaminski, 2001) and State standards are tools that teachers are required by State laws and school board policies to use in order to document and guide learning. Artshopper immediately links these policies and tools to the use of time and instructional pacing in her classroom in two ways. First is the time required to "fit everything in." In this case the "everything" refers to the standards. Second is adherence to the school's rigid master scheduling and the required instructional minutes for each subject area. Additionally, Artshopper describes the power structure in the student's division of labor between "what's laid out as good practice and everything by the people above me" and more developmentally appropriate activities such as play based centers and working with playdough.

Through analysis of further teacher narratives, this section will argue that as these three corners (rules, tools, and division of labor) of the activity theory triangle come together in the common theme of "time," a triangular prism is

formed (Figure 5) demonstrating the patriarchal project of schooling that is so powerful that teachers like Artshopper have internalized its control, as evidenced by the need to “constantly keep yourself in check” and to create mental scripts to defend their actions in meeting children’s needs.

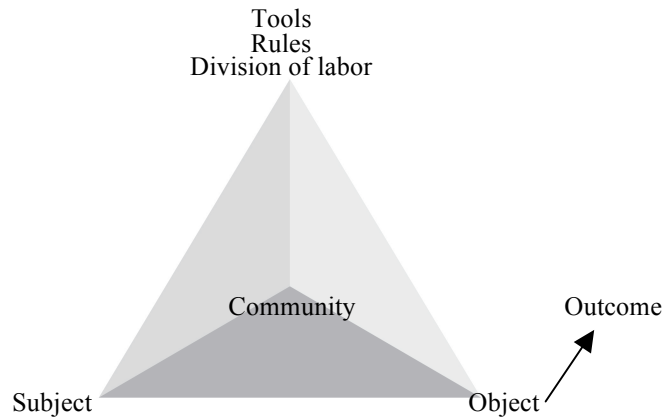


Figure 5. The transformed activity theory triangular pyramid.

The following chapters will examine teacher narratives of “fitting it all in” or in other words, how teachers divide the labor of the classroom using classroom tools in order to assist children in achieving the required objectives (Chapter 5); how teachers achieve the former within rigid time structures set by school policies (Chapter 6); and finally how teachers further divide their labor in their work with others and within their own time frames to accomplish these requirements (Chapter 7).

Chapter 5

FITTING IT ALL IN

My classroom activities – just that all kids need to be performing in a certain level by this date, whenever mid-DIBELS assessment is given. I don't wanna teach them the test or anything like that, but it does drive a lot of the activities obviously that I've planned which is good because those are the standards I'm supposed to be teaching anyway. I think it plays a part in everything (pause) and just everything is just so rigorous now that I feel like things have to be a lot more fast-paced so that I can fit everything in. Do you know what I mean? (Artshopper, Interview 1)

As Artshopper states, a constant issue is the need to make sure that all curriculum requirements are covered, both within the school day and the school year. In the previous passage, most imminently it is DIBELS testing that raises this concern. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) assessments are the primary means by which students' literacy progress is measured throughout the school year in this school and school district. DIBELS scores are used to monitor student growth and identify students needing additional learning assistance. Often teachers and instructional assistants outside the regular classroom deliver this extra assistance. Teachers and administration meet regularly to review student DIBELS data. It is important to note that students' progress on this assessment is also used to monitor effectiveness of reading

instruction delivered in the regular classroom in the identified “core” reading time periods. DIBELS assessments are required tools used to monitor both students’ and teachers’ progress towards attainment of specified learning objectives. Therefore, the DIBELS assessment is the tool being used by the patriarchal project of schooling that Artshopper specifically states is “driving” which activities she plans.

Contrast how the DIBELS assessment is driving Artshopper with how district assessment tools combined with classroom observations are informing MariaM1875’s instruction:

That’s something [an assessment packet], the district has taken all the standards and broken them down into quarters and then has devised some, these are not by any means wonderful, but they’re kind of a quick test to see if the kids mastered the standards for that quarter, and this is just the first one. So it’s brand new and I get to be the keeper of it. This is just for math...

We have done some alignment of standards with Montessori lessons.

Okay, we’ve worked on that, and now they’re going to change to the core curriculum. So those have all been added to and that is kind of what these benchmark papers are addressing that I can see. So we’ll use those if we want and some of us are using them and some of us aren’t using them.

And we do Acuity; which is predictive tests on how the children will do on (state testing). So we do that third through sixth, and it’s usually three times a year that they take that.

So we go through and look at that data and look at our observations of the kids and what they've been doing and where they are, and then we adjust their curriculum to meet their needs. (MariaM8311875, Interview 2)

MariaM8311875's experience using these progress-monitoring assessments is quite different. While she and her Montessori colleagues have aligned their program with the state standards they are not required to use the district quarterly assessment that are tied to district curriculum maps. As she states, "we'll use those if we want and some of us are using them and some of us aren't using them." If a Montessori teacher uses the assessments, the results are used solely by the teacher to "adjust" individual student's curriculum. The feelings about high-stakes identification of students' learning problems is absent, as is the monitoring of teacher effectiveness. In this case it is the student's need that is driving the learning, not the potential assessment score.

This is consistent with how MariaM8311875 and her assistant interacted with students in the Montessori classroom. After a brief morning meeting, students in MariaM8311875's classroom immediately moved independently around the classroom picking up work from shelves. They settled themselves at small tables and floor-desks and began working, generally with very little prompting or redirections from the teachers. Throughout the morning and again in the afternoon the teacher and assistant would call small groups of students to them for instruction. All other children continued working. In this environment, time was very fluid and monitored by the children themselves. How to tell time was one of the first lessons that new students to the Montessori classroom learned,

generally when paired with an older student initially, and then as a topic that is returned to by the teachers.

We talk about the fact that picking up a work, taking it to your table, looking at it and putting it back really isn't a work. It takes a certain amount of concentrated time to do a work well, and to learn from it and it's usually 20 to 30 minutes about. If you get really engrossed it might be longer. If it's really quick then, if you're doing something that doesn't have a lot of parts to it, maybe it will be less, but then you really should spend some more time. (MariaM8311875, Interview 2)

There are multiple layers of student accountability for this time. First, the students record their work in small notebooks that are reviewed throughout the day by the teacher and assistant. Additionally, when the teacher calls a small group together for some direct instruction, it is assumed that each student has completed certain works in the classroom since the last time that group met. In one such observed case, two students who were called to the small group had not completed pre-requisite work and were not prepared for the lesson.

MariaM8311875 quietly asked the students if they had completed certain independent works. "So they were asked to leave and do the work before they would have a new lesson" (MariaM8311875, Interview 2) which one student immediately did. The other student began that work a bit later only after some encouragement from the other dismissed student.

So in comparing the division of labor for learning content in a timely manner between Artshopper and MariaM8311875, Artshopper had the sole

responsibility for fitting everything in within a predetermined timeline while MariaM8311875 shared that responsibility with her students. Where Artshopper experiences anxiety, MariaM8311875 did not, yet at least one student perhaps felt some discomfort. However, were MariaM8311875 and her students still participating in the patriarchal project of schooling through their use of time? Perhaps not as rigidly as in Artshopper's classroom, but the appropriate amount of time to use with materials and the accountability for learning the content of those materials sufficiently to progress in the next lesson is still the guiding force within MariaM8311875's classroom. It is just that the division of labor is more equally distributed between teacher and students. In both classrooms the priority is on learning content directly connected to objectives set by policy makers.

Returning to Artshopper's first interview, her desire for a more fluid timeline, perhaps akin to that of MariaM8311875's, is apparent. She acknowledges that children have their own internal motivation to learn and she advocates for classroom experiences to build upon those internal desires:

It's like you're constantly trying to make sure that you're doing your job academically, and emotionally and making sure everything is child-friendly and exciting, everything for them and that they're growing on all levels and not just that their DIBELS score's increasing or that they are able to count to 30 now instead of 10. I mean those are really important things but it's not balanced.

I think every class and book I've read says that children naturally are growing towards that direction and it's your job to make sure that they have those structured opportunities to foster that.

It might not be like one guided, one whole group lesson about the letter "G" that every single kid in the room gets it, can write it and can say the sound. That's not how it is. A lot of kids need a lot more processing time, they might need to spend two weeks in the future doing alphabet puzzles, writing letter "G" in the sand table and make it with playdough or working with G tubs and things that start with "G". All these things will increase their knowledge of that letter.

Walking in a room, if you see a kid playing with a plastic bunch of grapes and a goat and doing those things, I mean, automatically you're like, "Oh, this is the reading block. Why are they playing with goats during the reading block?"

Yeah, and being like, "No, these kids need to work with these objects. They need to draw these objects. They need to associate that these two things go together or it's never gonna really be there." Otherwise, I can sit there with flashcards, but it doesn't make sense and it's not—and they're gonna get sick of that really fast. (Artshopper, Interview 1)

In the beginning of this passage, Artshopper emphasizes the focus on children by repeating, "everything is child-friendly," "everything for them," and "they're growing on all levels" as opposed to increasing their DIBELS score. By stating, "every class and book I've read" she is attempting to reclaim her professional

judgment of how time will be used in her classroom not just for whole group lessons and flashcards but lengthier times for processing, doing alphabet puzzles, using the sand table and playdough. In her second interview, this same topic appeared when discussing her perceived lack of rigor in the adopted reading materials:

Well, and the curriculum is less rigorous than some of the other things I'm doing, do you know what I mean? I'm just thinking of Harcourt, and some things they have in there are ridiculous. Easy and just like, I'm not going to waste their time with that. Like "Color this picture of a fish and write an 'F' on it." Do you know what I mean? I'm like, no. They're way beyond that. (Interview 2)

She is attempting to pull away from the rules governing how time and tools are used. She is advocating for these decisions to be based on her relationship with the students rather than the rules created by others.

It is interesting to note that several of the kindergarten teachers focused on the time usage of learning letter sounds, specifically this idea of learning a letter of the week. For Juliecarol returning to the kindergarten classroom after many years, it became the starting point for deciding how time was going to be used in her classroom.

I started getting a little freaked out going, "Oh, Letter of the Week. I have to do a letter of the week?" I started to look at all this stuff and it took me a while, over a course of about three weeks, and I've now figured out, "I've got to do this phonemic awareness piece, gotta do this phonics piece.

The literature stuff, I have some flexibility with this resource and the books that I love and that I know engage children.”

That’s it. That’s my decision-making process. I have all my kindergarten objectives. I’m learning them like this. I sat down and did this nerdy thing that I’ve always done. I take calendar, our open activities, read aloud, graphing activities, these things that are always part of our classroom.

I sat down and I made a chart. Here’s all the objectives I’m covering every time that I do this so that I could feel confident. (Juliecarol, Interview 1)

For Juliecarol what started her planning to “fit everything in” began with the letter of the week activities from the adopted reading resource. She did use her professional judgment in deciding which pieces of the resource she was going to use when and how she could use “the books that I love and that I know engage children.” She also found a way to utilize “these things that are always part of our classroom.” At this point it is the tools of her classroom that are determining how time is used. However, her next step brings policy into the planning as she sits down and charted when objectives are being covered. It is how time is used to implement the school district’s curriculum and the adopted resource that is driving Juliecarol’s classroom.

Kinderpal proclaims that he refuses to do the letter activities in the adopted reading program.

I'm a little different than some people because just my methodology is different. Like, for instance, some people take (reading adopted materials), and (reading adopted materials) says you do letter –no, I'm not gonna –

I ignore everything in (the reading adopted materials) that has to do with letters. I don't ignore their literature. I don't ignore any of the writing activities, and I don't ignore the phonemic awareness which is the most important component in the entire program and the fact that you can tie it to their literature is even more important, but when it comes to their alphabet, I start the year with the immersion of all letters, and then I spend my time coming back through the year by going back to them.

So usually when you look at it from the standpoint of what's been introduced the entire alphabet is introduced countless times before we even get to winter break. So I'm not a huge fan of the, "This is F week."

(Kinderpal, Interview 3)

Seemingly, his objections here to using the letter of the week are his personal, professional opinion that he feels it is more appropriate to fully immerse students in all of the letters and letter sounds than to teach them in isolation. He is more focused on the literature, writing, and phonemic awareness of the adopted materials. It is important to note that in my observations in Kinderpal's room children were very focused on word attack and phonetic skills during their small group activities. These activities included writing words that were made with letter cards, making words on computer games, and reading words from onset and

rime cards with the teachers. Given the intensity of this work and Kinderpal's disdain for the letter of the week activities, I believe there is more than his issue with teaching letters in isolation.

I call it fluff. People call it other things. Just those little bits of things you do here and there. I think you have to stick to that curriculum as closely as you possibly can and then you cut out little portions of things that are not as relevant. In other words, if you're teaching a unit you know exactly what that unit's supposed to cover and you make sure you cover that. If there are a lot of extension activities that you previously would have covered, you don't cover those unless you can find a way of fitting them in, through use of a center or some other activity where you don't necessarily have to direct it.

I think what you have to do is you have to make sure that everything that is of the most important aspect of your curriculum is absolutely taught without deviation. Then, after that, if you can fit it in you fit those things that might make you feel nice about the curriculum, but they're not as important as those things that you absolutely have to do. Those are choices that people make.

Because if you look at our curriculum, there's a lot of stuff in there and when you look at the objectives to any given unit, you have to say okay, I know I'm doing this; and, if I have time that's a really cute thing and maybe I could do that; but, maybe it doesn't warrant the attention that this

does. Because I know if I do this we'll read and we'll write and we'll be exceptional. That would be nice, but maybe I can't get to that.

I'll tell you, another aspect of that that has always bugged me is people's perception of what we do and what we do are not the same. People get this impression that based on prior learning as an adult that kindergarten is this playing neat place where all you do is fluffy stuff. I am the most academic person. We don't mess around with anything. We don't make something if its overall value towards overall learning in the classroom is not merited. I'm not gonna spend an hour on a project that has this much gain (showing small space between finger and thumb) but makes me feel good. I'm just not gonna do that. I wanna get to the heart of that curriculum and I want to get to the heart of that lesson so that I know unequivocally we are learning that. (Kinderpal, Interview 1)

Kinderpal is adamant that his class time will be focused solely on the curriculum and only on the curriculum. He will fit in "fluff," "cute," and "neato" only if there is time. However, he never really tells us what kind of activities fit his definition of "fluffy," "cute," or "neato." The descriptor of "fluff" could refer to "soft" activities, rather lacking the idea of "rigor" which is a harder, firm word; "cute" and "neato" tend to refer to innocence or items with infantile visual appeal but of little substance. Would Artshopper's plastic goats and playdough be seen as "soft" and extra? Would the Juliecarol's "things that are always part of our classroom" be too "fluffy," "cute," or "neato?" For Kinderpal those activities would have to be directly linked to the curriculum. Apparently letter of the week

activities are not directly linked or perhaps they are too “cute.” If they are Artshopper’s description of “Color this picture of a fish and write an ‘F’ on it” they are not significant enough for Kinderpal’s students’ learning. For Kinderpal, it is the curriculum, the official list of what students are to learn that drives how time is spent in his classroom.

Returning to Artshopper’s earlier narrative, her intense focus on the standards has her creating internal scripts for how to account for the classroom activities.

I think in my mind, I’m always having this conversation with myself where if someone came into the room and questioned me I’d be ready to be like, “Oh no. This is what they’re working on. Look, that’s the standard and this is how it aligns to what (reading program) is telling me what to do.” (Interview 1)

Her performance of this potential conversation is similar to a more overt action that Kinderpal is taking to confront accountability to those policies.

Yeah, but see, you’ll notice if you go over by the tile over there and pretend like you walk in, take four or five steps, if you turn, whatever I display over there, you can see. Whatever I put on the board you can see, and then my plan is, because I’m trying to get ahead of what they expect of us, this is –I’m gonna post a week’s worth of state objectives here (pointing to closed door in corner of room).

Maybe people will look at them, maybe they won't. That's not the point, they're posted. And then over here (pointing to whiteboard behind small group table), where I would normally write them, I'm making a condensed version. My new cards are about probably that big (gesturing approximately 8-inch span with hands) with the state objectives on them. Then I'm gonna make a much smaller card that is very kid friendly. Now, my kids aren't necessarily gonna read it, but it'll be smaller and the daily objectives will be up there, so I can look at my weekly objectives and the post the dailies, and so I'm kinda at the point where you've gotta make what you do visual for the people who wanna see what you're doing and then functional for you...

Then if you ask me what I'm doing, is it on that board, well, some version of it or a tie-in of it, or an activity that's an off-shoot of it, it's all there. My biggest argument is you'll see somebody come in and they'll see there's objectives there. They're not reading them. How could they? So that's why I decided, if we're gonna play this little game, and I don't know that it's a game, but I'm gonna treat it like a game, then I'm gonna post 'em and they're printed, and so if you wanna walk up and read 'em, you can read 'em, and they're visual and you don't have to get this close to read 'em. They're that big, and so I figure if I do that what's our complaint?

And then the smaller ones, what I was thinking is the ones I can post daily I can actually –you know, they’ll only be cards this big, well I can have a deck of them that I’ve picked out for the day and I can actually put them on my doc. cam and show the kids, “Today, we’re gonna hmm and hmm and hmm,” and so I could set out the whole day that way.

Now that’s different than what I’m accustomed to doing, and I’ll have to find time for it, cuz it’ll take a few minutes but I’m willing to fit it in.

(Interview 3)

Instead of just mentally rehearsing verbal scripts to defend how his classroom activities are standards-based, Kinderpal is focused on posting those objectives – in two different ways. One set for when he sees “somebody come in and they’ll see those objectives there” even if he states, “They’re not reading them” and another smaller, more “kid-friendly” set to post for the children, even though they “aren’t necessarily gonna read it,” or talk about when putting them under the document camera.

However, Kinderpal makes it point to state that in his views this is a “game” between two adversarial forces. In his first paragraph he states, “I’m trying to get ahead of what they expect of us” (emphasis added). This is reinforced as Kinderpal challenges these unnamed intruders into his room when he states “so if you wanna walk up and read ‘em, you can read ‘em, and they’re visual and you don’t have to get this close to read ‘em. They’re that big, and so I figure if I do that what’s our complaint?” This passage has the tone of a school-yard scuffle where two parties are squared off and one participant is daring the

other to come after him. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether or not these objectives, most especially the children's version, have been created. While I did see a pocket chart on the door that Kinderpal told me was designated for these standards and he showed me some paper strips with typed standards during interviews and observations, children's objectives were not seen. Additionally, throughout the passage Kinderpal refers to the children's cards will future tenses of verbs, such as "I'm gonna make...", "it'll be smaller," "they'll only be squares this big..." Posting the objectives is a way that Kinderpal is attempting to assert his dominance over his classroom.

The focus on objectives provides a very similar commentary from Janecrayon when asked to describe how she decides on what instructional materials and strategies to use in her classroom:

Janecrayon: You're more focused on your objectives. We're doing this topic in a new format now so you are much more driven to those specific points, not that I was a bad teacher before, but ... it made me a much better teacher. I've got this much time, I've got this much to accomplish, how—then you look at how can I pack it in there.

It's not so much the cutesy, artsy project things; it's just very driven instruction and trying to get to those goals that your money is tied to and your students' future rides on.

Sonya: So the cutesy and fun has kind of taken a back seat then?

Janecrayon: Yeah. There's not much time for that. You have to do 90 minutes of core reading; you have to do 30 or 60 minutes of interventions; you have to get some math accomplished; you have to do the High Up strategies. Your day kind of goes really quick and you learn to piggyback. (Janecrayon, Interview 1)

Janecrayon states upfront that it is objectives that drive her classroom activities. In fact, there are so many objectives that she must “pack it in there” bringing to mind a metaphorical suitcase that must be sat upon before it explodes. There is room in this suitcase only for essentials – the objectives – not anything “cute” or “artsy.” Significantly, she actually “ties” together time for “very driven instruction (tools and division of labor)...to get to those goals (policy)” with the attainment of money upon which children's futures depend. Whether it is money attained for the school itself or the money that children will need to make in their future is unclear. However, in both of those cases, it is the attainment of wealth and success in the world outside the home that is at the heart of the patriarchal project of schooling.

Additionally, Janecrayon begins to bring up the details of how teachers are to spend that time as she delineates the “90 minutes of core reading” and “30 or 60 minutes of interventions”. It is this element of the daily schedule that is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 6

MASTER OF THE DAY: THE SCHEDULE

I mean kindergarten is automatically faster-paced because they have short attention spans, but it's like I almost feel anxiety when I look at the clock and I'm like, "Oh no. I'm running 15 minutes late. I need to be able to do this now because of block schedules, or minutes or even like all the things that I'm expected to get in by a certain point or by the end of the year."

Do you know what I mean? It's like constantly keeping yourself in check, which causes some anxiety, and maybe causes me to be more anxious than then it's like I can't do my job as well because I am in the state of being anxious about everything. That doesn't translate well when you're already in a room full of chaos. If you're short tempered, or feel like you're under some clock requirement, or regulation or whatever, it increases your anxiety already when you're in a room of 25 five year-olds. (Artshopper, Interview 1)

Returning to Artshopper's narrative from the beginning of this section, she briefly explains the effect that being tied to a tight school schedule has upon her and her interactions with the children. By her repetitions of "anxious" and "anxiety" five times in that short passage, running fifteen minutes behind the school's block schedule causes her great concern and she feels that it negatively impacts her work with children. While she mentions "a room full of chaos," there

is not further elaboration of that chaos in her narratives. Therefore, this mention of chaos appears to be a slip (Tobin, 2000) that is more reflective of the chaotic state of her nerves than of the children's behavior in the classroom. In our second interview Artshopper once again mentions this anxiety over the schedule when she states, "So my eyes are on the clock, like the whole morning during whole group. Like, okay, am I remembering to do the scripted reading lesson? Then, am I remembering to do this? Then, oh no, we took this much time on the story, so what am I going to do?" Once again, her anxiety is evident in her short choppy sentences, repeating the effort to remember to complete activities and her near panic at running over-time reading a story, creating a sense of breathlessness.

This chapter will examine how rules within three schools in the same school district vary in their implementation of the master schedule. Other teachers from Artshopper's school, one of four Title I schools in the district (Arizona Department of Education, 2011), will share narratives that describe similar anxieties as well as frustration over students' decreased opportunities for learning and social and emotional development due to the rigid implementation of the master schedule

However, this passage from Wrigleymama demonstrates a different approach that is similar to other narratives from the teachers at two school sites within this district that are not Title I schools:

Also, we have scheduled blocks of time during our day that are to be uninterrupted. So we have to – so there's not a lot of wiggle room, I guess, from what their – what the policies are, what we're supposed to be

doing within the classroom. I think its just all how you make it your own. I don't know. I tend not to let policy and all those things bog down what's going on in the classroom because I – when it comes to the kids, it's their individual needs and what they need. I try to focus on that and eventually all of what we're supposed to do - it all falls into place. (Interview 1)

For Wrigleymama, while the policies may dictate what she's "supposed to be doing within the classroom" she feels the freedom to "make it (her) own." In fact, her use of the phrase "supposed to be doing" is indicative that she does not let policy "bog down" her decision-making. She separates herself from the policies by putting herself in opposition to the policymakers with her slip, "I guess, from what their – what the policies are." Perhaps she finds it easier to bend the rules and not do what she's "supposed to" be doing, which is to follow policy, rather than oppositionally face policymakers (or their enforcers) in order to do what she feels would best fit her students' needs. Nonetheless, she doesn't appear to have the anxiety of running a few minutes behind or having to remember each and every activity for a given time period.

While part of this difference in responses to a rigid schedule with "no wiggle room" could be Wrigleymama's greater number of years of classroom experience, it is more likely the difference in the climate at the two different schools. As mentioned previously, Artshopper and Wrigleymama teach at schools in the same district. This school district has begun adopting the Response to Intervention processes to work with struggling students and to identify children for special education services (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009;

Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Gersten & Dimini, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Gerber, 2005; Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, McKnight, 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005). Response to Intervention (RTI) is a process that has been developed to identify children with learning disabilities. It was developed as an alternative to models requiring students to fail in school before having their learning disabilities diagnosed. It was also developed to address the disproportionate number of minority students receiving special education services, specifically learning disabilities (Harris-Murri, King, & Rostenberg, 2006).

While there is some variety in how RTI is implemented in schools, the most frequent implementations is a tiered approach (Berkeley et al, 2009) where all students receive instruction in the “core,” generally in reading and math. All of the class participates in some types of screening assessment to preliminarily identify students who may need extra assistance in their learning, or in RTI language, “interventions.” These results are then examined in one of three ways: the problem solving model, the standard protocol, or a hybrid of the two (Berkeley et al, 2009). In the problem-solving model a decision making team creates an intervention plan for individual children based upon that child’s needs. In the standard protocol students are grouped by an overall need, for example reading fluency, and provided with general research-based instruction for that overall set of skills. Wrigleymama’s and Artshopper’s school sites have implemented the standard protocol to this point.

Students identified as needing “interventions” by the initial screening assessment first receive modified and small group instruction during the whole class’ “core” reading or math times. This is referred to as Tier 1. If students do not respond to this level of “interventions,” based upon Curriculum Based Measures, specifically the DIBELS progress monitoring of oral reading fluency, students then receive a “Tier 2 intervention.” This requires the students leaving the regular classroom to receive research-based instruction from a reading specialist or an instructional aide under the direction of the reading specialist. Monitoring of students’ progress continues with possible changes in instructional intensity and frequency (including possible Tier 3 interventions), if needed.

It is this structure of tiered instruction that creates the rigid schedule with “no wiggle room.” To best utilize the school’s resources, all classes at a particular grade level must have their core reading times occurring within the same block of minutes. This is true, as well, for the math core instructional time. Reading and math resources (tools and division of instructional assistants’ labor) can then be divided among those classes where there is the most need. Even more important, Tier 2 instructional blocks must occur at the same time for each grade level. This allows children from various classrooms within one grade level to attend a Tier 2 intervention small group together. While these children leave the room, their classmates back in the classroom must be doing similar reading or math work. They cannot proceed to instruction in other content areas because the students receiving Tier 2 “interventions” outside the room would miss that content instruction.

This leads to two important considerations. First, students still in the classroom receive “enrichment” activities during this time. Since those students are being pushed even higher while other children are receiving “interventions” for the basic skills, the achievement gap continues to increase. The other, and perhaps more pertinent point for this chapter is the rigidity in the schedule that this creates. Since the Tier 2 personnel labor force (reading specialists and instructional assistants) must be divided among the entire school, each minute of their time becomes a precious commodity.

neivxs describes how this down-to-the-minute accountability affects her classroom and her emotions.

Then I was really insulted, I guess the word is insulted, I took it very personally the other day when (the RTI coordinator) came in and showed me the attendance list for one of the reading groups. One of my students was late every day for reading group. I had to take a deep breath to not get mad. I do my darndest first thing in the morning to get my attendance done, to get my kids on task. Maybe I look at the clock and its 7:55 a.m. Maybe I look at the clock and its 7:57 a.m. I try to know when it's 7:53 a.m. because I ask them always to put their work away, push their chairs in; and if it's 7:55 a.m. or later, then I'm like oh just go. I don't want to do that but now I'm afraid to make them late because I know it's going to take them a little while to put their work away. They need to do that. I could set an alarm. I thought the kids all leave at the same time, why is one kid late? (Interview 2)

neivxs is upset because the RTI coordinator has confronted her due to one of her students arriving at the Tier 2 small group late. While neivxs states that she's upset with the coordinator, her frustrations appear to be more directed at the time, as that is the focus of the rest of her comments. Her comments about the tardy child are limited to the final sentence. The rest of her response to the coordinator's accusation is accounting for the minutes between 7:53 and 7:57 a.m. Furthermore, the entire tone of her day is set by this rush to get "attendance done, kids on task" and at least a few of her students to their Tier 2 group in the first ten minutes of the day. By neivxs' accounting here, every one of those minutes counts.

Another effect of this rigid schedule is that with three-and-one-half hours devoted to reading and math instruction, it can be difficult to have time for other school subjects and activities. Finding time for writing instruction is a challenge for both Wrigleymama and Artshopper.

Like I've been having a really hard time finding time for Writer's Workshop, where it can be a real Writer's Workshop and not just – I hate giving a mini lesson and then it's like, okay, oh no, we only have ten minutes. But then the kids go and they start and so it runs over and then, now we're into math. (Artshopper, Interview 2)

Our writing time just gets smushed some days because it's in-between. We have specials in the afternoon and (we have) our reading and math blocks. Although I do integrate a lot of writing into those two times, it

takes up the whole morning. The specific writing time is always smushed. Trying to figure out times to put it in and have them feel consistency between what they started writing yesterday and what they're doing today and having them remember. (Wrigleymama, Interview 3)

Redminne's concern is directed towards the children's physical, social and emotional well-being within these tight time constraints. In our third interview she shared two ways that she feels the schedule negatively affects the students and herself. First, she's "frustrated" that because of the rigid block schedule she is not able to address the children's social development.

Actually it is like one of my frustrations is that I just feel like I don't have time. I don't have time. I don't. I wish that I had 30 minutes a day to meet with my kids and have like a class meeting format. Meet and talk about our classroom and our community and what's happening and how we can solve problems...there is no leeway. No flex. Our whole morning's blocked in. Then in the afternoon – I mean our science and social studies is at the end of the day. There is potential I guess to do something then, but at the same time we have to get through all that too.

(Interview 3)

First, there is the reappearance of Wrigleymama's "no wiggle room" as Redminne states that "there is not leeway. No flex. Our whole morning's blocked in." When a car is "blocked in," there is something, often other cars, preventing that car from moving forward. Much as that car is trapped, Redminne feels trapped within the

schedule. She can't move forward in finding time to help her students work through community issues.

Later in that same interview while returning to the children's social and emotional needs, Redminne also shares her concerns for the limited amount of recess and lunch time:

They should not have barely 15 minutes of recess of day. I think that's a huge problem. Fifteen minutes? It's not even really 15 minutes because they make them – they make them even line up, I think, before the bell. I mean that's another thing where I'm just like, you know what - we're almost like shooting ourselves in the foot. That's how I feel. By mandating all this time, they get no time to run. They get no time to eat.

(Interview 3)

Students at this school get 15 minutes of recess time, 5-10 minutes of transition time into the cafeteria (including hand washing at an outdoor trough) and then approximately 15 minutes to eat their lunch in a controlled environment. That is forty minutes that goes by very quickly for the students and it is their only break from the learning time.

This passage points out several conflicts. First, there is what activity theory refers to as a Level 2 contradiction (University of Helsinki, 2004), a conflict or contradiction between nodes within the activity system. In this case the conflict is between the teacher (Redminne) and the division of labor (those staff members controlling recess) signified by Redminne's use of "they make them line up." The labor has been divided so that those outside the classroom

(administration) are making decisions as to how long recess generally is (20 minutes) and how the time will be implemented (15 minutes or less of play then the transition). Redminne does not feel that this is sufficient time for children to play and eat.

Then, Redminne points out what activity theory refers to as a Level 1 contradiction. A Level 1 contradiction occurs within a node of the activity system. Redminne states that “we are shooting ourselves in the foot” by restricting the time children have for play and eating in order to create enough minutes in the day for uninterrupted Tier 1 and Tier 2 times for math and reading. Shooting oneself in the foot has two connotations. First, it can refer to accidentally harming oneself when you meant to harm someone else as when a gun prematurely discharges while being pulled from a holster. It can also refer to a soldier intentionally shooting himself in the foot to avoid entering battle. It is unlikely that Redmine intends that the policy has intentionally restricted play and eating time (shooting the foot) to be in conflict with the uninterrupted times (going into battle). However, using the first connotation of shooting oneself in the foot as an accident that prevents the intended outcome seems more likely Redminne’s intended meaning. If children have play and eating times restricted (shooting the foot), their learning times would likely not be as productive (the RTI policy’s intended outcome). Therefore, the recess policy conflicts with the RTI master scheduling policy.

The school district anticipated a Level 1 contradiction in another area. According to Artshopper a group of kindergarten teachers met with district

officials and decided that kindergarten children had different learning needs and that meeting for ninety-minute block of reading time and eighty-minute blocks of math time would not be developmentally appropriate.

Juliecarol confirmed this when she explained a negotiation she instigated with her principal over the school's master schedule. After she questioned that the school's master schedule had kindergarten teaching language arts in the afternoon the principal "pulled something that was a master schedule thing from the district that had a blank space for kindergarten" (Juliecarol, Interview 2) in contrast with the other grade levels' schedules drawn in to the minute. Using this information, Juliecarol's kindergarten teammates were able to move their language arts time to the morning where they felt the students would be more attentive.

Artshopper didn't have this kind of flexibility. She acknowledges that "we don't have set blocks" of uninterrupted times on the school's master schedule. However, then she states that with the "logistics of everything (Tier 2 groups), it's kind of turned into what everyone else does and it's kind of like what the rest of the school does with the blocked times" (Interview 2). She continues by stating:

How it's been interpreted here is that everything during your reading time should be only reading, everything during your math time should be only math, everything during your social studies time should be only social studies. You really don't have a centers time, but we'll call that social studies. Do you know what I mean? It's just a lot of fudging to be

officially correct, because everyone know those things are important and they don't really fit anywhere, so it's like, let's just try to fudge everything.

Once again there is evidence of a Level 1 contradiction. District policy states that kindergarten will have a more open schedule. Yet the logistics of the scheduling with the rest of the school restricts that open schedule. The school policy is for content area instruction be limited to that content area. Yet the teachers feel that they have to “fudge” to include developmentally appropriate activities or as Artshopper states elsewhere, “slip it in under the table” (Interview 1). Both “fudging” and “slipping it in under the table” are indicative of cheating and breaking the rules.

Artshopper slips in a very important phrase at the beginning of the last passage. She states, “How it's been interpreted here...” This is key because it points to a very important difference between the two schools within this district. Artshopper's, neiivxs', and Redminne's school began working with the state for full implementation of the RTI (Response to Intervention) process two years ago. According to school RTI leadership committee notes, this Title I school struggles with high numbers of “at-risk” students identified by DIBELS and math screening scores.

Wrigleymama's school and Juliecarol's school, with far fewer students identified as “at-risk” has just recently begun implementing certain elements of RTI. Only three of Wrigleymama's student's and only two of Juliecarol's students have been identified as needing RTI Tier 2 services. Those students are

pulled out of the regular classroom for 30 minutes of their class's reading block and progress monitored weekly. During that time the other students in the class are participating in literacy stations. Juliecarol has complete flexibility over the rest of her day.

The only other element of RTI present in Wrigleymama's classroom is adherence to the uninterrupted instructional times for reading and math and thus the adherence to the "no wiggle room" of the class schedule determined by the school's master schedule. However, as Wrigleymama stated earlier, what happens during those instructional minutes is more open to the teachers' modification. This includes integrating the school's "leadership academy" (Covey, 2008) focus into other areas of the day.

All the leadership is incorporated throughout the day, integrated. We have a specific book that we look at and we'll read and they have a workbook that goes with it...a lot of it's supposed to be integrated into our curriculum needs. A lot of it can be a part of writing; it can be a part of their reading, a part of that. When we specifically discuss as a group what a different habit looks like out of the seven habits, effective leaders, that takes some time. Trying to squeeze that in, that is new to us. (Interview 3)

I was able to watch Kinderpal, another teacher at this school, incorporate the leadership academy book (Covey, 2008) into his social studies lesson which was taught in preparation for the students going shopping at the parent-teacher associations "Winter Boutique." Kinderpal explained,

when I'm reading something that tends to be more discussion-oriented, which our social studies curriculum is, not build this and make this, it's more discussion – but what's kind of neat and the fun I've been having with social studies this year is that I constantly tie it into The 7 Habits. You know, well, how are they doing this? How is that a win-win? Did he put first things first? Did he begin with the end in mind? How do you know? Is there proof? (Interview 3)

There is a key difference between these two school sites in this one school district in what is happening during these instructional minutes in the classroom. Artshopper's, neiivxs', and Redminne's children are held to strict minute-by-minute accountability to core reading programs, supplemented with scripted whole group instruction, and rigidly controlled "Instructional Focus Group" or "intervention groups" whereas Juliecarol's, Wrigleymama's, and Kinderpal's children have classroom experiences modified and enriched with leadership skills within a similar rigid schedule. How can the education system purport to be working to close the achievement gap when these types of differences in learning experiences vary so greatly between schools of different economic means? How can a supposed school reform measure like Response to Intervention (RTI) fulfill its purpose if that very system further stratifies society? I ask these questions not in expectation of one clear answer, or even a set of answers. I ask these questions to provoke further discussions of our nation's (and world's) approaches to acknowledging and truly addressing the diversity of our learners in positive and impactful ways.

Furthermore, how can tools, rules, and division of labor better utilize teacher and student time in order to meet all students' needs on more equitable grounds? In the following chapter teachers begin to address this question as they share how they divide their labor in their daily work with children to meet the requirements of curriculum and policy. However, questions of equitability remain.

Chapter 7

THE JUGGLING ACT

I think time is a big challenge. Time to get it all in, time in maintaining energy, I think, throughout the day and throughout a semester and then throughout the school year. The first couple weeks of school are – you’ve got all this excitement and energy and enthusiasm and then it’s hard because you start getting the meetings scheduled in and then you feel like you’re getting pulled in a million different directions. So I think time is the biggest struggle when you feel like you just can’t do it all.

(Wrigleymama, Interview 1)

It seems each school year is fresh and a new opportunity filled with “excitement and energy and enthusiasm” for Wrigleymama. However, once the newness has worn off and the daily life of school begins, including requirements outside the classroom, Wrigleymama begins to feel “pulled in a million different directions.”

Other teachers described this “pull” of time in different ways. In trying to manage everything there is to do and find some kind of balance Kinderpal states that “Sometimes I feel like I’m trying to suck a watermelon through a straw. I love watermelon. Could I cut it up?” (Interview 3). Certainly, trying to eat a watermelon through a straw is perhaps possible, but it would take a great deal of time and energy and would not be the most efficient way to eat a watermelon.

With this metaphor Kinderpal is equating the manner in which he being required to work with children to eating watermelon through a straw – requiring a great deal of time, energy and not being done very efficiently. Just as he loves watermelon, he loves teaching. He just wants to divide the tasks of the job into more manageable pieces.

In one short interview passage Artshopper describes herself as both stuck in a whirlpool and as juggling.

It's like you're in this – I don't know – almost like a whirlpool, like you're stuck in this whirlpool and everything is swirling around you, but you're also – do you know what I mean? You're stuck in a place where everything's moving constantly and all the time and you're having to modify and adjust to stay in control to a certain extent...I guess I just need to be okay with that to a certain extent just to keep my sanity. That is what I struggle with the most: just trying to keep everything like juggling and in motion without dropping everything. (Interview 1)

It's an interesting visual image that Artshopper creates. When one is in an actual whirlpool of water the concern is being sucked under and drowned. For Artshopper that drowning is equated with keeping her sanity. Yet while she's keeping her sanity, she also has to perform a juggling act. A juggler has a certain degree of control over his balls, knives, and flaming swords, just as Artshopper feels she can control her tasks. It is those outside influences, the whirlpool swirling around her that has her losing her sanity. Where those outside influences “in motion” are “fitting everything in” (Chapter 5) within the minute to minute

requirements of her day (Chapter 6), managing her time is the juggling act that will be the focus of this chapter.

Prioritizing

Prioritizing the work that needs to be done is one of the ways that teachers manage their time. Wrigleymama stated it this way:

We have our big rocks and our little rocks and focusing on those big things – the big ideas first and trying to target what’s – prioritize, I guess is the right word – what’s most important. Then if the other stuff, if you’re able to get to the other stuff then I do that, but I think just prioritizing. (Interview 1)

Wrigleymama sees the tasks that she needs to complete as “rocks,” something hard, often immovable, and frequently not very attractive. They certainly are not considered friendly or welcoming objects. Yet she is able to sort through them in order to find those that are “most important.” The smaller rocks are dealt with only if there is time.

Often those priorities get interrupted. During one of my observations, as the children were being walked to recess, Wrigleymama called two of the boys back to her. She then brought them back into the classroom to talk to them about a behavior incident that had happened shortly before recess.

What’s funny, I don’t think a lot of people know or realize that when the kids have a break, oftentimes with the morning recess, if we’re not on duty we have a break where I can check the emails or take care of business.

Today you saw there was an issue with two of my students. It needed to be addressed right away and so that took up the majority of that time. So then that break – so now, when do I check the emails or when do I do whatever. It gets pushed and so it's little and unanticipated events that occur that I don't think ... people don't realize that those times that we're supposed to have for either prep or break or whatever, they're eaten up a lot by handling things that need to be addressed. If you don't handle it, it's going to be a lot harder down the line. Then what happens?

(Interview 2)

Wrigleymama's priority was the children. She put them first. Other "business," including emails, was pushed to the side to be taken care of later. She has accepted this as the way things are; however, she feels that "people" outside the school are unaware of these restrictions to teacher time.

Some of the other business that Wrigleymama referred to included preparing materials for teaching. Using time efficiently to prepare those materials is part of the prioritization process for Kinderpal. First, he thinks it's "idiotic" to spend hours making something that "kids spent ten minutes on" (Interview 3). Secondly, he sees a huge benefit to receiving adopted materials with enough "lead time," especially those involving the preparation of game-type activities.

Now my hope is, between now and the end of the year, all the games in (math resource 1), in both books of (math resource 1), and if there's any – there aren't as many games in (math resource 2) but there are a few, I want all those made up and then like you take the ones that go with (math

adoption). I can't always find the time to make all these games. So I really want that game arsenal completely made up so that it's just grabbing. (Interview 3)

Kinderpal feels he can save time on a daily basis by preparing materials before they are needed and creating his "arsenal." While "arsenal" can refer to a collection of any kind of item, it generally refers to a collection of weapons for war. It's a term that seems a little harsh in this context and it's unclear why Kinderpal would choose that term, unless perhaps he feels that preparing for teaching has certain similarities to preparing for battle.

Just as Artshopper tried to maintain her sanity from within the whirlpool, neivxs found that she had to set boundaries which then further limited her time, forcing her into a chronological prioritization.

I have to set boundaries. I have to set – I have to allow myself to have personal time – leave the school building by a certain time. So, I've limited the one resource that I have so little of to begin with. So it requires me to stay focused. I think I put a higher priority on being prepared for the next day, or for the next week, and know to some extent what I'm gonna do in my smaller groups, or for pockets of kids, or grading papers and noting what is it that they're missing or not getting, and who's not getting it – just trying to stay on top of it from there. The mandated assessments take a back seat. They get done hurriedly at the end because they're not important to me. Calling parents takes a backseat, a lower priority. It's a high priority for me, but it doesn't get done. (Interview 1)

Where Kinderpal is planning ahead in creating his arsenal of games and activities, neivxs is focused on making it through each day, one day at a time, rather a survival mentality. Her second priority is preparing for working with children in small groups. While neivxs professes that calling parents is a high priority for her, she has put it aside even stating that it is now a “lower priority”. The lowest priority for neivxs in this passage is the required assessments. By stating that they are not important to her, the fact that they are even completed, albeit “hurriedly at the end” is a testament to the power that the assessment policies hold over her. This issue with completing assessments was shared by several of the teachers.

Assessing young children

Redminne related a story to me in her third interviews about a meeting that she and neivxs attended.

Even yesterday at our grade level meeting we were just – I mean (neivxs) spoke up and voiced her concern. I mean she told us she was gonna say this. We were like, “yeah, we totally back you on this.” Like it’s true. She’s like, “you now I’m just finding it really difficult to fit in all my small groups and get all my assessments done. Not just what I’m trying to do for my self, but all the phonics screeners and everything else we have to do.” She said, “Because it’s first grade. They can’t work for this – independently all that time.” I even feel like now I have to start assessing again. I feel like I just finished that. I’m like, oh my gosh, my groups.

Like I've got to meet with my groups. Like I can't just – it's like this horrible imbalance of – It takes forever.

In this case there is a definite double-voicing (Bakhtin, 1981) of a theme several teachers shared. Redminne and neiiivs are attempting to balance assessing students for their own formative instructional purposes (“what I'm trying to do for myself”), required school assessment (“all the phonics screeners and everything else we have to do”) and actual instructional time with children (“to fit in all my small groups”).

Part of the challenge in completing these assessments is the nature of the assessments. Kinderpal explains that “all evaluation can't be don't via observation. It has to, more often than not, be done through demonstration where you ask and get a response from the child. They have to show you how they count a group of 30 objects using one-to-one correspondence. They have to show you how they write the alphabet.” (Interview 1)

Another part of the challenge is the nature of the young children. Following the passage above Kinderpal further explained that unlike “if you're in fifth grade you could have them silent reading, they could be working on a book report at their desk”, he can't do those types of tasks with five-year old. According to Artshopper this is because “when they're so young, they're not independent, there's no one else to be able to go to if they need something because I'm in there all by myself.” (Interview 1)

While there's a note of desperation and isolation in Artshopper's statement, "I'm in there all by myself", the disruptions to assessing come from outside the classroom as well because she continues

I mean someone needs a Band-Aid and then I'm in the middle of assessing a kid, and then the fire bell rings and then we're all outside and then we come back inside and it's – you know it's always something new.

Someone comes in tardy or someone's absent for four days and I never get them assessed and I don't realize it until – you know, because for whatever reason until I go and enter the data. It's just there's always something. There's always like the bolt that's turned into the gears and as soon as I fix it, that whole process has been delayed and put out of whack.

(Interview 1)

Artshopper uses the metaphor of machinery to describe the process of assessment. Where it should be operating smoothly and efficiently as well-oiled gears of a machine, the outside influences of fire alarms, tardy, and absent students, are "bolts" that grind the machinery to a halt. Data is missing and forward progress stops, for the child and the class.

Another challenge with assessing children is the sheer number of assessments. Teachers have listed above assessments that inform their instruction and required school assessments including phonics screeners, DIBELS assessments. Janecrayon continues this list with monthly district bubble-tests for both reading and math because her school is a Title I school, assessments from the adopted math and reading programs, and a monthly writing assessment. She also

relates how her school had put together a practice test for English language learning to get the students ready for the year-end state-mandated English proficiency assessments. However, after taking the time to develop the practice tests, the school “had to abort that plan because there wasn’t enough time” (Interview 1).

This section has pointed to the challenges of working with the plethora of assessment tools, both those mandated by policy and those teachers use to guide instruction. While the teachers attempt to divide their labor, constant interruptions thwart those plans.

Instructional assistants

One solution for meeting student, curriculum, and policy demands that some schools have tried is to further divide the labor amongst other school staff, including instructional assistants. As Janecrayon explains, “You really need that kind of help from these instructional assistants with 30 kids in the classroom. Because it’s a lot for one person” (Interview 3).

However, dividing the work among more people doesn’t necessarily make less work for the teacher or free up a lot of time overall. Further teacher time is taken in using instructional assistants in two ways: training the instructional assistant and preparing for their lessons. Janecrayon’s first instructional assistant of the school year arrived with some DIBELS training. Other than that “she didn’t have a clue how to help” (Interview 2) so Janecrayon set up time for her to go and observe instructional assistants in other classrooms. Juliecarol had a

similar situation where the instructional assistant assigned to help her classroom also arrived with training in DIBELS and the one of the school district's scripted reading intervention programs. While Juliecarol felt that the assistant was "very experienced instructionally" (Interview 3), Juliecarol was reluctant to send her highest need children into the hall to work with an assistant not under her direct supervision. In Juliecarol's words, "These are the students that are most in need of my expertise as a teacher and I don't want them in the hall and I don't want them in the hall for many reasons." (Interview 3) She then provides three reasons she doesn't want them working in the hall: "for everybody to see them working in the hall, for all the distractions that take place in the hall, plus I don't know what they are doing."

So Juliecarol consulted with her literacy specialist and was told that she could "develop whatever (she) wants for the literacy aide". This ability to use professional judgment to this level was unique among the participants in this study. Nevertheless, Juliecarol describes what she has done

I make a little plan and basically I just build it off my lesson plans and she comes in for a half hour. It became clear that my two intensive kids – she wasn't going to work with them, nope, cuz as skilled as this person is, she is not skilled to work with them – didn't know how to go from here to here (motioning with hands). I thought those kids belong with me. They are the fist two your saw – Cathy and Antony. They are my instructional focus group and they are always first. Always. Sometimes somebody else is with them, but they are my – they get me. They don't see Mrs. K, the K-

3 aide because that is not going to work. So I quickly identified what is the next level of kids and it is a great success. She can do two, she can do three, and can do two groups of two and I have fed about six different kids in and basically it is just a variation of whatever the little stations are.

(Interview 3)

Juliecarol's concern for her struggling readers led her to assume sole responsibility for their progress. Instead of dividing the labor and passing their instruction onto an assistant, she took the time to teach them herself. However, this could perhaps have saved her time in the long run. If she were to have divided the labor so that the assistant taught those children she could have had to spend time training the assistant, preparing further materials for the assistant to use, or having to further assess these struggling readers' progress in order to document their needs for administration at the school (especially in proceeding through the RTI process).

Janecrayon also assumed responsibility for the "low kids" but for different reasons:

I tried to have her do the interventions for the really low kids, like round 3 because I try to give them like more interventions than I do the other kids and she would take one kid at a time and then there were so many, so it was like two days to get through everybody and I said, "We gotta step it up because this has to happen all in one day...so I'll take the low kids, you take the high kids." (Interview 2)

Whereas Juliecarol assumed responsibility for the extra instruction of her higher needs children so that she could better control their instruction, Janecrayon's rationale for assuming responsibility for her high needs children was more about time utilization (mastering the schedule). She passed the more capable students, who apparently were quicker to teach, to the assistant. While Janecrayon is able to teach all of the children in one day, the question has to be raised as to how this was accomplished. Since her focus was on time, was she able to meet with all of the higher need children because Janecrayon is a more efficient, more capable teacher (Juliecarol's rationale) or did she gloss over the instruction so that it was completed in a shorter time span?

Both of these cases, though, show how Juliecarol and Janecrayon juggle the division of labor in working with their children. As Artshopper mentioned earlier, that juggling act can be a challenge. But Kinderpal has another view on that juggling act:

If you look at a teacher who is frustrated or angry, or feeling ineffective it's because they're not completely plugged in, they're kind of floundering a little because they can't keep all the balls in the air, but I gotta tell ya – when you're keeping them all in the air, and you're working with that flexibility that you have to make those decisions as a teacher, a lot of things that are awesome can happen. (Interview 3)

Artshopper struggles to keep her balls in the air despite her frustrations and questions of her sanity. Yet she keeps going though. Perhaps in search of that awesome-ness that can happen.

Time to grow

Finally, in the one significant interchange between teachers on the blog, Janecrayon and Juliecarol put into perspective these external influences of the patriarchal project of schooling surrounding time (tools of the curriculum, State, district, and school policies, and the school's and their own division of labor) and what they mean to children's development and how the project is expecting children's labor to be utilized:

Janecrayon: The road to education has taken yet another turn. There are so many tests that required. One teacher asked, "When do we have time to teach anything?" There are more scores to review and evaluate to see where the children line up. So think of the story, *Leo the Late Bloomer* (Kraus, 1994). What happened to letting children come into their own? Leo came around in time and there are children similar to Leo's situation. They just need more time and why are people in such a hurry to have a child test through? People sometimes do better when there is not so much pressure. I think that children are the same – cut the pressure.

Juliecarol: I have a poster in my classroom that reads, 'Childhood is a journey, not a race.' So much of what we are asked to do, expected to do, does not match this core belief that I hold dear. Whether we're expected to follow a curriculum map (down to the week and day, for pete's sake) or whether we're expected to get children "ready" for a "district testing window," we're constantly

pushed to do things that don't match this basic tenet – that children need time, and guidance, and time, and a helping hand, and time, and a loving, skilled, knowledgeable teacher, and time!

Janecrayon and Juliecarol summarize many points from this section. There are so many required tests that another teachers asks Janecrayon “When do we have time to teach anything?” or as teachers in Chapter 5 stated, “fit it all in.”

Similarly, Juliecarols specifically mentions adherence to the district's curriculum map and ensuring children's timely preparation for district testing, which were also themes from Chapter 5. Janecrayon then brings up the pressure that the emphasis on time is putting on the children, much as the teachers talked about the same type of pressures they feel in Chapter 6. In this passage Janecrayon advocates for children to have more time to develop. She cites *Leo the Late Bloomer* (Kraus, 1994), a book where Leo's mother advocates for patience in letting Leo learn to read, write, and draw while Leo's father impatiently “watches” for signs of Leo's “blooming.” With this comparison Janecrayon is advocating for children's labor to be divided differently. In fact, their labor should be driven by the children themselves, not by the external influences of the patriarchal project of school, especially as it relates to time.

Furthermore, I feel it is also important to note how this book reinforces the traditional maternal/paternal relationship to learning further indoctrinating young children into these gender roles. Or perhaps it is that those gender roles and their relationship to schooling (in this case reading, writing, and drawing) are so pervasive as to be assumed truths.

Juliecarol then continues explaining this tension. She states that she's asked to "pushed to do things that don't match" her basic tenet that children need time. She cites the metaphor of childhood as a "journey, not a race." A journey brings to mind traveling for a long time, often with significant experiences and enlightenments along the way whereas the purpose of a race is to get somewhere as fast as possibly. She provides examples of curriculum maps and testing readiness as part of the race. She juxtaposes this with time, stating it four times for emphasis. Yet this provision of time is children's time. There is no mention here of curriculum, policies, or how the work will be divided. Instead this is time that is provided alongside guidance, a helping hand, and a loving, skilled, knowledgeable teacher. These are words more descriptive of Section 1's maternal influences.

This section began with the proposition that as the three corners (tools, policy, and division of labor) of the activity triangle come together in the common theme of "time", a triangular prism is formed demonstrating the patriarchal project of schooling. Teacher narratives in the previous three chapters have illustrated this proposition. However, children's time to develop alongside a loving, skilled, knowledgeable teacher must be considered as well. This once again puts teachers in the position of the maintaining the maternal relationship with the child while simultaneously helping them to be successful in the paternal project of schooling.

Chapter 8

FINAL THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

I think it just comes down to when you're the teacher, you're in the real world. Our classroom is not a (curriculum) map. It's not "You do this for five minutes." These are real kids. (Redminne, Interview 1)

In this short passage Redminne immediately locates herself and her students in the "real" world. For over twenty years I was privileged to work side-by-side with many teachers in some of these "real" classrooms with "real kids." Often our conversations before and after school revolved around our frustrations with the world outside our classroom. One sister-teacher would share a conversation she'd had with a non-teaching friend about what was really wrong with education today and how teachers just needed to do such-and-such. Another sister-teacher would describe her frustrations at being treated like an idiot at a meeting with "experts" from the State Department of Education. One of my brother-teachers would sigh exasperatedly that a new district policy was just so out of touch with what children were really like and what they really needed. And frequently the topic of discussion was a recent newspaper or television story on how horrible education was in our state (or our nation) and how if we, teachers, only did this or that, all students would be getting those desired test scores.

At times these conversations happened on our way to presentations disguised as “staff meetings,” filled with curriculum maps, past and present test scores, and directives for implementing programs and policies. After these meetings we would return to our classrooms and wonder aloud to each other, “Where were the children in that meeting?” Working with children was the “real” the focus of our work, in our teacher eyes. Constantly I wondered what could account for such different perspectives of school. It was these experiences that guided my initial investigations. So I turned to my sister teachers and one brother teacher. It was important to hear their voices, to understand this “real” world in which we live.

The maternal relationship

One thing that became apparent right away was that one of the biggest joys in these teachers’ lives was their relationships with their students. I know in my teaching experiences, there were many rough mornings not feeling my best or dreading a particular challenging part of the day to come, where thoughts of my children waiting for me at the classroom door put a smile on my face and quickened my steps to work. Based on this experience, one of the first questions asked in preliminary interviews was, “What are your biggest joys in working with children and families?”

For Juliecarol it was simply, “Getting to know these children.” Similarly, Artshopper stated, “I just think the kids and getting to know them and them getting to know you and just how it becomes something really special.” Both of

these teachers are reiterating earlier narratives illustrating the special relationship and connection that mothers feel with their children that Grumet describes as “The child is mine. This child is me.” (1988, p. 10) Juliecarol strives to know her children and Artshopper wants to not only know her children but also have her children know her. By seeking this reciprocity from the children they are creating one condition of care (Noddings, 1984).

Further demonstrating this caring relationship through reciprocity is the joy that MariaM8311875 stated:

Of course, the ah-ha moments when their eyes light up that they’ve caught something really great, but along with that, though, over the years I’ve had several children that have been scared of school. That’s my own personal background, being really terrified of first and second and third grade. So to have them relax and their parents relax and have them really enjoy school is really special.

She feels the “ah-ha” moments with the children, but what’s just as important is that she reaches within her heart’s memories to help children overcome similar fears she faced as a child further describing Grumet’s (1988) maternal connection.

Kinderpal and neiiivs also focus on this deeper understanding and engrossment with children:

Getting a kid to realize that all those thoughts they had about themselves were wrong and the real treasure inside of them is something they can find if they just know how to look for it. (Kinderpal)

It's gotta be when I see a child realize that they have potential, that they have value. Part of that comes through in the classroom just between the child and myself. (neivxs)

Both of these teachers find their own joys in getting a “child/kid [to] realize” what's inside of that child bringing, once again, to mind Grumet's (1988) citing of Strasser in “the very possibility of my thought, of consciousness, rests upon the presence of a ‘you’ for whom I exist” (p. 7). For Kinderpal and neivxs, their joy rests upon the students' self-realization of potential and treasure.

However, the fact that Janecrayon provides as her initial greatest joy the example of the boy “so overweight he couldn't enjoy recess” as her biggest joy is a reminder that, at times, care is not always easy and there are times where we must seek the help of others in providing that care. In this case Janecrayon's action was to contact the school's health office, who then worked with the boy's family. Yet, Janecrayon's joy was that she saw change in the boy. As he lost weight she saw him become healthier and happier and this happiness created joy in her, once again demonstrating that connection and maternal relationship.

However, Wrigleymama's narrative from the beginning of Section 1 reappears in this discussion of teachers' initial statements of joys with the reminder that ultimately the maternal connection must be put aside and the role of the father must be prioritized (Grumet, 1988). For her biggest joy is knowing that each day it's “going to be something new and different and then just seeing when a child struggles with something and then finally that light bulb moment when it clicks.” As discussed previously, that “light bulb moment” is indicative of

attaining the skills and knowledge of the outside world, the world away from the home. Grumet (1988) connects these skills and the knowledge of the outside world with the patriarchal project to “claim the child and teach him or her to master the language, the rules, the games, and the names of the fathers” (p. 21). Thus, Wrigleymama’s greatest joy is in guiding children to find success within the patriarchal project of school, reflecting back to curriculum’s maternal project “to relinquish the child so that both mother and child can become more independent of one another” (p. 21).

Redminne echoes this ultimate maternal project of curriculum in her initial statement of what brings her joy. Yet she brings another element into her statement:

One of my favorites is when I see children enjoying what they are learning and making progress and celebrating small achievements that they make along the way and being able to share that with their families. And working together with their families to support what’s happening in the classroom and help them make those progress jumps at home, too.

Redminne celebrates children’s “small” successes with the patriarchal project and takes this celebration further by sharing these successes with the child’s family. Thus she is expanding the child-teacher relationship to include the child’s family.

Teachers’ relationships with families in this dissertation have been a quiet, seldom mentioned element. This narrative from Redminne is one of the few passages where family is specifically mentioned as part of their classroom experiences. In this passage Redminne describes a reciprocal relationship

“working together” with the family in both the school and home environments. However, throughout the rest of all teacher interviews, family involvement is mentioned only in short snippets. At those times, teachers mention talking to parents on the phone, sending home communiqués, and parents volunteering in the classroom or at the school. There are Janecrayon’s narratives of parents needing help from the school for their hearing-impaired and overweight children.

Finally, there was a passage from neiivxs where she shares that two mothers went to the principal wanting their children removed from her classroom. She states that both the principal and she felt that the mothers had over-reacted to a situation and that things were ultimately resolved to the mothers’ satisfaction with the children remaining in neiivxs’ room. This is especially poignant considering that neiivxs stated twice in her interviews that she would not want her own children in her class this year and that she has had to work at having a positive, nurturing attitude.

These alternating supportive and contentious relationships between teachers and families can partly be explained by these dual roles that teachers have in the classroom. Teachers are to nurture and maintain caring maternal relationships with the children (Grumet, 1981, 1988; Noddings, 1984, 1992) while simultaneously handing the children over to the patriarchal project of school (Grumet, 1981, 1988). According to Grumet, “bearing the credentials of a profession that claimed the colors of motherhood and then systematically delivered the children over to the language, rules, and relations of the patriarchy, teachers understandably feel uneasy, mothers suspicious” (1981, p. 181). This

uneasy, suspicious relationship could account for the limited accounts of family involvement in the teachers' narratives.

My current work at the University of Arizona is working with pre-service teachers in early childhood education to mitigate this contentious relationship. All of the students' professional level coursework is built upon four principles related to research on families' "funds of knowledge" (University of Arizona, 2011; Gonzales, Moll, Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales, Amanti, 1995). This position acknowledges and builds upon the accumulated knowledge of families through systematic home visits whose very purpose is to learn from the families rather than about the families. At the very heart of this position and of this pre-service teacher education program is the desire for families and schools to foster a mutual trust or *confianza*. The goal of this type of *confianza* would be to diminish, hopefully to the point of non-existence, the kind of unease and suspicion the Grumet describes and was apparently demonstrated in this research.

So to this point a triad relationship is formed (Figure 6). There is the preliminary maternal-type relationship between the teacher and the child, the role of the family that is both in conflict and support of the teacher, and then there is the relationship that families have with their children.

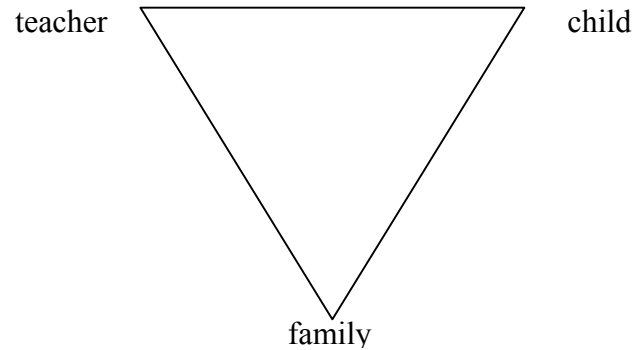


Figure 6. Maternal-based relationships

The paternal project

Grumet (1988) states that the aim of the patriarchal project is to “claim the child and teach him or her to master the language, the rules, the games, and the names of the fathers” (p. 21). In order for the children to learn this language, rules, games, and names of the fathers, the schools use tools such as curriculum, adopted programs, instructional strategies, the academic language of schools; they must have rules and policies on how to accomplish the tasks; and they must have some way in which to divide the labor in order for the task to be fulfilled.

These points of instruction correspond to outer nodes on the activity theory triangle (Barab, Evans, & Baek, 2004; Engestrom, 1999; University of Helsinki, 2003) (Figure 7).

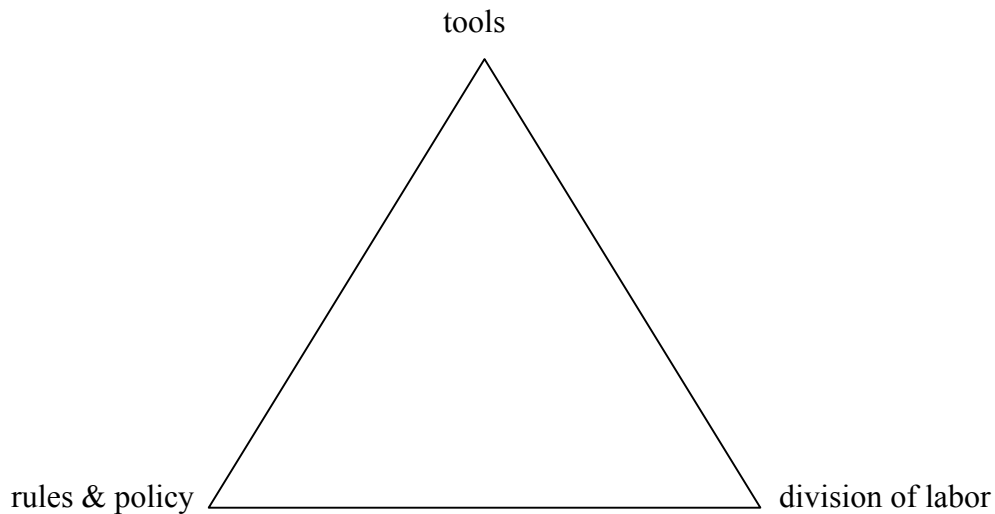


Figure 7. Outer triangle of activity system

In the narrative passage at the beginning of this chapter, Redminne mentions one of the tools of the patriarchal project: the curriculum map. Other tools mentioned by teachers in this study include such examples as the curriculum standards, assessments, play-based center activities, learning games, general school paperwork, as well as basic classroom tools such as papers, pencils, books, and the language used to communicate with each other. Another important tool that plays a key role in several of the teachers' narratives is the clock. The clock is the tool by which the teachers track time within their classroom. As discussed previously and will be again shortly, time plays a powerful role in the classroom.

This role of the clock is found in the earlier passage when Redminne performs the authoritarian voice of the patriarchal project emphasizing, "You do this for five minutes" referring to the rules governing the use of instructional minutes in the day and adherence to the school's "Master" schedule. In fact, the

effects of this Taylorian factory-model, to-the-minute accountability (Apple, 1988; Willis, 1977) will be discussed in more detail in following sections.

Rules and policies are also found in teachers' narratives such as those governing assessment procedures, policies enforcing the focus on and attainment of State and district curriculum goals by children as well as posting of those objectives in the classroom, classroom behavior expectations, and procedures for addressing student academic needs such as the Response to Intervention process (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Gersten & Dimini 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Gerber, 2005; Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, McKnight, 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005).

In dividing their labor teachers described how they managed their workload. In Chapter 7, Wrigleymama brought forth a metaphor of the hard labor of mining when she stated, "We have our big rocks and our little rocks." She then saw her job as prioritizing those big rocks or "the big ideas." The status of the "little rocks" is dependent on her success addressing the "big rocks."

Additionally, teachers described the challenges of meeting labor demands regarding assessment policies. Where teachers were required to have completed mandated assessments by specific times, there were many times when interruptions to the classroom schedule or routines prevented accomplishment of these tasks. This constituted a second level conflict within the activity system (Barab, Evans, & Baek, 2004; Engestrom, 1999; University of Helsinki, 2003) between the nodes of rules and division of labor. The assessment rules were in conflict with the way in which teacher labor was being divided. Assessing

children was not able to happen due to interruptions in the classroom routines such as bus evacuation drills and absent students. A similar level two conflict occurred in relation to the role of instructional assistants in the classroom. The teachers were required by school policy to work with the instructional assistant to meet the needs of struggling students, but this supposed assistance created an additional amount of labor for the teacher. Furthermore, this also points to a level one conflict occurring within the division of labor node. Assistance is available to relieve the work load of the teachers in addressing all student needs in the class however this “assistance” also creates more work as the teacher must both prepare lessons and materials as well as train the assistant.

While these conflicts within and in conjunction with division of labor occur, it is of critical importance to note that “time” is a subject that teachers discuss that brings these three nodes, tools, rules, and division of labor together in order for the successful attainment of the activity system’s output: student learning and growth. In Chapter 5 teachers’ narratives discussed the pressures of appropriately dividing their own and the children’s labor to “fit in” all of the required curriculum (a tool used to help children succeed in learning that is created and enforced by policy) within the time provided by further school and State policy demands.

Similarly, in the next chapter teachers’ narratives explain their attempts to divide the labor, again of their own and the children’s, within the tool of their schools’ “Master schedules”, a tool created and enforced by policy. Furthermore, driving that “Master schedule” in at least two of the schools, were the policies and

requirements surrounding the implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) program (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Gersten & Dimini, 2006; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Gerber, 2005; Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, McKnight, 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2005). The areas of agreement and conflict at different nodes between the school activity system and the activity system of the RTI also constitute a fourth level conflict (Barab, Evans, & Baek, 2004; Engestrom, 1999; University of Helsinki, 2003). The conflicts within this fourth level between the school activity system and the RTI activity system would be an excellent area for further study in the education community looking for other sites where this occurs and how it affects both activity systems.

Finally, in returning to the previous discussion on how teachers divide their labor, “time” brings together ways that teachers prioritize the work that policies require, the tools to complete that work, and how instructional assistants may save some time by having more hands amongst which to distribute the labor yet simultaneously demanding more of the teachers’ time. These issues in the division of labor also point to the manner in which the to-the-minute level of time accountability intensifies teachers’ labor. Where Apple (1988) points to the loss of leisure, socialization, and deskilling of the workforce with this intensification of labor, teachers in this study use metaphors of juggling, balancing plates, and sucking watermelon through a straw to describe the great lengths they must go to in order to manage this time. However, as will be shown, there have also been further, more troubling effects of this intensification of labor.

As these three corners of the activity system (tools, rules, and division of labor) come together, they form a triangular prism (Figure 8).



Figure 8. The joining of activity system nodes by “time”

The positioning of these three nodes becomes of crucial importance as the activity systems becomes whole with the addition of the teacher, child, and family.

The maternal-paternal relationship

However, maternal relationships and the paternal project do not operate in isolation, nor do they operate side-by-side. Rather they are integral parts of the same activity system – schools. When the triangle of maternal relationships discussed above is united with the nodes of the paternal project, an activity system such as the one in Figure 9 is created.

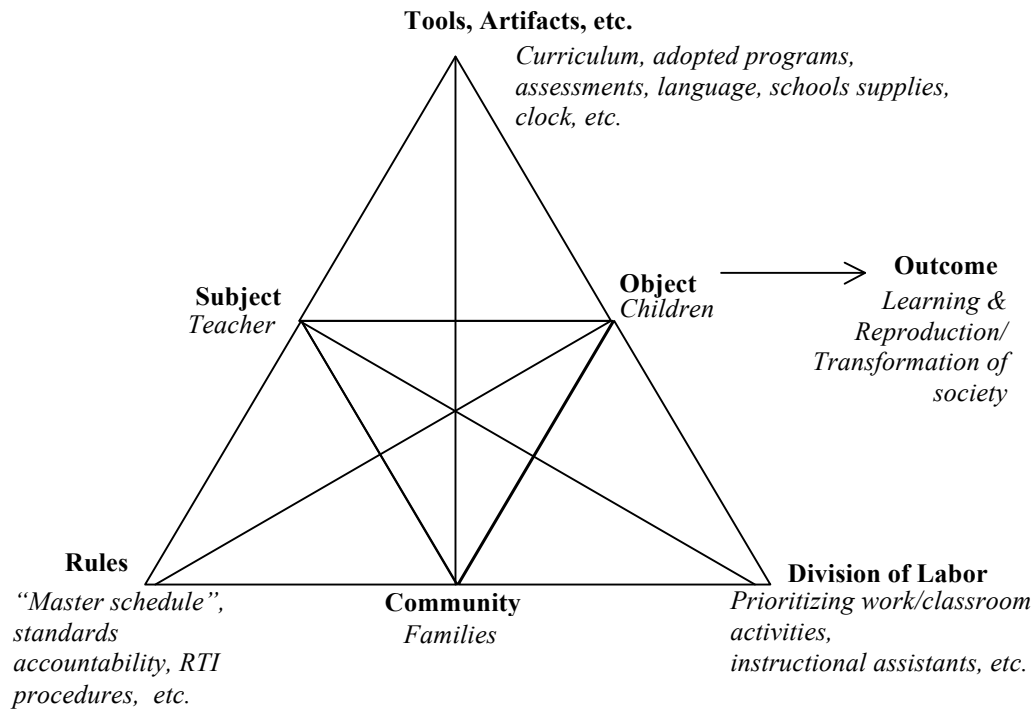


Figure 9. The activity system of school

According to Engestrom and Mietinnnen (1999) there are two processes occurring within the activity system. Internalization is the process by which the nodes of the activity system work together to reproduce culture. While the manner in which the different nodes of the system may interact may alter and shift in small, internal ways, that shifting and change is not so great as to change their overall character and the ultimate outcome of the system. Thus the system is reproduced time and again. As outside systems exert more influence on and are greatly influenced by the nodes of the current education system, new tools are

created, new rules are enacted and so forth, the activity system is transformed into a new version or versions of the system. This is the process of externalization.

These processes of internalization and externalization have important considerations for the current state of education. Despite decades of attempted school reform, persistent issues still exist, such as the achievement gap between White students and students of color as well as lower-socioeconomic means, inequities in school/teacher quality, and the over reliance of high-stakes testing. It is my argument that the activity system of schooling continues to be stuck in a process where internalization is continuing to reproduce schooling in its current form and changes upon and within the activity system's nodes have not been sufficient to produce externalization and a transformation of schooling.

The institution of education is an activity system with a long history. How these nodes within the system act and react to each other is based on that history as well as recent influences from the other activity systems. Yet much of traditional school learning has been maintained because "the basic structural features of classroom experience have remained unaltered" (Denscombe in Miettinen, 1999, p. 328). I propose that one of those basic structural features has been the tension between maternal relationships and the paternal project.

Several times in their narratives, teachers in this study, have related how they deal with the tensions between these two apparent binaries: maternal relationships and the paternal project. The relationship between binaries is often indicative of a power relationship (Derrida, 2001; Prokhovnik, 1999; Tobin, 2000). These power dynamics can be found in many of the teachers' narratives.

They are especially evident in Chapter 5 as Artshopper and Kinderpal both relate experiences of trying to do what's best for their students from their maternal relational perspective while meeting demands from the patriarchal project.

Artshopper describes creating mental scripts to defend the activities in her classroom that she has planned based on what she believes is going to best fit her students' developmental and learning needs. She fears that an administrator coming into her classroom to check on fidelity to the mandated curriculum plans and materials will not understand why her children are using playdough and playing with plastic goats and grapes. This need to have a memorized script to defend her actions in keeping children engaged, happy, and learning in the classroom is strong evidence that Artshopper has internalized of the power of the patriarchal project (Foucault, 1980).

Kinderpal takes a more overt action. He creates a two-fold system to meet the school policy requirements of posting objectives that the students are learning. He posts one set of State objectives on door clearly visible to adults who enter the classroom, yet tucked away from the student areas. He states, "Maybe people will look at them, maybe they won't. That's not the point, they're posted." Kinderpal is also posting a condensed child-friendly version on a white board in the student learning area. He states that his kids "aren't necessarily gonna read it," but then he states "I'm kinda at the point where you've gotta make what you do visual for the people who wanna see what you're' doing and then functional for you." He even refers to this posting of objectives as a "game" between two adversarial forces and positions himself and other teachers against the enforcers of this

objectives posting. He acknowledges that there are others with power over him to force him to post these objectives, yet he is attempting to take back some of that power to do things his way, even though they may be meaningless.

As teachers related frequent narratives entwining “time” with tools, rules, and the division of labor and how these time-combined nodes interacted with their relationships with their students and the students’ families (albeit families appeared limitedly), this power relationship between maternal relationships and the paternal project of school takes on a hierarchical shape (Figure 10).

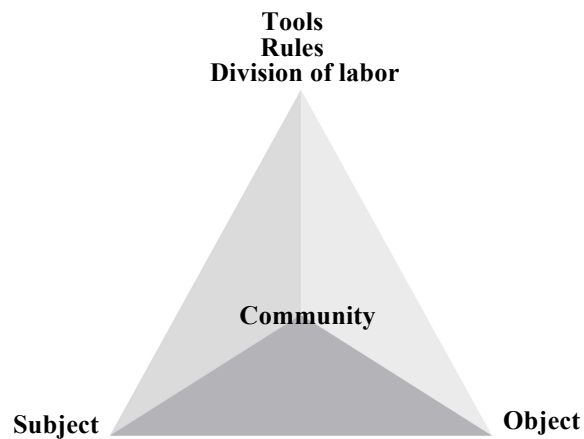


Figure 10. The joining of maternal nodes with patriarchal project “time” unity

In fact, if one were to draw a line from the top of the pyramid, the position of the patriarchal project of schooling where the nodes of tools, rules, and division of labor are united by common theme of time, to the middle of the maternal relationship triangle formed by the subject (teacher), object (students), and community (family), the resulting line would resemble a panopticon as described

by Foucault (1977, 1980), in which control of time in classrooms is that tower looking into each cell of the maternal relationships between teachers, students, and families. One example of the panopticon are the teacher narratives describing walk-through checklists performed by administrators that inspect classrooms for standards in alignment with mandated curriculum mapped to the month, week, and day, for learning time spent with fidelity to adopted curriculum programs, and student on-task behaviors to make each minute of learning count and Artshopper's prepared mental script ready to answer their challenges.

Issues of power and privilege

It is important to also point out another power dynamic in this dissertation. That dynamic is the power of my presence and my interpretations of the teachers' narratives. First of all, my role as an academic from the university brings a certain kind of power into the conversations and my very presence in the classroom during observations (Gee, 2005). The teachers know that I will be listening and watching and interpreting their words and actions for academic gain. While I have explained that one of my main goals to get teachers' stories and experiences out into the world, these teachers know that I have the power to decide which stories are told and in what fashion. Furthermore, I also identify myself as a fellow teacher to my participants. As such, there is a sense of shared experiences and camaraderie. This is intensified by my more personal relationships, teaching alongside some of the participating teachers. Therefore, the experiences teachers chose to share and how teachers act in my presence is

affected by this power dynamic with me as a seeming comrade-in-arms, confidant, and sister-teacher. Perhaps there are stories that are held back that may embarrass one to a sister-teacher or perhaps there are ones told that wouldn't be told to a purely outside researcher.

Secondly, there is power in my interpretations and presentations of these teachers' narratives and experiences. My observations, analyses, and interpretations are thoroughly contaminated by my own lived experiences as a sister teacher (Pillow, 2003). Yet, there is also the question of whether I have been so contaminated that my interpretations are being used unfairly to support the arguments that I want to present. Another aspect here is whose voices are being privileged. Since one of my main purposes of this research was to bring teachers' voices and experiences out into the open, am I doing those teachers an injustice by breaking their narratives into pieces and including only excerpts and then only the excerpts that I choose to make my points?

Finally, there is the power that I hold as a White woman of privilege and the fact that seven out of eight of the participating teachers are also White women of privilege and the eighth teacher is a white male of privilege. neivxs even goes to great lengths to explain how this position of power had a profound effect on her growing up in Chapter 4. Part of the theoretical framing of this dissertation is using feminist theory that was developed based on the experiences and cultural perspectives of White women (Gilligan, 1982; Grumet, 1981, 1988; Noddings, 1984, 1992; Thompson, 1998). This perspective does not necessarily take into account experiences of mothering and the maternal relationships of other cultures.

While it could be argued that feminist theory from this White privileged standpoint is in accordance with the participants in this study, that does not mean that the experiences described or the conclusions drawn here would be relevant for teachers of other cultures in their experiences of schooling. This does not negate the experiences and findings made here. Rather, it points to their potential limitations or parameters of this study and opens areas for further exploration. What are the classroom experiences of teachers of color? How would a teacher of color respond to the narratives of the teachers found in this dissertation?

As Foucault (1980) asserts, “The summit and the lower elements of the hierarchy stand in a relationship of mutual support and conditioning, a mutual ‘hold’ (power as a mutual and indefinite ‘blackmail’)” (p. 159). Prokhovnik (1999) states that one of the problems with dichotomy is this very relationship between the two poles. As demonstrated by the configuration of the activity system, both maternal relationships and the paternal project are required in the maintenance of this system of schooling. Furthermore, Prokhovnik states that another problem with dichotomy is the manner in which the mind/body dichotomy from the Enlightenment has become a dominant metaphor in our society to the point where dichotomous pairings permeate every corner of our culture often closing our minds to other possibilities. This, in turn, creates an “adversarial style of argument” (Prokhovnik, 1999, p. 33). Kinderpal’s previous narrative stating how posting the objectives is like a game takes on this adversarial style of argument when he further states, “I’m trying to get ahead of

what they expect of us.” In his argument there is only the teachers’ way and the way of those who will be coming in to view posted standards in his classroom.

Another problem with dichotomies according to Prokhovnik is their closed nature that denies further options and alternatives. Thus in this study teachers feel the pull only in two directions, towards creating and maintaining their relationships with the children and working to meet the demands of the patriarchal project. Redminne’s narrative at the beginning of Chapter 4 brings these tensions in this closed system to mind when she states, “so that we can still do what we think is right and do what we’re supposed to do which is always kind of the tricky part.” It also brings to mind the conflict and anger that neivxs exhibited as she described the conflict between children getting settled in the morning and the prompt to-the-minute arrival of students to their small group instruction. Nowhere in these narratives is there another alternative. The system is closed to contain the teacher’s way or the way they’re “supposed to do” it, continuing the adversarial arguments.

Furthermore, by stating, “what we’re supposed to do,” Redminne is pointing out the force of the pull towards one end of the dichotomy. In this study “what we’re supposed to do” are those elements of the patriarchal project that are associated with what have been labeled as “school reform measures,” such as curriculum standards created by those currently in power at State and district governmental levels, instructional materials and strategies adopted and overseen by similar governmental bodies and enforced by local administrators, and assessments designated by federal, state, and local authorities. Additionally,

teachers have described that “what we’re supposed to do” requires a vast amount of time and labor.

Returning to Apple’s (1988) discussion on the intensification of teachers’ labor, “There is so much to do that simply accomplishing what is specified requires nearly all of one’s efforts. ‘The challenge of the work day (or week) was to accomplish the required number of objectives.’ As one teacher put it, ‘I just want to get this done. I don’t have time to be creative or imaginative” (p. 44). This is eerily reminiscent of Juliecarol’s narrative on the “crushing” effects from the outside:

I’ve always thought that the pressures outside crush some teachers. It crushes their creativity, crushes their spirit, crushes their desire to spend time on what’s important. I do. I think it’s crushing. (Interview 1)

I would argue that those forces of creativity, spirit, and “desire to spend time on what’s important” are descriptors of skilled professionalism. As described by teacher narratives in this study, teacher-proof, scripted curriculums and resource materials that have been touted as necessary reform measures have no room for creativity nor do they provide opportunities to spend time on anything else (so, therefore, they are the only things that are important). Thus, as teachers search for any leverage upon which to anchor their professionalism and maternal relationships, they find their spirits crushed.

This brings us to a final problem with dichotomies. They lead to the denigration of women. In support for this statement Prokhovnik (1999) quotes Plumwood as stating that “features that are taken as characteristic of humankind

and as where its special virtues lie, are those such as rationality, freedom, and transcendence of nature (all traditionally viewed as masculine), which are viewed as not shared with nature...humanity is defined oppositionally to both nature and the feminine” (p. 37). Furthermore, Prokhovnik argues that as a result of this subordinate position, women cannot effectively challenge the male dominance from within this closed dichotomous relationship. One result of this subordinate position has been the silencing of teachers. As discussed in Chapter 2, that while some teachers voices have been heard in the past (Ayers, 2001; Casey, 1993; Florio-Ruane, 2001; Gruwell, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994, Miller, 1990; Nieto, 2005, 2003; Paley, 1986, 1979), there has been an alarming absence of teachers’ voices in recent reform measures (Ohanian & Kovacs, 2007). This denigration of women also appears as metaphorical physical and emotional abuses of the teachers in this study, as in Chapter 4 where they describe being pressure-cooked, crushed, brow-beaten, and hand-slapped and as having feelings of helplessness, despair, guilt, and the diminishment of their soul as they dealt with forces from the patriarchal project while caring for children in the class. It is no coincidence that discourses on school reform have taken a turn towards “teaching bashing,” continuing this metaphorical abuse.

Not only is this alarming from an emotional and humanitarian perspective and in no way should be put aside for even a moment, but this denigration of women has a larger impact on the activity system and any hope for “school reform” for the future. Prokhovnik further states that,

The problem with the polarities is not just that their hierarchies subordinate women and maintain the dominance of men. They also ‘separate but do not fully divorce’ pairs of things which are interconnected, so that the positive senses of connectedness of the terms cannot be recognized and therefore neither of them can be adequately understood or operative. (pp. 37-38)

Therefore, any attempt to more fully understand this activity system of schooling will continue to be hindered until this apparent dichotomy can be fully re-married through awareness of the “positive senses of connectedness” between the maternal relationships and the patriarchal project.

A new way forward

Prokhovnik (1999) proposes an alternative that is consistent with the view of the activity system of schooling as relationship-based. While this way forward would require breaking down massive historically-erected barriers and Discourses and may at this point seem over simplistic, I believe that this alternative holds hope for further research and ways of addressing “schooling.” To that end Pokhovnik proposes seven relational features of what she calls a “both-and mode of thinking” (p. 38): that the character of the relation is not a given; dynamic movement; open-ended relation; relation as inclusive; the role of a self-conscious commitment to change; ambiguity; and the “broken middle.” In the final section of this dissertation I would like to explore how these relational features can help to inform further explorations and examinations of teachers’ lived experiences in

the classroom and the future of schooling. While an extensive description of Prokhovnik's argument is beyond the scope of this project at this time, a brief summary here will help guide my final thoughts.

In arguing that the character of the relation is not a given, Prokhovnik quotes Weir by stating that “rather than simply rejecting the identity in the name of difference, or accepting it as something oppressive but inevitable, we need to develop alternative theories of universality and of individual identity which do not exclude but include difference and otherness” (p. 41). These dynamics of inclusion are dynamic and intersubjective. She provides the example of the intersubjectivity in the ethic of care as discussed in Chapter 3 where, through a caring relationship, the carer and the cared-for experience an I/thou relationship (Johannesen, 2000; Noddings, 1984, 1992). My argument is for there to be a dynamic intersubjectivity amongst *all* nodes of the activity system, creating a fluid hammock that can bend, fold, and support as needed.

Additionally, these relations are open-ended with no desire for an ultimate “winner”. This argument is not advocating for a new third way to be developed so that “the logic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, particularly when the synthesis forms a new thesis, operates as a dichotomous chain” (Prokhovnik, 1999, p. 44). This open-ended quality should lead the hammock mentioned previously to bend, sway, and change shape while still holding together its nodes (or perhaps acquiring new ones) in ways unforeseen or unimaginable. However, making this relation inclusive means that the relationship between maternal relationships and the paternal project are not denied but rather that it is “re-envisaged...as one

among many possible kinds of connection rather than as an opposition” (p. 46). Of course this means that power relationships of the dichotomy must be addressed to allow for inclusion of “other” knowledges, leading to a “self-conscious commitment in change” towards relational thinking. Where the current activity system is generally based on White middle-class, heterosexual perspectives, what would happen if the activity system of schooling sincerely opened to ways of knowing not represented by these current perspectives of power?

Ambiguity is seen as a positive quality by Prokhovnik as she draws upon the example of the possibilities of multiple interpretations that can be found in literature, to advocate for the multiple interpretations within relationships to create multiple opportunities and experiences. Therefore, we must acknowledge and incorporate multiple “truths” in acknowledgement that there is no one best way for children to learn, no one best practice, nor one defined set of learning standards. Learning is ambiguous within the activity system and work within that activity system needs to welcome and embrace unknown learning that is occurring. Education research has been focused on how and if students are obtaining certain standards and receiving adequate test scores. What if education research examines what children were actually doing and what they were actually learning, beyond those policy driven standards?

Finally, Prokhovnik describes the need to look beyond the dichotomy, to look beyond a deconstruction of the dichotomy, to address the “broken middle”, which in this case is the heart of this dissertation – those lived experiences of

teachers as they work within this activity system amongst the various nodes which have historically been shaped by the maternal-paternal dichotomy.

Therefore, while educational history and the gendered identities within that history cannot be ignored, it is time to move forward with history. These either-or tensions between maternal relationships and the paternal project, where it is the primary focus of the teacher's job to prepare children for academic success in school, have created a system stuck in internalization (Engestrom & Mietininen; 1999). It is a system where the nodes of the patriarchal project are attempting change, adding more or different curriculum, materials, and assessments, creating new policies and rules, and dividing labor with instructional assistants. Yet teachers' voices in implementing those changes within the maternal relationships are going unheard or undervalued. This increases the power dynamics, taking a physical and emotional toll on the teachers and not creating the conditions necessary for externalization and lasting school reforms.

We need to broaden the "project" of school to include, alongside current academic elements and many of the reform measures just mentioned, elements of the maternal project such as curriculums of care (Noddings, 2006), building and maintaining relationships, recognition and valuing the knowledges gained from those relationships, and a focus on social and emotional development.

Furthermore, where this dissertation research uncovered and focused on areas of tension between maternal relationships and the paternal project, it would be advantageous for further research to seek out classrooms experiences where the activity system is more open to multiple perspectives and experiences. Where

this study focused on eight classrooms in one geographical area, under many similar social and political forces, it is probable that other locales would have different experiences that warrant investigation.

In this dissertation, as in so much research, children's voices are absent. Children's voices are an even more silenced group of voices than those of teachers (Gaches, Peters, & Swadener, 2011; Morrow & Richards, 1996; Osman, 2005). According to Morrow and Richards (1996),

while there are plenty of sociologically *relevant* discussions of children's problems and problem children, there are few sociological studies based on children's accounts of their everyday lives and experiences and sociologists and anthropologists are increasingly acknowledging that sociological research (as opposed to psychological/behavioural/medical research) with children is underdeveloped (p. 92)

Considering the vast amount of time that children spend in schools as part of their daily lives and the huge emphasis that adults put on the teaching process inside these institutions, the idea that so little is truly understood about those experiences from the perspectives of children is extremely troubling. How do children experience this activity system? In the activity system that I have framed, children are placed as the "object". What if they were positioned as the "subject" (Mauthner, 1997)? Who or what would they see as the "object" and the "outcome"? It would be enlightening to hear children's narratives of their classroom experiences and to see their multiple roles inside this "broken middle." Or would their narratives and experiences even lead to a "broken middle" at all?

This returns to the previous discussion of the power dynamics of my role as researcher. In this study it was me interviewing and observing teachers and analyzing and interpreting their narratives. While one of my purposes was to privilege teachers' voices and experiences, I also have subverted their voices and experiences to my own academic gains. This is a subversion with which I am not comfortable and have found troubling throughout my research and analysis. To truly embrace Prokhovnik's argument in going beyond these dichotomous relationships, further research of this nature needs to be co-constructed and co-developed with teachers and children. They need to be equal participants in shaping and guiding the exploration and the uses of these explorations. Once again, this would not deny the position of power of the person whose name is at the top of the Institutional Review Board paperwork, but opens the research relationship to possibilities from the middle. Perhaps that's where we start with the next research opportunity, "In voices from the middle."

Therefore it seems fitting to end with some of these voices from the middle, reiterating what brings them joy:

I just think the kids and getting to know them and them getting to know you and just how it becomes something really special. – Artshopper

It was just such marked differences in this kid. Then he was out there running at recess. – Janecrayon

Getting to know these children – Juliecarol

Getting a kid to realize that all those thoughts they had about themselves were wrong and the real treasure inside of them is something they can find if they just know how to look for it. – Kinderpal

Of course, the ah-ha moments when their eyes light up that they've caught something really great, but along with that, though, over the years I've had several children that have been scared of school. That's my own personal background, being really terrified of first and second and third grade. So to have them relax and their parents relax and have them really enjoy school is really special. – MariaM8311875

It's gotta be when I see a child realize that they have potential, that they have value. Part of that comes through in the classroom just between the child and myself. – Neiivx

One of my favorites is when I see children enjoying what they are learning and making progress and celebrating small achievements that they make along the way and being able to share that with their families. And working together with their families to support what's happening in the classroom and help them make those progress jumps at home, too. – Redminne

So, I love every day. It's exciting because I know it's going to be something new and different and then just seeing when a child struggles with something and then finally that light bulb moment when it clicks. - Wrigleymama

Footnotes

1. I feel it is important to note, that while I recognize the historical perspectives leading to the usage of terms such as male and female, patriarchal and feminist, the realities of life are not that simplistic nor dichotomously defined. Furthermore, while there is a strong tradition of women as teachers of young children and the gendered work force in education, men have also been, and continue to be excellent, caring, nurturing teachers of young children. The issues that are discussed in these veins are relevant for men teachers in the work force, as well as women. In fact, at times, men in early education have had several other issues with which to contend, as well.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sonya Gaches has recently left the elementary classroom where she was developer of and teacher in a first through third grade multiage program for the thirteen years. For eleven years prior to that she was a first grade teacher. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Practice in Early Childhood Education at the University of Arizona in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Sociocultural Studies. Sonya is married and the mother of three grown children. There is no doubt that her experiences as a mother have influenced both her teaching and her research.