

A Narrative Landscape of a Teacher's Perception of the 'Other' in a Korean
Christian University: The Courage to 'Be' and to Learn.

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Abstract

The teaching and learning field has been renowned for being a rapidly changing and multifaceted environment. Moreover, being both intensely personal and public, the process of cultivating, discovering and relaying knowledge has also been influenced from a wide range of participating individuals to the broader groups in society. Such numerous possibilities for interaction have highlighted the difficulty of defining 'good' teaching and learning, especially considering the growing objectivism of modern day value systems. An increasing number of educators have thereby responded to this confusion by returning to more fundamental and holistic views of 'knowing' the 'other.' Such rising concerns for holistic teaching and learning practices represent many exciting possibilities for developments towards authenticity and autonomy, as teachers become responsible explorers of their profession.

The current study is an autoethnography of my own teaching experiences at a small Korean Christian University. It captures my desires to develop greater sensitivity and empathy as a critical teacher practitioner, and further documents efforts to acquire aesthetic and creative skills as a writer. Ultimately, through my experiences as a teacher researcher, I have sought to develop a deeper picture of the knowing process as a rich and mutual dialogue between the 'knower' and the 'other.' To do this, I have constructed eight stories based on my teaching experiences. The first describes the reflections accompanying my experiences of writing, whilst the next three involve narrative portrayals of certain striking colleagues and students. The following two stories convey the 'faith' and 'acceptance' experienced through the study, and the last two act as a form of reflective closure to the overall teaching and researching experience

Since I believed that the symbolic and holistic nature of story writing could convey the depth, complexity and open-endedness of the knowing process, I have chosen narratives and reflective writing to capture and depict my experiences (Van Manen, 1997). Interviews and journals writing of my students and my colleagues have also been included to further explore these ideas. Accordingly, this current study seeks to portray a view of 'knowing' that enables teachers and students to become co-researchers, who can cultivate sensitivity, creativity and empathy towards the 'other.'

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Preface

This study began as I embarked on a fresh start as a teacher of English as a Second Language (TESOL) in South Korea. It reconstructs the journey taken to form my knowledge base as a developing educator and learner, to explore what it means to know the 'other' deeply. It also attempts to share such critical moments with others to generate further dialogue about the 'knowing process.' I decided to investigate this issue of knowing, as it was a key part of my experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. I felt that it was inseparable from my own personhood, as it affected how I viewed and related to the 'other.' I therefore hoped to strengthen my teaching skills, by investigating how it was influenced by my own personhood.

Unfortunately, due to the implicitness and elusiveness of the 'other,' it seemed to evade me the more I sought after it. A view of the knowing process then surfaced in my readings as a living encounter between the 'knower' and the 'other,' such as one's own self, other individuals, or the broader world (Palmer, 1989). 'Knowing' as a union between the 'knower' and the 'known' was portrayed as a deeper form of understanding, in which meaning was mutually constructed through dialogue. Alternatively, a superficial one-sided form of understanding was argued to result when the 'knower' projected his or her own preconceptions onto the 'other.' This form of knowing has been conceived as an attempt to control and possess the 'other.' The nature of this encounter with the 'other' was thus shown to determine the authenticity and richness of the knowing process (Hartman & Zimberhoff, 2003).

'Knowing' as a relationship became increasingly significant when drawing a parallel between the knowing process and one's life journey. This connection highlighted how all human beings are

born responsible for fulfilling the possibilities of their own existence (Yalom, 1989). Yalom (1989), a well-known psychotherapist, also illustrates how individuals could realize their existential responsibilities by relating more authentically to the 'other,' such as their sense of mortality, life, the world, other individuals or the presence of a higher power. I similarly felt that 'knowing' the 'other' in teaching and learning was only a small part of the 'knowing' relationship grounding every aspect of my life.

The current self-study is hence a narrative landscape of my critical encounters with the 'other' within my classroom, the department and the University. These encounters are presented through stories of my 'lived' experiences as an early career academic (Clandinin & Connelly, 2002). I aimed to depict through narratives how various colleagues and students related to the 'other' in their teaching and learning, as well as to explore how each type of relationship influenced my own practices. These narratives are further contextualized through a general description of the 'knowing' process within the current University and the country of South Korea.

Such contextualization indicates the urgent need to view the 'knowing' process as a two-way relationship with the 'other.' For instance, South Korea has been renowned for its fiercely competitive and highly lucrative education system. Like many other competitive Asian nations, there are numerous private institutions and high levels of exam related stress. Not surprisingly, these trends have also influenced the English teaching field, as test taking skills have been asserted over general communicative proficiency.

Most of all, the current study is action orientated, as I hoped to become more critical and

reflective through investigating my experiences. By reflecting on how my colleagues, students and I confronted the 'other,' I also believed that any insights generated could be inadvertently used to inform the practices of others. Moreover, since I felt that 'knowing the other' was a relevant and inescapable part of our human condition, I believed it was an important theme to explore.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The current study is a personal investigation into the knowing process, as it explores how individuals seek to know the other. Here the verb 'know' relates to the understanding of and ultimately the relationship formed between the individual and the other. The nature of this relationship is believed to depend on how the latter is perceived by the former. For instance, an objectivist view, in which the other is regarded as a voiceless and inanimate object, is argued to both dehumanize the knower and limit their understanding. A holistic view of the knowing process as a reciprocal relationship, however, is shown to enable healing, by restoring knower's full potential to learn and grow. This holistic approach is believed to enable a more complete view of the other, by focusing on its contribution to the knowing process. Knowing is accordingly depicted as a relationship of love rather than control, as understanding between the knower and the known is facilitated by mutual dialogue. This relational view of the other may thus be life giving, as understanding is cultivated within the knower. Alternatively, objectification of the other is shown to inhibit one's full capacity for being, by reducing one's sensitivity and understanding.

Hence, the current study employs narratives to depict one teacher's investigations of her own experiences, as they are depicted as symbolic tools that can portray the elusiveness and implicitness of the other. Writing from both my personal journal and my students' learning journals and notes from interviews with colleagues are used to construct these narratives. This chapter also outlines the basic purposes, the broader significance and the specific research questions driving the current study. Lastly, it touches upon the dilemmas of finding a suitable means for data collection, as well as an appropriate medium to convey the study's implicit

themes.

Purpose of the Study

The current study portrays a narrative landscape of my experiences teaching English as a second language in a Korean Christian college. It describes critical moments concerning the department, the curriculum and the school as a whole. The first section explores my attempts to find my own unique teaching voice, as well as my efforts to integrate a relational view of the knowing process into my practices. Accordingly, I have critically reflected on my teaching practices, the curriculum and the broader dynamics of the University through a personal journal.

The second section analyzes the reflective writing of participating student journals to explore how they approach the other in their learning. This group consists of daytime college students between the ages of eighteen and thirty, who were enrolled in intermediate and advanced level composition classes. Each class consisted of English major students, who were able to articulate their complex ideas in English. Difference in language was therefore not problematic in accessing their intimate thoughts. Excerpts of both journals are used to construct the narratives of the current study. Consequently, the knowing process is depicted through narratives of how my students and colleagues are perceived to encounter the other in their practices.

Significance of the Study

The overall significance of the current study lies in the universality of the themes explored. As stated in the preface, our encounters with the other can be construed as a fundamental part of existence. Martin Buber (1970) in 'I-Thou' reiterates how human existence implies a

relationship, regardless of whether it is an objectivist ‘I-It’ or a more authentic ‘I-You’ connection. Each of these relationship types are elaborated below. Hartman and Zimberoff (2003) have also illustrated how subjective relationships with the other enable us to live a rich and meaningful life.

The study’s significance is further evident when we consider the plight of our education system and perhaps society in general, which is criticized for becoming increasingly superficial, non-relational and objectivist. These critics have condemned such trends towards rationalism for ignoring and minimizing the non-visible richness of life (Neill, 1994). Hence, rationalism has been argued to inhibit our human capacity for being, by limiting our understanding of what is implicit (Neill, 1994). The current study thus proposes that a non-objectivist view of the other can enhance the depth and authenticity of our teaching and learning practices.

Research Questions

The study's research questions focus on how the knowing process manifests within the current teaching and learning situation. It also explores the implications of these factors on my teaching practices.

- i) How is the other depicted by the teacher researcher in her journal, and how is this understanding manifested through the narratives?
- ii) How is the other, in relation to one's subject matter and learning processes, depicted in student journals?
- iv) What are the implications of this perception for the teacher researcher's overall teaching

and learning practices?

- v) What kind of revelations concerning the other emerge as a result of the narrative writing and research process?

The Current Research Setting

This section includes a brief description of my identity as the teacher researcher and the University in the current research setting.

a) My Identity as a Teacher Researcher

Since the current research involves a personal investigation into my teaching experiences, this section briefly describes how my identity as a young, female Korean Australian, who is situated in the current University, may have impacted my perceptions of the other.

i) Cultural Identity

My Korean Australian heritage may have subconsciously influenced by experiences working in a Korean university. Having migrated to Australia as a toddler, my understanding of Korean social customs and mindset was often limited and flawed. The migration history of Korean Australians had been relatively new in the eighties; hence, my knowledge of Korea developed via my interactions with a few members of the Korean Australian community. However, Korea had undergone dramatic changes in the last couple of decades, emerging from its war-torn past as a highly industrialized nation. It was no longer the same place that it had once been. Consequently, not only was my Korean language proficiency weak, I also lacked other fundamental details concerning Korea's changed identity as a developed nation.

The superficial stereotypes I had formed from childhood then led me to make quick judgments about certain students and Korean coworkers, without a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics involved. Likewise, I felt that those who disregarded my Western heritage similarly reciprocated these mistaken conceptions concerning cultural identity. Such individuals would expect me to follow the subtle social cues deemed 'appropriate' for my Korean features. Conversely, I also sensed such cultural stereotyping from those who did not acknowledge my Korean heritage. These individuals would classify me as the 'foreigner,' who had little, or no insight or relation to the Korean culture. This 'either/or' simplistic labeling often left me feeling dismissed or misunderstood. Though the frustration of being immersed in two cultures was significant, it was not elaborated upon, as I felt the study's focus might then become too dispersed. Yet it may have been further valuable to investigate how this complex embodiment of two different cultures affected how I perceived the other.

ii) Teaching Experience and Social Circumstance

My limited years of teaching experience were also significant, as it enhanced the vividness of my recollections. Having entered my third year of full-time work, the teaching profession was still a new and unfamiliar terrain. Being the only instructor involved in teaching the higher level writing classes, I also had the freedom to construct my own curriculum. The earnestness felt through such a challenge may have made this experience even more vivid.

Being deeply immersed within the current research situation was another factor that strengthened its impact. Since I did not have many social contacts in Korea, I was free to form new

relationships with my colleagues and my students. Various additional duties, such as homeroom teaching, also presented opportunities to interact personally with my students. Furthermore, since I also lived on campus, the borders between my work, social and home life were often blurred. Subsequently, the depths of my interactions added to the richness of these recollections.

iii) Gender and Age

Additionally, the Confucian principles of Korean society affected my perspective as a teacher researcher. As mentioned above, my young age and female gender was often a disadvantage when interacting with the Korean administration, as a senior Korean male colleague would have to speak on my behalf. With an approximately eighty to twenty percent ratio between men and women amongst the Korean professors, the representation of female instructors was also limited. Perhaps the injustice felt from this unequal gender representation contributed to my desire to prove my competence as a young, female teacher. This may have added to the whole-heartedness of the current research experience.

b) A General Description of the Current University

The study's themes are further contextualized through a description of the current Christian University, which was established in a South Korean city in 1995. The school has approximately 4000 students and 120 faculty members. It seeks to have a global outlook, by advocating lectures conducted in English, and further sponsors students from third world countries such as Afghanistan, Africa, Vietnam, and Russia. Lastly, this University espouses a strong nondenominational Christian background, which can be seen in the vision statement below.

The Vision Statement
· Honest Christian laymen who will change the world through a spirit of love, humility and service for the glory of the God.
· Honest Global servants who live to serve communities, nations, and the world, especially developing countries, through their professionalism and ethics.
· Honest intellectuals with a Christian world view in various academic fields, reestablishing the true purpose of education and rebuilding destroyed biblical creationism and morality.(Isaiah 58:12)

Table 1: Three points of the vision statement (Kyeongbuk Global University Homepage, n.d.)

i) The Religious and Academic Aspects of the University

The Christian faith is evident in the University culture and the extracurricular programs offered.

The formal religious activities include chapel, a mandatory weekly meeting for all students.

Other compulsory activities include the team system, where groups of thirty students meet each

week for chapel attendance and social events. The Christian culture is also visible in a code of

practice called the 'Honour code,' which was established to cultivate principles of honesty,

responsibility and service towards others. Examples of this code can be seen in the non-proctored

exams, the seminars held during the school festival and the freshman orientation. However, the

pervasiveness of Christianity is most apparent in the various Bible meetings, church services and

other such faith-based activities.

{NOTE: A pseudonym has been used to refer to the current University and all its participants}

Academic achievement was also a key target for the current University. One such example can be found in the University's stringent admission policy, which requires students to score in the top 5-10 percentile for their final year high school examination. This places the current University amongst the top ranking universities in South Korea. It also consists of eleven different departments, including science, computer engineering, international languages and Christian culture, whilst postgraduate programs are offered in fields such as law, science and international studies. Overall, Kyeongbuk Global University aspires to challenge students both spiritually and intellectually by integrating faith and learning.

ii) Problems faced by the University

Due to its small size, isolation and religious orientation, the current University faces certain problematic factors concerning the other, which may have been less apparent in larger, secular universities. One such problem is the far distance from the city of Seoul, where much of the country's academic, social and cultural resources are centralized. This has led to fewer chances to fraternize or exchange information with other elite universities, which has further contributed to the general inclusiveness of student life. Students are hence seen to waste time surfing the net or playing computer games in their dormitory rooms. Unfortunately, the ensuing loneliness is not easily alleviated; as they usually live too far away to regularly visit their hometowns.

Additionally, due to conservative Christian and Confucian influences, there is also a lack of representation of the other deemed taboo. For instance, Kyeongbuk University does not provide

avenues to openly discuss or educate its students on safe sex practices, despite the alarming increase in the rate of illegal abortions. A survey conducted by a counseling professor in year 2004, revealed the increasing numbers of students undergoing illegal abortions in nearby clinics. These individuals were perceived to have experienced emotional trauma, such as severe depression. Unfortunately, efforts to publicize and increase awareness of such findings were discouraged.

Dilemmas as a Researcher

Finally, I have briefly described my difficulties as a teacher researcher to shed further light on the current study. The first challenge faced was the confusion felt from the implicit nature of my ideas. My second struggle was in finding an appropriate means of making such ideas tangible for expression. Both these factors are outlined below.

a) The Implicit Nature of the Study and My Integrity as a Researcher

There were few avenues for critical discussion with colleagues or classmates, due to my own experience of isolation at Kyeongbuk University. Consequently, chances to openly discuss ideas and receive feedback on my writing were limited. Aside from this fact, the biggest challenge was the implicitness and indirectness of my ideas. The high levels of ambiguity often made my research seem like a wild goose-chase after certain vague notions. Yet, this uncertainty seemed to be an inevitable, due to the elusiveness of knowing the other. Nevertheless, I was tempted to take the easy route and escape the tension of ‘not-knowing’ by ‘constructing’ rather than ‘uncovering’ my answers. Consequently, the lack of direction and the freedom from limiting preconceptions, gave this study both its greatest amount of possibility and frustration.

b) Finding a Suitable Means of Collecting Data

The intangibility of the ideas also made the choice of data collection problematic. For instance, I needed to convey the complexity and indirectness of the knowing process, as well as to capture the process of encountering the other. Less explicit and analytical forms of expression were thus required to convey these ideas, such as the symbolic language of metaphors and narratives.

Equally open-ended, broad and symbolic methods of data collection, such as story writing and journaling, were also incorporated. In terms of data collection, it was difficult to build enough intimacy to elicit personal details from participants about their learning. Since most classes consisted of approximately twenty or more students, who met twice a week for a little over two hours, there was little chance to develop personal trust in my relationships. These notions are discussed in the following literature review, alongside a broader discussion of the study's themes.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

This chapter discusses the types of knowing relationships that can be formed, such as the I-It and the I-You unions. The I-You is asserted as being a truer means for knowing the other, as it revolves around reciprocity, trust and love. The I-It, however, is believed to be a limiting, one-dimensional form of knowing that characterizes dogmatism. Hence, this chapter highlights the need to let go of the I-It encounter in order to embrace the richness of the latter. It also indicates how solitude can help individuals listen out for the other within an I-You encounter. The notion of paradox is further introduced to emphasize the complexity and mystery of the I-You relationship. Finally, due to the difficulty of such forms of knowing, courage, faith and openness are argued to be fundamental for embracing the other.

Existence as Relational: The Innate Drive to Encounter the Other

The 'will for meaning' has often been defined as being representative of all human qualities (Frankl, 1997). James (1929) argues how such questions are inherent in all people, because they revolve around the very purpose of existence. This 'will for meaning' is similarly regarded as the universal desire to know about or to develop an understanding of the other. Victor Frankl (1997) affirms such a view through 'logotherapy,' a field of psychology that defines the 'will for meaning' to motivate human existence. Polyani (1967) further describes humans to have an inner desire to explore the other, or a 'natural' drive towards a hidden truth. Subsequently, it is argued that humankind is motivated by the universal desire to make sense of their existence through their interactions with the other.

The view of a relational human existence is reiterated by Buber, who states that there is a relationship at the heart of any true encounter between the knower and the known, "Whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation" (1970, p. 55). The presence of something is thereby believed to imply the existence of a counterpart, that is, something that exists outside of this You. Buber rephrases this view, suggesting that the existence of the other allows us to recognize our own selves as 'being,' commenting, "I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You. All of actual life is an encounter" (1970, p. 55). Frankl (1997) similarly proposes that the essence of our humanity lies in relation to something or someone outside of us. He believes that such self-transcending relationships with the other enable individuals to become their true self, which is relational by nature. Our very existence may therefore imply a relationship between the knower and the known, regardless of the type involved.

The I-It Encounter of the Knowing Process

This section of the chapter describes the I-It encounter of the knowing process. Both the I and It counterparts and the implications of their relationship on the individual and the other are discussed below.

a) A Definition of the I and the It of the I-It Encounter

The I of the I-It encounter is defined in the current study as the ego-mindset of individuals. It is asserted to highlight the objectivist and non-immanent part of our identity that seeks a superficial form of distinctiveness between oneself and the other (Wiedemann, 1986). This distinctiveness is believed to be motivated by the ego, which perceives itself to be 'real' as long as it exists in

separation to the other (Merton, 1977). Hartman and Zimberoff (2003) further explain how the lack of structure and boundary can appear like a form of annihilation for the ego. They argue that the ego can only form I-It relationships with the other, as it seeks to draw boundaries by separating and labeling what it encounters. The It of this relationship is defined as the ego's objectified view of other.

b) The I-It Encounter and the Problematic Effects of Objectivism

In the I-It encounter, an individual is perceived to objectify the other (Buber, 1970). The I of this encounter is defined as an ego that becomes conscious of itself through, ". . . sett[ing] [itself] apart from other egos" (Buber, 1970, p. 111). The I-It mentality is thereby shown to control the other, by superficially breaking it up matter into small and isolated categories. Such a process of separating and drawing false boundaries is criticized for fragmenting our perception of reality (Miller, 2000). Palmer (1983) further warns how objectivism implies a mindset of ownership, where knowledge is sought to gain superiority over others. He predicts that this view will create endless cycles of competitiveness, as knowledge is utilized to gain mastery over the world (1983, p. 39).

A materialistic value-system may thereby objectify our humanity, by limiting the richness of humanity to mere functional purposes (Capra, 1998). Alternatively, the I-It mentality can be seen to inhibit the non-mechanistic human capacity for richness and creativity, when it measures human worth in terms of its output and economic viability (Neill, 1994). The knower and the known are hence both diminished, as the knower is dehumanized and the other is rendered as a lifeless object to manipulate and control. This view resonates with Jung's (1945) concerns that

human beings are gradually losing touch with the essence of their humanity. 'Essence' here refers to the 'collective unconsciousness' of humankind, or the core of an individual (Jung, 1945, p. 200). Jung (1945) accordingly proposes that rationalism is slowly disconnecting human beings from the mystery of their inner being.

The ensuing repercussions of this I-It mentality are believed to manifest in the types of people 'manufactured.' These individuals appear to be deprived of the meaning and security of past eras. They are also characterized by a sense of alienation, isolation and confusion (Neill, 1994). Consequently, it is claimed that the growing quantification of human worth in modern day life will ultimately diminish our humanity (Neill, 1994).

c) The I-It Encounter and the Problems of Subjectivism

Palmer also criticizes subjectivism for being inherently objectivist in its approach (1983). He explains how a person's view of 'reality' is indirectly objectified, when it is not challenged and broadened (Palmer, 1983, p. 55). In other words, individuals may objectify the other when they cannot look beyond their own thought processes to empathize with another's. The boundaries formed from these self-constructed 'realities' are thus believed to prevent the mutual development of 'truth.' Palmer (1983) similarly asserts that despite its diversity of viewpoints, subjectivism still fails to include the important function of dialogue. Dialogue is shown to enable the knower to understand the other through its' self-revelations. Palmer (1983) thereby concludes that another mode of knowing is needed, which can facilitate mutual accountability, dialogue and the possibility of change.

d) An Example of the I-It Relationship: The Negative effects of Religiosity

Religiosity is an example of how the ultimate form of I-You knowing, that is the 'spiritual encounter,' can be similarly reduced by objectivity. Religiosity, which Tacey (2003) defines as a dogmatic approach to religion, is often described as an I-It form of relationship. Tacey (2003) criticizes religiosity for projecting narrow standards of perfectionism onto the other. He also condones its centralization of power, in which select groups of authority figures impose their views at the cost of reality (Tacey, 2003).

Religiosity is shown to repress true spiritual development, when individuals pursue general frameworks of faith without personal understanding. For example, Merton (1992) warns how the ready-made structures of institutions hinder real spiritual growth, when they are substituted for authentic soul searching. Although the simple act of adopting another's structure may secure instantaneous identity, Merton argues that it may not necessarily be compatible with, or it may even overpower our own beliefs and desires, stating, "Take the structure away and some people may not recognize themselves . . . our identity is immersed in a structure, which has been devised for and by somebody else. When we're in that structure we feel at peace; when we're out of it, we don't exist" (Merton, 1992, p. 135).

Accordingly, traditional religion is criticized for dismissing the self-exploration needed to cultivate personal and spiritual growth. Self-exploration is perceived to enable authentic relationships with the other, by facilitating critical dialogue. Alternatively, the mistrust of self-exploration is equated to a loss of faith, where individuals denounce their non-personalized form of religion as something external and unrelated to themselves (Tacey, 2003, p. 83). A similar

example can be seen in the act of compromise, where individuals settle for a superficial faith that lacks personal conviction.

The core of one's belief system may thereby be overtaken by a view of the other that lacks personal understanding. This notion assumes that individuals must first be true to themselves and become 'authentic human beings,' before they can identify themselves with an external structure (Merton, 1992, p. 136). The integrity and courage needed to create and confirm one's own existence may hence develop a solid foundation for any structure later adopted (Merton, 1992). Religious dogmatism may hence reduce the level of authenticity present within the knowing relationship, as the knower projects their limited preconceptions onto the other.

The I-You Encounter of the Knowing Process

Due to these limitations of the I-It knowing encounter, it is argued that another view is needed in which the knower and the known work together in a mutually disclosing relationship. This form of knowing is described as the I-You encounter. Both the I and You counterparts and the implications of their relationship on the individual and the other are discussed below.

a) The I and the You of the I-You Encounter

The I of the I-You relationship is conceived as being different from the I of the I-It encounter. Instead of the ego-mindset, the I of the I-You encounter is defined as being the innermost part of our being, one's spiritual self, one's 'soul' or one's most authentic self (Neill, 1994). This selfhood represents the whole and undivided self, by expressing the deeper levels of one's identity. Consequently, the I of the I-You encounter is regarded as the immanent inner core that

contains one's full human capacity for richness. Neill (1994) labels this internal strength as an individual's state of personal power, which unleashes the creative forces within both oneself and others.

In contrast to the I-It encounter's limited and objectified view, the I-You encounter is depicted on a more intrinsic and spiritual level, in which both the I and the You relate to each other from their innermost being. This interpretation originates from the Latin derivative, 'spiritus,' which means 'breath.' This translation has been extended according to the definition in Webster's College Dictionary (1991), as a life-giving or animating principle, or the 'breath of life.' The I and the You of the I-You encounter can accordingly be viewed as being the inner core, the authentic self and the 'breath of life' of both the knower and the other. Both counterparts are shown to relate and dwell within each other, in this intense 'spiritual' encounter.

b) The I-You as a Reciprocal Relationship

In the I-You encounter, the other is regarded to have its own sense of 'being.' The 'I-You is thereby perceived as a reciprocal relationship, in which the other also participates in the knowing process by revealing itself to the knower. Buber expresses this notion, stating, "No thing (non-objectification) is a component of experience or reveals itself except through reciprocal forces of confrontation" (1970, p. 77). Likewise, the knowing process may be conceived as a mutual process, in which the knower also listens to the other. Buber elaborates further on the mutual participation of the knower and the other, stating, "The You encounters me. But I enter into a direct relationship with it. Thus the relationship is election and electing, passive and active at once . . ." (1970, p. 66). Unlike the limiting one-sided relationship of the I-It encounter, the I-

You involves a more complete picture of the other by depicting the knowing process as a mutual encounter.

c) The I-You Encounter as a Relationship of Love, Trust and Grace

It is argued that this interaction between the knower and the other is absent in normal objectivist ways of knowing, in which the non-human world is stripped of its voice. In the I-You encounter, however, the knower may utilize other capacities of knowing, such as empathy, intuition, compassion and faith, to dialogue with the more subtle messages from the world (Palmer, 1983, p. 54). Such listening may require obedience, as the knower gives way to the other to create meaning through mutual dialogue. This contradicts the objectivist view in which the knower controls, rather than listens to the other.

Palmer also explains how manipulating the other for self-serving purposes may result in failure, as any real relationship between the knower and the other implies an act of 'troth,' in which trust, attentiveness, care and goodwill are reciprocated between the knower and the known (1998, p. 35). Moreover, the knower also embodies trust in the other, by allowing it to contribute to the knowing process. Trust is also believed to provide the other with the courage to reveal itself to the knower. Accordingly, the act of knowing is interpreted as a love relationship, in which a community is formed through dialogue (Deikman, 1982, p. 78).

Without love, it is argued that individuals will not even desire to unify with the other. And more importantly, love is perceived as a fundamental part of the I-You encounter, by unifying the

inconsistencies that lie beyond our logical comprehension (Palmer, 1983). Palmer relates how we can receive such love through accepting paradox, stating “. . . [we can receive love] by living faithfully within the paradoxes and tensions themselves, refusing to resolve them by collapsing into one pole or another, but allowing them to pull us open to that transcendent love in which all opposites find reconciliation" (1983, p. 111). Love is therefore believed to unveil the mysteries inherent in the other, by helping us transcend the limitations of our rational minds.

Grace, the most expansive form of self-less love, is shown to enable the other to reveal its mystery to the knower to form a relationship with them. Any revelation from the other is believed to bear this wondrous quality of a gift both unexpectedly and effortlessly received. Buber illustrates the importance of grace in the I-You encounter, indicating how true understanding of the other can never be contrived, "The You encounters me by grace- it cannot be found by seeking" (1958, p.35). Frankl (1997, p. 2) similarly asserts that success naturally follows grace, rather than effort, stating, ". . . success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue . . . as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a course greater than oneself." Therefore, logical reasoning is perceived as the tool for comprehending the limited preconceptions of the I-It encounter, whilst grace is depicted as the way of transcending it.

d) The Presence of the I-You Encounter

Another characteristic of the I-You relationship can be seen in its lack of mediation, which Buber summarizes as, "But in the act of beholding it was no thing among things, no event among events; it was present exclusively" (1970, p. 89). Buber (1970) further describes how the act of speech, which captures and gives form to perception, erects a barrier that separates individuals

from their experiences. He explains how the presence of both the knower and the other is enhanced when they are free to simply 'be,' stating, ". . . I and You confront each other freely in a reciprocity that is not involved in or tainted by any causality; here man (sic) finds guaranteed the freedom of his being and of being (Buber, 1970, p.89)." The I-You relationship is thereby shown to convey the full presence of a living encounter between the knower and the known.

e) Creativity as an Example of the I-You Encounter

An example of the richness and reciprocity within the I-You encounter is visible in the creative act. May (1994) describes such an encounter by relating a conversation with the famous poet Auden, who defines poetry as a marriage between the poet and language. May explains how language itself rises up to embrace the poet, stating:

Language is the symbolic repository of the meaningful experience of ourselves and our fellow human beings down through history, and as such, it reaches out to grasp us in the creating of a poem (1994, p. 85).

The artist is therefore perceived to be both active and passive, as they must first listen patiently to the other with sensitivity, stating, ". . . (receptivity) is an active listening, keyed to hear the answer, alert to see whatever can be glimpsed when the vision or words do come" (May, 1994, p. 80). This form of listening is shown to differ from the one-sided subjective I-It relationship, as one's actions are informed by the other's authentic presence. May (1994) similarly illustrates how artists shed light on the deeper underlying dynamics of a period through their intense encounters with the world. He subsequently suggests that the creative encounter is determined by, ". . . the degree of absorption, the degree of intensity. . . [and] a specific quality of engagement" (p. 41). Moreover, the creative encounter is believed to convey a sense of 'totality' that accounts for interlocking patterns, which allow individuals to perceive the beauty and coherence between

seemingly separate parts (May, 1994). Wonderment, purpose and meaning may thereby ensue, as things fall harmoniously into place.

The Importance in Forming a ‘Right’ Relationship with the Other

The nature of this relationship may thereby determine whether individuals can embrace the possibilities of their existence, or whether they sabotage such opportunities to grow (Hartman & Zimberoff, 2003). These relationship types are listed through Buber’s (1970) terms, the I-It and the I-You. The I-It is depicted as an encounter in which individuals objectify the other as a possession to manipulate and control. It is further perceived to embody modern-day values, such as rationalism and objectivity. Unfortunately, the current climate of society is shown to favour the I-It encounter due to the similar superficiality of its own value system. Since the principles of materialism and consumerism are claimed to dehumanize those who depend on such structures for self-identification, it is suggested that more holistic forms of knowing are needed. The I-You encounter is one such example of a relationship that involves mutual revelation and dialogue between the intrinsic essence of the other.

The Need to Let Go of the I-It Mindset; the Possibility of Solitude

Letting go of the compulsive need to control has often been considered as the first step in deeply relating with the other. Watts (1974, p. 161) expresses how individuals must let go of the controlling ego, which limits and divides the mind into artificial parts (Watts, 1974). Merton (1992, p. 208) further explains how our endeavors may be unsuccessful when our emotions are overcharged, as we are too anxious to concentrate on the current task. A loss of freedom may therefore occur, if our happiness is overly dependent on a positive outcome (Merton, 1992). This

anxiety is also regarded as being futile, since the outcome of our endeavors lie outside our control.

Solitude is regarded as one way for individuals to simply 'be' in a noisy and chaotic world. It is believed to form a space needed for us to focus on and unify our scattered thoughts, so as to directly confront oneself amongst the noise (Palmer, 1983, p. 121). Not only can it enable inward integration, solitude is perceived as an important practice in a society, in which words are suffering a loss of meaning (Merton, 1992).

a) Solitude as Inward Integration

Solitude has accordingly been used to centre ourselves, so that we can both receive and reflect on the other's voice (Palmer, 1983). It has been associated with the practice of deep contemplation, in which we can form insights, rather than being occupied by distractions. Merton expresses this need for space and solitude:

While silence is a form of presence, we must also recognize that presence has to include the notion of distance, the concepts of dignity and reserve. . . You have to have enough distance to be yourself, composed and at ease . . . dignity and space in which to be one's own person (1992, p. 10).

b) Inward Integration as a Means for Outer Connectedness

Likewise, silence is shown to help individuals develop into independent and autonomous human beings. Merton indicates how space is needed to acquire inner dignity, explaining how presence is formed as individuals take time out to collect themselves (1992). He further illustrates how words such as, ". . . dignity, privacy, reserve, self-respect, distinction, integrity and diffidence. . ." help individuals attain a healthy level of stability and maturity (p.34). This increase in self-

respect is also believed to lead to loving relationships. Merton illustrates how the distance between oneself and others allows people to offer something unique of their own selfhood, as opposed to individuals who are too embedded in " . . . symbiotic relationships, a sort of mass of confused people" (1992, p. 70). The inner integration cultivated through solitude may thus help us form outward bonds with others, by freeing us from both the fears that others might destroy our already fragile sense of being. It may further release us from the conflicting messages of our divided inner self (Palmer, 1983).

c) Inward Integration as a Form of Purity

Walsh and Vaughan (1993) also confirm how we can acquire inner dignity by stilling our scattered stream of consciousness. They introduce the purity of a concentration that unifies the mind. Merton further describes concentration as the ability to focus one's stream of thoughts on a single point, as opposed to the half-hearted 'patchwork' attempts of 'self-conquest' (1992, p. 201). The latter approach is believed to lead to scattered results, as individuals are inwardly divided by superficial motives (Merton, 1992). Thus, it is regarded that success ultimately depends on whether our goals are worthy enough to deserve our wholehearted efforts.

Goleman (1977, p. 71) continues to describe wholeheartedness as a mind that settles and focuses on a single point of reference, where it is shown to, ". . . penetrate[s] it; (be) totally absorbed in it, (as it) moves in oneness with the object, where one's awareness completely unify with its point of reference." Walsh and Vaughan (1993) similarly explain the importance of both our level and the object of concentration. They thereby urge us to focus on what is valuable, since our mind may take on the form of what it fixates upon.

d) Inward Unity as Receptiveness to the Other

Freedom from needless preoccupations may thus create a space for individuals to grasp any elusive and hidden meanings (Merton, 1965). Merton (1965, p.52) poetically refers to his notion of seeking solitude for the sake of inner stability as, "[The] fasting of the heart. . ." Such fasting is perceived to empty the senses, so that they can become more receptive and attentive in listening. Merton cites a story of Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher, to further explain the importance of being wholeheartedly attentive, stating, "The goal of fasting is inner unity. This means hearing but not with the ear; hearing, but not with the understanding; hearing with the spirit, with your whole being. . . when the faculties are empty, then the whole being listens."

May (1994) also emphasizes how receptivity should not be confused with passivity, as it is the 'active' receptivity of a unified mind that opens up to the other, "It is an active listening, keyed to hear the answer, alert to see whatever can be glimpsed when the vision of the words do come" (p. 81). Walsh and Vaughan (1993, p. 50) similarly relay the need for inward unity, describing how our minds are predominantly in disarray, ". . . in our usual constrained state of mind, awareness and perception are insensitive and impaired; fragmented by attention instability, coloured by clouding emotions, and distorted by scattered desire."

e) Solitude as a Sign of Love and Presence

Likewise, silence is defined as a shared acknowledgement of love in which individuals are free to simply rejoice in the other's presence (Merton, 1992). In order to reveal the nakedness of their beings to each other, Merton explains that individuals must, ". . . want to be present to each other

and then trust what happens" (1992, p. 3). He also suggests that the absence of words enables the raw power of one's presence to surface, commenting, "We renew our silence, not by going around and talking to people endlessly or by giving up our way of life, but by letting the quiet be impregnated with presence and with light. Then it is life-giving . . ." (1992, p. 5). Opposed to the uttering of many meaningless words, the presence of one's being is thus shown to extend life-giving energy to others.

f) The Fear of Solitude and the Need to overcome it

Despite the importance of solitude in listening out for the other, Palmer (1983) believes that individuals greatly fear the boredom and inner darkness evoked. He explains how the 'noise' generated by modern life has become so familiar, that it has become a part of our lives. He therefore encourages us not to be so fearfully dependent on such superficial busyness, so that we can know the other with love and compassion.

'Flow,' the Feeling of Holism

Letting go of our controlling mind has thereby been considered as the first step in deeply understanding the other. This freedom from self-consciousness is construed as an instinctive form of spontaneity. It is also perceived as the direct expression of our inner beings, which seeks to encounter the raw essence of the other (Czikszenmihalyi, 1991). Czikszenmihalyi refers to this feeling of togetherness as 'flow,' likening it to the general feeling of harmony within the natural world (1991; 41). 'Flow' thereby defines an experience in which the inner core of the knower can participate fully with the other, as they join together as one entity. Czikszenmihalyi gives an analogy of a tennis player, who has attained this high level of immersion, stating:

When all a person's relevant skills are needed to cope with the challenges of a situation . . . people become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous, almost automatic; they stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions they are performing (1991, p. 53).

Consequently, individuals are shown to be so immersed in a moment that they respond in perfect harmony with their self and environment. The value of responding directly to what one senses is reiterated by Merton (1992, p. 46), who cites the writing of Chang Tzu, a famous Zen writer. Chang Tzu gives an example of an individual who maneuvers a cleaver through flesh with great precision, by unifying so completely with their action:

But now, I see nothing
With the eye. My whole being
Apprehends.
My senses are idle
The spirit
Free to work without plan
Follows its own instinct
Guided by natural line
By the secret opening, the hidden space
My cleaver finds its own way
I cut through no joint, chop no bone.

Yalom (2002, p. 35) also introduces the value of spontaneity through an analogy of a piano player, who expresses such exquisite heights in music by breaking free from simple technique.

Such loss of self-consciousness is asserted to help individuals uncover the raw and unconscious parts of their own selfhoods (Czikszenmihalyi, 1991). Czikszenmihalyi relays the mysterious nature of this growth, stating, "Paradoxically, it is when we act freely, for the sake of the action itself rather than for ulterior motives, that we learn to become more than what we were" (1991, p. 41). He expresses how inner integration results, as individuals become attentive enough to

harmonize all their thoughts on a single goal.

Intuition, the Experience of Holism

An inwardly unified individual is thus defined as someone who is acutely in tune with any underlying sense of holism. Such receptivity to oneself and the world beyond is believed to cultivate further insights, as implicit patterns of connectedness are discovered (Ayers & Schubert, 1992). Merton expresses this point, stating, "It is not mere passivity, but it is an action that seems both effortless and spontaneous because it is performed 'rightly,' in perfect accord with our nature and with our place in the scheme of things" (1965, p. 28). Instead of experiencing friction with one's environment, we may then feel an overwhelming sense of ease and belonging. This experience of holism and insight has often been defined as 'intuition.'

Intuition has been regarded as a holistic and spiritual form of awareness (Bolton, 1984). This form of transcendent and highly aesthetic form of awareness has also been labeled 'classic intuitionism,' that is, a ". . . a special contact with prime reality, producing a sense of ultimate unity, true beauty, perfect certainty, and blessedness" (Torff & Sternberg, 2001, p. 22). Miller (1982) proposes that intuition allows individuals to develop a holistic form of knowing, from which all other understandings are inferred (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000). Torff and Sternberg (2001, p. 7) similarly define intuition as the raw and innately specified knowledge structure encoded into the human condition, whilst Emerson portrays it as a primary source of spiritual and moral understanding. Further analysis and inquiry is thereby believed to be impossible beyond this common point of origin (Miller, 1982). Lastly, it is also regarded as the instinctive

gut response that precedes formal explanation or reasoning (Merton, 1992). Consequently, intuition is shown to allow individuals to access an enormous store of innate and higher-level understanding (Shapiro & Spence, 1997).

Openness to Paradox: The Understanding of Holism

Letting go of one's limited frameworks is hence argued to broaden one's understanding, by enabling a higher form of holistic knowing that accounts for opposites. This form of knowing emphasizes the need to transcend the limiting boundaries of our rationalizing mind, in order to grasp the fullness of the other. Marcic (2000) similarly asserts that, since rationalism simplifies complex issues into either- or dichotomies, it lacks the flexibility of the mysterious and ineffable aspects of the other. Paradox, however, is shown to link the spiritual and ineffable world together, by unifying opposites as one. Capra (1998, p. 78) reiterates this view, by recalling a comment by the theorist, Bateson, who describes how logic cannot handle the circular trains of thought constructing reality. This conversation between Bateson and Capra highlights the fundamental role of paradox in human awareness.

a) 'Reality' as the Coexistence of Opposites

Acknowledging this paradoxical coexistence of opposites may be essential for a holistic and 'truthful' view of reality. Such a view is expressed by eastern philosophers, who assert that something can only truly exist in the shadow of its opposite, since a one sided view merely distorts 'truth.' For instance, the interdependence of opposites is expressed in the notion of light existing through its opposite, darkness. An awareness of light is thus shown to occur through an understanding of its absence. Merton (1965, p. 43) further expresses the necessity of coexistence

for balance, stating, "When a limited and conditioned view of 'good' is erected to the level of an absolute, it immediately becomes an evil, because it excludes certain complementary elements which are required if it is to be fully good."

In addition, opposites may not only be interdependent, but they may also interpenetrate and unify with each other (Reason & Rowan, 1981). An example can be found in the colour grey, in which a measure of light exists in darkness and vice versa. Another instance of unity within opposites can be seen where something reverts to its opposite form when taken to the extreme. For example, both complete darkness and light are believed to result in a similar sensation of blindness (Reason & Rowan, 1981). Merton (1965, p. 30) also relates how beauty that is overdone becomes ugliness, whilst extreme happiness can end in trouble and dismay. Paradoxes are thus regarded as an essential make-up of all reality, where all things are constructed by two opposing 'truths' that define each other.

b) 'Life' as the Dynamic Movement between Opposites

Aside from being constructed by opposites, life may also suggest a constant movement between extremes. Merton (1965, p. 30) gives such an example through an analogy of rain clouds. He explains how these patches of condensation fall to the ground as rain, which then rise to the sky to become rain clouds. Rain is shown to result from this constant movement between the earth and the sky. Accordingly, the essence and energy of life may revolve around this dynamic and cyclic movement between opposite extremes. Reason and Rowan (1981, p. 131) further argue how our human condition implies a lack of finality, as the contradictions of life are impossible to resolve.

c) The Limitless Possibilities in Opposites

In addition to this dynamic movement between extremes, limitless opportunities are believed to exist at the point where opposites meet. Merton introduces this importance of convergence through Confucianism, stating, ". . . [the point] where all affirmations and denials converge" (1965, p. 30). He relates how all possibilities are limitless at this intersection, as nothing is defined or set in place, stating, "He who grasps the pivot is at the still-point from which all movements and opposites is thus seen in their right relationship" (Merton, 1965, p. 30). Openness to the coexistence of opposites is thus shown to enable our imagination to grow infinitely.

d) The Fear of Paradox and Reasons to overcome it

Despite the need for paradox in holistic understanding, it is often dismissed due to the discomfort caused. This discomfort is perceived to ensue as one lets go of the comfort and familiarity of simple dichotomies to seek interrelatedness between 'opposites' (Marcic, 2000). Palmer similarly suggests that suffering occurs as individuals resist opening up to the tension of defying logic (1998). Moreover, individuals are proposed to have natural built-in defenses against insecurity and embarrassment, which may result from facing the unknown (Marcic, 2000). The first of these two defenses are labeled as 'displacement,' in which the opposites are projected onto the other, whilst the commonalities are overlooked. The second form of defense is regarded

as a compromise, in which the creative vitality of the extremes is lost (Marcic, 2000).

In spite of the discomforts of opening up to paradox, Palmer (1998) proposes that individuals will ultimately embrace this tension in order to expand their heart and mind. Marcic (2000) similarly conveys how individuals will seek interrelatedness to deepen their understanding, despite the anxiety caused by uncertainty and ambiguity. Palmer (1998, p. 73) further relates how paradox facilitates the development of higher-level forces such as creativity and love, which are powerful enough to reconcile opposites. Love is also shown to provide the patience needed to embrace the uncertainty involved. Consequently, paradox is regarded as a key-learning tool, when it motivates individuals to make personal and active efforts to understand the other's mysteries. It may also consolidate the learning process, when it allows individuals to deeply engage in the meaning making process (Marcic, 2000).

Implications of Holism and the I-You relationship on Living

The I-You perspective may accordingly be difficult to pursue, due to the uncertainty involved. Individuals are therefore encouraged to be brave in being present to each life encounter, as they live out their questions with openness and faith.

a) The need for Courage

Courage is also shown to provide the faith needed to open oneself up to the other in the I-You encounter. May (1994, p. 13) expresses how, “[Courage] is the foundation that underlies and gives reality to all other virtues and personal values.” He uses the French derivative of the word, ‘Coeur,’ which means ‘heart,’ to illustrate how, courage gives strength to all other virtues,

similar to the heart's role of pumping blood to the rest of the body (May, 1994). Consequently, without the authenticity of presence, our actions are claimed to lose their inherent meaning and become mere acts of conformism (May, 1994). May (1994, p.13) accordingly asserts that courage may enable individuals to be authentically present in each life encounter, stating, "In human beings courage is necessary to make 'being' and 'becoming' possible. An assertion of the self, a commitment, is essential if the self is to have any reality." Courage is thereby defined as an act of self-affirmation, by helping individuals to actively participate in their encounters. Despite the contrasting demands of one's environment, May urges people to have courage in cultivating self-honesty and life-giving actions.

Being present to one's own self may also imply a general sense of responsibility for life, that is, the ability to, "honor and cherish life and try to help sustain it" (Morgan, 1998, p. 314). Morgan (1998) conveys how all individuals must have a personal sense of integrity, in which they fulfill their duty of care towards one's self and the other. Truthful practices are then conceived as the essence of moral responsibility, as it displays an individual's ability to appreciate and honor life. It is subsequently asserted that individuals may cultivate life-giving actions, as they identify themselves as morally responsible beings.

b) Letting go to Faith: Living out One's Questions

Courage is also regarded to be important, for letting go of our need to control the other. Merton (1965) uses the analogy of a Confucian monk to convey the meaninglessness felt in pursuing things that cannot be sought after. He asserts that such efforts are destructive due to their futility. He thereby urges us to be wise enough to recognize when we no longer continue on our own

effort. The Confucian monk Keng relays this point to his disciple, stating:

If you persist in making effort,
To obtain what effort cannot get,
If you persist in reasoning,
About what cannot be understood, You will be destroyed,
By the very thing you seek,
To know when to stop,
To know when you can get no further
By your own action, This is the right beginning. (Merton, 1965, p. 133)

Rilke also defines the act of letting go as the essence of being truly alive, where he states, ". . . only someone who is ready for everything, who doesn't exclude any experience, even the most incomprehensible, will live the relationship with another person as something alive and will himself sound the depths of his own being" (1984, p. 88). He explains how such openness may evoke the full richness of humanity, by allowing individuals to be receptive to all possibilities.

The limitations of human effort may thus imply the necessity of faith, where individuals can step forward to embrace the unknown rather than shrink back in fear, when their logic fails. Rilke (1984) therefore urges us to affirm ourselves by living out our questions, instead of settling for the instantaneous answers that stifle curiosity. In a letter to a student, he (1984, p. 56) speaks of the patience and compassion inherent in openness:

Be patient toward all that is unresolved in your heart . . . Try to love the questions themselves . . . Do not seek the answers, which cannot be given because you would not be able to live them- and the point is to live everything. Live the questions now.

Palmer (1998) similarly addresses the importance of ambiguity in learning, explaining how living out one's questions develops communities of explorers. Learning is depicted here as a life-long and open-ended journey, rather than a process of answering each other's questions. Rilke (1984) likewise encourages individuals to have the faith to receive their personal forms of

creativity with trust and faithfulness.

Trust may also imply the presence of patience, as individuals wait with confidence and faith, instead of contriving their desired outcomes. Rilke (1984; 24) expresses how patience requires an inner conviction that things will eventually happen in its own time. He promises that the resulting joy will far outweigh any discomfort, if individuals are able to bear all things with patience. Lastly, Rilke (1984) describes the mixture of joy, pain and thankfulness felt in the daily struggle for patience. The application of these themes in the teaching and learning field are discussed below.

Implications of the Relationship with the Other on Education

The education context is perceived as a small microcosm of the knowing process occurring in our daily interactions with the other. From a teacher's viewpoint, the other can be any aspect of their environment, such as their own selves, the subject that they are teaching, their students, other teachers and the school. For students, it can be their own selfhood, the teacher, the subject that they are studying and other students. Accordingly, it is asserted that either an I-It or the I-You relationship may lie at the heart of the teaching and learning role, depending on how it is perceived. For example, to know the other deeply and authentically, teachers may first need to perceive it beyond their own projections. Conversely, teachers may need to regard themselves with appreciation, to also see the other from such a stance. Consequently, knowing as an I-You relationship is proposed to enable both the teacher and learner to fulfill their potential as holistic beings.

a) The Importance of Teacher Self-knowledge

Firstly, teaching as an I-You encounter implies that a deeper view of the other is dependent on a teacher's self-perception. For instance, Palmer (1998) illustrates how the inner life of anything is incomprehensible to oneself unless individuals can first perceive themselves clearly. He continues to explain how teachers need to achieve a certain degree of inner harmony to free themselves from clouded perceptions. Likewise, it is proposed that teachers can respect both their own selves and the other, by believing in their own transcendence. Kornfield (1993, p.317) also indicates how appreciating our own sacredness enables us to regard others similarly. Conversely, he explains how we are able to establish relationships based on such acceptance, by accepting our own selves as being loved. Inner integration and grace is therefore shown to deepen community bonds, as one is able to firstly redeem what has been rejected within oneself. Kornfield (1993) similarly proposes that embracing all the repressed parts of our own selves will allow us to accept these aspects in others. Individuals are thus encouraged to look for universal bonds of experience that connect, rather than separating themselves in the desire for distinctiveness (Neill, 1994).

This notion of validating the inner self is evident in the Latin derivative of education, 'educare,' which means to 'to lead out from.' This term suggests that teachers can perceive the You, that is the other, and the I of the I-You encounter on a level of richness, by drawing out the 'inner truth' from within their students, rather than simply 'filling' their minds with information (Palmer, 1983). Teachers, who are able to appreciate their own richness and transcendence, may similarly be able to help students 'draw out' their inner forms of 'truth,' in addition to providing them with the adequate learning experiences to construct their knowledge.

b) An Example of an I-You Encounter- A Teacher and Student Relationship

Furthermore, a teacher's interaction with their students can appear as a shared interaction, in which knowledge is formed from both counterparts. Correspondingly, teachers and students can open their lives to each other, as they both participate in a common search for meaning (Bolin & Falk, 1987, p. 19). Westerhoff depicts teachers as pilgrims, who model the learning process to their students by offering up their own examples of learning for viewing (Bolin & Falk, 1987). He explains how these real glimpses into a teacher's life aids learning, by allowing students to perceive any abstract concepts on a concrete level. However, he believes that teachers must both be vulnerable and compassionate enough to accept the scrutiny that results from such openness. Palmer (1998) further relates how a teacher's authenticity and openness may allow students to respond with similar truthfulness and courage. He believes that these actions will ultimately form an 'interdependent community of truth,' in which both the teacher and the student co-participate in creating meaning (Palmer, 1998, p. 54).

This mutually reciprocating I-You encounter is shown to take place on the deepest level of human connection, where teachers communicate with their students through a common language of humanity (Miller, 1981). Rogers (1974) describes this interdependence as a form of genuine communication, as it involves the teachers and students speaking authentically from their core. Rogers (1974, p. 26) also explains how such commonality enhances our levels of communication, demonstrating how it is our most private, personal and therefore seemingly incomprehensible feelings that speak accordingly to others. The current study asserts that individuals can connect to the most personal and sacred part of the respondent by reaching out

from such a place. These personal means of investigating one's experiences are introduced in the next chapter through the discussion on self-study methodology.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology of self-study and autoethnography. Self-study has been increasingly acknowledged in education as a way of enhancing teacher professionalism, autonomy and authority. It is regarded as being particularly suitable for teachers, considering the experiential and practical nature of their knowledge base. Self-study has accordingly been used to investigate how teachers' implicit beliefs affect their practice, as it embodies the flexibility needed to depict practical experience.

This focus on the personal, however, has been criticized for being too insular and subjective. These criticisms have prompted alternative ways of consolidating one's findings with further research, like peer critique and referencing other literature. Likewise, this study incorporates similar alternative methods for support, such as student and teacher interviews, narratives and journal writing. Autoethnography is perceived as a common form of self-study that involves a holistic and narrative exploration into one's practices. I have accordingly incorporated autoethnography to both capture and enhance my critical understanding as a teacher learner.

Self-study

Although the level of academic rigor in self-study has been questioned by traditional researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002), the growth of its popularity has been undeniable in the past years (Zeichner, 1999). Self-study has become so prevalent in education, that it is now described as the 'new scholarship' in teacher education (Zeichner, 1999). It is believed to enrich a teacher's practices, by allowing them to research their own experiences (Clarke & Erickson, 2004). Such

investigations are also claimed to be innovatory and emancipatory, as teachers generate knowledge that is directly applicable to their practices. Self-study has accordingly been regarded as a legitimate form of research that acknowledges the rich variety of teaching and learning experiences (Zeichner, 1999).

Raines and Shadiow (1995, p. 2) highlight the importance of self-study for re-examining and refining one's teaching skills, stating, ". . . deliberative reflection gives voice to one's knowing and accelerates professional growth." Likewise, the exploration of one's teaching practice is reported to strengthen teacher professionalism, as teachers comprehend and express their ideas through systematic reflection. Schon similarly identifies professionalism as the ability to reformulate and reflect upon one's environment as a guide for future action (as cited in Fueyo & Koorland, 1997). Subsequently, teachers and students are called to be researchers of their practices, to enable genuinely transforming and self-sustaining learning. In the current study, self-study is regarded as one way for teachers to be responsible practitioners, who actively construct their teaching journey.

Shulman (1986) reiterates this significance of a teacher's selfhood by asserting that a teacher's ability, knowledge and character are most influential. He argues how both the teacher's explicit and implicit beliefs affect their practices more than cognitive reasoning, since it carries the raw power of their being. Investing time and effort to investigate implicit understanding may thereby uncover the fundamental beliefs influencing a teacher's actions. It is asserted that individuals may also be able to construct new 'coherences' that inform 'old' understanding through this continual process of negotiating meanings (Clarke & Erickson, 2004).

Self study is subsequently regarded as a valuable form of research due to the idiosyncratic nature of the teaching situation. Knowledge is accordingly considered a function of cognition, rather than something inert to be acquired and stored; and being practical and experientially based, it is also shown to accumulate horizontally rather than vertically (Clarke & Erickson, 2004).

Moreover, since knowledge itself is perceived to be inseparable from the knower, it is believed to manifest in biographies, stories and individual actions, which characterizes self-study (Clarke & Erickson, 2004). Eisner (1991) also defines knowledge to be a verb, as it requires the 'knower' for it to be redeemed. The self-study methodology has thus been included in the current study to depict the intimate details of the given contexts (Clarke & Erickson, 2004).

Considering the benefits of an insider perspective, many have opted for this systematic and rigorous cycle of inquiry, reflection and action. However, some (Hamilton, 1998) have claimed that self-study is too insular and subjective to be disseminated as public knowledge. Certain practitioners have therefore made efforts to validate their 'subjective' findings by providing more support. For example, Cochran- Smyth (1993) identifies peer commentary and critique as one way to 'inform' an insider perspective, stating that individuals can add credibility to their self-explorations by grounding it in the existing literature (Clarke & Erickson, 2004). They argue that personal reflection should be transformed into a tangible product that holds significance for others.

If undertaken thoroughly, self-study can also be an empowering and informative means of exploring the teaching and learning landscape. It may enable teachers to develop the skills

needed to document their experiences, as they confront both their successes as well as shortcomings (Clarke & Erickson, 2004). However, such a reflective stance is regarded as being quite painful, as individuals may directly confront the flaws and contradictions within their practices. Consequently, those undertaking self-study are first advised to ask themselves whether they have the will power, emotional maturity and intellectual honesty to generate constructive knowledge from such raw views of their experiences. Being similarly afraid of looking directly onto my own experiences, I questioned whether I had the maturity or courage to undertake this self-reflective study. Nevertheless, I decided to take on this task of exploring my teaching practices through autoethnography, one common method of conducting self-study.

AutoEthnography

The following section briefly describes the use of autoethnography in the current study. It also outlines its limitations and presents alternative arguments concerning its validity.

a) The Rationale

An autoethnographic approach of self-study emphasizes the value of the knower's selfhood in the knowing process. It assumes that practical knowledge is a vital part of the knowing process, since it exists in all the aspects of one's lived experience. It also places a great significance on the researcher's personal experience, by giving it legitimacy as valuable data. Reed- Danahay highlights the authenticity and the authority accessible through self-representation, questioning, "Who is to speak on behalf of whom" (1997, p. 3)? Bochner (2001) further highlights how autoethnography is self-empowering, as it shifts from master narratives to local stories.

Hence, autoethnography involves a highly personal depiction of a researcher's own explorations into their environment. Reed-Danahay (1997) further explains how the word 'autoethnography' itself is divided into 'auto' (self), 'ethnos' (culture) and 'graphy' (research process). This methodology employs these three aspects to conduct and orient one's research. Therefore, autoethnography acknowledges the ambiguity, complexity, and variety of meanings within any particular research setting (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Though autoethnography is a personal investigation into one's own experiences, it may also inspire critical reflection in others (Ellis & Bocher, 2000). These observations into one's practices can enable a natural form of networking, by helping others to reflect on themselves. The knowledge generated through one individual's experience may then indirectly evoke insight in others. Accordingly, autoethnography has been perceived to facilitate both individual and collective learning (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Likewise, I also hoped to catalyze insights in others by displaying my own critical reflections.

b) How it is included in the Current Study

This study can thereby be regarded as an autographic study of the various critical incidents and individuals within my teaching journey. Through these descriptions, I have hoped to convey certain notions about the I-You knowing encounter in my practices. This study also includes a detailed description of the current research setting, as well as my own identity as the teacher researcher, in order to construct a clear picture of study's unique context. In addition, the emotions and reflections recalled from both the writing process and critical moments have been displayed to shed a deeper light onto a teacher researcher's experience. The subjectivity and

specificity of this view, however, has triggered a debate concerning what can be defined as 'acceptable' research.

c) Criticisms of Autoethnography

Despite its perceived benefits, those who value traditional standards of validity (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997) have questioned autoethnography's subjectivity. Autoethnography's focus on one individual's perspective has also been criticized for being too self-indulgent and narcissistic (Holt, 2003). Others have argued that the presence of the researcher's voice challenges the traditional ideals of silent authorship, because distance and objectivity is no longer maintained (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997). Holt (2003) also writes about the general mistrust of the 'self' in academia and of its association to inaccuracy and fallibility.

However, such traditional standards for assessing validity are increasingly criticized as being too reductive to account for the implicitness of human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Such rigid measures of objectivity are also claimed to overlook the marginalized voices within the research field (Tierney, 1998). Lastly, since human beings do not live in isolation from each other, it is argued that traditional notions should be relayed together with one's personal reflections. These discussions on the legitimacy of autoethnographies have led individuals to construct a different set of criteria. They are summarized in the Table 2.1 below.

Table 2. 1 Five factors to review personal narrative papers (Revised version: Includes analysis of both evaluative and constructive validity techniques within journal articles, not doctoral theses, though applicable to both). Richardson (2000, p. 15-16)

	Revised Criteria for Assessing a Study’s validity
(a) Substantive contribution.	Does the piece contribute to our understanding of social life?
(b) Aesthetic merit.	Does this piece succeed aesthetically? Is the text artistically shaped, satisfyingly complex, and not boring?
(c) Reflexivity.	How did the author come to write this text? How has the author’s subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text?
(d) Impact	Does this affect me emotionally and/or intellectually? Does it generate new questions or move me to action?
(e) Expresses a reality.	Does this text embody a fleshed out sense of lived experience? Autoethnographic manuscripts might include dramatic recall, unusual phrasing, and strong metaphors to invite the reader to ‘relive’ events with the author.

Despite concerns whether a ‘good story’ could ever be validated as being ‘scholarship,’ Holt affirms that we must hold firm in protecting these implicit forms of ‘truth’ (2003).

The section below describes the rationale for narratives in the current study. It explains why narratives are an appropriate method to convey holistic forms of knowing, and briefly highlights their ability to capture the full complexity and richness of life. It further explains how narratives can evoke strong emotional responses that trigger changes in behavior, which allow individuals

to form connections within their own self and with others. These factors are shown to enable empowerment and healing, by helping us to reflect upon and recover our own voices. The following section thus describes how narratives are incorporated in the current study and finally concludes with discussions concerning their validity.

How Narratives were Constructed in the Current Study

The current narratives were generated through reflective journals written by myself and my students, as well as the interviews I had conducted with my students and colleagues. From rereading previous journal entries and interview notes, I developed pieces of writing that contained a critical incident or a deeper underlying theme. Since I believed that such writing contained an unresolved message, I continued to reflect on them until a broader picture could form. Such entries would keep surfacing due to their stronger emotional component, even despite the passing time. So as I read these entries, I could vividly relive the ‘encounters’ they contained. Alternatively, many narratives were abandoned during the process of writing, as I felt they were too weak to convey my experiences fully. Other narratives were joined together, as they contained similar resonating ideas. Further narratives would spring up from the process of writing itself, such as the first and the last two stories of my ‘Findings.’ These stories emerged through the new struggles that rose in the study.

Overall, the current narratives continued to grow until the final stages of writing, as each time I revisited them, a new insight would emerge. Since these stories underwent various alterations depending on my current frame of mind, I was afraid that there would be no consistency or coherence amongst them. After completing my key eight narratives, however, I could perceive a

pattern that reflected the journey I had taken as a teacher researcher. These narratives are presented as my 'Findings.'

Definition of Narrative

Narratives are perceived to capture the more mysterious qualities of life, by embodying the spiritual modes of expression, such as symbols, metaphors and myths (Tacey, 2003). These three aspects are regarded as the imaginative and instinctive modes of knowing used to tune into the raw essence of the other (Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993, p. 128). Accordingly, symbols, metaphors and myths are construed as expressions of the mysterious and universal elements of life. These qualities were also critical for expressing the intuitive ideas within the current study.

a) The expression of Holism

Firstly, narratives are demonstrated to express holism through the tools of symbols, metaphors and myths.

i) Symbols

Symbols have often been used to look beyond the literal and concrete, to the invisible activity in the natural world (Tacey, 2003). Due to its lack of a concrete form, this invisible undercurrent is believed to manifest via our imagination through symbols and images. The simple word descriptions of symbols are thus shown to carry a depth of meaning that conveys the creative, mysterious and 'un-knowable' revelations of our imagination (Tacey, 2003, p. 158). Such symbols have been used to represent various implicit themes conveyed in the 'Findings.' For instance, through writing my narratives, I came to realize how certain characters and events came

to symbolize deeper themes, such as failure, guilt, forgiveness and redemption.

ii) Metaphor

Metaphors may similarly express the raw experiences of the other commonly felt through our senses (Altrichter et al., 1993, p. 128). Like symbols, metaphors are believed to generate new meanings and deeper insights, by providing multiple perspectives of the other (Altrichter et al., 1993). For instance, it is shown to reveal a profound and hidden 'truth' by drawing simple connections between two seemingly unrelated aspects (Altrichter et al., 1993). Aside from the generation of new and universal understandings, metaphors are also shown to convey the full richness of life, by providing a substantial amount of meaning through simple descriptions. Hence, metaphors are also incorporated to shed a deeper light on the characters and events recorded.

iii) Myth

Myths have similarly been interpreted as an expression of the spiritual world, which includes accounts that return to the origin of being. The world is depicted here as a mythic and sacred place that centres on its 'Creator' (Baeton, 1996, p. 122). In mythology, reality is organized according to raw archaic terms, which focus on the inherent sacredness of life (Tacey, 2003). Tacey (2003, p. 165) also extends this description by stating that myths convey a sacred vision that embodies God's presence:

. . . a double visibility, which allows one to see the sacred reality behind the daily events, the 'echo or shadow of the real', that supports, gives life and meaning to events and actions. . . which recognizes the mysterious presence of the living God within life.

Since the nature of reality is perceived as being too fantastic to pin down on a concrete level, myths are regarded as one of the purest means to articulate spiritual truths concerning human existence. Likewise, the current narratives also convey symbols and metaphors that refer to universal and ‘mythic’ themes. Through various depictions of characters and events, I have hoped to express key themes concerning the mysterious essence of the human encounter.

b) The Universality and Holism of Narrative

Narratives have thereby been regarded as one of the most instinctive means of making sense of the world, by mirroring the innate human tendency to draw connections between seemingly discrete and isolated entities. Being the most primary mechanism for conveying and organizing our understanding, narratives are also shown to accommodate humankind’s desire for meaning.

Coles (1989, p. 189) expresses this fundamental instinct to make sense of the world:

. . . going back, way back, to the earliest of times, when men and women and children looked at one another, at the land, at the sky, at rivers and oceans, all mountains and deserts, at animals and plants, and wondered as it is in our nature to do: what is all this that I hear and see unfolding before me.

Narratives are thus paralleled to human schema in its use of imagery and the tendency to organize experiences through time sequence. The current study was similarly undertaken to investigate what it means to know the other from our core sense of being. It asserts that these desires for understanding are a natural expression of our human identity.

The Rationale for Narratives

Narratives can thereby help in researching experience due to its similarities to human nature. It is argued to fulfill our innate desire for coherence, symbolic expression and moral integrity, as well

as evoking transformative actions and healing relationships within oneself and with others. Hence, Barabara's Hardy's view of narrative as the ' . . . primary act of mind transferred to art from life,' (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977, p.12) is also evident in the current study, in which narratives are depicted as an expression of how we process our world.

a) Fulfillment of Human nature

Firstly, narratives are demonstrated to embody the similar desires for symbols, unity and authenticity as that within our human condition.

i) As Symbol Using Creatures

Human beings have often been regarded as symbol-using animals in their innate capacity to think metaphorically (Eisner, 1997). This instinctive tendency to use images to process the world is expressed by Clandinin and Connelly (1988), who propose that our memories consist of images that help us make sense of the past, present and future. They illustrate how we are able to recall these past impressions with greater strength and clarity, as they are imprinted onto our minds through our sense of 'touch,' 'taste' and 'smell.' The stories of the 'Findings' similarly contain details derived from the small but vivid traces of encounters left on my senses.

ii) Desire for Coherence

The universality of story telling may also assume that human beings have a predisposition to organize their experiences in narrative form (Bruner, 1990). Human beings can be perceived as pattern makers, who make sense of their life by gathering their experiences into larger and more meaningful units (Neill, 1994). Polkinghorne describes how 'narrative configuration' is an

instinctive means of interpreting actions through a “drawing together [of] entities,” in which the relationships between seemingly isolated aspects are unveiled (1988, p. 36). Individual elements are thus shown to become comprehensible, by being identified within an overall pattern.

Polkinghorne (1995, p. 5) also describes narratives to be the most appropriate ‘linguistic form’ for situating human interactions within a context. Such contextualization is demonstrated to create a more comprehensible view of reality, by capturing the uniqueness, complexity and richness of life. Similarly, without describing the context from which the other arose, I felt that I could not clearly convey these current encounters.

Bruner similarly elaborates on humanity’s innate readiness for narrative, poetically describing it as the, “. . . art hidden in the human soul . . .” (1990, p. 15). He thereby describes life to be artistic through these attempts to create a meaningful and convincing life story. Polkinghorne (1988) further depicts narratives to be the primary means to make human existence meaningful, in its ability to place particular actions and moments within a scheme of events. He argues that this tendency to join each separate day of living into ‘episodic units,’ attributes individuals with the purposefulness of achieving set goals. Such attempts at coherence are shown to highlight how humans seek meaningful engagements with their world. Clandinin and Connelly (2002, p. 145) reiterate this all inclusive and pervasive nature of narrative, by depicting people as, “. . . living storied lives on storied landscapes. . .” Accordingly, an individual’s life may reveal how they perceive, process and express their understanding of the world.

Witherall and Noddings (1991) introduce this parallel between narrative and life, suggesting how most people relate their experiences through a story, as its inherently sequential nature conveys

the holistic nature of reality (Bruner, 1990; 43). Likewise, Clandinin & Connelly (2002, p. 70) propose how the connective and sequential patterns of a narrative's structure forms a three-dimensional time space, in which the storyteller moves through from the past, present, future. This continuous flow and movement is likened to the open-ended and ambiguous nature of living life (Bochner, 2000). Being able to look back onto one's past by writing stories is thereby shown to help individuals make sense of their experiences holistically (Bochner, 2000).

Additionally, narratives may generate future paths for inquiry, as the act of reflecting upon one's life offers up other alternative points of view (Clandinin & Connelly, 2002). Narratives are thus perceived as a chief means of translating knowing into an act of 'telling,' as it expresses the richness and holism of our thoughts. Life and narrative may also be complementary in that life both 'anticipates' and 'draws meaning' from it (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.745). Moreover, narratives are believed to correspond to life, as Hardy explains how even our relationships are based on an exchange of stories, stating, '(Narratives) creates, maintains and transforms our relationships; we come to know each other by telling, untelling, believing and disbelieving stories about each other. . .' (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977, p.13).

iii) Need for Authenticity and Authority

Telling one's own story relates to the issue of authorship, where individuals generate meaning through a sense of coherence (Bochner & Ellis, 2002, p. 746). Coherence is achieved as the separate events in one's life are joined together through the storying and re-storying process. Deriving meaning by forming a sense of continuity has thus been regarded as a responsibility to live a meaningful rather than a thoughtless existence (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.746). Personal

narrative is described to be one such form of 'moral work' that helps individuals to, ". . . live a meaningful, useful and ethical life" (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.747). Likewise, developing a sense of ownership over my own experiences has been a strong highlight of the current study.

b) Capturing the 'Truth'

Narratives are also shown to capture the 'truths' of a situation, by helping us to look beyond our agendas and preconceptions, though this notion of 'truth' is interpreted differently depending on the research tradition. It is believed to reveal any hidden layers within our knowing, such as the meaning making process.

i) 'Seeing' Instead of 'Beholding'

It is asserted that less interference from one's preconceptions helps us perceive a circumstance as it is presented, rather than as it is conceived. This notion of facilitating a clearer understanding is reinforced by the advice from a senior doctor, Dr Ludwig, who encouraged other practitioners to listen to their patients stories with, ". . . [a] minimum amount of conceptual static in [their] head," to derive a more accurate and genuine understanding of any illnesses (Coles, 1989, p. 19). The word 'static' suggests how self-narratives and other forms of technical knowledge may distract us from the 'truth.' Dr Ludwig similarly introduces the Greek root, 'theamai,' to refer to, "something visual in our minds," highlighting the importance of perceiving what is present, rather than any preconceived formulae or mental conceptualization (Coles, 1989, p. 20). The word 'theory' is thus shown to signify an, 'enlargement of (our) observation,' rather than a 'complex [form of] theorizing' (p.20).

Individuals are therefore required to listen to others' stories with an open heart rather than through personal agendas or presuppositions. Coles (1989, p. 18) speaks of the 'moral thoughtlessness' of psychiatrists who, through their ownership of professional power and vocabulary, ". . . are intent on 'getting a fix' on (patients): make a diagnosis; ascertain what 'factors' or 'variables' have been at work; decide upon a therapeutic agenda." This lack of moral consideration is equated to a form of dehumanization, as individuals are perceived as problems to solve rather than people to listen to. Such moral receptiveness is believed to be lost to those who are incapable of looking beyond their own limiting conceptions, as they are in a rush to find an answer. Moral responsibility is thus shown to underscore respectful listening, where individuals are receptive enough to accept the 'truth' of a story, without trying to change or modify it. Since the current stories were constructed through my own perspective, I similarly found myself listening out for ideas that validated my views.

Mental conceptualization felt like the common if not inevitable burden of being a teacher researcher. Here I needed a prior knowledge of the broader literature to build an 'informed' opinion, but I also required a sense of openness within my awareness of previous research. The notion of 'active listening' became significant at this point, by indicating how prior knowledge could facilitate greater connections and insights rather than fossilizing my understanding. Valuing and respecting the 'truth' of the other has accordingly been regarded as a moral responsibility entrusted to all individuals.

ii) Perceiving the Complex and the Hidden Aspects of Life

This ability to 'behold' instead of 'theorize,' may also help individuals catch details often

overlooked, ". . . (the) messages omitted, yarns gone untold, details brushed aside altogether" (Coles, 1989, p. 21). The inherent indirectness of the story form is shown to encompass the complexity of life, such as the intricate story lines, multifaceted characters and ambiguous moments. Bridges (1999, p. 12) relates how narratives can draw connections between seemingly unrelated entities, stating, ". . . [stories have] a capacity to convey the ambiguities, complexities and the ironic relationships that exist between multiple viewpoints." I also felt that the rewriting process helped clear away any mental or emotional static clouding my experiences.

iii) Observing the Meaning Making Process

Despite its invisibility, the cognitive process can be seen in the story form (Polkinghorne, 1988). Husu (2003) describes how individuals are often unable to fully observe and understand the meaning-making process, as they are too preoccupied with attending to their thoughts, rather than their mode of knowing. Stories, however, are also asserted to reveal how the teller and the listener construct and reconstruct meaning in their lives. Unveiling the meaning-making process may reveal the stories hidden within one's cognitive processes. Coles cites the advice of Dr Ludwig to express how stories can be found hiding in, ". . . the way we look at our lives, which matters we chose to emphasize, which details we considered important, the imagery we used as we made our interpretations" (1989; 18). He concludes that valuable 'truths' may be discovered as, in addition to the simple act of listening, individuals may attend to how they participate in the listening act. Subsequently, it is asserted that the information one chooses to listen to and one's methods of expression reveal how an individual constructs meaning.

Ellis and Bochner thus conclude that life is a process to be lived, rather than an idea to be

conceptualized, stating, ". . . the narrative text refuses the impulse to abstract and explain, stressing the journey over the destination, and thus eclipses the scientific illusion of control and mastery" (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.744). Feeling the tediousness of separating myself from my experiences, I similarly desired the simplicity and genuineness of merging into both the writing act and the experience itself.

c) Narrative as a Means of Evoking a Response

Most importantly, narratives are shown to transform our understanding of life and the way we live, by making a strong impact on our emotions.

i) Pauses formed via Emotional Intensity and Gaps in Meaning

Stories are also shown to evoke emotionally intense responses, when relating directly to core human issues. Speaking deeply from one's core is believed to require vulnerability, which Ellis and Bochner describe, stating, "If you let yourself be vulnerable, then your readers are more likely to respond vulnerably, and that is what you want, a vulnerable reader, to take the reader by the throat, break her heart, and to heal it again" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). Strong emotional parallels between a story and a reader's experiences may help readers reflect on their lives, by momentarily separating them from their existence. Coles (1989, p. 57) describes how the powerful words of a gifted author, Tillie Olsen, triggered such a 'pause' in his students. The ability to create pauses was also relevant to the current study, as I hoped to enable readers to reflect in the midst of their busy lives.

Narratives are also regarded to make a powerful impact on a person, as listeners may need to fill

in gaps to interpret a story's indirect messages. Consequently, individuals may have to respond actively to a story's telling to process what they hear. This may lead to multiple interpretations, as each individual makes sense of a story through their own unique perspective. Listening can accordingly be regarded as a dialogue between a listener's own understanding of a story and a story's revelation of itself. The messages within the story may then leave a more lasting impression; as listeners are able to place themselves in the 'other's' position.

ii) The Moral Dimension of a Response

Since stories convey their messages indirectly, the very act of interpretation can be construed as an act of judgment. In particular, stories involving judgments of 'right' and 'wrong' are claimed to evoke such moral responses. Accordingly, the decision to remain as a passive bystander has been criticized as moral negligence. Morality is also perceived to be demonstrated on the part of the storytellers, who write compelling narratives that contain ethical lessons. Stories written from this emotional, moral and spiritual core are believed to provoke a similar language of intensity and depth from their listeners. I similarly felt that the validation or the lack of connection experienced by readers would reflect a similar absence or presence of moral engagement with the injustice depicted in my stories.

iii) 'Living Out' the 'Truth' and Understanding it

Aside from the ability to perceive the hidden 'truths' of life, narratives are also regarded as a means to live. Dr Ludwig likens the process of living to a developing story, stressing how the focus should be placed on an unfolding life, rather than the diagnosis (Cole, 1989, p. 29).

Accordingly, by telling and retelling stories to oneself and others, individuals may be able to

make a better sense of their experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2002). Dr Ludwig further points out how we are morally responsible to respect any stories told, since our stories are the most valuable companion in our life journey, ". . . Their (the patients') story, yours, mine- its' what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (Coles, 1989, p. 30).

Ultimately, the strength of narrative is perceived in how they spur individuals into action. Ellis and Bochner introduce the power of an active response, stating, ". . . The crucial issues are what narratives do, what consequences they have, to what uses they can be put . . ." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002, p. 745). Coles (1989, p. 47) further quotes a favourite English professor, stating, ". . . there are many interpretations to a good story, and it isn't a question of which one is right and wrong but of what you do with what you read," to explain how moral responsibility implies positive changes action. Accordingly, narratives are argued to motivate both inward and outward changes in oneself and the world beyond. As stated in the 'Findings,' the final purpose of my narratives also lay in its ability to affect a reader's life.

d) Narrative as a Means for Relationships and Community

Narratives may also form powerful relationships within the teller of the story, and between the teller and listener.

i) Between the Reader and the Author

Since stories are jointly constructed between the teller and the told, they are often conceived as being relational (Bruner, 1990). The role of the listener is also attributed with importance as they

enhance a texts' 'accessibility' and the 'readability,' both of which can hook readers into the meaning-making process (Bochner & Ellis, 2002). Nye (1997) further explains how the listener takes on an active role through the storyteller's skill of evoking compassion. Richardson similarly describes how the writer draws readers into the act of creating meaning, by engaging them on all levels, that is, ". . . morally, emotionally, aesthetically and intellectually" (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.745). The listener is then shown to actively unravel meaning, as they look for parallels between a story and their own lives. They are also asked to affirm the 'truth' within a story by acknowledging any parallels perceived.

This contribution from the listener is shown to establish a relationship of grace, as they acknowledge the teller's experiences through their response (Nye, 1997). This relationship is also perceived to be based on dialogue between the listener and the teller (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.18). Narratives have thus been regarded as invitations for a relationship between the writer and reader, who can become companions through the bonds of shared experience (Bochner & Ellis, 2002). Validation from my readers was also invaluable in helping me to navigate through my own teaching and learning journey.

ii) Within One's own Selfhood

Additionally, narratives can facilitate connections within one's own selfhood, as individuals find parallels between certain stories and their own lives (Eisner, 1997). Kaye and Jacobson (1999) define the metaphors within stories as a kind of shorthand that allows individuals to have a clearer understanding of their lives. This outsider viewpoint may enable them to recognize any hidden biases, which Ellis and Bochner (2002, p. 748) describe as the ability to, ". . . expose [the]

vulnerabilities, conflicts, uncertainties, choices and values," inherent to our viewpoints. The ability to perceive the 'truths' retained in stories may thereby enhance one's insightfulness and level of empowerment. For the current study, the writing and rewriting process also revealed the deeper fears motivating my actions, which then gave me the hope of improving my practices.

e) Narrative as a Form of Empowerment and Healing

These relationships formed between oneself and others are shown to facilitate healing within all participants, as individuals recover their sense of wholeness and 'presence'.

i) Self-Healing Through the Recovery of Voice

Narratives may accordingly be a powerful form of personal discourse used for reflecting upon and uncovering one's own unique voice. Bahktin (1981) elaborates on how narratives can help individuals distinguish one's own thoughts and feelings, by allowing them to differentiate themselves from others (Witherall and Noddings, 1991, p. 183). This ability to discern one's own voice is believed to evoke greater responsibility over one's feelings, thoughts and actions.

Witherall and Noddings (1991) further introduce how authority can be facilitated through authorship, as the presence of the writer's own voice adds to a narrative's authenticity. Clandinin and Connelly (2002, p. 78) similarly attribute self-empowerment to 'critical presence,' asserting that individuals can lead fuller lives by reflecting on how they 'author' their own experiences. This critical perspective is argued to open up new possibilities, in which certain boundaries of perception are broken down (Clandinin & Connelly, 2002, p. 89).

ii) Self Healing through Reconstructing one's Life

Narrative method may also help individuals reconstruct their lives via stories (Nye, 1997). Nye (1997) explains how the act of reconstructing one's life helps people fight against similarly painful adversities in the future, by allowing them to deal with their past. For example, Coles describes a patient who confronted his illness through fiction, relating how, ". . . (fiction allowed him to) . . . explore, by indirection, aspects of his own world- (aspects that otherwise) by reason of 'fear and trembling' [they] found to be off limits" (1989, p. 31). Displaying past hurts and wrongs may then help individuals live harmoniously in the present, by freeing them from the vicious cycle of guilt and pain. Stories have thereby been used to fight against adversity, by helping individuals take responsibility for the past (Frank, 1995, p. 132).

A well-written narrative may also enhance our imaginative faculties, by allowing us to perceive any patterns of interrelatedness. Eisner (1997, p. 31) expresses how, "Narrative, when well crafted, is a spur to imagination, and through our imaginative participation in the worlds that we create, we have a platform for seeing what might be called our 'actual worlds' more clearly." He also suggests that stories mutually enhance both the teller and listener's sensitivity to the 'other,' stating, ". . . when narrative is well crafted, empathic forms of understanding are advanced." Empathy is therefore perceived to facilitate both the telling and listening of stories, by allowing individuals to tune into the 'other's' voice. This was initially a difficult factor to grasp, but I was able to perceive potential stories in my encounters through the narrative writing process.

iii) Self Healing through the Act of Healing Others

Frank (1995) additionally highlights how the shared experience of weakness could trigger a

healing process that may eventually allow even the ill to become healers. He explains how the act of telling stories about one's own illness may allow individuals to witness to the conditions that strip others of their voice. Frank (1995, p. 132) concludes how the storyteller engages in an 'ethic of solidarity and commitment,' as they speak 'with' and not 'for' fellow sufferers. Individuals may hence be able to regain control over their weakness by using it to heal others.

iv) Healing Others via Listening

Finally, individuals may be receptive to the experiences of another by emptying themselves to a state of silence. Charon (2005) describes how, "This imaginative, active, receptive, aesthetic experience of donating the self toward the meaning-making of the other is a dramatic, daring, transformative move." He asserts that listening is fundamental to the healing profession, as a listener can validate a 'teller's' words through it, stating, "Attention may be the most urgent goal in our work--to attend gravely, silently, absorbing oceanically that which the other says, connotes, displays, performs, and means" (Charon, 2005, p. 39). Consequently, a listener's openness and show of concern is perceived to trigger the natural healing process in the teller. Overall, having little time to listen to my 'voice' and the painful lack of continuum amongst my experiences was a strong motivator to write. So I hoped that by expressing and fulfilling this deep yearning within me, a similar desire for reflection could be triggered in others. Despite its strengths, however, narratives have often been criticized for not fulfilling more traditional standards of validity. Therefore, a need for new measures for assessing the validity of qualitative research has been suggested.

Narrative and Validity

Despite criticisms that narratives are too subjective to be an inaccurate research method, their advantages lie in their ability to convey the interrelatedness of a particular study, as well as generate other lines of inquiry. Therefore, instead of simply criticizing narrative's lack of traditional verifiability, it is asserted alternative measures for validating narrative methodology must be provided.

a) Criticisms of Narratives as a valid Research Methodology

Since the experiences that construct narratives are often indeterminate and incomplete, narratives themselves have been criticized for not being verifiable on an analytic level (Bochner & Ellis, 2002, p. 745). Atkinson (1997, as cited in Bochner & Ellis, 2002) further claims that personal narratives may distort reality by being overly subjective. He introduces the term 'romantic constructions of self' to express how such heroic representations of 'self' may lack a sense of accuracy (p.745). Subjectivity is thereby regarded as being potentially dangerous, when it transforms research into a 'therapeutic' rather than an 'analytic' experience. Lastly, the fallibility of one's memory is shown to reduce narratives' credibility as a reliable source of data. This factor is elaborated upon further in the 'Discussion.'

b) In Defense of Narratives

Researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) have therefore come to narrative's defense, by criticizing the two key aspects of traditional research methodology, 'neutrality' and 'consistency.' The principle of 'neutrality' is claimed to be an inadequate standard of

measurement, for artificially separating a person's values from their inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The idea of having an entirely objective approach to research has also been questioned, due to the inherent bias of human interpretation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have further criticized the linear views of causality within traditionalist models of inquiry for presenting a limited view of reality. They believe that solely aiming for 'consistency' is naïve and inaccurate, as it fails to take into account the complex, implicit and mysterious nature of life. Eisner (1997, p. 265) thus concludes that conventional forms of research often misrepresent phenomena due to their tendency to constrain data. Accordingly, it is suggested that a more flexible range of research method is needed.

Narratives are thus regarded to defy traditional standards of validity, by situating and relating facts to each other. They are shown to depict knowledge, not as isolated facts, but as interrelated and connected phenomena (Golomolek & Johnson, 2004). Golomolek and Johnson (2004, p. 24) illustrates how narrative conveys 'truth' holistically, stating, "Thus, narratives are holistic and cannot be reduced to isolated facts without losing the truth that is being conveyed." They highlight how seemingly isolated moments can derive meaning when connected to the whole. Clandinin and Connelly (2002, p. 145) also express this idea of a continuous and sequential reality, by describing how narratives have, ". . . not so much to say that people, places, things are this way or that way- but they have a narrative history and are moving forward. . ." Certain 'truths' of life are therefore claimed to elude analytical research methods of gathering and registering facts.

Bochner (2000) also reflects upon the interpretive nature of narrative, by describing how it

depicts meaning in both a personal and literal sense. Polkinghorne (1988, p. 45) further asserts that narratives' inherently aim for verisimilitude, ". . . (the) appearance of reality and truth-likeness," rather than an exact representation of events. Verisimilitude is perceived to be a more holistic measurement, as it acknowledges the inherently multifaceted and ambiguous nature of human experience (Polkinghorne, 1988). Bochner and Ellis (2002, p. 745) similarly relate how narratives seek to present the 'likeness' of truth rather than objective facts. They explain that, ". . . a story is not a neutral attempt to mirror the facts of one's life; [nor is it a means to] recover already constituted meanings," but rather creates the effects of 'life-like [ness]' and 'believability' (Bochner and Ellis, 2002, p. 745).

Since narratives involve a general depiction of 'truths' rather than verifiable facts, they are regarded to encourage various lines of thinking that generate further research. This inquiry base of narrative is conveyed through Ellis and Bochner's (2002, p. 749) statement, "(Evocative stories) long to be used rather than analyzed; to be told and retold rather than theorized and settled; to offer lessons for further conversation rather than non-debatable conclusions; and to substitute the companionship of intimate detail for the loneliness of abstracted facts."

Accordingly, narratives can relay one's experiences and generate further lines of conversation, as opposed to merely presenting analytical and measurable facts.

Bochner and Ellis (2002) also outline how narratives promote further dialogue between the writer and the readers. They relate how narratives can be, ". . . used as an agent of self-understanding and ethical discussion," as it helps both the readers and writers seek better forms of conversation even amongst seemingly irreconcilable issues (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. 748).

This ability to embrace difficult discussions may then enhance compassion, by positioning individuals empathetically in another's world. Consequently, it is suggested that narratives should be judged on how they can enhance compassion and hence improve the lives of the participating individuals. Likewise, Bochner and Ellis (2002, p. 751) illustrate how the objectives of narrative are different from traditional research methods, by being orientated around questions such as, "What kind of person does it shape me into? and What new possibilities does it introduce for living my life?"

Stories may also reveal how meaning is constructed based on one's current environment and state of mind. Bochner and Ellis (2002, p. 745) convey how, "Stories show us that the meaning and significance of the past is incomplete, tentative and revisable according to contingencies of our present life circumstances, the present from which we narrate." They thus illustrate how constructing narratives are active pursuits of meaning, rather than efforts to acquire an exact and static representation of facts. Lastly, the free flowing and open structure of narratives is shown to strengthen its imaginative and poetic power of expression. All of these ideas were relevant for the current study, as I believed that I could perceive greater richness in my daily encounters by understanding the depths of the knowing process.

c) An Alternative View of Validity

Instead of the traditionalist mode of assessing the validity of qualitative research methods, Mulholland and Wallace (2003) have presented three different principles. The first of these principles include the integrity of the research process, where trustworthiness is determined by whether the research process can be corroborated by other sources (Mulholland & Wallace,

2003).

Methods to corroborate one's findings	Application to the current study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considerable time spent in the field - Use of multiple data sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three and a half years - My own narratives / journal writing - Teacher and student interviews - Student journal writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretations subject to outsider audit - Participants sharing in the interpretive process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion with other teachers concerning teaching principles and the narratives written for the current study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of the researcher's voice - Documentation of researcher's subjectivity - Discussions about the limitations of a study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of my voice in the narratives and journal writing recorded in the 'Findings' - Documentation of study's subjectivity and limitations in the 'Discussion'

Table 3: Aspects to support a research method (Mulholland and Wallace, 2003, p. 51)

The second principle presented by Mulholland and Wallace (2003) concerns the reader's response. Readers are shown to validate and legitimize any claims, by matching them up against their own personal experiences. The researcher may help readers in these endeavors by thoroughly describing the study's intentions and purposes, whilst also depicting how it progressed in its particular context (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988). Accordingly, it is asserted that researchers need to present a particular research situation from a participants' view.

A third principle is whether a particular study can open up future lines of inquiry. Mulholland & Wallace (2003: 45) elaborates on how researchers need to assist others in constructing their knowledge base, by enabling readers to perceive parallels between a study and their own lives. This criterion has been explained through the discussion on autoethnography.

Narrative in Teaching

Narratives are similarly shown to help teachers form connections in their lives, by enabling them to make their practical experience into a more tangible form.

a) Both Teaching and Stories as Being Experiential Based

The teaching process has often been regarded as the continuous process of living out and telling stories (Elbaz- Luwisch, 2002). Maclean (1993) relates how narratives can encompass all the implicitness and the complexities of human interaction, and hence capture the experiential based nature of teaching. He therefore asserts that less traditional and fixed modes of measurement, such as narratives, can better evaluate any paradox and uncertainty involved (Maclean, 1993). Eisner summarizes this view, stating, "To the extent that experience itself can be conceived of as a primary medium of education, stories are among the most useful means for sharing what one has experienced" (1997, p. 39). Stories are thereby conceived as an authentic way to investigate the teaching process, by embodying a similarly implicit and experiential form of understanding.

b) Narratives Helping Teachers to Make a Connection in Their Lives

A part of a teacher's knowledge base may hence be formed by stories of practical experiences derived from the teaching field. Accordingly, stories can be used to organize and articulate one's practical knowledge, as teachers tell and retell what they know through narratives. As a result, narratives may help teachers perceive parallel story lines that enable greater understanding of both their personal and professional lives, (Golomolek & Johnson, 2004). Writing stories may also create a mediational space, in which teachers can acquire greater self-awareness by

negotiating their roles (Golombek and Johnson, 2004). For example, stories are believed to create a temporary other, with which teachers can enter into reflective dialogue. Teachers may thus be more competent in handling the constant mediation between personal values and external commitments from administrators, parents and the public (Elbaz- Luwisch, 2002). They may also be able to find their own voice as developing professionals in the midst of multiple pressures. Lastly, since the current research displays one teacher's researcher's exploration of her practices, the case study methodology is included.

Case Study

Case study is asserted to be a self-empowering methodology that develops teacher autonomy and professionalism (Burgess, 1985). This notion of teacher professionalism is evident in Stenhouse's view of comprehensive educational research, which indicates how case studies can empower teachers by allowing them to investigate their own teaching practices (Burgess, 1985).

a) Rationale for the use of Case Study

Case study is shown to provide a richly descriptive and person centred view, as it focuses on a single rather than multiple cases. It assumes that inquiry should extend beyond a simple pursuit of technical knowledge to embody human centred principles, since it involves the social world (Burgess, 1985). Case study is thus regarded as a person centred research methodology, as it represents the unique case of a participating individual. Likewise, case study is often acknowledged as a methodology that conveys a rich and insightful account of the research environment (Burns, 1998). Case study is accordingly included in the current study to present the narratives from the teacher researcher, students and other teacher participants.

b) Case Study Methodology

Overall, a case study is perceived as a formal collection of evidence defined within an individual case (James, 1996). Jaeger (1988) explains how these individual segments construct a ‘bounded system,’ where each element is joined to form a particular ‘case.’ Likewise, case study methodology is used in the current research to understand the ‘isolated’ moments that formed my teaching journey. Stories of the teaching and learning process are then relayed both deeply and evocatively to convey the fullness of this particular research context. Case study is similarly portrayed as being ‘process’ as well as ‘product’ orientated, as it focuses on ‘depth’ rather than the ‘breadth’ of coverage (James, 1996).

c) The Problem of Reliability and Validity

Similar to narratives, case study’s strengths have also evoked criticism because of its lack of scientific generalization (Burns, 1998). The personal views held by the researcher are then shown to influence the direction of the findings and hence diminish its level of rigor (Burns, 1998). Burns depicts such a situation, stating, “. . . methodological rigor appears slight, writings reveal more literary than reliable valid explanation” (p. 34). Burns also claims that this methodology may lack the thoroughness needed to validify one’s research, as it focuses on a artistic, rather than a logical depiction of events (Burns, 1998).

However, similar to narratives, case studies are not shown to generalize or explain a phenomenon in a causative sense (Yin, 1994). Instead, case studies aim to describe and portray a particular phenomenon or event (Yin, 1994). Moreover, it is believed that these problems of

validity can partly be addressed using triangulation (Yin, 1994). Such multiple sources of evidence and converging lines of inquiry are perceived to lessen potential problems of validity and reliability, as different sources of evidence are used to provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Yin, 1994). For this reason, both journals and narratives are included in the current study. Excerpts from these journals are included in the following chapter.

How Journals were Included in the Current Study

My journal writing together with those from participating students has been an important source of data. My entries contain reflections that were recorded from 2002 to 2007, whilst I was conducting and writing up the current study. The student journals were also collated within this period. (See excerpt in Appendix 3.1 and 3.2.) The participating students were from my higher-level Advanced Composition class students from 2002 to 2006. Ethics approval to include student journals was received. (See Appendix 3.3)

My own journal writing was used to both construct my stories, as well as to reflect on my teaching practices. I would set aside time each week before and after classes to reflect on certain students or lessons, and would often record various critical incidents or memorable conversations with students and colleagues. At other times I would just write to unleash my personal frustration or to clarify a certain issue. These entries would be recorded periodically throughout the week and would be revisited after a day, week, month or even a year for further reflection.

Since I felt that journals provided a safe place to freely experiment with ideas, I would use them to practice my skill of creatively depicting experience. These chances to both experiment with

and revise my writing were also crucial to develop my proficiency as a writer. Furthermore, my understanding of events would deepen through the writing process, as I could reflect on these instances from an alternative point of view. After multiple reflections, certain journal entries would evolve whilst others would be abandoned completely or grouped together with others.

Furthermore, I would highlight certain significant reflections students made concerning their learning progress in their journals and would then reflect on such passages in my own writing. If a particular reflection contained themes that validated a previous journal entry, I would build it into that existing entry. Later, I would also revisit this piece of writing to draw out further possible meanings. The story, 'Acceptance,' 'The Teaching Journey,' 'Hannah' and 'Hamen' were examples of such writing.

I would also group certain student entries under 'headings,' such as the challenges experienced in learning, the joys of discovery and self-initiated improvement. Using these headings, I would write a general reflection based on key issues in my experiences. 'The Teaching Journey,' was an example of one story that was generated spontaneously out of the commonalities found within student responses.

Benefits of the Journal Method

Overall, journals have been incorporated as the initial means to capture the insights involved, whilst narratives have been used to display my findings. I chose journal writing as it embodied the flexibility of form needed to convey my intuitions, as well as the distance needed to deeply self-reflect on my experiences.

a) The Freedom of Journal Writing

Journals are regarded as a suitable means for recording one's natural flow of thoughts, due to the flexibility of its form (Burniske, 1994). Being a personal and private form of writing, it is perceived to have less inhibitors, such as the fear of failure or the need to conform (Burniske, 1994). Rainer (1980, p. 2) similarly describes how it can follow the free flowing form of human consciousness due to its private nature, as we can be free to express our deepest and rawest thoughts since we are no longer fixated on the formal rules of content or style.

b) The Beneficial Distance in Journals

The act of writing is also shown to create a distance between the writer's thoughts and selfhood, by freezing the former as a written record (Holly, 1997). This separation is believed to be important, considering the general disorganization of our thoughts (Rainer, 1980). Consequently, it is argued that we can better perceive our experiences by reformulating them into written words (Holly, 1997). Beasley (1981) comments on this transformation, stating,

. . . the gap between the transmission and reception of written language allows time for the writer to wrestle with their thoughts, rework formulation, projection and [hence lead to] the transformation of experience(p. 27).

Increase in objectivity is also shown to enhance awareness of one's subconscious understanding (Rainer, 1980). Rainer describes this view, stating:

The act of writing removes the unconscious, the unknowable or the inside purpose, to actions and events. It allows the writer the opportunity to examine his/her motivation in action and the influences, both internal and external (pg. 177).

Van Manen (1997) further elaborates on how writing decontextualizes our thoughts from the present time, in order for us to perceive our current 'lived experience' with greater objectivity (Van Manen, 1997).

Subsequently, journal writing is believed to help both students and teacher researchers regard their experiences with greater objectivity. Van Manen (1997, p. 32) describes such a circumstance, stating, ". . . It [writing] teaches us what we know, in a way that we know what we know." This study similarly proposes that the distance facilitated through journal writing helps to clarify and personalize our thoughts. Journal writing similarly enabled me to reflect on my experiences through the safety of distance. I was therefore better able to find peaceful moments to let my own voice speak.

c) The Ability to Reflect through Journals

The distance provided through journal writing has thereby helped me process my experiences, by facilitating a 'mindful' act of writing (Van Manen, 1997, p. 33). Lomax, McNiff and Whitehead (1996) express how journal writing allows writers to make the tentative observations needed to form one's own interpretations. Such reflections are shown to involve a pattern-formation process, where connections are made between isolated events and understandings (Holly, 1997). Van Manen further describes this interpretive and relational aspect of writing, stating, ". . . understanding the world means, creating signifying relations, a pattern of meaningful relations condensed into a whole" (1997, p. 35). Furthermore, this ability to form patterns is shown to develop holistic ways of knowing. Holly reiterates the holism facilitated through journal writing, stating:

The journal writer needs to reflect quietly, to go back and reconstruct or recapture the setting, thoughts, and feelings at the time- the flow of events. Once these flows are felt, other events, behaviour, or ideas that 'fit' with them become increasingly evident. The journal holds experiences as a puzzle frame holds its integral pieces . . . (1997, p. 21)

A holistic view is also shown to allow writers to discover their natural writing voice, genuine interests and creative capacity (Rainer, 1980).

d) Journals as a means to unleash the Intuitive and Spiritual

Inquiry driven journal writing is perceived as one such method of satisfying the basic human need to question and explore, by helping individuals directly access their intuitive thoughts (Rainer, 1980). Rainer expresses this notion:

Free write to discover. . . This flowing, releasing, intuition sparking writing is generally termed 'free writing', but has also been called 'spontaneous' or 'automatic' or 'stream of consciousness writing' (1980, p. 168).

Likewise, journal writing may contain the looseness of structure needed to capture our 'lived' encounters with the other (Evans, 1987). The current study similarly proposes that such implicit experiences manifests through spontaneous and free-flow journal writing.

e) Journals as a means for Research

Accordingly, journals can facilitate awareness, by helping teachers critically reflect upon their own practices (Collier, 1999). Donoahue, Patterson and Van Tassell (1996) describe how journal writing cultivates greater self-knowledge, by making our hidden assumptions visible. Holly (1997, p. 26) further regards this quest for self-knowledge as a fundamental part of the teaching process, relating how individuals themselves need to be involved in uncovering their, ". . . unrecognized needs, fears, desire, anxieties, hostile impulses." Latta (1991, p. 8) similarly

proposes that students must take ownership of their own problems by reflecting upon. Journal writing is thus regarded as a means to self-empowerment and professionalism, by providing teachers with the opportunity to research and investigate their own teaching practices (McKernan, 1996).

Collier (1999) also expresses this idea of inquiry-related teaching and learning, explaining how journal writing allows teachers to cultivate student researchers. He depicts teachers and students as co-researchers, describing how teachers can express belief in their students by giving them responsibility over their learning. Journal writing is similarly used in the present study to empower and facilitate self-motivated and inquiry-orientated practices.

f) Journals as a Form of Empowerment

It is believed that such inquiry-led teaching and learning practices may ultimately lead to practical improvements in student and teacher behaviour. Hollingsworth (1997) describes these potential benefits for teacher development. He measures the overall effectiveness of journal writing according to the positive changes incurred in one's practices, such as professional development and practitioner research. For instance, journals are shown to evoke further empowering changes by allowing individuals to find connections between their personal and professional values.

The following chapters display the 'Narratives' of the current study, which describe my encounters of the other within this particular research setting. The selection of stories, their

particular subject matter, the order of depiction and the various images used to convey meaning were all problematic parts of the writing process. For instance, though certain stories seemed to rise naturally from my experiences, others were awkwardly constructed by selecting moments that reinforced my preconceptions. The stories that follow hence contain both a combination of emotion and intellectual reasoning developed from my readings.

Chapter Four: Narratives: Seeking the Other

Initially it seemed that the organization of these stories was as random as their subject matter. After further reflection, however, I was able to notice a pattern unfolding amongst them. For instance, the first story, 'Process of Writing' introduces the initial reflections and emotions that constructed these narratives. It provides the backdrop needed for readers to better understand and perhaps appreciate the stories to follow. Their layout thus moves from a simple view of various incidents or ideas, to a deeper reflection of the themes held. Consequently, it shows how the study has progressed from more implicit and emotion based stories to a more theme-based theorizing. Accordingly, the format for the current study conveys the path of discovery undertaken.

Lastly, I have used italics when referring to dialogue and excerpts of writing from my students and myself. I have chosen not to follow the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing system, as I wanted to convey these stories through my own writing style. The stylistic form used in the 'Narratives' therefore does not correspond with the remainder of the study. Pseudonyms have been used for any characters or institutions mentioned.

The Writing Process- The Journey of Knowing the Other

How my stories would develop

The stories in this chapter originated from various characters and incidents encountered in my first three years of formal teaching. I chose these particular moments, as their vividness marked them out as key turning points in my teaching career. Each of these 'emotion' based encounters with the other was depicted through narratives, due to the freedom I found within its creative and figurative form. To construct a story, I then began puzzling out emotions embedded in my experiences. I followed these trails to the insights that surfaced.

Moreover, I hoped that these stories would be powerful enough to convey the full essence of a 'lived encounter.' Being self-sufficient, I also believed that anything extra added onto the stories would only detract from the message relayed. I felt that an adequate balance of description and silence was thereby needed so that both aspects could complement rather than overshadow the other. Overall, I hoped that the emotional presence of a story would provide it with authority, whilst the images could give it a tangible form for expression. By creating a particularly vivid picture, I hoped that readers could simultaneously behold and experience each encounter.

Berke (Webb, 1994, p. 297) records the thoughts of two very well known writers, William Strunk and E.B White, to discuss this balance between words and silence. He describes how both writers emphasized how each sentence and paragraph was to 'speak' directly to the writer. Furthermore, Berke further praises economical writing for being, "efficient and aesthetically satisfying," and hence less taxing on a reader's patience and energy (Webb, 1994, p. 297). Murry (Webb, 1994, p. 297) also stresses how it is a "basic responsibility" of writers, "to inflict no unnecessary words"

on their readers. Writing is thereby viewed as being pleasurable to read, when words flow harmoniously in accordance to their natural meaning. Paradoxically, this seemingly instinctive sense of simplicity is shown to enhance through practice.

The Difficulties of Writing a Story

Despite the benefits of story writing, there were also many challenges faced through this process. The three main struggles I experienced were the initial state of emptiness, the lack of inner unity and the need to find my writing voice.

a) Building Something out of nothing

Firstly, since I was attempting to add definition to something without a clear form, a high level of discomfort was often present. Such a fresh slate has been regarded as a form of possibility and responsibility, which Murry (Webb, 1994, p. 161) describes as the endless and open process of writing, stating, ". . . words on a page are never finished. Each can be changed and rearranged and can set off a chain reaction of confusion and clarified meaning." In writing my stories, I was constantly aware of the excitement and fear brought on by the possibility of starting afresh.

For instance, the empty white spaces felt disconcerting, as I was never quite certain of how to fill them. Not only was I confused about my own words, but they seemed inadequate for expressing my confusion. I was thereby too busy questioning the 'reality' of my feelings and seeking external validation from others, to allow my own words to surface naturally. Rather than letting go and trusting in myself and the other, I then found myself contriving my stories.

Einstein expresses this notion of letting the mystery unfold, by comparing the inherent purity and beauty of Mozart's work to Beethoven's 'contrived' music. He explains how the former 'created' his music, whilst the latter 'found' it, stating, ". . . it had always existed as a part of the inner beauty of the Universe, waiting to be revealed" (Webb, 1994, p. 16). Since expressing the full intensity of my encounters required a similar authenticity of the actual encounter, I felt that my mind also needed to be receptive to 'hear' the surfacing images and words. Listening for a possible story was thus frustrating due to the time and energy it consumed, but I still kept persevering, as I saw the greater reward in being able to express myself authentically. Murray expresses this importance of affirming one's personhood, stating, ". . . all writing is done for human beings by human beings. Writing, in other words, like language itself, is strictly a human enterprise" (Webb 1994, p. 16).

Writing evocatively enough to elicit strong emotions from readers was a challenge. These struggles led me to recall a statement made by Bochner and Ellis (2002, p. 752), who express disappointment at realizing how so few students could convey anything deeply because of their, ". . . [Inability] to move around in the experience and [to] see it as it might appear to others." They compare these individuals to the skilful writers, who could depict an experience so vividly, that readers would feel like they were reliving a part of their own memories. Likewise, I hoped readers could engage with my writing with a similar emotional intensity.

b) Lack of Inner Unity

When attempting to reconnect to myself, I came to realize how the absence of reflection had left my mind in disarray. Moreover, the exhausting demands of daily life had also numbed me to my

emotions. Frazzled and overwhelmed, certain critical emotions began flitting by in my life unnoticed. Over time, even the desire to reconnect to myself through reflective writing seemed to dissipate. These thoughts were recorded in my teaching journal below:

A couple of years ago, I would often write out all the rubbish in my mind until I got to what was important inside. I ranted and raved to plough through the thoughts floating around. But these days, this process seems to take too long. It feels like an indulgence or even a waste of time. (2006, June 2nd)

The more I ignored my heart, the weaker its voice became, making me afraid that one day I would lose it completely. Greater energy and time was thus needed to reconnect to myself. These struggles with discouragement are disclosed in the journal entry written below.

I have missed being alone, and of spending time just to reflect on my life. This may seem surprising, as I spent the whole weekend almost alone. And yet, in this time, my mind was exhausted by continually being engaged in something. So it is during this time of writing that I can come to a place of rest. It feels good just to be able to sit without being swayed here and there by other demands. (2006, November 12th)

Lastly, not only did writing help me to get in touch with both my surroundings and myself, it also helped me to release the images and sensations clogging up my mind. Letting go of this mass of unprocessed thoughts freed me to take on new thoughts.

I guess I am tired of each day finishing without any record leftover. I am beginning to feel frustration as each experience passes by without any visible mark. If I can put my foot down to stamp down the moments passing by, maybe I could see some kind of scheme in it all. Instead, each day goes by like water passing through my hands. (2007, Jan 14th)

Once again, staying in touch with my own heart helped me to recall and recreate the heartfelt nature of my experiences. The alternative was a series of knowledge-based stories that lacked presence and sincerity. The power of a narrative thus seemed to lie in the integrity of a lived experience of emotion, and its ability to recapture such genuine interactions with the other.

My first days at Kyeongbuk were the most difficult, but they were also the most vivid. When I

close my eyes, I can almost return to the rooms of burning oil and copper kettles. These difficulties experienced have made these memories acute, just as if the laughter, the satisfaction and the sharp pain of loneliness occurred yesterday. Now that I have understood that such acuteness of feeling exists, I desire to experience it once more. (2006, August 24th)

c) Trying to find my writing voice.

But most of all, writing these stories showed me how difficult it was to fully recognize my own writing style. Being unable to connect with my writing left me feeling disillusioned about how meaningful my words were. I would therefore delete whole passages of 'lifeless writing' or abandon certain stories completely. However, these disappointments slowly revealed how the act of writing was like coming to a sense of personhood, where I was actually translating my own being into my stories. The inability to connect with my own writing hence made me feel like I could not recognize my own face in a mirror.

When I read my writing, I cannot sense the presence of myself in the way that I can sense others in their writing. When I read the thoughts recorded by another person, my mind picks up on both the words the writer speaks and leaves out. All of these seem to join to form the growing impression of an individual. But when I read my writing, I cannot feel the presence of the person behind it. (2006, November, 12th)

Realizing this, I started to look for my own presence during the writing process, as without an understanding of her whereabouts; writing became the disappointing act of mimicking others. This was a revelation, as I had previously regarded skilful writing as competent language use, rather than the ability to convey one's own presence. Murry similarly defines 'voice' to provide life to writing, stating, "Voice is the force which drives a piece of writing forward. It is an expression of the writer's authority and concern" (Webb, 1994, p. 163). Through my own intuitions and the resonance felt in my readings, I began to value personal voice over linguistic expertise. Good writing increasingly seemed like a paradox between an instinctive sense of ease, as well as the struggle taken to let one's natural voice emerge.

Through my readings, I also realized that it was the writer's presence, rather than their technical skill and intelligence, which touched my heart. Examples of such writers were Robert Coles in 'The Call of Stories,' Parker Palmer in, 'The Courage to Teach,' and Rainer Mariner Rilke in 'Letters to a Young Poet.' By letting themselves be known so deeply, I felt that these writers were extending their friendship to me. They became my closest companions in the writing process, as their own examples of courage and connection brought me out of my isolation. Through glimpsing their struggles, I could similarly find meaning in displaying my own loneliness and vulnerabilities. They showed me how my personal struggles as a teacher researcher could become a powerful tool to encourage others. Despite this, there was always the slight presence of self-doubt and fear in terms of whether my words would qualify as acceptable or meaningful 'data' for others.

The Need for Trust and Faith

Since anxiety and doubt seemed to paralyze, trust and faith then helped me to move forward. Such trust assumed the presence of grace; of believing that the other I was seeking would naturally surface. Letting a story 'create' itself through my experiences was both an emptying and fulfilling experience. I often felt despair at the empty periods of waiting, but was exhilarated to see words mysteriously materialize on a page. In addition, the more I was able to give creative expression to my selfhood, the more this capacity seemed to increase. These thoughts emerge in the reflections recorded below.

The months of July and August are stuck on my wall. They are from the sections of a calendar that I cut out to help me keep track of the days. With each day that passes, I take my pen and make a great big stroke along its number. Now there are 17 strokes on the page, although it seems only yesterday that it was fresh and unmarked. A month and a half left to write up my

project. Each day gone by is signified by a simple pen mark on my wall. There are already seventeen strokes. It leads me to wonder how quickly the rest of the numbers will follow.

July has come quicker than previously thought. Each week passes like an explosion of light and, the words of my assignment grow like a small child. Sometimes in great spurts, sometimes painfully slow, the path of writing has no clear line to follow. Feeling my way across this month of July, I look back at the other previous months for some guidance. Miraculously enough, these months have also managed to reconcile themselves, despite my beliefs that they would and could not.

.....

It is good to take this moment to catch my breath, as there are still a lot of commitments to see through. If only I could realize the outcome now, as I have this overwhelming impatience to reach the finish line. And yet, when looking at the buds appearing on the tree outside, I realize that all my unfinished work will similarly come to a close. The buds have opened up even before I could recognize that they had appeared. They came up one night while it was still cold, and blossomed late in the morning. So when walking to work one day, I looked up at the sky and saw these branches full of thin shell-like cherry blossom petals. (2006, August 5th)

Free writing as a Means to Find a Story

Accessing the emotional content of my experiences was difficult, as I needed a similarly complex and elusive means of expression. Finally, I chose the method of free flow writing, as it embodied the flexibility and spontaneity as my rising sensations. Free writing helped me reconstruct the story-writing process, by giving me the chance to relive the moments that formed a particular study. It also helped me express my emotions pictorially, by enabling me to find subtle images that could express each implicit encounter. I thereby hoped to gather words light enough to dissipate into the air, so that only the meaning would be left remaining.

Using language vividly enough to evoke a sense of reality was aesthetically challenging. For instance, certain arrangements of words would fall flat, creating a one-dimensional view of the experience. I would then cut away at such 'life-less' words in a passage only to find nothing left remaining. Overall, I realized that emotionally vivid writing involved a similarly poetic language

of the heart, such as metaphors and imagery. However, the ability to generate and arrange such images harmoniously was difficult to discern.

Free flow writing was the best way to access such subconscious and creative forms of language, as it helped me to by-pass the rigidity of my logical and analytical mind. An example of such writing is visible in the journal passage below.

I sit here in front of my computer, typing into the screen. Not quite knowing of where things will lead. Realizing that each hour I sit, time will fall like little drops in an ocean. . . . One word after another, until a single line of words is formed. . . .

. . . The magic of something steadily appearing on a page gives me small peace, as it is the emptiness that is disheartening. For when moments pass like water falling into an ocean, the creation of anything seems like a small miracle. . . .

. . . . Revising for meaning until the page shrinks. It seems like the hours have fallen like rain drops in an ocean, disappearing altogether, and rising like vapor. . . . Shy to make an appearance, and even swifter in their disappearance. Making words conceal their physical presence, as hoping to leave nothing remaining other than the actual experience . . . but it seems that the words have come to disappear altogether. (2005, April 18th)

Conversely, I felt that the rigidity of academic writing put a dampener on all of these natural impulses, by imposing an objective structure over my natural writing style.

Benefits of Writing Stories

Through the process of this study, I have realized how stories can be a powerful means to express the spontaneous and intuitive writer deep within, as well as to form connections to myself, others and the broader world.

a) Stories as a Means of Connection

Ultimately, the strength of my own emotional response seemed to determine how deeply a reader

could connect with my writing, as my ability to internalize the emotions of an encounter acted as a bridge for readers to cross. Furthermore, the depth of individual's receptivity to any hidden emotional content seemed to depend on their own emotional sensitivity. Accordingly, both a reader's level of perceptiveness and the strength of my emotions also seemed to maximize the power of a narrative.

b) Making sense of Life

Moreover, the process of free writing was like an instinctive pursuit of meaning in my life. Writing allowed me to reflect on how certain hidden motivations were unconsciously influencing my practices. Through externalizing and confronting these moments, I could better understand both my perceptions and myself through a more holistic view. Without such opportunities to reflect, I felt frustrated and lost.

c) Benefits of Restorying

Moreover, the act of revising my stories was a major part of the writing process, as it enabled further insights to surface. Often certain puzzling factors became clearer over time, as the emotions clouding my understanding were released. Consequently, these periods of restorying have allowed me to perceive my experiences without the distortions of self-consciousness and insecurity. My view of the past has thus been tempered, as I am better able to glimpse others and myself with greater compassion.

Accordingly, the outcomes of my actual experiences have not changed, as the record of mistakes remain. Only my perceptions seemed to have altered in depth. This concept is iterated by Murry,

who states, "Making something right is immensely satisfying, for writers begin to learn what they are writing about by writing. Language leads them to meaning, and there is the joy of discovery, of understanding, of making meaning clear. . ." (Webb, 1994, p. 167). I am similarly able to better perceive the layers of meaning within my experiences, by seeing how they have contributed to my self-perceptions. I have also come to realize the life-enhancing power of restorying, in which I can replace worn out and self-destructive stories with those that evoke growth. Hence, I am now learning to overcome fears that there will be no better story to replace the old ones once they have gone.

Finally, I have realized that our stories must keep transforming, to avoid recycling distorted narratives that are no longer relevant for our lives. The rewriting and restorying process has thus represented such a continuous movement towards a more holistic and wholesome view, rather than a regression in understanding. I trust that this realization will evoke further desires in me to construct life generating, rather than self-deceptive narratives.

d) Expression of Aesthetism

Finally, these insights have freed me to be bold, courageous and reckless, as I have been able to express myself more creatively in my writing. I would thus throw metaphors, images and symbols playfully together like slabs of clay in my hands, hoping that my words to take all kinds of dynamic forms and shapes. Such playful experimentation with words has also been discussed by Murry, who relates how;

Words have double meanings, even triple and quadruple meaning. Each word has its own potential for connotation and denotation. And when writers rub one word against the other, they are often rewarded with a sudden insight; they are often rewarded with a sudden insight, an unexpected clarification (Webb 1994, p. 167).

Similarly, words were also my tools to express beauty, diversity and flashes of insight. Following my instincts for harmony and creativity, I would arrange them to both deeply and aesthetically express meaning.

Concluding Thoughts

Lastly, through writing the current stories, I have realized the need to let go of control and to develop more life enhancing points of view.

a) Needing to 'let go'

Declaring my stories as being 'finished' was difficult, as I never felt that they were polished enough to display. So despite the benefits of the rewriting process, these 'never to be completed' stories were becoming a heavy weight. The more I wrote, the more flaws I perceived; hence, I would find myself stuck in rewriting the same story, feeling too fearful and ill prepared to move on. Overall, I felt that my writing would never really be 'ready,' even should I reach a point of saturation.

This chronic nature of the rewriting process made me realize how the only way forward was to let go of my compulsive need for control and finality. I needed to keep reminding myself that I could never completely know the other and that there would always be one further detail to add. This was not easy to accept, however, as although open-ended beginnings led to greater possibilities, unresolved endings felt somewhat deflating. The renowned Russian author Tolstoy also expresses a similar feeling of inadequacy concerning his writing. Murry relates how Tolstoy

never reread his work; as such an experience would always leave him constantly rewriting the passage over in his mind (Webb, 1994). This writer portrays the full angst of those who seek to let go of their work, stating:

The maker's eye is never satisfied, for each word has the potential to ignite new meaning. . . A piece of writing is never finished. It is delivered to a deadline, torn out of a type-writer on demand, sent off with a sense of accomplishment and shame and pride and frustration. If only there were a couple more days, time for just another run at it, perhaps then. . . (Webb, 1994, p. 168).

b) Learning to see the glass as being 'half full'

However, if I redirect my focus to the growth possible through expressing my own words, the futility of my efforts seems less. In fact, even now I can see the positive changes acquired through self-reflection, as previously negative teaching experiences have resurfaced as the more transformative moments in my career. Re-crafting my stories has been beneficial in this sense, by giving me more opportunities to rewrite healthier and life-giving narratives.

This study has been my constant companion throughout my early years of teaching. The pages in my journal contain the colourful individuals and circumstances that have formed my teaching identity. More importantly, I was able to form connections with others through my stories, by reaching out from the isolation felt through my struggles as a teacher researcher. The joys of making a connection have become the best part of the story writing and researching experience, silencing my fears about the inherent 'worth' of my work. These ideas are recorded in the stories that follow in the next three chapters.

Chapter Six involves a pictorial description of key characters and events encountered at Kyeongbuk University. These portrayals dwell on the elusive and the paradoxical nature of

knowing the 'other.' Chapter Seven involves a discussion of the key themes of 'acceptance' and 'faith' that arose in my teaching and learning practices. Lastly, Chapter Eight focuses on the joys of teaching and the importance of dialogue in research.

Chapter Five: Narratives- Character, Event Portrayal

I have decided to place the next three stories, ‘Hannah,’ ‘Hamen’ and ‘The Department,’ after the reflection on the writing process, as they support the first narrative by providing actual examples of the type of metaphorical writing introduced. The messages conveyed through each portrayal are also simple and straightforward, as they revolve around a selection of snapshots taken of key characters and events. I believed that such writing was easier to access, as their message was conveyed pictorially. Consequently, I hoped that these stories would ease readers into the remainder, in which the meaning was less visually relayed. Instead of simply ‘viewing’ a picture that was described, I felt the latter narratives would require greater levels of mental engagement for the reader to process. The first story, ‘Hannah’ depicts how the elusive face of the ‘other’ can emerge through the rewriting process.

Hannah- Elusiveness of the Other

I think each teacher has a memory of a face that haunts him or her, and in my case, it was the face of my student Hannah. Perhaps I had retained memories of Hannah, as I believed that I had unfairly dispensed a form of judgment, which had not been balanced it with care. Alternatively, maybe it was because my feelings about her were somewhat mixed, for despite my remorse, I also felt that I did my best to guide and facilitate her learning. So perhaps my confusion lay in determining whether my interactions with Hannah had been entirely effective. Her face may have continued to haunt me, as in my instruction, I could not resolve where my responsibilities ended as a teacher and where another person’s began.

Professor?

I felt a touch of surprise when I saw a familiar face in my class.

Hannah, you didn't get enough homework the first time round? What are you doing in this class?

Hannah smiled shyly as she greeted me. The look in her eyes was familiar. They held their characteristic soft but hesitant light.

My first experience of having Hannah as a student

Hannah entered my classroom in the spring semester of 2005, when I had just begun teaching higher-level composition classes. Back then, her eyes had also struck me with their subtle beauty. Like large almonds and tilted slightly at the edges, the feeling they conveyed was soft, gentle and a little sad. Above her eyes, she had drawn thick lines that gave her a sleepy and sultry look. This exotic effect was further enhanced through her dark powdered skin, deeply set eyes and straight ebony hair. It was hardly surprising to discover how her high school years had been spent at an Indian boarding school.

With an international businessman for a father, Hannah had spent her childhood in India. It was a relatively peaceful time in her life, until one day her father decided to return to Korea. This became a significant turn in events, as Hannah herself had insisted on remaining behind. The pain and loneliness felt whilst living in a girl's-only boarding school, finally culminated in a suicide attempt during middle school. In a descriptive essay written on the topic of suicide, Hannah described this event with a mixture of frankness and vulnerability. She seemed to be gifted with the ability to communicate her rawness to others, so in responding to each of her class assignments, I often felt like I was handling fragile pieces of glass.

My Second Experience of teaching Hannah

Hannah was looking at me expectantly from across the room, so I paused in the midst of my thoughts to recollect myself. Class had finished moments before, and only Hannah and I were left in the room.

Hannah, it seems like you have lost a lot of weight. Have you been doing okay these days? I asked.

Yes professor, I have lost a bit of weight since then, she replied, smiling shyly once more.

I sighed. Hannah would previously have been considered underweight, but now she looked thoroughly starved.

Professor, I have been going through a bit of a difficult time. Actually, I have been referred to a psychologist for intensive counseling, which means I'll be leaving for Seoul on the weekends. This might mean I'll have less time to study, but I'll do the best that I can.

Okay Hannah, let's see what we can do. Honestly, this course does involve a lot of hard work. You will be required to spend a substantial period of time reading articles and writing up a short research paper. Time is definitely an important factor, but let's do the best we can.

Despite her initial hesitation, I was happy to see Hannah in my class. Our previous interactions showed her to be a thoughtful student, who chose topics deeply related to her own life. Since the vulnerability within her writing had made an impression, I was excited about working together with her again.

Professor, I would like to choose India as the topic for my paper. I know that it is a little too broad, but India is a strong part of who I am. Other people may not think it is interesting, but it is an incredible place. It may be quite poor, but it has one of the fastest economies in the world. It also has a fascinating religious, historical and cultural background. Do you know that it was also colonized by Britain?

Hannah could not contain her excitement as she spoke. Listening to her speak, I started to warm to her topic. India began to appear like a wonderfully mysterious place. It was also gratifying to

glimpse Hannah instantly take ownership of her topic, as her sincerity was already bringing her words to life. So although we had a long way to go to narrow down her topic, I believed that Hannah's passion would help her achieve her goals.

Seeing the thoughtfulness on Hannah's face during class was a delight. She would sit with her head tilted, as she listened to my explanations about various reading and writing skills. Hannah would also focus intently on my words, often nodding with affirmation when able to connect with its content. At other times, she would sit still with a puzzled expression on her face, as she struggled to come to terms with an issue. I could perceive all these thoughts and emotions running through her deeply reflective eyes.

Hannah's Experience of Difficulty

Hannah's learning was most visible, however, through the work she submitted for class. I was particularly impressed by the quality of her annotated bibliographies, which contained a unique combination of personal reflection and analytical thinking. I recognized the natural sense of curiosity that drove her to examine the credibility of the arguments encountered. In glimpsing these critical thinking skills, my confidence in Hannah continued to grow. The final question remaining was whether she could complement these skills with the discipline and perseverance needed to complete her paper. This was not an issue until Hannah began missing class. After being absent for a couple of weeks, I found her outside my office early one morning.

Professor, I have started my counseling sessions in Seoul. It takes me almost a whole day to commute back and forth and so I have little time to study. I am sorry for having skipped lessons, but I have so much work to catch up on. I tried to delay the counseling sessions until I graduated, but the counselor said that my situation was urgent. It has a lot to do with matters related to my family situation and so on. In fact, I find myself getting better already, and so I'm going to continue despite all the trouble. Even my relationship with my family

members is improving. All this is great, but I am a senior and need to graduate this semester. My parents can't support me much longer so I need to find a job soon. I really cannot afford to fail any of my courses.

I looked at Hannah; she seemed on the verge of tears.

Come into my office Hannah and let's have a talk.

Inside my office, Hannah described the full extent to which she had fallen behind. Not only had she neglected my class, but also it seemed that she had also lost control of her other courses. I was overwhelmed at how far she had let things slide.

Okay Hannah, let me see what we can do here.

I was desperately trying to get a sense of bearing as I listened to her speak. Tears were now freely pouring down her cheeks and it seemed like she had given up. I was feeling a little overwrought by Hannah's situation, so I took a deep breath and then pulled out a blank piece of paper from my desk.

Okay, this is what we are going to do. On this side of the paper you are going to write down the name of each course you are taking, the title of each of the assignments set, as well as their due dates.

I was busy making a mess of squiggles down one side of the page, writing out certain instructions as I spoke. I then turned over to the other side of the page and drew five long columns.

On this side of the page, you are going to make a weekly timetable. You need to specify on what days you will be working on each assignment. Be as specific as possible, listing down the exact number of hours you are willing to invest. You can then check off each assignment or exam that you complete. I would like you to fill up this week's schedule with your most urgent assignments. After you have completed these, you can move onto the rest of the work set. But the aim is to draw up a realistic timetable. If you feel too overwhelmed, you might abandon your plans. Remember, the purpose of this schedule is to keep you focused and organized, rather than to cause you more stress.

The paper in front of me looked like an absolute mess. I sighed, wondering how anyone could make any sense of it. I myself had not known what I was going to write until the page had been filled. I quickly stole a glance at Hannah's face to see if anything had registered. It was surprising then to see how her tears had stopped and that her breathing was steadier. The look of anxiety had also disappeared somewhat, and I could perceive the smallest glimmer of hope.

Professor, do you mind if I take this paper with me?

Her question startled me. It was bewildering to see how Hannah desired something that I had regarded as trash.

Sure Hannah, take it if you like. I know that you can do it. Just take it step by step and be systematic about how you spend your time.

Hannah's look of appreciation shamed me, as my actions seemed deeply inadequate. I was also concerned by Hannah's inability to pull herself out of her present slump, as I knew that there would be similar if not more difficult obstacles in the future.

Okay Hannah, I will tell you what, I'll give you a little bit more time for your draft. I will have to take off some grade because it is late. But let's see what we can do together to work towards the deadline. How about you come to my office next week with your outline and we'll see what we can do to narrow down your topic.

My attempts to 'help' Hannah

Hannah came to my office the following week and we went through a draft of her outline. Since her topic had changed considerably, there was a lot of work to be done. Her focus was now on how an individual's psychological mindset contributed to the quality of their life. For example, she questioned how beliefs in karma had enhanced poverty in India, by making lower caste individuals too apathetic and helpless to improve their life conditions.

Over the following weeks, Hannah called me a couple more times about her topic. Her attempts at asking for help seemed a little half-hearted, as she was never concrete about scheduling a meeting. Her class participation was also becoming more and more scattered as the semester drew on. Since she was still far from finishing her final draft, I managed to give her another extension. It was then disappointing to see Hannah approach me once again empty-handed.

Professor, I'm really, really sorry, but I haven't been able to finish the paper today. I will get it to you as soon as I can. I just need more time.

Hannah, I have already given you a couple of extensions, and for the sake of being fair to the other students, I feel like I need to be a bit harsher. You need to be responsible about the requirements of this course and pay the price for your actions.

These words escaped from my mouth before I realized, ringing heavily in the space between us. Hannah looked at me for a moment and her expression slowly changed. I felt a shadow creep up onto her face until it almost covered it. Her eyes glistened with tears and I could sense the anguish in her voice.

Haven't I paid for things enough already?

Reflecting on her words a little later, I realized that Hannah's reply was perhaps directed more at the issues within her own personal life. Her despair seemed to suggest a mourning for all the anxiety, exhaustion and loss, some of which may have been uncovered in her counseling sessions. So hadn't she paid enough for the suffering in her life? Wasn't life going to give her a break? The memory of the sadness in Hannah's eyes and her disfigured, nail bitten fingers rose vividly in my mind.

Hannah's reaction was not what I had expected. I had anticipated a stronger sense of remorse,

and hence a greater determination to keep persevering. The despair that I then faced made me question whether Hannah had magnified my comment, until it encompassed her other sorrows. Whatever the case, I felt her mind slowly close in front of me. Attempts to redeem the situation were futile, and after a few closing lines concerning a revised deadline for her paper, Hannah walked off to her next class. This was my last interaction I had with Hannah as her teacher.

After this incident, I replayed this incident over in my mind, feeling distraught and confused about how I should have reacted. I knew that I could not be held entirely responsible for Hannah's response, but her final comment left me at a loss. She had not accepted personal offers for one to one catch up sessions, and had received more than enough extra time for her assignments. I also had wanted to be fair to the other students, who had already completed their work. Lastly, I was concerned that all my good intentions had actually weakened her, as my extensions may have made her a little too complacent. So after puzzling a little further, I decided to make a final concession if she would approach me first.

Thoughts on Hannah's failure to complete the course

The newly revised date for Hannah's final paper passed by with no sign of her completed work, so despite the high grade she had received for all her earlier assignments, Hannah ultimately failed the course. Later, when hearing that Hannah had already chosen to give up in the final weeks, I felt a greater sense of regret. Hope had definitely faded and certain repercussions had come about, but I wondered whether it could have reignited had she known that help was still available. Perhaps it was also an intuitive understanding of this issue that drew Hannah towards her chosen topic, on how karma affects lower caste individuals. It was interesting to see how

Hannah had chosen to investigate how a sense of guilt and worthlessness led individuals to limit their own lives. So likewise, perhaps Hannah could have completed her paper, if she had first believed she was capable of finishing it.

In sharing my thoughts with my colleagues, they reassured me that the responsibility had ultimately rested with Hannah, but my lingering sense of remorse made me question whether Hannah's story had in fact signified a deeper story of my own failure. If so, perhaps my own feelings of inadequacy in failing Hannah as her teacher were similar with her beliefs of being unable to finish her paper. Hence, maybe both our beliefs of failure enabled such helplessness to perpetuate itself in our lives.

Final Concluding Thoughts

A couple of years have passed since Hannah was my student, and from time to time, I have pondered whether I could have dealt with the situation better. Moreover, I would reflect on why I had so strongly desired for her to complete my class. If Hannah had been trying to let go of her assignment to salvage her personal and family life, I might have 'driven her to the ground' with my own need to 'succeed.' My own desire to be perceived as the 'competent teacher' may have therefore been the real factor motivating this story, thereby making Hannah the subject of a story that was truly about me.

Through writing this story, I have then been able to release the guilt I had unknowingly been carrying these past years for 'failing' Hannah. As prior to this point, I had not realized why the memory of Hannah's beautiful almond eyes had remained so painfully acute. Writing this

narrative has enabled me to let go of my guilt, by helping realize that I had been trying to be 'responsible' for something that lay somewhat beyond my control. It has taught me about the need to let go of this egotistic need to perceive things solely from my own centre, as well as freeing me from the compulsion to be the 'perfect' teacher. Thus, I am realizing that I am ultimately not answerable for anyone's actions but my own. Through writing, 'Hannah' I have thereby been able to regard myself with more compassion and acceptance. This view has also led to further healing in my life, by helping me to perceive and let go of the other 'Hannah's' whom I have painfully attempted to control.

The elusiveness of the other can also be perceived through its paradoxical nature. Paradox is introduced below through a description of a colleague, 'Hamen,' whose strengths and weaknesses are depicted to lie in the coexistence of extremes. Excerpts of dialogue and statements made by Hamen are included in italics.

Hamen- The Paradox of Extremes

I remember how I saw him for the first time about three years ago; when he stepped out of the school tuck shop with an ice cream cone in his hand. It was slightly surprising running into him, as though I had often heard his name in passing, we had not yet been introduced. On that particular Friday evening, however, I had my chance to meet Hamen, a professor in the Graduate International Law School.

Hi, my name is Hamen. I believe we have not been formally introduced before. By the way don't you just love these strawberry ice cream cones? They really put out the fire in your mouth.

I assumed that Hamen was referring to the spicy cafeteria food, so I refrained from raising my eyebrow. Nonetheless, I could recognize something engaging and colourful about him even from this first encounter. Perhaps he experienced a similar feeling of ease, as after reaching our apartments, he suggested taking a moment to talk further.

Empathy and Morality for the Persecuted

The International Law School for graduate students was founded in 2001, and shortly afterwards Hamen arrived as a guest lecturer. He had previously been involved with the Jubilee Campaign USA, a non-profit organization campaigning against faith-related persecution. Jubilee gave Hamen the chance to give a lecture on refugee and human rights at the International Law School. As a human rights lawyer, Hamen was very vocal in defending the rights of the persecuted. For instance, in an interview with a journalist, he once described the courage of individuals who helped North Korean refugees escape to China.

Courage is found in ordinary men and women, who out of a deep personal conviction minister to emaciated refugees hiding in China. Courage resides in the hearts of humble

people who do the right thing, expecting nothing in return. Courage is demonstrated by those who risk their own imprisonment for offering a glimpse of humanity to those who can never repay them. How absurd is it that these very ones should be hunted down and imprisoned by the Chinese government. In the end, North Korean history will record these as its heroes. . . (Referring to a United Nations meeting concerning Human Rights). . . The meeting served only to confirm for me that profiles in courage are scarcely found among those seated in positions of authority.

Here he also refers to a story about a young Chinese couple who were seeking refuge in a cave during winter, just after the wife had given birth. He reflects on the possible emotions they must have felt,

I can't help but think of the couple in the cave when I step out into the icy parking lot. I can't begin to imagine what it must be like to be so desperately exposed. I hope with everything that is in me that God has purposed to end their suffering.

Passion for Teaching

The empathy and idealism that drew him to human rights also fed the passion and love he felt for his students. For example, he would always consider how he could best help them before attending to his own needs. He would reschedule assessments depending on what was most beneficial for their learning, rather than simply trying to win their popularity. He was also involved in voluntary teaching work in Seoul, hoping to increase employment opportunities for graduating students, by publicizing the International Law School. The faculty members of the Law School also acknowledged the genuineness of Hamen's care, giving him the formal title of the Dean of Students. In addition, Hamen sought to create practical projects that would enable students to build upon their theoretical knowledge.

I have to begin by thanking the students at Kyeongbuk International Law School. They are bright, caring, and joyful. I treasure them dearly. I am impressed that they have decided to establish a refugee and human rights resource centre. Expect to hear good things from there.

Also, when asked about the source of his passion, he would relate how his Catholic faith helped

him to perceive the image of God embodied within his students.

I believe that the purpose of teaching is to help students make sense of a confusing and unpredictable world. It is vital that they are equipped with the skills to survive and succeed amongst all these rapid changes. We must realize that each student has limitless possibilities to creatively and positively impact their surroundings. We need to affirm the importance of each individual that steps into our classrooms, and to trust that they have something incredible and unique to offer.

Hamen regarded teaching as the divinely mandated act of cultivating individuals who could one day change the world. He would hence use faith-related terms like 'calling' and 'destined for greatness,' 'stewardship' and 'God-given gifts' in reference to his students. These words similarly bordered upon the magical or divine, as they conveyed his idealism for teaching. Hence, in hearing him speak of his teaching vocation, I could often sense his desires to live out his convictions concerning his profession. Hamen thus came to represent a model of teaching that I espoused.

'Joanne, just what if . . . what if God wasn't real? In my low points, there are times that I doubt his existence myself. But if He wasn't real, then how could I not live my life each day with faith? How could I not follow the path that is difficult to walk down?'

Believing his duties to be divinely mandated, Hamen also attributed noble and worthy goals for his students. Alongside his high standards for academic learning, he affirmed that individuals could make their mark on the world by protecting the rights of the needy. Consequently, he urged students to use their talents and skills for the benefit of others. Moreover, Hamen himself lived out this philosophy by actively volunteering for non-profit organizations such as Jubilee, which advocated the rights of persecuted individuals.

A mature aged law student in Hamen's class, who quoted him in her journal, confirmed this idea.

"What is more important than pedigree is faithfulness."

If I ever become a lawyer, I hope to be like Prof. Hamen. There is no doubt where his heart is. He is an extremely transparent and witty fellow. He emphasizes excellence, and reminds us of why we are here. Most of all, I love his honesty. (July, 2005)

This student also wrote a reflection in her public online journal, concerning a comment made by Hamen during a human rights lecture.

Summer semester has begun and the workload is intense. Maybe it is because I am hoping that our team does a really good job on the presentation we are preparing for next week. The issue is N. Korean refugees that flee to China and then are returned to be tortured in labor camps. Beautiful topic, huh? Prof. Hamen always says, "It could have been you." It is so true. I am so blessed to be born under a government that gives me freedom to speak, to move about, to disagree, and to "change the world" (as our university motto goes). But what if I had been simply born in a different place where those freedoms were simply not allowed. How horrible would that be?(Oct, 2005)

Hamen's strong purposefulness for teaching surfaced frequently in our conversations. Hamen himself would describe how he was the most energized, creative and vibrant as a teacher. This quality was further striking, as Hamen was socially shy and reclusive, often avoiding or being unusually silent during gatherings. Seeing these dual extremities of Hamen's personality was intriguing, as it almost seemed that his sense of introversion and lack of sociability had sheltered the intense idealism he felt concerning his profession.

Growing Concern for Hamen

When comparing myself to Hamen, I sensed my inadequacy as a teacher. Yet, when I thought of the lack of interaction he had with his peers, I was concerned that his energy may soon be depleted. I also wondered whether it was the fear of self-disclosure that motivated Hamen to embrace his teaching role so whole-heartedly, as I too was lured by the safety felt in hiding behind the 'role.' It often seemed easier to simply appropriate the behaviors associated with the 'traditional' teacher mould, rather than making personal efforts at self-expression. Being saved

from uncomfortable levels of intimacy, exposure and accountability was definitely an attractive possibility. Perhaps it was then easier for Hamen to take on the role as ‘professor,’ as opposed to relating to others simply as ‘Hamen.’

Paradoxical Needs as a teacher; the Loneliness and the Joy

Through my perceptions of Hamen, I believed I could see an example of the paradoxical needs teachers often face to both give and receive.

a) The Loneliness of the Role

This tension of replenishing and dispelling energy levels surfaced frequently in my own teaching career, where I became tired or overwhelmed when remaining at one emotional extreme. As our friendship deepened, Hamen partially came to affirm this point, sharing that he had been experiencing an unusually strong sense of loneliness. He attributed this feeling of isolation to his recent move from a shared apartment flat to a small single housing unit. His despair was so high that he was considering seeking clinical help for depression.

Joanne, these days I've often been experiencing this intense feeling of sorrow. Sometimes it gets so bad that all I can manage is to drag myself out of bed. When I get in this state I feel like there is nothing that I can do to pull myself out of it. It is like falling into the depths of despair.

This revelation was surprising, as up until that point, he had skirted almost every topic of conversation that required some degree of personal vulnerability. A genuine self-disclosing statement from Hamen was rare. He could talk energetically about human rights and his passion for teaching, but he was always on guard when it came to his own personal life. It then seemed like a major breakthrough to hear him express such an intimate comment.

I'm so sorry, I had no idea. . .

The medication I have been taking these days has been a big help, but this has been something I've been struggling with for a while. Even when I applied for the Law School, I wrote in my application that I suffered from depression. I felt like I should be upfront and let the University decide. Anyway, ever since I started working here it hasn't been that bad, but over the past couple of months I feel like things are getting worse. Now I feel like I need to get some help.

Hamen, is there someone that you can speak to?

That's an idea, but honestly, I prefer to keep this matter to myself. In fact, you're the only person I've told. Do you remember when you told me that I never really seemed to say anything personal of any real substance? Well, you got me thinking and now I'm trying to disclose more.

It struck me to see how acutely Hamen seemed to have absorbed my words. It seemed like he had let them slowly sink in until they had slowly transformed him. I knew that self-disclosure did not come easily for Hamen, so I appreciated at how sincerely he had listened. It reminded me once more about how earnestly Hamen seemed to process his surroundings. His newfound vulnerability was great news, as I finally felt that he was becoming more trustful of our relationship. But at the same time, I was saddened by his feelings of loneliness.

I did realize, however, that Hamen's intensity and wholeheartedness might have freed him from the self-conceived boundaries that other teachers may have similarly felt.

You know Joanne, when I work for the Law School, I sometimes feel like I am walking on water. I watch how the convictions of these students grow and I feel like miracles are constantly occurring around me. Each day I feel that I am living by faith. I don't know what I would do if I had to leave this place.

Hamen expressed both sorrow and resignation whenever he contemplated leaving the University. By being stretched to his utmost capacity whilst working at the Law School, the loss of this environment may have represented a similar absence of the qualities, needed to bring out the best

in him. This was slightly paradoxical, as even though Hamen's wholeheartedness as a teacher caused him loneliness; it also rejuvenated him. Lastly, being somewhat of an idealist, his students may have also helped to uphold his belief in human beauty and hope.

If Hamen had been more pragmatic and self-preserving as a teacher, perhaps he might not have perceived the joys that could be attained from his profession. Simultaneously, the hope and faith he exuded may have also allowed his students to embrace their learning with similar wholeheartedness. Life might have then seemed more logical and consistent, since his beliefs in teaching could manifest in his practices. Subsequently, Hamen's strength may have lay in his perceived weakness, where he could access the ecstatic feeling of 'walking on water' through letting go of familiarity and security.

A Measure of Grace that Continues

In a previous conversation, Hamen related the strong victory of a mooting team he had recently trained. They had broken the undefeated reign of the most prestigious University in Korea, and were to travel to Washington D.C to compete internationally. The joy he expressed reminded me once more of his passion for teaching, making me realize that despite all the passing years, his passion for his students had deepened rather than dissipated.

Joanne, these students truly are the joy and delight of my heart.

Hamen had never stopped feeling or expressing this particular sentiment. It made me feel that in spite of my earlier fears of possible burnout, his passion had remained alight. Grace had

managed to persist in Hamen's life, providing the energy and life needed to override his difficulties. So regardless of the exhaustion he might have experienced within his extreme highs and lows, Hamen disproved my theory that his wholeheartedness would fade.

No Final Answer

As my friendship with Hamen continues, our conversations similarly repeat themselves. At times, we speak about the disappointments and difficulties that rise from our core insecurities. Other times we describe the joys of watching our students grow. We both oscillate between the opposite poles of excitement and boredom and of joy and disappointment. But these conversations help remind me once more of how the journey is a continuous cycle of such emotions, rather than a final 'it is' statement. Similar to my inability to make a final appraisal concerning Hamen's capacity as a teacher, I could not have written a story about him that was not equally open-ended.

The next story portrays a conflict that had taken place in our faculty, which reinforces the importance of moral integrity when relating to the other.

Morality- One's Responsibility to the Other

Background of the TESOL Department

The current University was established in 1995 by a businessperson who dreamed of building a Christian University in South Korea. Though it was conceived in hope, the University suffered from many crises, such as the imprisonment of the President for the improper use of government funding. The University also continued to experience struggles with financial sponsorship and constant challenges to the President's leadership. However, despite these hurdles, it still managed to excel as one of the top universities of South Korea. In addition to its academic and religious orientation, it was also becoming renowned for its emphasis on globalization.

The English language was subsequently a compulsory element of academic life. Unlike most other universities in South Korea, the current University required each student to undertake at least two years of mandatory English language speaking, listening, reading and writing classes. Each of these classes was systematically sequenced to equip students with the skills needed to undertake their major courses in English. The name of the school itself, 'Kyeongbuk Global University,' also suggested this hope of internationalization. The English language curriculum was therefore fundamental for the daily functioning and realization of the school's vision.

The Dilemma Faced by the TESOL Teachers

Since this transition towards internationalization and was a huge task, the English language department had the greatest number of instructors. These instructors were required to teach both core English language classes, as well as courses from other departments. They were also responsible for extra-curricular activities, such as weekly homeroom meetings with students.

These extra classes were an added burden, since the current curriculum had been intensified to increase student performance. The instructors therefore found themselves physically and emotionally exhausted from teaching six different classes of up to twenty-five students. In order to avoid burning out, the English language teachers scheduled a meeting with the rest of the Department heads, the President and the Vice President of the University, to negotiate better working conditions.

Meanwhile, the language teachers were also being pressured to change their curriculum by a full-time tenure track professor, Professor Kim, who was overseeing the English language teachers. Professor Kim had likewise been reprimanded by the President of the school for the falling TOEIC test scores, an American exam that is used in Korea for job recruitment. Since these scores had been falling each year, Professor Kim was demanding that the department teach TOEIC preparation courses, similar to those taught at private institutes. This was despite the Korean government's efforts to minimize such rote learning by introducing a new academic essay-writing component into this exam. The English language teachers adamantly rejected this test-orientated approach, as they believed that language learning involved a systematic and integrated practice of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

A rift then formed between the language teachers and Professor Kim, as the former argued the importance of maintaining the pre-existing academic curriculum, whilst the latter advocated exam preparation skills. This issue became significant, as within the span of a few years, the curriculum had shifted from the basic level of conversation classes commonly taught at private institutions, to an academic curriculum appropriate for tertiary education. Overall, the English

language teachers were hoping that the University could one day realize its vision of using English as its main language of instruction. However, since the administration was unaware of these changes, they could not understand the language teachers' demands. In particular, the relationship between Professor Kim and the two language teachers, Anne, the Curriculum Coordinator, and Ross, the instructor chosen to be the future 'head' instructor, had become very tense. The language teachers were aware of this fact, as both Anne and Ross had disclosed the nature of their relationship with Professor Kim during one private meeting.

Hopes of the TESOL Instructors to improve their working conditions

One objective of this impending meeting to improve working conditions was then to make the leaders of the University aware of the Language teachers' own vision for globalization. The English language teachers hoped to relay how much time and effort was needed to teach students at an advanced academic level, contrasting with the basic conversational standards commonly taught elsewhere. Since an academic curriculum signified a heavier workload, the instructors were also hoping to reduce their teaching hours from eighteen to sixteen hours per week.

Although the language teachers' contracts were not tenured, they regarded this reduction to be fair, considering that they fulfilled similar extracurricular duties to those teaching an average of ten to twelve hours.

Secondly, the English language instructors wanted to cultivate a sense of cooperation with the other departments, by helping them conduct their lectures in English. Aside from using English textbooks, minimal efforts had been made. And although certain professors were ready to implement this goal, the low comprehension level of students became a barrier. Realizing such a

dilemma existed; the English language teachers were planning to work together with other departments to equip their students with the necessary English language skills.

Lastly, the language teachers were asking to be acknowledged as a formal part of the University. Though they were given the title of 'professor' and were required to fulfill its specified duties, the official documents registered the department as an 'Institute.' The language instructors were therefore inconvenienced by having to leave South Korea to renew their visas each year, rather than every two-years. They also believed that this lack of formal recognition led other faculty members to devalue their role in the University. The language teachers then believed that formal acknowledgement from the University would bridge any gaps in 'status,' language and culture existing between the domestic and international staff. Moreover, if this demand was answered, the Language Department would be incorporated into the Department of General Studies,' as the English language was also considered as a mandatory subject. This move was contested, however, due to language barriers and the lower education backgrounds of the language instructors.

The negative outcomes of these attempts to improve working conditions

Anne and Ross thereby held lengthy negotiations with Professor Kim and with the Dean of the school, Professor Lee, to prevent possible miscommunication. Weeks of preparation therefore preceded the proposed date for the meeting. It was then a great relief that the necessary information was successfully relayed to each of the Department heads at the meeting. The President had also expressed his desire to lower the language teachers' credit hours, as well as to formally acknowledge them. Overall, all those present at the meeting showed their support

concerning the English language instructors' requests. The two responses that followed the meeting then came as a big surprise.

The response of the administration and the TESOL teachers

Firstly, the administration led an investigation into whether the language teachers were fulfilling their actual contractual hours in attempts to fire Anne and Ross. Unfortunately, the official documents did not register other work duties, such as curriculum development, scheduling and writing lab. Despite being informed of these extra work duties, the administration had already quietly began the process of terminating both contracts.

Realizing what was happening; Ross and Anne held an emergency meeting with the language teachers before they dispersed for the break. Ross informed them of how the Dean and Professor Kim had been openly threatening to terminate his contract for 'inciting rebellion' against the University. Anne too disclosed similar threats made to her contract, which had fortunately been overturned by the President's intervention. Ross then passed out a letter he had written, outlining that the previous meeting had been held with the 'best intentions' to work for the University's vision of globalization. In listening to Ross, the language teachers were stunned by the administration's aggressive and underhanded responses. Their disappointment was further heightened in light of the administration's hypocritical public declaration of Christian love and servitude.

The response of the English language teachers themselves, however, was a greater cause of dismay, as certain instructors hesitated in giving their own signatures of support. The teachers'

fearfulness of the administration was understandable considering the harsh measures taken against Ross and Anne. Nevertheless, their unwillingness to help those being treated punitively as scapegoats was disheartening. Rather than expressing bitterness, both Ross and Anne encouraged their colleagues not to feel obliged to give their signatures. Finally, after careful rewording of Ross's letter, signatures were gathered from all the instructors present.

Tensions simmered over the vacation period, but very little attention had been paid to the language teachers' requests. The department itself had undergone slight transformations, such as the transfer of Ross to the Graduate School of Law to teach legal writing, due to the difficulty of continuing under Professor Kim's leadership. Moreover, although the language department was incorporated into the Department of General Studies, this integration was only superficial, as the official documents still classified the language department as an 'Institute.' The instructors continued to be issued short-term visas, whilst the contract hours also remained the same. In light of these factors, Anne continued to work hard on her negotiations with the administration.

Further repercussions: the resignation of one instructor

The news of Anne's resignation then came as little surprise, considering her lack of success. The specific reasons Anne gave involved the administration's manipulative actions concerning the number of contract hours and their lack of formal acknowledgment from the University.

Although the language department was incorporated into the Department of General Studies, Anne was still issued with the same institute visa she had received for the past five years. In relation to the credit hours, homeroom was established as being a one credit hour course, rather than the three hours allotted to other departments. If treated equally with the rest of the

University, homeroom teachers would then be entitled to teach 16 rather than 18 credit hours.

Anne was mostly disillusioned, however, by the blacklisting of her husband, John, who had been working at the Graduate School of Law. Anne believed that the administration had redirected their efforts to sabotage John's position, since the president thwarted the threats made against her. She outlined how the administration had contacted various leaders at the Law school to terminate John's contract, though pretending to make amends. Anne was further disappointed at the lack of intervention from the International Faculty at the Graduate School of Law. Though having enough authority in the University to protect John, they had chosen to remain silent on this matter. Anne thereby concluded that she had no other choice but to resign, to show the administration that their actions were not acceptable.

The critical reflections of one instructor

In light of her own hardship, I was surprised to read Anne's final apology to the English language teachers for the times that she too had been insensitive to our needs. I appreciated these comments, as we had often felt imprisoned by our workload, which often left us grading essays on weekends and late into the nights. However, Anne's leadership was not challenged, as she worked twice as hard to build up the English curriculum to its current academic level. She had also tried to resolve as many personal matters without compromising the quality of instruction. Therefore, with her fair but disciplined leadership, she continually challenged the teachers to keep striving to achieve. Yet, I did notice a growing flexibility in her final semester, as she began conducting surveys to explore the needs of her colleagues.

Lastly, Anne concluded her reflections with insights gleaned from a magazine for project managers. The article described emotionally intelligent leaders as those who could tune into the needs of others and inspire such forms of connection. Relating these principles to the current circumstances, Anne highlighted the administration's inability to comprehend the needs of the international professors, as well as her own lack of understanding concerning her colleagues. She pointed out how culture could be misused to prevent such forms of emotional connection, indicating how the administration's role of being the 'gracious host,' and the foreign professors' position as the 'invited guests,' could have further aggravated inequalities in power. Whilst stressing her respect for the Korean culture, she questioned how cultural norms could be used to excuse immorality.

Concluding Reflections

In her final email, a new humbler side of Anne seemed to be emerging. Perhaps in her departure, she could finally make amends and empathize with her colleagues. After Anne left, one of the language teachers wrote a letter to the administration, condemning their harsh measures. It described both Anne's contributions to the department, and criticized how she and John had been treated. Though I myself had decided to sign this letter for Ross and Anne, most of my other colleagues had politely declined.

Finally, the teachers who signed the letter also feared a possible continuation of the administration's harshness. They believed that their level of aggression might even escalate, since the administration now knew that their leadership would not be strongly protested. The instructors thus believed that the security felt by both those who refused to sign the letter was

false, as any future attempts at negotiation might have a similarly negative outcome. They concluded that since they lacked the strength of unity, they wielded little if any power. Consequently, they believed that the weakness of certain individuals had brought down the well-being of the entire group.

Those who knew Anne realized how the school had literally lost the 'goose who laid the golden eggs.' Though difficult for the administration to control, she had also embodied the qualities that could have brought about any genuinely innovative transformations to the University. By over-valuing submissiveness and obedience, they had in fact lost the rarer and more valuable qualities of dynamic and creativity leadership. Finally, the President of the University eventually asked Anne to return to her position, as without her presence, the leadership of the language teachers had weakened and the development of the curriculum had stalled. Anne rejected the offer, however, as she felt that futility of continuing under such authoritarian leadership.

Overall, Anne's toil eventually resulted in a two-hour reduction in the language teachers' workload and the inclusion of the teachers in the General Studies department. Semi tenure-ship was also given to those who had the necessary higher degree qualifications. So although it had come at a high cost and over a long period, Anne's petition was partially answered.

The following stories in Chapter Six develop upon these snap-shots of events and characters, by elaborating on the qualities of 'acceptance' and 'faith' that I perceived in my experiences. Rather than focusing on a particular individual or event, these narratives are structured around these core themes.

Chapter Six: Narratives - Themes of Acceptance and Faith

The next two stories are based on the themes of 'Acceptance' and 'Faith,' the two concepts that emerged the most frequently throughout my experiences. These stories flow less spontaneously, as their content was decided according to their compatibility with these themes. Rather than generating meaning from the experience itself, these stories were then constructed from such a pre-selected structure. The impression made may have thereby been less vivid. Despite this, I hoped that these stories could scaffold the remainder of the narratives, in which the meaning was relayed even less metaphorically and pictorially.

Acceptance- Healing via Holism

One important quality I have learnt from my teaching experiences has been the value of acceptance. I have seen how it validates an individual and their everyday actions, giving people the courage and affirmation to express themselves. I have also seen how it enables individuals to embrace the other, bringing validation to previously rejected areas. Overall, I have come to regard acceptance as a means for transformative growth within both my students and myself, by helping us to reconnect with undervalued and marginalized areas.

Another characteristic feature of acceptance was its sudden appearance, where it often seemed to materialize unexpectedly like acts of grace. For instance, certain wounds preventing individuals from opening up to the learning experience seemed to be healed simply by another's act of acceptance. Words such as 'gift' and 'redemption' conveyed the recuperative power of acceptance, by implying the beauty and rarity of a gift given freely. Emptied of ulterior motives,

more space for the positive qualities of affirmation and trust seemed to form. Like the effects of grace, acceptance can also facilitate growth by allowing individuals to forgive and embrace their own weaknesses.

Despite its profound effects, acceptance is easy to overlook due to its subtlety. As even the glimpse of a healthy trait seems to minimize the self-consciousness of another, or the simple offer of relationship, may trigger self-acceptance. Consequently, since people generate the healing act just by their presence, they often seem to be unaware of how their small actions affect others. Acceptance can thus convey a sense of authenticity and presence, as it both originates from and reaches out to connect to one's innermost being.

The Webster's College Dictionary (1991) affirms this notion of validation by defining acceptance as the willingness to take hold of, approve of or validate the other. This definition suggests how acceptance regards the other as being both 'normal,' 'proper' or positive. Consequently, the other is validated for its inherent or potential worth. But how vital is validation, and how daunting does its opposites, rejection and isolation seem? More importantly, what part do these needs and fears play in my classroom? Two cases that express this importance of acceptance are episodes that occurred with a certain student and colleague.

Importance of Acceptance for Growth

My experiences with this particular student culminated in an intensive sixteen-day winter vacation class during 2003. Though being relatively short, this English grammar and composition class was particularly memorable, due to the trust and openness that was quickly

established between classmates. Yet one student shied away from this closeness: he was a senior student who was planning to graduate during that semester.

Though I am not Christian, I like the Bible clause, 'The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.' But you did it! Don't you see my darkness thanking you? I pray you become a light to all people.

This student caught my attention because of this comment written on an Internet discussion board site. It was a part of a final reflection written about what he had learnt from class. He posed a simple question asking whether I could see his darkness thanking me. Though it seemed simple enough, its symbolic nature struck a chord. Later I recorded a response in a personal journal.

There was nothing particularly striking about this student, until the class captain made a suggestion about organizing extracurricular discussion groups. In that instance the student sprang into attack, arguing heatedly against the proposal. Overcoming my initial feeling of shock, I felt a little weary at the thought of future resistance from him. Later, through the interactive space of small group activities, I could sense his introspective and thoughtful sides emerge. I remember this impression being reinforced by a conversation, where he related the desolation and emptiness felt when speaking with others. It made me wonder about the loneliness and isolation he might have experienced. This conversation then opened my eyes to his presence in class. I began to notice the way he trembled slightly when speaking to others, as if the act of speaking to another person caused him physical effort and strain. I also began to be aware of his unusually pale skin, deep furrowed eyebrows and his gently smiling eyes. But overall, I felt his silence to be most striking, where he would sit and smile quietly, directing soft whispery replies inwards towards his shoulders. (18th Dec, 2005)

Three weeks of winter school passed by uneventfully, and my impression of the person who had so forcefully rejected the discussion groups, gradually began to disappear. Aside from a few casual conversations, my interactions with this student had been minimal, which was why I was

so surprised when reading his comment. Can I see your darkness thanking me? I remember asking this question in my journal and then constructing a reply.

Yes, I think I can see your darkness thanking me. Not because I possess some amazing talent, but in some ways, I feel that, we are made of the same mesh. That is why I feel I can understand you, as I also give people what I can, even if it is my darkness.

Acceptance as an unnoticeable action

Looking back now, I wondered whether this student felt that I had unknowingly offered something precious to him. Perhaps he had been able to receive the feeling of validation that he needed, when I had responded to his presence. His reference to the light shining in the darkness may have then referred to how I had validated his sense of self-worth. Furthermore, my own vulnerability may have allowed me to perceive his thankfulness and understand the joy he felt. For if I had not been able to see myself as a mixture of light and darkness. Likewise, this simple analogy of light and darkness reminded me of how the warmth and solidarity offered to others could chase away one's sense of isolation.

But what was most striking, was the subtle way that acceptance was received and offered. It was surprising that my student was thankful for something that came as naturally as relating to another person. A tacit form of communication was thereby taking place, where I had unknowingly acknowledged his sense of self-worth by spending time with him.

Lastly, the effortless nature of acceptance seemed to imply that it was as instinctive as the natural act of breathing. Such reflections made me question how and why acceptance was so easily offered in this particular circumstance as opposed to others. It reminded me of the many other times when acceptance was completely absent in my life. I could recognize such an instance in a

relationship with a certain colleague, Tracy. My interactions with Tracy occurred in my final two years at the current University, from 2004 to 2006.

When Acceptance seems Difficult

We made our first brief introduction in the school cafeteria. Though having spoken less than a couple of words, I remember initially feeling intimidated by Tracy's heavy make up and her over-eagerness to please. Soon after, I was told that Tracy and I would be roommates. Her previous roommate was leaving to live with another one of her ex-roommates. Since she was just in the process of moving out, I was left with the uncomfortable prospect of sleeping on the couch. This was until Tracy offered me her own bed to sleep in, allowing me to sleep quite soundly for the next couple of nights. So despite the initial awkwardness, I felt that perhaps Tracy would be considerate enough to share a house with. Hence, when her previous roommate adamantly refused to share even an office with her, I ignored my misgivings and decided to both live and work together with her.

The next couple of months passed by chaotically as we prepared for our new classes. There was not much else to occupy my thoughts but working life, but after the hectic pace began to slow, I started to notice how frequently Tracy's name began appearing in my conversation with my family, friends and other colleagues. After speaking with Tracy's ex-roommates, I came to realize why both individuals had left after their brief experience of living with her. Her first roommate had moved out after two weeks to sleep in her office, abandoning the apartment which she had lived in for the past two years. The second person had left after two months. In listening to their stories, it seemed that the difficulties we experienced were similar.

In my case, living with Tracy was both bewildering and stressful, as she would hardly leave the house except to go to work. When arriving home after work, she would try to keep her loneliness at bay by seeking my company and would also openly express her hurt and resentment when I did not reciprocate similarly. So like her previous roommates, her act of reaching out left me floundering.

Underlying Dynamics of Difficulties in Acceptance

Looking back now, I wondered whether there was also an additional factor of neediness underpinning her loneliness, where she was unable to draw lines separating herself from others. Perhaps she was trying to derive a sense of solidarity through her relationships, as without them, she may have felt insecure and lost. I thereby felt that she was trying to attach herself to my life rather than seeking answers for her own. This may have then prevented her from forming healthy and non-destructive relationships with others.

After a few months, both Tracy and I moved out to separate small one-room apartments newly built on campus. Free from sharing my living quarters with her, I found myself feeling less burdened by our interactions in the office. After our office allocations changed, I rarely saw Tracy except for work meetings.

Concluding thoughts about both stories

These two stories about Tracy and my student then gave me insight into how the I-You union was needed to build positive relationships based on respect and growth. As even in the narrative

about Tracy, an instance in which the I-You encounter was sorely lacking, I was able to perceive the importance of such an encounter for building healthy relationships. The difference between these two stories may then have rested in the nature of the relationships formed. As despite the similar longing for acceptance in the case of my student, perhaps the professional distance of the teaching role enabled me to fulfill my duties of care without feeling encroached upon. And perhaps the desire for acceptance had also differed from that of Tracy's, as he was able to feel validation without taking something more important away.

Therefore, the boundaries within the I-You encounter became further significant, as I came to realize the importance of not imposing on the other, but of working together in balance to fulfill the mysterious knowing act. For instance, if I was driven by ulterior motives that lay beyond the simple act of encountering the other, I felt that I would readily strip away at its essence due to my neediness. The I-You thus seemed paradoxical, as it required the boundaries self-respect alongside the self-forgetful act of caring characterizing grace. This seemed to ensure that the knower would not detract from the other through the knowing act. As opposed to the I-It interaction that invades the personal essence of another, the I-You then seemed to be the mutual interaction of a growth-invoking knowing encounter. This notion of acceptance is linked to the significance of 'faith,' which is explored in the following.

Faith- A Means for Growth

Faith as a Means of Forming Character

Joanne, I would like you to teach an advanced level composition class this semester for the English Literature Department. I know that you yourself are already involved with the research writing process through your dissertation. Overall, I think you would be the perfect person for the job.

Anne, the curriculum coordinator, spoke these words to me one afternoon, whilst trying to organize the following semester's schedule.

Anne, are you sure about this? I do not really know what this course involves and I am pretty much in the early stages of writing up my paper.

I hesitated for a moment, as I imagined the high number of participating students and the heavy loads of grading. Painful visions of spending Friday evenings, wading through one paper after another, rose vividly in my mind.

Joanne, I don't see why not. . . I think you'll do a great job.

Short, simple and sweet, without any additional explanation. Anne looked up at me, waiting for my answer. Briefly turning aside, I started weighing up the pros and the cons. High-level composition classes involved writing extensive papers based upon one's own academic field, and I felt that such a course might help me to brush up on my own writing skills. The fact that my students and I could empathize and encourage each other about the research writing process was also enticing. Lastly, despite my unfamiliarity with the research writing process, writing was an activity that I generally enjoyed. All these thoughts flew across my mind as I peered into the coordinator's anxious face.

Okay, Anne, I might as well give it a shot.

I spoke those words on an idyllic Friday afternoon, when sunlight was gently entering the room. It was the end of a long working week, and with only a couple of weeks remaining in the semester, I felt the intoxication of approaching a finish line. Perhaps these factors lulled me into making a decision that would jolt me out of a relatively comfortable work load.

This writing course could either have made or broken my spirit that term, as it was as challenging as it had been joyful. Being extremely 'challenging,' I also felt that I had learnt a great deal. For instance, I had to take greater initiative to create my own curriculum, due to the lack of structure in the course. I also found myself constantly searching for new resources, since the students flew through the tasks I had set. But what was most characteristic about this experience was the exhilaration felt in abandoning my comfort zones. Each lesson held the possibility for unexpected creativity and even the lessons that seemed impossible to prepare for naturally evolved, giving me a sense of confidence and openness to challenge the unknown. The loose structure of this class also freed me from a particular 'learning' style, thereby enabling me to face new encounters without too much anxiety. Subsequently, the uncertainty, the unfamiliar levels of autonomy and the unforeseeable flow of grading and homework also seemed to slowly build up my capacity for endurance, perseverance and flexibility.

The Effects of Faith on Myself as a Teacher

Teaching writing on a higher skill level boosted my confidence as both a writer and a teacher. It also gave me a broader overview of the writing process, helping me to better prepare students at lower levels. Having this bigger framework thereby made me realize the higher professional goals that I was striving towards. My students similarly came to find their work personally

meaningful, by becoming responsible for acquiring the skills needed to move onto the next level of competency. Hence, through a combination of skills, knowledge and faith in ourselves, we could work purposefully together towards our learning goals.

This was a new development in my own career, as previously I did not even realize that such a meaningful level of writing instruction existed. And having lacked faith in my own capabilities, I would never have thought to acquire it. Consequently, without Anne's strong conviction about my abilities, I would never have found the courage or foresight to undertake this class.

. . . I think that you will be the perfect person for the job.

With years of experience in allocating courses, and of drawing up new curriculum and of organizing complex scheduling rosters, I believed that Anne had the gift of discerning an individual's capabilities. Therefore, although it was a single decision concerning class allocations, I believed that it helped to mould me into the teacher that I felt Anne perceived. So even if her motivations had been pragmatic, as no other suitable instructor was available, my own particular 'interpretations' of her action was enough to increase my self-confidence.

The Faith of my Students

This factor of faith also applied to my own attitude towards my students. For instance, since I could not provide much attention to each person's needs, I was surprised to see them initiate constant self-improvements. These students seemed to be sensitive and courageous enough to follow their own hunches, by pursuing their learning on a certain level of faith. Furthermore, since the course was not restricted by tight rules, the context was conducive for free expression. In reading their papers, I could thereby feel their skills; knowledge and level of confidence grow,

as well as sense their excitement and passion in reaching new ‘frontiers.’

Faith Creating the Person for Living and Learning

These thoughts of faith remind me of a comment once made by my mother, as she reflected on the stained glass window of a church building. She pointed out how the sun shining through the colorful pieces of glass made each piece bright and luminous like gemstones.

You are like the beautiful colours of these stained glass windows and your character is as bright and as full of life as these pictures. Don't forget who you are.

Reflecting on my experience with Anne, the importance of my mother's faith became clearer as I realized how it had helped me to reach the major milestones in life. Similarly, if Anne had not taken that initial step of faith in allocating the class to me, I felt that I would not have learnt the skills I now possessed. Hence, the validation received from a person whom I respected seemed to give me the confidence to trust in my abilities. The significance of Anne's initial act of faith was also visible when I recently decided to change jobs. My expectation of joining this University was low, considering its prestigious nature. Later, when I was offered a position to help reconstruct the writing curriculum, I could see how far my belief in Anne's faith had extended into my teaching career. In this instance, faith had mysteriously cultivated in me a desire to grow into the likeness of the potential that I believed she saw.

This experience with changing jobs thus highlighted the importance of being given the faith and the opportunity to succeed. I felt that the value of faith extended far beyond this particular instance, reaching into the living and learning process, even more so due to life's inevitable uncertainty. Faith therefore seemed vital to keep one's understanding evolving, by generating

further springboards for learning. Hence, without faith, I felt like I would not have the courage to face the challenge of the unknown.

The next two stories are final reflections concerning the researching and writing processes undertaken to construct the preceding narratives. They build upon the earlier portrayals by depicting the underlying thoughts and emotions accompanying these experiences.

Chapter 7: Narratives – Final Reflections

The final two stories convey a greater level of self-reflection concerning the overall research experience. These stories are included next, as they were created from insights generated by the dilemmas and concerns within the teaching, writing and research process. I was mindful that I could not fully depict this study without also including these ‘behind the scenes’ emotions and contemplations. These stories act as reflective summaries to the previous writing, as they document the history of pains and joys taken to construct the earlier work. I therefore hoped to provide greater contextualization to this study, by revealing the intimate details of my research journey.

The Teaching Journey- Coming to Know the Other

This story is written about the advanced Academic writing classes I taught in my final year at the current University.

Slow Transformations

I do not know whether it is my classes or my teaching style that has changed, but this current group of students feels different. We cover ground at greater speeds, as certain instructions and ‘understandings’ are becoming more automatic. Sometimes I think such effortlessness comes from higher motivation levels, as these students need to acquire these skills to study overseas. Other times, the interaction between us feels so instinctive that I wonder if something more is at work. If the reasons do not lie with the participating students, I then wonder whether the answers can be found within me. Or maybe they lie with us both, as perhaps we have acquired expertise

through the familiarity of practice and the desire to learn.

The Authenticity, Harmony and Aesthetism of Teaching and Learning

Overall, I am becoming more confident about my work. My lessons seem lighter, as I am able to pick up cues from my students and tackle any existing problems with speed. I am also less self-conscious in the classroom, as I am no longer thinking so much about myself, or of how I appear to others. Feeling less inhibited, I can become more spontaneous and creative. What I have lived in terms of the writing process thus emerges, until I feel like I am becoming a part of the encounter itself.

Teaching writing opens up multiple opportunities to glimpse how pieces of understanding fall together, as the more I teach, the more I can instinctively recognize how others learn. I can therefore relax enough to go through the discovery process together with my students, without constantly second-guessing our interactions. This reminds me of writing from Chang Tzu, who explains how people cannot get angry at a boat blocking their path if there is no one steering it. It conveys the lightness that I feel when my lessons are free from own anxious need for control. During such times, I have little self-interest invested, aside from the aesthetic pursuit of learning. I am able to forget myself, as I am less burdened by the desire to ‘achieve’ results.

This aestheticism also extends to the learning process, as I see how my students’ minds work holistically. They take a complex bundle of intuitions, knowledge, experience, perceptions, and skills and slowly assimilate them. Their thoughts are also often abstract, as they attempt to comprehend things on a deeper level. They thereby continue to keep forming connections until

their understanding is more complete. This mutual desire for aestheticism opens up possibilities for relationship, as community is formed through our combined efforts to acquire completeness. Alternatively, I find myself resisting students who perceive me objectively, as a tool to be utilized. Our goals are no longer explicitly common, as they seem to be motivated more by results rather than the process of learning. The relationships formed with such students can be draining, as they often perceive me in terms of my 'usefulness,' rather than seeing me as someone who is also learning together with them.

An Example of Shin: The Beauty of the Learning Experience

Shin was a senior student who attended my short-term summer vacation writing class. His first assignment was a sophisticated brainstorm, outlining the solitude he felt from his impending graduation. After a quick overview of his thoughts, I felt that the categorization of his points could be extended further. Attempting to be 'helpful,' I introduced the idea of the loneliness experienced during times of transition. Over the next few days, Shin brainstormed further. Looking at his next assignment, I was disappointed to see his own notion of solitude disappear underneath my idea of transitioning. Due to his confusion, it seemed that he had chosen to write about the issues raised in our discussions. When expressing my disappointment to him, he quickly disbanded these ideas.

Shin also had difficulty in choosing an appropriate form for his writing. He spoke of his desire to write freely from his heart, since his previous studies revolved around such strict rules of organization. I too felt torn between the desires for a more fluid structure, despite having being quite firm in advocating a 'safe' but orthodox academic structure. However, though I ultimately

agreed that a more concrete form would detract from the raw power of Shin's writing, I also found it difficult to respond to something so aesthetic and personal. So when he approached me about this dilemma after class, rather than trying to resolve it, I just decided to listen to him speak, letting everything surrounding overtake me. The wind was blowing quite strongly, pushing and pulling at the willow trees nearby. Watching the erratic movements of their flaying branches, the stress of wrestling with my student's writing dissipated into the air. Similar to letting myself go to these forces of nature, I also decided to give Shin the freedom to write in his own particular style.

Later when he gave me his final essay, I marveled at how he had changed his topic to the immediate struggle of finding an essay topic. His essay further examined whether transitions were the root cause of his loneliness. Next, through the symbol of a turnstile and an elevator, he finally pondered whether his isolation and loneliness would remain as a constant factor throughout his life, by being an inevitable part of our human condition. This gentle tweaking of his topic was impressive, as it revealed the extent of the faith placed in his intuitions. The fluidness with which he redirected his writing from his mind to his heart was rare, as many students could not express their intuitions directly even after multiple faltering attempts. But Shin almost instantly chose which path to take and did not hesitate, even though it meant defying my instruction. His desire for aestheticism had taken priority over the formal guidelines I had set out.

At the next summer camp for humanities students, I read Shin's essay to my students. Though seeking to inspire my students, their response far exceeded my expectations. They

enthusiastically nodded their heads with affirmation, as they listened to Shin's difficulties in writing and his reflections on loneliness. They also sought me out after class, telling me how much his writing had touched them. Their gratitude made me realize how, glimpsing the authority of Shin's presence in his words, may have allowed them to realize the richness of voicing their own deepest concerns.

Fruits of Learning: Beginning of Transformations

Likewise, the most beautiful factor of my students' writing was the fact that it was their own. Another student Lee also commented on how his essay could act as a starting point for his journey to develop a more communicative view as a writing teacher. By expressing his genuine reservations, Lee could become more critical of his professional as well as personal writing practices. Overall, it seemed that Lee could become a better teacher, by voicing his unconscious concerns. I believed that the self-trust and hope developed through self-reflection could thereby start him on this journey of change.

The benefit of both Lee's and Shin's learning experience also transferred to me, as by watching them give voice to their concerns, my own instincts concerning their learning were confirmed.

This encouraged me to keep pursuing my own intuitions in teaching. Moreover, perhaps we were both mirroring confidence to each other by watching such changes take place.

In reading my students autobiographies, I am reminded once more of how colorful and passionate their lives are. There was a lot of hope in their descriptions of rising up against the hardship, the contradictions and the regrets that have shaped them. Life then seems beautiful regardless of its blemishes, and maybe even more so because of them. These small snippets of life's ins and outs give me the comfort that my own troubles are just one amongst many. (2007, December 12th)

Compulsiveness; Forgetting the Heart of the Matter

I need to try to follow this philosophy of self-learning, as students protest that I do not give them enough directions to follow. I need to trust in my own instincts, which tell me that students might naturally 'learn' if I withhold the 'answers,' even though they cannot see the purpose of letting their own thoughts emerge and evolve.

These classes show me the importance of connecting what we learn in class to life beyond. For if living really is an act of learning, I believe that the learning done in this class should then be an act of living life. (2007, December 14th)

When feeling insecure as a teacher, I cannot help but to also perceive myself, my teaching and my students objectively. I then begin bombarding my students with an overload of answers, trying to appease my inadequacy. This compulsiveness also surfaces when I paint, where I layer one colour upon another until they all merge into each other. Hence, I am left with murky streaks of paint that have lost their own distinctive shade. As a teacher, I make similar efforts to over-extend myself, trying to take control of my students' learning until I have sabotaged both our attempts to 'teach' and 'learn.'

Lastly, I also feel the weight of my students' hopes, as they wait expectantly for a magical solution to answer all their questions. I do not want to disappoint them, nor do I want to appear as someone who knows little about 'my' subject. A form of superficial self-interest is therefore present, as I feel pressured to prove my usefulness as their 'teacher.' However, such self-interest results in a similar desire to control the teaching and learning experience.

Finally letting things go

Since the act of teaching involves such inner struggles, it almost seems impossible not to reflect

on the experience. However, when feeling the most exhaustion and despair, I almost become too fearful to write, as the more I analyze my experiences the worse they become. I hate to become an outsider to my experiences, but this often happens as I record them. In my commentaries, I have caricatured people, depicting them as demons or as saints, and yet by doing so, I have barred myself from entering my own experiences. Even worse, I often minimize my own emotions, congratulating myself when things go well, or incriminating myself when things go badly. If student performance is low, I regard myself poorly, and when it is high, a part of me cannot help feeling overly prideful. This reliance on performance for credibility has always been quite painful. Writing has created such avenues for simplistic and superficial labeling, where I have used it to berate or overly congratulate myself.

In this sense, I have begun wondering about the possibility of having little or no expectations from the beginning. Instead of holding onto my preconceptions or assumptions, it seems better if I simply write, teach or live for the act itself. So although most beginnings are always a form of anticipation, I am learning not to project too far into the future, as I can never fully predict the outcome. All I can hope for is to do my best and let the rest go.

This reminds me of the movement of skilful swimmers, whose bodies are sculpted by their years in the water. Their bodies seem to command the space they occupy, as each of their motions follow with style and control. Their pace is leisurely and the feeling of harmony they exude is beautiful, as they occupy their space with such ease. Hence, their movements show me that although I cannot control the responses of others, at least I can acquire this sense of harmony in my own body and thoughts. So hopefully one day I may be able to break free from all the

commentaries and lose myself completely in the experience.

The following story introduces a final important factor of the researching and writing process, which is the validation received from others. This narrative acts as a closure to the above, by discussing the importance of dialogue as a means to expand upon self-exploratory studies. The feedback of the main character, Eliza, is interspersed throughout the narrative to support the ideas presented.

Eliza's Response – Dialogue and the Interrelatedness of Knowing

Relatedness through Stories

When my supervisor told me that her colleague in Australia, also an early career lecturer, was interested in taking a look my stories, a part of me felt surprise. Although I had previously argued for the value of subjectivity in qualitative research writing, I was still feeling a little doubtful about their academic credibility. But despite my doubts, I agreed to let her read them, as by that stage my ideas were beginning to stagnate.

I read Joanne's stories a few months ago when (Joanne's supervisor) suggested that I would find them helpful and relevant to my own experiences, moving to a new academic environment and struggling to understand and perform in the new context.

It was surprising to hear that Eliza had not only read, but had moreover felt a sense of connectedness to my stories. She wrote how my writing had helped her to access deeper emotions, such as the 'vivid' feelings of, “. . . incompetence, guilt and even anger towards (her) self,” evoked by a particular story "Hannah." The word, 'vivid,' seemed to highlight the depths and clarity of her feelings.

This notion of connectedness seemed clearer when reading about Eliza's initial hesitation in replying to "Hannah." Reading her reflections, I could imagine the energy needed to address her thoughts. Eliza wrote about the teaching vocation, and the prevailing sense of inadequacy felt by many practitioners. She also spoke of the paradox in being a teacher, who works both independently and in connection to a larger institution. Finally, she outlined the difficulty of expressing such reflections through writing. All these points gave form to my thoughts and hence provided my ideas with greater tangibility.

Overall, Eliza's response reflected back certain issues in my life more concretely, as I previously lacked the objectivity needed to separate distinct themes or ideas. Perhaps I was still too caught up in the emotional content of my stories to see otherwise. Still, it was interesting to note how Eliza had experienced a similar intellectual difficulty in relating to these stories.

After reading the stories again I feel more or less the same difficulty to relate to them to an 'intellectual' level.

It was also surprising for me to realize how much confirmation I had desired, as the resonance between Eliza's thoughts and my own brought about a huge sense of relief. It seemed her affirmation provided the approval needed to keep pursuing my intuitions. As rather than faltering in the dark, I now felt like I was involved in confronting the deepest issues related to the human heart.

Rereading the last page of 'Hannah's story', when the person who writes the story (Joanne) and the person that the story is about (Hannah) come together; become the reflection of each other but stay distinct –sharing similar burdens but having followed different paths, having taken different life decisions-, I felt the same strong and conflicted emotions.

Furthermore, it was interesting to recognize the similar forms of interrelatedness that I also sensed from my readings. I remembered how I felt about certain stories written by Irwin Yalom, concerning his practices as a psychologist. In 'Momma and the Search for Meaning,' he described the mysterious ways individuals responded to their existence and mortality. His portrayals of an individual's raw ontological essence were so poignant; that they would resurface during future moments in my life. This notion is written below in an entry from my own journal.

This project evolves. I know not how, but through incidental meetings and comments made by those passing by, I am beginning to realize that an encounter with the 'other' is not just an incidental experience. (2007, Sept 29th)

Possibilities for Further Dialogue

The encouragement felt from Eliza's response made me contemplate on showing these stories to others. For instance, I thought about sending 'Hamen' and 'Department' to the main characters that had inspired them. I had kept in touch with Hamen and was in email contact with Anne, who had left for the States. The contact made with Eliza excited me about the potential for further dialogue, at the same time, I was still fearful that these readers might call my writing into question. The possibility that they could negate my stories with different interpretations seemed like a frightening risk. Lastly, I also feared that individuals might react negatively to how I had portrayed them, especially concerning the issues related to their core. Perhaps I could have discussed how these points further prevented me from opening up to the other.

However, there are a couple of concepts that I sense that I approach from a different perspective than Joanne and I would love to know more about her approach but also about she thinks about where I come from.

Hence, if Eliza had not read nor responded to my stories, this opportunity to reflect would never have existed. She highlighted certain issues that I had been less aware of, such as the 'personal and group / social' notion of 'moral responsibility.' She also introduced notions of 'gender' perceived in 'Hannah' and 'Balance,' and issues of 'power' and 'ideology' within 'Department.' These notions had escaped my attention due to my focus on ontological aspects concerning the other. However, Eliza's questions opened up further lines of reflection, whilst also revealing the complexity and multifaceted nature of any given 'reading.' So despite my fears, the existence of different perspectives was what kept this particular discussion evolving.

For instance, Joanne's stories bring together personal and group/social moral responsibility. Her subtle, multilayered discussion is fascinating but I am wondering what she thinks about 'power' and 'ideology' (especially as it they are evident in the 'Department' story) and also about issues of 'gender' (both 'Hannah' and 'Balance' raise them).

Response to Eliza's Questions

So how was the theme of gender visible in 'Balance' and 'Hannah?' Perhaps the gender of both individuals influenced their portrayal, attributing to the delicacy and 'sensitivity' of Hannah, and the 'heroism' of 'Hamen.' Lastly, issues of 'power' and 'ideology' were less visible, as by the time that I had written 'Department,' I was somewhat accustomed to the cultural norms of a country previously governed by authoritarian regimes. I was therefore possibly less sensitive to any power and ideological struggles within this story. There were also factors concerning gender discrimination, which both Anne had I had experienced, as well as my own cultural identity as a Korean Australian, that I had not included due to the fear of getting side-tracked. However, perhaps such discussion would have reinforced the complexity of the other. So overall, Eliza's questions reminded me of the importance of critical dialogue for uncovering the 'other's' rich complexity.

"The emotions that are kept at bay"

In closing, a comment made by Eliza concerning, 'the emotions that are kept at bay,' remained with me. She described how we did not attend to deeper underlying emotions due to our busyness and our fears of confronting them. This comment struck a chord, as it represented the terror I felt in fearfulness. Perhaps my worst fears would have been realized at this point, as I would come face to face with what I had been neglecting. Then I would know what I had ultimately been missing out on.

However, it was only the last few days and with the start of the new academic year approaching fast that I realized that my reluctance had deeper causes. As I started worrying again about teaching, reprimanding myself for doing too little over the last months, fearing that I am not good enough and that the evidence from the last semester –that I can manage-

is accidental, I started thinking about Joanne's stories; what is to be a teacher, to work with young people and nurturing their dreams of shaping and improving the world (how little of that I believe that I did last semester), to be part of an institution (of an abstract entity that is defined by its members but it is at the same time independent of them), to struggle to express ideas and to put them on paper.

But despite regrets for not having reconnected with myself earlier, I felt reassured that I had finally recognized the rewarding possibilities of growth it enabled.

This is the final story recorded in the findings. It concludes the journey of recollections in my formative years of teaching. The discussions of the reflections generated by these narratives follow in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Discussion

This chapter introduces how the current study originated from desires to better understand the other within my teaching and learning practices. It also explains the importance of solitude, faith, whole heartedness and grace felt in struggling to know the other, especially in the education field.

How the Current Study Originated

The beginning of my teaching career brought on an endless of flow of stories and interesting encounters, which were often too overwhelming and complex to process. Desiring to understand them better, I decided to hold onto my experiences; instead of letting them just pass by. Since cultivating 'thoughtfulness' also required avenues for contemplation, I incorporated journaling and narrative writing to explore my teaching experience. I hoped that any commonality then perceived by readers would help them to rediscover hidden parallels in their own lives. This notion is expressed through Eliza in her feedback to my stories. Refer to Appendix 8.2.

The feelings have been there but the demands of the new working and teaching environment kept them at bay. Hannah's story triggered an outpour of emotions that I vividly remember after all these months. I read the other three stories and to different extent I related to all of them and promising to myself to send some comments to Joanne as soon as possible.

a) An Attitude of Curiosity and Concern about 'Original' Questions

This study therefore emerged from a desire to understand and hence develop greater competence over my profession. Through my readings, I could see how such concerns underpinned the research experience. For instance, Van Manen defines phenomenology (1997, p. 32) as the act of, ". . . reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon," describing how

research is evoked by curiosity towards phenomena. Van Manen (1997, p. 5) refers to such intellectual interest as one's desire to connect oneself to more universal forms of meaning. This curiosity is further paralleled to the empathetic mindset, which equates the desire to truly know about the other with concern. Accordingly, an individual's level of concern may be measured by how much time they invest exploring it (Van Manen, 1997, p. 5). This quest to investigate a particular phenomenon has been shown to commit individuals to the other they seek to know (Van Manen, 1997, p. 30).

Moreover, since the phenomena explored deals with the 'essence' of matter, any curiosity evoked is believed to be worth one's undivided attention. The word 'phenomena' itself is shown to suggest involvement on such a raw and elemental level (Van Manen, 1997, p. 41). Examples of phenomenological questions, such as, "What does it mean to be a teacher? What is teaching?" seemed to illustrate this idea of returning to the 'core' of the matter (Van Manen, 1997, p. 41). Our level of thoughtfulness is thereby believed to increase as we focus on the 'big picture' rather than on superficial distractions.

This idea became further relevant, as the more I explored my teaching practices, the more universal the themes became. For instance, this initial desire to understand my experiences finally resulted in deeper questions concerning the knowing process. These questions then led me to reflect on what it meant to know something in its original essence. Soon the daily stream of encounters within the knowing process began appearing like the small building blocks constructing my entire existence. So beginning with what was visible on the surface, I continued to form connections until more universal themes were uncovered.

b) Deeply Encountering and Living out one's Questions

Such investigations originate from similar depths, as exploring the 'essence' of matter is regarded as an intensely personal and 'real' act (Van Manen, 1997, p. 41). Van Manen introduces how individuals investigate experiences as they are lived rather than conceptualized (1997; 30). I similarly felt that a personal, rather than a theoretical basis, would help me to take genuine ownership of my work. Van Manen similarly highlights the value of personalizing one's research, depicting reading and writing as acts of 'reflective reliving,' which allow us to both deeply and personally re-encounter our experiences (1997, p. 30). The parallels between the actual life moment and its depiction may hence be so strong that they are almost interchangeable. For example, he refers to texts as records of lived experiences, indicating how its 'meaning structures' can be relived, as we 'experience it via reading' (1997, p. 30). By portraying experience as text, he thus claims that individuals can be transported back into the actual moment.

Given that such universal questions into the essence of matter can only be asked by tapping into something equally deep, even the desire to ask such questions are shown to originate from a similarly authentic place. Queries into the heart of matter are accordingly perceived to embody the vulnerability and authenticity of completeness. Likewise, critical research is believed to enable individuals to be both 'profoundly in' and in 'direct contact' with the world (Van Manen, 1997, p. 5). It is also regarded as a means for 'being and becoming,' in which one's capacity for understanding can flourish through honest and raw interactions with the other (Van Manen, 1997, p. 5). Being fully engaged in asking such core questions may thereby help individuals

access their full capacity for knowing. Through the process of writing and reflecting on my stories, I similarly wished to become more critically grounded as a teacher researcher.

c) The Inevitability of Asking such Questions

Even the desire to ask such questions into the 'essence' of being has been construed as an inevitable response to life. For instance, since life assumes a stream of encounters with the other, such as the given moment, an individual or one's circumstance, the freedom to live a thoughtful existence is also regarded as an unavoidable part of our human condition. Yalom (2002, p. 135) expresses this inevitability of 'authoring' our lives, stating, "Through the accretion of our choices, our actions, and our failures to act, we ultimately design ourselves. We cannot avoid this responsibility, this freedom." A similar sense of responsibility to understand my own teaching practices led me to undertake the current study.

Asking such questions concerning the other may highlight life's interrelatedness. Harris and Wasilewski (2004) explain how human beings are related not only to each other, but also to everything in the natural world by principles of responsibility and reciprocity. Accordingly, everyone and everything is conceived to have value, as they contribute to mutually active rather than coercive relationships. Likewise, this notion of reciprocity emphasizes the mutuality of the giving and receiving role, in which all things are shown to exist together in co-dependence. By perceiving themselves as both a receiver and a giver, individuals may hence acquire a stronger sense of purpose and belonging. Consequently, coexistence and mutual dialogue are argued to cultivate a harmonious, genuine and self-validating existence.

d) Writing as a means to access above

Lastly, as stated in the literature review, writing about one's practices may result from one's desire for meaning. Van Manen (1997, p. 88) explores how providing shape to the ineffable begins with this process of invention, illustrating how something can be displayed for viewing, when it is placed in a temporary form. He subsequently declares that human beings need to maintain ". . . an almost unreasonable faith in power of lingo to communicate the inexpressible" (Van Manen, 1997, p. xiv), to discover and enhance the ability to perceive what is hidden. In 'The Process of Writing,' I expressed a similar longing to use writing to make my thoughts tangible.

Investigating the Knowing Process via Empathy

A curiosity concerning how the other manifested in my teaching and learning experiences has thus motivated the current study. This study also investigates whether such relationships with the other were based on an I-It or an I-You relationship. Parallels can be drawn between this notion of empathy and Martin Buber's description of the I-You union. Empathy is acknowledged as a form of I-You interaction, in which the "experiencing whole self of one person speaks to the experiencing whole self of the other" (Davis, 2003). Knowing the other as it reveals itself is thereby regarded as the deepest possible way to experience it.

Since empathy is perceived to lie beyond the knower's control, grace is depicted as a key element of the I-You encounter, as individuals may not be able to experience the other without its consent. Davis (2003) explains how such a deep relationship assumes vulnerability, "This view of empathy involves a far richer interaction than simply projecting one's ideas and feeling into

the other, or taking the other's perspective, and introduces the spiritual aspect of experience.”

Rather than control, the ‘You’ is then shown to meet the ‘I’ through a natural encounter of grace and good will. The creative encounter implies such merging between two centres, where the knower interacts with the other according to its natural rhythm and sense of timing. Davis (2003) extends this view to life in general, proposing that authentic human existence revolves around the mutual meeting of the I-You encounter.

Difficulties of Anxiety

The I-You form of knowing is also argued to bring about an equally high level of anxiety, given the profundity of the encounter. This intensity is regarded as a type of collision, where the self comes into direct contact with a world of completely different meaning structures. The ensuing conflict in views is believed to evoke a feeling of groundlessness, in which one’s frameworks for interpreting the world are temporarily shaken (May, 1994, p. 93). Tillich (1997, p. 46) appropriately labels this experience as the, 'anxiety of nothingness' and of 'non-being.' Although he expresses empathy for those who fear such uncertainty, Tillich encourages us to be versatile in embracing these moments as creative possibilities for living (1997, p. 66). May (1994, p. 93) further explains how creative individuals can tackle such moments of 'non-being' head-on, by forcing them to produce meaning instead of fleeing from them. In light of uncertainty's creative power, May (1994, p. 93) urges us to be courageous and vulnerable, despite the pain of uncertainty.

An Example of the Creative Encounter: the Fruits of Overcoming Anxiety

The creative encounter has also been referred to as an intense act of absorption, in which one

completely abandons oneself in an encounter (May, 1994, p. 21). Moreover, it is asserted that this heightened awareness is commonly characterized by the holy and ephemeral feelings of grace. Such complete immersions of our senses are believed to be induced by universally transcendent subject matter (May, 1994, p. 89). Symbols are shown to carry these deeply embedded archetypal forms of meaning that retains the living essence of an actual encounter (May, 1994, p. 86).

The Importance of Faith, Affirmation, Wholeheartedness and Doubt

Anxiety and despair were thus my frequent companions as I waited for my stories to unveil themselves. In 'The Process of Writing,' I described my attempts to escape anxiety by contriving rather than discovering my stories. As though I realized how my actions could diminish a story's emotional power of authenticity, the empty spaces on my pages were even more daunting. Pearce introduces this point through her description of how to write a book. She declares that 'forcing a story' is just as detrimental as giving up on it, as it would inadvertently destroy the life it contains (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977, p.182). She proposes that individuals instead need to wait patiently for it to grow naturally, without trying hard to 'reason' through the process (p.182).

a) Trust, Faith and Openness

In terms of the I-You encounter, respecting that the other has a sense of self beyond the knower's projections seemed to prevent individuals from overlooking its presence. Again, such trust assumed grace, where the other would extend its good will, even when least expected. The importance of grace for receiving the richness present can be seen in the story 'Faith,' which

defines faith as the quality that provides us with the confidence to grow according to the potential perceived.

Furthermore, Palmer (2003, p. 23) describes how faith can help us live out the full breadth of human emotion, stating, "The deeper our faith, the more doubt we must endure; the deeper our hope, the more prone we are to despair; the deeper our love, the more grief we are likely to know." Hence, it is asserted that the more open we become through faith, the greater our pain and joy will be. Openness is thus proved to evoke the most growth, when it extends into the painfully unexplored and neglected areas of our lives. Rilke (1984, p. 93) holds these areas to be the most fertile for healing and rejuvenation. He therefore encourages us to experience the full spectrum of human experience by cultivating openness in such areas.

Through my readings, the greater possibility within 'wrestling' with my silence surfaced, as I saw examples of certain writers who flourished from this process (May, 1994, p. 93). Additionally, I could perceive examples of courage in students like Shin and Lee, who were taking leaps of faith in their writing. The gratitude felt by other students who glimpsed their courage and sincerity reminded me of how 'sacred' and transforming the learning process could be. Their real experiences of learning conveyed a wealth of understanding that my simple instruction could not achieve.

b) Affirmation via Participation

Not only is one required to have faith in the other's autonomy, the I-You encounter itself is perceived as an act of participation. Tillich (1997, p. 108) describes 'being' as something

essentially productive in nature. He also regards it to be a self-affirming force that allows individuals to participate in creating meaning (p. 46). Individuals are thereby shown to acquire dignity and express self-love by actively 'authoring' their life. For instance, creativity has been perceived as an act of 'spiritual affirmation,' in which individuals can participate meaningfully within their context (Tillich, 1977, p. 46). Such creative forms of participation are believed to transform one's being, which Tillich describes stating:

Everyone who lives creatively in meanings affirm himself (sic) as a participant in these meanings. He affirms himself as transforming reality and creatively. He loves himself as participating in the spiritual life and as loving its contents. He loves them because they are his own fulfillment and because they are actualized through him (1977, p. 46).

Consequently, individuals are shown to actualize themselves as they participate in their discoveries. They are also regarded to love the content of their discovery, as they perceive their own presence within it. Tillich defines this interaction as a form of 'spiritual self-affirmation,' in which individuals can ". . . participate meaningfully in their original creations. . . [by] alter[ing] and [being] changed by the meaning discover[ed]" (1977, p. 46).

Despite the confusion caused by subjectivity, I felt that it helped to affirm my own presence. However, as discussed in 'The Process of Writing,' such acts of self-affirmation were also a heavy burden. I was often torn between the desire to create compelling and emotionally stirring stories, and yet I was unsure of whether I could commit to such a task. May (1994, p. 13) similarly relates how courage is vital for realizing the possibility of 'becoming,' where individuals can inherit a sense of being and dignity by actively constructing their lives.

c) Wholeheartedness and Passion

During the moments that I could wholeheartedly embrace the writing process, words would flow fluidly onto my page and time would pass unawares. I would focus simply on the writing process itself and all other thoughts would be forgotten. Through such strong connections with my own writing, I hoped that readers could similarly engage deeply with the experience recorded.

Accordingly, such forms of wholeheartedness are asserted to originate from a mind unified by a single focus. The alternative is regarded as the broken concentration of self-consciousness and anxiety (Yalom, 1989, p. 11). Merton (1965, p. 28) also defines this sense of 'scatteredness' as a 'patchwork' mindset, which lacks the spontaneity of being deeply in tune with our own selves and surroundings. This feeling of superficiality and separateness seemed particularly acute during moments when I had lost my sense of centre. During such moments, my mind would be too scattered to convey anything coherently.

Grace, however, is shown to override such separation by unifying everything into itself. Given without expectation, it is also believed to engulf any divisiveness or conflict. Watts defines such self-expansive love, stating, “. . . love is the organizing and unifying principle which makes the world a universe and the disintegrating mass a community. It is the very essence and character of mind and becomes manifest in action when the mind is whole” (1974, p. 117). In the current study, I felt that grace was visible in the 'other's' defiance of my efforts to separate it into little 'knowable' parts.

d) Importance of Doubt

Like the multifacetedness of life, the pursuit of the I-You knowing encounter is also construed as being inherently paradoxical. Hence, the credibility of any 'truth' is shown to lie in the

coexistence of doubt and trust. Moreover, doubt is believed to imply a greater respect for the 'truth,' by acknowledging the unknowable and mysterious nature of the other. May (1994, p. 93) further highlights the importance of openness through illustrating how the search for 'truth' is a 'never dying process' due to 'truth's' unfathomable nature. He concludes that individuals must thereby be prepared for a similarly endless search towards understanding. May (1994) additionally emphasizes the need for vulnerability and compassion amongst doubt, due to the lack of closure concerning life 'truths.' Commitment is thus claimed to be healthiest, not without, but in spite of one's doubts.

Though the constant presence of doubt was exhausting, its absence seemed to imply that my ideas had become static. Similar to using pain as a measurement for feeling, the presence of doubt seemed to signify that my words still contained life. The ability to keep asking questions then kept pushing this study along to new levels of possibility. Ultimately, a balance needed to be reached, as too much doubt paralyzed me with self-consciousness.

e) Need for Solitude

Finally, as summarized in the literature review, the outer conditions of silence and solitude helped me to be receptive to the other. Solitude is perceived to create a space for individuals to recollect themselves to a state of readiness and to listen to the other's voice. The writing process in particular seemed to facilitate such moments of solitude and contemplation. In 'The Process of Writing,' I described how periods of reflection became the markers to navigate my experiences, as thoughts of who I was and what I endeavored to achieve were lost without them. Writing therefore enabled the momentary 'escape' needed to refocus on the core principles grounding my

profession.

Transcendence: The Fruit of Deeply Encountering the Other

Thus, by persevering with trust, whole-heartedness and doubt, it is believed that we can receive the fruits of deeply encountering the other. Furthermore, it is argued that we may acquire a sense of holism via empathetic awareness that helps us fulfill our human capacity for imagination, understanding and morality.

a) Healing via Wholeness

Solitude is also proposed to facilitate a more humanistic awareness that reconnects us to ourselves and others on a deeper emotional level. The Greek definitive of the word healing depicts empathy as the restoration of something fragmented. In this sense, a healer is shown to help people become whole, by allowing them to reconnect to their own selves and to others. Individuals may thus be able to reconnect with the parts of their inner lives, to gain a sense of harmony and completeness (Jackson, 2001). They may no longer be scattered or disconnected from their essence, but can instead form clearer pictures of oneself and harmonizing relationships with others (Watts, 1974). This may allow them to develop greater appreciation for others, as they regard their own selves with similar respect.

The wholeness I felt in being able to reconnect with the deeper recesses within myself was equally life-giving, as I could start anew with in a fuller understanding of my experiences. Subsequently, I could become more thoughtful and attentive to the other, rather than being overly focused on my own self. Giving more respect to the mystery of the other and its capacity

for revelation was freeing, as I was no longer compelled to be in complete control of the knowing process.

b) Wholeness via Empathetic Interconnectedness

Like grace, empathy is regarded as a similarly powerful bond that draws things together. This process is shown to occur in stages, beginning with an emotional 'crossing over,' followed by an intellectual shift, and finally an attempt to reach out to the other on an altruistic level. According to Davis (2003), the empathetic reaction is initiated by a powerful emotional response. This response is claimed to place individuals in the other's position, as they momentarily lose their sense of self. Empathy has hence been regarded as the imaginative tool used to project oneself into the place of another, as individuals relax the controlling and regulating forces of their logical minds (Davis, 2003). New meaning is believed to emerge through such emotional and intuitive exchanges.

Ultimately, empathy and creativity are defined as a form of interpersonal relatedness that enables individuals to feel the emotions of another like their own (Jackson, 2001). Jackson (2001) gives an example of empathy in a therapeutic situation, outlining how healers can imaginatively enter the sufferer's inner world to form a healing connection with them. Polyani also defines (1967, p. 53) empathy as a form of indwelling, which Watts (1974, p. 103) reiterates stating, that to know anything truly, ". . . [you] cannot stand outside it and define, you must enter into it, be it, and feel it," implying how creativity lies at the heart of empathy and other such deep connections to the other.

This reconnecting process is perceived to take place on the deepest possible level, where individuals can 'cross over' into the 'lived experience of the other by forming an emotional connection with it (Davis, 2003). Emotions are construed as being tools powerful enough to form deep bonds with others. Additionally, such shared experiences of meaning are asserted to create a ripple effect, in which communities of people are brought together (Davis, 2003). In fact, this process of crossing over is perceived to be 'more complex and involuntary' than the simple act of putting oneself in the place of the other. It is regarded as a pattern of interaction, in which one synchronizes one's person's field of being with another's (Davis, 2003). Empathy can thus be described as a constant emotional communion between the inner essences of individuals.

In the current study, empathy allowed me to form connections with the characters in my stories. For example, in 'Acceptance,' I could connect to the appreciation felt by a student through recognizing my own needs for validation. Similarly, in 'Hamen,' I could recognize in myself the fears that might have motivated him to avoid vulnerability. Lastly, my own feelings of inadequacy may have led me to write about Hannah's failure to complete my course. I also hoped that others could form empathetic bonds with my stories by being able to relate to it on an emotional level.

c) Empathy as Transcendence in Being

Imagination has thereby been defined as a state of transcendence, as it stretches people beyond what they perceive to be possible. Davis (2003) depicts this shift as the ability to ". . . connect[ing] with that which goes beyond description," where empathetic individuals can access a wider pool of shared emotions by viewing the other from its own particular stance. These

individuals may be able to strike greater connections with others, and hence enhance their overall capacity for human feeling. In 'The Department,' being in a similar position of victimization may have similarly enabled Anne to enter empathetically into the difficulties of her co-workers. Unlike the administration, it seemed that Anne had been able to use her suffering to show compassion for others. This growing sense of integrity then seemed to embody a holistic and almost omniscient outlook. It seemed that she could recognize her interrelatedness with us through her resonating experiences.

Being able to perceive the world from another's perspective has therefore been associated with 'responsible' living. Friedland (1999) depicts interconnectedness to underpin ethical forms of decision making, as it takes into account another's welfare. He illustrates how individuals can practice compassion, as they free themselves from self-absorption to consider the desires of others. He further depicts this state of compassion through the Buddhist term 'equanimity,' where individuals can let go of needless preoccupation to focus on their surroundings. Moreover, sensitivity towards the 'interests and intentionality' of others is shown to increase as individuals experience the virtue of making firm ethical stands for others (Friedland, 1999).

In 'The Department', Anne and Ross's conflicts with the administration highlighted the importance of individual morality in relating to the other. For instance, without empathetic awareness, the administration had superficially depicted the foreign teachers as 'rebellious' workers. Hence, by perceiving the teachers through a superficial 'us' versus 'them' view, they acted according to such a power structure, rather than trying to resolve issues through dialogue.

The Elusiveness of the Other: An Unknowable mystery

Aside from the lack of readiness, relating to the other was also difficult due to its elusiveness.

For example, seeking to know the other was both a confusing and frustrating endeavor due to paradox. Paradox, however, has been argued to provide the balance, holism and energy needed to drive our existence. Individuals are therefore asked to overcome their fears of uncertainty, to embrace paradox's potential power.

a) Creativity: an Example of Paradox

Paradox is perceived to be visible in the creative encounter, which is shown to contain both the freedom of boundless energy, as well as the borders needed for definition. May (1994, p. 113) firstly explains how the creative act rises up by struggling against certain boundaries. For instance, struggling with one's limited understanding is likened to the energy generated in pressure chambers, where creative insights may emerge as chambers of thought burst (May, 1994, p. 113). He thus proposes that creativity needs form to translate into meaningful action, as unguided creativity may develop into psychosis. Neihart (1998) similarly illustrates how creative people can cross over the borders between the rational and irrational, due to their flexibility and fluidity of thought. Such individuals are claimed to possess an uncommonly high tolerance for deviance and irrationality, an ability to form original connections, as well as a tendency to form combinations that blur conceptual boundaries (Neihart, 1998). Accordingly, subconscious, spontaneous and intuitive thinking has often been perceived as a regression into primitive thought. The raw power of instinct can thereby defy logic and help us access our latent creativity.

b) The Power of the Extremes: Hamen

The power of extremes became increasingly visible through the course of writing my stories. I felt it most keenly through the character of 'Hamen,' who displayed creative movements between extroversion and introversion. It seemed that these extreme highs and lows of emotion helped to make Hamen into a particularly colourful and unique individual. I also felt that he was able to maintain his strong sense of passion by continually moving between both opposite poles.

c) Life as an Inevitable Movement between Extremes

Movement between opposite extremes is claimed to be inevitable due to the necessity of change and continuity. Palmer (2003) illustrates the impossibility of remaining at one extreme, describing how idealists often burn out under the strain of trying to meet the perceived needs of the world. He indicates how there will always be an infinite number of needs, which far exceed our capacity to fulfill, stating, ". . . I need to know with real clarity what gift or resource has grown within me that is now ready to be harvested and shared. If it is my gift to give, native to my own inner soil, I can give it without depleting myself: that gift will grow again, in due season" (Palmer, 2003). This notion of balance and harmony is likened to the natural law of the passing seasons. It is believed that these natural cycles of life, such as the stages of harvest, connect to the universal conditions governing the world. I could also sense this changing cycle of seasons through the emotional landscape of Hamen's teaching career.

d) The Wholeness of Opposites: Hannah

Like the movement between two opposites in the natural world, their coexistence reflected the

wholeness of a two-sided picture. For instance, through writing 'Hannah,' I keenly experienced the contrasting desires to achieve and to let go of such efforts to strive. As though the story first seemed to be about a student who had lost faith in her own abilities, the emerging themes of compulsion, striving and guilt revealed how I had been describing my own feeling of inadequacy as a teacher.

Miller and Stroh (1994) reaffirm this importance of acknowledging what is hidden, by describing how certain individuals resolve dilemmas by choosing one option at the expense of another. They warn how such superficial settlements can have a negative outcome, indicating how what is ignored may fester in the dark (Miller & Stroh, 1994). Likewise, the guilt within 'Hannah' also continued to perpetuate, until it had become a part of my teaching identity. Through replaying this narrative of insufficiency, I had thereby come to limit my own abilities as a teacher. However, through the guise of writing a story about a student, I was able to safely confront my hidden self-perceptions. Knowing the true motivations behind 'Hannah' then provided a new lease on freedom, as I could replace this self-deprecating narrative with one based on self-awareness and grace.

Alternatively, individuals are shown to avoid paradox by seeking comfort and security. Miller and Stroh (1994) identifies some of these avoidance tactics as being, opting for one extreme over another, being paralyzed in one's decision making or achieving a superficial consensus between opposing groups. Examples of such tactics were evident in the straightforward, 'black' and 'white' pictures I had painted of certain characters. In terms of 'The Department' and 'Acceptance,' the administration and Tracy were depicted negatively, as I wanted to convey a certain message

concerning the I-It encounter. Hence, I negated any contrasting details that disturbed or conflicted with these portrayals, fearing that they would conflict with my depictions.

e) Learning to Approach Paradoxes: Faith

However, rather than living with the comfort of a limited one-dimensional view; it is believed that individuals must commit themselves to what elicits growth. Accordingly, Miller and Stroh (1994) assert that growth occurs when individuals immerse themselves in opposing forces in order to construct new connections. This awareness of conflict is seen to gradually submerge with familiarity, until it is finally forgotten. Miller and Stroh (1994) present this view through the analogy of learning to ride a bicycle. They describe how the nervous teetering of a learner transforms into the beauty of momentum, as an awareness of the two sides disappears.

Learning to write through an understanding of paradox has formed the major struggle of my stories, as I hoped to avoid projecting one-sided views of the other. Though these attempts were often unsuccessful, there were also moments when paradox would emerge in my reflections through the contrasting interpretations. During these times, the initial awkwardness of managing two extremes corresponded to the act of learning to ride a bicycle, as the perceived opposites slowly began to merge. Similarly, my tentativeness also slowly disappeared as I saw insights surface.

We may thus need to receive paradox with faith when our logic fails us, in order to move beyond our expectations (Bullough, 2005). For example, it is asserted that we may be able to uncover our hidden potential, when we are stretched to our maximum capacity. Likewise, faith was a key

theme in 'Hamen,' as his unique school environment may have evoked a sense of vitality, by pushing beyond his everyday capacity for being. Furthermore, Neihart (1996) describes this state as the emergence of one's primitive self, from which one draws energy and inspiration. Neihart (1996) also expresses how the lessons received from personal suffering may enhance an individual's level of faith. This notion is visible in the story of 'Faith,' in which the difficulties of teaching challenging classes allowed me to grow to meet the challenges of my tasks.

The 'Truth' about Grace

Though grace has been the least discussed theme, it is perhaps the most central to the I-You encounter. Grace is regarded to far exceed and defy the parameters of our logical mind. Being the pinnacle of human capacity, all calculations are also argued to be unnecessary beyond this point. Consequently, grace is believed to imply that the knower can simply trust in the other, regardless of the circumstance. Stegner, who describes the intense feeling of belongingness felt whilst camping underneath the stars, relays this firm trust:

It came from unimaginably far places, across a vast emptiness, below millions of polished stars. And yet its touch was soft, intimate and reassuring, and my panic went away at once. That wind knew me. I knew it. Every once in a while, sixty-six years after that baptism in space and night and silence, wind across grassland can smell like that to me, as secret, perfumed, and soft, and tell me who I am (Webb, 1994, p. 345).

Grace is shown to emerge, as we perceive our belongingness in a meaningful and harmonious universe. Individuals are thereby asserted to experience a great sense of inner peace and joy, as they accept, trust and value each moment in life. Peck (1993) describes such a peace of mind,

stating, "Now what better news can there be than that we cannot lose, we are bound to win? We are guaranteed winners once we simply realize that everything that happens to us has been designed to teach us what we need to know on our journey" (p. 24). Likewise, grace is believed to ensue, as we trust in a higher power guiding the universe. Hoffman confirms this notion through introducing one of Einstein's credos inscribed at Princeton University, "God is subtle, but he is not malicious." He relates this message to grace, stating, "By this Einstein meant that scientists could expect to find their task difficult, but not hopeless: the Universe was a Universe of law, and God was not confusing us with deliberate paradox" (Webb, 1994, p. 18).

Grace is thereby absent in stories that perpetuate guilt and inadequacy, such as 'Hannah.' A similar experience has been described by Anne Dilliard, a well-known writer, who reflects on an experience of running away from a kindly old neighbor. She describes the guilt harbored from this event, stating, "The trouble was, I hadn't forgiven myself. I was still brooding over it all when I was thirty" (Webb, 1994, p. 79). Like my experience with 'Hannah,' Dilliard was also able to liberate herself from such negativity by rewriting more life-enhancing forms of narrative. Her story also indicates how grace can lie at the core of the I-You knowing process, as the knower and the other unifies in a relationship of compassion rather than negativity.

Implications of Above

Encountering the other is depicted as an inevitable response to living life. Therefore, individuals are encouraged to pursue a sense of openness with discipline and joy, to attain authenticity and to overcome despair.

a) Interacting with the Other: A Journey of Continual Openness

Since we live in a world inhabited by the other, our life may revolve around a stream of encounters. This continual flow of interactions has been likened to a journey consisting of difficulties and joys. These journeys are shown to begin with a call or a desire to explore the other, and then a shift towards the struggle of opening up to the unknown. The analogy of a journey has been particularly suitable, as through the 'Process of Writing' and 'The Teaching Journey,' I have sought to record the arduousness of the teaching, writing and researching process. The overall destination has thus been to portray the struggles and joys of my attempts to deeply encounter the other.

Such a process of journeying has been described as a pilgrimage, as it is suggested that individuals need to physically remove themselves from their hectic environment, to escape from the meaningless preoccupations of living. Westerhoff describes how such journeys help individuals regain a sense of centering and renewal (Bolin & Falk, 1987). In the case of the current study, the story writing process became a pilgrimage taken to re-confront my practices with renewed confidence and hope.

b) Discipline

Undertaking such journeys to understand the other is deemed difficult considering the fear and anxiety involved. Without consistent efforts for discipline, it may thus be hard to gather up enough confidence to venture out into the unknown. Yalom (2002) illustrates how Abraham Lincoln similarly stressed the importance of discipline and preparation, by indicating how many more hours were needed to sharpen an axe, compared to the actual hours used to fell a tree. He

thereby encourages us to keep refining our minds against fear and laziness. The value of discipline was also evident in the current study, as much effort was needed to bring my mind to a state of receptiveness, and to make my intuitions comprehensible. Hence, both capturing and conveying meaning required high levels of discipline and concentration.

c) Joy in Pain: Living Life

The hard work of discipline is nevertheless argued to be well worth the effort, considering that our goal is greater self-understanding. Rilke (1984, p. 56) explains the preciousness of self-knowledge, stating, "what is happening in your innermost self is worthy of your entire love. . . [so] work at it." He asks that we do not to waste too much time being overly concerned about what others may think about us, and encourages us to let life progress naturally with hope and confidence. This process is likened to the ripening of fruit or the coming of spring, where one's being may gradually evolve. Rilke (1984) illustrates how people must learn to enjoy this form of endurance, by letting their lives grow silently, holistically, sincerely and without fears. He thereby entreats individuals to live out their questions with trust, ". . . let life happen to you, life is always right" (Rilke, 1984, p. 101), to make the best of any opportunities afforded. Rejoicing in the painful unknown and embracing the acuteness of living is thus a brief overview of Rilke's life philosophy.

d) The Fruits of Authenticity and Personal Power

Opening oneself up to the pain of uncertainty can then evoke authenticity and personal power, as individuals become present to daily life. Subsequently, rather than limiting their own experiences by objectifying themselves and the other, they may receive the greater possibilities within it. This

self-affirmation may help individuals in reclaiming the integrity that comes from ‘authoring’ one’s own words and actions, thus enabling more self-determined life choices (Kornfield, 1983). Furthermore, Merton (1992) conveys how individuals need to become authentic before they can occupy themselves with other concerns. Therefore, rather than pursuing other external life matters, he believes that individuals must first acquire their own personal authenticity, stating:

So before we can become prophetic, we have to be authentic human beings. . . who can create their own existence, who have within themselves the resources for affirming their identity and their freedom in any situation in which they find themselves (Merton, 1992, p. 21).

Merton subsequently declares that a personal sense of freedom is achieved by expressing and affirming one’s own being. With such rewards in sight, he urges us to continue our journey of self-discovery with joy and excitement.

e) The Alternative of Despair

Having courage in openness is believed to lead to emancipation, whilst the alternative is defined as despair (Tillich, 1997; 66). Yalom (1989, p. 35) gives such an example through ‘wishblocked’ individuals, who are no longer in touch with their desires. He states that without one’s own thoughts, individuals will lead a parasitic existence by feeding on the inclinations of others (Yalom, 1989, p. 35). Hence, without an authentic centre, such individuals may come to rely on others to gain a sense of being. Yalom (1989) ironically dismisses such forms of over-dependency as being ‘tiresome.’

Significance of the Study to the Education Field

Accordingly, the significance of the I-You knowing encounter in the education field may lie in the possibility of more critical and creative teaching and learning practices. Such practices are

argued to be vital considering the growing objectification of education.

a) Problems of Objectification and the Knowing Process

As discussed in the literature review, it is claimed that the objectifying I-It relationship diminishes the knowing process, as superficial preconceptions are imposed onto the other. The problems of viewing our teaching subject, ourselves as teachers and our students through the I-It frame of knowing are further explained below.

i) Of Our Subject

Firstly, it has been proposed that the objectifying I-It view has detracted from the overall learning experience, by diminishing the view of our subject matter. For example, Nall (2004) describes how generalizations can be formed where individuals readily accept easy offers of theories and abstractions for 'acquiring' knowledge. Such propositioning of knowledge is regarded as being only temporarily satisfying, when over-simplified answers supplant the real experience of 'truth.' Unfortunately, Nall (2004) asserts that students will commonly experience these limits to their natural inquisitiveness in their academic careers. He subsequently defines I-It mindset values to increase our knowledge, but identifies I-You learning to be what truly affects our life. Nall (2004) asks teachers to facilitate the I-You form of knowing in students by displaying their own understanding, especially since teaching involves relaying abstract information that, ". . . cannot be assumed from first principles or inferred from appeal to common humanity" (Nall, 2004). However, he also acknowledges how transferring knowledge in the academic context inevitably involves the labeling and portioning of 'truth,' stating, "The I-It way of knowing, the only transferable way of knowing, is a beast fleshed out from differences

and distances." He believes that this is a natural part of the teaching process, as individuals face the 'I-It' dilemmas as they render their subject knowable to others.

ii) Of Ourselves as Teachers and our Students

This I-It perspective can also translate to the teacher's selfhood, as teachers who are obsessed with technique may ignore the underlying mood of the classroom. Palmer (2003) highlights the importance of a teacher's selfhood, indicating how a teacher's given response is unconsciously influenced by their interpretations of themselves, their students and their subject matter, rather than the mechanics of teaching. He further declares that the greatest obstacle to good teaching is the low regard of student ability, which may cultivate teaching practices that, " . . . induce vegetative states (p. 34)." A similar process of mind dulling is believed to be visible in students who chase after objectivist views of knowing. This point is illustrated by Rodriguez's description of students who pursue achievement over authentic thinking;

The scholarship boy (sic) is a very bad student. He is the great mimic; a collector of thoughts, not a thinker, the very last person in class who ever feels obliged to have an opinion of his own. . . He relies on his teacher, depends on all that he hears in his classroom and reads in his books. . . (Webb, 1994, p. 213).

Palmer (2003) extends this view to teachers themselves, asserting how they may fearfully objectify themselves and their students, by shying away from what lies beyond their control. He proposes that this fear must be acknowledged and overcome, in order to embrace communities of honesty and openness. It is asserted that individuals must fulfill their potential to choose more life inducing elements, such as humility, love and efforts to understand, over depleting forces like fear, power and ego. Accordingly, we are urged to choose the more self-empowering 'conversations' that help us become explorers of our lives.

The plight of modern day individuals is subsequently shown to lie in their inability to recognize their own richness, and hence achieve their possibilities for being. An analogy of a folktale from Central Asia expresses such a view, where a robber sells an exquisite and priceless rug at a hundred gold pieces, as he could not fathom a higher number existing (Hendricks & Fadiman, 1976, p. 23). Likewise, individuals are shown to limit their lives and attain only a fraction of their potential due to the lack of vision.

b) Developing I-You Teaching and Learning Practices

To escape from the objectivist forms of knowing listed above, teachers are asked to develop a greater sense of openness and to be creative in listening out for the other.

i) Creative Receptiveness to the Other

Due to the limitations of the I-It knowing encounter, teachers have explored the possible practical ways to access the raw power within one's own selfhood (Palmer, 2003). One method suggested has been the use of alternative materials such as poetry and art. The metaphors inherent to these mediums are shown to generate further insights by offering alternative points of views. Palmer (2003) examines the usefulness of metaphors, explaining how it can help us project ourselves into images of who we want to be and what we want to achieve. These projections are believed to make us available to ourselves in surprisingly fresh ways, as we forego the rationalizing and editing processes of logic. Metaphors were also used in the current study to evoke creative views concerning my practices and myself.

ii) Greater Openness to the Other

Palmer additionally reveals a form of teaching and learning practice that may cultivate the open practices illustrated above (2003). He describes the voluntariness of the pedagogy of the soul, in which individuals ask open and honest questions that allow them to, ". . . hear each other into deeper and deeper speech." He thus urges individuals not to forget this simple principle of communication, "No fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting straight," in order to bring about this perfect state of openness and trust (2003, p, 44). This idea of not fixing the other, whether it be my stories or my students' assignments was difficult to accomplish, as I was too driven by anxiety. During such times, I kept fearfully reconstructing certain details until the overall picture was lost.

Another form of openness is visible in the student teacher relationship. It is asserted that this relationship is most empowering when both individuals can research their intuitive experiences of the other together. Teachers are thus shown to share the responsibility of actively constructing the learning experience with their students. Likewise, students can also free themselves from hollow or meaningless activities, as they participate in 'constructing' their own learning (Ayers & Schubert, 1992). In this way, teachers and students are regarded as co-researchers, who are undertaking journeys of the I-You process of knowing together.

c) Examples of Such Teaching Practices

Reflecting upon and sharing one's critical moments are believed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the other. Moreover, teachers are also encouraged to cultivate paradox, in order to further develop I-You forms of knowing.

i) Critical Moments

Critical moments are similarly regarded to help teachers become honest and nonjudgmental of their practices. Palmer (2003) describes how sharing critical turning points concerning one's practices can help individuals confront their more vulnerable and transformative teaching moments. These 'public' conversations are also shown to lend a feeling of mutual solidarity, as people use their experiences to act as a model for others. Teachers may then be able to explore possible identities freely, without being obliged to conform to them. Palmer (2003) maintains that such free and critical exchange amongst independent practitioners is a mark of an autonomous profession. Likewise, recording the critical moments of encountering my fellow colleagues Hamen, Tracy and Anne; the department; my students Hannah; and the teaching and writing processes, has helped me to reconstruct the path taken in my teaching journey. This overview of my past gave me a sense of rootedness, appreciation and a renewed sense of hope for future moments.

ii) Cultivating Paradoxes

The spirit of inquiry and openness is also believed to emerge through certain breaks in logic. Miller and Stroh (1994) propose how the illogical can be used to expand one's understanding, citing how opposing and multiple viewpoints challenge the assumption that opposites cannot coexist. These conscious efforts to create opposition are shown to generate a more accurate and holistic outlook, by providing the alternate sides of a view (Miller & Stroh, 1994). Educators, however, are asked to maintain an even distribution of uncertainty and security to ensure optimal learning conditions.

The conclusion further elaborates on the limitations, strengths and implications of this particular research. As the final chapter, it serves as a reflective closure, by offering suggestions for further research emerging from the current study.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter is a culminating discussion, drawing together the key findings of the current study. It acknowledges the possible limitations of subjectivity and attempts to validate this factor by discussing the objectives of the current research. Further recommendations for future inquiry are also suggested, as this chapter concludes with reflections on the teacher-researcher's journey towards understanding the other.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the benefits of an autoethnographic study, it has often been criticized for its idiosyncratic data and romantic depiction of events. Due to the inadequacy of language, it is also claimed to be weak in conveying the full depth of a research situation.

a) A Singular Perspective

In spite of the importance of self-study for exploring one's own teaching practices, this factor was also a basis of the study's limitations. For example, because the focus was placed on one individual's interpretations, the range of data collection was limited. Eliza's feedback in particular highlighted the possible range of subject matter available, as she pinpointed the issues of culture, gender and politics that 'Hannah' had failed to discuss. Clandinin, Connelly & Bradley (1999) similarly describe the importance of engaging in conversations where one's stories are told, retold, heard, reflected back and relived in new ways to generate further insight. Perhaps more opportunities to engage in such conversations may have expanded the discussions presented.

When available, feedback helped me to perceive any hidden or implicit meaning in my words on a more concrete level. For example, one of my supervisors once raised a question about how my stories tied together as a whole. Her feedback coincided with the frustration I felt at being unable to form a sense of coherence amongst my narratives.

I hope you are going well with the teaching and the writing. I have had another look at Eliza's comments and I agree with you that the piece seems to fit into the 'findings' section, although it could also go into the 'discussion' section in the context of your own processes of learning and reflection. This could serve as a counterpoint to your own insights and the experiences of the cases you have gathered, and it provides affirmation of aspects of the case stories. The common points are the self-searching and need for self-reflection; the times of self-doubt balanced by a determination to continue to think in 'bigger' ways about the grander ideals of the teacher; and the desire to be recognized and affirmed in what you do as a teacher. The idea of transitions into new ways of thinking seems to me to be another clear theme of Eliza's writing. (June 19th, 2007).

By summarizing my ideas in an unclouded and concise manner, my supervisor reflected them back to me with greater clarity. I could then gain further solidarity concerning my intuitions, and hence build the confidence needed to keep persevering with my stories.

b) Overly Romanticized Construction

In addition to the limitations of having a singular perspective, self-study has also been criticized for overly romanticizing its findings. Ellis and Bochner (2002, p. 745) introduce this point through the, 'romantic construction of self,' which refers to the emotional depiction of events. Such instances of emotional exaggeration have often been criticized for lacking in accuracy and reliability. Other cases of 'romantic construction' have been visible in the selective nature of human memory, in which individuals unconsciously highlight, distort and even erase memories according to their emotional state (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. 745). Furthermore, due to the

inevitable subjectivity within our observations, all representations are argued to have an element of interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). These forms of discrimination were also evident in my stories, as I chose to display certain experiences over others.

Such selectiveness was most visible in the heroic and epic connotations applied to the teaching and writing process. I had romanticized both these processes by portraying them as epic journeys. The characters of 'Hannah' and 'Hamen' also underwent such 'romantic depiction,' as I exaggerated certain character traits for aesthetic purposes. In such circumstances, the most extreme and intense personal qualities were portrayed through a magnifying glass to make a more vivid impact. I felt that such 'romantic construction' was validated, however, considering that the meaning retained far out-weighed the need to be accurate with minor details.

In other instances, however, I felt that such 'romantic construction' led me to cancel out other alternative perspectives. For example, in 'Faith,' I may have projected the quality of faith onto Anne's decision for class allocations, despite the possibility of alternative motivating factors. In 'Acceptance,' I also romanticized my depiction of Tracy, psychoanalyzing the motivations for her 'neediness' without providing adequate support or evidence to validate my assertions.

Despite such dangers of 'romantic construction,' many researchers are now exploring the possibility of improving their skills of evocatively portraying their experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2002). Anne Dilliard similarly relates efforts of cutting out the weaker elements and strengthening her writing, by focusing on a central image. She illustrates how symbolic images could amplify her words by, "embody [ing] and vivify[ing] [her] ideas. . ." (Webb, 1994, p. 79).

Murray also refers to Eleanor Estes' advice of minimizing the bad and revealing the good, stating, "At the end of each revision, a manuscript may look . . . worked over, torn apart, proved together, added to, deleted from, words changed and words changed back . . . but must maintain its original freshness and spontaneity" (Webb 1994, p. 162).

c) Inadequacy of Words

Despite this attempt to recall the emotional content of an encounter accurately, words themselves are often regarded as being inadequate for conveying the depth and mystery of experience (Nall, 2004). For instance, even the most touching life stories are asserted to leave this element of a person unknowable, by being too basic to convey the full complexity of an individual. Nall (2004) similarly acknowledges how deep understanding can only be acquired through personal experience, claiming that there is no short and easy way to understand identity. The process of abstraction in writing stories is therefore shown to inevitably reduce a person to a mere 'depiction.'

The silence of an empty space is subsequently asserted to speak volumes, especially during moments when words fail us (Van Manen, 1997). Such ontological silence is defined as the anchor individuals return to when faced with the inexplicable. Van Manen (1997, p. 114) describes this instinctive desire to go back to a perfect state of silence as the 'fundamental predicament' of our lives, stating, ". . . indeed at those moments of greatest and most fulfilling insight or meaningful experiences that we also experience the "dumb" -founding sense of a silence that fulfills and yet craves fulfillment" (Van Manen, 1997, p.114). The inadequacy of words for describing raw experience also brought me back to this initial state of silence, as the

empty spaces on a page then seemed to safeguard the mystery of my encounters. At other times, this silence felt like a huge invisible barrier, blocking my attempts to write. Rilke's (1984; 102) notion of 'wrestling with one's silence' became clearer at this point, as words not only seemed inadequate for expressing the other, but the other itself seemed to resist my attempts to 'define' it.

Validation of the Current Research project

Despite these limitations, the overall purpose of the study was not to convey an overly factual or analytical discussion of ideas. Rather, my goals were to make a better sense of my surroundings, to derive a greater sense of personal empowerment and hence to evoke similar transformative actions in others.

a) A Means of Making Sense of the World

In the current study, my purpose was not to theorize or to provide answers about a certain phenomena (Ellis and Bochner, 2002, p.744). Instead, I hoped to derive a personal sense of meaning by depicting my encounters with the other through my own writing style. Subsequently, my stories came from desires for aesthetic and creative expression, at other times they grew from a longing to make peace with unresolved themes. Whether these reasons were valid enough for an academic study, however, has been a key source of debate. Such localized and idiosyncratic information within subjective studies have been criticized for lacking in relevance and external validity beyond their own case. These arguments assert that one person's experiences are not verifiable enough hold significant for others. However, rather than providing direct answers to questions, the purpose of this study was to acquire empowerment over my own practices, in the

hope of indirectly informing the practices of others.

i) The Act of Speaking and Telling

Learning to translate one's practical understanding into relevant knowledge has often been identified as a natural and deeply powerful way of sharing meaning with others (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.744). These writers explain how some stories are so self-contained, that they do not need to undergo abstraction and explanation. Instead of being analyzed, it is believed that they exist through their telling (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p.744). Accordingly, stories are shown to live on by leading to further conversations rather than final conclusions or settlements.

ii) Depicting the Complexity and Dynamism of Living

Another purpose of this study was to explore certain phenomena through writing. Writing has often been perceived as a tool for bringing something into being. Van Manen (1997, p. 32) introduces the term 'logos,' to explain how writing creates meaning by depicting something as it is revealed. He draws a parallel between lived experience and the linguistic structure of language, citing the cyclic stages of a beginning, middle and an end, to show the commonality of the living and writing process (p. 39). Van Manen also gives an example of such a parallel by defining all human experience as 'text,' explaining how life and writing have multiple readings and interpretations. Ellis and Bochner similarly demonstrate how life and narratives have a common structure, as both anticipate and draw meaning from a telling (2002, p.744). Like the open-endedness of life, the tentative and inconclusive nature of our writing may reveal the incompleteness of past meanings, which are contingent on our changing life circumstances.

Likewise, I felt that the writing experience coincided with my life journey. For example, the rewriting process, as depicted in 'The Process of Writing,' illustrated the possibility of positively transforming our practices by revising old plot lines. Hence, the chance to rewrite narratives such as 'Hannah,' allowed me to redeem circumstances that had previously lacked hope. Enhancing my skill as a writer thereby signified a growing fluency of thought, of making the connections needed to better understand my daily life.

iii) To See the Hidden and Elusive

The case study form also provided the close-up view needed to perceive what I had commonly over-looked. Van Manen (1997, p. 116) introduces this idea of uncovering hidden understandings, by introducing the Greek meaning of, 'something unpublished' to refer to non disclosed knowledge. I similarly hoped to glimpse my intuitive knowledge through such a close-up view. Van Manen (1997, p. 130) further describes how writing helps us glimpse the boundaries and limitations of our 'sightedness,' giving examples of certain authors who can deeply depict what they 'see' via symbolic form. Additionally, individuals are inadvertently shown to unify with their target, as they move towards what they perceive. Van Manen therefore urges us to be more thoughtful in 'seeing' and authoring our lives through 'insightful praxis' (1997, p. 130). Becoming more critical of my own perspective was similarly difficult, since I had become too accustomed to my own particular outlook on life. This then prevented me from deepening my understanding of the other.

iv) Connect to the 'Ground' of Experience

A fourth objective of the current study was to address both the specific and the universal, by placing the details my encounters in its broader context. Van Manen (1997, p. 122) elaborates on this tension between the general and universal, describing how individuals can become critically grounded by reflecting on the details of their experiences. He maintains that such refined sensitivity can reveal deeper meaning structures within one's lived experience. I also experienced the tension of describing specific encounters through the broader framework of authentically knowing and relating to the other.

b) Empowerment and Reconnecting with Oneself

In addition to making a better sense of the world, I hoped to acquire authority over my practices by reconnecting to myself on both an intellectual and emotional level.

i) Problem of Authority

Finally, Ellis and Bochner (2002, p. 744) attributes such desires for authority to 'the problem of authorship,' in which individuals attempt to derive meaning and continuum within their practices. As written in, 'The Process of Writing,' I also hoped to attain a similar coherence by recording my experiences through journals and narratives. By uncovering and contextualizing my presence and motivations as a teacher, I believed I could acquire greater ownership over my practices.

The notion of writing as a craft highlights its interpretive nature, by displaying the filtering system of the person who writes. This system is shown to demonstrate a writer's orientation to the world, by revealing what they are capable of seeing (Van Manen, 1997, p. 132). Crafting one's own writing is thus believed to bring upon self-healing, as individuals reclaim their lives

by reconstructing it in their own unique way. Beattie (1995, p.61) also describes how the acts of telling and constructing stories about our knowing process cultivates self-affirmation, as we personally contribute to what we see. The interpretive nature of rewriting can hence be emancipatory, as writers are free to investigate the who's, whys, how's and what's underlying their experiences (Eisner, 1991, p. 35). Similarly, expressing my own particular 'filtering system' has allowed me to better perceive and appreciate my writing style.

ii) Expand Thinking Skills: Perceiving Schema via distance

Externalizing our thoughts is perceived to develop our thinking skills, by helping us to claim our subconscious knowledge on a more conscious level (Van Manen, 1997). The distance formed through externalizing our thinking is defined by Van Manen (1997, p.127) as a 'cognitive stance.' Through this self-reflective space, it is believed that we may be able to perceive signifying relationships within our experiences and thoughts. Eisner (1991, p. 34) regards this pattern finding capacity to differentiate novices from experts, where the latter have naturally acquired more complex schemata through practice. He proposes that these refined schema also bear our own unique mark or 'signature,' which helps us make a better sense of our complex world.

This idea of schema formation was discussed in 'The Teaching Practice,' where I depicted the growing familiarity and comfort felt within my practices. Developing a certain sense of fluidity increased my confidence, helping me to undertake further challenges. More opportunities to reflect through writing also allowed me to see the layers of meaning I had previously overlooked. Van Manen (1997) similarly explains how writing assumes the rewriting process, as it conveys the multifaceted and ambiguous nature of living. Subsequently, individuals may continue to

explore multiple layers of meaning, whilst uncovering certain 'knowable' and 'tellable' 'truths' in their thoughts. Rewriting is thus shown to cultivate better writing and thinking practices, as individuals learn to self-reflect and organize their thoughts.

iii) Aesthetic 'Seeing' and Empathetic Understanding

Additionally, freedom from the restraints of an academic style enabled me to convey my emotions symbolically and metaphorically. Eisner describes such aesthetism as 'connoisseurship,' or an 'art of appreciation,' that allows individuals to imaginatively and creatively craft their words (Eisner, 2006). This aesthetic representation of practical experience is believed to enlarge our empathetic capacity, thereby enabling us to catch the depth hidden in everyday life (Eisner, 2006). Moreover, this empathetic capacity is claimed to grow through greater practice.

Eisner (2006) further argues that the capacity for aesthetism must first be mastered, as individuals can only depict the world, as they perceive it. In other words, one's unique meaning structures of deciphering the world may determine what qualities are visible. Alternatively, what we see may undergo a form of 'imaginative transformation,' depending on our level of sensitivity. Eisner (2006) thus encourages us to keep cultivating our clarity and depth of sight, since it determines what we can appreciate and live out. Images and symbols are referred to as one such aesthetic structure or language system. They are presumed to organize our thoughts, by forming the canonical impressions that guide us through life (Eisner, 2006). These images are also believed to be imprinted on our minds, determining the ways we address the world. Accordingly, the impressions received in our classrooms can be seen to similarly form the cognitive structures used to interpret our experiences.

c) A Means to 'Play'

Furthermore, the aestheticism expressed through stories has often been construed as a form of 'play.' James Briton (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977) has introduced the notion of 'play' in writing, by describing the possibility for creative constructions of meaning. He expresses how individuals create a proliferation of images in their daily life, to which they attribute different levels of meaning. What we perceive therefore undergoes imaginative transformation depending on our perceptions, which Briton describes, stating, 'In play, we improvise upon the representation for reasons to other than the facts of our experience. And freed from this necessity, we seem able in some sense to be more ourselves' (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977, p.44).

Briton thus proposes that individuals can become more authentic through play, as they express their experiences according to personal, rather than external meaning structures. Since play can also be used as a form of escapism, he asserts that individuals must find a balance between reality and imagination, stating, 'I want to see play as a free activity lying between a world of shared and verifiable experience and the world of inner necessity' (p.46). Similarly, Warlow (Meek, Warlow & Barton, 1977, p. 97) also defines play to enable individuals to create, ' . . . alternate selves, alternate lives, and alternate worlds,' to make their lives more interesting and ultimately more pleasurable. This notion can finally be seen in, 'The Writing Process,' where I describe the creative and 'playful' expressions accessible through narratives.

I would often throw metaphors, images and symbols playfully together like slabs of clay in my hands, hoping that my words to take all kinds of dynamic forms and shapes.

d) To Form a Relationship with Others and to Compel them to Act

Finally, narratives are asserted to embody the creative power needed to motivate changes in thought and action (Rosen, 1986). Eisner (2006) reiterates how 'good research' generates questions concerning what ideas are worth pursuing. Therefore, rather than the quantity of information produced, meaningful transformations in behavior are argued to have greater importance. Similar qualities are asserted to characterize 'good' writing practices in general, which Dilliard describes stating, ". . . of course good writing doesn't describe feelings at all; it evokes them in the reader by describing the observable world with vivid language." In the current study, I also hoped to create powerful stories that would help individuals to vividly experience the other.

Other Questions to ask Concerning Reliability and Validity

Although traditional standards of measurement have often equated subjectivity with inaccuracy, it can be viewed more positively through other frames of reference. Accordingly, subjective studies can be judged based on their referential adequacy, where individual's can observe a study's level of 'structural corroboration' and 'consensual validation.' These terms are explained below.

a) 'Structural Corroboration' and 'Consensual Validation'

'Structural corroboration' determines whether a reader can see what the author claims is present in his or her work (Eisner, 2006). It questions whether there is adequate supporting evidence that renders a situation or conclusion believable. 'Consensual validation,' however, describes the support or affirmation given to a particular interpretation (Eisner, 2006). It asserts that sufficient overlap can reinforce a study's validity, as others support one individual's claims.

b) Coherence

Both factors are perceived to determine the believability of a study's premise, as they assess the quality of the logic within a particular study. Eisner (1991, p. 39) also defines such harmony as 'gestalt qualities,' as it shows whether something is a 'good fit' or not. Such measures may reveal a study's overall level of thoroughness and trustworthiness, by deciding whether isolated parts fit together with unity (Eisner, 1991). Hence, the subjective and aesthetic qualities of a study may be able to convey the full complexity of an interrelated world.

c) Trustworthiness of Workmanship

Claims to validity must also account for the complexity of lived experience, in which authentic emotion is both acknowledged and valued. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) describe how the validity of a qualitative study must lie in the trustworthiness of its workmanship. They argue that the emotional landscape of the researcher must be included to relay the full complexity of the research experience. Examples of such emotions include the mixed feelings of vulnerability, confusion and weakness felt in undertaking their research. The emotional reliability of a study can accordingly be measured by whether readers can deeply experience both the researcher's intellectual and emotional landscape (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. 749).

d) 'Usefulness'

A qualitative study's level of 'usefulness' may also determine its value, as due to the difficulty of reaching a consensus about more subtle matters, individuals may ultimately rely on how useful a study is for their lives (Eisner, 1991, p.36). The three points of 'comprehension,' 'anticipation' and

'guide,' are believed to fall under this category (Eisner, 1991). For example, a study may be useful when it helps us comprehend an otherwise confusing situation. It can also have value by helping us predict and anticipate the future. Accordingly, since qualitative studies are both general and interpretive, they may emphasize, explain and provide directions for future research paths (Eisner, 1991, p.38). In the current study, this criterion of 'usefulness' was far more prevalent than the qualities of 'accuracy' or 'factuality.' Overall, I hoped that these stories would help both others and I map out our teaching experiences, helping readers to also find the courage to voice their concerns.

e) Researcher's autonomy

Eisner (1991; 36) concludes that given the complexity of any study's claim to authority, it is ultimately the researchers themselves who must make their interpretations as credible as possible. He states that once their particular stance is decided, they must let the readers themselves assess a study's validity. Researchers may therefore also need to focus on how a certain study affects a reader's selfhood, instead of simply being fixated on measures of accuracy (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. 749). Similarly, a study's validity may lie in how it can enact positive transformations in both the researchers and readers' lives. This notion is visible in 'Hannah,' which had the greatest transformative effect of all my stories, by helping me to let go reproducing its themes of guilt and inadequacy.

Additionally, due to the idiosyncrasy and dynamism of a teacher's knowledge base, Eisner (1991) explains how there is no final point of validation in teacher research. He thereby uses the expression 'it all depends' as the most useful qualifier for validity (Eisner, 1991, p.36). Such

open-ended statements are regarded as being the most suitable conclusion for any discussions concerning the complex and mysterious.

f) Researcher's skill of Craftsmanship

Lastly, aside from a reader's own assessment of a study's reliability, writers are also called to keep improving their skills of depicting their understanding. Ellis and Bochner (2002, p. 752) raise the issue of how most researchers are not skilled enough to convey their experiences clearly. They complain of the 'tunnel vision' of certain writers, who lack the fluidity to 'mov[e] around in an experience' they seek to convey (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. 752). These writers may have trouble analyzing their thoughts on a deeper level, or accessing the deeper emotional content of their experience. Their writing may thereby fail to convey the life and energy within their encounters (Ellis & Bochner, 2002, p. 752). By being unable to depict a situation colourfully, readers may also be prevented from entering into it.

Alternatively, the expressive use of language may help readers to imagine and hence be transformed by the fullness of an encounter depicted (Eisner, 1991, p. 36). Such skillful depiction is perceived to take place on an intuitive level, as readers can engage in the experience recorded with their whole presence. Murry (Webb, 1994, p. 163) gives an example of this 'know how,' likening it to the sensitivity needed to discern, ". . . how much garlic is needed in salad." Although this description may seem like an oversimplification, it does emphasize how implicit the decision making process in writing can be. He further elaborates such spontaneity and fluidness, stating:

The maker's eyes move back and forth from word to phrase to sentence to phrase to word. The maker's eye sees the need for variety and balance, for a firmer structure, for a more

appropriate form. It peers into the interior of the paragraph, looking for coherence, unity and emphasis, which make meaning clear (Webb 1994, p. 163).

I similarly desired to develop my writing skills by constructing these stories. In 'The Process of Writing,' I described the hope of discerning fluidity and harmony within my words. I hoped that such poetic configurations of writing would maximize its emotional appeal, as well as trigger further insights to explore. Therefore, cultivating an aesthetic 'eye' and developing a greater appreciation for beauty and harmony were two aspirations guiding the current study.

These notions are described below through an excerpt of Eliza's response to my stories, in which she describes her own struggles of validating the subjectivity within her own research. Refer to Appendix 8.2. She also discusses how reflecting upon one's own work may generate an internal consistency that enhances a study's trustworthiness. Lastly, she questions how the act of deconstructing subjectivity and objectivity may help individuals derive greater meaning from such subjective forms of research.

Finally, as someone who struggled with 'subjectivity' in my doctoral thesis, I found extremely interesting how Joanne builds up 'internal validity' in her stories but also in the story about how the stories were written. However, I think that her skillful exploration of what a 'story' is can take her a step further; to deconstruct the opposites of objectivity/subjectivity.

Recommendations for Continued Research

Intimately knowing the mysteries of the other opens up a vast number of possibilities concerning individual research. In terms of education, a series of self-studies conducted by teacher and student communities may motivate self-sustaining growth within both groups and the broader community. For instance, teachers can place students in powerful positions of learning by opening up their own life-long journeys of knowing the other. The ensuing trust and emancipation between the teacher and student may thereby generate mutually initiated transformations of practice that will further affect other areas in society. The current study accordingly recommends further opportunities to share individual narratives, in order to generate new understandings or validate previous ones for within and beyond the education context.

Overall, further research into the knower who engages in the act of knowing, may be needed to make the research process more transparent and accessible. For instance, individuals can shed light on the researcher who suffers and grows whilst conducting the current study, hence depicting the intimate details not commonly disclosed in traditional academia. Readers may thereby be able to perceive the complexity and mysteriousness of exploring human experience, as they undertake this process alongside the researcher. Hence, the real example of one person's experiences may convey a transformative meaning, which generalized knowledge within textbooks cannot relay.

Webb (1994) also introduces an anthology of essays written by skilled writers, describing the reading experience as an archeological dig. She depicts the shift in the discoverer's mind, as they unearth artifacts created by expert craftspeople from ancient times. She explains how they move

from admiring an object to making speculations about its creator. Webb (1994, p. 1) concludes how an artifact's workmanship reveals the pains taken to create it, stating, ". . . chances are that it was not made on first try . . . yet . . . The earlier versions are gone, absorbed long ago into the final lovely thing you hold in your own hand, and no record of the potter's labor to create it survives." She finally relates this analogy to the reading process, conveying how readers rarely take into account the, ". . . slow, seldom straightforward, often downright messy," process taken to construct a piece of writing. Likewise, introducing the story of the researcher's journey may help readers appreciate the complexity and wholeness of the ideas conveyed.

Since I also hoped to document the moulding, crafting and refining stages taken to develop the final product; it may have been valuable to compare the difficulty of formal academic writing, as opposed to the effortlessness of narrative writing. I could have focused on the different maturity levels of these two writing styles, highlighting how certain arrangements of words fell together fluidly, whilst others would appear awkward and childlike. Moreover, I could have investigated more about any parallels found in the stories, and explored why I had chosen to write about certain themes as opposed to others. Lastly, it would have been beneficial to have included any ensuing acts of 'telling' and 'listening' generated from the current stories, to further document the resonance between teacher practitioners. Unfortunately, my relative isolation context during the EdD process made this a difficult course to pursue.

Overall, I believe that more inquiry into avenues for telling and retelling stories may further enhance teacher professionalism, by translating the countless number of stories told orally into a more tangible form. Teachers may thereby convey the relevance of their skills beyond their

immediate context, by showing the various creative ways they can relay their intuitive knowing to others. Similarly, individual practitioners may not only be able to be equipped with the skills to conduct self-study, but may also cultivate sensitivity and inquisitiveness towards their profession. Hence, in addition to attaining skill and knowledge, they might gain a renewed sense of purpose regarding their chosen vocation.

Additional efforts must then be made to disperse fears that self-study is too bothersome, too difficult or too narcissistic to undertake. Teacher practitioners also need to be reassured that their idiosyncratic knowledge is significant, if not even more transformative than theoretical knowledge. Consequently, greater opportunities to read, tell and retell stories about localized situations must be made, so that their meaning can grow, or be altered or be strengthened by each 'telling.' I believe that such an intimate understanding of the I-You form of knowing will ultimately empower individuals to confront their practices on the deepest level imaginable. Such a notion is glimpsed through the feedback of one of my supervisors,

I have now finished reading your whole draft. I found it extremely engaging and very well-written! Your 'voice' emerges very powerfully and I found myself wanting to keep reading and engaging! This really affirms what you argue in the thesis - about the relational nature of knowing and the need for the writer to draw the 'other' in through their own courage to explore and a willingness to be 'vulnerable' in searching for 'truths'! So it has worked for me!! (14th March, 2008)

Conclusion

Finally, liberal education resonates with the wisdom of Socrates, who once stated that a life deeply lived was one that was truly worth living (in Palmer, 2003). The current study relates a similar theme, as it involves an investigation into a growth-evoking view of the knowing process. It acknowledges the complex and contentious nature of the knowing encounter within the teaching and learning field, and therefore asks that teachers and students become more critical of their practices. Palmer (2003, p. 14) warns teachers of the possible harm that can be otherwise committed, stating, "If you choose to live an unexamined life, for God's sake do not take a job that allows you to impose it on other people." He therefore urges teachers not to, ". . . violate [ing] the needs of the human soul" by dispensing dull forms of education that fail to address these core issues (Palmer, 2003, p. 14). Certain educators, who choose to settle for a mere superficial understanding of their role, have often discarded these key concerns as being too abstract, esoteric or irrelevant. However, there have been others who have attempted to refocus on what it means to teach and learn on a more fundamental human level. This study similarly seeks a deeper and more holistic view of the knower, the other and the type of relationship formed between them. It aims to go back to the 'heart' of what it means to truly know the other.

The view of the teacher and student, who attempts to know and interact with the other, holds exciting possibilities for the education field. Teachers may no longer be burdened as being the omniscient bearers of knowledge, who exist solely in a functional sense. Similarly, students may no longer be viewed as vessels of knowledge to fill; instead, they can be seen as active and self-autonomous participants in the knowledge production process. The other, whether it is the

subject of study or the teaching and learning process itself, may also be openly received and deeply appreciated.

Accordingly, individuals must be encouraged to confront the other with an empathetic awareness that acknowledges deeper possibilities for knowing. Through such sensitivity to the other, it is hoped that we may be able to make major breakthroughs on our journey of 'becoming and being.' Furthermore, our capacity to understand the mysteries of knowing, such as paradox, creativity, grace, intuition, and metaphors, may also enhance along with our confidence. Despite these understandings, it has been difficult to let go of the oversimplified answers originating from I-It forms of knowing. Berke (Webb 1994, p. 297) discusses such gradual fossilization of our minds, stating, "By the time that we write, most of us have grown so self-conscious that we stiffen, sometimes to the point of rigidity, when we are called upon to make a statement in speech or in writing." These fears of failing resonate with me even now, as I flinch from the possibility of appearing foolish.

Through the painful but rewarding process of writing, however, my overall objective has changed. Rather than being motivated by the simple desire to avoid appearing weak, my goal is to finally become a teacher practitioner who can speak her own words. As expressed in the final two paragraphs of the story, 'The Teaching journey':

In this sense, I have been wondering about the possibility of having little or no expectations from the beginning. Instead of holding onto my preconceptions or assumptions, it seems better if I simply write, teach or live for the act itself. So though most beginnings are always a form of anticipation, I am learning not to project too far into the future, as I can never fully predict the outcome. All I can hope for is to do my best and let the rest go.

This reminds me of the movement of skilful swimmers, whose bodies are sculpted by their years in the water. Their bodies seem to command the space they occupy, as each of their

motions follow with style and control. Their pace is leisurely and the feeling of harmony they exude is beautiful, as they occupy their space with such ease. Hence, their movements show me that although I cannot control the responses of others, at least I can acquire harmony in my own body and thoughts. So hopefully one day I may be able to break free from all the commentaries and lose myself completely in the experience.

Despite the importance of theorizing about the I-You knowing process discussed above, I am reminded that truly knowing about the other means finally letting go of all thoughts, to merge with the process itself. In this sense, deeply knowing about the other may be inseparable to the notion of being, as it involves fundamental changes to our core. I believe that such changes cannot help but to transform lives, as individuals not only acquire new knowledge, but become renewed in their sense of self. Transformative teaching and learning practices that embody I-You knowing, may hence imply such broad possibilities for the education field, as both teachers and students can finally let themselves fall into the ocean that lies waiting.

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Appendix

Appendix 3. 1 Ethics Approval

COPY



The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia

Human Research Ethics Committee
www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human

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02 December 2004

Associate Professor R Ewing
School of Social Policy and Practice
Faculty of Education and Social Work
Building A35
The University of Sydney

Dear Professor Ewing

I am pleased to inform you that the Human Research Ethics Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2004 approved your protocol entitled "**Spiritual teaching and learning in a Korean Christian College: to know as we are known**"

Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref No.:	11-2004/3/7852
Approval Period:	November 2004 – November 2005
Completion Date of Project:	15 December 2006
No. of Participants:	15
Authorised Personnel:	Associate Professor R Ewing Dr J Manuel Ms J Yoo

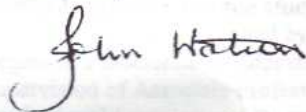
To comply with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*, and in line with the Human Research Ethics Committee requirements this approval is for a 12-month period. At the end of the approval period, the HREC will approve extensions for a further 12-month, subject to a satisfactory annual report. The HREC will forward to you an Annual Progress Report form, at the end of each 12-month period. **Your first report will be due on 30 November 2005.**

Condition of Approval Particular to this Project
(S1.6) please amend your answer to "Y" and provide details.

Conditions of Approval Applicable to all Projects

- (1) Modifications to the protocol cannot proceed until such approval is obtained in writing. (Refer to the website www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human under 'Forms and Guides' for a Modification Form).
- (2) The confidentiality and anonymity of all research subjects is maintained at all times, except as required by law.
- (3) All research subjects are provided with a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee.
- (4) The Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee.
- (5) The following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Sheet. ***Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney, on (02) 9351 4811.***
- (6) The standard University policy concerning storage of data and tapes should be followed. While temporary storage of data or tapes at the researcher's home or an off-campus site is acceptable during the active transcription phase of the project, permanent storage should be at a secure, University controlled site for a minimum of seven years.
- (7) A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely



**Associate Professor J D Watson
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee**

Encl. Participant Information Sheet
Participant Consent Form
List of Possible Questions for Teacher Semi-structured Interviews
List of Possible Questions for Student Semi-structured Interviews

Cc: Ms Joanne Yoo, 18 May Street, Turrumurra NSW 2074

APPROVED

Appendix 3.2 Excerpt from the Researcher's Journal

Wednesday, March 16, 2005

“I really love my writing classes so far”

I have not begun using the textbook as of yet, and so everything I have taught has come out of the mistakes that I made in writing and the painful process that it took for me to learn how to write. So I feel like I am able to walk students through the step of writing as I have lived it. I feel like I am a part of the knowledge that I share with my students. . .and it is in fact a part of me, that is, my experiences. Funny, how words themselves begin to contain life, if the life of the speaker is embedded in them.

Talking and teaching from the heart. I can feel it's strange effects both in myself and my students. I guess I have often felt like I was absent in the way that I taught in the past. . .perhaps it has taken me this long to find out how to go about this in teaching ESL. . .but this time, the classes I have been given this time have also been quite proficient in English. . and so I have been able to extend learning a little beyond the basic levels of communication. . .to the process of learning English as native speakers see it, that is, as a means of expressing thought.

These classes make think about the nature of connecting what we learn in class to life beyond. I think living is an act of learning, and that learning in class should then also be an act of living life. . . and these days I have been feeling this strongly through my writing classes

http://hyun6447.blogspot.com/2005_03_01_archive.html

Appendix 3.3 Excerpt from a Student's Journal

Monday, September 15, 2003

Hi! It's so hot. Isn't it? I believe that the courage is to do what I believe that right. When someone can do with his belief, it could be the courage even though it is very very small thing. I think that the one who can be honest and have courage to do at very small thing also can complete large one. Actually, I'm so nervous to tell about my secret. But I think that it is also courage to tell others my secret. First of all, I'm so sorry about my acting at last quiz to you, all. I cheated last quiz time. Please, let me explain about that situation. I studied so hard at the before day of my English quiz. And I believed that I could get a perfect point at exam. But it's very confused for me memorize the name of the people. And I was nervous because it was the first exam of my fall semester. Anyway I collected the answer-written paper at the last class. When I give the whole answered paper, professor start to pray and I wanted to check the answer with others paper. At that time I found that my two answers were not equal to others one. And I corrected my answer and gave to the Professor. Maybe I was insane at that time. After that class, I realized that I cheated and do against the Lord God and the honor code. I fell in panic!!! 'What shall I do? I'm so crazy, Young!!! You're insane!!! You cheated!!! My heart beat so loudly. I needed to have some time for thinking about this situation. But if I returned to my dorm without doing anything, I would be more complex to do something. Maybe I would drop this class." To be honest. It's the best way. And no wait! "I followed that voice. I visited the office of the professor to tell about my cheating. She told me that it was also her fault because she gave the chance to get a temptation to cheat. Although, after listening her states I couldn't remove my

fault. After all I wanted to get zero point at that quiz. It was Friday that the last day of one week.

Although my friends wanted to go out to relax, I couldn't. Actually it was my first cheating experience during my life. I got shock. I depressed. I was so blue. But I was honest at least!!

Thank you for giving the courage which can tell my fault to others.

http://hyun6447.blogspot.com/2003_09_01_archive.html

Appendix 8.1 Shin's Essay

In front of a Turnstile

These days, I have some problems in writing the essay, which is homework in English camp. My instructor has taught me the importance of organization of essay. And I agree with her. But my totally subjective thesis makes the organization difficult. These days I feel lonely, and that loneliness is a little bit strange. I just want to explain the strange loneliness. But how can I organize my emotion? And how can my subjective emotion be explained logically?

So, my essay didn't go well. Many times I thought again and again, but unfortunately I could not understand myself even. But a few days ago, I met my teacher who had taught me in a middle school about 10 years ago. She had understood my feelings very well, and I [wanted to] hear her comments. We met in a Japanese restaurant, which is located in 7th floor. Passing a turnstile of building, we smiled each other. And in elevator, I just said that she would gain more weight than before, and she told me; you look slimmer than before. Actually it's been 11 years since I saw her last.

Sitting in my seat, I was thinking how I could explain my recent mental agony. Many kinds of Japanese foods were served, and I didn't talk for a while. She told me about her class and of her works these days. And I just told her my routine life as a senior student in university and finally she said, "You know that? I feel very lonely these days. It is very strange melancholy. When I was your age, my routine days were gloomy also. But at that time, it was just vague gloom, and I couldn't figure out the reason. But now, I am over forties, my gloom is a little different. I don't

have much time in my life to challenge some new kind of work. And I already know that. But strangely I feel very lonely because of that fact. I can't understand myself enough. So... How about you? Do you feel lonely these days? Please tell me your recent feelings."

It was very amazing. How could she estimate my recent mental state? And furthermore, how come does she feel gloom these days like me? Instead of answering to her, I just drank a sip of alcoholic drinks. The color of the fish's eyes seemed to be solitary, which lay down on plate. It was the sign that had [revealed to] me that I got drunk.

Coming out from restaurant, we waited for the elevator. Our figures were reflected in door of elevator. Two lonely people were just looking at their own [feet]. When the elevator arrived at 1st floor, we got off. First, she passed the turnstile. And I followed her, but after for a while I just stood the same place. There was a same elevator, and in the door, only one person was reflected. She was not there.

Suddenly a thought struck me. When I was in trouble because of my essay, my writing instructor suggested 'new life stage opening and closing doors' as a main point. Maybe, nowadays I am closing and opening a door. I am going to graduate and enter society. But in any sense, there are no differences, not only in between closing and opening, but also in between the old place and the new place. Perhaps, the doors which we can face in our lives are all turnstiles. I thought I could remove my loneliness after passing the door, but maybe loneliness is not connected with the door. And actually, people may not pass the door at all. Thus now, what should I do something with my loneliness? The glass of turnstile was very dark. I couldn't see outside.

Appendix 8.2

Eliza's email (Monday, 5th March 15, 2007)

I read Joanne's stories a few months ago when (Joanne's supervisor) suggested that I would find them helpful and relevant to my own experiences, moving to a new academic environment and struggling to understand and perform in the new context. I read first 'Hannah's story' and I had a very emotional response to it. Hannah's story allowed me to face all my feelings of incompetence, guilt and even anger towards myself. The feelings have been there but the demands of the new working and teaching environment kept them at bay. Hannah's story triggered an outpour of emotions that I vividly remember after all these months. I read the other three stories and to different extent I related to all of them and promising to myself to send some comments to Joanne as soon as possible.

Time passed and despite completing my hectic first semester and moving to the quieter times of the summer, I couldn't write my response. I thought that it was accumulated tiredness and my natural laziness that kept me from engaging with a more or less 'simple' –and surely enjoyable– task. However, it was only the last few days and with the start of the new academic year approaching fast that I realized that my reluctance had deeper causes.

As I started worrying again about teaching, reprimanding myself for doing too little over the last months, fearing that I am not good enough and that the evidence from the last semester –that I can manage– is accidental, I started thinking about Joanne's stories; what is to be a teacher, to work with young people and nurturing their dreams of shaping and improving the world (how little of that I believe that I did last semester), to be part of an institution (of an abstract entity that is

defined by its members but it is at the same time independent of them), to struggle to express ideas and to put them on paper. Rereading the last page of 'Hannah's story', when the person who writes the story (Joanne) and the person that the story is about (Hannah) come together; become the reflection of each other but stay distinct –sharing similar burdens but having followed different paths, having taken different life decisions-, I felt the same strong and conflicted emotions.

After reading the stories again I feel more or less the same difficulty to relate to them to an 'intellectual' level. However, there are a couple of concepts that I sense that I approach from a different perspective than Joanne and I would love to know more about her approach but also about she thinks about where I come from.

For instance, Joanne's stories bring together personal and group/social moral responsibility. Her subtle, multilayered discussion is fascinating but I am wondering what she thinks about 'power' and 'ideology' (especially as it they are evident in the 'Department' story) and also about issues of 'gender' (both 'Hannah' and 'Balance' raise them). Finally, as someone who struggled with 'subjectivity' in my doctoral thesis, I found extremely interesting how Joanne builds up 'internal validity' in her stories but also in the story about how the stories were written. However, I think that her skillful exploration of what a 'story' is can take her a step further; to deconstruct the opposites of objectivity/subjectivity.

Eliza