

**THE PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY IN EDUCATORS:
A Phenomenological Inquiry**

by

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ABSTRACT

Educators today are faced with increasing numbers of students labeled "at risk" who are in need of empathic understanding. Few educators receive the training and support to provide empathy to distressed young people. Little is written in the literature about empathy in educators.

This research examines empathy as it emerges in interpersonal interactions and in the professional expertise of an educator. Participants in this research used a guided imagery and journaling technique called the "Encounter Process" to record their memories of an interaction, including what they imagined to be the perspective of another. They then reflected on their journaling with the "Reflection Process".

Using an emergent phenomenological research design, stories and reflections on interpersonal encounters are examined. Essential themes are expressed in a model of empathy in an educational context and the process and development of empathy is described.

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x

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Some years back, as a high school teacher, I became intrigued with the practice of empathy. When I listened carefully to students, paid mindful attention to their point of view, and invited a variety of opinions and perspectives, I was able to develop meaningful relationships with students that seemed to facilitate the learning process.

My conscious concern with therapeutic dimensions of empathy emerged when a young woman's family called one morning and asked me to counsel their daughter for a violent rape that had occurred the night before. My emotions were aroused by the girl's distress and I became intensely involved.

As I reflect on the consequences of my reaction fourteen years ago, I recognize that I had emotionally identified with the violated young woman. This identification had the quality of fusion, where the boundaries of my own emotions were confused with the student's experience. I remember sensing something was radically wrong in my reaction. My empathy felt unhealthy, charged with unresolved fears, anxious concerns and a compulsive desire to alleviate her suffering.

Six years ago when I was training educators in suicide prevention strategies, I recognized a similar, over-involved empathic reaction in educators working with troubled youth as well as a reaction of withdrawal. Triggered by the distress of suicidal youth, educators became emotionally identified with the young person, feeling profound helplessness and hopelessness. In other situations, educators became distant, angry and depersonalized distressed

youth. From my observations, many educators have difficulty interacting effectively with emotionally disturbed young people.

Significance of Study

The plight of at risk youth has stimulated and brought an urgency to the significance of this study. The at risk young person challenges educators to reevaluate and restructure fundamental educational structures and practices (p. Miller, 1991). Educators working with the at risk youth are confronted daily with the need for new perspectives and alternative ways of responding. The at risk youth teaches us that the traditional methods of education are in chaos and new patterns of complexity and order have yet to emerge.

P. Miller (1991) proposes that restructuring involves changing critical situational beliefs of teachers, namely their personal sense of competency. "Classroom teachers often believe that their training has not given them skills to work with challenging students, a belief that influences their personal feelings of competence" (p. 32).

A personal sense of competency emerges when one feels able to master their world (Waters & Lawrence, 1993). In the search for competency courage is needed to cope with the anxiety and conflict experienced by the educator as they interact with emotionally distressed young people.

The significance of a caring, empathic adult in the life of vulnerable youth has been argued passionately by Alice Miller (1990a, 1990b). She points out that caring and empathy emerge from within educators and needs support and nurturing. However, the culture of the school has traditionally paid little attention to the inner life of teacher and often ignores the impact of teachers'

feelings and emotional needs on students (Weissglass, 1991). Weissglass (1991) calls for staff development opportunities to help teachers identify latent prejudice and personal biases toward students in order to develop a better understanding of the mistreatment of learners. In order to identify unconscious prejudice it is necessary to develop patterns of "intersubjectivity" between an educator and a learner.

Intersubjectivity, a concept similar to empathy, is a reciprocal interaction of teacher and students believed to be necessary to learning and growth. According to Goodenow (1992), cognitive thinking is built upon patterns of thought, value and meaning that emerge out of experiences of relationships where both participants are subjects, and able to consider the other as worthy of attention, thought and care. Goodenow calls for the development of intersubjectivity in educational relationships as a way to discern one's own bias and prejudice in interactions with at risk youth.

The young person who is at risk is often alienated and disconnected from caring, compassionate, and responsible adults. These young people are without the necessary support to resist societal forces of violence, suicide, homicide, drug and alcohol abuse, perfectionism, sexual abuse, depression, early parenthood, illness, school dropout, school failure, neglect and other destructive factors (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989). Simple explanations and solutions are inadequate to stem this rising tide of alienation and risk (Levitt, Selman, & Richmond, 1991). The social context of North American culture as well as personality and biological factors influence risk behavior of young people (Jessor, 1993).

Pointing to the need to pay attention to "extra-familial transactions"

Jessor (1993) argues that the:

traditional preoccupation with socialization and patterns of interaction within the family has usually meant that extrafamilial transactions - those with other institutions and other contexts, such as church, school and neighborhood, all of which can have important consequences for an adolescent's development would largely be ignored. (p. 119)

Young people who are described at risk are often struggling with emotional, cognitive and social forces that threaten to overwhelm attempts to adapt in healthy ways. Educational researchers today are challenged to draw questions from the reality of social life to understand how young people thrive despite adversity, poverty, limited opportunity and racial and ethnic discrimination (Jessor, 1993).

Young people today are urgently in need of adults who are competent in their empathic abilities and understand emotionally troubled youth at an intersubjective level. Educators today have the opportunity to be empathic; extra-familial guides ceaselessly striving to reconnect alienated youth with a caring, human dimension of life. To do this, educators require support from administrators, parents and the community. They need to feel competent and valued for empathic abilities.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to examine the process and development of empathy in educators as they interact with others in the context of their ordinary, daily encounters with others. Essential elements of empathy will be

discerned and obstacles and contributions to the development of empathy will be examined.

It is my hope that this knowledge, gleaned from the context of lived experience, will lead to the support and guidance of educators who are interested in developing empathic abilities. It is envisioned that knowledge regarding the process and development of empathy will inspire and guide educators who wish to understand disturbed young people. I hope that this work will encourage those involved in restructuring efforts to examine the human environment of educational structures and work toward the creation of *therapeutic practices of schooling*.

To accomplish this vision, I will describe the essential elements in the process and development of empathy as it emerges in ordinary, daily interactions between educators and learners and the development of empathic abilities in educators.

In order to create a description of empathy appropriate for the support and guidance of contemporary educators, it is first necessary to review the body of scholarly literature on this complex and global concept.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

In the following review of literature, I examine a selection of the diverse theories, concepts and research related to the complex global word - empathy. Little quantitative research on empathy in education appears in scholarly literature. This seems to be due to a lack of consensus regarding the nature of empathy. This review of literature focuses on findings that reveal valuable insights into an understanding of empathy that may be applicable to educational structures and practices.

In the first section, historical roots of empathy are traced to the twelfth century Confucian term "shu", nineteenth century German aesthetics and the term *einfühlung*. Relevant aspects of Scheler's (1954) classical treatise on empathy are noted and a glimpse of a current meaning of *einfühlung* is shared from a meaningful conversation.

The second section reviews the concept of empathy as a developmental achievement within the constructivist view of human development. The constructivist view of development is contrasted to the skill training approach of empathic behaviors.

In the third section, internal dynamics of empathy are explored, including the role of cognition and emotion. Epistemological and therapeutic implications of empathy in the school are discussed in the fourth section.

The fifth section identifies low emotional differentiation and its association with empathy and a medical school research project of "conscious identification".

The sixth section examines implications of empathy in schools and reviews ways empathy may be communicated in schools.

Historical Roots of Empathy

The nature of empathy has perplexed human beings throughout history. Marguiles (1989) calls empathy an "enigmatic process" and poses the question: "How does one begin to approximate the inner experience of another?" (p. 3). This question has been considered in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.

Confucianism and shu

The Analects of Confucius (Waley, 1938, 4.15), recorded in the twelfth century, use the word "shu" to describe empathy (Kalton, 1994, private communication).

The Master said, 'Shen! My Way has one (thread) that runs right through it.' Master Tseng said 'Yes.' When the Master had gone out, the disciples asked saying: 'What did he mean?' Master Tseng said, 'Our Master's Way is simply this: loyalty and consideration.' (Waley, 1938, p. 105)

Michael Kalton (personal communication, June 13, 1994), a scholar of Confucius, explains that shu, the character on the frontpiece of this research, is the "thread" that runs through the "Way". With shu, one's "heart and mind are integrated" and one lives with "loyalty and consideration". To have shu, one is first centered in one's own mind and heart, "maintaining integrity within".

Shu is relational, and involves a loyal commitment to self and others in caring, compassionate relationships. To have shu, one attempts to understand the heart and mind of human persons.

Einfühlung and aesthetics

The word empathy entered into the English language at the end of the nineteenth century and was derived from the German word *einfühlung* with origins in German aesthetics (Marguiles, 1989; Dissanayake, 1992).

Einfühlung is 'feeling (oneself) into' (Dissanayake, 1992, p.141).

The word *einfühlung* was developed after 1870 by German and British thinkers who were interested in clarifying the physical feeling and effect of a naturalistic approach to the arts (Dissanayake, 1992). *Einfühlung* involves a suspension of the self to clear the perceptual field of inner elements that an observer may impose on a situation as well as an imaginative and creative aspect of entering another's artistic world (Marguiles, 1989).

Dissanayake (1992) contends that the movement of *einfühlung* into aesthetic experience counteracted the interpretation of art as supernatural and spiritual and was an attempt to reconcile the mind-body dichotomy in aesthetics.

Art was awakening to the pleasure found in the organic and vital, it affirmed tactile values, stirred the imagination and provided animation for one's own life. Inherent in *einfühlung* was a "trustful familiarity" with nature. (p. 145).

Einfühlung and interpersonal relationships

The term *einfühlung* gradually came to include a process of understanding other individuals, not just artistic expression (Marguiles, 1989). In a

conversation with German friends, I learned that interpersonal dimension of *einfühlung* is held sacred as the "center of human life" (Knoth, T. & Knoth, C, private communication, July 17, 1994).

The term *einfühlung* inspired Max Scheler in 1912 to examine empathy in depth. In his preface to his classical treatise, The Nature of Sympathy, Scheler (1954) writes:

I am not going to begin with an analysis of love and hatred but shall start by enquiring into the processes which one may describe as 'rejoicing-with' and 'commiserating'; these being processes in which we seem to have an immediate 'understanding' of other people's experiences while also 'participating' in them. (p. 3)

Scheler (1954) coined the term "fellow-feeling" to describe the phenomenon of mature, healthy empathy. Distinguishing between "infection" and genuine understanding, Scheler (1954) describes four ways of interaction.

In the first, "community of feeling", individuals feel an experience in common; such as a commonly shared loss. This is not fellow-feeling but an experience of either sharing through love or a common experience which Scheler (1954) calls a unity of feeling.

In authentic fellow-feeling, there is an "intentional reference" to the feelings of the other person's experience. The distinction of a caring intention is fundamental for Scheler (1954), who points out that a cruel person is able to visualize and vicariously enjoy the feeling of pain and suffering in another.

Often confused with authentic fellow-feeling is "emotional infection" and emotional identification (Scheler, 1954). Emotional infection is a simple transference of a state of feeling and does not presuppose any participation or knowledge of the emotions of the other. With emotional infection, contagion is

involuntary and increases, gathering momentum and can be observed in a crowd in action.

Emotional identification is a form of infection, where the feelings of another are unconsciously and involuntarily identified as one's own (Scheler, 1954). It can come about through absorption of another self into one's own or by a process of becoming overwhelmed by another.

The distinctions between fellow-feeling and similar-appearing phenomena in relationships as described by Scheler (1954) are helpful to discern the process and development of healthy empathy. We can become intentional in our professional attempts to understand others, to develop a fellow-feeling or empathy as we now call it. Scheler's (1954) insights regarding infection, identification and contagion of emotions are highly relevant to educators today in the struggle to understand children with emotional difficulties.

Fellow-feeling is described by Scheler (1954) as an "out reaching" and entry into another's situation that creates an authentic transcendence of one's self (p. 46). In true fellow-feeling there is no reference to one's own feelings. We are not joyful on another's person's account, we savor their joy. As a metaphysical phenomena, in-depth fellow-feeling creates a "change of heart" a fundamental "change in the inner most nature of reality itself" (p. 59). Although Scheler believes that fellow-feeling is an intrinsic characteristic of the human spirit that enables one to have an insight into the value of another, he acknowledges that we may have a closed mind and heart that results in egoism.

According to Scheler (1954) egoism and the accompanying state of egocentricism is the taking of one's own environment to be the world. We are

egocentric when we identify subjective values as environmental ones. For Scheler (1954), fellow-feeling is an intentional choice to concentrate on a cherished, intrinsic quality in another which dissipates egocentrism.

I find it exciting that Scheler (1954) believes that the egoism can be eliminated by a "mere act of will" when we endow others with equal value as the self (p. 60). Empathy, or fellow-feeling creates an "enlargement" of our own lives and enables us to transcend the limitations of our own experiences. Experiences of empathy can profoundly influence the course of human development.

Scheler (1954) uses the example of Buddha to argue his point. As a young, wealthy, egocentric man, Buddha encountered a suffering servant. In the immediate and profound out reaching of fellow-feeling to the suffering person, Buddha was able to gain an intuitive insight into the underlying unity of the world. According to Scheler, authentic fellow-feeling reveals a unity of being that underlies our human experience.

The power of empathy to enrich and enlarge human life was affirmed in a conversation recently. Thomas Knoth (personal communication, July, 17, 1994) stated that *einfühlung* is "what all people are hungry for; we all want someone to take time to really understand us, to care for us." Crystal Knoth (personal communication, July, 17, 1994) told stories of her training as a youth care worker in Germany when she was taught *einfühlung*. She was taught to suspend judgment, to move beyond what was visible in another, to lay aside her own emotions and carefully search for the essence of what another may be thinking and feeling. Both Crystal and Thomas felt *einfühlung* was the central theme of life, "it is so big, it is all life". A German/English dictionary (Messinger,

1984) defined *einfühlung* with the following phrases: "to acquire insight into"...."to get into the spirit of"...."to grasp the essence of"....(p. 296).

This exploration into historical and cultural dimensions of *einfühlung* expands, deepens, and brings new life to the theoretical possibilities of empathy. Both *shu* and *einfühlung* point to a way of life that is grounded in the structure of one's own personality as a moral orientation that values, cherishes, and affirms human life and connection with others.

Scheler's (1954) insights into fellow-feeling, unity of feeling, emotional identification and contagion give us a clear picture of ways that empathy can be distorted. From Scheler we learn that empathy has a variety of covert guises, each clever in masking a loss of self and egoism with the illusion of care for another.

Issues of Development

In order to consider empathy a "mature developmental achievement" as described by Young-Eisendrath and Wiedemann (1987), it is necessary to first review constructivist and contextual approaches to human development. Development from a constructivist point of view is the "task of mastering the fact of one's existence" (Hayes, 1994, p. 262). Steenbarger (1991) argues that development occurs in the context of lived experience through reflection on interpersonal interactions.

In this research study, specific facts of one's existence are contained in ordinary encounters with others that participants have described. Mindful reflections on specific, contextual interactions from lived experience provide a

crucible for the educator to master and take responsibility for the dynamics of human existence and interaction.

The constructivist tries to understand how another makes sense of personal experience and how meaning is constructed for them. Constructivists focus not on human beings as objects, but as humans being fully in the context, their situation, and their struggle to make sense and wholeness out of their lived reality.

Hahn (1987) speaks of human development when he describes the need for direct involvement in the phenomena of life and experimentation with alternative ways of seeing, acting and being. "Direct practice - realization - not intellectual research, brings about insight. Our own life is the instrument through which we experiment with the truth" (p. 8).

For Hahn (1987), valuable teaching must have the intention of bringing about understanding and compassion and "reflect the needs of people and the realities of society" (p. 8). In the search for valuable teachings constructivists may take into consideration abstract knowledge gleaned from intellectual research, but they rely heavily on the direct involvement of the individual in the process of reflection on vagaries of life for truth and wisdom.

Jordan (1991) argues that the ability to empathize varies according to the context of specific situations and an individual's own development. She explains that developmental issues that can affect whether we respond with empathy to another. These include: a personal sense of identity, prior learning, cherished values, emotional maturity, and capacity to suspend judgmental criticism.

The capacity for empathy is believed to be innate (Hoffman, 1981, 1987, 1988) and is considered by Hoffman to be the basis for moral development that emerges in the context of healthy, nurturing interpersonal relationships. In an extensive research project on female development, Young-Eisendrath and Wiedemann (1987) found that objective empathy begins with one's subjective experience of the other. "We intuit and perceive what is accurate within the inner state of being of another. For objective empathy and compassion to occur there is a blending of the highest subjectivity and highest objectivity" (Young-Eisendrath & Wiedemann, 1987, p. 226).

For some, the experience of empathy has spiritual dimensions. In her doctoral dissertation, Edith Stein (1917), a student of Husserl (1859-1938), suggests that the experience of communion through empathy could be known as the grace of God.

In sharp contrast to Stein's (1917) mystical, intuitive reflections on empathy, Egan (1990), an advocate of a skills training approach to empathy, expresses irritation regarding concepts of empathy. "I do have problems with empathy as a cult and with exalting it so as to make everything else subservient to it" (p. 128). Despite Egan's disdain for the spiritual quality of empathy, it remains a complex, multi-faceted, elusive and intriguing dynamic of human interaction.

Donovan and McIntyre (1990) describe a developmental-contextual paradigm similar to constructivism where learning is believed to take place through interactive processes with others. In this paradigm of human development, children are believed to learn through their attempts to communicate and those efforts often take the form of behavior as symbolic

communication. Children form self conceptions through connectedness and relatedness to others (Gilligan, Lyons & Hammer, 1992) and develop procedures to gain access to other people's knowledge (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986). Belenky et al. argue that the capacity for empathy is the "heart" of those procedures (p. 113).

Einführung and neuroscience

A cursory glimpse of neuroscientific findings relating to empathy explains the biological process of reaching out to understand the subjective reality of another. Dissanayake (1992) explains that as human beings we are confined within sensory limitations that have proved useful to our survival. Sensory perceptions of phenomena outside our limits is available by conscious intellectual activity, however everything we know is ultimately based on our five senses and reaffirms the inseparable nature of the body/mind. Through einführung we can utilize our conscious intellectual intention to move outside our habitual perceptual limitations.

A perspective is not an inner picture, according to Dissanayake (1992), but a pattern of relative synaptic strengths in the neural network. Perspectives include both representations which are cognitions and emotions which add meaning to cognition. From a neurophysiological view, emotions and cognitions occur simultaneously in organisms and are experienced phenomenologically as a unitary one. Through einführung with another we expand our perceptual field to include the integrated emotional and intellectual reality of another.

Skill Training Approach to Empathy

Training programs for helping professionals often take the skills approach which emphasizes conditioning of empathic behaviors and have little to say about the internal elements of empathy. Cormeir and Cormeir (1991) advise responding to a client empathically and imply that this behavioral skill will foster the ability to understand other people from their own frame of reference. Specific tools to convey empathic understanding according to Cormeir and Cormeir include: 1) showing the desire to comprehend; 2) discussing what is important to the client; 3) using verbal messages that refer to client feelings and 4) using verbal messages that bridge or add to implicit messages.

Egan (1990), author of The Skilled Helper, a training manual for helpers, conceives of empathy as a skill that can be learned, however, he does acknowledge that "you cannot respond empathically to clients unless you are empathic" (p. 127). Assuming that empathy resides inherently in the caregiver, Egan states, "Now on the assumption that you are empathic, we turn to what needs to be done to express empathy to your clients" (p. 127).

In the skills training approach, little attention is given to the internal experience of the empathizer. Empathy is seen as a way to clarify the experience of another so that the client is more effective in managing life, focuses on the communication of empathy and is a "tool of civility" (Egan, 1990, p, 135). Research in the skills training approach determines when and how empathy is helpful in the counseling process (Cormeir & Cormeir, 1991).

E. Kottler and J.A. Kottler (1993), advocate for a skills training approach for teachers, acknowledging briefly the complex dynamic of self and other in understanding another in their frame of reference:

Empathy is the ability (and willingness) to crawl inside someone else's skin and to know what he or she is experiencing. This is where attending, listening, and interpersonal sensitivity come together in such a way that you are able to get outside yourself enough so that you can sense what the other person is feeling and thinking (p. 41).

Trainers in the skill development approach such as J.A. and E. Kottler (1993) rarely acknowledge the time consuming, gut wrenching, humiliating, and painful developmental process required to get inside yourself enough so that you can eventually "get outside yourself enough" (p. 41) in order to sense what the other person is feeling and thinking.

Internal Developmental Approach to Empathy

The task of getting "inside yourself enough" to eventually "get outside yourself" involves a chaotic, messy process of emotional awareness and development, introspection, reflection, moral development and self-empathy. An emphasis on emotional awareness is called "internal empathy" by Jackson (1986). In describing the development of internal empathy, Jackson maintains that it requires a "willingness or ability to bring into cognitive awareness one's sensings" (p. 105).

Speculating that it may be the inability or unwillingness to label sensings, or accurately name emotions, that prevents external empathy skills from being effective, Jackson (1986) found in an empirical study that "general sensitivity to

emotions is related to the ability to perceive said affect in vivo and the willingness to label those impressions cognitively" (p. 111).

The ability to become conscious of emotions and label them cognitively with discernment and sensitivity allows an individual to gain access to inner dynamics embedded in internal and external dimensions of an interaction. This internal cognitive/affective style of empathy has the power to mitigate suffering. As Frankl (1963) succinctly states: "Emotion, which is suffering, ceases to be suffering as soon as we form a clear and precise picture of it." (p. 117).

The ability to form a "clear and precise picture" of emotion can be described as emotional maturity and is a significant developmental achievement (Schnarch, 1991). The healing therapeutic effect of empathy emerges from naming intense emotions in the context of caring relationships.

Goldstein and Michaels (1985) name internal components of empathy as perception, emotions, cognition and communication. Advocating for the affective/cognitive integration of an empathic response, Goldstein and Michaels challenge models of empathy that separate internal emotions and thoughts.

Theories of Cognitive and Affective Empathy

Conflict in the literature on empathy reflects a schism between theories that consider empathy a cognitive construct and requires cognitive-role taking and those that emphasize the affective aspects of distress and concern as sources of empathy. Stevens-Long and Macdonald (1992) illustrate this schism in an analysis of various measures for empathy and argue that the most commonly used assessment tools for empathy have either a cognitive or affective bias.

When we adhere to either a cognitive or affective dimension of empathy we are limited in a holistic understanding of another. The intellectual mind and emotional responses are interwoven, although we may have a stronger preference to be conscious of one or the other.

Grieving individuals may tend to hide emotions and display cognitive responses that contradict their authentic affect (Rando, 1984; Wolfelt, 1988). In a classroom, quiet individuals may be presumed to be doing "fine" and may not trigger the emotions of the professional through a display of distress. These same individuals may be locked in an invisible prison of alienation, depression and withdrawal.

Advocating a cognitive style of empathy for caring professionals, Maslach (1982) found that contact with troubled human beings who have problems relevant to the helper is more emotionally stressful. To be consistently helpful, Maslach advises that the empathic professional begin an encounter with an attempt to see things from the other's perspective and secondly, to "feel with" another.

Maslach (1982) believes that emotional arousal from the display of another's distress can be exhausting to a professional caregiver and result in depersonalization and punishment to the one in distress. The strategy of attempting to see things first from another's perspective may have been developed by Maslach to mitigate the effect of emotional identification.

Rather than emotional arousal through identification we can strive to resonate or reverberate with another. Goldstein and Michaels (1985) describe affective reverberation as "the production, tuning and maintenance of an affective state within ourselves that is a faithful reproduction of that initially

present to us by another person" (p. 62). In affective reverberation the emotions do not take root within us as they do with arousal; they simply resonate, lessening the likelihood of identification, projection, burnout and depersonalization.

In emotional arousal, one's own unresolved distress is often triggered and projected on another in an unconscious desire to rescue and "save" the other. With affective reverberation, one is able to separate one's own desires and subjectivity and perceive another's frame of reference as separate.

Therapeutic and Epistemological Dimensions of Empathy

Empathy is highly regarded as an important therapeutic element of healing in counseling as well as an epistemological approach to learning. Both dimensions have complex and intriguing possibilities for educators.

Empathy is believed to be the single most essential element of therapeutic relationships (Rogers, 1975, 1986; Kohut, 1977, 1984; Steenbarger, 1991). Rogers (1986) articulates the healing power of empathy:

To my mind, empathy is in itself a healing agent. It is one of the most potent aspects of therapy, because it releases, it confirms, it brings even the most frightened client into the human race. If a person is understood, he or she belongs. (p. 129)

A leader in the field of self-psychology, Kohut (1977) elevates the power of empathy. "Empathy, the accepting, confirming and understanding human echo evoked by the self, is a psychological nutrient without which human life, as we know and cherish it, could not be sustained" (p. 705).

As an essential dimension of counseling practice, the process of empathy engenders a strong emotional bond in therapeutic relationships. With an interplay of introspection and perception, empathy explores both subjective and objective reality, revealing only a part of another's reality.

Epistemologically, empathy can be considered an approach to learning that combines cognitive and affective elements in the quest for knowledge (Belenky et al. 1986; Young-Eisendrath & Wiedemann, 1987; Kegan, 1992). Sharma (1992) points out that "to inquire into the life of another is in the deepest sense an inquiry into the reality of the other ... so that a theory of empathy is or must be an epistemological theory" (p. 387).

With an epistemological framework to describe "connected knowers", Belenky et al. (1986) traces the process of knowing another through empathy. Initially interested in the data of another's life, there is a gradual shift to a focus on the other's way of thinking. "Connected knowers learn through empathy". They "learn to get out from behind their own eyes and use a different lens" ... "the lens of another person" (p. 115).

Constructivists argue that each individual holds within their inner mind multiple, interconnected perspectives which create their version of reality (Guba, 1990). The young child enters school with a wide variety of personally developed "scripts" regarding self, others and the world and having finely developed abilities of discrimination and association on which subsequent learning must be constructed (Gardner, 1991).

"The mind of the five year old is already chockfull of serviceable scripts, many of which will be drawn on for decades to come" (Gardner, 1991, p. 68). Knowledge contained in "scripts" within the structures in a child's mind,

cognitively orient a student and can be a source of misperception as well as perception. Scripts enable a child to assimilate new learning and make it his or her own.

Gardner (1991) stresses that unless we, as educators, comprehend these very early intuitive understandings, we are not able to educate a child to integrate them into the disciplined learnings in school. Knowledge learned in school that is in conflict with these habits of mind and body will create serious difficulties for a child, while formal knowledge consistent with early knowledge will be mastered far more easily. The inner cognitive world of the developing child is an unexamined reservoir of intuitive knowledge that may be accessible through empathy, the epistemological process of knowing another through the other's own "lens".

When a child has been supported, stimulated, respected and protected in early life, foundational theories about self, another and the world provide a fertile ground for formal education. However, when a child has endured abuse, trauma, abandonment, or other "at risk" factors which interfere with developmental potentialities, intense unresolved emotions may be expressed in disruptive behavior or go underground in disconnection and disassociation (Donovan & McIntyre, 1990). At risk children find the cognitive focus of the school confusing, incomprehensible and frustrating (Gardner, 1991).

Kegan (1992) advocates an holistic epistemological perspective-taking capacity as the goal in the development of the mind. In his opinion, schools have been successful when the adolescent can "internalize another's point of view in what becomes the construction of personal experience, thus creating

new capacity for empathy and sharing at an internal rather than merely transactive level" (p. 8).

In his schema of knowledge, Kegan (1992) conceptualizes the development of the mind as a sequence of qualitative developments emerging in the development of a single mind, the evolution of a single mental activity. A particular level of knowing is organized by not so much what the mind knows but how it knows.

Educators who have developed empathic abilities in both epistemological and therapeutic modes are essential to educate the vast numbers of at risk students who are suffering painful experiences of alienation, isolation, failure and loss of personal significance. Noddings (1984) states that the emphasis in schools today should be "not on the establishment of programs, but the establishment and evaluation of chains and circles of caring" (p. 180). Educators are not expected to be therapists for children but they need, at the very least, to be knowledgeable about loss and trauma and empathic with its manifestations in the classroom in order to not create further pain and suffering for children.

Integrating Therapeutic and Epistemological Dimensions of Empathy

Empathy is used as a way of knowing another for purposes of connection, learning and healing. According to Sharma (1992), empathy is an "affective in-tuneness as well as cognitive information gathering and processing" (p. 383).

The therapeutic and epistemological dimensions of empathy can merge in caring, authentic professional educational relationships and intersect as a

way of knowing about the reality of another in order to facilitate healing through human understanding and connected learning experiences.

Both epistemological and therapeutic empathy require fluid perspectives. In my practice as a teacher, a clinical psychotherapist, counselor and researcher, I have experienced human perspectives as both fixed and fluid.

When fixed, a perspective does not shift to adapt to changing reality. Patterns of maladaptation occur that create problems for individuals, families and communities. When fluid, perspectives are able to shift, flow and adapt to changing social and environmental factors in an on-going process of development. Empathy requires a continually shifting of perspectives, an ability to see from multiple lens.

While an unchanging, internal mindset provides a consistent pattern of identity and response, static perspectives can result in an inability to remain open to the flux of life and inner world of others. In a world of radical change, old and familiar mindsets are a point of stability and comfort, however they can fossilize and prevent the creation of fresh ways to conceptualize the reality of another.

As Marguiles (1989) points out, the human mind resists exploration. This reluctance is often not perceived by the one resisting. I have discovered embedded in our "objective" mindsets attachments and habitual patterns of perceptions regarding the self, others and the world. Clinging to our own version of knowledge and truth can prevent us from more profound truth and lead to dangerous human conflicts.

Narrowness and fanaticism are in every system of knowledge; the religious, scientific, academic, cultural and personal realm. Openness,

tolerance and appreciation for others, and "nonattachment to views" can be infused in systems and can lead toward reconciliation, peace and freedom (Hanh, 1987, p. 23). The examination and development of empathy has universal human value.

Authentic human empathy requires a beginner's mindset , a "negative capability" (Marguiles, 1989, p. 12) when engaged in interaction. A "negative capability" is created when an individual is willing to release cherished beliefs and dogmas with a conscious intention to explore and to "try on" the multiple perspectives of others without premature judgment and criticism.

In merging the therapeutic and epistemological dimensions of empathy, the fluid mind allows the educator to be flexible in focus. Moving from a cognitive understanding of a child's mind to an affective grasp of the child's feelings and back again to the child's logic, the educator learns to have a multiple lens perspective on a single child.

Lack of Emotional Maturity and Empathy

Our culture has long sensed the immense recesses of the human spirit, which have been little explored and has reacted to that sensing with anxiety and denial (Singer, 1990, p. 15)

The most significant difficulties in empathy seem to emerge in the realm of emotional development. Schnarch (1992) calls a lack of emotional maturity low emotional differentiation. Low emotional differentiation can result in empathy "look alike" such as identification and projection. Goldstein and Michaels (1985) echo Scheler's (1954) concern for the confusion of healthy empathy with

unconscious and sympathetic emotional identification. Unconscious identification with another can result in a phenomena called projection that can be abusive in a caregiving relationship (Peterson, 1992).

Projections emerging from unconscious identification with another are boundary violations and create a "breach in the core intent of the professional-client association" (Peterson, 1992). "Projections occur when professionals exploit the caregiving relationship to meet personal needs rather than client needs" (p. 75).

Maslach (1984) claims that sympathy is a source of "burnout" resulting in physical, emotional and spiritual depletion of the caring professional. Maslach (1984) points out that sympathy is often confused with empathy, but is actually confused projections of one's own unresolved issues on someone else's situation.

Making Conscious Unconscious Identification

In a study of physicians in training, Korner (1993) found medical students identified unconsciously with patients as they made assessments. In an effort to mitigate stereotyping and prejudice that comes with identification, Korner describes a technique where medical students learn to consciously identify projection.

Using a process called "conscious identification," medical students are required to formally write from the patient's point of view "using one's empathic perception and imagination to enter into the person's inner world" (p. 118). Making conscious normally unconscious identification permits the medical student to be aware of the tendency to hold a single lens perspective and

develop the habit of shifting perspective to another's way of thinking and feeling (Korner 1993).

Korner describes conscious identification, where medical students take time after recording data and observations to "consider the patient's experience, i.e. using one's empathic perception and imagination to enter into the person's inner world" (p. 118). Korner believes the process of identification occurs normally at an unconscious level. By formalizing unconscious identifications in writing they can become an additional source of information and that "it may be less likely to lead to stereotyping or prejudice" (p. 118).

While leading staff development seminars for teachers, I have observed that many educators are motivated to respond empathically to at risk youth. However, educators' unconscious projections and identifications may lead to personal and professional burnout as well as serious violations of the students.

Conscious identification of the unconscious bias and judgment is necessary to prevent boundary violations of children who are already vulnerable. If wounded children continually absorb and internalize the unconscious projections of adults entrusted with their care, they gradually lose the ability to develop competency and mastery of their own world.

Emotional Development and Empathy

A variety of emotional abilities are needed to ensure that authentic, healthy empathy will occur in an interpersonal interaction. An empathizer needs to develop the ability to make projections, identifications and fusion conscious, the ability to label affective sensings appropriately and the ability to extend empathy to the self. Schnarch (1991) uses the term emotional

differentiation to describe levels of emotional maturity. "Differentiation is the process by which a person manages individuality and togetherness in a relationship" (p. 198). With a low level of differentiation, people are likely to be involved in highly dependent, fused relationships. At a high level of differentiation, people are interdependent, able to listen and hear others' viewpoints and intense emotions without reacting and attempting to automatically change them. Schnarch maintains that caregivers with low differentiation may use empathy to "gratify their own needs to soothe and stroke at the patients' expense" (p. 402).

Highly emotionally differentiated individuals are confident in their ability to understand themselves. This is distinct from people with a high self image but little identity. Using the "power of positive thinking" individuals may create and maintain an image of an idealized self, but this is an artificial picture of one's self, an idealized version or pseudo-self that conflicts with authentic self-knowledge (Schnarch, 1991, p. 203).

Self-Empathy and Emotional Maturity

Unless one has empathy with the self, it is unlikely that empathy for others will be authentic and healthy. Empathy with the self occurs when one is congruent with one's essence and unique spirit. It refers to an appreciation of one's basic identity rather than the pseudo-self.

According to Jordan (1991), self-empathy involves letting go of unnecessary self-doubts, learning to trust inner emotions and imaginings, intuition and reasoning. Self-confrontation, a path to self-empathy and emotional maturity,

involves an open honesty regarding one's own intentions, identifications, projections and boundary violations.

The development of self-empathy requires a trust in inner emotions and cognitions, a release of an inner cacophony of shame and doubt and a practice of mindful, caring knowledge of the unique self. According to Jordan (1991) a person is more capable of being present in authentic loving relationships when one practices the discipline of self-empathy.

For women, the pull to empathy of others and neglect of self is strong according to Gilligan (1982). In her early research (1982) as well as more recent studies (Gilligan, Ward, & Taylor, 1988; Gilligan, Lyons & Hanmer, 1990) she has found that women are conditioned to attend first to the needs of others and may experience considerable guilt about claiming attention for the self and from the self. This guilt is non-productive and care of self needs to be understood as a moral responsibility.

Empathy for others is compromised by a lack of empathy for the self. Without self-empathy a person has difficulty differentiating from others and establishing clear boundaries of the self (Jordan, 1991). Empathy triggered from people with low self-empathy may be highly charged with projection, fusion and identification that violates professional boundaries.

Empathy in Education

Responding to challenges for restructuring education, Patterson and Purkey (1993) argue that teacher education must expand to encompass the interaction between the total personalities of both teachers and students and develop vital personal characteristics of empathy, respect and genuineness.

These characteristics are "more important than knowledge of subject matter or proficiency in skills, methods, and techniques" (p. 149). Empathy, the foundation of these characteristics, is defined by Patterson and Purkey as "understanding of another person from that person's point of view" and is achieved "by putting oneself in the place of the other so that one sees, as closely as possible, as the person does" (p. 149).

Recognizing the need for highly proficient teachers to utilize the most potent skills and techniques in educating the emotionally traumatized student, it is essential to understand a child from the child's own point of view. Without this foundation, there is little reason to expect that learning experiences, methods and techniques will have significant value for the individual student.

Teachers often go into teaching with hopes of making a significant difference in the lives of young people. van Manen (1991) argues that teachers carry the responsibility "*in loco parentis*" toward all children entrusted to their care. This responsibility emerges from children's needs to have a safe and protected sphere to "develop a self-responsible maturity" (p. 6). However, most education for teachers involves empirically based knowledge of subject matter as well as methods and instructional technologies, neglecting the vital "attitudinal relationships and people in the process" (Patterson & Purkey, 1993, p. 148).

Many teachers find their decisions to attend to the needs of individual children are eroded as job stress increases (Maslach, 1982). The absence of quality attention leaves both students and teachers feeling isolated and alienated. A decrease in interpersonal contacts with pupils occurs with the impact of financial concerns in the schools and the pressure to focus on overall

curriculum, standardized achievement tests and generic teaching behaviors (Sudzina & Gay, 1993).

Research on empathy in educators is sparse; however, Aspary and Roebuck (1975) found that high-empathy teachers use more praise and encouragement, less criticism, show acceptance of expression of feelings of students and elicit more student talk. When teachers scored high on empirical measure of caring relationships, their students were observed to spend more time in interactive instruction, were more active in their academic responding and were less often off task with less instance of involvement and discipline (Taylor, Brady, & Swank, 1989).

Empathy requires expression of some sort, however, methods of communicating understanding that are useful for a therapist may not be appropriate for an educator. Morgan (1984) proposes that teachers can communicate empathy through managing of instruction, organizing the learning environment, responding to feelings, developing emotional well-being in students and developing an environment of humor, warmth, affection and relaxation.

Creating a caring environment in education is a fundamental priority for Noddings (1984). She explains that in schools of care, the teacher opens to the perspective, feelings and attitudes of a student toward specific learning experiences, setting aside her own needs, listening and joining with the child in the child's perspective. Through this caring union, Noddings (1984) believes the student is empowered to sort out the confusion, set priorities, be open to new dimensions of learning, and develop competencies.

Acknowledging that this kind of caring relationship may seem "implausible and undesirable" to critics, Noddings (1984) maintains that

"teachers need not establish a deep, lasting, time-consuming personal relationship with every student. What I must do is to be totally and nonselectively present to the student - to each student - as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total" (p. 180).

Zehm and Kottler (1993) suggest to teachers that empathy means "being a partner in the journey toward resolution of the problem" (p. 68). With non judgmental and accepting attitude, Zehm and Kottler (1993) advise an unconditional regard for the child that must be communicated so that children "can learn to love themselves" (p. 69).

J. A. and E. Kottler (1993) advise teachers to communicate understanding of a child gleaned through empathy so that the child "does not feel quite so alone" (p. 41). This communication involves skills of attending, active listening, and statements that reflect feelings. The Kottlers (1993) advise teachers to avoid attempts of empathizing that may be intrusive, especially giving advice, unless there is a potential danger.

Development of Empathy in Students

According to Noddings (1984), the context of caring empathy in educational relationships becomes the model of moral ethics for young people. The growing child daily witnesses adults who live out an ethic of care. This modeling challenges students to contribute to that relationship in the form of engrossment in the learning activity (Noddings, 1984).

A significant concern in schools today is the development of multi-cultural understanding. Communication theorists have historically argued that empathy

is extremely difficult, if not impossible, in intercultural encounters due to radically different meanings and emotional responses (Broome, 1991).

According to Broome (1991) communication theorists argue that we have no direct knowledge of another's mental inferences, only what we imagine, assume and validate. Broome uses the phrase "third culture" to describe a shared space of connection between two people that allows intercultural encounters to create a mutual understanding (p. 243). We may not know the specific interpretations that another makes, but we can come into a common human experience of shared meaning.

Each of us knows that it is difficult, if not impossible at times, to build understanding and a shared meaning when we have different personal, cultural, social, and sexual orientations. By developing practices that create awareness of one's own consciousness and consideration of the reality with another, it is possible for individuals from different perspectives to share a common bond of understanding.

In this research, educators' inner perspectives are made conscious as they interact with others in situations where they may feel confused, challenged or distressed through a process of conscious identification. In clearing the space for a less prejudicial view of the at risk youth, the adult is able to more creatively and accurately understand the plight of the distressed child. Through reflection, the adult integrates the knowledge gleaned about the young person and considers alternative ways of response.

The examination of literature on empathy reveals a wide variety of insights, theories and practices regarding empathy. Philosophy, spirituality, aesthetics, friendship, neuroscience, feminism, psychology, epistemology and

communication skills training all contribute to a stimulating tapestry of knowledge regarding empathy.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

In this chapter, I describe a research methodology designed to closely examine threads of empathy embedded in the context of ordinary, human interactions reported by educators. The strands of empathy that emerge in the research will be illuminated by concepts discerned in psychological literature. Through an exploration and identification of dynamics of human interaction and reflection, meaning will be created and patterns will emerge out of lived experience. These patterns will be expressed in a description of empathy discerning essential elements and a discussion of the development that the elements spawned.

In the phenomenological constructivist tradition, I begin a description of research methodology by articulating my personal orientation toward empathy. The purpose of this revelation is to discern possible bias and to inform readers about my own beliefs and values as an inquirer of empathy. This orientation describes a philosophical and spiritual grounding of this research. In this section, I speak about my journey of development, readings that have inspired me and concerns I hold deeply in my heart. It is from this perspective that I have interacted with the phenomena to construct a description of the essential themes that characterize empathy.

Researcher's Orientation

As most of us have observed, life is very difficult, abject misery for some, and as Noddings (1989) says, "at the bottom sad" (p. 244). Children carry the

weight of the unresolved losses from parents and pass it on. Imbalances of power result in oppressive conditions for a significant part of the human race.

For those with adequate financial, political and social resources, there may be a denial of feelings and blindness toward oppressive conditions that are the birthplace of evil and violence. The media and norms of 20th century North America give support to the abdication of burdens gained through dedication to power, information, fashion, luxury and appearance. In living out this choice, the existential crisis of significance and meaning is kept at bay with the blocks that keep the "aliveness uneasily imprisoned within" (Bugental, 1978, p. 36).

Many learn to bring "aliveness" in the midst of life, by retreating from grimy burdens and responsibilities in the world and into academic, aesthetic, and religious traditions. While traditions provide a community structure that can respond to the suffering in the world and support for an empathic caregiver, traditions can also provide a retreat and hiding place from the harsh reality of life in this century.

Many times in my twenty-five year career as an educator and psychotherapist, I have been overwhelmed by the needs of yearning children in pain, people suffering homelessness, poverty of many kinds, and despair. At those times, I have left the "trenches" and retreated into academic and spiritual traditions as a way to distance myself from the messy chaos and pain of today's world and to gain perspective. Renewed and refreshed, I have returned to work in the contingent world of human interaction. I find myself speaking with a new voice, more simply but with clarity.

Maintaining the connection between the chaotic world of practice, the classroom with a "mindset of terror" (L. Murray, private communication, March

28, 1994) and the discipline of academic research involves an on-going effort to integrate and balance internal and environmental influences. This integration is at the center of both practice and research, internal reality and context of human experience. For me, integration emerges from a tension between my own spirit and soul.

Moore (1992) indicates it is essential to remain tethered to soul as one retreats from attachment of the world. "...spiritual vision comes with a price" (p. 250). "The soul needs spirit, but our spirituality also needs soul - deep intelligence, a sensitivity to the symbolic and metaphoric life, genuine community, and attachment to the world" (p. 229).

For a period of time in my life I chose the freedom of lightness, the allure of transcendence and retreated from many attachments to the world. Cumulative trauma and burdens of my life had become so overwhelming that I yearned for release. Relief came as I learned skills to disassociate through religious practices. Mystical experience proliferated and visions entranced me as I ascended higher and higher toward absolute freedom. I felt I had found a home in transcendence.

One day I watched from the window as white snow was swirled by winds off the ocean, and first knew an "unbearable lightness of being" (Kundera, 1986). Choosing the light involved the loss of significance, the loss of connections, community and reality. It was a path of survival and hopefully a step toward ultimate integration of burdens and freedom, weight and light. In learning to hold the tension of these polarities, the light and the darkness, connection and freedom, heavy sadness and joy, I have learned that eventually all can be integrated to empower an acceptance of painful reality.

The path of integration I utilize is what I call a reflective empathic encounter. In my work and research I am exploring the use of an empathic encounter as a way to continually stay connected with one's own soul, body and spirit as well as connected with others. I am hopeful that this integration will be evident as I continue this inquiry.

Noddings (1989) points out that education in modern times has been guided by a sense of optimism, and she challenges us to consider education "guided by a tragic sense of life, a view that cannot claim to overcome evil (any more than we can overcome dust) but claims to live sensitively with as little of it as possible" (p. 244). Rather than a morality toward evil and darkness inspired by fear, Noddings suggests an intentionality guided by the desire for loving relation and joy.

In the city where I live, children bring guns to school, innocent bystanders are shot and pre-adolescent children commit murders on a regular basis. Young people live with high risk choices as they try to cope with the normal struggles of childhood and adolescence as well as survival in schools. Ironically, more young people die from suicide in Washington State than any other cause; they choose not to survive.

Many of these young people are labeled "at risk" years before the crisis may claim their lives. The risks abound: lack of parental support, inner scars of unresolved multiple losses and trauma, alienation, illness, isolation, learning differences commonly called "disabilities", drugs, alcohol, abuse, depression, poverty, behavioral issues, dropout as well as chronic stress from perfectionism (Capuzzi & Gross, 1989; Schaffer & Gould, 1987).

In the midst of this broken world of reality for many is an opportunity of resilience and human connection. Moore (1992) speaks of "everyday sacredness" as a kind of spirituality that is ordinary and close to home as "especially nourishing to the soul" (p. 214-215). Finding "aliveness" in the most mundane of human activities grounds those who tend to wander in the air, who are addicted to spiritual or academic highs.

Taking time to be totally and authentically present to self and another while engaging in an interpersonal encounter can be ripe with meaning, joy and insight. These moments of full awareness and attention are transformative and life-begetting, creation in the midst of chaos. The secret seems to be empathy, focusing attention and caring, choosing acute awareness of our inner life, labeling and naming our raw emotions and "sensings" as well as those of others (Jackson, 1986).

Krishnamurti (1969) says:

We are not aware of outward things or of inward things. If you want to understand the beauty of a bird, a fly, or a leaf, or a person with all his complexities, you have to give your whole attention which is awareness. And you can give your whole attention only when you care, which means that you really love to understand - then you give your whole heart and mind to find out. (p. 31-32)

There is, however, a dark side to empathy. I have learned that when I am physically and emotionally fatigued, the more attention I give to distressed individuals, the more permeable I am to destructive spirits and the diminution of my soul. The phenomena of contagion of intense emotions and ideas to vulnerable people has been documented in the research on suicide clusters (Biblarz, Brown, Biblarz, Pilgrim, & Baldree, 1991), and reassures me that there

is empirical evidence to support my experience of destructive permeability to others.

I am discovering that it is only the grounding and care for my body, my emotions and my soul firmly tethered to the earth, that allows me to interact in a healing mode with deeply wounded others. I have learned that permeability is not healthy empathy, however it is neither good nor bad. It rests on a continuum in any given situation, ranging from closed and guarded to a mid-point balanced gentle and healing mode to an extreme of excess openness without boundaries.

For Moore (1992), soul work involves attentiveness to authentic experiences of love and intimacy in the ordinary experiences of the day. Putting soul in the center of our lives, linking both mind and body, involves remaining present to life as it reveals itself day by day. Soul work is the cultivation and attentive participation of the raw materials of our lives, attending to the small details of life as well as major decisions.

Discarding "salvational wishes" the soul caregiver observes what is there, discovering a deeper respect for uncomfortable emotions, unhealthy habits and human failure. "Problems and obstacles offer a chance for reflection that otherwise would be precluded by the swift routine of life" (Moore, 1992, p. 19).

A participant in this research, a young teacher named Val, reflects on knowledge gained through reflection on human encounters: "A work experience uncovered my darkest side: incredible anger, hateful words, clenched fists and tears of frustration." Sensing the source of her anger in fear, another participant, Risa, writes: "Because I was able to overcome my fears

through the encounter, I gained a greater understanding and respect for myself."

Change occurs not in a cure resulting from intentional intervention but by reflecting and re-imagining the deeper story of our life. A participant in this research, Risa, writes:

I value the new insight I have gained about myself and my personal goals. I believe that knowledge can be gained through all encounters and I hope I will continue to search for new insights and ideas in future professional as well as personal encounters.

Transformation and change occur when one has new knowledge. Knowledge is developed through reflection on lived experience. In the role of a guide, counselor, therapist, educator or caregiver, our task is to witness and encourage the inner sight and wisdom within each human individual. This way of perceiving another requires a shift in perception, a softer gaze, a mindful presence to the energy of the whole person

Not long ago this energy emerged for me in the paintings of a woman from Africa. I gasped as graceful black figures shimmered in an unusual light on the canvas. In a series of her paintings of men dancing, totemic figures stare out of pole-like, armless bodies. The artist explained that these totemic beings are witnesses to the divinity. Just as the artist is called to witness the dance, we each are, in a sense, totemic witnesses, observing the darkness and the light in ourselves and others.

We are called to give witness to the darkness and light of human life, the miracle of incarnation. Holding the tension of the darkness and the light with

loving attention, we remain armless, choosing to allow others the dignity of their own solutions.

Developing our strength as totemic witness, we enter into an empathic reflective way of being with ourselves and others. Empathic connection calls for an immersion in the way of being with another while maintaining clear boundaries of the self. The totemic witness knows another through the heart and mind, and with courage, observes all that is revealed.

Empathy is a commitment to deeply value both self and others, connecting and integrating the thoughts and feelings involved in an interaction. In an empathic connection we take the raw stuff of life and allow it to enter in, touch us, and flow out. We take in the limitation, pathology and pain of human life as well as the strength, mastery and joy. Both the darkness and light are received into the pole of transformation and released in an altered form.

Healing the polarized splits of body/mind, pathology and health, light/darkness, empathy entices us into a deep sense of the soul and sacredness of all human life. Moore (1992) suggests that we find concrete ways of getting the soul back. Empathic encounters with self or another can be a concrete way of connecting with the soul of self, or of another. Soul likes to be surprised. When we open to empathy we open to surprise of deeper realities.

In empathy we risk insight, a re-ordering of the way we see ourselves and others. Insights can threaten to disrupt all the predictable structures of our lives, propelling us into loop after loop of change.

I am not sure how, but I know that empathic encounters are the space in which the ambiguity and polarities of the weight and light merge for me. The tension of this ambiguity is not resolved once and for all, but is an on-going

dynamic, drawing me deeper into the self and deeper into the reality of others. Only in this descent and illumination is the tension satisfied for a time.

In the empathic encounter we intentionally choose to reverberate with feelings communicated by others, to enter into the "inscape" (Marguiles, 1989) of another, thus gaining insight into the inner world. We choose to stay fully present as the story unfolds, and in an unexpected moment, there is an illumination of what we imagine to be the inner world. As totemic spirits, grounded in our souls, we hold the space, we contain the intense energy of the work and connection. Tentatively, through reflection, our imagination is triggered by images, feelings, metaphors. We observe each as they emerge, let them go to receive the next.

At times we sit silently, loyal to self and the other, seemingly in the dark regarding the inner world of another. It may seem disjointed, fragmented, nonsense. We wait in patient pregnancy for the gift of illumination. Breathing deeply to enter more fully into this darkened depth, we descend. At times, a shimmering halo seems to suddenly emerge around the other and angelic divinity within them is revealed. Illumination has occurred. Light has penetrated the darkness and we quicken in excitement.

Like waves of the sea, we ride the ebb and flow of this energy of shared empathy, "dual unity" (Grof, 1993, p. 91), surrendering to the moment. Calmness and peacefulness settle into the space as the intensity diminishes. We bring closure to this empathic encounter, gradually relinquishing the orgasmic delight of empathic witnessing.

We prepare to move out of this intense focus on another into a more extended awareness. We begin to hear the birds singing, notice the

temperature of the room and consider the small tasks of the hour. We part, knowing a link has been woven that will connect us in an eternal time.

A secondary teacher described empathic encounters: "We have become larger - we are more, there has been a small transformation" (T.R., personal communication, 1991). Our order of being is broken down in some small way, dissolved in the empathic descent and we emerge re-formed. Re-freshed. Renewed. It is important to hold the stillness of this inner transformation allowing each bone, muscle, and cell to integrate the ambiguity of light and darkness, to re-form the story, to discover a way of wisdom and love.

Questions for Inquiry

As evident in the Researcher's Orientation, I have entertained many complex and interrelated questions regarding the process and development of empathy. These questions have shifted over the past four years, some expanding, others diminishing. The questions have been my guide, challenging, motivating and stretching me to consider a wide range of concepts relating to epistemological and therapeutic dimensions of empathy.

I bring to this inquiry my expertise as a psychotherapist and as an educator. The work of the psychotherapist is to listen, observe, intuit, speculate and check out clues that compose another's reality. This knowledge is used to create a therapeutic alliance or participation in shared meaning where healing can occur.

The work of an educator is similar to the therapist; to discern a learner's inner knowledge and intrinsic motivation. However, the goals are subtly

different. The teacher gains insight into another in order to facilitate meaningful learning and development.

While fulfilling distinct functions, empathic relationships of the educator and therapist are challenged with similar questions. In the process of this research my questions have become more holistic and can be synthesized into three main queries: 1) What is the nature of empathy in educational encounters?; 2) What are the essential elements of an empathic encounter?; and 3) What contributes to the development of empathy in educators?

Preparation for Research

In order to accurately describe the research methodology that was used in this research, it is necessary to articulate its process and evolution. Inspired by the studies and theorizing of Delores and Arturo Biblarz (1991) on contagion of youth suicide, I began to develop an inquiry on empathy five years ago. If hopelessness and despair could be transmitted to vulnerable others through the process of contagion, I wondered if empathy could mitigate that contagion.

As I began to investigate the effect of empathy on the contagion of hopelessness, I found that there was no agreement in the literature on the process or assessment of empathy. Empathy is a complex ability, highly valued by therapists, educators and some medical personnel, however, the literature of empirical research refers almost exclusively to the external manifestation of empathy with little reference to the internal process. In my work as a psychotherapist and educator, I realized that empathy must be authentic if it was to be effective, but how one is able to achieve authentic internal empathy was shrouded in mystery.

As a result of my initial queries, I began to explore my own internal empathic process utilizing a journaling technique where I reflected on perspective-taking. I noted after several months that I was becoming more aware of my tendency to identify, project, fuse and disconnect in situations that aroused my emotions. Once aware and conscious of identifications with others, I became more adept at bracketing my own reactions and responding to others in their own terms.

Curious to discover if this journaling technique would be useful to others, I began to facilitate educators to employ the technique of perspective-taking through writing. I encouraged educators to examine closely the ordinary, daily interactions that comprised their professional practice and reflect on the meaning of the encounter with another. The results were promising and I arranged for two pilot studies.

Pilot Studies

Two pilot studies of this research were held in 1991 and 1992 in cooperation with Lifeline Institute for Youth Suicide Prevention in Tacoma, Washington and Seattle Pacific University in Seattle, Washington. In-service educators enrolled in graduate level six-credit courses to enhance competency in teaching vulnerable youth.

Activities of the course included completion of six responses to the Encounter Process (Appendix A) and one response to the Reflection Process (Appendix B). Participants who volunteered for the research reported in the Reflection Process that the Encounter Process enabled them to clarify and

understand themselves and clients in specific interactions and contributed significantly to their development as professionals.

Using phenomenological methods, I analyzed the written encounters and reflections in a small *n* study, searching for essential elements in the process of empathy. In the analysis, I noted that the participants demonstrated small perceptual shifts of awareness in the encounters that cumulated into significant developmental growth. With awareness and reflection on intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions, the ability to empathize naturally developed. I realized that the process and development of empathy are inseparable and that development emerges within the context and process of lived experience.

Research Approach

The research methodology chosen for this study is qualitative, constructive and phenomenological. Qualitative research supports investigation in a natural, contextual mode and struggles to discern differences and similarities between subjective and objective experience.

An examination of empathy has a similar struggle; to be authentically empathic it is necessary to discern another's experience from one's own. As human beings we are often enclosed in our own subjectivity and highly susceptible to identification with others. This identification is the source of projections that bias our interpretation of another's intention, perception and behavior.

Qualitative researchers have attempted to address the problem of subjectivity and objectivity with the development of research methodology. Researchers Husserl (1965) and von Hildebrand (1960) grappled with the

problem of intersubjective relationships in the early years of the century and devised innovative methodology in response. Contemporary researchers (Guba, 1990; Heshusius, 1994; Lincoln, 1990) continue to explore the problem of subjectivity and objectivity, re-creating new paradigms of research. Guba (1990) argues for flexibility of research methodology and advises that qualitative research follows the unique interaction between the researcher and participants. This approach mirrors the belief that an empathic connection with another emerges out of a unique interaction between the empathizer and the one cared for.

Heshusius (1994) offers a fresh perspective on the management of subjectivity and objectivity. Comparing the process of "procedural subjectivity", the process of managing one's own subjectivity with "procedural objectivity", Heshusius argues that both approaches anchor research in a mode of consciousness that separates the knower from the known. She suggests a mode of consciousness that emerges from deeper connections of the knower and the known, called "participatory consciousness" (p. 16).

Rather than objectifying or subjectifying knowledge, the "participatory mode of consciousness" invites participants to "let go of all preoccupation with the self" and enter into a "state of complete attention", so that a "fundamental selfother unity" can emerge (Heshusius, 1994, p. 17-18). A participatory mode of consciousness requires an intentional, mindful, non-intrusive attentiveness to a larger reality than the self.

According to Heshusius (1994), as objective researchers, we create a distance between the self as knower and the other as the one known because we believe we need to control our experience from a distance. We often fear

the intimacy and connection that comes with a "selfother" unity. We fear becoming overpowered by the other, or losing ourselves in the participatory mode of consciousness. Merging into what one wants to understand, researchers come to know a larger reality in a somatic, immediate and holistic way (Heshusius, 1994). The participatory mode of consciousness in research can reflect a similar connection in empathic human interactions called shared meaning.

Qualitative Research and Human Connection

Belenky et al. (1986) describes a selfother epistemology as "connected knowing".

Connected knowers develop procedures for gaining access to other people's knowledge. At the heart of these procedures is the capacity for empathy. Since knowledge comes from experience, the only way they can hope to understand another person's ideas is to try to share the experience that has led the person to form the idea (p. 113).

Creating new collaborative methodology to explore in a fresh way the quality of human connection, feminist researchers (Gilligan, Lyons & Hanmer, 1990; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Belenky et al., 1986) have focused on specific, contextual and interpersonal interactions that constitute the development of knowledge and a framework for research. In qualitative research, the researcher and the one researched can create an interaction in which they become "fused into a single entity" (Guba, 1990, p. 27) while they work to establish knowledge about the world.

Qualitative Research and Empowerment in Education

In a constructivist model of school restructuring, it is considered valuable to empower educators to assume stronger accountability for the discovery of knowledge. Lincoln (1990) argues that new paradigms of qualitative research offer distinct advantages for educators in their quest to discover and transmit knowledge as compared to conventional research that separates the researcher and researched in a "top down" orientation" (p. 98).

Conventional research transmits knowledge in propositions and statistics while the new paradigms of qualitative research value knowledge that is secured from the local context from those "on the inside" who are challenged to action (Lincoln, 1990, p. 98). Guba (1990) believes that positivism and post positivists paradigms must be entirely replaced because facts and "reality" exist within some construction of theoretical framework that is often lost; "reality" can only be tested through an implicit or explicit window of theory; all facts are laden with value; and "knowledge is a human construction between the inquired and inquired into" (p. 25-26). The epistemology of constructivism in the creation of knowledge in the educational process reflects the constructivist research approach. Both attempt to bridge a gap between the knower and the known, and rebalance structures of power.

Criteria for Qualitative Phenomenological Research

Qualitative research is an inductive search for meaning. Theories develop from the "bottom up" (Bogan & Biklen, 1992, p. 31) and abstractions emerge as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together. The purpose of qualitative research is not to prove or disprove a hypothesis, it is to

provide understanding for a topic. The results of this research illuminate to some degree the understanding of the participants, and can be informative and applicable to human beings in general (Hycner, 1985). Application or transferability criterion refers to ability of the research to facilitate insights or inferences the reader may apply in his or her own circumstances (Guba, 1990).

Criteria for qualitative research involves both the process and product of the inquiry. Flake (1993) characterizes the history of quantitative research in education as emerging from an "analytic, atomistic, behavioristic way of thinking about child development" (p. 163). More holistic questions are possible in qualitative research. For a global, complex, elusive concept such as empathy, qualitative research is able to generate a meaningful description with the power to stimulate reflection in others. Value in this research lies, in part, with the effect of the stories and findings to trigger insight in the readers and the conclusions to create change or action. Guba (1990) calls it empowerment criterion. Empowerment criterion refers to the ability of the study to "evoke and facilitate action" on circumstances or environment on the part of the readers (Guba, 1990, p. 74).

The subjective influence of the research is often a concern for those who utilize qualitative research. In this research, there is an on-going awareness and bracketing of the researcher's own presuppositions as an essential element of data analysis. According to Colaizzi (1987), objectivity is faithfulness to phenomena and requires the recognition and affirmation of personal experience and experience of another.

Rigour in phenomenological research, according to van Manen (1990) requires precision, exactness and the moral resolve or courage to stand up for

the significance of the phenomena. To maintain rigour in this research, strict faithfulness to the original data was maintained throughout the process of analyzing and reporting the data.

The value and usefulness of the qualitative phenomenological approach is in clearer and deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Polkinghorne (1989) argues that the consequences of understanding a phenomena in a more sensitive and inclusive way can result in further exploration of the phenomena as well as influencing decisions in attitude and policy to further experience the phenomena.

Phenomenology

A phenomenological research approach was chosen for this study because it is highly effective in stimulating, describing and refining the essential qualities of a particular phenomena. In this research it is desirable to make visible internal dynamics of empathy as it exists in human interactions and in developmental patterns in educators. To empathize one must be able to intuit the essence of another, a subjective process very similar to phenomenology.

Phenomenological research seeks to discover the "consequential in the inconsequential, the significant in the taken-for-granted" (van Manen, 1990, p. 8) and attempts to gain a deeper understanding of fundamental meaning in human existence. Meaningfulness is not always immediately obvious and can be developed. We often take for granted small, human interactions of the day, and the internal process of empathy in these encounters may be invisible to the casual observer and considered inconsequential.

Husserl (1859-1938)(Lauer, Trans.1965) , recognized by scholars as founder of contemporary phenomenology, struggled with reductionism in psychology and advocated for the a priori element of all meaningfulness in experience. In addition to his interest in determining the being that meaning has, Husserl (1965) held *einfühlung* as the crux of phenomenology.

Describing the enigma of empathy, Husserl (Lauer, Trans., 1965) questions the "problem of how another human being, in all his individuality and specificity, could be constituted within my consciousness and yet be truly other to me" (p. 7). For Husserl, consciousness is not simply a mirror of events, it is a medium endowed with its own meaning confounding and confusing human relationships. The link between phenomenology and the quest for the essential meaning of empathy continues to affirm the logic of choosing phenomenology as a research method.

Phenomenology and Education

This problem of creating the reality of another in one's own consciousness became known as one of intersubjectivity (Owens, 1970) and its fundamental question has an urgency in today's world and schools. "How does one person (a subject) encounter another person (a subject) precisely as another subject?" (Owens, 1970, p. 1). . Writing can provide an avenue.

van Manen (1990) describes a reflective writing process used in phenomenological research to understand participants in their own terms. In this process, the researcher begins by choosing to focus on an experience that seriously interests her and she investigates that experience by writing and rewriting a description of the phenomena as it is lived. This approach is easily

available to practitioners in education and serves to empower a personal and professional sense of competency and care. Writing about a phenomena allows one to consider a variety of perspectives and exposes underlying threads of meaning embedded in an ordinary experience.

Phenomenological research is needed in education today as a method of creating knowledge and returning to connected learning. Students are distanced from themselves, learning and educators. Emotions are distanced from cognitions, body is distanced from mind, theory is distanced from practice, teachers are distanced from students, administrators and peers, and technology threatens to distance all of us from human concerns. van Manen (1990) challenges researchers to become mindful and tactful toward the human dimension of life that emerges in schools. "Pedagogy requires a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience" (p. 2). For van Manen, "research is a caring act; we want to know what is most essential to being" (p. 5).

van Manen (1990) postulates that the goal of phenomenology in schools is to "know how to act tactfully in pedagogic situations on the basis of carefully edified thoughtfulness" (p. 106). The thoughtfulness of the researcher enables her to "differentiate between essential themes and themes more incidentally related to the phenomenon under study" (p. 106). These essential themes provide a fresh perspective toward understanding a basic human experience of existence.

Heshusius (1994) predicts questions of research ethics from one's belief that we can separate the subjective from the objective, to ones that question our own moral life and the kind of world we are constructing. As Heshusius points

out, "Students in school, I am quite sure, could not care less about our methodological quibbles; they would like us to forget our concerns about our 'selves' so we can fully listen to them to help us understand how to turn schools into better places to be" (p. 20).

Developing a Research Process

A high school teacher in a pilot study to this research expressed his experience of using the Encounter and Reflection Process:

I believe some windows to a deeper understanding of myself and others have been opened. It is very important to get out from behind your desk and make contact with these students and try and see things through their eyes.

Only then can you come to an understanding of their feelings and answers to why they act and feel the way they do. I think I have done this in the past but have pulled away from this kind of feeling skill. Why? I am not sure.

Maybe I got too close. It hurt too much, or just all the so called important things that were added pushed that part of education aside. You see, you can't give it a grade, so it doesn't fit all nice and neat on a report card or referral form.

In my teaching profession, I see myself a more of a feeling, listening and understanding person. I already have an open door policy. The first thing I believe I will need to do is to be open about my own feelings so they understand that if he can open up so can I.

We are all changed to the center of our own target as we drag our center over to someone else's feelings, problems or point of view to better understanding. We can never totally return to the original point because we have been affected by that other person's point of view and them by ours and thus we grow. (T. R. 1991)

As I examined encounters and reflections gathered in the pilot study to discern aspects, phases and development in empathy, I realized that each person told their unique story in a personal authentic voice. For example, when T. R. (1991) talks about "being changed to the center of our own target as we drag our own center over to someone else's feelings, thoughts or points of view to better understand", we have new metaphor that stimulates understanding beyond the familiar phrase "seeing the world from another's perspective."

In order to respect the unique perspective of each educator in the research, I chose to use a small number of participants. In the decision to limit the number of participants, the depth of research was expanded which enabled me to implement Colaizzi's (1987) criteria for research. Colaizzi argues that the full personhood of the participant must be respected and this only happens when listening to her total being and entirety of personality.

Selecting research participants

Four research participants were selected from two graduate level educational in-service courses taught in both Canada and the United States during Winter and Spring terms of 1993. Although each course had a different instructor, they utilized the same course readings (Stanley, 1993). The use of Encounter Process (Appendix A) and Reflection Process (Appendix B) were assigned.

A letter (Appendix C) was mailed to all students registered in the course after grades were submitted which invited them to participate in this research. Included in the letter was an explanation of the purpose of the research, an assurance of confidentiality, and a signed agreement to participate (Appendix

D). Interested participants signed the agreement and mailed their written materials to me. Different names for the participants were selected by the researcher, and identifying data has been destroyed.

I chose four of the participants for the following reasons: 1) their written stories exhibited a willingness to confront themselves in an effort to develop both personally and professionally; 2) their written work included meaningful reflection on their encounters with others; 3) the participant was interested and agreed to participate in research. Each participant selected met Colaizzi's (1987) criteria of having lived the experience of a specific phenomena and the ability to articulate their experience as they live it in their daily life.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for purposeful sampling was adopted by selecting participants from both Canada and the United States who were diverse in their roles in education, and differed significantly in age and experience. Each participant selected demonstrated a common human struggle to develop understanding for self and others from a variety of emotional, cognitive, and cultural orientations.

The first participant is Paula, a mid-career school counselor on a study sabbatical. The second is Risa, a school social worker, just beginning her career. The third participant is Karen, a beginning elementary teacher and the fourth is Val, a more experienced teacher in an elementary school. Further identifying material has been deleted at the request of participants.

Each participant wrote about a wide variety of encounters with young people, colleagues, friends, clients and self. Participants of this research were advised of the analysis of findings at the time of the initial analysis and at the conclusion.

Generation of data

The Encounter Process (Appendix A) and the Reflection Process (Appendix B) were refined in pilot studies and developed specifically for this research. Selected participants submitted from four to six Encounters and one Reflection for analysis. A brief description of each follows:

Encounter process. Inspired by Koziey and Andersen's (1990) work on phenomenological research using a guided imagery, the Encounter Process was created as a way to capture the essence of an experience. According to Koziey and Andersen, changes in perspectives, thoughts and behavior can begin with identifying existing patterns through guided imagery. The use of imagery in identifying and describing unrecognized habits and preferences which structure reality creates opportunities for change and alternatives. Through guided imagery the participant is in the pattern in a more direct way and able to generate symbolic images and metaphors that can bridge the gap between the old and the new, and thus create new responses, actions and patterns.

Using the Encounter Process, participants were invited to explore in writing any interpersonal interaction that needed to be sorted, clarified and understood. In this Process, educators recalled an encounter, entered into a guided imagery of the experience and wrote about it from their own perspective as well from what they imagined to be the other person's point of view. Next, they reflected briefly on the meaning embedded within the encounter.

The purpose of the Encounter Process is to encourage educators to make conscious their unconscious perceptions of self and others in specific

situations, to intuit the essence of another, to stimulate perspectives from another's point of view and to create an opportunity for reflection. Shifting one's perspective to another's vantage point allows individuals to be connected in an experience of shared meaning that can emerge as empathy.

The value of making conscious one's own inner world is to discover invisible patterns of meaning that create opportunities for connection. The feelings of the professional are important clues to dynamics within the self that may interfere with a relationship or serve to strengthen it. The Encounter Process stimulates new responses and actions.

Reflection process. After a selected number of Encounter Process writings are completed over a period of six to nine months, the participant reflects on those interactions in an attempt to glean meaning and knowledge with the Reflection Process. Adapted from the work of Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985), the Reflection Process encourages an integration of cognitive and affective learning and creates knowledge from experience.

Pointing out that most experiential education is deficient in the reflective skills, Boud et al. (1985) emphasize the process of working through the attitudes and emotions that color understanding. In a style of reflection that respects the whole person, feelings and values are integrated with cognitive perspectives.

Using the Reflection Process the writer recalls each Encounter and articulates and responds to uncomfortable emotions. Pleasurable emotions are named and efforts to enhance and retain them are encouraged. By acknowledging and managing affective responses immediately, emotions become allies in the discovery of meaning and knowledge.

Reflection, a response to an experience, allows a learner to bring to conscious awareness covert thoughts, emotions and associations in order to acknowledge, evaluate and make choices. In a form of reflection that integrates the affective and the cognitive, emotional events of the past are remembered and thus available for new integration and integrity.

Negative affect can interrupt the flow of understanding. Rooted in the interpretation of the learner, negative affect can be discharged or transformed through attentiveness in a reflective process. The goal of the Reflection Process is not to raise emotions but to develop awareness of the role of emotions in human experience and to model a way that individuals could manage emotional reactions.

In the Reflection Process, as the learner probes more deeply into the associations, new learning, prior knowledge, values to the self and outcomes of an experience, there is a deepening of self-understanding. This self-understanding involves self-forgiveness, clarification of expectations, and a deep sense of meaning.

The particular Reflection Process used in this research created a container for the organization of knowledge, self-exploration and decision making. The Reflection Process revealed prior habits of learning; the lack of affective reflectivity in the past and habits of pre-judgment and reactivity. Through a process of validation in this reflection process there is a testing for congruence between existing knowledge and new knowledge that allows an individual to deepen the appropriation of learning and consider alternative actions for the future.

Analysis of data

A combination of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) method of grounded theory, van Manen's (1990) human science method, Colaizzi's (1987) method of phenomenology, and Hycner's (1985) methodological guidelines to phenomenology were used in this study to analyze the writings of participants. Additional procedures were based on the Encounter Process and Reflection Process and were added to enhance the full elaboration of the stories and to expose researcher identification, bias and prejudice. The following steps were employed:

1. **Transcription**. A packet containing the Encounter Processes and the Reflection Process for each participant was transcribed by the researcher into a format appropriate for analysis. Each writing was verified in the transcript. Writings were read and re-read carefully by the researcher and an independent evaluator. Meaning units were delineated.

2. **Grounded Theory Analysis**. Using the strategies of Strauss and Corbin (1990), the analysis of each participant's writings began with an exploration of the properties and dimensions of words, phrases and metaphors in meaning units. Each meaning unit was named with at least one specific concept. The researcher re-read the meaning units in specific writings, noting similar and divergent concepts. Concepts were then expressed in categories. The researcher then created a story describing each participant's writing from categories in a process Strauss and Corbin (1990) call axial coding.

3. Encounter Process. Returning to original transcription, the researcher compared it with the axial coding. The Encounter Process was used to elicit the researcher's own perspective of the story as well as the imagined experience of the participant. This data was used to discern personal bias, identification, judgments, projections and assumptions made by the researcher. The use of the Encounter Process in the analysis of the stories also elicited a deeper level of understanding and meaning regarding the phenomena of empathy. The researcher then re-wrote a description of the participant's story articulating essential themes.

4. Independent Monitoring. Two independent observers monitored steps two and three in the work of one participant.

5. Themes Expressed in Psychological Concepts. The researcher re-read literature on empathy and integrated essential themes of participants' stories with psychological understanding.

6. Developing a Narrative. After completing the first five steps described above for each writing, the researcher gathered and read the stories from one participant and wrote a completed story describing the experience of the participant.

7. Reflection Process. The researcher wrote a personal reflection using the Reflection Process on the essential themes and development discerned in

the work of a participant. The purpose of this step was to deepen implications for the meaning of the work.

8. Repeat Steps One to Seven. The researcher repeated each step for each participant.

9. Compare for Similar and Divergent Processes. The researcher assembled each participant's data and searched for similar and divergent themes and similar and divergent developmental process, and created a list of those themes as findings.

10. Findings are Validated. Findings are verified by re-reading the original of each participant's work by researcher and independent evaluator. Each participant's stories are evaluated in terms of the findings.

11. Creating a Model. A description of the process and development of empathy is presented in a model of essential themes. Developmental issues are discussed.

Summary of analysis

The research method was one of analyzing, intuiting, reflecting and describing. I allowed the phenomenon to guide the process of research so that the essential elements of empathy would be revealed. As a researcher, I experienced each step as a rich and rewarding opportunity for growth and development.

Of particular interest in the analysis is the use of step three, the **Encounter Process**. As a researcher, I chose to use this Process to reveal personal and professional bias, unconscious motivations, prejudice and pre-commitment to the initial analysis of stories. This was the same task I was asking participants to complete in their written work. After the initial analysis using grounded theory methodology in Step Two (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I returned to the original data and attempted to write the story of the encounter from what I imagined to be the inner voice of the participant. Stepping into their shoes, seeing from their vantage point, I imagined, speculated, assumed and intuited what might be their inner process of association, thinking, and feeling.

I then subjected this perspective-taking to a rigorous verification with the original data, the analysis, as well as my own personal reactions. This process elicited a number of biases based on unresolved emotional wounds of my past that could have interfered with my perception of the participant's reality. One example occurred when I found myself feeling critical toward a teacher in her treatment of a particular child. When I looked carefully at my reaction, I realized I had identified with the powerless child. Suddenly, a forgotten memory came into consciousness. An event from over forty years ago emerged with a strong sense of shame, humiliation and embarrassment. I realized I had made conscious an unconscious identification.

I found that perspective taking is a strategy that allows the researcher to identify bias, projections and distortions of perspective and to access a participatory mode of consciousness with a participant. Entering into a participatory mode of consciousness with the participant, I felt I could discern a holistic knowledge of empathy and intuit the themes that were deeply

embedded in the work of the participants as well as in the life of the researcher. The inclusion of this step fulfills the demand for rigour in the qualitative research process.

The use of the Reflection Process enabled me to translate the themes and conclusions that emerged from the lived experience into a language of education and psychology appropriate for presenting research findings and further research. Following the cleansing of the data through perspective taking and written reflection, I then began the work of expressing the psychological insights contained in meaning units more directly, through a process of "reflection and imaginative variation" (Giorgi, 1985, p. 17). I believe that identifying themes discovered in the research with contemporary psychological and educational theories will enhance the usefulness of the findings.

Although Giorgi (1985) believes that it is difficult to express participants' experience in psychological language because there is not an already established consensual psychological language, I have attempted to "try on" psychological, spiritual and pedagogical theories when it was helpful to understand a phenomenon. This was useful to "apprehend the essential relationships among essences" (Husserl, 1965, p. 659).

An unexpected gain of using the Encounter and Reflection Process in the research analysis was a discovery of a shared meaning with participants, a sense of community and common purpose. In the examination of the topic empathy, few tools have been developed that have enabled researchers to experience empathy with participants. This added immeasurably to the value of the research for my own development. van Manen (1990) gives permission to researchers to construct their own version of the dimensions of a phenomenon:

"In determining the universal or essential quality of a theme, our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (p. 107).

CHAPTER 4

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to describe the process and development of empathy in interactions of educators. In describing the findings of this study, I would like to invite readers into an empathic relationship with the participants by telling their stories as closely to the participant's own terms as possible. Each participant is described with a pseudonym and a minimum of identifying information to insure confidentiality.

Following the presentation of each participant's experience, I reflect on their work, my perspective taking through the Encounter Process and possible connections with psychological, educational and spiritual literature. The researcher reflection becomes a dialogical voice that reveals patterns, themes and developments.

The Participants

Paula

Paula is a school counselor, mid-career and maintains a small private therapy practice. In her stories and reflections, Paula struggles to understand intense emotions which can lead to either connections with others or isolation and withdrawal. Reflecting on the Encounter Process, Paula acknowledges her emotional development:

My first thought that represents new knowledge is in the area of feelings. I recognize that in the past I repressed painful emotions or I chose to 'file them away' to deal with at another time. With this encounter process I wanted to work through the emotions at the

time of writing. And I find now, that immediately after an encounter, I am motivated to identify and process uncomfortable emotions connected with the experience."

Paula's First Encounter: Fused in Sympathy

In her first encounter, Paula describes physical tension and a headache as she talks to a client on the phone. During most of the interaction, Paula listens quietly, although the details of the story seem to follow a familiar pattern of blame and victimization. Near the end of the interaction, Paula shifts from a stance of a passive listener to challenging her client with an active intervention.

Defensively, the client attacks Paula. Paula labels the attack as "miscommunication" and ends the conversation. Her first reaction is to "call someone and tell them about this but it was too late". Instead she ignores her emotions and turned her "attention to the TV after pouring a glass of wine".

When Paula writes about the interactions from the client's perspective, intense emotions emerge. She imagines that the client is frustrated because the phone has been busy and feels desperate to talk to "someone ... I have so much on my mind." As she writes about the interaction from what she imagines to be the vantage point of the client, Paula experiences chaotic, distressful feelings.

Reflecting on perspective-taking, Paula accesses and acknowledges her own deep emotions triggered by the client. Conscious of her own emotional turmoil, Paula becomes aware of the destructiveness of the relationship and makes decisions to alter future interactions. This reflection opens Paula to a recognition of the common ground between herself and her client. The client is not just a person with problems, but another human being trapped in a familiar

cycle of dysfunctional family, misunderstanding, blaming, fault finding, pain, isolation and suffering.

Paula moves back and forth in her reflection between her own emotions and the client's needs and feels "sad for her pain and helpless in her struggle to understand herself and her relationship with others." The reflection provides Paula with clues for direction and action. Paula realizes how her own emotional pattern affects the shared relationship. "I am not so sure that I can continue to be supportive when I continue to bury my feelings. It drags me down" ... "I think that I need to deal with this and not let it continue in this way."

Acknowledging the client's painful and frustrating search for love and belonging, Paula is concerned for her welfare. She considers "the idea of her seeing a new therapist with her, if she is agreeable." Defining the central difficulty as stemming from confusion of roles in the relationship, Paula decides a course of action. "When I return I need to clarify with her some boundaries concerning our relationship." Paula reveals violations of professional boundaries, as well as her own anger and resentment toward this client. "I refuse to spend one more evening watching her get drunk and talk about the past for the millionth time."

Paula's Second Encounter: Multicultural Learning through Empathy

In the second encounter, Paula listens to a speaker from a different cultural tradition. In this interaction, Paula enters empathically into the perspective offered by the speaker, resonates emotionally and discovers the encounter to be a way of learning which is authentic, stimulating and enlightening. Paula's intention is openly receptive to the presentation and the

speaker: "I was really looking forward to this presentation" "I was surprised to see she was a Native."

The speaker invited listeners into her personal and professional story through self-disclosures, authenticity and an inner peacefulness. She "began by reading excerpts from her journal. She had a calm, soothing tone of voice." Identifying with the speaker, Paula notes their shared compassion for wounded children. Offering a vision of healing and a process of intervention, the speaker "outlined a program she did with the children." Paula reports that "I felt a sense of optimism in her work as a counselor and also in my own as a helper."

Expressing her empathic connection with the speaker in written appreciation, Paula describes the impact of this encounter on her. "I felt good that there were wonderful people out there like her and I felt a sense of safety and peacefulness." In her reflection, Paula noted learning and growth: "This added to my knowledge of working with Native People."

Evaluating a familiar way of gaining knowledge, Paula expresses her frustration with traditional learning; "I am tired of the textbook approach...N. people are like this: 1...2...3...and you should do this: 1...2...3... Speaking with N. people and also with people who work with N. people is where you find some answers and ideas." Rather than despairing about parents who do not attend the school for conferences, Paula is impressed that the speaker revealed her own empathic understanding that parents avoid the school because of their "own bad memories."

When Paula imagines herself in the role of the storyteller, she recreates the contents and process of the talk with deeper meaning and more specific

detail. Perspective taking in this encounter allows Paula an opportunity to re-create careful notes regarding the steps of intervention.

In the perspective taking, Paula's impression of the speaker's deep sense of personal mission, hope, skills, creativity and courage are revealed. Paula internalizes the speaker's sense of mission through emotional identification: "When I am talking about some of my clients I become quite emotional, as their lives have touched me deeply. I care so much for them, and I tried my best to help them."

Paula recognizes the speaker's skills in handling difficult boundary issues despite emotional connection and imagines that the storyteller is deeply caring, committed and helpful to her clients. Paula is especially impressed that the speaker is committed but can leave the school confident that the client's well being is not her life-time responsibility. The cost of caring, a deep vulnerability to emotional pain and sorrow, is acknowledged as a reality inherent in the work but not an obstacle to moving or engaging in similar work. This understanding builds on Paula's awareness of her own lack of boundaries she discovered in her first encounter.

Paula's Third Encounter: Crashing from the Top of the Mountain

Paula entered a class late but elated from her successful presentation in a multi-cultural counseling class. The second group greeted her and continued their discussion of childhood trauma, abuse and grief. "They continued the conversation and as the class discussion progressed I felt a number of different emotions... I felt myself 'come down'... I felt tension and anxiety... almost like being at the top of a mountain and now I had come crashing down."

Feeling painful alienation, Paula describes her developing headache, and lack of meaningful contribution, she "feels bad because I wasn't contributing to the discussion. The odd time I did come out with statements, they weren't 'earth shattering' by any means." Blaming herself for her isolation and discomfort, Paula attributes her tension to her failure to contribute. This failure was a "real dilemma because I love this class and look forward to it every week." Paula decides "I shouldn't be here... I didn't seem to have the energy or the motivation to think and be actively involved."

The emotional spiral continued downward as Paula experienced real pain. "My heart hurt and I felt like crying at one point." This profound suffering all occurred without expressing her pain to anyone in the group.

Paula's ability to imagine the perspective of the group seems to be severely limited by her own emotions. "It's difficult to describe what each person in the group was thinking but I imagine that they might have wondered where I was and why I was late. People may have wondered why I was quiet and said so little."

Fixed in her own vantage-point, Paula seems to discount her observable knowledge that the group was engaged in an intense discussion and may have been simply thoughtless in welcoming her into the class. Choosing to blame herself for her discomfort, pain and alienation, Paula stays isolated in her inner suffering.

Paula's Fourth Encounter: "Sympathy" with Another
Invites Boundary Difficulties

Paula is deeply engrossed in her work when she is interrupted by a knock on the door. Recognizing the knock, Paula notices that it is unusual - K is there without calling. She observes K's reluctance to disturb her, but also her urgency to spend time together.

Without hesitation, Paula chooses to leave her work and listen to the story of the caller. Gradually, Paula is engaged in the details of a power struggle in an alienated family. Reacting internally with anger and critical judgment, Paula continues to deepen her engagement in the complexity of the story. The characters emerge as the history is related.

The oldest sister is identified as the "enemy" and is castigated by Paula for revealing family secrets and demanding rights. As Paula describes the drama, her emotions are obvious. She expresses outrage and sympathy with the storyteller. Validating the storyteller in her description, Paula continues to enmesh in the family dysfunction. Reflecting on her emotions, Paula identifies intense anger toward the "enemy," the sister, and sympathy for the storyteller and her mother. Identifying with this one side of the power struggle, Paula criticizes the oldest sister.

When Paula takes the storyteller's perspective, she sees a person in "desperate" need to talk and hoping and praying Paula will listen. Imagining herself to be the storyteller, Paula is aware that K trusts her to not "tell her family" and wants to talk, seek advice and confirmation of being on the "right track."

In her reflection, Paula recalls she listened intently without discussion and held her "feelings to myself." Aware of her client's "great need to talk," Paula was "biting her tongue," then stopped, feeling the need to keep a "whole wide range of feeling" to herself. The client verbalized her anger, hurt and confusion when Paula encouraged her to identify her feelings.

Paula listened to a justification of intense emotions that she felt decreased "as she spoke." When the client asked for advice, Paula told her to take time to reflect to avoid reaction, suggested support for her mother and invited herself to a family birthday celebration. Continuing to offer alternatives to K, Paula recommended increasing the family communication.

Moving from recall in her reflections, Paula acknowledges her difficulty in situations that she is personally involved in, the intensity of her own anger and her struggle to remain impartial. More generally reflective of this encounter, Paula ponders the difficulty of holding back personal feelings when "clients share their concerns with you". Discerning reactions from response, Paula sorts out the place and time for empathy and compassion. Emotions emerging from personal unresolved issues can be triggered by issues brought up in a session and there is need for "skill and control." Paula concludes with a warning that "you really would not be helping anyone if you are not comfortable with your own losses, issues, etc."

Paula has become personally and emotionally involved in a client's story. It is almost like being carried by the flow of a river; there seems to be something pleasurable in joining with the client in the intensity. However, it is a sort of intimacy that feels uncomfortable on reflection for Paula.

Paula seems to have confused empathy with sympathy. Sympathy infers an identification with another, joining another to flow down a shared stream of emotion. Empathy requires a bracketing of one's own emotions to be able to experience the perspective of another and the emotions that emerge from the other's perspective.

Unrecognized personal issues, such as Paula alludes to, confuses her as a listener, leading to arousal and contagion of emotions between both parties. Alternatives emerging from Paula's emotions are contagious for K. Through her "suggestions" Paula seems to be directing the client to satisfy her own personal emotions, rather than using the encounter to explore the perspective and responses of the client.

Paula refers to K as a client, but notes the difficulty in listening to people she is personally involved with, suggesting boundary and role confusion. While aware of this, Paula "bites her tongue" to avoid directly expressing her emotions, but does not seem to see the suggestions as a covert expression of emotions.

This covertness allows the emotions to be communicated from Paula to K without the boundaries that would come with a more direct expression. Although responsive to the needs of her client, readily available at a moment's notice, Paula does not create a safe space for the client to sort out her emotions.

Paula's Fifth Encounter: Making a Choice

In her fifth encounter, Paula has a conversation with an administrator of the school who seems to discourage her from returning in the fall. Paula considers his covert "suggestions," opts for time to gather more information

despite persuasion from the administrator for an immediate decision. The choice to take her time to gather the necessary information allows her the space to consider her options and desires.

Describing the encounter, Paula relates her feelings of confusion after the conversation and begins to explore the invisible motivations embedded in audible conversation. Paula "wonder(s) if he has any hidden agenda that I am not aware of."

Approaching a supportive friend and co-worker for the necessary information, Paula is able to clarify the professional issues and receive encouragement in the process. In her reflection, Paula values this experience as empowering; "I am reminded that I need to take control here. As (the co-worker) pointed out, I need to make decisions based on what is best for me."

Imagining the administrator to be in the process of 'staffing', Paula recognizes his need to know her intentions. Continuing the perspective-taking, Paula imagines the administrator to be thinking: "I think now of a way to gently introduce the idea of changing to another school. So I speak about growth and change and suggest that ... it is often good to move to another school. I ask her if she ever considered that." The administrator's intention and process of staffing seems clear to Paula as she sees the situation from this vantage point.

In this perspective taking, there seems to be little emotional identification, projection and prejudice that has been present in prior encounters. Paula uses the perspective-taking as a way to gain intuitive knowledge regarding her question of a "hidden agenda" without judgment, blame or arousal of intense emotions.

In her reflection, Paula affirms the importance of considering her own needs first, she reflects on her future and growing confidence in her ability to make good decisions for her life. "The future is not clear but it is not frightening or threatening to me. I know that I am capable of taking risks ... moving has reinforced this. The experiences can be very rich and rewarding when one chooses to take risks."

Acknowledging the importance of encouraging relationships in professional life, Paula takes time in her reflection to appreciate the contribution made by her co-worker. With a hopeful sense of the future, Paul closes her reflection "I'm feeling optimistic and that something positive will result from this whole process."

Paul values the caring demonstrated by her co-worker when she asked for information and advice. The ability to risk one's vulnerability, to openly and trustingly solicit understanding from another allows the healing power of empathy to be activated. Displaying distress indiscriminately as a strategy to gain understanding and acceptance may be a self-destructive habit for victims of neglect, abuse and trauma and may lead to further traumatization.

In this encounter, Paul considers the risks in displaying her vulnerability and confusion, and chooses to be open with her co-worker. This risk-taking could be interpreted as an act of courage or a sign of weakness depending on the specific situation and mindset of the observer.

Paula's Final Reflection

Recalling the encounters in her final reflection, Paula remembers "so many different emotions." The practice of perspective taking, of "describing the

encounter through the eyes of another person seemed to have a calming effect on me." Defusing intense emotions through activating images of another's perspective, Paula was able to make conscious her formerly unconscious identifications, call on the non-judgmental voice of her observant self and break through the pattern of single lens perspective that contributed to the intensity of her inner emotions.

Intense inner emotions disconnected from raw feelings are felt as generalized anxiety according to Segal (1987). Segal points out that "adults confuse intensity of feeling with loss of control" (p. 51). Anxiety and its companion, fear, limit cognitive processing to a one-track perspective (Borysenko, 1989). With the development of the ability to hold a multiple lens perspective, an individual increases her capacity to imagine alternative strategies to solve problems and achieve a specific outcome.

For Paula, listening attentively to "what the other person was thinking ... opened up a much bigger picture ... a new world ... a whole new perspective!" Writing from the perspective of another was a new habit: "I have rarely taken as much time to actively reflect on what the other person may be seeing, feeling, hearing and doing." Tracking her own emotional development from anxiety to empowerment through perspective taking, Paul states: "As I felt more relaxed, I discovered that I was better able to focus and to complete the last stages of the process. I felt less emotional and more open to finding the true meaning of the experiences."

The discovery of meaning began to replace Paula's inner focus on intense emotions and self-blame. "Writing about encounters has helped me make some sense and meaning out of the experiences."

Reflecting more deeply on her emotional well being, Paula writes: "More focus on emotional awareness of myself and others has been a significant outcome of this process. And I think I am more open to change now. In the past depression, I felt numb ... I became extremely defensive. But now I feel ready and willing to implement changes."

A diverse array of intense, uncomfortable emotions were identified in the encounter process: "In other encounters, I felt surprised, confused, depressed, powerless, resentful, guilty, frustrated, hurt and alienated." Reflecting on the uncomfortable emotions from a thoughtful perspective, Paula would "try to analyze why I am feeling so uncomfortable and what is the true source of my anger."

Choosing to retain pleasurable emotions, Paula strategized the following techniques: holding a "positive frame of mind"; focusing on enjoying the process; identifying the source of the pleasure; involving herself in pleasurable activities and surrounding herself with positive, supportive people.

In a meta-emotional reflection, Paula summarized the pattern of former emotional habits. In the past she had "repressed painful emotions or I chose to 'file them away' to deal with at another time." Writing out a description of the encounter motivated Paula to identify repressed or suppressed emotions. "With this encounter process, I wanted to work through the emotions at the time of writing." Identifying a further development, Paula reports: "And I find now that immediately after an encounter, I am motivated to identify and process uncomfortable emotions connected with the experience."

Perspective-taking was identified as a check on unconscious identification, bias or exaggeration. Seeing through the eyes of another opens

the opportunity for Paula to look "carefully and honestly" at her interactions with others. "It (the encounter process) has caused me to take a good look at who I am, to clarify how I feel about certain issues and to examine my values and beliefs."

In the process of making conscious her emotional patterns in the encounter process, Paula discovered that she has had a habit of feeling "guilty for feeling so good." Through early experiences when feeling good was not acceptable to others, Paula has unconsciously believed that it was right to feel bad. Fully conscious of her self-imposed obstacle to feeling pleasurable emotions, Paula chooses to "treasure those moments and be kinder to myself in the future."

Self-empathy developed as Paula was more able to accept her "faults and limitations" and self-disclose by allowing "individuals I trust to see my inner self." Learning to be "more supportive and respectful of myself," Paula achieves a new level of self-empathy. "I am aware that I want to take care of myself, to trust myself and to share myself with others."

Researcher's Reflection on Paula's Work

The examination of Paula's work was the first in the series of four participants. Through the process of continually returning to the original data, I delineated properties and dimensions, concepts and categories of meaning units, created the axial coding and revealed prior identifications.

I was initially very aware of the dangers inherent in Paula's difficulties with establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries in therapeutic relationships. In her first encounter Paula describes herself as the therapist for

the person on the phone. This role challenged me to clarify what I believed was confusion in boundaries. I saw the pain of confusing friendship with a therapeutic relationship, something I have found that is a common struggle with caregivers.

Initially, I experienced the client's call as an intrusion, and felt Paula was responsible for allowing her client to manipulate her. I felt that, in carelessly maintaining the space for healing, Paula became vulnerable to intense emotions of guilt, frustration, anger and inadequacy and became less able to serve the needs of the client.

The intense emotions of resentment, anger, betrayal and suffering seemed to be felt by both parties in this encounter and suggested the possibility of projection and led me to reconsider the nature and conditions for projection.

Theories of projection (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1965; Singer, 1990) would suggest that Paula could be denying feelings that originally emerged in her early history and that she may habitually and unconsciously project and interject emotions in her relationships with others. Perls et al (1965) caution us to differentiate between reality and fantasy by looking again and again at areas of possible projection and introjection until we wake up and come to our senses.

Singer (1990), explicating the invisible dimensions of life through the visible, suggests that projection is like a picture on a screen that has been projected by a movie projector so that the drama seems to be coming from the screen rather than the projector. This metaphor was continually in mind as I struggled to clarify my own reality from that of my research participant.

Singer (1990) argues that we can only begin to accurately perceive when we recognize our tendency to project images of our mind on others. Perception for Singer involves "finding out how much is 'I' and how much is 'not I' and separating the two" (p. 185).

Reflection on Paula's first encounter convinced me that I needed to move beyond an analysis in my qualitative methodology and expand my research design to include the steps of researcher perspective taking (Step 3) in the analysis of data as an ongoing search for identification, projection, introjection and bias.

I realized that valid objection to qualitative research is the possibility of prejudice and bias. This caution is equally applicable to quantitative research. I realized that this concern could only be met by going over and over the stories, my own experience, and comparing, analyzing and determining how much was "I" and how much was "not I" and separating the two.

In my reflection I also recognized the intention to be attentive to another, compassionate; caring was not enough. Paula found that her own suppressed emotions were causing serious difficulties in the relationship. These emotions tended to "drag her down" and paralyze her from taking a supportive role as a therapist.

Through analysis of the reflection process, I recognized that perspective taking allowed both Paula and myself to sort out perceptions from projections, evaluate our own emotional reactions, develop altered cognitive representations of reality and create multiple strategies for change. It was then I conceived of the strategy to take the participant's perspective as an expansion of the research design beyond the original analysis for meaningful themes.

When I imagined the encounter from Paula's point of view, I took what I assumed was her voice of an inner dialogue of feelings. Uttering Paula's invisible voice of feelings triggered my own neglected emotions regarding my mother's recent death and inspired me to generate the courage to listen to my own emotions and not hide from them.

In reflecting on Paula's work, I recalled Bugental's (1978) description of two levels of being. First level is the conscious, reflective awareness of ourselves and circumstances and second level is the reactions that emerge from unrecognized patterns - usually stemming from experiences of strong emotional impact.

I felt my own emotions surrounding a recent loss were distancing me from clear communication with others, and centered in a constriction in my throat, a heaviness in my shoulders and stiffness in my neck. Just as Paula experienced tension in her body and her head starting to ache, my physical pain signified emotions embedded in my body.

At this point, I recognized how essential it was for this research to attend to my own emotions, re-center my life to have full access to my own emotions and become keenly aware of my own perspective in each specific situation. I returned to the disciplines of psycho-analytic therapy, massage, yoga, journaling, dreamwork and mindfulness of the ordinary daily tasks of caring for myself, my home and hearth. Inspired by Paula and the effects of perspective taking, I affirmed my commitment to confront myself, to tolerate intense feelings of fear, anxiety, inadequacy and to carefully reflect upon them.

Bugental (1978) states that "emotionality is a unitary dimension of being - one suppresses one aspect at the cost of crippling all" (p. 126). Choosing to

take full responsibility for my own emotions, I felt far more prepared to do qualitative research and bracket my own perspective, feelings and bias.

In this first encounter, I recognized the need to value my own subjectivity, knowing that it would enable me to relate more meaningfully and selectively with others in my life as well as in the analysis of my research data. I realized I was practicing self-empathy as I affirmed my own subjective experience.

In reflecting on my perspective taking in Paula's second encounter, I began to appreciate Paula's focus on caring that enabled her ability to learn through empathy in "connected learning" (Belenky, et al., 1986).

Noddings (1984) refers to Paula's style of caring as a "feeling with" and a kind of empathy that "receives the other" (p. 31) rather than penetrating the reality of another. The learning and growth in this encounter for Paula enabled her to join with others in service. With receptive caring, Noddings (1984) argues there is a "motivational shift" (p. 31). Receiving the perspective of the storyteller, Paula aligns herself with the mission of caring for suffering, wounded children. Moving reflectively back and forth from the world of the speaker to her own thoughts and feelings, Paula expands her own sense of commitment and purpose.

In reflection, I was aware that I experience a similar flow of mutual meaning and purpose when I receive authentic insights into the inner world of another. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) speaks of "flow" as an experience where "self-consciousness disappears and the sense of time become distorted" (p. 71).

Paula's emotional permeability and intentional attitude connected her to the unique knowledge of the speaker. Connected learners use a less

judgmental, more personal approach to knowing than "separate knowers" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 115).

Paula trusts that the speaker has something valuable to say because it is coming out of her experience. Receiving the perspective of the storyteller, Paula becomes aware of her peaceful, loving and respectful inner attitude. Moving with a "motivational shift" beyond the visible information, facts and data, Paula seems to connect with motivations, values and beliefs offered by the speaker.

Discerning few personal projections, I discovered a sense of connection and shared purpose with the women of this encounter. I felt a mutuality of care, respect and appreciation for the work of the storyteller, Paula's work as well as my own work.

Perspective taking in Paula's third encounter reveals the ecstatic response to praise and the dramatic deflation as Paula entered the second classroom. Resonating with anger and pain of being ignored, I felt the shift from expansiveness into a retraction and withdrawal into the self. Reflecting in Paula's voice, I began to appreciate Paula's struggle to take control of her time.

Realizing the locus of control of time as a symbol of a sense of control of the world, I realized that accountability for one's own time is at the root of emotional stability. Turning over the control of one's time to another may trigger anger initially, and then a numb compliance with authority, covert resentment and fatigue set in.

Paula is struggling with traditional institutions of secondary and higher education that encourage an individual to abdicate control of one's time to a

higher authority. I resonate with Paula's struggle to carve out time for reflection and peer support in the hectic world of education.

I reflect on the need to be spontaneous, reflective and resourceful and avoid patterns of reaction and rote routine that depersonalize and de-humanize education and caregiving. Control of time is deeply interwoven into the human need for relationship and meaning. There seems to be an on-going incompleteness regarding time, there is never enough when engaged in situations where one has accepted the authority of others to control time. However, when in control of time and engaged in the creative flow of meaningful encounters and purposeful work, time takes on a new quality of timelessness that nurtures and refreshes.

Moving into deeper reflection on this perspective taking, I recognize that Paula finds meaningfulness inherent in ordinary daily interactions. Reflecting thoughtfully on the subtle movements of an interaction, one's perspective begins to shift, expanding the mind to alternative perspectives and multiple realities. Each shift uncovers valuable insights that can deepen self-knowledge and reveal invisible patterns of meaning.

In her third encounter, Paula has a deflation of euphoria that she initially blames on the topic which the second class was discussing. In reflection, Paula is honest and admits that it is not all true, her deeper difficulty is with her lack of time. Recalling time difficulties with clients, peers and self, Paula acknowledges her right to control her own time and decides to take action to create new meaning in her life.

This sense of new meaning triggers feelings of joy and elation. A clarity is achieved, abdicating one's responsibility for time can result in no time for

processing one's emotions and the consequence could be deflation spiraling down into anger, resentment, projection and self-consciousness and blame. Taking control of one's time allows for the process of sorting, sifting and assimilating emotions into self concept and expands one's sense of self, developing a stable mood of appreciation and joy.

Paula has learned to cherish the need to have time to understand her emotions. When intense emotions are experienced with an individual or a group, it is difficult to connect with others until feelings have been processed. Time pressures result in emotional distancing from people, especially when intense emotions are present in the interaction. Distancing results in alienation and becomes an obstacle for seeing the world from other's point of view. In alienation the focus is fixed on the self.

Through this reflection, I have come to the awareness of the need for clarity of intention in empathy. We need to choose to create the time to understand our own emotions as well as the emotions of others if we are to be authentically empathic.

Taking Paula's perspective in the fourth encounter raised the question of how we move out of our own emotions, when they are triggered by the difficulties of another. I imagined that Paula has become more angry as she listened to a story similar to her own, projected her unresolved emotions despite her belief that she had control of them, and gave advice that demonstrated her sympathy rather than empathy.

The role of professional involves a responsibility and power that must be carefully monitored. Reactions, responses, suggestions, advice and interpretations all can be taken as "truth" by the other, but may simply reflect

one's own unresolved dilemma. As caregivers, I believe we are charged with the function of maintaining the therapeutic space. We are in a sense a totem, a holder of the patterns of stories that create meaning in life. Just as the totem defines a space as sacred, set apart, the professional relationship allows people to live in a healthy, authentic way that nurtures both the inner and outer life. A mindful teacher creates and guards the class environment so that each individual is safe, learning can occur and meaning and knowledge can be created.

Although caring and responsive to the needs of her client and readily available at a moment's notice, Paula does not initially create a safe space for herself or others. Her emotions of rage and hostility are, at times, unacknowledged to herself but experienced subtly by the client. As Scheler (1924) argues, there is a danger of contagion with unconscious intense emotions. Empathy demands a safe container, a place where stories are told that are held sacred, a space where an individual's own healing power can emerge to accomplish the reconciliation of whatever breach has occurred.

Paula has an deep intention to care for others despite her limitations. She has an inspiring spirit of generosity with her time. As with other professionals, she struggles to maintain boundaries and live authentically in caregiving relationships.

In her final encounter, I imagined Paula to be feeling controlled and manipulated by the administrator, but holding her own power, acknowledging her distrust, and refusing to make an immediate decision. Despite intense feelings of rejection, I speculate that Paula considers carefully how to manage these emotions and chooses to seek information and support from a friend.

Encouraged by the friend, Paula deepens her confidence in her own ability to choose and to feel deep gratitude for support.

I felt encouraged by Paula's growing strength in handling the intense emotions of insecurity, anxiety and rejection. Allowing the feelings to emerge and be sorted and defused demonstrated significant emotional development for Paula. Paula was able to gain new perspectives when she attempted to "see through the eyes of another" and "look carefully and honestly" at her interactions with others.

Patterns that showed a change for Paula were her habits of "not dealing with emotions" and the internalization of the emotional pain of others. I was struck with the power of reflection to calm uncomfortable emotions with Paul. I felt inspired when Paula discovered she associated her pleasurable feelings with guilt and that it was now "exhilarating" to feel good. Paula's resolution to be "kinder to myself" and take accountability for personal emotional wellness marked her growth in self-empathy and emotional maturity.

Risa

Risa is an educational social worker serving a number of schools. In her work, Risa learns to actualize her unconscious emotions for meaning and purpose. She struggles with the issue of authority and learns to access her own sense of courage and competency.

Risa's First Encounter: Anger at an Intrusive Supervisor

In her first encounter, Risa is relaxing at the end of a long, rushed week and "feeling a sense of connectedness" while she enjoys discussing a video

with other social workers. A supervisor appears "suddenly", disturbing the group interaction: "my supervisor is supposed to be at the ocean right now, not here."

Risa reports her supervisor jokes about "watching movies on the job" and describes what she knows about the speaker on the video. Internally resisting the supervisor, Risa feels irritated, disrespected and demeaned. "I really don't care to spend fifteen minutes of my day listening to her opinions about this speaker. I am capable of making up my own mind about the value of this video."

In her perspective taking, Risa imagines that the supervisor is rushed for time, but feels a need to "stop by the office to make sure everything is OK." From the vantage point of her supervisor, Risa expresses friendly and helpful intentions.

In reflecting on her encounter after perspective taking, Risa acknowledges that her reaction is "typical of how I have been feeling lately after encounters with my boss." However, Risa shifts the attribution of her feelings to the supervisor who "is a person who wants to maintain a great deal of control." Struggling with assigning responsibility for her reaction, Risa acknowledges that the supervisor would consider her comments about the speaker as "information" while Risa considers them to be "opinions" that waste her time.

The perspective taking reveals an interaction between Risa and her supervisor on two distinct and conflicting levels. Visible is the overt interaction, where the supervisor is considered friendly and informative, and invisible is the dynamic of silence, resentment and anger discussed by Risa.

Risa notes that this resentment comes from the supervisor talking "at" people instead of "to" people and "this has bothered other co-workers, as I have heard many complaints." Later in the day a co-worker shares "similar feelings" about the interactions, which helped Risa feel less isolated in her silence and resentment. "It felt good to know that I was not alone in feeling frustrated."

Moving to an observation of her own emotions in her reflection, Risa states: "I think I learned and am learning to be more aware of my feelings." "Taking time" to examine "why I am feeling this way right now," Risa traces her resentment to the supervisor's need for control. This attribution allows Risa to be "better able to go on with my day once I have pinpointed my feelings and have dealt with them in a healthy way."

Concluding her reflection, Risa writes poetically of her sharpened sense of vision, touch and breath. Strategies of walking, observing the sky, birds, orange leaves, and breathing have helped Risa to relax and "my mindfulness expanded."

Risa's Second Encounter: Approaching a "Resistant" Parent

Feeling anxious about an encounter before a home visit, Risa recalls the difficulties other educators have had with this parent, her own lack of relationship with the parent and the "serious concerns" she held for the child. Co-workers had "visited this same parent only weeks before,... she had been highly resistant to their presence" and was warned that "this mother did not feel comfortable dealing with Caucasian persons."

To assure contact with this parent, Risa has strategized that she will follow the bus to the child's house "because I know that this way the mom

cannot avoid me as she has to meet her child as he gets off the bus." Feeling "kind of guilty for surprising" the parent, Risa is "hoping and praying that she will be willing to listen to what I have to say."

Catching the mother's eye in contact, Risa requests a few moments of her time. Rolling her eyes, the mother complies with the request. Entering the home, Risa immediately lets "her know what I am here to talk about." This direct approach creates an obstacle. "I sense a great deal of resistance from her and make a couple of guesses about what I observe and she denies my guesses." Undaunted Risa continues: "As I attempt to go on with more information, she still gives me no eye contact."

The conflict escalates with Risa's verbalization and the mother's silence. "I then tell her that I sense resistance from her and ask, 'Can you tell me what that's about?'" Speaking her silent message, the parent "once again shrugs." With this message, Risa feels "an overwhelming sense of helplessness."

Returning to the school with feelings of rejection and failure, Risa finds "support for myself" with teachers. Discussing the encounter with a peer group of social workers, Risa receives constructive feedback and she begins to feel more hopeful. "I felt like I was able to put the situation into a clearer perspective so that I would not internalize the event."

The immediate effect of the encounter was "emotionally and intellectually draining and frustrating! I felt like I was doing all I know to do to effectively and gently approach a difficult subject with a seemingly disinterested parent."

Briefly taking the perspective of the parent, Risa imagines she "may have felt intruded upon as I did arrive unannounced. Besides, the only interactions I have ever had with the (social work) staff have been about negative things

related to my child." Risa does not attempt to imagine any further inner dialogue of the parent.

In her reflection on the encounter, Risa decides to do "more research about talking to Afro-American women." Noting her development and professional growth, Risa concludes: "I learned what it feels like to be challenged about my skills and I learned that, once again, I have a lot more to learn about myself and about others."

Risa's Third Encounter: Problem Solving for the Girl Frightened by Men

In her third encounter with a young girl, Risa feels good about how she used her attending, listening and problem solving skills, but remains concerned about the child and unsure about her effectiveness. In her reflection Risa states: "I learned that I have a lot more to learn! I felt that I could have been more effective, but was not sure what to do."

The encounter began abruptly when a male supervisor requested that she speak immediately to a young girl who "has difficulty talking to men." Feeling nervous and unprepared, Risa immediately begins to utilize her counseling skills with the child.

In her perspective taking, Risa imagines the profound sense of injustice, disrespect and betrayal felt by the child in being forced to talk to a stranger about a problem concerning a teacher. Risa imagines the child feels trapped, and gives up her quest for fairness and justice, submitting to the "game" of counseling and problem solving to "try to get out of this trouble my teacher put me in."

Reflecting on the encounter, Risa acknowledges her feelings as "fairly positive" regarding her own counseling skills. Risa is frustrated by the lack of time to build a trusting relationship with this disturbed child and knows that it was a difficult experience for the child. "As the child, this experience was a real drag. After all, I was in the principal's office because I was in trouble and I was forced to talk to a total stranger." Re-taking the perspective of the child, Risa feels helpless in her current counseling skills and knowledge, open to learning more effective ways to help troubled children.

Risa's Final Encounter and Reflection

In her reflection paper Risa focuses on a specific encounter with her supervisor which becomes an opportunity to demonstrate her growth, achievement and express her hopes and plans for further development. Preparing to confront her supervisor to advocate for a client, Risa wants to "have my supervisor ... clearly see how her words and actions in recent days had created a problem" and "for the problem to be fixed."

In recalling the encounter, Risa re-lives vivid, emotionally dense "episodic memories" (Crick, 1994, p. 67) complete with details. Intense rage "channeled into writing" helped Risa to produce a "factual document" to share with her supervisor. Coping with a nervous stomach before the encounter, Risa uses "self-talk" to center on "facts and not my personal feelings."

Determined to stay focused and controlled, Risa walks into the office of her supervisor, establishes eye contact and requests privacy and uninterrupted time. Keeping a calm demeanor, Risa feels a sense of purpose as she reads the document to her supervisor.

Surprised by the supervisor's sadness and acknowledgment that she was responsible for the problem, Risa discounts the praise her supervisor gives as a distraction from solving the problem. Re-asserting herself, Risa interrupts and stands up to ask, "What are you going to do about this?" The supervisor agrees to an acceptable solution.

In her reflection, Risa acknowledges that her relationship with her supervisor triggered fears that had been with her since her early childhood, her "darkest side." "A work experience uncovered my darkest side; incredible anger, hateful words, clenched fists and tears of frustration."

Advocating for a client who had been "dehumanized" by systems, Risa carefully developed the courage to speak her mind to rectify a mistake. Documentation, journaling, confidential consultation, and positive self-talk were used to create the strength to confront the supervisor. Risa was able to advocate for a client who had been "hurt by the ordeal" and to break her own habit of silence and resentment in the face of injustice.

Feeling confident that she could handle "a similar confrontation whether the person wronged another or me," Risa reflects on the responsibility to channel anger at injustice in a way "that promotes growth within myself and my relationships with others." Affirming her "empowerment" Risa reasserts her confidence - "I CAN survive difficult situations that involve confronting a supervisor."

Moving into deeper memories, Risa recalls her sister as someone who "has a very strong, assertive (borderline aggressive at times) personality, while I she received lots of strokes for being respectful and sweet." Recognizing she will "continue to be challenged by some of my old beliefs," Risa knows she will

continue to grow in self-respect if she continues to be mindful of her own emotions and choices.

Reflecting on her sense of self, Risa believes she has gained a "greater understanding and respect" for herself and a "balance of my meeker and my more assertive side." Risa is optimistic about her future development and commits herself to taking risks and positive self-talk.

Researcher's Reflections

When I imagined the encounter when Risa found the supervisor intrusive I noted that Risa felt affirmed when she listened to the "grumbling" of peers. Listening to covert criticism helped Risa to feel more connected with co-workers and blame the supervisor for her resentment.

I pondered how difficult it would be for Risa to speak up when the supervisor came in the door. For Risa, it would be a breach of professional boundaries to discuss in that particular situation her feelings of invasion, resentment, and disrespect. Risa believes, at this point, that her supervisor is in control and her only alternatives are silent resentment and covert conversations.

When I attempted to imagine Risa's inner dialogue in her second encounter with the "resistant parent," I felt an urge to attempt to take the perspective of the silent parent. I interpreted the parent's resistance as a frustration with Risa in her cultural unawareness. I imagined that the parent felt Risa was talking in a language she could not understand and that she has had a long history of well-intentioned but insensitive caregivers from various agencies, schools and institutions invading her life.

Choosing to see Risa's intention, I recognized her very real concern for the child and her fear of approaching the "resistant" parent. In the perspective taking, I imagined the level of courage that would be needed to strategize, get in a car and go to the bus stop where the mother met her child.

I imagined frustration when the parent doesn't respond. I resonated with Risa's sense of inadequacy and helplessness when her communication strategies failed, and understood her logic that the parent does not care about the child. However, I celebrate with Risa for her courage to enter an anxiety producing situation to help a child. I admire her acceptance of her limitations and her effort to glean meaning and growth from this encounter.

In the third encounter, I note that an unfair demand that was made by the male supervisor when he asked Risa to rescue him with this child. Risa has not been given a case file or time to reflect on underlying issues regarding the classroom conflict. She was expected to solve the problem. This feels demeaning to her personally and professionally and is an injustice to the child.

Hurrying down the hall, I imagine Risa's anxiety growing as she approaches this child who "has difficulty talking to men." How can she solve this dilemma? Risa is not given the opportunity to do an adequate appraisal and feels forced to listen and solve the conflict through skills that "break down the child's problem into smaller parts."

Accountability for this breach of professional ethics belongs in part to the principal who wants to quickly dismiss this conflict. This incident raises questions regarding an educational system that denies children the right to a grievance, possible classroom abuse and for time to establish trusting relationships with supportive adults. In our culture, children are often assumed

to be at fault in a conflict with a teacher and may be denied resources to grow in competency and trust.

In her final encounter, Risa demonstrates a significant shift in her interpersonal interactions. Her unconscious emotions have been acknowledged and transformed into integrity and strength. She has confronted herself with her "darkest side," deeply held feelings of inadequacy and anger. Rage "channeled into writing" has become the impetus to advocate for a less powerful client. Her memory of that day is vivid and her intense emotions bring meaning and purpose to the confrontation with her supervisor.

Risa has carefully planned her interview with her supervisor. Her sense of injustice at the mistreatment of a client has activated strong emotions as well as complex cognitive problem solving. In this confrontation, Risa effectively employs strategies to integrate her cognitive problem solving abilities with her passions. She has journaled her emotions, used positive self-talk to manage her strong feelings and documented "facts and not my personal feelings." Risa has sought consultation from others and now speaks with courage of a heart and mind connected in loyalty; with consideration to her client and herself. In this encounter, Risa appears to live out the Confucian concept of shu.

In her work, Risa is attempting to develop her empathy for herself and her clients. Although she does not use these words, she knows that she needs to assume her own authority before she can be empathic with her clients and advocate successfully for them.

Kathy

Kathy is an inexperienced elementary teacher who learns to let go of her need for control and power and allow children more freedom. She learns to feel less threatened by 'acting out' children, begins to understand the logic and intention behind the actions of young people. Kathy finds that empathic interactions with students enable her to feel more successful as a teacher.

Kathy's First Encounter: Forgiven by a Child

In the first encounter, Kathy is trying to "alphabetize names of students in my group and trying to figure out who each student had for homeroom." The class is engaged in a "quiet study period" when Kathy notices that "the noise level is rising."

Irritated, Kathy quiets the class so she can concentrate. Looking up she saw that "Sam has two spelling papers on his desk. One is finished, the other is not." Kathy assumes that Sam is copying Carl's paper, and requests both papers. She destroys the papers she has collected and hands cut two new ones. Sam begins his work without comment, however Carl is upset. "Carl is perturbed and begins to pound, pound on his desk, then cry."

Carl is not calmed by Kathy's attempt to describe her reasoning. Carl claims he "didn't know that Sam was copying his paper" and angrily leaves the room, loudly asserting "I won't do it."

When Kathy takes Carl's perspective she realizes that Carl was unaware that Sam would copy. Risa speculates that Carl did not understand the consequences of handing his paper to Sam and he feels that an injustice has been done to him. Kathy believes that Carl was confused when he saw his

work being thrown away and then asked to redo it. It felt "dumb" to Kathy when she sees her behavior from Carl's perspective. From Carl's perspective, Kathy writes "By now I'm so frustrated I throw my chair up and stomp out of the room swearing I will not redo this paper."

Both Kathy and Carl thought seriously about the encounter that evening, and the next day, Carl asked Kathy for "another spelling paper. He also talked to me later, letting me know he understood the consequence and did feel it was reasonable after thinking about it."

In her reflection, Kathy notes that the interaction initially was "normal"; "giving a logical consequence for a logical behavior." However, it had a "sour note"; that reverberated into an opportunity for self-confrontation and learning for Kathy. "I ended up feeling bad, wondering if I'd done the right things." However, the self-doubt was eased the next day when Carl decided to cooperate. "After talking to Carl the next day, I realized I had done okay I wasn't as bad as I thought." Feeling forgiven by Carl, Kathy moves out of self-blame into deeper knowledge and a commitment to change.

Kathy found when seeing through Carl's eyes that "the teacher seemed obnoxious, and I felt powerless. I needed to gain control so I won't redo it. This gave me a little more power, but I feel bad anyway." Expanding her reflection, Kathy reports a "better understanding of the powerlessness of children in the classroom, or world for that matter."

In her time of reflection, Kathy comprehends Carl's logic and resonates with his "powerlessness." She then considers a global awareness of children who have been oppressed and disabled by adults. This understanding

influences Kathy's practice as a teacher: "I also learned I need to empower my students, give them choices as far as consequences go."

In reflection, Kathy alters her self-internalization of this event with self-empathy: "I also learned I'm not as bad as I was thinking. Carl does respect me, and feels I respect him (which I do), I learned this through a later conversation."

Kathy's Second Encounter: A Lonely Niece Asks Her to Play

Kathy is in a conversation with her sister about her upcoming move across the country when her niece invites her to play. Distracted, Kathy asks the child to repeat her question. Vaguely, Kathy puts her off: "I tell Terry that maybe later we can sit and play a game, that I'd enjoy playing with her but that I'm very busy right now." When the child walks away dejected, Kathy is moved by her distress: "My heart drops.... I've hurt her feelings."

When she sees the interaction from the child's perspective, Kathy imagines Terry is feeling bored and lonely when she invited her to play. Further alienated by her aunt's distance and rejection, Kathy imagines that the child feels lost, confused and in need of comfort. "Now what will I do? What am I supposed to do? I'll go sit on Dad's lap for a while." Kathy reports that she gave some of her time to the child later in the day "so that she wouldn't feel as if she didn't matter to me."

In her reflection, Kathy felt she should "validate the need for attention without making a person feel bad." Kathy has discovered the child's emotional vulnerability to adults, and she feels the need to affirm a child's value and meaning.

Kathy's Third Encounter: Blowing Off Steam

In her third encounter, Kathy has come from an angry confrontation with a student. "I was discussing with a student his attitude toward following directions and my disappointment with this ability. I was rather tense, standing, using a very gruff tone of voice."

Frustrated, Kathy enters a colleague's room "needing to blow off steam" and says "I need to go run a few laps and cool down." The colleague senses her anger, inquires, listens and supports Kathy by offering to take study hall so she can "unwind."

The effect of support is instantaneous. "This made me feel great! I am important enough to get a break...." Kathy returns to her study hall feeling relaxed with her support and time out.

When Kathy takes the perspective of the colleague she imagines the thoughtful intentions. With the support and care Kathy felt her "frustration had been validated" and "I am okay, my frustrations were justified."

In her reflection, Kathy felt that others cared about "how things are going in my room, that we aren't alone at (this school)." Feeling a renewed self-esteem, Kathy was grateful to belong to a compassionate community. "I am lucky to have caring people around me, that I can be open with them and that I can return this compassion."

In this encounter Kathy experienced the relaxation, self-esteem, and relief that can occur in a community where there is a sense of mutual respect, listening and support. Being able to "be open" with others allows Kathy an opportunity to release intense emotions and feel safe.

Kathy's Fourth Encounter: Motivating Chris to Finish His Reading

In the fourth encounter, Kathy attempts to motivate Chris to complete his work with outrage and rhetorical questions. She believes she is effective, however she does not do a reflection on the encounter.

Previous to the encounter, Kathy is grading papers while she listens to a guest teacher engage students in a critical thinking activity. The students are restless and ready for recess when the bell rings and the guest teacher dismisses the students.

Kathy calls out the names of students who must remain inside to complete assignments. Chris, one of the named students, opens his book, moves his pencil but Kathy discovers he is "scribbling on the paper." A confrontation, "What are you doing?", gets no response. Asking why he is scribbling, Kathy begins to clarify her need and reasoning. "I need reading from you, that is why you can't go to recess." Chris looks at her then at his paper.

Escalating her emotions, Kathy challenges. "I then continue, slightly outraged, saying 'Chris, who didn't do their assignment?'" The student answers: "me". Five more questions follow, each revealing Kathy's growing outrage and logic. Assuring Chris of her fairness, she reminds him she has cut the assignments in half. Finally the child begins to work.

Later that day Chris returns with a contract indicating he will complete his outstanding work by a certain date. Kathy adds to the contract that she will reward Chris with a "soda and some chips" if he satisfies the terms of his contract.

In her perspective taking Kathy imagines that Chris is angry and distracted and says to himself: "I hate it when she makes me stay in from recess!

I've got so many things on my mind!" From Chris's vantage point, Kathy imagines that he notices that she is not talking to him. "Now she is talking at me, not even talking to me!"

Imagining that Chris understands her logic, Kathy believes Chris will interpret her outrage and anger as indicators that she cares for him. "... maybe she does have a reason to be irritable... gee, she wants me to at least have a chance... maybe I'll start working."

Believing Chris is motivated by her logic and concern, Kathy feels that the problem is settled. "This seemed to get him going and I realize he does understand that they need to be done and why."

Kathy's Fifth Encounter: Reflection-in-Action

In her final encounter, Kathy tells the story of her interaction with Daniel. Although Daniel was "new", Kathy believed that he needed to do this assignment and to know the rules and logic of this classroom. Her "fundamental rule" is "as long as a person is trying, they will receive positive rewards for their work. Not trying is unacceptable."

Looking up from grading papers, Kathy sees Daniel conversing with another student. Observing that Daniel's "assignment is not complete," Kathy asks if she can help. Daniel "denies needing assistance and continues that the assignment is stupid and he doesn't need to know this stuff anyway."

Feeling personally threatened, Kathy is determined Daniel will do the assignment: "he had to do the assignment and I was going to see to it that he did." Explaining her logic to Daniel she suddenly realized "my reasoning was going nowhere quickly."

In a strategic and transformative shift, Kathy asks Daniel about his dream when he "grows up." Daniel wants to play football. "My heart leaps for joy. I can connect the ear to a career in football." Kathy explains how balance and the ear are connected. The class becomes involved to "convince him that the ear was responsible for balance and I wasn't just fooling him." "He did his assignment."

Kathy skips the formal perspective taking and does an in-depth reflection on this interaction. Initially Kathy felt "frustrated". She had interpreted Daniel's, "lack of involvement as a personal attack, that I hadn't done my job, otherwise he wouldn't mind doing the assignment." Keeping control of the situation, staying "on top" was essential to Kathy.

"As the encounter continued, I began to see the situation in a different light and my feelings began to change." When Kathy took the perspective of the child informally, **as she interacted with him**, she learned essential information. She discovered that "Daniel was having a hard time reading the vocabulary of the assignment." Feeling "empathy", Kathy realized "Daniel wasn't trying to upset me by not doing the assignment, the text was just too difficult for him to read himself."

As Kathy takes time to assist Daniel with his learning she is "proud to have Daniel in my class. He was providing me with a new challenge." Pleasurable feelings accompanied her work: "I felt good that I had made learning applicable to him ... and that was probably the first time I felt I had accomplished this goal."

Deepening her reflection, Kathy finds that when "threats on my ability" are kept in perspective she is a better teacher. She is learning to talk and listen

carefully to her students "even the words they speak silently through body language and acting out behavior" become important to her growing effectiveness as a teacher.

Reflecting on the shift in her interpretation of children's behavior, Kathy explains: "I've learned that this 'acting out' is more a cry for help than an attempt to take control away from the teacher. The child just wants to feel control in the situation and if he can't control the assignment, he'll behave in a way that will draw attention away from the assignment."

Reflecting on the encounters of the past six months, Kathy reports a growing sensitivity to others: "I have learned to think more thoughtfully about the interactions I have with my students and my peers." This has affected her self-esteem. "I have learned that I am a valuable person with more to give than I previously thought."

Researcher's Reflections

In the first encounter, I initially had a sympathetic reaction to Carl's dilemma, felt blame toward Kathy and the compulsive desire to "fix it" for Carl. Realizing I was projecting, I found I was reacting to a childhood memory of oppression and injustice in the classroom. Bringing the memory to mind, writing about it, feeling the buried shame and humiliation, allowed me to reflect on and ultimately integrate the long lost event into my sense of self.

Unless I had taken time to do this inner personal work, I would have been content to stay with a critical interpretation of the encounter filtered through my stale anger, blame and childhood logic. I am finding that the perspective taking reveals continually latent wounds that are the source of prejudice, bias and

reactions. It is time consuming, but allows me to sense a growing integrity in my work. Identifying my own bias, projection and sympathy allows me to witness more truthfully to the subtle qualities of human interaction, leading to rigor and validity of this qualitative process.

As I reflected from Kathy's position on her second encounter, I imagined that she would be distracted by her anticipatory grief in the upcoming move of the family members. Unconscious of her own inner process, I imagined Kathy to be disassociating from her emotions and disconnected from her senses. When Kathy realized the child's pain, I imagined her immediate sadness and fear that she had unintentionally hurt a child.

While reflecting on my perspective taking, I sensed a conflict in Kathy. She is distracted by her own emotions and does not want to interact with the child at that time. She feels guilty about her refusal and tries to find ways to live with her own discomfort. This interaction was an example of empathy triggered by distress. When emotional empathy is aroused by the distress of another, guilt often enters into the interaction. At times guilt results in a productive self-confrontation, but often it remains a source of personal inadequacy and low self esteem.

When Kathy found support from a colleague after her angry encounter with the student, her strong unconscious emotions aroused by her interaction with the student were quieted. Kathy was reluctant to tell her colleague about her angry confrontation, but a radical shift occurred when she was received non-judgmentally. Kathy found joy and renewal and realized that she will be able to compassionately support her colleagues in the future. This knowledge seemed to expand Kathy's sense of professional identity.

Reflecting on this encounter, I wondered if teacher collegiality could help a teacher feel validated and supported while venting inappropriate anger on children. Many of the encounters I read are written by teachers who are concerned about taking out their frustration, anger, hostility and irritation on children.

In this encounter, Kathy is expressing "disappointment" in a "gruff tone" that a child has failed to live up to her expectations. I wondered if a child deserves anger from a teacher when they fail to live up to expectations. I wonder if anger vented on a child is ever valid or justified. Perhaps it is useful to "blow off steam," however, anger of adults can be traumatic for children and seems to be a reaction to an educator's helplessness and powerlessness.

I notice teachers, social workers and counselors call their anger by other names: "frustration", "disappointment", "tension", and "stress". Anger has the effect of distancing people unless it is transformed within the angry person. Anger toward a common "enemy" can result in collusion of a group against another. I find in this research that anger is a significant problem in educational relationships.

In Kathy's fourth encounter, I was aware of the pressures that Kathy may be feeling - grading papers, marking a gradebook - grades due next week - "antsy" restless students. The encounter with Chris was painful. This is a child who has a "lot on his mind."

Kathy takes her paperwork seriously. Filling in her gradebook and motivating children to complete unfinished papers are ways she demonstrates her accountability. I imagine that she really does "need" an assignment from Chris. Perhaps Kathy has used rhetorical questions, outrage and guilt on

herself in order to be responsible, and finds it natural to apply the same strategies in motivating a child. The use of pressure and humiliation does seem to motivate Chris for a period of time. But I am still concerned for his soul.

In her last encounter, Kathy entered into an inner reflectivity as she re-read her encounters over six months and noted profound shifts. The story of Daniel is the most exciting: "something happened when I realized Daniel was not listening" ... "It seemed like an inspiration" ... "perhaps I could connect this assignment to what he might be interested in."

The incident with Daniel reveals the fruit of Kathy's effort to make sense out of her growing awareness. She knows in a deeply somatic way that something essential has shifted in her work. "Her heart leaps for joy" and she feels excitement in making learning relevant. For Kathy, this is what teaching is about - listening to children, finding out what is important to them, and making learning relevant to their lives.

This new understanding enabled Kathy to become self-confrontational, to recognize her fear and her need to stay "on top." She understands now that her domination of the classroom came out of her own needs and that she has ignored children's needs. Kathy is now painfully aware of her power to wound or heal a child with her words. This understanding propels her into a global reflection on the needs of children in the world today and responsibilities that challenge teachers.

Kathy has developed a deeper understanding of herself and her effect on children in this process. She has made conscious her unconscious projections on children and discovered the process of reflection-in-action. When she realized that her reasoning was "going nowhere" with Daniel, she interrupted

her usual way of teaching and asked Daniel a question. This question gave her information that she could use to develop her own competency as a teacher as well as the competency of the child. In the midst of a challenging interaction, Kathy took time to reflect , restructure her belief and re-adjust her behaviour..

Val

Val has been teaching at the primary level for a number of years and initially seems to be suffering from what J.A. and E. Kottler (1993) would call "rustout". In the remainder of her encounters, she follows her interactions with one child. In her encounters she begins with a concern for the child and becomes aware of his lack of parental support. Her empathy and care develops into a strong commitment to this child and she finally finds a way to communicate how much she cares. Val's relationship with Chad becomes a crucible in which her ability to empathize develops and manifests itself.

Val's First Encounter: Rage and Punishment

In her first encounter Val reveals a painful interaction with a child that emerges into a valued learning experience. Her rage erupted in a class and is directed toward a child who may be cheating.

Alone in her classroom shortly before noon, Val notes her hunger as well as her feelings of stress and anger: "We are finished with reading, and I'm feeling a bit stressed. I haven't been enjoying reading this year. I hate those SRA books!"

Val responds to the children who are "strolling in" by forcing a "cheerful" demeanor. She suppresses her anger and assumes a task-oriented attitude.

Val's self-coerced positive attitude intensifies her emotions: "I have to force myself to be cheerful, and I really dislike that feeling."

When she begins the spelling test, Val's frustration increases as the children resist the test. The silence of test-taking is broken when a child "gasps" and accuses another child of cheating.

Val observes the accused child "shoving a piece of paper into his desk." She erupts. "I'm furious! I grab it out of his desk. I take his final test. I rip it up and throw it in the garbage. I tell Walter, 'That's a big, fat zero!'"

Imagining the child's perspective, Val learns about a logical dilemma confronting Walter. She realizes that he has expectations for always doing well on spelling tests. When he remembers that he has forgotten to study, the child believes he "will be in trouble if I don't do well." Val imagines the child's anxiety as he searches for a solution and reluctantly decides to use his pre-test "no one will even know." Continuing in Walter's voice, Val notices the teacher is far away, he is safe from observation. When a student observes Walter's actions, gasps and calls attention to his "cheating", Val resonates with his sense of fear and embarrassment, his "face is getting red. Everyone is staring at me. I wish I could disappear!"

Val confronted herself violently for the child's distress. "I immediately wanted to kick myself for the way I handled the situation." Continuing to punish herself with shame and guilt, Val's emotional pain and suffering increased. "And because of the way I handled it my mood continued to get worse."

Disappointed in Walter and herself, Val's self-beliefs of moral superiority are shattered. In the humility of self-confrontation, Val acknowledges this is a "valuable experience for me."

Re-establishing balance, Val states "I realize now that it wasn't the end of the world." Her pain and suffering had broken down her construction of reality, her own self-image, for a period of time, but was eventually re-integrated into an expanded sense of self.

In her reflection, Val mindfully explores this painful experience. This exploration gives Val a window of choice, an opportunity for growth. In her self-confrontation, she has learned something valuable. Val believes she could have handled the same situation differently now. "I possibly could have made it a learning experience for everyone involved instead of a humiliating one." Her identity as teacher has been expanded as one who makes painful experiences into learning opportunities.

Val's Second Encounter: Joining a Family Therapy Session

Val's second encounter began at a parent conference when a father invites her to give some "input" on Chad's behavior in a family therapy session. Val agrees, "willing to help in any way I could."

Her anxiety builds as she listens to her co-workers' concerns, finds the address in a dangerous neighborhood and encounters an unfamiliar family lifestyle. "I'm practically knocked over by the smell, smoke and filth." Listening to adults yell and order the children about, Val wishes she had not agreed to come. "What I was seeing was hurting me. The truth hurts, I guess."

Val feels a rush of caring and compassion for the child when she sees him. She wants to "hug him" as he comes into the room. Her anxiety was heightened by her reaction to the counselor. She feels defensive as she resists

the counselor's attempt to solicit her recommendation for placing the child in special education.

Val silently observes the child as he resists the intimidation of both the counselor and his parents and suppresses her rage and fury until she goes out to her car. As she leaves, Val feels frustrated that the child's needs were not adequately addressed.

When she takes Chad's perspective, Val imagines he is vaguely concerned about the meeting and notices that Chad's father did not ever greet or acknowledge his son when he came into the therapy session. She imagined Chad noticing this and resigning himself to loneliness: "oh, well." Continuing her speculation into Chad's inner world, she felt the intensity of his panic and confusion. "Now all eyes are on me. They're waiting for some type of answer, but I don't even know what to say."

In her reflection, Val concludes that Chad is "numb," unable to see the filth, feel the pain, and hear the yelling. Donovan and McIntyre (1990) would recognize Chad's numbness as disassociation. Disassociation involves complex cognitive process that allows a hurt child to behave as if they do not recognize distinctions of pain and can be a survival asset (Donovan & McIntyre, 1990). Disassociation does not mean that the child actually does not recognize the distinction of pain. They have simply created a protective mask for their vulnerability. Val has an instinctive awareness that Chad has created a barrier to protect his sensitive feelings.

In her reflection, Val gathers together the clues about Chad's predicament. She recalls Chad's behavior in school, the knowledge she has gleaned from the home visit and her own perspective taking. Val recognizes that Chad

is neglected and abused emotionally and is now responding in a disassociated way. She believes she is the only one trying to understand Chad and that her dedication to him is essential and "may be his only hope."

Val's Third Encounter: Stealing Candy for Attention

In this third encounter Val has been distracted from the children while she ran the film projector. Sounds of mumbling caught her attention and immediately Val pieces together her operational hypothesis: a child has stolen candy.

Entering into a reflection-in-action, Val notes her emotional center of calm despite being bothered by the violation of her moral expectations. When she questions the child, he affirms his guilt, and Val takes time to "collect" herself. Val develops her strategy of response to the child as she acts. First, she distracts the attention of the class to other work and then enters into communication with the guilty child. Val recognizes that anger is "no good," and expresses disappointment, sadness and sense of violation with deep feeling. She is "near tears." "I ask him how he could do this after he'd come so far."

Taking the perspective of the child, Val discovers that the child expects to get attention from the teacher by taking the candy. Val imagines the child becomes concerned and feels "forgotten" as she sees to the needs of the class. When she returns to the child, she believes he experiences relief to simply be noticed. Val speculates that the child interprets her attention as a sign of caring and a time of connection and attention.

In her reflection Val evaluates her new strategy of taking time to sort out her response to the child. She was able to involve the class in another activity

which helped to decrease the embarrassment for the child. She then had time to consider alternate responses. As Val was considering her response she received an unexpected sense of support and understanding: "I looked at my class, and it was as though they knew what I was going through. That helped."

Shifting into a reflection on personal growth and professional development, Val finds her self-esteem enhanced by her evaluation of this encounter. With a sense of efficacy and competency, Val gave herself credit for consciously trying to save the child from embarrassment and for not reinforcing the child's bid for attention with his "stealing". Generalizing, Val affirms her development; "I'm growing in some ways. At least when it comes to dealing with Chad."

Val's Fourth Encounter: Breaking Through to Caring

In her final encounter Val again is reporting an interaction with Chad, but this time she is enthusiastic to have "a positive reflection to share!" "He's the one who has really caused me to reconsider why I ever chose this profession."

For the first time Chad is absent, surprising Val. "The kids who drive you crazy are never absent!" The absence is later explained by his mother who relates that Chad "might be epileptic, they think he'd had a mild seizure over the weekend." Responding compassionately when Chad returns the next day Val ran "over to greet him, and we give each other a big hug."

Val's information is updated by the parents. At the time of group sharing Val invites Chad to tell his story. The child asked her to tell the story to the class. She does so, and is relieved to see "genuine concern on his classmates' faces."

Openly Val expresses her concerns and care to the child: "I told my husband all about it, Chad, and we want you to know that we're praying for you and all of us in here will have you on our minds tomorrow." Thrilled with Chad's response Val relates: "I couldn't believe the look on his face. He was beaming!"

Entering imaginatively into Chad's perspective, Val speculates that initially Chad might feel his absence is unnoticed. His arrival and greeting made him feel valued, welcomed and worthy of concern. Imagining Chad's perception of other students Val writes "My friends look really worried. They're all looking at me now."

Reflecting on this encounter Val notes that Chad rarely expressed any emotions and this encounter was important to communicate caring and concern to Chad. "I really felt like I had reached him. Maybe for once he realized somebody does really care! And I do care so much, possibly too much at times." Although a serious illness was possible, Val seemed to feel that an emotional healing took place for Chad.

Val's Reflection

Val expands her awareness by writing from the perspective of others although she feels she was already well grounded in core beliefs, values and theory related to her profession. The understanding she reaches through "writing about the encounter ... from another person's point of view" was "incredibly valuable" for her. In her reflection Val shares her conclusions.

Recalling the first encounter, Val outlines her process of reframing. She notes her inner shifts of interpretation and meaning. As she reflected on a painful and regretful experience, Val recalls feeling a lack of personal congruity

with her inner emotions and her behavior. "I remember having to force myself to smile and be cheerful that afternoon. I had just finished a reading lesson that I was beginning to despise. I recall feeling tired and worn out, like I usually am on Friday afternoons. I sat at my desk while giving the final spelling test instead of wandering around the room like I usually did."

Val has continued to reflect and glean learning, meaning and development from this experience. Five months later, Val seems more able to connect her reaction with her frustration with the curriculum, and her fatigue. However, the memory of inflicting shame, guilt and punishment on a surprised child was vividly impressed in Val's memory:

"I can see the look on his face now as I remember the encounter. If I could go back in time and do it over differently I would. As I mentioned earlier, when I think about the encounter, I feel extremely guilty."

With a focus on the professional growth and development that emerged from her experience, Val is confident that if "the same situation arose again, I would handle it much differently." Trusting her transformation, Val begins to describe the shifts in her process of change.

Val recognized that she felt betrayed by Chad for cheating. She internalized the child's actions as personally disloyal to her. When she named her emotional reaction as betrayal, Val realized that she had developed a pattern of identifying children's mistakes as a reflection of her teaching abilities. Val feels a profound sense of relief when she realizes that she has learned to discern children's actions from her own teaching. In her previous interpretation, Val had allowed the errors of children to trigger her own sense of inadequacy

as a teacher. Separating these two issues gives freedom and relief to Val. "Now that I've come to that conclusion, I don't always feel so incredibly responsible for everything they do. That's a load off my shoulders!" Separating her personal sense of self from everyday occurrences in the classroom "feels wonderful" for Val.

This learning was accomplished, in Val's perspective, without a fundamental shift in her belief and value system. For Val it was a way to adapt and adjust to the work of teaching as well as her own needs. Deepening her reflection, Val notes that she tends "to take things very seriously at school. When Chad cheated, my belief system was being challenged." Val has entered into a therapeutic role of observer of self as she attempts to empathize and understand her intense reaction that day in November.

She recognizes that: "Being honest with oneself is so important to me" and that "Chad was not being honest with himself or me." This is the source of Val's betrayal, the identification of her values with Chad's values. Val begins to reconstruct the events of the encounter again in terms of her desire to teach her values and integrity. Knowing that self-esteem for her comes from her own inner integrity, Val remembers asking Chad "if he could have possibly felt good about getting 100% on his test knowing he had cheated."

In her perspective taking at the time of the encounter, Val acknowledges that Chad is concerned about the trouble that his failure will cause. His needs and logic are different than Val's. Val remembers her own inner logic. "I wanted to make it very clear to him that he needn't prove himself or impress anyone. All that mattered was that he felt good about himself and the things he

did." Here Val exposes her ambiguity and the paradox of her intentions and behavior.

Val intends at the deepest level to teach values of honesty, integrity, and self-esteem, however her reactive punishment was an attack of blame, shame and humiliation. Val reacted in anger in the moment, somehow believing for a period of time that making an example of Chad would be a helpful learning experience.

For months Val has suffered with the eidetic images of the boy's face in her mind. She has reflected on how she would do it differently, and has had the opportunity to know that she does handle things differently now.

Resisting the paralyzation of extreme guilt for inflicting pain on a child, Val has chosen to find meaning in the situation. Re-interpreting the encounter, Val recognizes how seriously she held the actions and behavior of children in the classroom as a reflection of her abilities. In knowing this about herself, Val is free to release her burden, and hold children responsible for their errors.

With this new pattern of holding children accountable for their behavior, Val finds that she feels good about herself and so do the children. "I feel I am able to place responsibility on the children now for their actions. Therefore, I feel much better about myself, and I believe the children feel better about themselves."

The discipline of writing an encounter produced valuable conclusions for Val, however she likes to "think I would have eventually come to these conclusions on my own." Writing "from another person's point of view" was incredibly valuable for Val. Val has awakened to her own responsibility and power.

"Suddenly, I'm hearing myself talk, and I'm seeing that everything I do makes an impression upon these children."

Researcher's Reflections

In imagining Val's experience in her first encounter, the pattern of anger, suppression, self-coercion, and eruption felt familiar. I felt sad for the child, a boy who usually does "so well," making an unwise choice and receiving the force of Val's rage. Taking Val's perspective, I resonated with her shattered sense of moral superiority. She was capable of emotional abuse of a child. In this culture, we all participate in these patterns, actively or passively, creating sorrow, suffering and pain. Most of us would prefer to imagine that we do not and that good people do not abuse children.

This encounter sensitized me to the powerlessness of children when adults vent anger and rage to regain a sense of control. I reflected on the generational cycle of powerlessness, rage and abuse and my own participation in the effects of systemic oppression.

As I took Val's perspective in her encounters with Chad, I felt the frustrations of trying to communicate with a child that does not seem receptive to signs of care. I imagined from her perspective that this child was locked in a shell and finally opened to trust that he is loved. I sensed her intense commitment to this child, and considered, though, that it may be "too" much. I felt uncomfortable that the love and attention Chad sought through behavior was finally gained through illness. In her reflection process, Val spends the entire time attempting to make sense out of her failure with Chad, however, she spends very little time exploring the meaning of her success with Chad.

Writing encounters for Val is a way to re-evaluate inner beliefs and explore theories as they affected her practice. She explores patterns of her feelings, thoughts, beliefs and actions and confronts herself in areas where her behavior is inconsistent with her values. Val uses reflection to make her inner conflicts visible and to plan changes in her patterns. The process of writing encounters over time allowed Val to carefully observe her behavior. "Each time I begin the encounter process, I hope to take a closer look at my behaviors and to see my behaviors from another perspective."

I am struck with Val's openness, honesty and integrity when reflecting on an encounter. She has courage to admit her vulnerability and personal sense of inadequacy in order to continue to learn. "After participating in each reflection, I consistently discovered things about myself that I would not have known if I had not reflected upon them."

Val reports she has become conscious in a new way. Awakened, she finds herself aware of her significant impact on children. "Suddenly I'm hearing myself talk, and I'm seeing that everything I do makes an impression upon these children." Val has shifted from internalizing children's errors to becoming personally responsible for her own actions with children. In her journey, there have been many obstacles, however Val's inner belief in honesty, integrity and self-esteem have facilitated her development and growth.

Development of Empathy in Participants

The most significant finding for each participant in this study is the discovery of inner unconscious forces that determined how they thought, felt and reacted in ordinary human interactions. Through mindful attention to their own

inner experience and the imaginative exploration into the reality of others, the participants increased their awareness of emotional identification, assumptions and distortions of thought.

This awareness of the internal dynamics that are involved in interpersonal encounters stimulated the reflective processing of each participant. Engaged in reflection, the participants gradually shifted their mindsets into more meaningful understanding and interpretations of themselves and others. With more inclusive perspectives, the participants each felt empowered to choose more effective approaches to their interactions.

Boundaries were established through awareness and reflection that enabled participants to clearly differentiate their own experience from the reality of the other, thus clearing the perceptual field for the possibility of empathy.

The Encounter and Reflection Process each proved to be a valued strategy to gain access into another person's inner world. Each of the participants developed the ability to intuit the reality of the other distinct from their own. This development occurred through their deep and direct involvement in the phenomena of interaction.

Steenbarger (1991) argues that development is a process of reflecting on the ever-changing reality of life and a function of complex interactions between individuals and their world. In this research, participants were given a structure and encouragement to mindfully develop awareness and understanding of specific interactions. Each of the participants in the research used the structure and encouragement to facilitate their own growth and development.

With experiences of authentic empathy, participants appreciated the intrinsic value of others. The women of this study reached beyond limitations of the self to the appreciation of others as cherished and valuable human beings and a sense of "enlargement" (Scheler, 1954, p. 61) of their own lives.

The Essential Elements of Empathy

At the core, empathy for others requires an understanding and acceptance for another in the other's own terms. Once boundaries were established that maintained separate realities, the participants were able to enter into a shared understanding of the meaning inherent in an interaction.

Through the use of phenomenological analysis and reflection, the phenomena of empathy rose to a clearer awareness. Tesch (1990) notes that phenomenologists collect intensive and exhaustive descriptions of participants' experiences as well as their own. Using the intense and exhaustive descriptions, a textual interpretation is created by the researcher to describe the phenomena (van Manen, 1990). The following description of empathy and its development is the result of an intense and exhaustive analysis of the stories of the participants as well as my own reflections.

Empathy emerges in the context of interpersonal relationships if sufficient essential elements are present. The first essential five elements of empathy found in this research include: intention, attention, self-empathy, perspective taking and reflection. Each of these elements are largely invisible to an external observer and exist within the internal mind of the empathizer. The remaining elements which are more visible include: communication, maintaining the therapeutic space and shared meaning. Following the brief introduction of each

element, I re-examine the writings of each participant for verification and clarification of the findings.

1) Intention. Empathy is initiated when an individual chooses to attend fully, nonjudgmentally, thoughtfully and carefully to the inner world of another. Empathy is blocked when one holds an indifferent, distant, or critical stance toward another. However, intentions are fluid and involve a moment-to-moment choice of attitude toward another. Intentions can shift in the midst of an interaction, or remain fixed. Attitudes, habits of thoughts and emotions, inform intentions.

Prior to each actual encounter, there is a "non-revealed attitude" (von Hildebrand, 1960, p. 154) that "breaks forth and actually reaches the other person" (p. 123). In healthy empathy, the intention and the caring attitude supporting it is expressed and when it reaches and is received by the other, an intersubjective situation is created. Intention and the underlying attitude can ultimately be chosen by the empathizer. This choice has deep moral implications and exists within the internal frame of reference of the chooser.

2) Attention. Clear attention is possible when a choice has been made to focus on the reality of another. Attention involves utilizing the senses to mindfully listen, observe, and discern cues presented by another regarding their inner state of being. Full attention requires "bracketing" or setting aside one's critical judgmental voice, one's emotional reactions and becoming mindfully present to receive another or to imagine the reality of another.

Mindfulness is a quality of attention that describes a thoughtful, open and caring attitude toward another (Langer, 1990). The gift of attention is an external manifestation of the inner intention and attitude toward another. "Bracketing" one's own emotions is possible when one is skilled in self-empathy.

3) Self-empathy. In self-empathy, one directs toward oneself an intentional, attentive, non-judgmental, open, forgiving attitude. In self-empathy, one is mindful of the self, centered, grounded and able to feel and acknowledge one's own emotions. Self-empathy includes the ability to confront oneself, to tolerate and learn from intense emotions, to respect the developing self, forgive the self, accept and understand the self and to speak one's mind with courage. Self-empathy serves to build a firm foundation on which empathy for others can develop.

4) Perspective taking. Perspective taking involves imagining, speculating and assuming the thoughts and emotions that the other may be experiencing. Perspective taking requires a person to reach out of a personal sensory experience and intuit a distinctly different view from the lens of another. Perspective taking can occur through the active imagination or in writing. It becomes external as the empathizer checks out the accuracy of assumptions, fantasies and speculations in dialogue with the client. Through perspective taking and reflection, a distinct type of empathy can emerge, a retrospective empathy that enlightens and expands the internal mindset of the professional, altering commitments and future interactions.

5) Reflection. With reflection we allow thoughts and emotions to move back and forth in consciousness in an effort to discover invisible meaning. Four levels of reflection have been observed in this research: recall, association, connection of patterns, and subtle shifts in perspectives that alter patterns. Reflection offers a container, the crucible, where the learning that emerges in a shared experience may become fully internalized. Reflection can occur in the midst of action and it also can be retrospective in nature. Through the reflective process one can anticipate and plan for future interactions.

6) Maintaining a therapeutic space. It is critical that a caregiver accept the authority to protect the boundaries and connections of a relationship. The empathizer has the task of protecting and safeguarding the emotional vulnerability of individuals involved and empathic connection. Concern and respect for another is expressed in caring for the therapeutic space. When an educator continually creates a classroom environment of warmth, safety and stimulation she is maintaining the therapeutic space. When a counselor respects the client's need for time and confidentiality and freedom from the emotional issues of the professional, he is caring for the boundaries. When a social worker demands time to prepare for an interview with another, she is safeguarding the emotional vulnerability of the client. The highest priority for the professional is to recognize the needs of the client at all times and to honor and maintain a healthy therapeutic relationship. Maintenance of the therapeutic space can be conceptualized as the work of the totemic witness.

7) Communication. Empathy emerges in an interaction and requires an expression of understanding. In communicating empathy one takes a stance toward the other that acknowledges the intent to care and understand the other's perspective. In the communication of empathy we acknowledge the essential being and value of the other. This communication can take place verbally, non-verbally or in actions that emerge from the shared understanding. For teachers, communication of empathy may take the form of developing well being in students, creating an atmosphere of warmth and humour, responsiveness to feelings or planning a specific learning strategy.

8) Shared meaning. Heshusius (1994) calls this a participatory mode of consciousness. Many terms have been developed to describe the shared meaning that is created between two people as they interact. Broome (1993) calls it a "third culture"; for Hahn (1987) it is "interbeing". Grof (1990) calls it "dual unity." Phenomenological researchers (von Hildebrand, 1960; Owens, 1970) have called it "intersubjectivity."

Each name adds additional insight to this highly potent experience. von Hildebrand (1960) explains the complexity of intersubjectivity:

The social act creates an intersubjective situation. For when the interpersonal space between the two persons is penetrated and a new bi-polar relationship is established in which both beings function as subjects (p. 121).

This is a time when the distinctions of self and other are dissolved and a common connection is established. The participatory mode of consciousness is

a sacred time, boundaries are momentarily suspended and a sense of human unity is experienced.

The essential elements of empathy are not static but are interwoven dynamics of the developing pattern of the relationship and re-emerge to strengthen, deepen and renew the fabric of connection. Breaking empathy down into essential components facilitates an examination of how each element is embedded in the specific encounters of participants. In the following presentation of findings, I examine the essential elements of empathy and the obstacles and contributions to the development of empathy embedded in stories of each of the four participants.

Essential Elements of Empathy in the Interactions of Participants

Intention

Using a process model of empathy, I have found that development of empathy occurs when the intention for the well being of the other increases. Empathy is expanded when a person chooses to mindfully and carefully attend to the reality of the other. With intention and care, perspective taking is focused on the strengths of the other, emotions are differentiated between the caregiver and the receiver and the capacity to think and act in the best interests of another is strengthened.

Intention involves the decision to act in service to another, to care for the interests of another. As professionals, each of the participants has an implicit commitment to act in the best interest of the client whether counseling clients, social work clients or students.

Other relationships are described where intention and commitment to the needs of the other is not implicit for participants. These relationships include encounters with supervisors, teachers, people with whom there is a dual relationship, relatives, and friends as well as with the self. In the relationships where intentions for the interests of the other is not implicit, a different quality of decision is made.

Paula

Paula has a tendency to identify with others and her professional challenge is to develop clear boundaries of the self and the other. As Paula becomes more accountable for her own unconscious emotions, she is able to accept and understand others as separate human beings.

Intention in dual relationships

In her first encounter, Paula describes an encounter with a client who has permission to call her at home, has been invited to visit her at home, and with whom she has spent evenings "watching her get drunk and talk about the past for the millionth time." In her perspective taking and reflection, Paula acknowledges the harm to herself and the client that has occurred because of violation of boundaries.

Enmeshed in the suffering of the client, Paula moves out of an unconscious identification in suffering and begins to clarify her intentions for her own emotional development as well as those for her client through the reflection process. Paula "feels sad for her pain and helpless in her struggle to understand herself and her relationship with others" but she knows that she

must acknowledge her own emotions. "I am not so sure that I can continue to be supportive when I continue to bury my feelings. It drags me down."

Affirming the intention for the welfare of the client, Paula considers "the idea of her seeing a new therapist with her." Respecting her own professional needs, Paula decides "When I return I need to clarify with her some boundaries concerning our relationship."

In her fourth encounter, Paula again struggles with extricating herself from a fused, sympathetic relationship where the client is also a friend. Although she has been deeply absorbed in a task, Paula chooses to leave her desk when she recognizes another's agitation and urgency to talk. Feeling the desperation of the client in the perspective taking, Paula is motivated by the deep distress she perceives. Paula's intentions to separate her own anger, criticism and identification from those of the client are strong, but the familiarity with the family, and inner personal issues keep the confusion intense. In her reflection, Paul realizes that personal issues "that are not resolved in your life and that are too close to home" affect her ability to "help others."

Intention with a teacher

In her second encounter, Paula clearly intends to learn from the speaker from another culture. Discovering the speaker was native enhanced her expectant attitude and intentions. "I was really looking forward to this presentation." This positive intention opened Paula to an immediate identification with the speaker.

Listening carefully to the "calm, soothing tone of voice," Paula reflects on their shared compassion for wounded children, and carefully noted the speaker's "program she did with children."

With a strong intention to learn from the speaker's point of view, Paula experienced learning and growth and a preference for an empathic epistemology. "I am tired of the textbook approach. Speaking with N. people and also with the people who work with N. people is where you find some answers and ideas."

Impressed by the empathic attitude of the speaker, Paula is inspired to develop her own authentic capacity to find meaning: "clients want to know what is at the heart of the matter. TRUST AND HONESTY are important."

Intention with a supervisor

In her fifth encounter, Paula has a conversation with an administrator who seems to have a "hidden agenda that I am not aware of." In this encounter Paula resists putting the needs of the administrator first and chooses to attend to her own needs. Paula explores embedded motivations when she attempts to see the encounter from the eyes of the administrator. Gaining the knowledge through perspective taking that she is being "gently" manipulated by the needs of the supervisor, Paula is able to affirm her intentions for her own professional and personal choices. "I need to make decisions based on what is best for me."

Intention with peers

When she enters a class of peers late, Paula feels left out, alienated and ignored. She came in with an intention to connect and relate, but finds the

group in a deep discussion. Reflecting on her encounter, Paula begins to forgive herself for not making "earth shattering" statements that would contribute to the group.

Recognizing her projection on the group regarding her intention to belong and feel recognized, Paula realizes that she needed time out to sort out her feelings and intentions. In her reflection, Paula realizes she has not "taken time" to reflect and process intense inner experiences from the other group. As she continues to reflect, she realizes that her pattern of not taking time to process experiences has a direct relationship to her work as a school counselor. Paula makes a commitment to change her former patterns.

Intention with self

Paula demonstrates a neglect toward the self in her first encounter when she notices, yet ignores, physical pain and passively allows a client to dominate her on the phone. When Paula shifts to a more active intervention, the client attacks. Paula defends herself, there has been a "miscommunication".

Reacting to the encounter, Paula wants to call someone to talk, but watches TV and drinks wine. Later in her reflection, Paula empathically recognizes her own anger and frustration, and the destructive effect of denying her feelings.

In her fifth encounter with the manipulative administrator, Paula has a positive intention toward herself. She clarifies the issue, seeks support and empathy from another and affirms her right to make her own decisions without considering first the needs of the administrator.

In this encounter, Paula focuses her caring intention toward herself. She engages in self-empathy. According to Jordan (1991), self-empathy is an aspect of the self that maintains boundaries of the self in specific experiences (Jordan, 1991). Carefully remaining passive and non-committal until she sorts out the confusion of the "hidden agenda," Paula takes time to respect her own needs. With active self-empathy, Paula decreases her dependency on others for decision making, and feels the confidence in her inner core to trust her risk-taking activities.

Feminist researchers (Gilligan, 1982; Young-Eisendrath & Wiedemann, 1989) maintain that it is a moral responsibility to balance a caring mutually for the self with care for others. However, as Gilligan (1982) maintains, this balance is especially difficult for women. Most women have been socialized to believe they are responsible for the needs of others. Paula's intention for the self in this encounter is a significant point of development.

Caring intentionality toward the self is an internal, intrapsychic process where the aspect of the self which observes and judges shifts into "empathic contact with some aspect of the self as object." (Jordan, 1991, p. 51). This intrapsychic empathy with the self is believed to lead to enduring changes in inner self-representations or images of the self that govern emotions, decisions, relationships and patterns of behavior (Jordan, 1991).

In her encounter with the administrator, Paula solicits and receives understanding and forgiveness offered by a co-worker, which allows her to shift from a self-critical, shame orientation to an empathic contact with the self. "I talked about the past and discussed the issues I recognize that need to be dealt with and I was specific by giving examples."

Focusing on Paula's strengths, the co-worker releases Paul from blame: "It's water under the bridge" ... "he is happy that I've had this year away to assess myself and develop and grow professionally as well as personally." The affirming interaction with the co-worker allowed Paula to feel connected, in control and hopeful. "I felt that it strengthened and reinforced our relationship" ... "I am reminded that I needed to take control here" ... "I need to make a decision based on what is best for me" ... "I know that I am capable of taking risks."

Intention and caring for others

In her third encounter, Paula's intention to relieve suffering of oppressed people is enhanced. Identifying through empathy, Paula feels she is sharing with the speaker in a common mission, a participatory mode of consciousness.

Receiving caring intentions from another is similar to that described by Noddings (1984) and means "feeling with" another rather than a more projective penetration into the reality of another when one attempts to "feel into." Noddings (1984) describes a process similar to Paula's: "I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other" (p. 30).

Intention for the encounter process

In her final reflection paper, Paula relates that her intention and expectation for professional and personal growth through the encounter process was very high. Anticipating "potential cognitive insights which could be gained after thoughtful reflection," Paula believed that this work "could be a very empowering, meaningful process."

Paula's optimistic intentions for her development motivate her to self-disclosure and thoughtfully reflect on this process with the result of significant growth... "it (the encounter process) has caused me to take a good look at who I am, to clarify how I feel about certain issues and to examine my values and beliefs."

Attention

The second essential element of empathy, attention, is examined as it emerges from Paula's work. While intention involves a cognitive commitment based on significant values, attention requires a physical, sensual attunement to the reality of an environment, the self and another. Attention in an empathic encounter, unless triggered by pleasure or distress, is dependent on mindfulness.

The encounter process begins with the suggestion that the participant relive their feelings, sensations and focus in the first person as they recall a specific interaction with another. Beginning to journal an encounter with a sense of mindfulness to an ordinary experience allows that interaction to be explored for potential meaning. Langer (1990) points out that mindfulness can rescue everyday reality from the trap of emptiness to offer a new perspective, a fresh possibility for growth, development meaning and commitment to our daily experiences.

Attention to one's own physical sensations

In her first encounter, Paula describes her ear as "slightly sore" from three previous telephone conversations, the tension in her body when she

hears the voice of this "client" and the beginning of a headache. Paula is able to acknowledge her own ambiguity, discomfort and distress when she recalls her reaction; passively sitting down to listen and enduring a long monologue.

Torn between a sense of obligation and sympathy, Paula feels compelled to listen despite her distress. By attending to her somatic experience, Paula is able to confront her polarity of embedded emotions and work out a satisfactory solution.

Attention to time

In her second encounter Paula, comments on her sense of time while taking the perspective of the other: "I speak for an hour ... time passed so quickly." Csikszentmihalyi (1990) speaks of time flowing in experiences where "self-consciousness disappears and the sense of time becomes distorted" (p.71) and argues that experiences with a distorted sense of time provide for creative discovery and move an individual to a more complex way of perceiving reality. In attending to the sense of time while identifying with the speaker, Paula develops a vision of how her intense emotions are a deep passion for justice and a motivation to care that can be expressed in life-giving ways.

In her first and third encounters, Paula feels pressured by time. Time seems to drag when she listens to the hour and a half monologue, time seems controlled by others in her third encounter. Rushing from one group to another, Paula neglects to take time to process her intense emotions. Moving beyond her first reaction to blame herself for her discomfort, Paula realizes she needed time to switch "hats", to focus for emotional control, to reflect rather than react.

In her reflection, Paula recognizes pressure of time as an ongoing theme in her life. This discovery leads to a motivational shift, a commitment to access control of her time and hence control of her life. "It makes me think about re-organizing my day to allow for time to reflect on each interview and take time to write notes, etc." Inspired by a sense of control over her time, Paula begins to plan for creative, reflective time to respond mindfully to changing circumstances rather than react emotionally.

Attention to others

The intention to attend to others emerged in Paula's perspective taking and reflection. In her first encounter, Paula is tired but listens quietly although the details of the story with growing frustration. When she interrupts to suggest an intervention, the caller is offended, attacks and ends the conversation. The caller demands to be attended to in a particular way ... passive, agreeable listening.

Paula's perspective taking and reflection on her passive listening and attending reveals invisible connections with deep emotions and intentions. Through perspective taking and reflection after the encounter, Paula moves out of an unconscious identification with the client's suffering and begins to discern the inner world of the others as distinct from her own.

In her reflection paper, Paula reports that listening attentively to "what the other person was thinking opened up a much bigger picture ... a new world ... a whole new perspective," "I have rarely taken as much time to actively reflect on what the other person may be seeing, feeling, hearing and doing."

Perspective taking

The third essential element of empathy involves the imaginative speculation on the thoughts, emotions and interpretations of another. In the first encounter, Paula writes about the interaction from the perspective of the client and her own intense emotions emerge. She imagines that the client is frustrated to find the line busy and is desperate to talk to someone because of mental anxiety. "I have so much on my mind." Trapped by maladaptive family patterns, the client seems doomed to repeat a litany of blame, misunderstanding and hurt.

As she describes the encounter from the clients perspective, Paula seems strongly identified with the client's suffering. Allowing the shared emotions to flow toward consciousness, the perspective taking reflects a fusion where Paula is unable to distinguish her own emotions from the client's.

In her second encounter Paula, is sympathetic with the speaker in her graduate class, however there seems to be a positive, heroic identification. Identifying emotionally in the perspective offered by the speaker, Paula reports in her reflection "I felt a sense of optimism in her work as a counselor and also in my own as a helper." In the perspective-taking Paula imagines the speaker's deep sense of personal mission, hope, skills, creativity and courage.

Paula internalizes what she imagines as the speaker's association with emotions and mission in her perspective taking: "When I am talking about some of my clients, I become quite emotional, as their lives have touched me deeply. I care so much for them, and I tried my best to help them."

Paula recognizes the speaker's skills in handling difficult boundary issues despite emotional connection. She notes that the speaker is able to

leave the school confident that the client's well being is not a life-time responsibility. With this perspective-taking, Paula discovers the cost of caring as a deep vulnerability to emotional pain and sorrow but this vulnerability does not need to be an obstacle toward engaging in caregiving.

In the third encounter, Paula feels alienated, develops a headache and moves into isolation through self blame. The emotional spiral of suffering continues as Paula experiences physical pain. "My heart hurt and I felt like crying at one point." Unable to imagine much about the perspective of the group, Paula states: "It's difficult to describe what each person in the group was thinking but I imagine that they might have wondered where I was and why I was late. People may have wondered why I was quiet and said so little."

Trapped in her isolation, Paula seems to discount her earlier observation that the group was engaged in an intense discussion on trauma and may have been absorbed in the topic. Choosing to blame herself for her discomfort, pain and alienation, Paul stays isolated in her own inner suffering until her reflection.

In her fourth encounter, Paul imagines her friend is "driving over to my house feeling desperate to talk to someone." Believing she is the only person the friend is able to trust, Paula agrees to spending time so that the friend will have essential relief.

In her fifth encounter, Paula uses perspective taking to learn more about the motivation of an administrator. Having been asked to think about moving to another school, Paula imagines that the administrator says to himself: "I think now of a way to gently introduce the idea of changing to another school. So I speak about growth and change and suggest that after a year away it is often good to move to another school. I ask her if she has ever considered that." In

this interaction, there seems to be little emotional identification with the administrator. Paula achieves clarity in terms of the cognitive processing.

In her reflection paper, Paula finds that perspective taking is soothing to her conflicting emotions. "Describing the encounter from the eyes of the other person seemed to have a calming effect on me." Paula defuses her emotions through imagining another's perspective and is able to make conscious her formerly unconscious identifications and projections. She calls on the non-judgmental voice of her observant self to break through the pattern of a single lens perspective that has contributed to the intensity of her inner emotions.

Tracking her emotional shift from anxiety to empowerment through perspective taking, Paula states: "As I felt more relaxed I discovered that I was better able to focus and to complete the last stages of the process (the reflection). I felt less emotional and more open to finding the true meaning of the experiences." Looking "carefully and honestly" at her interactions with others, Paula found perspective taking to be a tool for emotional processing. "With this encounter process, I want to work through the emotions at the time of writing." ... "And I find now, that immediately after an encounter, I am motivated to identify and process uncomfortable emotions connected with the experience."

Reflection

The fifth internal element of empathy that has been identified in this study is reflection. In the reflective process participants experienced a retrospective empathy, an awareness and understanding of the inner world of another. They also created a sense of meaning in an encounter and used the reflection to sort out possible alternatives.

Reflecting on her perspective taking in the first encounter, Paula moves back and forth between the client's emotions and her own feelings. Realizing how her own emotional patterns affects the relationship, Paula decides to change her role in the relationship. "I think that I need to deal with this and not let it continue in this way."

Paula identifies the difficulty in this relationship as a confusion of roles and decides to "clarify with her some boundaries concerning our relationship." In the reflective process on this encounter, Paula moves from passive resignation to empowerment. Prior to the reflection, Paula has disassociated from the encounter. After reflection on feelings and reactions, Paula chooses to alter the relationship.

In the second encounter, Paula discerns her preferred method of learning through reflection. She realizes how much she enjoys learning through authentic experiences of others rather than through abstract formal learning.

In the third encounter, Paula notes in her reflection that her intense emotional shift from "elation" and "euphoria" to alienation occur because of a lack of time rather than her personal failure. In her reflection, Paula mindfully sorts out the small ordinary movements that composed her interactions with the two groups and her inner core self.

First, Paula forgives herself for the failure to make "earth shattering" statements. "I realize that perhaps I'm a bit hard on myself." Self-forgiveness enables Paula to shift out of her isolated, self-blaming perspective and evaluate the loss of control she experienced in her reactions. "I think that if I had had a

longer break between the two classes, things may have been different. It was difficult to wear two hats in the different classes".

Paula associates her need for time to process intense experiences with her difficulty in her work as a school counselor. "I think about seeing several clients with a variety of problems. There is so little time to sit and reflect on these."

When she shifts from self-blame to a recognition of obstacles for emotional control in her environment, Paula enhances her sense of efficacy. "It makes me think about re-organizing my day to allow time to reflect on each interview and take time to write notes, etc." Subtle changes in Paula's perspective involve a shift from a self-focused painful suffering to insight into strategies and choices that could be used in different situations.

In her fourth encounter, Paula reflects on her own behavior: "I listened intently" ... "I kept my feelings to myself" ... "When she had stopped I just waited ... biting my tongue because I felt a whole range of feelings." Exploring emotional boundaries, Paula reflects on her attempt to separate her own anger, criticism and identification from influencing her client.

Entering into deeper reflection, Paula generalizes on the difficulty in maintaining boundaries when she needs to hold back intense emotions. Paula realizes that personal issues "that are not resolved in your life" can create confusion in a caring relationship. "If you're not comfortable with your own losses, etc., you certainly won't be able to help others."

Reflecting on her fifth encounter, Paula affirms the choice to consider her own needs first in this encounter. She reflects on her future and growing sense of efficacy regarding decision making. "The future is not clear but it is not

threatening to me. I know that I am capable of taking risks" ... "experiences can be very rich and rewarding when one chooses to take risks" ... "I'm feeling optimistic and that something positive will result from this whole process."

In her reflection paper on the five encounters, Paula recalls "so many different emotions" in her work. When Paula reflects, her emotions are transformed into a discovery of meaning and the decision-making process.

Writing about encounters has helped me make some sense and meaning out of the experiences.... More focus on emotional awareness of myself and others has been a significant outcome of this process. And I think I am more open to change now. In the past depression, I felt numb and I became extremely defensive. But now I feel ready and willing to implement changes.

Through reflection, Paula learned to think about her feelings, she would "try to analyze why I am feeling so uncomfortable and what is the true source of my anger." Summarizing the pattern of former emotional reactions, Paula reflected that she had "repressed painful emotions or I chose to 'file them away' to deal with at another time." "With this encounter process, I wanted to work through the emotions at the time of writing" ... and "I find now, that immediately after an encounter, I am motivated to identify and process uncomfortable emotions connected with the experience."

By making conscious her emotional patterns in reflection, Paula discovered she had a habit of feeling "guilty for feeling so good." Unconsciously feeling right only when she felt "bad", Paul becomes aware of her self-imposed obstacle to feeling pleasurable emotions. Choosing to "treasure" moments of pleasure, Paula makes a decision to "be kinder to myself in the future."

Issues of Development for Paula

Emotional differentiation

In early encounters, Paula feels a deep sense of obligation and sympathy. She believes that others are desperate and she can be trusted. Sympathetically, Paula makes heroic efforts to help others. Sympathy is a form of identification with another; it is defined as: "1. the quality of being affected by the state of another with feelings correspondent in kind." (Vizetelly, 1931, p. 1139). Having unconsciously identified with others in distress, Paula's empathy is triggered by distress that is remarkably similar to her own.

In her first encounter, Paula complies with the client's expectation to listen passively, and stays on the phone for one and a half hours, until her resentment and suppressed anger erupt in an attempt to intervene. The client's resentment and anger become directed toward Paula and escalate the shared level of suffering.

When she is reflecting on the fourth encounter, Paula realizes that her own unresolved personal issues are affecting the clarity of relationship. Merging and fusing emotions with her client, Paula struggles to "bite her tongue." Rather than directly disclosing her emotions, Paula is energized to give advice and generate solutions for the client. This reaction could be considered a boundary violation.

Peterson (1992) defines boundary violations, not by the content, but through a process of disconnection that occurs in the context of the relationship. Although Paula is caring and responsive to the needs of others and readily available at a moment's notice, she does not create a safe space for herself and

others until her last encounter. Her own emotions are unacknowledged and without clear boundaries in most encounters.

When Paula makes her emotional identification conscious throughout the encounter process, she moves out of unconscious connections with others into an awareness of the difference between her own experience and that of another. Schnarch (1991) calls this a developmental achievement emotional differentiation. With a low level of differentiation, an individual is dependent on receiving a reflected sense of self from others. Without attention, approval and acceptance of others, real pain is experienced by Paula: "My heart hurts and I felt like crying at one point."

Schnarch (1991) proposes that a higher level of differentiation is developed when an alternative perspective is generated whereby an individual recognizes that a particular impasse is a reflection of personal expectations and projections. When Paula leaves one class "euphoric" due to comments of a teacher and peers, and enters a second class that gives her little attention, she experiences alienation, displaying a low level of ability to absorb and manage emotions from a stable inner core.

In her perspective taking and reflection Paula develops stability of her inner core through self-confrontation, self-validation and self-soothing activities. Schnarch (1991) describes these activities as essential for an individual to relinquish expectations and resist being molded and changed by others. Self-confrontation is necessary for the development of emotional maturity (Schnarch, 1991) and occurs repeatedly in Paula's reflective process: "it has caused me to take a good look at who I am, to clarify how I feel about certain issues and to examine my values and beliefs."

In her encounter with a manipulative administrator, Paula takes time to choose her response rather than reacting. She resists the "gentle" prodding of the administrator and affirms her right to base her decision on her own needs. An inner locus on control is an important dimension of emotional maturity (Schnarch, 1991) and this encounter reflects Paula's success in lowering her dependency on the approval of others. Receiving support and encouragement from a co-worker, Paula risks making choices for her future, taking control of her life.

Defusing intense emotions through the practice of perspective taking, Paula was able to link inner feelings with conscious thoughts and shift her perspective. Segal (1987) points out that intense inner emotions can be generalized as anxiety which limits cognitive processing to a one-track perspective. With reflection, Paula learns to hold a multiple lens perspective which increases her capacity to imagine alternative strategies to solve problems.

Paula's development of empathy

In working with Paula's stories, I continually returned to her written encounters as I searched for patterns, development and meaning. Moving deeply into her struggle with boundaries, emotions and sense of control of one's own life, I recognized that Paula finds meaningfulness inherent in ordinary daily interactions. Reflecting thoughtfully on the subtle movements of an interaction, her perspectives begin to shift, expanding her mind to multiple realities. Each shift uncovered valuable insights that deepened her self-knowledge and revealed invisible patterns of meaning.

Paula learned to take time to process her intense emotions generated in ordinary interactions with others. Until an emotion is thoughtfully processed, it is difficult to connect with others who have different feelings. When Paula delayed the processing of her emotions she felt distanced and alone. This alienation became an obstacle for Paula to see the world from another's point of view.

Through this second review of Paula's work, the complex factors involved in her interactions became more visible. Each reaction to an interaction was constructed out of an underlying pattern of adaptation and the pattern is revealed as the analysis continued from another perspective.

Perspective taking and reflection challenged Paula to move deeper into her positive intention for the client as well as for her own well being. This seemed to break the former pattern and create new opportunities and alternative ways of responding.

Risa

The second participant, Risa, struggles with the nature of her professional intentions. She is conflicted between her sense of responsibility to authority and to her clients. This ambiguity is clarified as she activates her own authority and discovers a profound sense of meaning in advocacy for clients.

Intentions with a supervisor

In her first encounter, Risa felt personally violated by the intrusion of the supervisor into the peer group and she interpreted the supervisor's behavior to

emerge from a demeaning and disrespectful attitude toward her. Risa's hostile feelings toward this supervisor create confusion in her intentions. The negative, critical support from the peer group seemed to intensify her feelings of irritation and anger. There is a pattern of negative group criticism directed toward the supervisor, however, Risa learns to identify her emotions as unconscious projections emerging from her own unresolved issues of childhood. Risa also learns to disengage from the covert critical judgmental discussions with peers. She finds them inflammatory, contagious and confusing. Risa learns to activate her own methods of sorting out her feelings and identifications which are more consistent with her integrity. However, we do not see a caring, empathic intention toward the supervisor emerge in Risa's work over six months. Her empathy is focused on her client .

Intentions with a parent

In her second encounter, Risa attempts to approach a parent that she has prejudged as "resistant". Racial issues seem to cloud this encounter. Risa has been told that the parent is uncomfortable "dealing with Caucasian persons." Risa has some "serious concerns" regarding the woman's son, and she intends to advocate for the child despite difficulties reported by other educators. This encounter reveals Risa's passionate dedication as an advocate but lack of cultural awareness that is necessary to be effective. Her pre-judgment could be considered an unconscious projection on the mother. Later in her reflection, Risa decides to seek more information on "Afro-American women."

Intention with a child

In the third encounter, Risa is caught by surprise when a male supervisor asks her to talk to a student because the girl "has difficulty talking to men." Feeling nervous and unprepared, Risa begins to use problem solving skills in dealing with the issue. She does not have time to form a trusting relationship with this troubled child.

In this encounter, Risa is confused in her intention. Rather than advocating for her client, the child, she follows the expectations of the male supervisor. She discovers in her perspective taking that the child feels this betrayal, however she does not become aware of her conflict of intention.

Intention with a supervisor

In her fourth encounter, Risa is reclaiming her power that has been lost in interactions with a supervisor. Her intent is to advocate more effectively for a client who has been treated in a "dehumanizing way." Risa prepares well in advance for a confrontation with her supervisor. She channels her intense rage into a constructive power of advocacy. A great deal of reflection through journal writing has helped Risa to create a "document" to share with her supervisor and use "self-talk" to cope with a "nervous stomach" before the encounter. In the interview with the supervisor, Risa maintains her deep sense of purpose to advocate for a client who had been "dehumanized" by systems.

As in the preceding encounter, Risa does not value a caring empathic intention for her supervisor. She feels that her supervisor attempts to manipulate her through friendliness, indications of distress and sorrow and praise, and believes that she would abdicate her power to advocate effectively

for clients if she softened her judgment toward the supervisor. She chooses to distance herself from her supervisor.

Intention for self

In her final encounter with the supervisor, Risa has carefully developed her courage to break her own habit of silence and resentment in the face of injustice. She admits that she has a habit of being "highly self critical" and has allowed the inner critical voice to hold her to impossible standards. She seems to hold her supervisors to the same impossible standards in projection. This kind of projection could create a "halo" effect where a high degree of wisdom is attributed to the supervisor as well as a "negative fall" when the supervisor fails to live up to her expectations.

Attention

Risa is reluctant to give attention, time and respect to the supervisor in her first encounter. She feels threatened by the power the supervisor displays. In her second encounter, Risa expects resistance from the parent, but chooses to attend to communicating her own perspective and does not attempt to listen and understand the parent. Attention is highly dependent on intention.

In her interaction with the troubled young girl, Risa focuses on her own needs to solve the problem for the principal rather than listen to the child's perspective. In the final encounter, Risa is again determined to communicate her perspective to her supervisor. She feels she will lose her emerging authority if she empathizes with the supervisor.

Risa is most effective in attending to her own process of identifying unconscious factors that have influenced her interactions. She develops the habit of journaling and monitors her own inner self talk. By carefully attention to her inner voices, Risa is able to internalize her own sense of authority as a professional.

Perspective taking

When Risa takes the perspective of the other in the first encounter, she recognizes the benign intentions of the supervisor to check things out in a friendly way. However, Risa discounts the supervisor's point of view and blames the supervisor for dominating the group.

In the second encounter with the parent, Risa engages in a brief perspective taking. She imagines the parent "may have felt intruded upon as I did arrive unannounced. Besides, the only interaction I have ever had with the staff have been about negative things related to my child." This perspective taking allows Risa to recognize her own racial bias.

In the interaction with the troubled child, Risa takes the child's perspective and imagines that the girl feels a profound sense of injustice, disrespect and betrayal. Risa imagines the child feels trapped and gives up her quest for fairness and justice from the teacher, submits to the "game" of counseling and problem solving to "try to get out of this trouble my teacher put me in." This perspective taking marks a shift for Risa. Through perspective taking she has entered into the painful inner world of a child and witnessed her contribution to the child's oppression.

In her final interaction, Risa stays centered in her own perspective, except to note the sadness of the supervisor. Fearing she will be drawn into the supervisor's perspective, Risa resists, interrupts and stands up to ask, "What are you going to do about this?"

With perspective taking, Risa has become conscious of her own fears, biases, power to wound and vulnerability. She begins to understand that her own unresolved emotional pain is a barrier to her professional development.

Risa and reflection

In Risa's reflections, she describes her process of emotional development through the Encounter Process. "I think I learned and am learning to be more aware of my feelings." "Taking time" to examine "why I am feeling this way right now," Risa initially traces her resentment to her supervisor's need for control. This attribution allows Risa to be "better able to go on with my day once I have pinpointed my feelings and have dealt with them in a healthy way." This sense of relief gained through blaming allows Risa to relax, "my mindfulness expanded."

When Risa writes her reflection on the "resistant" parent she feels rejection and failure. Seeking "support for myself" with peers, Risa receives feedback that enables her to modulate the impact of the experience on her self-perceptions. "I felt like I was able to put the situation into a clearer perspective so that I would not internalize the event." Despite the use of all her resources, Risa felt the interaction was "emotionally and intellectually draining and frustrating. I felt like I was doing all I know to do to effectively and gently approach a difficult subject with a seemingly disinterested parent."

Shifting into a constructivist voice in her reflection, Risa acknowledges her lack of cultural awareness and decides to do "more research about talking to Afro-American women." Internalizing the learning, Risa concludes: "I learned what it feels like to be challenged about my skills and I learned that, once again, I have a lot more to learn about myself and about others."

Reflecting on her encounter with the troubled girl, Risa feels "fairly positive" about her counseling skills, but is frustrated by the lack of time to build a trusting relationship with an obviously disturbed child. Risa recalls her perspective taking: "As the child, this experience was a real drag. After all, I was in the principal's office because I was in trouble and I was forced to talk to a total stranger."

In her final encounter, Risa reflects on her relationship with her supervisor and acknowledges that the supervisor triggered her hidden fears. "A work experience uncovered my darkest side; incredible anger, hateful words, clenched fists and tears of frustration." Risa has made her unconscious projection conscious. This shift of perspective through an acknowledgment of her own woundedness marks a significant developmental achievement for Risa. It was possible because of the choice to engage in a reflection that is particularly extensive, revealing and honest.

Risa has clarified her sense of meaning by choosing to advocate for clients. In the final encounter, Risa finds the courage to confront the supervisor and thus break her habit of silence and resentment in the face of injustice and anger. Determined to stay focused and controlled, Risa walks into the office of her supervisor, establishes eye contact and requests privacy and uninterrupted time. Keeping a calm demeanor, Risa feels empowered as she reads the

document to the supervisor. Risa carefully developed the courage to speak her mind to rectify a mistake.

This courage gave Risa the confidence that she could handle a "similar confrontation whether the person wronged another or me." Risa reflects on her awareness that anger can be transformed in a way "that promotes growth within myself and my relationships with others." Affirming her "empowerment", Risa reasserts her confidence, "I CAN survive difficult situations that involve confronting a supervisor."

Reflecting on old memories, Risa recalls her sister as someone who "has a very strong, assertive (borderline aggressive at times) personality, while I received lots of strokes for being respectful and sweet." Reflecting on her sense of self, Risa believes she has gained a "greater understanding and respect" for herself and a "balance of my meeker and my more assertive side." Risa is optimistic about her future development and commits herself to further development and assertion.

In this reflection, Risa has moved through different levels of depth in reflection. In the first level of reflection, recall, Risa recalled the preparation and encounter, she made associations with her ability to advocate this client and other future clients. At the next level of reflection, Risa connects the patterns of being "respectful and sweet" that developed in childhood with patterns that are no longer effective as a professional. At the deep level of reflection, Risa chooses to speak her mind with courage. She is able to shift her belief that a "good" person is not always "respectful and sweet," but that a good professional is assertive as an advocate. This shift allowed Risa to feel hopeful about

conflicts where she would need to advocate and take risks. She realized these risks would be a source of learning and future development.

Maintaining the boundaries

When the "friendly" supervisor intruded into a peer gathering, Risa reacted with internal irritation, resentment and isolation. Her anger seemed to be a protective shield for the relaxed and connected interaction between her peers. In Risa's mind, the supervisor did not belong. However, her protective anger to maintain the group was not expressed and stayed inside to simmer and brew into resentment and hostility.

In attempting to relate to the Afro-American parent, Risa feels protective of the child and hostile toward the parent. She interprets the parent's silence as indifference and confronts the parent with resisting. If Risa had included the parent in her circle of concern rather than considering her an adversary, perhaps she would not have experienced a sense of failure.

When challenged by a male supervisor to talk to a girl because the child won't "talk to men," Risa does not seem conscious that she is complying with the supervisor's agenda rather than caring for a troubled child. In her perspective taking, Risa discovers the child feels further violated and abused despite Risa's satisfaction in the use of her own problem solving skills.

In her fourth encounter, Risa is clearly advocating for a client. She accepts responsibility for caring for herself and for a client. Risa has become aware of her need to create boundaries for herself, to avoid being seduced by the supervisor's praise and contrition. Risa creates complex strategies to maintain boundaries and employs them successfully.

She congratulates herself on accomplishing this feat. She has erected boundaries with an intrusive supervisor and plans ways to guard the therapeutic relationship: "I know that in a similar future situation, I will ensure that I document all 'promises' made by another at work that will affect me or my client." Risa believes this achievement will enable her to become a better advocate for clients and defend their interests.

Shared meaning

Only in the first encounter does Risa report a sense of shared meaning with others for a brief, but interrupted time, although she does refer to a bond that was created by 'grumbling' about her supervisor. Her focus in these encounters and reflection is on development of a grounded, centered sense of self, a self who is able to feel one's emotions and channel them into constructive paths as a professional advocating for clients. Perhaps this is a prerequisite to entering into a connection mode of interaction for Risa.

In reading Risa's encounters at a second level, we see that she has a passionate sense of advocacy for the child of the Afro-American parent and the client who has been "dehumanized" in the final encounter. She deeply feels the troubled girl's sense of outrage and injustice. It seems that Risa is capable of entering into a deep sense of connection with her clients, but that her encounters have centered on her need to protect the boundaries of those relationships.

Self-empathy

Self-empathy involves emotional differentiation, self-confrontation, self-acceptance and self-respect. Despite her inability to connect empathically with her supervisor, the parent and the troubled girl of her encounter, Risa is able to grow in self-empathy in each encounter through her candid, open self-confrontation. She admitted her "dark" emotional side, her lack of cultural awareness and effective skills, her inability to develop trust and her own sense of failure and inadequacy.

Self-empathy enables us to forgive ourselves for not having all the answers, to accept ourselves as another struggling human being doing the best our awareness permits in any given situation and to continue to confront ourselves to a new level of development. Using self-confrontation, Risa learns to respect her own boundaries from internalizing failure, to seek constructive guidance from more experienced peers and to develop self-knowledge and humility.

The focus on self-confrontation seems to be the critical difference between self-esteem and self-empathy. Strategies to develop self-esteem focus on developing strengths and a positive accepting outlook on oneself (Canfield & Wells, 1976) while self-empathy acknowledges the darker side of one's personality, the continual failures in human interactions, and learns to seek the strengths embedded in the pathology of daily life.

For Risa, her primary strength embedded in her difficulties is the fierce concern and advocacy for clients who have been abused. She concludes her encounters with a deep sense of self respect that has been integrated into her need to be assertive and the "meeker" sides of her personality.

In her reflections, Risa decides to develop her own capacity for self-care. She writes: "Because of this encounter, I am spending less time taking responsibility for how others feel and am focusing much more time on self care (which my old beliefs told me was quite selfish to do)." Self-care for Risa is being "mindful of my emotions and choices."

Through self-care, Risa has gained valuable "new insight" about herself and her personal goals. She values newly found wisdom and knowledge that "can be gained through all encounters." Through supportive friends and her own inner resiliency and the ability to "buck up," Risa has been able to "overcome fears" and gain "a greater understanding and respect for myself."

Risa's issues of development

In three of her four encounters Risa experiences her supervisor's behavior as an obstacle to empathic connection with others. Embedded in these relationships is a destructive power imbalance. In the first encounter, the supervisor's lack of sensitivity regarding her power is demonstrated by intruding on a pre-planned gathering of peers. In the third encounter, Risa is instructed to immediately talk to a deeply troubled child, disrespecting her professional role. Complying with the demand of principal, Risa unconsciously abdicates advocacy for the child. She submits to the principal's expectation and counsels the child with problem-solving skills. On a deeper level, Risa knows the child is in danger and may not "make it." She believes the child feels violated by her and is in danger of giving up and "playing the game."

Risa experiences stress as an obstacle to empathy. Her habit of handling her frustration has been to distance herself from her supervisor and do

"as much of my job as possible on my own." The result of withdrawal is increased isolation and stress. In her first encounter, Risa notes chronic stress in the workplace and the relief with sharing with other social workers: "It feels good to not be rushing to get things done for the moment."

Borysenko (1994) identified the leading physiological and psychological stressor as separation, isolation and loss of connection with others. She argues that peace of mind and intimate connection with nurturing, supportive others is healing. With loss of trust in a support network, loneliness and stress are high. In Risa's work group there is a fundamental loss of trust when feelings and complaints about the supervisor proliferate on a covert level.

Despite the loss of connection with the supervisor, the support system of the social workers is not safe for Risa. She found that 'grumbling' with her co-workers depleted her energy rather than restoring it.

Risa demonstrates developmental growth when she clarifies her own authority to advocate. In her final interview with a supervisor, she is able to rebalance the power structure. This confrontation entailed a descent into her own patterns of fear, rage and darkness with the eventual resolution of these complex forces. Risa believes that her growth came from "the fact that it was another human being who had been hurt by the ordeal. I feel positive that I acted as an advocate for this other person and I also believe I gained some self-respect."

A developmental shift occurred for Risa when she realized that venting anger at work was "neither professional nor healthy." She intentionally chose to "refrain from discussing my supervisor at work" and used journal writing to

transform her anger. In her journal, Risa sees her anger for what it was; her own "darkest side" as well as energy she could use to advocate for a client.

At a deep level of being, Risa had confused the intense emotions emerging from childhood experiences with anger from current situations. In differentiating between the two, Risa had to first acknowledge her own "darkest side." Then choosing to use a number of strategies to process her own rage, Risa transforms it into energy to challenge a systemic injustice harming others.

Risa has discovered through reflection on her encounters that she wants to speak her mind with courage:

...assertiveness is a quality I admire in others and one which I would like to assume. I have fought with my old beliefs, the qualities however, which tell me that respect and obedience to superiors are the qualities I must always exhibit in order that I may feel like I am a 'good' person. The encounter which I described has helped me to realize that I can incorporate all of those qualities into my personality and still hold on to my self-respect.

Summary of Risa's development

Risa described her experience honestly and openly, she transformed her "darkest" side in her development. I believe that development is a leap into a new way of being and is accomplished with small successive shifts. These minute changes in perception mark significant turning points where transformation occurs. In the opening created by shifts in perception, new logical systems of thought are created, emotions are integrated into logic and valuable learning is accomplished. In her willingness to be vulnerable and honest, Risa finds that meaning is created out of the confusion.

Risa admits to being "highly self-critical." This habit enables her to confront her own limitations, failures and darkness, to resolve the task of leaving

her "sweet and obedient" self behind and integrating strength for assertion essential for a professional advocate. Accustomed to denying her own authentic voice and feelings as a child and young adult, Risa risks speaking her mind and gains a sense of "empowerment" and "self-respect".

Her self-perception of powerlessness is transformed from a compliant, respectful and sweet girl to an empowered professional woman able to advocate effectively for powerless adults and children. In this shift, Risa reduces the effect of social and family conditioning. Choosing courage rather than fear and anger, Risa moves beyond her own limitations.

In her encounters, Risa does not directly communicate empathy, however it is clear that Risa is becoming a more empathic person. In an intriguing paradox, as Risa stops worrying about how others feel she learns to care authentically for the feelings of others. In her last encounter, she avoids responding to the friendliness and "ramblings" of her supervisor in order to attend to her client's welfare.

Risa's developmental task is to know, manage and empower her emotions in professional relationships. It may have distracted Risa from this task to feel empathy for the supervisor. Risa reported that in the past she had worried and felt responsible for others' emotions and that she needed to focus on her own.

Healthy receptivity and resonance with the feelings and situation of another does not need to include worry and responsibility. However, Risa is not in a context where she is able to achieve receptivity and resonance of her supervisor's emotions without fear of her own power being neutralized. Perhaps the power differential between the two women is too wide to permit a

mutual connection from Risa's point of view. Perhaps developmentally, it is essential for Risa to find her own voice, speak her mind before she can listen without judgment to the voice of another who has power over her.

Schnarch (1991) speaks of the work that is essential to enter into intimate, empathic relationships as "self maintenance in the face of fears of betrayal and abandonment. The most important trusting relationship is the relationship one has with oneself" (p. 131).

Kathy

In her encounters, Kathy becomes aware of her efforts to control children through logic, fear and humiliation. Learning to listen carefully to students, Kathy becomes more thoughtful in her interactions. She feels "better equipped to handle challenges facing students" and feels she can "make a difference by using empathy."

Intentions

In Kathy's interactions, her intention to create order is visible and her intention to care is implicit. In her first encounter, Kathy is focused on the task of trying to "alphabetize names of students in my group and trying to figure out who each student had for homeroom." The class is engaged in a "quiet study period." When Kathy heard the "noise level" rise, she felt irritated, quieted the class and noted that "S had two spelling papers on his desk."

Although Kathy consciously intends to concentrate in order to finish her task, she has a latent intention to care for the feelings of the students in her class. This caring is evident when Kathy allows Carl to fully express his feelings

and when she ponders the "sour note" of the day. When Kathy imagines Carl's perspective, she resonates with his "powerlessness" and decides to change her behavior.

Although Kathy works hard at keeping control, her intentions are to be fair in disciplining children. She believes in "logical consequences for logical behavior," an abstract principle of justice.

In her reflection, Kathy becomes aware of the need to respond with connection and concern for relationships and to be more sensitive to children's feelings of powerlessness and their need for control. This shift is a significant moral development that integrates concern for feelings with abstract justice.

In her second encounter, Kathy is distracted when a child requests her attention. Kathy tells the child: "I'm very busy right now." When the child walks away, Kathy is moved by her distress: "My heart drops.... I've hurt her feelings." Kathy seems to have a conflict in her moral orientation between her slogan of fairness and her concern for children's feelings of powerlessness and rejection.

Intention with a peer

In her perspective taking on her third encounter, Kathy realizes that a colleague made a conscious choice to listen and support her. The colleague's choice gave Kathy a sense of being valued. It released her from isolation, tension and anger and helped her achieve a sense of acceptance and support.

Intention to motivate students

In her fourth encounter, Kathy calls out the names of students who must remain inside to complete assignments. Chris resists her directions, and Kathy

attempts to motivate him through humiliation and shame. Despite her knowledge that Chris had "a lot on his mind," she believes that the child understands how much she cares.

In an encounter with Daniel, Kathy is determined to have him do his assignment despite the fact that he is "new". "He had to do the assignment and I was going to see to it that he did." Although Kathy's intent is focused on the child's performance, she feels a need to keep control of the classroom and not allow students to "threaten my ability." In a shift of intention, Kathy has an inspiration; she asks Daniel about his dream when he "grows up." Daniel wants to play football. Thrilled, Kathy can now direct her energy toward Daniel's needs and interests. "My heart leapt for joy. I can connect the ear to a career in football."

Intention and care from students

Carl, the student accused of cheating, when went home to consider his teacher's perspective. Returning the next day with forgiveness and respect for his teacher, Carl offers reconciliation when he asks for another spelling paper.

The child's intention to care for his teacher is confirmed when Kathy writes: "Carl talked to me later, letting me know he understood the consequences and did feel it was reasonable after thinking about it." This caring has a profound impact on Kathy and alters her internalization of this event. The relationship between Kathy and Carl is enriched by mutual trust, meaning and understanding. In this encounter the child reached out to empathize with the teacher.

Receiving authentic empathy from a student, client or supervisee seems to be nurturing and highly beneficial to the professional. This seems to be a spontaneous attempt by the empathizer to care despite vulnerability. I am struck with the humility and courage that is necessary to empathize when one holds less power than another. Perhaps this is the kind of understanding that was advocated by Martin Luther King Jr. in the civil rights struggle for full equality and Gandhi in his search for freedom from oppressive powers.

Attention

Prior to the encounter with Sam and Carl, Kathy is distracted by her task of organization and irritated by the noise in the classroom. She is not attending to the students. Reacting to a quick glance, Kathy assumes students are cheating and punishes them both without checking out their story. Despite her lack of attention, Carl works out the dilemma. The next day he asked for "another spelling paper."

In her second encounter with the lonely niece who wants to play, Kathy does not attend to the child. In fact, she has to ask the child to repeat the question. When she takes time later in the day to attend to the child, she seems to focus on soothing her own guilty pain for hurting the child rather than on being fully present to the child. Kathy's emotions have been triggered through a display of distress on the part of the child. We often assume that a display of distress will stimulate empathy, but in this case it created a reaction of guilt, not empathy. Kathy did not like to think of herself as a person who would hurt a child. Her reaction was predominately about her own injured self-image, not the child's distress.

When her co-worker offers her a listening ear and takes time to observe her intense emotions, Kathy feels valued and significant. Feeling relaxed with having been heard and accepted, Kathy returns to her class.

While trying to motivate Chris to complete his reading assignment, Kathy observes that Chris is not working. Her attention takes the form of a growing outrage toward the child. Escalating her rage and blame, Kathy finally motivates Chris to work.

Kathy's attention to Daniel, the "new" student, shifts when she observes that her logic is not effective with the student, he is not doing his assignment. When Kathy attends to the unique interests of this child, she changes her motivation from logic to understanding. With this shift, Kathy experiences a sense of joy and enthusiasm and activates the class to participate.

Perspective taking

When Kathy takes the perspective of Carl, the student accused of cheating, she tries on a variety of thoughts that the child may have been holding. Ultimately, Kathy realizes that Carl did not understand the consequences of letting Sam read his paper and that he feels an injustice has been done to him. When Kathy sees her behavior from Carl's perspective it felt "dumb" to throw away work and redo it.

When Kathy imagines her interaction from the lonely child's point of view in the second encounter, she feels the boredom and loneliness of the child and the sense of alienation and rejection when her offer to play is refused. "Now what will I do? What am I supposed to do? I'll go sit on Dad's lap for a while."

Taking the perspective of the colleague gives Kathy the opportunity to imagine the thoughtful intentions of another. Imagining the sense of mutual caring and support extended by the colleague, Kathy is able to relax. Her "frustration has been validated" and "I am okay, my frustrations were justified."

When Kathy takes the perspective of Chris, she realizes he is overwhelmed and intensely dislikes the retention. She imagines the effect of her lecture on him: "Now she is talking at me, not even talking to me!" Contrary to the information gleaned in her perspective taking, Kathy imagines that Chris believes she showing him how much she cares by pressuring him to work.

Kathy's perspective taking with Daniel is qualitatively different than earlier encounters. Her perspective taking occurred within the context of the encounter, was brief and functioned like a gestalt. Things suddenly fell into place when Kathy asked Daniel about his dream. "As the encounter continued, I began to see the situation in a different light and my feelings began to change."

Taking the perspective of the child as she interacted with him, Kathy found that she felt "empathy" and realized "Daniel wasn't trying to upset me by not doing the assignment, the text was just too difficult for him to read himself." This perspective taking is a profound shift from a focus on self as subject to **student as subject**.

When I took Kathy's role, I imagined that she had a striking inspiration when she realized that she could motivate Daniel in a respectful, empathic way. This new perspective enabled Kathy to become self-confrontational in her reflections, to recognize her fear and her need to stay "on top" and dominate the classroom out of her own needs.

Reflection

In her first encounter, Kathy notes in her reflections that the cheating incident began in a "normal" way. However, there was a "sour note" that reverberated into an opportunity for reflection, self-confrontation and learning. Experiencing forgiveness from the child, Kathy moves from self-blame in her reflection to deeper knowledge and commitment to change.

When she reflects on the powerlessness that she felt when she took Carl's perspective, Kathy finds the encounter has given her a "better understanding of the powerlessness of children in the classroom, or world for that matter". Reflection on her encounter with the child who asks her to play, Kathy felt she should "validate the need for attention without making a person feel bad." Kathy considers that children are emotionally vulnerable to adults and need to be affirmed in their value and meaning. As she reflects, her sense of guilt emerges, believing she "should" validate the child. Kathy especially dislikes her own failure.

Motivated by a sense of obligation and duty, Kathy advises in her reflection: "Be sure to find something for the person to do, find a task they could do to help you ... tell them it would help and they will feel they've done something important. This feeling will make the child feel important and not make me feel like I've brushed a child off." The display of distress did trigger an empathy of a sort, but it seems to be dependent on feelings of guilt.

Reflecting on her supportive encounter with a co-worker, Kathy felt part of a compassionate community. For Kathy, it was important that others cared about "how things are going in my room, that we aren't alone at this school."

"I am lucky to have caring people around me, that I can be open with them and that I can return this compassion."

Reflecting on her encounter with Chris, the child kept in from recess, Kathy believes Chris is motivated by her logic, humiliation and punishment and that the problem is settled. "This seemed to get him going and I realize he does understand that they need to be done and why."

In her reflection on her encounter with Daniel, Kathy is thoughtful and mindful. Pleasurable feelings accompanied her work: "I felt good that I had made learning applicable to him ... and that was probably the first time I felt I had accomplished this goal." Discovering a way to motivate without control through power, shame, humiliation or punishment is liberating for Kathy. In this encounter, Kathy is able to make a significant shift in the midst of an interaction. This mid-stream transformation gives her a joyful glimpse of her potential as a teacher.

Deepening in reflection, Kathy finds that when "threats on my ability" are "kept in perspective" she believes she is a better teacher. Learning to talk, listen carefully to her students "even the words they speak silently through body language and acting out behavior" has become important to her growing effectiveness as a teacher.

Reflecting on her shift in interpretation of children's behavior, Kathy reveals: "I've learned that this 'acting out' is more a cry for help than an attempt to take control away from the teacher. The child just wants to feel control in the situation and if he can't control the assignment, he'll behave in a way that will draw attention away from the assignment."

In her reflection on the encounter process, Kathy reports a growing sensitivity to others: "I have learned to think more thoughtfully about the interactions I have with my students and peers." This has affected her sense of self. "I have learned that I am a valuable person with more to give than I previously thought."

Perhaps the most significant discovery for Kathy is the power of her words: "I can make a person feel either empowered or embarrassed by the very words that I use." Looking back on past encounters with students, Kathy realizes that she can "get so busy trying to stay 'on top' of my students that I haven't given them the opportunity to be heard."

Valuing her awareness as "powerful", Kathy takes time regularly to

give the students a chance to be heard. I am more willing now to stop and hear what a child is asking for in my encounters with them. I try not to jump to conclusions, but to see the situation from the child's point of view. This is not an easy task, but it has benefited my students and myself.

Moving to a more global perspective, Kathy observes "students need more from teachers today." In addition to "security, warmth and acceptance," Kathy believes "they need to feel they are worthwhile human beings and that they do have someone to talk to." Challenges to increase teacher's responsibilities are not popular, however, Kathy argues: "This is a lot for teachers to live up to, but I feel they will do it."

Referring to her development of the past six months, Kathy feels hopeful it will continue: "with the encounter process as a tool, I feel I am better equipped to meet the challenges facing today's students. I feel that I can make a difference by using empathy."

Kathy describes the boundaries of her empowerment: "I realize I cannot make a student's home life any better, but I can make a difference at school. This makes me feel good about my profession and myself. I can make a difference."

Kathy is able to "think more thoughtfully about the interactions I have with my students and peers" and has expanded her reflections to include her emotions. In this process, Kathy sorts out her feelings of threat, inadequacy and her need to come out "on top".

Through reflection, Kathy has come to acknowledge the power of her fear to limit her effectiveness. She has learned to monitor and "check" her emotions. Freed of her own fear, Kathy is able to listen deeply to the message of the child, understand the specific needs of the child, and design strategies that motivate and educate.

Kathy is inspired and empowered by her empathic connection to make a difference in the way she relates to children in her classroom and is no longer overwhelmed by the emotional needs of children. This knowledge increases esteem and sense of efficacy for her profession and herself. "I can make a difference."

In her reflection, Kathy reports that she is attempting to make changes in the normal routine. "I try to take time out now ... and give the students a chance to be heard. I have also made it a high priority to make learning more enjoyable."

Kathy acknowledges her difficulty with change in her teaching. "I realize change is hard, but I also know I am growing in the process. I am more willing

now to stop and hear what a child is asking for in my encounters with them. I try not to jump to conclusions, but to see the situation from the child's point of view."

In Kathy's encounters, empathy did not always occur at the time of the original interaction, but was often initiated and developed in the perspective taking and reflection. It then was communicated to the child and nourished the emerging interactive relationship between the teacher and child. In Kathy's work she paints a picture of a teacher and her students struggling for understanding, trying to see from the perspective of the other, while respecting their own reality. Both are willing to learn from a frustrating situation.

Kathy's issues of development

Coercion by fear, shame and disgrace is a fairly traditional method of motivation and may occur despite caring intentions. Kathy believes she communicates to the child that someone cares enough to trouble with them. However, I believe that this is doubtful.

Alice Miller (1990a) describes the source of violence in today's world as emerging from abuse of children by adults who believe their actions are "proper and necessary", "unavoidable since children are sometimes difficult" and that adults who care for them are "overtaxed". For Miller such views are "inhumane and dangerous" (p. 4-5).

Miller (1990a) asserts that: "There are many examples of how the repression of our suffering destroys our empathy for the suffering of others" (p. 13). Adults who have felt empathy for the abused child they had been, have more respect for the needs and feelings of others. In this encounter, Kathy discounts Chris's pain and confusion.

Kathy gives us a clue to understand her former difficulty. "I have learned that I am a valuable person with more to give than I previously thought." Without self-esteem, Kathy was not aware of her impact on children. She was surprised to find that she has power with her words: "I can make a person feel either empowered or embarrassed by the very words that I use."

In the midst of a frustrating situation with Daniel, the new student, Kathy shifts from her usual strategy of power and control and attempts a new approach by moving over to the inner world of the child. Asking Daniel about himself gives Kathy time in the midst of the action to imagine his perspective. Knowledge gleaned in that moment triggered an insight leading to a new way to motivate learners. For Kathy, this was a breakthrough moment:

I was feeling threatened by this new student and I wanted to be sure to come out on top of the situation. I didn't want to lose control of the classroom. As the encounter continued, I began to see the situation in a different light and my feelings began to change. Realizing that Daniel was having a hard time reading the vocabulary of the assignment, I felt empathy.

Shifting from a hierarchical model of control to a more mutual relationship allows Kathy an opportunity to listen, observe and attend to children. To do so Kathy is aware that she needs "to keep in check" her emotions of fear, threat and frustration.

Kathy's uncomfortable feelings seemed to dissolve when she attempts to see the lesson from the child's point of view. "It seems that the uncomfortable feelings, being threatened, tested and frustrated worked themselves out in this situation." Fear was replaced by joy, confidence, and a sense of professional

growth. Keeping threats in perspective allows Kathy to make learning relevant and develops students who are "proud of their work."

Sensitivity to her power to wound or empower a child brings Kathy into the awareness of moral responsibility, a significant moral development. "I think back on my interactions with students and often find I have not demonstrated positive actions." Discovery of oneself as a contributor to another's oppression is very uncomfortable. However, Kathy uses this self-confrontation to develop a more altruistic style of teaching.

Val

In her writings, Val demonstrates her work toward overcoming her own sense of inadequacy as a teacher. In the encounter process she recognizes an unconscious pattern of identifying children's mistakes as a reflection of her teaching ability. Challenging her unconscious belief system allows Val to teach from her own values and integrity. Val, like Kathy, is awakened to her own power and responsibility: "Suddenly, I'm hearing myself talk, and I'm seeing that everything I do makes an impression on these children."

Intention toward students

In her first encounter, Val is disturbed, hungry and feeling "stressed". She forces herself to be "cheerful" and eventually erupts. Val is working hard to maintain a positive intention for the children, but she is feeling overwhelmed by circumstances out of her control.

When a child accuses another of cheating, Val's emotions erupt and she loses control of her anger. She suffers for months with regret for her rage.

Eventually she is able to transform her suffering and rage into significant personal and professional development. It must have been very difficult to maintain the tension of low self-esteem created by her honesty and integrity. Eventually, Val is able to become self-empathic which frees her development.

In the second encounter, when invited to a family therapy session, Val is eager to assist. Despite her anxiety regarding a dangerous neighborhood and an unfamiliar lifestyle, Val is open to knowing the truth about this child's life. Angry because the child's needs are not addressed, Val commits herself to more patience with the child. He "drives her crazy" but she realizes that she "may be his last hope."

In the third encounter, Val is focused on running a film projector, when she hears sounds of "mumbling" that mean trouble. Val enters into a reflection-in-action when she takes time to "collect" herself. During this time out, Val realizes that anger is not useful here. Choosing an alternative strategy, Val intends to consciously try to save the child from embarrassment and not reinforce the child's bid for attention with his "stealing".

In her fourth encounter, Val is enthusiastic to have a "positive reflection to share." The child, the "one who has really caused me to reconsider why I ever chose this profession," has been tentatively diagnosed with a serious illness. Val's intent is to communicate care and concern for the child. She feels successful, "I really felt like I had reached him. Maybe for once he realized somebody does really care! And I do care so much, possibly too much at times."

Attention

In the encounter with the child caught cheating, Val is limited in her attentiveness due to her intense emotions. Reacting in a rage, Val is blinded to clearly seeing the child's point of view at the time of the encounter.

With the family therapy session, Val is keenly aware of the dangerous neighborhood and "the smell, smoke and filth." Her disgust moves to care and compassion when she sees the child she has come to help.

In the encounter with the child who has stolen candy, Val is initially distracted with her attention focused on the film projector. Alert to sounds of trouble, Val immediately pieces together what she believes happened from words mumbled in the classroom.

In her interactions with the child "who drives her crazy," Val is highly sensitive to the child's needs. She gently invites Chad to tell his story and notices that there is "genuine concern on his classmate's faces."

Perspective taking

Taking the perspective of the boy caught cheating, Val learns that the child is struggling with a dilemma. She imagines he has high expectations for always doing well on spelling tests but has forgotten to study. The child believes he "will be in trouble if I don't do well." Speculating on the child's anxiety as he searches for a solution, Val imagines he decides to use his pre-test for help and that "no one will ever know." The teacher is far away, he is safe from observation.

Continuing the perspective taking, Val imagines the boy's fear and embarrassment when he is caught, his "face is getting red. Everyone is staring at me. I wish I could disappear."

In the encounter with the family in therapy, Val imagines the child to be vaguely concerned about the meeting, and realizes that the father did not acknowledge his son. In her speculation into Chad's inner world, Val feels his panic and confusion. "Now all eyes are on me. They're waiting for some type of answer, but I don't even know what to say."

In the third encounter with the child who ate the candy, Val discovers through her imagination that the child associates getting in trouble with attention from her. When she takes time out to "collect" herself, Val imagines the child becomes concerned that he is "forgotten" and experiences relief when she comes to talk to him. Val learns that the child interprets her attention as a sign of caring and an opportunity for connection and attention.

In attempting to understand the young boy with an illness, Val speculates that the child initially believes his absence will not be noticed. She then imagines that the greeting she gave made him feel valued, welcomed and worthy of concern.

Through perspective taking, Val enters into the subjective experience of a child. She is able to discern subtle, invisible dynamics within the inner mind of the child. Her speculation involves the logic of the child as well as the child's emotional state. The knowledge that Val obtains through perspective taking enables her to flexibly adapt to the unique needs of individual students. In the four encounters with Chad, she grows in her ability to understand the child's

way of being in the world. "He drives her crazy," but Val is committed to his welfare.

Reflection

Reflecting on her rage when she punished Chad for cheating, Val reports that she confronted herself violently for the child's distress. Val's expectations are shattered, but feels it was a "valuable experience for me."

Re-establishing a sense of perspective, Val eventually re-integrated the encounter into a new formulation of her identity. "I possibly could have made it a learning experience for everyone instead of a humiliating one."

Reflecting on the family therapy session she attended in hopes of advocating for Chad, Val creates her belief she is the only one trying to understand Chad, and that her dedication to him "may be his only hope." Although she does not have the power to effect change in the family, Val now has a meaningful reason to tolerate difficult behavior; "I have a new-found patience for Chad I am determined not to give up."

Shifting into a reflection on her growth and development, Val finds her self-esteem enhanced by her evaluation of this encounter. "I'm growing in some ways. At least when it comes to dealing with Chad."

In her reflection paper, Val found that "writing about the encounters" from another person's point of view was "incredibly valuable" for her. Recalling her first encounter, Val describes her process of change:

I remember having to force myself to smile and be cheerful that afternoon. I had just finished a reading lesson that I was beginning to despise. I recall feeling tired and worn out, like I usually am on Friday afternoons. I sat at my desk while giving the

final spelling test instead of wandering around the room like I usually did.

Val has continued to reflect and glean meaning from this experience. Her guilt seems to be constructive in helping transform her experience. She is now confident that if "the same situation arose again, I would handle it much differently."

Learning to hold children accountable for their own behavior rather than carrying responsibility for them has given Val a new sense of freedom and self-esteem: "I feel I am able to place responsibility on the children now for their actions. Therefore, I feel much better about myself, and I believe the children feel better about themselves."

Val's issues of development

Val's sense of stress, loss of enjoyment and self-coercion seem to come from her inability to control many factors in her environment. Her self-perception in the first encounter is one of "learned helplessness," a perspective which is "generally one that characterizes the way women have learned to view themselves in the world" (Williams, 1987, p. 184). According to Williams, the average woman in our culture experiences helplessness in ways very similar to that of a male war veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. It is important to recognize that the consequence of being born female in North American is a disability equal to the effects of post traumatic stress disorder.

When Val is at the family therapy session, I imagine a moment where hopelessness, powerlessness, insight, empowerment and purpose inter-mingle and create a meaningful commitment to Chad. Moments of a gestalt meaning-

making occur, where empathic knowledge is integrated with knowledge from many other sources.

These moments of transformation happen when the strongest, most altruistic forces of the personality are brought into an intention for the well being of the educator and her client. In the commitment to Chad's well being, I see Val's strength and belief that she could make a difference. She is not helpless or powerless any longer.

In the encounters, Val learns to allow time to reflect and think of an appropriate response. She becomes more self-empathic as she is less dependent on her student's behavior for her own sense of value and worth. Paying attention to her feelings, Val is able to consider their source and plan effective strategies for expression. This growth is visible to Val as she describes it in writing and is useful to further develop her sense of professional efficacy and competency.

Reflection has allowed Val an opportunity to monitor her emotions and growth. "Each time I begin the encounter process, I hope to take a closer look at my behaviors and to see my behaviors from another perspective." . "After participating in each reflection, I consistently discovered things about myself that I would not have known if I had not reflected upon them."

Awakened, Val finds herself aware in new ways: "Suddenly I'm hearing myself talk, and I'm seeing that everything I do makes an impression upon these children." In Val's journey there have been many obstacles to empathic connection with learners, however, her own inner beliefs in honesty and integrity facilitated her development and growth.

Researcher's Reflections - Summary

An analysis of the findings of the study has revealed that each participant experienced empathy in interactions in a unique way. Each faced distinct challenges in the development of empathy, however beneath the differences, common patterns of growth emerged as a result of the encounters.

An awareness of these patterns enables me to create a description of empathy which articulates the essential dynamic elements. The participants' experience of the development of empathy can be synthesized in a discussion which specifies the obstacles and contributions.

A Description of Empathy

A goal of this study was to provide a description of the process and development of empathy that may be useful to educators. This description emerges primarily from insights gleaned through an analysis and reflection on the work of participants in the research. It also draws on historical and recent literature on the epistemological and therapeutic dimensions of empathy as well as my own personal insights.

Empathy can be described as the ability of an individual to understand the essence of another person in terms of the other's unique personhood. Although believed to be an innate capacity, the ability to empathize may become distorted as a person interacts with other human beings.

This ability can be expanded and refined through a conscious intention to understand and care for another, as they are, separate from one's own unconscious emotions, beliefs and judgments. Empathy requires a choice for

the welfare of another and willingness to make conscious personal bias, projections, identifications and prejudice.

Empathy requires a mindful attentiveness to the full presence of another. It requires a choice to be fully present to another for a specific period of time in order to acquire insight regarding the nature and spirit of another.

Empathy requires a bracketing of one's own emotions. In order to identify and bracket our own unconscious emotions, judgments and bias from the experience of another, it is necessary to extend empathy to oneself. Emotions that have been disassociated must be brought back into awareness if we are to separate them from the emotional world of another. This remembering can be done in a spirit of loving self-confrontation, self-forgiveness and acceptance. If an individual is able to extend non-judgmental self-empathy to the more vulnerable aspects of the self, the courage to process emotional wounds emerges. At the deepest level, we each are striving for wholeness of the self. Once unconscious emotions are brought into awareness, inappropriate judgments, bias and prejudice can shift.

In order to intuit the essence of another, we need to transcend our own sensory perceptual limitations and extend the creative imagination into a consideration of the reality of another. Through perspective taking, an individual may simultaneously experience the thoughts and emotions of another. Moments of shared meaning that emerge in the simultaneous knowing of another are created through careful reflection on the cues and clues gained in perspective taking. Moving back and forth from the creative imagination to the lived experience of another, empathic understanding is forged.

This process of "cross-checking" can extend through the life of a relationship as one grows in deeper intimacy and knowledge of another. It is an illusion to believe that we can ever fully grasp the essence of another. We can only move, one moment at a time, into an gradual understanding of another person.

Verification of the reality of another's life and one's imagined assumptions may occur through dialogue and other non-verbal forms of communication. In this interaction, the one who chooses to empathize verifies assumptions, revises speculations and demonstrates a commitment to understanding the other in the context of the other person's unique life experience.

Authentic empathy has the characteristic of increasing self-empathy, self-efficacy and self-esteem in both individuals in an interpersonal encounter. Healthy empathy releases one's view from the grip of egocentricism and critical judgment while opening an individual's consciousness to fluid, broader perspectives. Moving from a position of self-focus and critical judgment, a person involved in an authentically empathic relationship is able to expand limited mental constructions to global concerns and create alternative ways of acting. The following section further illustrates the essential elements of empathy contained in this description. Because this study is phenomenological, a number of these elements of empathy were not considered prior to the analysis of participants' stories. In presentation of these findings, I include the insights, and research certain writers to help articulate the significance of the findings.

As a result of this research, empathy in pedagogical relationships is defined as an on-going interdynamic process of development with the following characteristics.

Essential Components of Empathy

Intention

Opportunities for empathy abound in everyday life, each with unique situational and contextual dimensions. We may show profound compassion and love for one individual at a particular time while demonstrating prejudice, hostility or indifference toward another. We often make value decisions about who is worthy of our empathy, who deserves our compassion. Whether conscious of intention or not, we choose our empathic involvement.

As a psychotherapist, I have found that a clear, specific intention toward the client opens me to perceive and to integrate thoughts and emotions in an interpersonal encounter. For over twenty years, since I first read the work of Victor Frankl (1963) I have pondered my freedom to choose my attitude toward others in any given set of circumstances.

Frankl (1963) raises the question of human liberty and choice of intention when faced with strong forces that threaten us to conform to certain set patterns of reaction. Responding to the question of intention out of his experience in a concentration camp, Frankl illustrates the independence of intention that can be preserved in conditions of intense distress:

And there were always choices to make. Every day, every hour, offered the opportunity to make a decision which determined whether you would or would not submit to those powers which threatened to rob you of your very self, your inner freedom; which determined whether or not you would become the plaything of

circumstance, renouncing freedom and dignity to become molded into the form of the typical inmate. (p. 104)

In taking an intentional attitude toward life and one's responsibilities to others, Frankl found that inmates discovered courage, creativity, meaning, despite "practically hopeless situations" (p. 133).

In my work with teachers I have found that stories of young people enmeshed in poverty, violence, suffering and pain threaten to overwhelm educators today and rob them of meaningful responses to abject conditions. Making conscious the unconscious intentions of professional commitment allows educators to find meaning and creativity in responding to individual students.

von Hildebrand (1960) states that before actually encountering another we have an intention, a "non-revealed attitude" that we often do not choose to manifest to the other (p. 120) "but the attitude itself breaks forth and actually reaches the other person" (p. 123). Human beings contact each other through expression of revealed attitudes that may reach the other despite our attempts to mask and withhold.

Describing intention, von Hildebrand (1960) explains that when we attempt to suppress this inner attitude we become conscious of it as a specific structure of an interpersonal situation. Hatred creates hostility and alienation and love creates returned love. "Love is essentially a positive response to the objective and intrinsic value of another's being" (p. 132).

An intentional attitude of caring, love or compassion seems to be essential if professionals are to utilize empathy for the needs of the client rather than meeting their own needs. When empathy is used to gather information

about the inner life of another for the benefit of the professional, serious moral and ethical questions emerge.

The professional educator's relationship with clients or students is built on the educator's expert authority and obligation to serve, and requires that the educator monitor self-interests in the context of the relationship (Peterson, 1992, p. 30). In order to fulfill the professional obligation to use power to make the clients make a positive difference in their lives, professionals must be just and trustworthy.

The choice and intention to empathize has serious moral implications. Advocating care and compassion as predominant moral principles, Gilligan and Wiggins (1988) believe that a justice framework of moral obligation and duty must be integrated into a moral perspective, balancing both the principles of equality and attachment.

The morality of compassion and altruism emerge in the form of "co-feeling" for Gilligan and Wiggins (1988). Co-feeling, very similar to shared meaning, develops through relationships where one participates in another's feeling in their terms with an attitude of engagement rather than observation or judgment. Co-feeling does not mean an identity of feelings or an ability to distinguish between the self and others, but implies one is able to know and live in close connection with the feelings of others. Gilligan and Wiggins chose the term co-feeling to avoid the connotation that projection has with empathy and to stress the mutuality of connection.

Subject-other distinctions form a major "blind spot" in theories of moral development, according to Gilligan and Wiggins (1988). These distinctions are believed to lead to a danger of detachment and objectification where one is

able to treat others as objects and feel no connection with them. Gilligan and Wiggins argue that empathy and concern about feelings is now viewed as the essence of morality. They support moral inquiry which deals with "inclusion and exclusion - how to live in connection with oneself and with others, how to avoid detachment or resist the temptation to turn away from need" (p. 123). Without co-feeling one lives in an "egocentric ignorance, dangerously prone to rationalization" (p. 124).

Students and clients give themselves to professionals out of neediness, they attach in order to bond and trust (Peterson, 1992). In an empathic encounter, the student or client is emotionally and spiritually vulnerable to the power of the professional and the conscious development of empathic abilities becomes a moral imperative.

Authentic empathy can emerge when there are clear intentions to attend to the inner reality of another for the express purpose of contributing to full development of that person. In order to be clear about our intention, we must find "out how much is 'I' and how much is 'not I' and separating the two" (Singer (1990, p. 185). As Frankl (1963) learned in the austere conditions of the concentration camp, every day there are dozens of choices to be made, choices to take time for selected others, choices to prepare to listen to others and choices to give attention to another.

Attention

An observer's mindful attention is needed to perceive the cues another person is expressing if we wish to develop empathy. In a number of studies, Langer (1989) was able to confirm her hypothesis that: "The way we first take in

information (that is, mindfully or mindlessly) determines how we will use it later" (p. 25). When we choose to be mindfully attentive to another we are sensually and mentally present: listening, observing, sensing; intuiting, total self, body, mind, emotions and spirit. When we are mindfully attentive our heart and mind are fully available to the other.

Only in the quietness of an attentive presence we can imagine the inner schema of another's mind and resonate with the emotions in the other's terms. Attention is grounded in our sensory skills of perception, however, to perceive another with empathy, one must look beyond the facade of the ordinary to the uniqueness of another. As Moore (1992) teaches, we need to search for the divinity in another.

In order to expand the ability to perceive the divinity of another we need a softer gaze, heart and mind not easily distracted by the false images of the self another may project. We need to see beyond the masks and harder edges of personality that developed as a protective shield to inner aspects of a healthy self.

Whistler (1992) reports on an extensive research project, where enhancing the perception of the inner world of another involves a shift in the mind as well as attunement to the senses. Teachers working with at risk youth were taught to perceive the strength in students rather than an on-going focus on the problems the children faced. They learned to see within at risk students, strengths of common sense, inner wisdom, and natural mental health. When educators learned to perceive students in this way they were:

genuinely enthused about discovering that the at risk students are fundamentally and inherently mentally healthy. They (teachers) are able to gain a new and more positive view of their students' situations and, in turn, have generally responded with more understanding in the classroom. (p. 27)

When educators in this research were able to see a child's healthy intentionality embedded in deviant behavior and understand the child's "cry for help", they were considerably more attentive to the child's cues and needs.

In this research, it was found that mindful attention can be retrospective in nature. Through a process of guided imagery, participants were able to recall interpersonal encounters and reflect and remember what was seen, felt, and heard at the time in order to construct an approximation of the other's inner sensory world. This construction enabled them to reinterpret the meaning behind the individual's words, behavior and actions.

Self-Empathy

When limitations and "inabilities" have been internalized into a child's sense of self there is a loss of empathy for the self. Without an on-going, dynamic and core process of self-empathy, it is doubtful that empathy for others can be sustained. Conversely, without authentic empathy for others, it is difficult to maintain self-empathy.

With healthy self-empathy, an individual creates time for one's own needs, desires and values, time to process intense emotions and time to come to forgiveness of the self for being human. With healthy self-empathy, one is able to acknowledge and manage anger, sorrow, joy, fear and treat one's self

with compassion. With a foundation of self-empathy, a person moves beyond failure and guilt and is free to care for the needs of others.

With self-empathy one has the ability to feel and acknowledge emotions; to confront oneself, and tolerate intense emotions so that meaning and learning can emerge. Self-empathy is essential for high emotional differentiation. Differentiation requires core stability of emotions that are not dependent on approval by others. Emotional core stability with high levels of differentiation and maturity seems to be the critical variable in a consistent empathic response as a professional caregiver.

Developing sensitivity, knowledge, and labels to describe one's inner sensings and feelings allows an empathizer to sort through varied explanations and arrive at an understanding of the source of emotions. This understanding, self-empathy, is devoid of blame, judgment and guilt, but serves to engage the caregiver in a more meaningful professional commitment.

Each of the four participants in this research learned to value opportunities to confront themselves and grow in self empathy. They each expressed a higher level of competency, self respect and self esteem. Healthy self-empathy combines self-esteem, self-respect, self-confrontation, self-forgiveness and self-care. It is the opposite of selfishness. With a selfish attitude one is continually concerned with the hope that others will fill unmet basic needs. The selfish person is often alienated, isolated and fearful of the demands others may make upon them. With self-empathy, one can live in community with others, with the freedom to love and understand another in an authentic altruistic manner. Out of a core process of self-empathy one is able to set aside one's

own emotions, needs and interests and intentionally encounter another person as a unique and separate human being.

Perspective-Taking

In my quest of empathy, I have come to understand "perspective-taking" as imaginal strategy to approximate knowledge and insight into another's perspective. From a neurophysiological point of view there is to be a natural integration of emotions and thoughts in one's perspective (Dissanayake, 1992). One's perspective is composed of representations or cognitions which indicate a strength in the pattern of neural network while emotions create meaning out of these cognitions (Dissanayake, 1992).

In the work of the four participants, perspective taking in the encounter process became a tool for emotional awareness. Emotional identification, projections and reality were made conscious to the participants. This conscious awareness allowed the educator to discern the inner world of another as distinct from her own. It enabled the educator to acknowledge her own emotions, and thus to take responsibility for soothing, calming and integrating affective experience.

To take another's perspective, it is necessary to creatively imagine the structures of the other's inner mind while resonating with the other's emotions. In reflection, there is a systematic interweaving of cognitions and emotions into a tapestry of empathic connection. Thoughts and feelings cannot be separated. Emotions trigger reasoning, and thoughts stimulate feelings. With perspective taking we can glimpse the purpose, meaning and passion of another.

When they were able to assume the role of the other through perspective taking, the participants accessed simultaneously the representations and the emotions of the client. Perspective taking developed an ability to stretch one's mind out into the realm of possibility and fantasy. Through practice in taking the perspective of another, fluid ways of seeing the world emerged for participants. Perspective taking developed the ability to maintain a flexible mental perspective, a "multiple lens" reality and allowed the participant to try on various perspectives. This epistemology has been labeled "connected knowing" by Belenky and her associates (1986).

How the mind knows is of significant interest to constructivists and connected knowers. "Connected knowers develop procedures for gaining access to other people's knowledge. At the heart of these procedures is the capacity for empathy" (Belenky, et al., 1986, p. 113). Connected knowing produces a kind of truth valued by women, one that is "personal, particular and grounded in firsthand experience" (Belenky, et al., 1986, p. 113).

Lazear (1990) advocates perspective taking as a way to awaken interpersonal intelligence. Lazear suggests: 1) staying focused on what another is expressing; 2) cutting off the internal "mind chatter", 3) guessing what someone else is thinking or feeling based on cues; and 4) checking the accuracy of that guess with the person. Lazear believes that interpersonal intelligence is the foundation for effective interpersonal relationships.

Education is a process of integrating cognitive and affective dimensions of learning experiences. The affective elements of an experience are the source of motivation and provide strength to recall. Unless an educator consciously leads students in processes to integrate experience into

knowledge, young people are left to their own attempts. Perspective taking occurs when a child learns to understand the cognitive and affective experience of another. Marguiles (1989) argues that through perspective taking we are confronted with world views and perspectives of others that may not fit our previous schema. In assimilating another's point of view and accommodating their perspective in our own world view, empathy becomes the catalyst for growth and change. In order to become a connected teacher, it is first necessary for educators to actualize their capacity for learning through empathy.

Recognizing the multi-faceted nature of empathy, I found theoretical dissonance with theories that emphasize the cognitive aspects of empathy and neglect the emotions, as well as theories that emphasize emotional arousal and neglect the cognitive dimension. Healthy empathy in this research seems to be the integration of both cognitive and affective components in one activity of perspective taking. As Kalton (1994) pointed out in conversation, empathy, or *shu*, is an "integrity of the heart and mind connected in loyalty and consideration."

Perspective taking may be active or passive. An active style of empathy involves the use of the creative imagination to speculate on the possible reality of another, while receptive empathy is more passive and hospitable to the reality of another.

Noddings (1984) speaks of a kind of empathy that is receptive rather than penetrating and invasive to the interiority of another. For Noddings (1984), receptive empathy involves welcoming another's full presence into the clear space of one's own interiority. To be receptively empathic, one must continually

prepare to receive others into their inner space. Noddings (1984) chooses to "receive the other into myself and I see and feel with the other" (p. 31-32) This receptivity requires sensitivity and can result in a mutual "motivational shift" (p. 33).

To nurture one's own personality as a "safe haven" for wounded others brings up fears. Egan (1990) warns prospective helpers there is a price to empathy that is depleting and costly. Calming the fear of losing the self in empathic relationships, Jordan (1991) offers a different perspective from a relational model of development: "Empathy is mutually nourishing, a life-giving exchange, one is affecting the other and being affected by the other, one extends oneself out to the other and also receptive to the impact of the other" (p. 82).

Reflection

Perspective taking stimulates a wealth of information and knowledge about another's frame of reference that must be reflectively integrated into meaning if it is to be useful. In perspective taking, a person tries to share in some way the experience that has led the person to form the ideas or perspective they have.

Through reflection a person opens and receives the experience of another expanding personal knowledge (Belenky et al, 1986). The reflective process in this research resulted in what I call "retrospective empathy." Through guided imagery and reflection on lived reality, emotions were acknowledged, associations with similar experiences were made and connections and patterns were discerned. Through reflection, participants shifted perspectives in a

gradual, intuitive way. These small but significant shifts emerged in reformations of mental constructions as well as decisions to alter old patterns. Choices were made in reflection that allowed the practitioner to live out meaningful intentions, clarify identification in relationships and take accountability for interactions with others.

In reflection, self-confrontation was less threatening and allowed the participant to forgive oneself while understanding the obstacles others experienced. Reflection opened the practitioner to more optimistic and hopeful perspectives while developing the embedded meaning in an encounter. Finally, reflection allowed participants to acknowledge the power they had to hurt and cause suffering for another. This knowledge empowered the practitioner to develop caring practices.

Reflection on one's consciousness through the encounter process became the vehicle for participants to articulate the personal inner world and to distinguish it from the inner world of another. Distinguishing between our own consciousness and the consciousness of another is the foundation for understanding and responsible care of the self and others. As Singer (1990) states: "To truly and truly experience one's life and one's concerns in a present tense, here and now, active voice, first person way is to bring about an evolution in those concerns" (p. 121).

Reflection offers a retrospective opportunity for the cognitive and affective components of empathy to be integrated. Goldstein and Michaels (1985) believe that emotional reverberation with the feelings of others experienced concurrently with cognitive perspective-taking can deepen and enrich our ability to caringly understand one another.

Reflection allowed for a continuation of the active, imaginal speculation that participants began in perspective taking. Marguiles (1989) describes empathy as a kind of knowledge of another that involves entering through the imagination the inner life of another and becoming familiar in the "inscape" or interior landscape of another. Reflection on one's imaginative speculation of another is an on-going process of human relationship that usually occurs in an unconscious, invisible conversation with the self. Through a written record, the unconscious attempt to imagine another's reality is made visible for an integration of unresolved personal emotional issues as well as revealing clues that assist in further understanding. Through the active imagination which integrates the emotions and cognitions, the empathizer reflectively creates, reworks and continually clarifies a dimensional inner map of another's consciousness.

Taking time after an interpersonal encounter to imagine, reflect and remember what was seen, felt, and heard is "retrospective investigation" (Marguiles, 1989) and allows perception to play a more active role. Inner sensory perceptions help to maintain coherence in the inner world because they are the internal organizers of human experiences (Marguiles, 1989).

When participants continued to practice the habits that were stimulated in the encounter process they showed significant developmental growth. When ordinary interactions form the content of an on-going reflective process, individuals demonstrate higher levels of competency in managing their own inner life as well as understanding others. Steenbarger (1991) claims that development is a process of reflecting on complex interactions between individuals and their world. Human life in the interactional model is seen as

chaotic, unpredictable and both cognitive and affective elements of empathy are essential to understand how the perceiver is constructing reality in the contextual developmental view.

Through reflection participants entered into a process of emotional and cognitive integration and each reached higher levels of emotional differentiation and cognitive understanding. Reflection has been recognized as a valuable tool for educators exploring their practice in times of chaos and change (Caning, 1991; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991), however, many models of reflection neglect to integrate the affective dimension of an experience.

Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) offer a model of reflection that enables individuals to construct meaning and knowledge out of interactions that carry uncomfortable and pleasurable emotions. This model was adapted for use in this research by both participants and researcher, the Reflection Process (Appendix B) and used to summarize and integrate the Encounter Process (Appendix A).

Reflective writing is a potentially powerful tool for the development of empathy in educators and other professionals. Teachers have been found to learn by reflecting in journal writing for professional purposes (Caning, 1991), access prior professional knowledge, expand a sense of self and develop creative alternatives and actions to changing realities (Schon, 1983;1987). Journal writing in this research allowed the educator to thoughtfully consider events of the day from a variety of perspectives and develop patterns of mindful response rather than mindless reaction.

In a naturalistic research study on reflective journals (Surbeck, Han & Moyer, 1991), participants were found to organize entries using a reaction-

elaboration-contemplation sequence. When this sequence was complete, a greater integration of information was detected and the progression of thinking flowed from personal feelings to higher social and ethical perspectives. In this current study, the pattern of reaction, elaboration and contemplation was visible in the reflection process. It is a pattern that facilitates the movement from mindless reaction to mindful response.

Participants in the current research initially reacted emotionally to the stimulus of an interaction with another. Through the use of the Reflection Process (Appendix B), participants learned to elaborate on their emotional reaction and discern the meaning of the experience for themselves and the other person. In the final phases of the Reflection Process, participants began to contemplate the global meaning of the knowledge they had gained. Several began to consider the transformative role of educators in a world where children are often powerless.

Maintaining the Space - The Work of the Totemic Witness

In any relationship or social system, issues of trust and safety often determine the degree of learning and healing that may occur. In social systems marked by deep trust, the "darkest side" of another is witnessed in a non-judgmental caring way, opening the dismembered part to a healing and transformative shift. When we feel a deep sense of acceptance, compassion and trust from another, we begin to open our minds and hearts.

The "totemic witness" is a caring educator who maintains the physical, emotional and spiritual boundaries for the space of learning and healing. The totemic witness is responsible for the creation of a physical space that is as free

from interference as possible. It is the role of the totemic witness to ensure that emotional identification and contagion are mitigated and that negative and destructive elements threatening learners are managed.

The totemic witness empowers another to voice deep thoughts and perceptions, to achieve honesty with the self, and to heal the wounds of betrayal and abandonment. Just as a totem holds the mythical stories of a people and culture, a totemic witness is grounded in the lived story of universal human life.

Maintaining therapeutic space for the participants in this research required the clarification of intentions and emotional boundaries and the development of a trusting, non-judgmental and caring relationship. The totemic witness cares for the boundaries of this relationship so that the inner space can be a crucible, a place where personal vulnerability and interpersonal connection is held sacred and transformed into strength. The relationship becomes a vehicle for healing and learning and the boundaries are respected through confidentiality and consciousness.

Each of the four participants in this research were able to create a therapeutic space for themselves in order to heal emotional wounds of the past. With this accomplishment, the boundaries with others were clarified. As the participants learned to discern unconscious emotional identification, projection and assumptions, they were able to create educational environments where clients were protected, nurtured and supported. In places of safe haven, empathy can flourish. When a professional learns about the particular difficulty and distress of a client, they are far more equipped to advocate effectively. The participants considered advocacy for their clients part of their professional role.

The work of advocacy, speaking a courageous voice for the powerless and disenfranchised, is the work of the totemic witness.

Communication

In each interaction, participants described communication that occurred verbally and non-verbally with others and within their own self-talk. Each aspect of this communication has a significant part to play in the development of empathy, but may be largely an unconscious reaction.

Expressed dialogue with another is the life-blood of healthy, mutual relationships. Information is requested and given, interpretations are clarified, the voice of each is empowered. The ability to dialogue with another emerges from one's own inner dialogue with the self.

The language of the body reveals the intention of the caregiver. When educators were distracted by paperwork or other concerns, children received the message that the teacher was not present. The tone of voice and posture of the educator revealed messages that negated the validity of the intended verbal message.

When participants had communicated with themselves regarding intentions, their own unconscious emotions, and reflected on their imagination of another, they could then speak authentically to the other person. When they were able to develop the ability to be accountable for their own inner voice, participants could speak in ways that respected the other person and developed trust and safety in the relationship.

Communication of empathy is not a skill that is easily learned. It is a significant developmental achievement. If the emotional maturity and internal

ability to empathize is present, it may be useful to learn skills and approaches to effectively express empathy. However, unless the approach is grounded in awareness and understanding, it will be inauthentic and eventually lower the level of trust in a relationship.

In this research, I observed educators unconsciously expressing their intentions in non-verbal ways which were not helpful in building trusting relationships. When educators are able to develop clarity regarding their professional intentions, this inner attitude is communicated spontaneously. Educator's intentions of care and respect emerge in many non-verbal ways, including the design of learning strategies to meet the unique needs of a student, the development of an invitational style to learning that respects the choices, perspectives and motivations of a student and the creation of an emotionally safe classroom environment.

Shared Meaning

When the essential elements of empathy are brought to a relationship, boundaries of the self may be dissolved and individuals may come together in a common meaning. Hahn (1987) calls this connection "interbeing" or "*tiép hien*" (p. 3). *Tiep hien*, a concept similar to shu, means to be in touch with the unity of the world and mind in the present moment. To live with interbeing, Hahn instructs that we must avoid attachments to our narrow views and be open to "receive others' viewpoints" through an observation of the self.

As participants learned to identify their own limited perspectives of themselves and others they found that barriers created by prior beliefs often dissolved. They released mental constructions regarding what was "right" and

became more open to the possibility of multiple perspectives. The shifting perspectives brought a greater awareness of their own abilities and gifts as well as a deeper appreciation for the unique personhood of other individuals. In the space of awareness and appreciation, participants entered into the heart of empathy, a moment of shared meaning that bonded two individuals into a common sense of humanity.

In this research, participants experienced moments when an individual transcended the sense of aloneness and made a significant connection with another. As Risa said: "My heart leaps for joy." This is the reward for our efforts to achieve empathy. It is the core of human understanding. It is the center of "einfühlung". As Confucius taught, it is shu, the thread that runs through the Way. It is life. It the profound mystery at the core of life. It is sacred.

Through this active, inner connection, the empathizer reaches out to the alienated individual, bringing them into a junction of another's perception of their life. It is a critical crossroads of human interaction, this meeting of two views, two perspectives, where the empathizer offers a contrasting perspective to another. This contrasting perspective offers the other a discontinuity in a habitual pattern of perception and interpretation that challenges fixed mindsets and previous self-interpretation.

This shared meaning also emerged in the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Heshusius (1994) speaks about a "participatory mode of consciousness," a space between the subjective and objective where the researcher and the researched meet and share in a "kinship" (p. 16). Referring to a "mode of consciousness," a way of being in the world, participatory consciousness is a way of knowing that is concern with a full

perception of the other without preoccupation with the self. This way of coming to know "is not a subjectivity that one can explicitly account for, but is of a direct participatory nature one cannot account for" (p. 17). The participatory mode of consciousness emerges from the capacity to "temporarily let go of all preoccupation with self and move into a state of complete attention" (p. 17).

The phenomenological methodology designed for this research allowed me to carefully observe my own limited mental constructions and receive the written work of the participants with less prejudice, bias and unconscious identification. I cannot claim to be free from narrow views. I do not know what I do not know. However, this methodology did provide significant impetus and structure for exploring realms of the unknown within myself. As I cleared my perceptual field through the research methodology, I found myself becoming more open and non-critical. Through observing my own process, I was able to more accurately discern my own issues distinct from those of participants and feel a deep sense of connection and common purpose. Through disattachment to many beliefs, I was able to appreciate and discern deeper meaning in this research process and develop my research abilities.

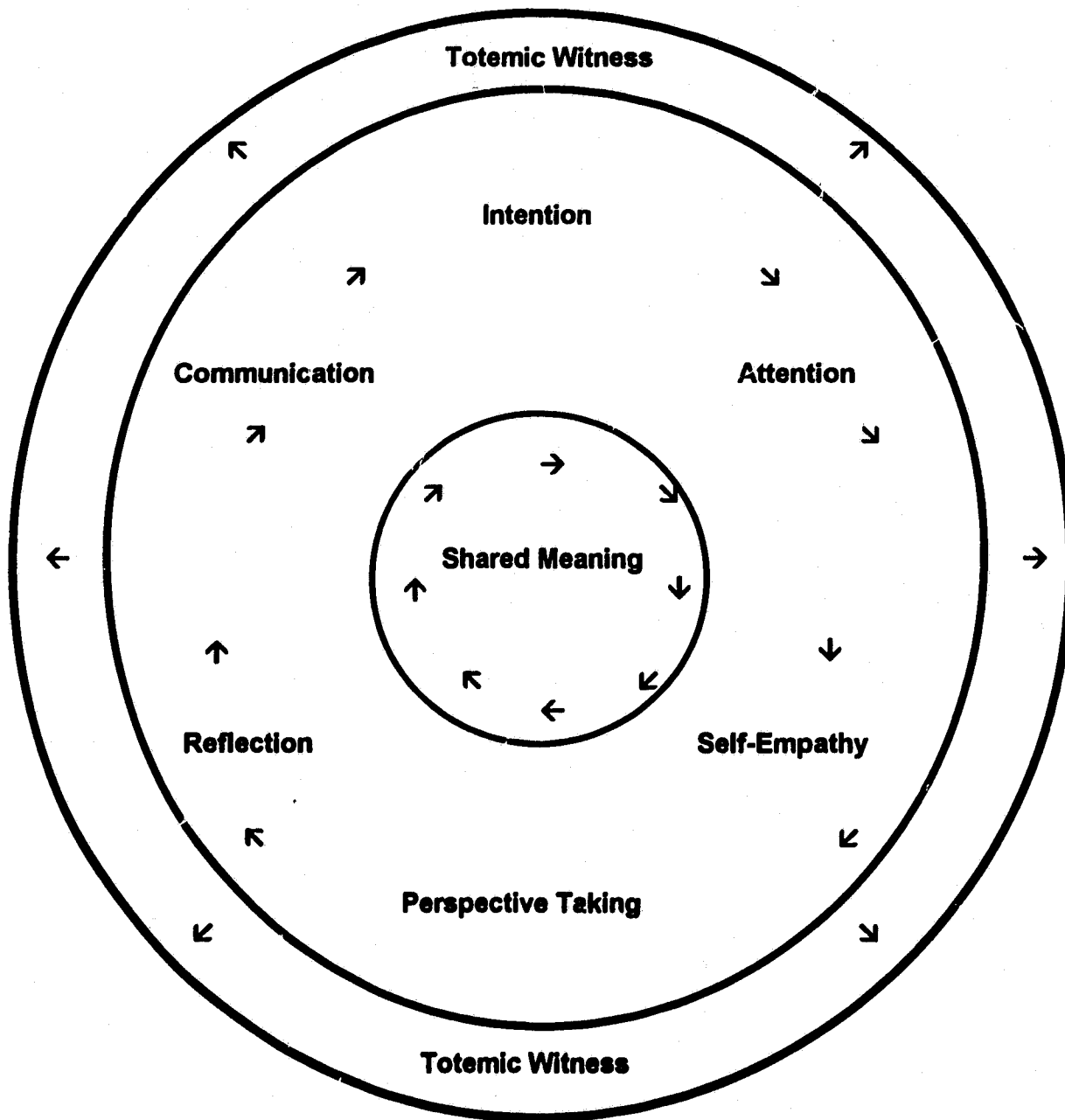
The following table summarizes the essential elements of the process and development of empathy observed:

Table 1

The Process and Development of Empathy
Essential Elements

intention.....	a clear choice to care for the well being of another
attention.....	mindfully present: body, thoughts and emotion
self-empathy	a conscious intention to confront, understand and forgive the self
perspective taking.....	a guided imagery into the reality of another where the cognitive and affective elements are simultaneous
reflection.....	an integration of the thoughts and emotions stimulated by an event where meaning emerges
communication.....	a verbal or non-verbal message that reveals the intention to understand and the quality of that understanding
shared meaning.....	a bond that connects individuals in a common human understanding
totemic witness.....	that aspect which maintains the boundaries of a relationship so that healing and learning may occur in safety

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS



Development of Empathy

This inquiry is a phenomenological exploration into the process and development of empathy as it emerges from the interpersonal interactions and reflections of educators. The phenomenological perspective chosen for this research reveals subtle as well as significant changes in participant's patterns of thought, feeling and behaviour as each comes into fuller self-awareness of an interaction, imagines the perspective of the other and reflects on that experience. The findings of this research are expressed as an empathic process as it emerges in an interaction and stimulates the development of an individual. In this section I expand on the findings regarding the development of empathy and its relationship to the development of the human person.

The process of empathy is defined as: taking the perspective of another in terms of the other's experience in order to gain understanding to benefit the other. When specific internal and external activities were fully present in an interaction, an optimal experience of empathy developed. In interactions where these activities were absent or diminished, empathy was non-existent or less fully developed. These activities included intentionality, attention, self-empathy, imagining the cognitive and affective perspective of the other, reflection, communication, maintaining boundaries and sharing a common meaning.

When working from a phenomenological perspective, the researcher is challenged to suspend and bracket personal assumptions and scientific knowledge regarding a specific phenomena in order to "come to grips with the significance of the phenomenological questions" (van Manen, 1990, p. 46). In doing so, the researcher reveals fundamental beliefs regarding human nature.

Deeply embedded in all theories of human development is the theorist's core belief in human nature (Stevens-Long & Commons, 1992; Miller, 1989).

Developmentalists attempt to answer questions regarding human behavior such as: How much do biological events determine how an individual behaves? What is the role of external, environmental forces on human choice? How does an individual's intention and freedom to choose one's own attitude affect behaviour? Does human growth and change happen in small successive steps or with a leap into another way of being?

According to both Miller (1989) and Stevens-Long and Commons (1992) beliefs about core life questions influence all theorizing about growth and development. Stevens-Long and Commons point out that developmental researchers and theoreticians may not even be aware they are guided by their own beliefs about these basic questions.

In the introduction to this work, I articulated my own philosophical beliefs associated with core questions regarding the process and development of empathy. However, I do not specifically identify the orientation of this research in terms of academic categories of developmental theory. Upon completion of this research, I have returned to the question, regarding the literature on development to discern the theory most closely aligned with my findings.

Traditional paradigms of development emerge from beliefs about the power of prior social conditioning and biological life events and form normative age descriptions while phenomenological paradigms attempt to focus on the dynamics of the immediate moment. Dannefer and Perlmutter (1990) call for "more attention to explanatory processes, rather than normative age descriptions" (p. 108). They distinguish between cognitive generativity, an

explanatory process and developmental theories based on physical ontogeny and habituation.

In the habituation paradigm, development in a stable environment involves a gradual accumulation of information which results in the shaping and molding of an individual by environmental forces. Cognitive generativity "entails the active recombining of logic, memory and imagination. It allows the individual to interpret the past and present, as well as to envision alternative lives and alternative futures" (Dannefer & Perlmutter, 1990), to begin as a child learns to reflect on lived experience and to form intentions and propose. They maintain that cognitive generativity can increase as one ages, while trajectories of the other two developmental processes, physical ontogeny and habituation decreases in the aging process. Cognitive generativity is the power of the mind to intervene in life experiences to create alternative perspectives regarding future behavior and develops through interactions of one's own internal reflections with everyday work and personal life. Generative aspects of the human experience include "imagination, resourcefulness, empathy and reflection" (p. 115).

In this research, empathy was developed through a process of intention, imagination, and caring reflection on interpersonal encounters. Interpersonal encounters, when focused upon, with a conscious choice to understand the other and the self, reveal meaningful, new patterns of perceiving self and other. In this trajectory of development, perspectives gradually shifted from simple, unreflective assumptions to more complex, multidimensional views that resulted in a reconstruction of habits of behavior through cognitive generativity.

Conflict and tension was found to be a stimulus for the development of cognitive generativity. Conflict motivated the participants to let go of habitual ways of thinking about problems and offers solutions that reflect greater "creativity, courage, wisdom and contemplation" (Dannefer & Perlmutter, 1990, p. 116).

For development of through conflict, interest must be high so that tensions emerging from change can be tolerated and self-honesty must be practiced. The participants in this research were chosen in part because of their interest and concern for personal and professional development. They were willing to endure the struggle with ambiguity emerging from the conflicts embedded in everyday interactions that they discovered in their reflections rather than resort to premature conclusions. Each of the participants demonstrated the pain and humility of honest self-examination when they confronted themselves for thoughts, feelings and behaviour that were potentially mindless and destructive.

In a study of empathy, Stevens-Long and Macdonald (1993) found that empathic conflict produces cognitive generativity. In the process of their research, they learned to appreciate how empathy was embedded in significant aspects of everyday reality. "We found that individuals were more likely to report the experience of empathy in response to the problems of family and children than to any other single theme" (p. 89). The ability to "sustain, tolerate and continue to work productively in the presence of conflict" is essential to the development of empathy (Stevens-Long & Macdonald, 1993, p. 91). Conflict in everyday life may be the source of empathy and empathy can be the solution to the conflict.

Empathy is believed to be an innate human characteristic (Kalton, 1994; Hoffman, 1988) but I found that the expression is highly dependent on the Intention and psychological health, and professional skills of the empathizer. Miliora (1993), in an analysis of pertinent literature, found that empathy is an innate capacity that requires a cohesive and secure sense of the self that may be obtained naturally as a child experiences empathic mirroring from caregivers or through later therapeutic experience. One model of therapeutic experience to achieve empathy is the conventional therapist-client dyad, however, I have been intrigued to determine alternative ways that adults may develop empathy. In this research, I have found that journaling encourages cognitive generativity.

Cognitive generativity "refers to the minded processes ... the ability to take oneself as the object of thought, to reflect upon the past and present, anticipate the future and speculate about the unknown ... to imagine, construct and adjudicate between complex and alternative plans of actions and to form and implement intention" (Dannefer & Perlmutter, 1990, pp. 114-115).

LaBoskey (1994), in her exploration into the nature of reflection, found that journal records allowed writers to expand the capacity of memory and return to an interaction for reflection on a situation as often as desired. She maintains that the process of recording events and reactions to those events challenges the writer to "make explicit many of their perceptions and judgments in doing so may increase self-awareness. They may also modify some of their beliefs and interpretations as they struggle to understand and present them" (p. 15).

In this research, new patterns of thought and feeling were developed by participants in their practice of cognitive generativity and journaling. With these

patterns the repertoire of behavior from simple to more complex forms expanded and the participant was able to respond to demands in a more fluid and creative way.

Developmental theories from a constructivist and contextual point of view add further richness to the findings of this research. The contextual paradigm of human psychological and social growth is an aspect of constructivism that maintains that children are believed to enter the world with the capacity for mutuality. Donovan and McIntyre (1990) describe the development of a child taking place in "the context of intense dialogical mutuality with the world" (p.4). In a developmental-contextual perspective, children are believed to learn through their attempts to communicate and will act out with behavior if adults do not understand their dilemma. If misunderstood in terms of logic or purpose, a child is hurt and loses trust in adults to understand essential needs, the hurt child develops "inabilities" that begin to limit the capacity for mutuality and empathy. In the North American culture, where children's feelings are routinely neglected, the capacity for empathy is often not developed (Miller, 1991). Many children grow up learning to inflict the same abuse on self and others.

Although the ability to empathize may be diminished as a person interacts in insensitive and uncaring environments, it is debatable whether the capacity is extinguished. Each of the four participants in this research struggled to develop the ability to discern another's logical systems and emotional responses as they engaged with others in ordinary daily interactions. They articulated the considerable growth and development that they felt occurred through the use of the Encounter and Reflection Process.

Through the articulation of the essential elements of empathy, this research has demonstrated that the development of empathy can be stimulated but is initially dependent on the professional's intention to become empathic and grow in the ability to become self-aware and aware of the reality of another. This choice can entail a considerable dimension of personal pain. Participants found it very difficult to feel the pain engendered in an honest attempt to make unconscious emotions conscious. Memories of unresolved losses of the past emerged intact with the thought distortions and intensely uncomfortable emotions of earlier events. It takes a great deal of courage to feel the pain of unresolved and uncomfortable emotions. Each of the participants of this research were selected for the courage to confront themselves and stimulate developmental growth.

In this research, I found a variety of internal and environmental factors which created difficulties for educators who chose to develop the capacity for authentic and healthy empathy. They include:

1. Low emotional differentiation. Intense unresolved emotions are the source of emotional immaturity and create low emotional differentiation (Schnarch, 1991). In the findings of this study, low emotional differentiation provided the most significant limitation to empathy. Often lying dormant and unnoticed until triggered, unresolved emotions when activated limited healthy connection with others.

Inner waves of anger, rage, sadness or pain became "too big" for the professional to manage at the time of an interaction and remain in connection with another. Unresolved emotions created errors and distortion of thought

which led to critical judgment, inattention, and thoughtless reactions. These unresolved issues continued to live a subterranean life until an ordinary interaction triggered them into a reaction to another. This covert energy emerged in blame, bias and projection and critical judgment.

Feelings of alienation and isolation emerge from a perceived loss of approval, limited participants from seeing from another's perspective. According to Schnarch (1991), when a helping professional has a low level of emotional differentiation they are vulnerable to situations where they feel a loss of approval.

Attempts to motivate learners through fear, shame and humiliation are manifestations of personal loss of approval and served to pass on the legacy of low emotional differentiation to children. When uncomfortable emotions are used to motivate others, a breach of trust occurs in a relationship, making an empathic connection less likely.

2. Time pressures and stress. Participants became angry and emotionally distanced from others when they felt pressure from a perceived shortage of time. The anger was not directly expressed but was projected on others. This seemed to intensify when uncomfortable emotions were present in an interaction. The ability to be intentional in attending to another seemed to be connected with a participant's perception of control of time.

The perception of control of her own life was also connected with a sense of control of time. When a participant believed that she had little choice regarding how her time was to be used, she reacted with powerlessness and a loss of intentionality for caring and empathy.

Loss of control of time seemed to initially trigger anger in participants, then was reduced into a numb compliance with the perceived authority, and resulted in covert resentment and fatigue. When a participant believed that others had the right to control her time, she reduced her personal sense of responsibility.

Empowerment of an educator was closely connected with the need to perceive that one has control of one's own time. Stress was experienced; the participant lost a sense of control of life and time. Feelings of isolation and alienation emerged as stress reactions distanced the participant from herself and others.

3. Reluctance to become involved deeply with others. Early experiences of abandonment and a feeling that she was different contributed to a reluctance to interact on a personal level with others. For each of us there is a tension between healthy solitude and intimate relationship. With low emotional differentiation, this chronic dissonance can result in avoidance and isolation as one seeks time and space for the self in a crowded, demanding environment or it can lead to enmeshment and fusion with others. Participants in this research used both avoidance and fusion to manage the tension of intimacy. Both reactions tended to diminish healthy development and congruent empathy.

In participants with stronger emotional differentiation, this chronic tension was balanced between self and others. With courage, self-confrontation and integrity, this tension was used creatively to expand the emotional maturity of the individual, increasing the ability to create healthy empathy.

4. Misuse of power by professionals. In most of the encounters, a story was told regarding an imbalance of power and resulting abuse. Of their very nature, helping professionals hold power over individuals and this power is a sacred trust. Without conscious awareness of the violations of this power, mindless abuse developed. Outrage at a perceived injustice provided a significant barrier toward empathic connection. This seemed to be the most difficult obstacle to empathy that emerged in this research.

When participants abused the power of the differential relationship, both individuals experienced difficulty. When participants were violated by supervisors or administrators, their ability to empathize was diminished. Supervisors violated the boundaries of those that they administered and the chain of abuse flowed down through the educators to the most vulnerable and least powerful, the children. As a result of this research, I am aware that we must break the silence regarding psychological abuse in schools and create new structures that rebalance power in educational relationships.

5. Lack of personal and professional support. When participants were not supported for the personal and professional development of empathy, they remained fixed in habitual, unreflective patterns and behaviors. All of the participants in the research appreciated the minimum support they were given as they opened up areas of inadequacy, darkness, and pain for the potential growth. Support for participants came from co-workers, students and friends. Administrators were not perceived as supportive by the four participants.

Table 2

Developmental Issues of Empathy

.....the capacity for empathy is inherent at birth

.....the ability to empathize is nurtured through daily interactions

.....the ability to empathize may be distorted by unresolved emotional wounds that have created maladaptive patterns of thought and behavior

.....the ability to empathize can be developed through intention, attention, self-empathy, perspective taking, reflection, dialogue and the creation of boundaries.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the process and development of empathy in educators. A human inquiry methodology was used to study self-written records of educators' lived experience. Educators told stories of daily interactions with others and then imagined, reflected, and found meaning in ordinary encounters with others.

The research findings are presented in two sections. The first section briefly described essential elements and reviewed participants' stories for verification and expansion of the findings. The second section synthesized the findings in a description of empathy. The essential elements involved in the process and development of empathy are expressed in a dynamic, circular model. In both sections, insights from scholarly literature are integrated into the discussion of findings of the process and development of empathy to give significance and depth to the findings.

This final chapter includes a discussion of the implications of the study for educators, implications of the study for learners, and implications for research. Limitations of the study are presented and recommendations for further research are suggested.

Implications for Educators

In considering the findings of this study and implications for educators' professional practice, I believe that the discernment of emotional identification, bias and prejudice in interactions with others is highly significant. Educators

need to be aware of their own misconceptions that occur in interpretations of human interactions in order to understand and approach others who are challenged with emotional, cultural and physical differences.

With literally hundreds of encounters a day, an educator has an enormous power to affect others through words, attention, attitudes and behavior. Participants in this study each became more mindful, thoughtful and careful in their ordinary daily encounters as they sorted out their emotional identification, bias and prejudice with others. When they were able to imagine, speculate and assume the perspective of another they were more tolerant and understanding of the other person. Reflection on this process created meaning for participants, new knowledge, and alternative ways of responding.

When participants chose to interact with others in a caring, focused manner, they experienced a sense of purpose, meaning and occasionally joy and their personal and professional self-identity was enhanced. Each of the educators in this study described mindless reactions to internal and environmental pressures which created situations demeaning to students and painful to the educator. However, when the participants became mindfully aware of the subtle dynamics in disrespectful encounters and their own unconscious cognitions and emotions, their professional efficacy and emotional maturity was enhanced and they were able to alter habits of perception and action.

A second implication for educators involves the possibility of using empathy to assess the needs of learners. As mandates for individualized instruction emerge from current educational restructuring efforts, educators are searching for strategies to understand a learner in the learner's own terms. A vast array of formal assessment tools are available, however, they require time

and resources to administer, score and interpret. Educators trained in psychological and epistemological principles of empathy could perform spontaneous assessments of students through empathic encounters and facilitate a cost-effective and caring individualized instruction program.

I believe that educators benefit from the opportunity to expand their knowledge and understanding of the epistemological and therapeutic uses of empathy in their professional practice. Choosing to use this knowledge will enable the educator to feel more empowered, develop the ability to connect with alienated young people and understand and work with peers and administrators in a more forgiving manner.

Implications for Young People in School

When I hear people describe teachers who have profoundly affected their lives, they often refer to educators who have understood them in their own terms. Educators who are proficient in empathic abilities can companion differently abled, depressed and alienated youth for even a few moments a day. As Nodding (1984) insists, a caring, empathic educator has a profound healing effect on all, even if the moment of connection is very brief.

An empathic educator is able to create a safe and caring educational atmosphere where a young person is free to explore, experiment and discover in a non-judgmental, accepting, and respectful atmosphere. Within this safe haven, the intrinsic motivation of a learner can emerge to accomplish significant development.

Most fundamentally, a student who is taught by an empathic adult feels valued, respected, accepted and significant. Specific programs would not be

needed to teach self-esteem, co-operation and conflict resolution. The students learn to esteem themselves, cooperate and resolve conflict from witnessing on a daily basis the modeling of empathy by the teacher and the other students.

Implications for Educators - Staff Development

These findings are useful for the creation of innovative opportunities for staff development of educators. Training programs and enrichment experiences could be offered to educators who wish to develop internal and less visible elements of empathy .

The results of this research inquiry add breadth and depth to the concept of empathy in the context of education. The description of the process and development of empathy adds a new understanding to the cumulative knowledge of educator development.

Assessment

In schools, difficulties of students commonly diagnosed as a variety of physical and emotional disorders may be assessed and treated in the future through carefully structured empathic attention. Through empathic understanding the "at risk" youth may experience a sense of belonging and acceptance that translates into a new enthusiasm for learning. Through empathy with peers, educators may develop the support and encouragement necessary to navigate the intense professional challenges of today and the future.

Examining the process and development of empathy opens the door to the possibility of stimulating the development of empathy in educators, students and researchers through education, support, and self-growth. Traditionally,

efforts to support a growth in empathy have centered on attending to another and communicating empathy. If it is a desirable goal to support teachers in the development of empathy, findings regarding the process are valuable.

Effect of Research on Participants

In this research I have discovered within an empathic encounter with another that there are a number of factors that stimulate developmental growth. A mature, healthy process of empathy is a universal human experience where an individual is able to emerge from a solitary state into a shared communion with others. It is the thread of human interaction that allows an individual and group to transcend the limitations of individual and cultural differences and connect in life-begetting ways. It is at the core of developmental growth.

In the constructivist paradigm of development, growth occurs in the context of lived reality and emerges out of reflection on interactions with one's environment. Each of the participants of this study told a story in which they claimed valued growth and development. Each of the participants shifted to a higher level of emotional differentiation. Motivated by the needs of clients, the participants valued their choice to become involved in this process. As they took time to learn about themselves and the unique pattern of their interactions, they were empowered to change habits, take risks and make decisions in a new way.

Through the Encounter Process and written Reflection Process, participants were able to move from personal emotional reactions to resonate with the emotions of the other while they came into a fuller understanding of the mental framework of the other. As the ability to shift into the perspective of the other

increased, participants were able to clarify their intentions toward themselves and others. Each encounter, when mindfully considered, revealed valued knowledge. The ability to glean significant meaning and learnings about self and others from ordinary, daily interactions was developed.

Participants became aware and developed a broader consciousness of the power of seemingly trivial words and actions. This consciousness augmented a growing personal and professional sense of empowerment or efficacy and resulted in a renewed commitment to professional goals.

Implications for Research

In this qualitative, phenomenological research, a new dimension of analysis was added. Through the use of the Encounter Process (Appendix A) and the Reflection Process (Appendix B) the researcher was able to access her own unconscious biases, prejudices and prior cognitive commitments. With access to this information, the nature of the analysis shifts, imperceptible at times, more significantly at other times. It moved from a limited reaction to contemplation and elaboration of knowledge.

With the addition of these two Processes, the researcher was able to enter into a personal, reflective empathic relationship with the work of the participants without fear of losing the voice of the participant to the subjectivity of the researcher. I believe a deeper level of meaning emerged through this process that enhanced the description of empathy as presented in the finding.

Limitations of This Research

The most significant limitation of this research emerges from the global nature of empathy. To describe empathy in a way that accounts for its complexity, it was necessary to examine a wide range of theories, research and insights regarding empathy. This variety made it difficult to establish a ground point for a logical and sequential review of literature.

A second limitation of this research involves the gender of participants. The vast majority of participants available for selection were female. The absence of male participants seemed to involve gender issues regarding empathy but I felt they were beyond the scope of this current inquiry. Future research should include the aspect of gender.

The third limitation involves the relatively few number of participants. However, as a counterbalance, the depth of analysis enabled me to access a level of knowledge that seemed reflective of basic human characteristics. The inclusion of the Encounter and Reflective Process by the researcher required an enormous amount of time and necessitated a relatively low number of participants for a research project.

Recommendations for Further Research

The current research has initiated a conversation regarding empathy in educators. The value of this conversation lies in the psychological, humanistic focus it brings to the vast amount of educational literature regarding the at risk youth.

Further research could examine the impact of empathic educators on young people who are struggling with cultural, emotional and physical

differences. Contemporary literature of psychotherapy and mental health sheds considerable light on effective ways to reach alienated young people. Case studies and other forms of qualitative research used in the field of psychotherapy could be applied to the compelling psychological issues in education today.

Closing Remarks

The culmination of this research coincides with a shift in my own development. As I completed this research, I found myself far less dependent on the approval of others and significantly more aware of the value of living each moment of life mindfully. I know that this work has emerged from a lifetime of experiences and has synthesized my own personal and professional development. With heart and mind connected, I am committed to integrity, loyalty and consideration.

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APPENDIX A**Encounter Process**

At the end of your teaching day take a few moments to write down feelings, images, thoughts and associations of the day in your journal.

As you sort through the experiences of the day, select an encounter with an individual that stands out in your mind.

Relax and remember where you were before this encounter as fully as possible. Thinking? Daydreaming? Absorbed in a task? Attentive? Hurried? Frustrated? Peaceful? Tense? Moving? Sitting? Standing? In other words, where was your body, mind and emotions. Who else was involved? Re-enter the encounter in your active imagination as you write.

Describe the encounter in detail in the present tense, allowing the scene to come alive for you. E.g. "I am walking in the hall and I notice a child standing near the door. I vaguely wonder what she is doing, and now I am looking at her more closely...." Include details that are specific, unique and vivid. Describe what you see, hear, feel and do.

Describe the encounter in detail in the present tense using your active imagination as if you were the other person. E.G. "I am standing near the door when I see a teacher coming toward me." Allow your active imagination to guide you in writing a brief scenario of the specific details complete with what you see, hear, feel and do *from the perspective of the other person.*

Returning to your own experience, describe what you did as a result of this encounter. What understandings, responses, actions or behaviours emerged from this event?

As you reflect on the encounter, describe: "What was this experience like for you as an educator?", and then "What was this experience like for you when you imagined you were the other person?"

APPENDIX B**Reflection Process**

The purpose of this reflection is to explore the experience of the Encounter Process and develop your understanding, knowledge and actions.

Reflection on Experience

Pre-reflection: What were your goals as you began the Encounter Process? What did you hope to receive from your participation?

Recollect and Replay: As you take time to visualize and replay the full experience of the encounters, your written response, observe what happened for you and notice your reactions to it. Write a description of the total experience.

What are the feelings you experienced? What uncomfortable feelings? What can you do at this time regarding uncomfortable feelings? What positive feelings have you experienced? How can they be retained and enhanced?

Re-evaluate the experience

Association: What images, thoughts or feelings come to mind that seem to represent new knowledge?

Validation: Test your knowledge for consistency between new knowledge and existing knowledge and beliefs. What were beliefs or existing knowledge and habits that were challenged? What seems a more acceptable truth to you now?

What do you value about what you have learned? How has this learning affected your sense of self?

What are the more significant outcomes of this experience for you? What actions have or will change?

APPENDIX C **Outline of Proposed Research**

Purpose:

This research will explicate from reflections on lived experience components and conditions involved in the process of developing empathy. The findings of this research will be used to develop understanding and theory regarding the development of empathy. This understanding will be useful to implement professional development opportunities for pre-service and in-service education.

Research Activities Emerging from the Course

Participants will be informed and invited to participate in a research project after the completion of the course and the submission of grades. The decision to participate will not affect the student's grade in any way. Selecting materials, the writing responding to The Encounter Process and The Reflection Process will be gathered by the researcher for phenomenological analysis.

Rigour

Faithfulness to the data will be highly valued by the researcher. Participants will have the opportunity to review and clarify the results of the preliminary analysis as well as the final analysis.

Confidentiality

Strict confidentiality will be maintained in all aspects of this research. Numbers will be assigned to each participant for the purpose of maintaining strict confidentiality until the time of review of preliminary analysis. Records of data from each participant identifying names with numbers will be handled exclusively by the researcher and destroyed at the completion of the study. Participants may withdraw from the research at any time during the study.

Value of Research to Participants

Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to theory and understanding of empathy as it occurs in ordinary human encounters. In addition, they will have the opportunity to learn through direct experience the principles, steps and issues relating to qualitative research in education.

The Research Data

The research data will be selected from written reflections solicited from participants. Guidelines for those reflections are described in the Encounter Process and the Reflection Process.

Mode of Inquiry

Researcher will follow the guidelines of phenomenological research to maintain rigour. The open coding system designed by Strauss & Corbin (1990) will be used to analyze data.

APPENDIX D**Letter of Informed Consent**

In the proposed research, participants will be invited to submit writing describing interpersonal encounters with others and a personal synthesis of reflections on those encounters.

_____ give my informed consent to my full participation in research conducted by Sharon Anne Stanley, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Victoria. I am aware of the nature, scope and sequence of this research.

I understand that strict confidentiality will be maintained at all phases of the research. My name and any identifying data will not be known to anyone other than the primary researcher. All identifying data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the research.

I understand that my grade for the course I am currently taking will not be affected in any way by my decision to participate.

I understand that the researcher will verify and validate her preliminary analysis and final analysis with me.

I understand that I may withdraw from this research study at any time for any reason.

Participant**Date**

Researcher**Date**

VITA

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The Process and Development of Empathy in Educators: A Phenomenological Inquiry

Author

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(Date)

January 27, 1995