CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION TEACHERS

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to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic field study examined six female home economics teachers' conceptions of Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum, the perceived influences on these conceptions and the relationship of the conceptions to classroom practice. Data from classroom observations, interviews and selected documents were analyzed using a framework of conceptual categories from the literature of curriculum and of FLE, and two emergent analytic categories ("tensions and constraints" and "images of FLE curriculum practice").

Six curriculum conceptions were labelled according to the teachers' beliefs about the aims and purposes of FLE. Similarities were related to the nature of FLE subject matter, while differences suggested differing views of the educational enterprise. Although the teachers indicated that multiple factors had influenced their beliefs about FLE curriculum, all considered life experiences to have had the greatest impact, suggesting that the curriculum conceptions were personally derived and represent the teachers' personal visions of FLE curriculum.

The considerable consistency between the teachers' articulated beliefs and their classroom practice in this study implies that curriculum conceptions were significant influences on curriculum practice and confirms the belief in the field that the teacher is the FLE curriculum. Contextual factors (such as the institutional nature of schooling) appeared to mediate some beliefs and may have contributed to some inconsistencies between beliefs and practice and to the emergence of some unarticulated beliefs. For the most part, these factors were related to the subject matter itself and indicate that FLE teachers may experience some unique influences on their practice.

The images of curriculum practice provide insight into the role of beliefs in the translation of FLE curriculum in the classroom. Of particular significance was the extent to which these images reflected the influence of personal life experience. These images also situate teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum within the classroom and indicate that teachers' beliefs interact with both the students and the subject matter of the curriculum. This interaction contributes to the character of the curriculum in use and suggests that while teachers' beliefs do play a central role in the translation of curriculum, other factors may also exert an influence.
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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

Family life education (FLE)—the study of family development and interaction—is a relatively new area of study in Canadian schools. Although some FLE courses were offered as early as the 1920's (Thomas, 1986), for the most part, these courses were not offered widely throughout schools and were available only to limited numbers of students. Indeed, as the Vanier Institute of the Family noted in 1971:

A few generations ago, few people in Canada looked upon FLE as a fit subject for a school curricula. For many there was no need for FLE of any kind to be taught to students—boys and girls learned what they had to know in the course of their family experience and their everyday lives (The Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971, p.1).

However, the Vanier Institute of the Family also noted that:

The situation is vastly different now. FLE of one kind or another is taught in hundreds of schools in Canada and has been the subject of consideration in hundreds of others. That the schools might legitimately teach FLE today, in one form or another, is seldom questioned (The Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971, p.1).

In the first national survey of FLE in Canadian secondary schools, the Vanier Institute of the Family (1971) found that 29% of the 4,475 schools responding to their questionnaire included FLE as part of the school curriculum. A more recent provincial survey (Arcus, 1983) indicated that the incidence of FLE in secondary schools was considerably higher, and could reach as high as 50%.

As more schools and school districts implement FLE programs and as some of these programs become mandatory, issues concerning who should teach them have become the focus of considerable debate. While numerous surveys indicate that parents, students, educational administrators, teachers and the general public support FLE in the schools, questions about whether teachers are adequately prepared to teach FLE continue to be the center of some controversy.
(Arcus, 1986). Indeed, in the surveys noted above, several concerns specifically related to the FLE teacher were identified. For example, it was reported that limited formal training in FLE philosophy and methodology and the deficiency of adequately tested teaching materials and resources generally contributed to a lack of confidence among teachers in teaching FLE. These concerns have raised questions about how to select FLE teachers. Some administrators indicated that it is often unclear which teachers on a school staff should teach FLE courses and criteria such as personal interest, association with a related course and ease of timetabling frequently appeared to be employed in teacher selection for FLE.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of these concerns about FLE teachers, little is known about the nature of teacher practice in FLE or about the role of the teacher in implementing FLE programs. Because they not only develop and implement programs but also interact directly with program participants, teachers are considered to be critical to the success of FLE (National Council on Family Relations, 1984). This importance of the teacher is based on the assumption that the aims and purposes of the field are reflected in and realized through practice.

Most writers in the field acknowledge this centrality of the teacher but disagree about the adequacy of their preparation to assume this role. Gaylin (1981), for example, suggests that many family life educators are frequently "volunteers" rather than trained professionals and are often inadequately prepared to "deal effectively with...sensitive and important issues" (p.515). Fisher and Kerckhoff (1981), however, assert that the practitioner's "wisdom, intuition and...lessons of personal experience" deserve greater recognition in the teaching of FLE (p.508). Little research has been conducted which
This ethnographic field study addresses some of the concerns about the FLE practitioner by examining family life educators' beliefs about FLE curriculum (i.e., curriculum conceptions) within the public school setting. Presumably teachers' beliefs about the field in general will be reflected in their beliefs about FLE curriculum and will yield insight into ways in which the aims and purposes of the field are interpreted in practice. This focus was adopted for several reasons. First, knowledge about the family life educator is considered to be central to theory development in FLE. Fisher (1986), for example, proposes that the family life educator is a key variable in FLE theory. In particular, she suggests that theoretical issues concerning the nature of the relationship of the educator to the participants (i.e., facilitator, authority, friend, model, confidant), the interpretation of the goals of the field in practice and the professional expertise required by the family life educator must be examined before FLE theory can be developed.

Second, most writers in the field acknowledge that in many ways the family life educator is the curriculum of FLE (Arcus, 1984). As the curriculum implementor, the teacher is crucial to the realization of the central concepts, aims and purposes embodied in a curriculum or program. Because the curriculum may be considered the vehicle by which the body of content associated with a field of study is translated into practice, the notion of curriculum provides a context for examining family life educators' beliefs about the field and how these are related to practice.

Finally, the nature of FLE subject matter is somewhat unique in that much of it may be lived personally (e.g., one lives in a family and has experiences in that family that profoundly shape one's life). Beliefs about the subject matter (as well as about the field) may be related to one's personal beliefs and experiences. Indeed, Miller, Schvaneveldt and Jenson
(1981) suggest that "the close personal involvement with the subject matter...may color...the perceptions of those who teach it" (p.625).

Evolution of the Study

While the development of this research was guided by the issues and concerns about family life educators reflected in the literature of FLE, two fieldwork projects conducted by the researcher provided the impetus to investigate such issues. The first project involved an exploratory study of teacher practice with a FLE teacher in her classroom. The second project was an ethnographic evaluation of a FLE curriculum involving several teachers in which the researcher was the fieldworker. In doing these projects, it became apparent that the teachers had different perceptions of the field of FLE and of the FLE curriculum they were teaching. For example, a teacher in one of the projects seemed to view FLE in terms of nurturing, another in terms of information transmission and another in terms of counselling and therapy. Moreover, in interviews several of these teachers reported that they perceived that their personal life experiences qualified them to teach this subject. Classroom observations during these projects revealed that teachers used their life experiences extensively in their teaching of FLE. These occurrences raised questions not only about how FLE teachers conceptualize the field, the FLE curriculum they teach and the extent to which these conceptualizations influence their classroom practice but also about the role of personal life experience in FLE practice. Such questions contributed to the genesis of this study.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to identify teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and to determine the relationship between their curriculum
conception and their curriculum practice. The specific research questions were:

1) What conceptions of FLE curriculum do FLE teachers express?
2) What factors do they perceive to have influenced these conceptions, e.g., professional education, the contexts of teaching, personal experiences, etc.?
3) What is the relationship between teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and classroom practice, i.e., how do their conceptions shape or influence their classroom practice?

Significance of the Study

This study of teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum may make several potential contributions to the field of FLE. First, it may help to clarify the nature of FLE practice in educational settings. As noted earlier, very little is presently known about what family life educators actually do. This study may provide some insight into the extent to which practitioners' beliefs guide their practice. From a broader perspective, this research may yield understanding of practitioners' interpretation of the field.

Second, the findings of this study may have implications for the preparation of family life educators. If more is known about how practitioners interpret the field and the extent to which their personal beliefs and life experiences guide their curriculum practice, then preparation programs might be designed to include such issues.

Third, this study may also have implications for curriculum development in FLE. If teachers' beliefs do play a role in the way in which FLE curriculum is implemented, then consideration of how such beliefs might potentially interact with the goals and assumptions of curriculum materials may be important in FLE program development.
Finally, because the teacher has been identified as a central variable in FLE (Fisher, 1986), this research may have implications for theory development in FLE as clarification of major variables is an important first step in any theory development (Burr, Hill, Nye and Reiss, 1979). Through the examination of teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum, this research may begin to clarify the nature of the role assumed by an educator in the process of FLE and contribute to this first stage of theory development in the field.

In the field of education, this study may contribute to increased understanding of the role of teacher beliefs in curriculum practice and of the relationship between teachers' abstract beliefs and their contextualized beliefs (i.e., beliefs reflected in practice). Such findings may extend the body of knowledge associated with curriculum development and implementation and may have implications for teacher education.

**Definition of Terms**

Several terms which are central to this research require clarification. "Family life education" is a multidisciplinary field of study and practice concerned with strengthening families and improving the quality of individual and family life (National Council on Family Relations, 1984). However, the term may be somewhat problematic in that it is frequently confused with "sex education". While there appears to be some agreement within the field that the terms are not equivalent and that FLE is broader in scope than sex education (Arcus, 1986), it is important to make clear a distinction between the two terms. In this study, "FLE" refers to the broad definition of the field which includes, but is not limited to, sex education. (Further elaboration of this definition is provided in Chapter II)

The term "curriculum" is used interchangeably with the term "program" and refers to the curriculum as it is set out in documents and includes what is to be taught, the materials used to teach and the curriculum as it is
actually taught in the classroom. Thus the term encompasses both the formal or official curriculum in documentary form and the informal curriculum as it is translated in classroom practice.

"Classroom practice" is used interchangeably with "curriculum practice". It includes classroom instruction (including the selection of methods and materials), classroom discourse and activities related to curriculum development and implementation (such as the organization and selection of content and the preparation of course materials).

This research is concerned with examining teacher beliefs about a field of study and the relationship of those beliefs to practice. The notion of "conception" is used to identify and isolate these beliefs. Thus "conception" will refer to the beliefs which teachers have with respect to FLE curriculum.

Limitations

Several limitations of the study should be noted:

1) This research is limited to school-based FLE and does not include FLE in other settings.

2) The cases studied are limited to female home economics teachers whose background in home economics may have shaped their view of FLE. As well, the study is limited to classroom teachers. Family life educators in other settings (such as in community agencies or in churches) are not included. The professional education background of school-based family life educators may have influenced their views of FLE.

3) The teachers studied in this research are all Caucasians with similar ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. These variables may have influenced their views of FLE.

4) This study is limited to a large metropolitan school district in a province in western Canada.
5) It is difficult to gather information about an individual's thinking without in some way disturbing it. The findings of this study represent the thinking documented at the time in which the researcher intervened in the teachers' thinking.

Outline of the Thesis

Chapter II of this thesis reviews three areas of literature relevant to this study: 1) FLE as a field of study and practice and family life educators in public school settings; 2) research on teachers' thought processes; and 3) curriculum theory and practice. The theoretical framework which guides the research is also outlined in Chapter II. Chapter III describes the features and characteristics of ethnographic research and delineates the specific methods used in gathering data. Findings are reported in Chapters IV, V and VI. In Chapter IV the findings concerning the conceptions of FLE curriculum expressed by teachers and the perceived influences on these are presented in six individual case studies. Chapter V reports the findings of these case studies concerning the relationship of curriculum conceptions to classroom practice. Chapter VI identifies some tensions and constraints associated with the context of teaching and describes four images of curriculum practice which were evident in all six classroom settings. In Chapter VII, the findings are discussed. Chapter VIII summarizes the study and offers some conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER II  REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, literature relevant to the questions of the study is reviewed. This literature review focuses on three areas: 1) FLE (both FLE as a field of study and practice and family life educators in public school settings); 2) research on teachers' thought processes; and 3) curriculum theory and practice. In addition, the theoretical framework which guides the research is delineated.

FLE as a Field of Study and Practice

The Nature of Family Life Education

FLE is a multidisciplinary field of study and practice concerned with strengthening families and improving the quality of individual and family life (National Council on Family Relations, 1984). Although there is evidence of some uncertainty and inconsistency regarding the use of the term (Arcus, 1986), there appears to be general agreement within the field that the central purpose of FLE is to assist individuals and families to "learn what is known about human growth, development and behavior in the family setting throughout the life cycle" so that they may "develop satisfying interactions and achieve their potential for enriching the quality of human living" (National Commission on FLE, 1968, pp.211-212). The specialized content areas of FLE include human development and sexuality, interpersonal relationships, family interaction, family resource management, education about parenthood, ethics, and family and society (National Council on Family Relations, 1986). In designing educational programs using these concepts, FLE integrates findings from disciplines such as anthropology, biology, economics, education, home economics, law, philosophy, psychology, sociology, social work and theology (i.e., family ministry).

FLE in North America was first in evidence at least one hundred years ago with the organization of parent groups to facilitate what was called
"child management" (Kerckhoff, 1964). The need for such education was intensified by social changes associated with industrialization and urbanization. These movements resulted in alterations to traditional family patterns, the role of the family as the primary socializing agency and the role of women in families. During this time, developments in psychology, sociology, home economics and the progressive education movement contributed to the evolution of FLE programs in a variety of settings, including schools (Darling, 1988; Kerckhoff, 1964).

Since that time, the field has expanded considerably. This expansion is evident in the development of FLE programs in a wide variety of settings, in the establishment of professional preparation programs in FLE in colleges and universities and in the formation of organizations which promote the well-being of individuals and families through education (e.g., the National Council on Family Relations in the United States and the Vanier Institute of the Family in Canada).

FLE programs may be offered in both formal and nonformal settings (Darling, 1988). Formal settings include institutions such as schools, colleges and universities, while nonformal settings include community service, adult education and religious contexts. FLE programs offered in any of these settings may be general (covering multiple content areas as described above) or specific (involving individual topics such as marriage preparation, parent education or relationship enrichment).

**Characteristics of FLE in Schools**

Although it is not universal, FLE in school settings is well-established. Following World War I, the progressive education movement provided the impetus to develop high school programs for teaching child development and family relations (Kerckhoff, 1964). While such programs are evident today in many schools in North America, the rationale for their
inclusion in the school curriculum has varied. For some, the primary reason for FLE was the prevalence of social problems:

In part the argument for FLE derives from the demands of a rapidly changing world and the unanticipated problems which confront modern families...social problems and new patterns of life associated with children and the family have become more threatening to our traditional way of life and more...costly to the state (The Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971, p.1).

For others, the rationale was not to solve or to prevent problems but to provide knowledge which will enhance the future well-being of individuals and families:

To promote individual and family well-being by providing sound knowledge that will enable individuals and families to make their own rational decisions [about family life] (Rodman, 1970, p.4, 5).

While these conflicting views of the purpose of FLE in schools persist (Sheek, 1984), it is generally agreed by scholars in the field that FLE focuses primarily on strengthening individual and family life through the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills (including communication, decision-making and problem-solving) which enhance the potentials of individuals in their present and future family roles (Arcus, 1987; National Commission on FLE, 1968).

Formal FLE school curricula include a range of content. While this varies among courses, some studies (Allen & King, 1970; Arcus, 1983; Koblinsky, Weeks & Cooke, 1985) suggest that several topics are commonly included in FLE programs. These include interpersonal relationships, human sexuality and reproduction, male-female roles, marriage and family dynamics, preparation for parenthood and child development. However, not all grade levels may cover all topics (Arcus, 1983).

In schools, FLE is most often offered by home economics departments (Allen & King, 1970; Arcus, 1983; Koblinsky, Weeks & Cooke, 1985; The Vanier
Institute of the Family, 1970; Sheek, 1984). Other departments which also offer FLE content include guidance and counselling, health and physical education, science and social studies. It is not only offered as a separate course but may also be integrated with other courses (i.e., social studies classes may include topics such as the cultural comparison of families, while science classes may include a unit on human reproduction). Although FLE is usually an elective course, many schools and districts are now mandating it (Arcus, 1986; Sheek, 1984). Some early studies suggest that more females than males enroll in FLE (Baker & Darcy, 1970; Bayer & Nye, 1964), but more recent surveys (e.g., Sheek, 1984) indicate that most FLE courses are coeducational (i.e., open to both boys and girls) and that male and female enrollment is approximately equal.

Issues and concerns most frequently reported by teachers and administrators in the surveys cited above center on the academic preparation and selection of FLE teachers and on the availability and adequacy of materials and resources. Increasingly the certification of family life educators in schools is becoming an issue and several states have adopted policies and procedures related to teacher certification in FLE (e.g., Sullivan, Gryzlo & Schwartz, 1978; Womble & Yeakley, 1980).

Family Life Educators in School Settings

Some literature discusses the qualifications necessary for family life educators (Arcus, 1979; Fohlin, 1971; National Council on Family Relations, 1984; Whatley, 1973). In all subject areas of the school curriculum adequate knowledge about the subject matter and the methods appropriate for teaching it are essential professional qualifications. However, the nature of the subject matter in FLE is such that the personal characteristics and life experiences of the teacher also become significant. Most writers acknowledge the interrelationship of these personal and professional qualifications. It is
generally agreed that the following characteristics are necessary for family life educators:

1) Sound knowledge in the many content areas of FLE, plus the ability to bring together findings from different disciplines and apply these to concepts and issues in the classroom;

2) Knowledge of and identification with the broad philosophy and basic principles of FLE;

3) Skill in using and evaluating family life materials and resources and in using a variety of teaching methods appropriate to FLE;

4) The ability to work effectively with young people, both individually and in groups;

5) Insight into one's own feelings and attitudes concerning family life topics and acceptance of one's own life experiences (see Arcus, 1979).

Although these general qualifications and characteristics have been proposed, they are based primarily on the perceptions of experienced professionals in the field (e.g., see Fohlin, 1974) and not on empirical investigation. Indeed, little attention has been given to the study of family life educators.

**Studies of FLE**

Few studies have focused specifically on the FLE teacher or on the practice of FLE in schools, in those studies which have been done, two general themes are apparent: 1) the content and characteristics of FLE programs developed or implemented by family life educators and 2) the characteristics and attitudes of family life educators.

The first group of studies examine FLE programs taught by family life educators in schools and focus primarily on the teacher as a curriculum implementor. Allen and King (1970) and Sheek (1984) surveyed schools in the United States to identify the major content areas that teachers reportedly
teach in FLE courses and to determine the incidence and methods of program delivery. Both studies found that FLE was offered in most secondary schools and that the FLE content was most frequently taught in home economics courses and included interpersonal relationships, marriage and family interaction, child development, human reproduction and parenthood education. Similarly, The Vanier Institute of the Family (1971) and the Canadian Education Association (Deiseach, 1978) surveyed Canadian schools to identify the nature and extent of FLE. The findings of both studies indicated that FLE content is offered in several subject areas and is included in significant numbers of schools.

School-based FLE programs in individual states or provinces have also been examined. For example, Koblinsky, Weeks & Cooke (1985) studied the characteristics of FLE courses in California schools at the grade 9 and 10 levels. They found that while teachers in health, physical education and home economics provided coverage of FLE topics in their courses, home economics offered longer courses and were more likely to include communication, decision-making and marriage and family issues than the other subject areas. Arcus (1983) surveyed schools in the province of British Columbia and found that FLE was widely offered in secondary schools. In these schools, most FLE was elective and offered as a unit within another course. Both home economics and guidance and counselling were reported to provide FLE content, although considerable variation in the topics and course organization were indicated. These studies echo the findings of earlier research on FLE programs in various parts of North America (Baker & Darcy, 1970; Bayer & Nye, 1964; Dager, Harper & Whitehurst, 1962; Kenkel, 1957; Mason, 1974; Ready, 1973; Rosentiel & Smith, 1963).

In a more recent study, Harriman (1986) examined the extent to which FLE teachers adapted their courses to include new, "emerging concepts" such as abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, death, child abuse and remarriage.
The teachers surveyed reported that traditional concepts such as interpersonal relationship skills, family interaction, choosing a marriage partner and child guidance were more important to teach.

The second group of studies examine the FLE teacher in school settings. Because the term "FLE" in these studies is often used interchangeably with "sex education" and because there are few studies which have looked at FLE as defined earlier in this chapter, both those studies which have looked at FLE and at sex education are included in this review. These studies are diverse and represent a variety of research topics.

Some of these studies have looked at teacher attitudes toward specific content areas in FLE. For example, in a study of the attitudes of Arizona sex educators toward specific content areas in sex education, Schuck (1972) found that most of the sex education content areas received support from teachers and school administrators. He concluded that these findings indicated support in general for the sex education programs in that state. Smith, Flaherty and Webb (1981) compared the attitudes of teachers in a human sexuality training program with national norms and found that these teachers held more conservative attitudes. Rubin and Adams (1972) discovered that teachers who were planning to teach sex education expressed less permissive attitudes toward sexuality than did those who were not planning to teach in this area. Yarber and McCabe (1984) studied school sex educators' views of topic importance and the correlation between teacher characteristics and the inclusion of topics in instruction. They found that teachers' attitudes toward their own sexuality was the most significant personal trait relating to topic importance and may influence whether a topic is included in instruction. Yarber (1979) assessed and compared the opinions of students, parents, teachers and principals concerning the emphasis that should be given to family life and sex education at grades three, seven and nine. He reported that
teachers generally supported the inclusion of these subjects in the school curriculum.

Some researchers have looked at the effects of training on teachers' attitudes and characteristics. Carter and Frankel (1983) studied teachers attending a training program in family life and human sexuality to determine the extent to which teacher characteristics can be used to predict sex-related attitudes of teachers. They found that while instruction in the content areas in family life and human sexuality significantly increased the teachers' knowledge, their attitudes remained unchanged. This latter finding was attributed to both the subjects' ages and to the lack of time spent in the program exploring feelings about sexuality. Several studies of inservice programs in family life and sex education (Arcus, 1979; Luckey, 1968; Luckey & Bain, 1970) have found that, through inservice education, teachers gain insight into their own attitudes and behaviour with respect to FLE, develop increased self-confidence in dealing with the subject matter and improve both personal and professional qualifications for teaching FLE.

Professional characteristics of FLE teachers have also been the subject of research and writing. For example, Womble and Yeakley (1980) studied the extent of academic preparation of FLE teachers in Indiana. They found that a substantial number of FLE teachers in that state do not meet the academic requirements to become certified as family life educators. However, in a California study of family life teachers, Koblinsky, Weeks and Cooke (1985) found that home economics teachers are more likely than teachers in all other areas except nursing to have obtained preservice training in FLE and to have attended conferences and continuing education courses in this subject area. In a United States national survey, Orr (1982) reported that teachers of FLE courses were most often trained in the areas of physical education, home economics and social studies. According to Sheek's (1984) survey of FLE in the United States, the "typical family life educator enters the teaching
profession with a baccalaureate degree...having been through an accredited program in Home Economics, Health, Education, and/or Social Studies" (p.50). Sheek notes that such family life educators generally have demonstrated competencies in core courses such as family relations and child development.

Some literature focuses on the personal characteristics required by family life educators. Much of this writing is based on the perceptions of experienced professionals in the field such as the National Council on Family Relations FLE panel (Kerkchoff & Hancock, 1971), graduate students (Whatley, 1973), directors of family life and sex education programs (Juhasz, 1970) and experts in the field of teacher preparation for sex educators (Carrera, 1972). Although many characteristics were identified in these studies, there were some commonalities. These included self acceptance and understanding, a high degree of empathy, sound knowledge of the content of FLE and methods for teaching it, good communication skills and acceptance and awareness of diversity and individual differences.

Teacher comfort in teaching FLE and sex education has also been investigated. Reid & Munson (1976) and Graham & Smith (1984) suggest that teachers' attitudes concerning topics such as sexuality reflect their degree of comfort with it. The findings of two other studies indicate that teachers themselves perceive comfort to be a central issue in teaching family life and sex education. For example, in their survey of sex education teachers, Herold and Benson (1979) reported that some teachers expressed discomfort when discussing human sexuality in the classroom and indicated that students appeared to be more comfortable when they felt that the teacher was not nervous or embarrassed. Similarly, Ryan & Dunn (1979) discovered that prospective sex educators seemed to feel most uncomfortable about dealing with potentially embarrassing student questions.

A few studies have looked at teacher selection in FLE. The Vanier Institute of the Family (1970) and Arcus (1979) found that many family life
educators are assigned to the course by school administrators. Adams (1970) assessed the relative importance of prior teaching experience as a criterion in the selection of family life teachers. When the sex knowledge, counselling adequacy and competency in handling FLE issues between experienced and non-experienced family life teachers were compared, no differences were found. It was concluded that adequate academic preparation is more important than teaching experience in the selection of FLE teachers.

Although the studies reviewed focus on FLE in school settings, most were concerned with FLE curriculum or with teacher characteristics and attitudes. Moreover, all of these studies have used survey questionnaires and have relied solely on self-reporting. Many have looked only at sex education rather than at FLE. Although information about teacher attitudes and characteristics may be helpful in understanding some of the factors which may contribute to successful FLE programs, such studies reveal very little about what actually happens in classroom practice. Similarly, studies of the content and characteristics of FLE programs may yield information about the formal (or official) FLE curriculum, but they disclose little about the nature of practice or about the ways in which curriculum content is translated in practice. Studies in the field of education suggest that this may be an important consideration, for the curriculum as it is practiced may differ from the curriculum as it is intended in documentary form (Fullan, 1982; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Goodlad, 1979).

Research on Teachers' Thought Processes

Research in the field of education during the past two decades has increasingly focused on the teacher's role in curriculum development and implementation and a growing body of literature affirms the centrality of the teacher in these processes. For example, researchers acknowledge the teacher as the key curriculum practitioner who uses, makes decisions about and
develops curriculum within the context of the classroom (Connelly, 1972; Connelly & Dienes, 1982; Connelly & Elbaz, 1980; Reid & Walker, 1975). It is also well-documented that the intentions of externally-developed curricula are rarely fully realized in classroom practice, but are changed and adapted (Goodlad & Klein, 1970; Fullan, 1982; Olson, 1981; Ponder & Doyle, 1978; Sarason, 1982). According to several writers, such modifications are related not only to teachers' perceptions of situational elements inherent in their classrooms but also to their beliefs about the curriculum materials. Indeed, some maintain that the frequent mismatch between what is presented in the classroom and what was intended by curriculum developers is due to the gulf between the developers' beliefs and perceptions and the teachers' beliefs and perceptions. Teachers may not share the points of view and conceptualizations embedded in curriculum materials and instead filter the intents through their own unique perspectives (Connelly, 1972; Roberts, 1980; Werner, 1980).

Thus, the traditional image of the teacher as a passive adopter of curriculum has gradually been replaced with an image of the teacher as an active developer and modifier of curriculum. Consequently considerable research has been conducted in the areas of teacher planning and decision-making as the link between teacher intentions and teacher behaviour is examined (Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Clark & Peterson, 1986).

This research has been described as research on teachers' thought processes and has been classified into three general areas: 1) research on teacher planning; 2) research on teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions; and 3) research about teachers' implicit theories and beliefs (Clark & Peterson, 1986). According to Clark and Peterson, these categories are derived from Jackson's (1968) distinctions among the pre-active, interactive and post-active phases of teaching. The first two categories represent discriminations between teacher cognition during instruction or before or after instruction, while the third category reflects the apparent influences
on the first two categories. The central aim of this third body of research is to understand the relationship between teachers' thinking and teacher behaviour within the context of classroom practice (Ben-Peretz, Bromme & Halkes, 1986; Halkes & Olson, 1984). Because this study is concerned with teacher beliefs about FLE curriculum and their relationship to classroom practice, this third aspect of teacher thinking provides a theoretical context for the study.

**Teachers' Implicit Theories and Beliefs**

Clark and Yinger (1979) describe research on teachers' implicit theories and beliefs as "the study of how teachers make sense of their world." They assert that this research is based on the assumption that teachers refer to a "personal perspective...an implicit theory...a conceptual system...or to a belief system about teaching and learning" (p.251). The aim of such studies is to "get 'inside teachers' heads' to describe their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values" (Feiman-Nemser & Flodin, 1986, p.506). Munby (1986) considers this study of teacher beliefs to be an important dimension of teacher cognition because it increases understanding of "the psychological context" in which teacher decision-making occurs. Similarly, Clark and Peterson (1986) suggest that the value of such research rests in the explication of the "frames of reference through which teachers perceive and process information" (p.287). According to Aoki (1977), these are important considerations, for the "fundamental perspectives found in the lived practical world of curriculum developers...are typically unconsciously held and unavoidably used" (p.52).

A number of studies concerned with teachers' implicit theories and beliefs have been conducted during the past two decades. These studies appear to reflect varying interpretations and conceptualizations of the notion of "implicit theories and beliefs" and a range of terms have been employed in
such studies to refer to these. For example, some have studied teachers' perspectives (e.g., Adler, 1984; Hammersley, 1977; Janesick, 1978; Peterat, 1983; Sharp & Green, 1975); some have studied teachers' beliefs, attitudes and principles (e.g., Bauch, 1982; Harvey, White, Prather, Alter & Hoffmeister, 1966; Marland, 1977; Munby, 1983; Nespor, 1985, 1987; Wahlstrom, Regan & Jones, 1982); some have studied teachers' conceptual systems (e.g., Barr & Duffy, 1978; Bawden & Duffy, 1979; Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976; Larssen, 1984, 1987; Lederman & Zeidler, 1987); and some have studied teachers' practical knowledge (e.g., Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1981).

As well, the focus or problem investigated in these studies has varied. For example, in an effort to understand how curriculum innovations are perceived, handled and interpreted by teachers, some researchers have studied teacher thinking about curriculum implementation. (e.g., Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976; Crowther, 1983; McKee, 1986; Olson, 1981, 1982; Peterat, 1983; Theissen, 1989; Tornvall, 1987). Others have examined teacher beliefs and principles which guide or give rise to certain classroom practices (e.g., Bauch, 1982; Bogess, 1985; Halkes & Deijkers, 1984; Harvey, White, Prather, Alter & Hoffmeister, 1982; Hornak & Lunetta, 1979; Marland, 1977; Munby, 1983; Nespor, 1985, 1987; Rose, 1973; Scheinfeld & Messerschmidt, 1979; Schmidt & Buchmann, 1983; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1986). Another group of researchers has looked at the ways in which teachers think about teaching and their teaching roles and the potential relationship of these conceptions to their classroom behaviour (e.g., Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Carew & Lightfoot, 1979; Hammersley, 1977; Janesick, 1978; Kimes, 1984; Krueger, 1985; Larsson, 1984, 1987; Sharp & Green, 1975). Some studies have focused on understanding the kind of knowledge teachers have and use and how it guides their classroom practice (e.g., Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1984; Elbaz, 1981; Lampert, 1985, 1986), while other studies have investigated teachers' thinking about the subject matter or the content of curriculum (e.g., Adler, 1984; Barr

The methods employed in these studies are also diverse. Some have used paper and pencil instruments to elicit teachers' abstract ideas and beliefs. For example, Halkes and Deijkers (1984) devised a Likert scale based on relevant literature to identify the criteria teachers use to deal with class disturbances. Other researchers have used some form of interview for gathering data about teacher thinking. Munby (1983) and Theissen (1989), for example, used Kelly's repertory grid technique (which includes both a construct-generating activity and interviews) to elicit teachers' personal constructs or personal "theories" about certain aspects of practice. Marland (1977) used stimulated recall interviews, in which teachers explained their teaching activities as they viewed them on videotape. Some researchers have used semi-structured and open-ended interviews in which teachers are encouraged to talk about their thought processes and beliefs using their own words and concepts (e.g., Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976; Elbaz, 1981; Larssen, 1984). Others have employed multiple methods (including both interviews and observations) to gain access to teachers' thoughts and thought processes and to understand how thoughts and actions might be related (e.g., Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1984; Janesick, 1978).

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1987), the assumptions underlying the choice of methods also differ. They point out that those studies employing only verbal reporting by teachers (such as in interview methods) embody the assumption that what teachers say does influence their practice and that there is a positive relationship between thought and action. In contrast, those studies using multiple methods (such as interviews in combination with observations) investigate the nature of this relationship.

Despite these diversities, all of the above studies represent attempts to understand the ways in which teachers' thinking is related to their
professional practice. The findings of some of these studies suggest that teachers' thoughts and beliefs potentially exert considerable influence on their educational practice. For example, both Janesick (1978) and Clandinin (1985) used field studies to examine teachers' expressions of beliefs and thoughts about their classroom practice. Janesick's study revealed that one teacher's perception of his role in the classroom was based on certain educational beliefs that he espoused. In particular, he viewed respect and cooperation in the classroom as central to students' development. He considered instructional goals to be "important in relation to the major class goals of respect and cooperation" (p.16). Similarly, Clandinin's study of "teacher images" suggested that while teachers' verbal expressions of their "classroom images tend to function metaphorically...and allow teachers to generalize on their [classroom] experience and to offer theoretical accounts of what they do", these images are essentially "images of practice" (p.382). Clandinin asserts that these images "are not merely mental constructs" but are embodied in and therefore guide classroom practice.

Other studies of teacher thought processes which have employed self-reporting methods have also found a positive relationship between teacher thinking and teaching behaviours. For example, Bauch (1982) reported that teachers' educational beliefs appeared to influence their teaching practices by contributing to the development of the classroom context in which learning occurs. Certain teaching behaviours identified by teachers in her study seemed to be related to differing "philosophical systems" or "sets of beliefs regarding educational processes" (p.27). Elbaz' (1981) study of one teacher's practical knowledge in terms of "images" which embody "the teacher's feelings, values, needs and beliefs" and which "serve to guide the teacher's thinking...and to organize knowledge...and guide...the intuitive realization of the teacher's purposes" (p.61) emphasized this teacher's perception of the centrality of beliefs in her teaching practice.
Other studies have demonstrated that teacher beliefs may interact negatively with curriculum innovations. For example, one of the findings in Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel's (1976) study of the understandings of teachers working in open classrooms suggested that several of the teachers held philosophies that were inconsistent with the open classroom approach. In his study of the implementation of the English Council Integrated Science Project, Olson (1981, 1982) found that teachers' beliefs acted as significant negative influences on the translation and transformation of new curricula in the classroom.

Several studies suggest that teachers' beliefs may interact with the contexts in which they teach. For example, in an ongoing study of teachers' conceptions of reading (Duffy & Anderson, 1982), researchers discovered that although teachers' expressed beliefs about reading did seem to affect some aspects of their classroom practice, other influences such as institutional mandates and class composition appeared to mediate their impact. Only after these factors were taken into account did the teachers' personal conceptions of reading come into play.

In their study of the influence of science teachers' conceptions of the nature of science on teaching behaviour, Lederman and Zeidler (1987) found that the teachers' classroom behaviour was not influenced significantly by their conceptions. They suggested that other factors, such as curriculum constraints, administrative policies and the availability of supplies had a more direct influence on the teachers' classroom behaviour. Similarly, Adler (1984) found that although student teachers expressed abstract beliefs and ideas about social studies in the elementary curriculum, these beliefs were not always evident in practice. She concluded that a broad range of factors related to certain "dilemmas of teaching" limited the influence of these beliefs in practice.
Nespor's (1985, 1987) research explored the origin of teacher beliefs about teaching and noted the influence of both years of teaching and the quality of past teaching experiences on these beliefs. The findings suggested that teachers' beliefs develop "contextually" in the course of their experiences. In this study, teaching was depicted as "'an entangled domain'...[in which]...teachers rely on loosely-bounded conceptual systems (beliefs) which help them define tasks...generate goals and make sense of their actions" (p.171, 172). Nespor claims that, because of the nature of their apparent origin, these beliefs tend to evolve and change over time. The findings of Nespor's studies may in part account for the findings of the three previous studies just cited. Indeed, Olson (1988) suggests that teachers' talk about their practice (including their beliefs and thinking about what they do) reflects the culture or context in which they teach. Thus, to adequately understand teachers' thinking and belief systems, Olson argues that both cognition and context must be considered (see also Ben-Peretz, Bromme & Halkes, 1986).

The findings of these studies suggest that there is a relationship between what teachers believe and what they do. Although several of these studies indicate that teachers' beliefs give rise directly to particular classroom practices, others depict the relationship between beliefs and practices less clearly. Mayer (1985) asserts that these divergent findings imply that research on teacher beliefs and classroom practice requires greater attention to identifying the direction of the relationship between beliefs and practice. In this respect, the extent to which teachers adopt a belief system as a justification for their practice as an "adaptive" measure or whether teachers use their "personal vision to shape instruction...[suggesting] a belief system that reflects environmental demands but is not controlled by them" (p.18) may be an important research concern.
Other writers suggest that greater attention needs to be devoted to understanding the nature of subject matter and its relationship to teachers' belief systems, particularly at the secondary level where "the teacher's work setting emphasizes...subject matter" (Nespor, 1985, p.151). As Nespor points out, "junior high and high school teachers are unavoidably committed to dealing with a body of knowledge, day in and day out, for the course of a school year" (p.151). Indeed, in Nespor's study, English, history and mathematics teachers conceptualized their subject areas in different ways, emphasizing the conclusion that there is a need to understand the nature of the subject matter areas and the "beliefs and experiences [in these areas] that teachers use to generate goals and make sense of their actions" (p.172). Moreover, according to Shavelson and Stern (1981), because of its potential impact on "what students learn and their attitude toward learning and the subject matter" (p.49), this is an area of research on teacher thinking requiring more attention. Such issues suggest that an investigation of teachers' conceptions of FLE curriculum, the perceived influences on these and their relationship to classroom practice is warranted.

Curriculum Theory and Practice

This study is based on the assumption that teachers have belief systems which influence their perceptions and their practice. The teacher is therefore viewed as an "agent" or one who "acts because of reasons...which are compelling...[and]...convincing" (Boyd, 1979, p.115). Thus it is assumed that teachers' beliefs guide their curriculum practice. Because this research examines teacher beliefs about curriculum, the literature of curriculum theory is reviewed. This review serves three purposes. First, it provides an overview of three perspectives of the central issues concerning curriculum theory. Second, it assists in situating this study within a theoretical context of curriculum. Finally, it clarifies the conceptual foundations of
Three Perspectives on Curriculum Theory

There is considerable debate in the curriculum literature about the meaning, the purpose and the development of "theory" in the curriculum field (Kliebard, 1977; Macdonald, 1975; McCutcheon, 1982; Vallance, 1982). Much of this debate has focused on the relationship of theory and practice in curriculum and on the extent to which a single or unified theory of curriculum can adequately account for all curriculum practice. Three perspectives on curriculum theory (based on the work of Giroux, Penna & Pinar, 1981 and Pinar, 1978) are briefly reviewed. These perspectives represent "three theoretical frameworks that govern specific approaches to curriculum issues" (Giroux, Penna & Pinar, 1981, p.13) and illustrate the central questions of this debate. While other writers have also examined these issues (e.g., see Grundy, 1987; Schubert, 1986), the three perspectives just noted attempt to place the theory-practice issues within a socio-historical context and underscore the somewhat "evolutionary" nature of this still unresolved debate in the North American curriculum field.

The Traditionalist Perspective on Curriculum Theory

According to Giroux, Penna and Pinar (1981), the traditionalist perspective reflects the early heritage of the North American curriculum field in administrative convenience. As the field emerged during the early 1900's, curriculum came to be viewed as "the organization of time and activities to be managed according to sound business principles" (Giroux, Penna & Pinar, 1981, p.2). The principles of scientific management (including efficiency, control and predictability) were applied to curriculum in the stating of curricular objectives and in the measurement of student outcomes. This administrative or
managerial function of the curriculum field stressed the "problem-solving nature of the curriculum venture" (Pinar & Grumet, 1981, p.22) and is still evident today in curriculum work which emphasizes the preparation of curriculum workers (such as teachers) to resolve and to prevent practical curriculum problems.

In this perspective, theory is prescriptive and used "to guide, to be of assistance to those in institutional positions who are concerned with curriculum", and reflects the influence of the work of Bobbitt, Charters and Tyler (Pinar, 1978, p.207). Theory is intended to improve curriculum practice, both at the level of curriculum development and in classroom implementation.

The Conceptual-Empiricist Perspective on Curriculum Theory

Although the traditionalist view of curriculum theory persists today, the early 1960's marked a period of unrest in the curriculum field and signalled the emergence of a second perspective of curriculum theory which was labelled "conceptual-empiricist". The factors contributing to this period of unrest stemmed primarily from the "curriculum reform movement" of the 1960's. In response to the launching of Sputnik, the United States developed new curricula for schools and initiated a period of curriculum reform. However, the developers of these programs were recruited from among specialists in "the disciplines" and not from specialists within the curriculum field. Coupled with a reduction in federal funding for curriculum development and evaluation shortly thereafter, the curriculum field lost credibility. According to Pinar (1978), the "traditional, practical justification of the field" diminished and "new justifications" more closely affiliated with social science research came to predominate (p.208).

In this perspective, two groups of curriculum theorists are described. The first group viewed the curriculum as an area to be studied empirically (as
in other social sciences) and was primarily concerned with developing hypotheses to be tested in "methodological ways characteristic of mainstream social science" (Pinar, 1978, p.208). Curriculum work involved the investigation of curricular phenomena with a view to develop theory which could explain, predict and control curriculum practice. The work of curriculum theorists such as Beauchamp (1968) and Johnson (1967) reflects this view.

However, toward the end of the sixties, a second group of curriculum theorists with a slightly different perspective emerged. In particular, the work of Schwab (1969, 1971 and 1973) provided the impetus for some curriculum theorists to look at curriculum theory and practice in another way. Schwab argued that the scientific mode of inquiry was not appropriate for the study of the practical activities of curriculum. He emphasized that the study of the practical should rest in the situational and particular events of curriculum practice. He proposed that theory alone cannot direct the practical work of curriculum because "questions of what and how to teach arise in concrete situations loaded with concrete particulars of time, place, person, and circumstance" (Schwab, 1971, p.494). He advocated an alternative view of the relationship of theory and practice in curriculum work, in which theory provides guidance but not direction:

If...theory is to be used well in the determination of curricular practice, it requires a supplement. It requires arts which bring a theory to its application: first, arts which identify the disparities between real thing and theoretic representation; second, arts which modify the theory in the course of its application, in the light of the discrepancies; and, third, arts which devise ways of taking account of the many aspects of the real thing which the theory does not take into account (Schwab, 1969, p.12).

Thus in Schwab's view, curriculum theory and curriculum practice are interrelated as theory is tailored to specific situations, while at the same time, practice itself may "generate additional courses of action for
application in the plethora of circumstances where theoretic knowledge might not apply" (Schubert, 1984, p.241).

Schwab's focus on the practical aspect of curriculum encouraged a "movement away somewhat from strict social science" (Pinar, 1978, p.209) and this second group of theorists argued that prescriptive curriculum theories are not particularly useful because they do not reflect the actual process of curriculum making and curriculum change. Theorists such as Connelly (1972), Walker and Reid (1975) and later Connelly and Elbaz (1980) and Connelly and Clandinin (1984) have extended Schwab's work and have focused on teachers as curriculum deliberators, "with their own beliefs and assumptions and with their own notions of what is worth doing" within their particular situations (Connelly & Elbaz, 1980, p.104).

The Reconceptualist Perspective on Curriculum Theory

According to Schubert (1984), Schwab's work contributed to the foundation for the emergence of a third perspective on curriculum theory during the 1970's. This group of "reconceptualist" curriculum theorists is diverse and has phenomenological, hermeneutical, existential, Marxist and psychoanalytic roots (Schubert, 1984). Several "thematic strands" are associated with the reconceptualist perspective. For example, there is a hermeneutical focus which emphasizes "subjectivity, existential experience, interpretation and the centrality of intentionality to understanding human action". A political focus stresses "class conflict, the reproduction of power relations...and the inherently political character of culture, meaning and knowledge" (Giroux, Penna & Pinar, 1981, p.14).

The purpose of theory in this perspective is not to guide, control or predict the work of practitioners but to understand the nature of educational experience and its social, political and interpretive dimensions. Indeed, Pinar (1978) asserts that "a...reconceptualization of what curriculum is, how
it functions, and how it might function in emancipatory ways" (p.211) are the aims of this perspective. Pinar and Grumet (1981) note that "[in this perspective] theory and practice are allowed to intersect...[and]... contradictions between theory and practice compel us to acknowledge the tension in the relation of these two terms" (p.33, 34). Theory and practice are therefore considered to be dialectical, in that resolutions to conflict between theory and practice are of central concern. The teacher as a curriculum practitioner is assumed to reflect upon the experiential meaning of curriculum activities as they unfold within the classroom and as the curriculum is "transformed into a pedagogic situation" (Aoki, 1988, p.411). The work of curriculum theorists such as Apple, Huebner, Macdonald and Pinar are characteristic of this perspective.

These three perspectives embody different notions of the relationship between curriculum theory and curriculum practice and imply differing views of the relationship of the teacher to the curriculum. Because this study focuses on the teacher as an active curriculum developer and on the teacher's interpretation of curriculum as it is used and developed in practice, it is best situated generally within the second perspective of curriculum theory (and specifically within the work associated with Schwab) in which the teacher and the problems of practice are viewed as the central concerns of curriculum theory. In this perspective, curriculum theory and curriculum practice are interrelated. Practice is regarded as theory in action and theory is modified according to the exigencies of practice.

Conceptual Foundations of Curriculum Theory

Diversity is not only apparent in conceptions of the role and purpose of curriculum theory, but also in the ways in which the notion of curriculum theory itself is conceptualized. Most curriculum writers agree, however, that the concepts associated with "curricular phenomena" (McCutcheon, 1982) are
essential components in such conceptualizations (Connelly, 1972; Connelly & Elbaz, 1980; Kliebard, 1977; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1989). Indeed, a number of writers suggest that curriculum theory is best conceptualized in terms of the activities that the field represents and the experiences, questions and issues commonly associated with these (e.g., Connelly & Elbaz, 1980; Kliebard, 1977, 1982; Schwab, 1973). For example, Schwab (1973) suggests that the practical nature of the curriculum field may be accounted for by considering the "commonplaces" of curriculum. These five commonplaces include the subject matter of curriculum, the learners and their characteristics, the milieu (or contexts in which learning takes place), the teachers (their knowledge, personalities and characters), and the curriculum-making process itself. Peterat and McClean (1982) propose another view. They suggest that if curriculum is generally concerned with "educative action with people", then the central issues and activities related to curriculum practice would be focused on the aims and purposes of education, the nature of knowledge and the relationship of persons to the process of education. Kliebard (1977) asserts that if "the central questions of curriculum are normative ones, in the sense that they involve choices among competing value options" about what should be taught, when, how and to whom (p.263), then beliefs about such issues would also appear to be a central consideration in the conceptualization of curriculum theory.

The three views just described represent ways of conceptualizing dimensions of curriculum theory which account for the participants in and the activities of curriculum and which in a sense act to "bound the field of curriculum" (Connelly & Elbaz, 1980, p.103). Such views (or dimensions of curriculum) are also reflected in writing about what has variously been called theoretical perspectives, orientations or conceptions of curriculum. These terms refer to the ways in which curriculum is viewed or defined by those who develop, implement or evaluate it and include underlying beliefs about what is
real, true and valuable where curriculum matters are concerned (van Manen, 1977). Eisner (1979) for example, describes five conceptions of curriculum or ways in which people conceptualize the curriculum for purposes of curriculum development. These include cognitive processes, academic rationalism, personal relevance, social adaptation and social reconstruction and technology. He considers each of these views of curriculum to embody "values that shape one's conception of major aspects of practice" (p.70) and to define a particular view of educational priorities related to the content of the curriculum, the teacher's role and the purpose of education.

Similarly, Miller (1983) outlines seven orientations to curriculum which possibly underlie educators' curriculum practice: behavioral, subject/disciplines, social, developmental, cognitive process, humanistic and transpersonal. He calls these "world views" about curriculum which represent the "mixture of...values, attitudes and perceptions [which]...provides the context for how we see [curriculum]" (p.1). According to Miller, curriculum orientations reflect particular approaches to teaching and learning and encompass several "theoretical and practical dimensions" such as conceptions of the learner, the learning process, the teacher's role and the purpose of education.

Both Eisner and Miller, however, acknowledge that these descriptions of curriculum conceptions or orientations do not take into account the variety of contexts in which curriculum practice occurs and that, in reality, it is probable that more than one conception may guide curriculum practice. To account for this, Miller and Seller (1985) propose three "meta-orientations" or "curriculum positions": the traditionalist or transmission position, the inquiry/decision-making or transaction position and the transformation position. According to Miller and Seller, each of these meta-orientations represents a range of beliefs about what schools should do and how students
learn and includes clusters or groups of several specific orientations to curriculum.

Other writers (e.g., Aoki, 1977; Apple, 1975; Grundy, 1987; Macdonald, 1975; van Manen, 1977) have focused on the knowledge dimension of curriculum, and have conceptualized curriculum perspectives or orientations in terms of the ways in which knowledge is selected and organized in the curriculum to serve certain human interests. Using the work of Habermas, three curriculum perspectives are identified: technical (a concern with the acquisition of facts and technical control), interpretive (a concern with interpersonal understanding) and critical (a concern with the development of critical reflection and transformation). According to these writers, each perspective reflects different views of the nature of knowledge and of how it should be used and may significantly shape curriculum practice.

Theoretical Framework

The "theoretical and practical dimensions" associated with the notions of curriculum conceptions or orientations constituted the theoretical framework for this study of teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum. This framework was developed from the literature of curriculum and from the literature of FLE. With respect to curricular concerns, the categories or dimensions of such a framework embody the beliefs that underlie curriculum practice and are centered on the interaction of certain key factors in the educative process:

1) beliefs about the learner, i.e., how the learner is characterized in the teaching situation;
2) beliefs about society, i.e., how the relationship between society and education is conceptualized;
3) beliefs about knowledge, i.e., how knowledge is seen to be developed, transmitted and used; and
4) beliefs about the purpose and process of education, i.e., what role education fulfills and how it is effected.

The dimensions of this framework were then considered in view of relevant concerns from the literature of FLE. These were based on Dail's (1984) work in which she proposes four categories which she claims might be used in developing or examining personal belief systems about FLE:

1) beliefs about the family and the quality and nature of family life, i.e., what the family is, what constitutes a family and what a family could or should be;

2) beliefs about the purpose of FLE, i.e., what this education is trying to accomplish and why;

3) beliefs about the content of FLE, i.e., what FLE should teach, what sources content should be derived from and what role content has in FLE; and

4) beliefs about the process of learning for families and individuals within families.

These two sets of categories were integrated to develop the theoretical framework within which this study was conducted. This framework included the following categories:

1) beliefs about the purpose and process of FLE;

2) beliefs about the role of the teacher in FLE;

3) beliefs about the learner and teaching in FLE;

4) beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE; and

5) beliefs about families in FLE.

Several considerations guided the development of this framework. First, it is based on the assumption that beliefs underlie curriculum practice. Such beliefs encompass several fundamental factors associated with the educative process and reflect the central issues and concerns associated with curriculum practice. However, because the research was specifically concerned with
beliefs about FLE curriculum, the general categories associated with FLE were modified to encompass the particular issues and concerns associated with FLE curriculum practice. Second, the categories of the framework are general and not idiosyncratic, that is, presumably they are meaningful to all teachers engaged in FLE curriculum practice. Finally, the dimensions of this framework are quite general and not rigidly defined. This inherent flexibility allowed for the accommodation of additional issues and questions related to beliefs about FLE and FLE curriculum practice during data collection and analysis. Thus this framework not only provided a way of conceptualizing this study, but it also facilitated data collection and analysis.

A potential limitation of this framework is noteworthy. In ethnographic field research, theoretical frameworks ideally act as "sensitizing concepts" in formulating research questions and in guiding data collection and analysis. However, a common difficulty with such frameworks concerns "exampling", where the completed research primarily provides "illustrations of somebody else's concepts or theoretical constructs" instead of those which are inherent in the research setting and naturally employed by its participants (Woods, 1986, p.187). Similarly, theoretical frameworks may constrain the data and impose "preconceptions and perhaps misconceptions" on the setting being studied (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p.25). Indeed, as Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) point out "there is no easy solution to the problem of selecting guiding concepts in [field research]...concepts from the academic disciplines may not capture the way teachers themselves think about their work...[and] the data [may not] provide any direct statement of what teachers think or feel" (p.506). Thus although the categories of the theoretical framework employed in this study were selected with consideration of their meaningfulness and relevance to the individuals and settings being studied, there is always the possibility that the framework may have constrained the data and shaped the findings.
Summary

In this chapter, three areas of literature were reviewed. The first area of literature concerned FLE as a field of study and practice and FLE in school settings. This review revealed that, although FLE is a well-established field of study and is commonly offered in schools, little is known about the practice of family life educators. While some studies have examined FLE in school settings, most conducted surveys to determine teacher characteristics or attitudes or the content of FLE curriculum. Such studies reveal little about the nature of FLE practice or about how the curriculum is translated in practice.

The second area of literature reviewed concerned teachers' thought processes. This review indicated that there is a relationship between teacher thinking and teacher behaviour, and that teachers' beliefs do play an important role in their classroom practice. However, the nature of this relationship remains unclear, suggesting that further studies are required which look at teachers' expressed beliefs and their contextualized beliefs to not only clarify the relationship between them, but to also identify the possible influences on them.

The third area of literature was related to curriculum theory and practice. An overview of three perspectives of curriculum theory suggested that there is considerable debate in the curriculum field about the nature, purpose and meaning of "theory" and that a central issue of this debate concerns the relationship of curriculum theory to curriculum practice. Because of its focus on the teacher as an active curriculum developer, this study was situated generally within the "conceptual-empiricist" perspective (and specifically within the work associated with Schwab) in which curriculum theory and curriculum practice are interrelated.

The conceptual foundations of curriculum theory and Dail's (1984) categories for examining belief systems about FLE were used to develop the
framework which oriented data collection and facilitated data analysis. The dimensions of this framework were: 1) beliefs about the purpose and process of FLE; 2) beliefs about the role of the teacher in FLE; 3) beliefs about the learner and teaching in FLE; 4) beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE; and 5) beliefs about families in FLE.
CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the method of the study. The methodological assumptions underlying the research method are examined and issues related to subjectivity, validity and reliability are discussed. In addition, the research design is explicated and data collection and analysis are described.

Ethnographic Field Research

Definition and Features of Ethnographic Field Research

This study employed the methods of ethnographic field research. Burgess (1984) describes field research as a generic term which represents "an observational approach...[which is]...principally conducted by anthropologists and sociologists" (p.2). This approach to research has been variously called ethnography, case study methodology, qualitative research and naturalistic studies, and is often used to refer to all research approaches which employ field methods (e.g., Rist, 1982; see also Jacob, 1987).

In reality, however, there are a variety of such approaches. Because these reflect differing theoretical and methodological perspectives which orient and shape the research process, field research as a term does not necessarily reflect any one perspective or research methodology (Atkinson, Delamont & Hammersley, 1988; Jacob, 1987). In this study, the term ethnographic field research refers to the use of ethnographic techniques (such as participant observation) in the conduct of field research.

Although there is no unified conception of ethnographic field research, it is generally agreed that this approach to research concerns the study of human activity in its natural setting (Hymes, 1982). According to Denzin (1978), the general intent of field research is "to confront empirical reality from the perspective of those who are being studied" (p.33).

The major features of this research approach reflect this central aim. As just noted, field research is characterized by a concern with the human
context or natural setting in which the research is conducted. Field methods such as participant observation (including interviews) are typically conducted in the research setting over an extended period of time, and reflect the importance of firsthand observations of occurrences. The researcher participates in the setting and assumes roles which may range from complete participant to complete observer. Such observation and participation by the researcher facilitates an understanding of the processes through which social behaviour is constructed. In field research, variables are generally not quantified and any prior hypotheses are tentative and subject to change as data are collected and analyzed (e.g., Smith, 1982; van Maanen, 1983). Indeed, Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that field research facilitates the systematic generation of theory from data, i.e., theory is inductively developed as the data itself yields concepts and hypotheses which are then verified through subsequent data collection and analysis (see also Strauss, 1987).

The research process itself is characterized by reflexivity and constant monitoring. The subjective interpretations of the researcher are considered to be part of the setting being studied, the research design is often modified and developed as the project evolves and the various stages of research are interdependent and integrated (Burgess, 1984; Rist, 1982).

**Methodological Assumptions**

The examination of assumptions underlying a research approach is an important consideration for, according to several writers (Denzin, 1978; Jacob, 1987; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973; Wilson, 1977), they reflect the theoretical orientations or perspectives which frame the research, and represent specific claims about the nature of human behaviour, the nature of the social world and the kinds of methods appropriate for studying these. The assumptions associated with a research methodology therefore influence not
only what researchers look for in their research but also how they conduct themselves in a research setting and how they interpret their research findings (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975).

A major assumption guiding this research is that teachers are active agents constructing their worlds. It is presumed that such action is based on the definitions and beliefs that teachers hold and the meanings that they assign to their classroom interactions and practices (including curriculum practice). These assumptions are reflected in the underlying assumptions of the sociological perspective of symbolic interaction.

The emergence of symbolic interaction as a distinct perspective in sociology and social psychology originated in the work of Dewey, Cooley, James, Mead and Thomas (Manis & Meltzer, 1972). In particular, Mead's theory of social behaviorism greatly influenced the development of this perspective. Mead posited that human beings interpret or define each other's actions and respond to one another on the basis of the meanings they attach to such actions. This capacity to interpret rests in the self, where individuals are able to take the role of another, to engage in interaction with themselves and to make indications to themselves. According to Mead, this capacity for self-indication constitutes the mind.

Central to understanding Mead's conception of the mind are the concepts of the "I", the "Me" and the "generalized other". The "I" is the biologic "I" which is an acting organism who "initiates solutions to environmental circumstances and problems". The "Me" is one's view of oneself as an object and represents one's ability to see oneself from the point of view of another. However, these other points of view may become generalized and consequently "one's own and others' behaviors may be seen not only from the point of view of particular others, but in terms of generalized and abstracted norms, values and beliefs of groups of others" (Berlak & Berlak, 1981, p.115). The
generalized other, then, represents the influence of culture and social experience on human behaviour.

In Mead's perspective, human behaviour encompasses not only overt activity (i.e., the observable actions) but also covert activity (i.e., the mental actions or self-interpretations noted above). His concept of "the act" (or human behaviour) embodies both forms of activity and thus includes the subjective forces associated with the individual's mind and the objective forces associated with the social context in which the act takes place (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Meltzer, 1972; see also Blumer, 1969).

According to Blumer (1969), symbolic interaction rests on three basic premises: 1) meaning is central to social action and interaction; 2) such meaning is socially constructed as individuals produce their own definitions of situations; and 3) the use of meaning in social situations (i.e., action and interaction) occurs through a process of interpretation. These suppositions are based on certain "root images" of human beings, human action and interaction and social reality.

In symbolic interaction, human beings are depicted as acting organisms, who act on the basis of what they take into account. This capacity for action reflects the ability of humans to take a perspective on themselves (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). In so doing, humans engage in what Denzin (1978) calls "minded, self reflexive" behaviour, which enables them to shape both their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. As human beings take their own perspective and fit it to the behaviour of others, social interaction occurs. According to Denzin, such interaction is viewed as sometimes unpredictable, "emergent" and "negotiated".

As individuals interact, they construct or define an understanding of social reality. Objects in the social world therefore have no intrinsic or inherent meaning, but are meaningful in terms of the actions that humans take toward them and "meaning" is socially constructed and open to reinterpretation
and redefinition (see also Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Thus, human action may be described as self-directed and purposive. The "forces which impel [a person] to act are substantially of his own making" as "man presents himself with perspectives and definitions that become some of the conditions for his own actions" (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p.5). Hence, symbolic interaction emphasizes "the definitional process, the meaning that something has to individuals" because it is "the mentalistic meanings and values that occur in the minds of people...[and]...the mentalistic definitions people make in their unique situations that are the most useful explanatory variables in understanding human [action and interaction]" (Burr, Leigh, Day & Constantine, 1979, p.49).

In the interactionist orientation to field research it is assumed that human behaviour is not caused by internal or external forces. Human beings are not passive, responding organisms but active, creating purposive organisms who behave on the basis of meanings that things have for them. Such meanings are developed, interpreted and reinterpreted through social interaction within a social context. This social context includes the social structures which are not only created and constructed by individuals interpreting their worlds but which also have social force in that they are internalized in the self through the continuous interaction of the "I" and the "Me". Thus in symbolic interaction, objectivity and subjectivity are not separated, but are viewed as interdependent (Denzin, 1978; Douglas, 1976; Johnson, 1975).

The methodological implications of these assumptions are considerable. If human action and interaction are interpretive, then in order to understand such action, the researcher must gain access to "the defining process" of the actor (Blumer, 1969). This suggests that situations must be studied from the actors' points of view and this requires participation in their particular social settings. Similarly, if human behaviour is shaped and influenced by the setting in which it occurs, then study of human behaviour in its natural
setting seems to be most appropriate. Moreover, if meaning is constructed through a social process, then human action cannot be adequately understood unless the framework in which the actors interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions is comprehended (Wilson, 1977). Thus methods are required which enable illumination and penetration of the actors' points of view and of the subjective meanings they attach to the objects that constitute their world. In this regard, the methods of participant observation (where the researcher engages in the actors' social setting observing, listening and asking questions over an extended period of time) are particularly appropriate. Through assuming the role(s) of those being studied, the researcher is better able to document and understand their perspectives and uncover the meaning embedded in their action and interaction (Wilson, 1977).

Research Purpose and Design

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers conceptualize FLE curriculum and to determine the relationship between their curriculum conception and their curriculum practice. This research was a multiple case study of six family life educators located in the Central Valley School District (a pseudonym), a large metropolitan school district in a province in Western Canada. A description of the selection of these six cases and of the process of gaining entry into the schools and the classrooms in which they taught will clarify the development of the research design.

Selection of Cases

In this research, home economics family life educators (as opposed to those who teach family life education concepts in other subject areas such as guidance, biology, health education or social studies) were studied. Two factors guided this decision. First, an official curriculum document for FLE was in place in the secondary schools of the province as part of the home
economics program and constituted the Central Valley FLE program. This document reflects the broad definition of FLE as outlined by the National Council on Family Relations (see Chapter II). (An outline of this curriculum is included in Appendix A.) Although other subject areas in the province and in this district include FLE concepts, or are called "FLE", they represent specialized content areas of FLE (such as human sexuality) which are subsets of the broader field, but are not synonymous with it. Because this research was concerned with understanding teacher beliefs about FLE curriculum which inform curriculum practice, the curriculum document enabled comparisons among the cases, and facilitated the examination of teacher beliefs related to FLE curriculum.

Second, according to surveys of FLE programs in North American schools (e.g., Arcus, 1983; Koblinsky, Weeks & Cooke, 1985; Sheek, 1984; The Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971), home economics appears to offer the greatest proportion of FLE programs in public school settings. Thus, this group of teachers is most likely to teach FLE within the context of schools.

Several factors influenced the decision to enter Central Valley School District. First, this district represented considerable diversity of student population based on socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Because respect for differing family patterns and family values is a central principle in FLE, attention to this dimension was considered to be an important factor in the selection of cases to be studied. Second, the home economics FLE program has been well-established in the Central Valley School District since the early 1970's. The current FLE curriculum in home economics is a revision of this earlier program and many of the home economics teachers in the district have been involved in its evolution. During the past fifteen years this program has received considerable support through professional development programs in the district. Finally, because of my experiences as a teacher of home economics and as a supervisor of home economics student teachers in this
district for a number of years and because of my professional associations with teachers and district personnel, it seemed likely that once the research proposal was accepted by the School Board, access to the schools and classrooms would be expedited.

The characteristics of the district determined the selection of the number of cases to be studied. As noted above, this district reflected diversity in socioeconomic and ethnic groups. The district is divided into six administrative areas which roughly approximate a cross section of both socioeconomic and ethnic groups in the city. It was decided that purposive sampling from across the district, i.e., selecting one case from each administrative area, would provide the range of teaching contexts necessary to consider the possible influence of program setting on teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum.

The selection of the six cases was based on judgement sampling, that is, selection criteria developed by the researcher (Burgess, 1984). These criteria included the socioeconomic status and ethnicity of the school (i.e., the context of teaching) and the teachers' experience in teaching the Central Valley FLE program (i.e., a minimum of three years). As noted above, the first criterion (the context of teaching) was identified as a possible influence on teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum. The second criterion (experience in teaching FLE) was considered to be the minimum length of time during which teachers would have resolved issues associated with beginning to teach a subject. Because it was deemed desirable to hold the curriculum content constant for the purpose of comparison among cases, it was expected that all would be teaching the same grade level of the Central Valley FLE program (i.e., either 11 or 12). Although in previous years there was a male home economics FLE teacher in this district, he was not teaching this subject when this research was undertaken. Thus, only female teachers were studied. While these initial decisions regarding the number of cases and their
selection criteria constituted the proposed research design, their realization ultimately depended upon gaining access or entry into the classrooms.

Gaining Entry to Settings

As preparations were made to gain entry into the district and to the schools themselves, it was anticipated that, in at least one school in each of the six administrative areas of the district, there would be a home economics teacher with the requisite experience currently teaching the Central Valley FLE program. However, as is common in field research, entry into the setting requires negotiation (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Woods, 1986). Moreover, such negotiation has been described as a "balancing act", where the researcher is engaged in making a series of judgments which may encompass reciprocity or compromise (Burgess, 1984; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). My experiences in gaining access and in subsequently selecting the six cases reflected both negotiation and compromise.

Following approval of the application to conduct this research by both the University Human Subjects Research Committee and the Central Valley School District Research Department, the District Principal responsible for Home Economics programs in Central Valley Schools was contacted. This individual supplied a list of secondary schools in the district, and identified potential research participants in those schools where the Central Valley FLE curriculum was taught. The District Principal also provided information about each teacher's experience teaching this program in the district and pointed out situational and personal constraints in several settings which might influence participation. For a variety of reasons, the District Principal recommended that certain teachers not be approached and this recommendation was followed. These additional "conditions" meant that, in conjunction with the original selection criteria (i.e., experience teaching the Central Valley FLE program and the context of teaching), the choice of settings was limited before any
teachers were even contacted. Based on the District Principal's recommendations, five schools and five teachers were eliminated from possible participation in the study, leaving eight teachers to be approached concerning participation in the research.

The District Principal outlined a protocol for making initial contacts with potential research participants. It was stipulated that initial contact be made by telephone and that once consent was given, a letter documenting this consent be delivered to the consenting teacher and to the senior administrator associated with the school. (A copy of this letter is included in Appendix B.)

In an informal telephone conversation with each potential participant, I introduced myself, provided a brief description of the proposed research and indicated that I wanted to discuss their potential involvement in the project. These telephone calls elicited a variety of responses. They ranged from immediate and unconditional agreement:

This sounds interesting and exciting...sure I'd love to do it.

to hesitation

Can I call you back and let you know in a few days?...I'd like to think it over.

and, in one case, scepticism

Well, I'm not sure...I'd have to have a lot of questions answered before I said OK.

Two teachers indicated that they were worried about being evaluated. One asked:

What if I'm not doing it [teaching the FLE program] right?

Another said:
It sounds like you'll be evaluating me.

Eventually each of these eight teachers agreed to meet with me individually to further discuss the research project and the extent of their involvement should they agree to participate in it.

It was anticipated that this meeting would serve several purposes. First, it would clarify the nature and purpose of the research, the teachers' involvement and responsibilities in the project and the implications of these for their classrooms. Second, the meeting would provide an opportunity to encourage the teachers' participation in the project. This allowed me to address the expressed concerns about evaluation and to suggest possible professional benefits which might accrue from involvement in the research project. These included the opportunity to reflect on their practice, which teachers may not always do consciously, and their potential contribution to the field of FLE in the development of knowledge about the practitioner. Finally, this meeting initiated the establishment of rapport with each teacher. For example, I made a point of identifying some experiences that we had in common. Indeed, the fact that I had taught FLE in Central Valley at one time, and was known professionally to several of the teachers may have facilitated access at this stage and contributed to some initial development of rapport.

Following these meetings, two teachers declined, two teachers remained uncertain and four teachers agreed to participate in the research. However, these four teachers expressed some concerns about having an observer in their classroom. These concerns appeared to be alleviated when I suggested that they would be free to stipulate times for observations and that whenever a planned visit became inappropriate or inconvenient (for whatever reason), an alternate time could be arranged.
Despite such assurances, the two teachers who were uncertain about being involved were still reluctant. One of these teachers continued to express worries about "being evaluated". However, after thinking things through, she agreed to participate, saying:

I've been evaluating myself over the past week...and I decided I'm not that bad.

The other teacher had just been assigned to a new school, and indicated that, due to the new workload and time problems, she felt:

very stressed out...if it was next year, I'd do it for sure...it sounds so interesting.

When this teacher continued to express concerns about both the pressures of being in a new school and the fear that she might not "give you what you need to get", I asked her if I could make it easier for her to be involved. She indicated:

I just need time to adjust, I guess.

After some further discussion, she agreed to participate, and, in order to give her time to adjust to the new school and its routines, I agreed not to make contact with her again (this time as a participant in the research) until the first term was well under way. (A copy of the Informed Consent document which teachers signed is included in Appendix C.)

As a consequence of these interactions, six teachers who met one of the criteria (a minimum of three years experience teaching the Central Valley FLE program) agreed to participate in the study. Unfortunately these teachers represented only five of the six administrative areas. Although this fell short of the original selection criteria, the five areas represented did provide a range of contexts of teaching, making it possible for the study to proceed. A further compromise in the design was required as four of the
teachers were currently teaching the grade 11 Central Valley FLE course, while
two were teaching the grade 12 course. However, the general purposes of the
two levels are the same and differences are evident primarily in the content
emphases. While this did not meet the specified or "ideal" proposed
conditions for the study, this new circumstance would allow for the additional
consideration of whether teacher conceptions were influenced by the level of
curriculum. Although this represents a departure from the original design, it
reflects the reality of field research in which negotiation is central to the
development of the research design.

Description of Settings

The School District

The Central Valley School District is a large metropolitan district with
a total population of about 50,000 students. Of these, approximately
two-fifths are enrolled in secondary schools. As noted earlier, the district
is divided into six administrative areas which encompass the district's
eighteen secondary schools and which are distributed geographically across the
city from west to east.

According to data provided by the Central Valley School District, the
socioeconomic and ethnic composition of the six areas differ. For example, in
the administrative areas located in the west, there is a high incidence of
professionals in the workforce and generally little incidence of unemployment
and low income. While residents in these areas are predominantly Caucasian,
there are also groups of Orientals and some Native Indians. In contrast, the
administrative areas located in the east and southeast parts of the district
reflect a higher incidence of blue collar workers and a greater incidence of
unemployment and low income. These areas are characterized by large
populations of multi-ethnic groups, particularly Oriental and Indo-Canadian.
The use of administrative areas as a measure of socioeconomic status and ethnicity is somewhat problematic. For example, the patterns of socioeconomic status in each of the six areas are not necessarily discrete and within each of the areas there is conceivably a range of levels of socioeconomic status. Indeed, the Central Valley School District provided only limited official data concerning socioeconomic status in each of the six areas. This data is based on average family income, educational level, incidence of low income and incidence of unemployment. While it is recognized that social class is not solely defined by factors such as occupation and level of income (Anyon, 1981), these were the criteria used by the district in describing the socioeconomic characteristics of each area. Similarly, only limited data concerning the ethnic composition of the six areas were available. However, because the six areas do provide both a cross-section of socioeconomic levels in the school district and a range of ethnic groups, it was decided to use them as an approximation of differences in socioeconomic status and ethnicity.

The Schools

Each administrative area includes up to four of the eighteen secondary schools in the district. While it was originally proposed that one case would be selected from each area, the availability of home economics teachers with a minimum of three years experience teaching the Central Valley FLE program

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'Anyon describes social class as "a series of relationships to several aspects of the process in society by which goods, services, and culture are produced." She indicates that one's social class is thus determined by "one's relationship to the system of ownership of physical and cultural capital, to the structure of authority at work and in society, and to the content and process of one's own work activity." According to Anyon, "all three relationships are necessary and no single one is sufficient for determining a relation to the process of production in society" (p.4). Although the notion of social class is referred to by the teachers in this study, it must not be inferred that these complex relationships identified by Anyon are necessarily embodied in their perceptions. Similarly, the socioeconomic characteristics of each administrative area are described in very general terms, and do not necessarily reflect the relationships Anyon notes.
precluded this. A general description of each school and its characteristics indicates the contexts within which the research was conducted. Information concerning the socioeconomic and ethnic composition of each school population is described using both the official data provided by the school district and the language of the teachers as they talked about the ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of students in their schools (e.g., "upper middle class", "working class", "blue collar"). To protect the identity of the teachers, each of the schools is identified using a pseudonym, the administrative areas are not named and descriptive data is general. The schools are presented alphabetically by pseudonym.

1) **Cornerbrook High School** is situated in an area which is populated by "professionals" and "white collar workers", who were frequently referred to as "a combination of upper middle class and middle class families". Although some students attending this school come from low income families, the incidence is generally low. Student enrollment is approximately 1000, and students are predominantly Caucasian.

2) **Forest Hills Secondary School** is located in a neighbourhood inhabited predominantly by "professionals", and was referred to as "upper middle class". There is little incidence of low income in this area. Approximately 1200 students, predominantly Caucasian and Oriental, are enrolled.

3) **Mountainview High School** is located in what was described as "an upper middle class" neighbourhood. Average family incomes are generally high and there is little incidence of unemployment in this area. It houses approximately 800 students who are predominantly Caucasian and Oriental.

4) **Oakland Secondary School** is located in a neighbourhood which encompasses both "working class" and "professional" families.
Average family income in this area varies, as does the incidence of unemployment. The student population numbers almost 1500 and is culturally diverse. The predominant ethnic groups represented in the school are Caucasian, Oriental and Indo-Canadian.

5) Riverside High School is situated in what was described as a "blue collar" area of the district. The average family income in this area is generally low and there is a high incidence of unemployment. The school population is predominantly Oriental (including Chinese, Vietnamese and some Japanese) and numbers about 800.

6) Seaview Secondary is located in what was referred to as a "generally blue collar" neighbourhood. There is a high incidence of unemployment and low income in this area. Approximately 1200 students are enrolled. The student population is predominantly Oriental (Chinese and Vietnamese) and Indo-Canadian.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection extended over a period of eight months (October through June) and corresponded to the duration of the school year. Although the stages of field research are interdependent and integrated (Rist, 1982) and represent a cyclical sequence of events in which the processes are repeated throughout the research project (Spradley, 1980), they are described separately for ease of discussion. However, where appropriate, the ongoing and reflexive nature of this research is elucidated.

Methods

This study employed multiple data collection strategies, including interviews, observations and document analysis. This "methodological triangulation" (Denzin, 1978) provided a means of checking the validity of the
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findings. Each method in relation to the questions of the study is described. (The data collection schedule is outlined in Table 1.)

**Interviews**

Interviews were used to gather biographical information, to elicit teachers' abstract beliefs about FLE and FLE curriculum, to gain insight into possible influences on teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and to clarify observer understandings of actions and events in classrooms. Two ninety minute formal interviews (one at the beginning of the research and one at the end) were conducted with each teacher. The first interview schedule was pilot-tested with two FLE teachers outside of the Central Valley School District and was subsequently revised. Both the initial (or pre-observational) and the final (or post-observational) interviews were taped and then transcribed. Informal or impromptu conversations with teachers following classroom observations or during telephone conversations were recorded in field notes.

The formal interviews in this study were semi-structured. According to Burgess (1984), such interviews are really "conversations with a purpose" (p.102). Non-directive or open-ended questions are used to "trigger" or stimulate the interviewee to talk about a particular topic. Occasionally, however, directive or specific questions for clarification or to explore emergent ideas or concepts are also used (Cicourel, 1964; Denzin, 1978; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). In this study, both open-ended and directive questions were included in the interview schedules. In the initial interview, questions focused on four general areas: 1) biographical information; 2) beliefs about the field of FLE; 3) beliefs about curriculum content and practice in FLE; and 4) beliefs about teaching and about education. In the final interview, questions were based primarily on classroom observations. While some of the specific or directive questions varied among the teachers
due to differences in the settings, several general areas were addressed: 1) why were certain approaches used in teaching? 2) how were topics and content selected? 3) what influences were perceived to have shaped their thinking about FLE curriculum? In addition, each teacher was asked to briefly reiterate her general beliefs about FLE and some preliminary findings were presented for validation by the teachers. (Copies of interview schedules are included in Appendices D and E.)

An important issue in conducting interviews is the development of rapport and trust with those being interviewed (e.g., see Schatzman & Strauss, 1973; Woods, 1986). According to Woods (1986), the relationship between the researcher and the interviewee ideally "transcends" the research and promotes a "bond of friendship, a feeling of togetherness and joint pursuit of a common mission" (p. 63). Such a relationship reflects a rapport that allows the interviewee to feel comfortable divulging information. Moreover, throughout the interview the researcher must maintain rapport, while at the same time controlling and monitoring the speech through active listening and in a sense manipulating the interviewee unobtrusively to gain access to their perspective (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). During the two interviews in this study, I endeavored to create a comfortable atmosphere and to develop rapport. This was of particular concern during the first interview, when I had spent relatively little time with the teachers in their respective classrooms. Maintaining eye contact, expressing empathy, encouraging the teachers to talk freely without interruption and stressing the confidentiality of their responses helped to put the teachers at ease and seemed to facilitate the interviews. As might be expected, the final interviews were longer and the teachers spoke with less hesitation and with fewer questions from me. Because the development of rapport is discussed later in this chapter under the heading of "Research Roles and Gaining Access to the Teachers' Social Worlds"
it is not elaborated here. (An example of an interview transcription is included in Appendix F.)

Observations

Observations in each teacher's classroom were conducted to determine the relationship of their abstract beliefs about FLE curriculum to their classroom practice and to provide a cross-check to validate data from interviews. With the exception of initial classroom visits (in which very general descriptive notations were made about the setting and its participants), most observations were formal, that is, focused and detailed, and concrete verbatim accounts of what the teachers actually said and did in their classrooms were recorded in field notes and transcribed into protocols. (An example is included in Appendix G.) These then provided what Burgess (1984) calls a "continuous record of the situations, events and conversations [which were observed]" (p.167). Because it is clearly impossible to record everything in the setting, some selection necessarily occurred. While the theoretical framework provided initial sensitizing concepts (see Denzin, 1978) for classroom observations, additional concepts emerged and helped to progressively focus subsequent observations.

During the course of the research, fifteen classroom observations for each teacher were conducted. A schedule of these visits was developed in consultation with each of the teachers. Because the Central Valley FLE curriculum document included four topics at the grade 11 level and three at the grade 12 level, it was anticipated that fifteen observations staggered over the course of eight months of the school year would provide a representative cross section of the major components of the program as it was being taught. Although an attempt was made to sample across these major areas of the curriculum, the order in which teachers chose to teach these particular topics and their decisions about what content to include or to exclude from
their program prohibited such discrete sampling. Observations were conducted at different points in the temporal cycles of each setting. To facilitate investigation of the similarities and differences among teachers and their settings, observations with each teacher were usually staggered (i.e., some time elapsed between classroom visits and these were purposely extended over the course of the school year).

Once in the settings, it became apparent that negotiation concerning planned classroom visits was critical to the successful completion of the research project. For example, unscheduled school events (such as assemblies) necessitated adjustments to the planned observation schedules. Similarly, illness, unanticipated personal and professional commitments and teacher perceptions that "this just isn't a good time for you to come", contributed to considerable re-scheduling of classroom visits throughout the course of the research. Periodically I sensed the need to observe some lessons in succession (usually triggered by an "unfinished" discussion) or was requested by the teacher to visit the next class "to see what happens next". Thus, as the research progressed, the original plan to space observations evenly over the school year was repeatedly revised.

Documents

Documents already present in the settings, such as the official Central Valley FLE curriculum document, course outlines and handouts used or developed by the teachers, and some guided writing completed by the teachers at my request were also collected to complement and extend other data. The former were used to identify beliefs about FLE curriculum in use and to verify data from interviews and observations. The latter were intended to elicit abstract beliefs related to the field of FLE and to FLE curriculum, and to verify data from other sources. These activities included providing a written definition of FLE, recording thoughts associated with some FLE concepts and rank-ordering
different ways in which students may be involved in learning in FLE. In addition, each teacher was given the opportunity to keep a reflective diary for recording her thoughts and impressions about FLE during the course of the research. This was presented as an optional activity and, due to what most teachers described as time pressures, only two actually engaged in this activity. However, as the research progressed, all of the teachers reflected on their beliefs about FLE and on their classroom practice in casual conversations with me following most classroom observations. In a sense these conversations replaced the reflective diaries, and the field notes from these were then included as data. (A copy of the Guided Writing Activities is included in Appendix H.)

Analysis

In fieldwork, analysis is not a distinct phase of the research process but is ongoing, beginning with problem formulation and initial data gathering, and continuing throughout data collection (Burgess, 1984; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Strauss, 1987). In this study, the general strategies of speculative analysis (including the use of sensitizing concepts), coding and categorizing, checking for the frequency and distribution of concepts and categories which appear in the data, and validation of these concepts and categories through the use of triangulation were employed.

The sensitizing concepts which initially guided data collection were several conceptual categories drawn from the literature of FLE and of general curriculum theory. These included beliefs about the purpose and process of FLE, beliefs about the role of the teacher in FLE; beliefs about teaching in FLE, beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE, and beliefs about families in FLE. These categories oriented data collection during interviews and observations, and were used in analysis to delineate teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum.
At the same time, however, certain recurring words, themes and images emerged during data collection. These became additional sensitizing concepts which guided the collection of data and which were employed during subsequent data analysis. For example, the word "story" recurred frequently and was evident in some teacher interviews and in the discourse of teachers and students in classrooms. The recurrence of this word early in data collection prompted me to look further for evidence of stories as the data were gathered.

Once data collection was completed, the sensitizing concepts and conceptual categories were used to code field notes, interview transcripts and selected documents for evidence or indicators of the concept or category. Such evidence included actions, events or words and phrases which were observed or included in documents and in dialogue.

Similarly, the curriculum conceptions were delineated using the five conceptual categories identified above. Interview data was coded for evidence of these categories. When conceptions were compared with classroom practice, the same conceptual categories were used to code the data of classroom observations and documents used in the setting with students.

Methodological triangulation (i.e., the use of multiple methods for data collection) validated the concepts and categories as they were identified and delineated. This triangulation involved scrutinizing the data from interviews, observations and documents for evidence of the predominant categories and concepts. When these appeared in data collected by all three methods, their validity was strengthened.

As the categories and concepts were firmly identified and delineated, they were also considered in terms of their frequency and distribution in the data. The greater the frequency and the more widespread the distribution throughout multiple data sources, the stronger the validity of the findings (Denzin, 1978). At the same time, the data was scrutinized for negative
evidence which might refute the claim that a particular category was indeed a substantive finding.

As the curriculum conceptions were delineated, they were labelled according to the central theme which characterized each. These themes related primarily to the teachers' understandings of the aims and purposes of FLE. Emergent concepts and themes contributed to the construction of two additional analytic categories ("tensions and constraints" and "images of FLE curriculum practice").

Research Roles and Gaining Access into the Teachers' Social Worlds

Gaining Access to the Teachers' Social Worlds

Gaining access into the teachers' social worlds differs from gaining entry into the research setting. Such access involves gaining the trust of participants and assuming or negotiating a role in the setting itself (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Once in the setting, the researcher's aim is to penetrate beyond the first level of social entry to what Goffman (1959) calls "the backstage" where the "actor can drop his front, forgo his lines, and step out of character" (p. 112). When this level has been accessed, the researcher has begun to enter the social construction of the setting.

In this study, the development of rapport and trust began during the first meeting with teachers concerning their potential involvement in the research project. I was conscious from the beginning of what Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) refer to as the development of a "working identity". For example, making a point of identifying our common experiences related to teaching FLE assisted the teachers to place me within their realm of experience and to relate to me as a person and as a teacher as well as a researcher (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983 for further elaboration of this
point). Indeed, Goffman (1955) refers to the importance of one's "personal front" or the impression made upon entering the setting. Because of the expressed concerns about my potential "evaluation" of their teaching, I took every opportunity to be sensitive to and to empathize with their experiences as FLE teachers and to occasionally reveal some of my own teaching experiences. Such actions helped to establish that I had an understanding of their lives in the FLE classroom and of the kinds of events that often occur there. I also gave the teachers considerable control over determining times for classrooms visits and attempted to accommodate their expressed needs and wishes whenever possible.

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), certain characteristics of the researcher, such as age, gender and ethnic heritage may shape relationships within the research setting and contribute to or interfere with the development of rapport and trust. In this research, both my age and my gender may have facilitated entry into the social worlds of the teachers. With one exception, my age was within five or six years of the ages of the teachers. Because of our chronological life stage, it is possible that we were experiencing common concerns and events. In fact, issues related to career development and the difficulties of balancing roles as professionals and wives or mothers were periodically topics of casual conversation. Similarly, the fact that we were all the same gender may have facilitated access to the social lives of the teachers.

As the research progressed, there was considerable evidence of the development of rapport and trust. On several occasions, some of the teachers made unsolicited telephone calls to me after a class in which there had been little time to chat. I also received invitations to participate in several social functions unrelated to the research project. Questions from many of the teachers about my personal life also suggested that they had accepted me into their worlds and wanted to know me as a person as well as a researcher.
One teacher offered to lend me some tapes about parenthood, and another lent me a book in which she thought I might be interested. Indeed, over the course of the research, I developed a "professional friendship" with these six teachers which was characterized by warmth and caring beyond the concerns of the research itself.

**Research Roles**

Related to rapport and trust is the establishment of research roles that will facilitate the collection of data. Four "theoretically possible roles" for those engaging in field research have been identified (Junker, 1960). These include complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer. These roles vary in the extent to which the researcher actually engages in the setting and participates as a member of the group. The first and last of these roles (i.e., complete participant and complete observer) are generally "covert" in that the research role is concealed from the participants in the research setting. In the other two roles (i.e., participant as observer or observer as participant) the researcher's research intentions are made explicit.

It has been suggested that both the role assumed by the researcher (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983) and the stage of research (Oelsen & Whittaker, 1967) will influence the data that becomes available. As complete participant, for example, the researcher risks "going native" or over-identifying with the group and taking the setting and its social structures for granted (Woods, 1986). In contrast, complete observation inhibits penetration beyond surface levels. During the early phases of research, roles are still emerging and typically general or surface information is obtained. As roles stabilize over time, however, more detailed, specific information is yielded (Oelsen & Whittaker, 1967).
In this study, I assumed the role of participant as observer. Although I principally functioned in my declared role as researcher (in which my actual involvement in classroom activities was minimal), occasionally I adopted the role of "teacher helper". This role was evident when teachers actively solicited my advice or my opinion (both during the class and outside of class) or when they asked me to comment or to add to class discussions. In this sense, I became a kind of "resident resource person". Indeed, one of the teachers called me a "classroom guest speaker". Thus, throughout the study, my degree of involvement in the setting varied. According to several writers (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Hammersley & Atkinson 1983; Merriam, 1988; Oelsen & Whittaker, 1967), such variation in involvement is usual in field research, and provides access to different kinds of data.

Related to this degree of involvement in the activities of the research setting is maintaining a balance between being an "insider" and an "outsider". Merriam (1988) describes this maintenance of marginality as "a schizophrenic activity in that one usually participates but not to the extent of becoming totally absorbed in the activity...[as] one is participating, one is trying to stay sufficiently detached to observe and analyze" (p.94). Such was my experience. In two of the classrooms, I encountered the urge to "go native". These classes and the teachers were so "inviting", that I frequently found it difficult to achieve the balance between involvement and distance. The following excerpt from my field diary illustrates this point:

They were discussing the realities of marriage relationships and that after getting married there is usually a let down. The discussion was lively; all the students had something to contribute, and not all agreed with her. She shared some of her own experiences, then asked me to do the same. Because I like this class so much, I almost started to do it, then found myself instantly backing off...an unconscious "hold it...this isn't appropriate for me to do". It was a struggle to retreat...I didn't want her to think that I wasn't interested or that I didn't think that this was important, so I just agreed with her and left it at that. She does seem to want me to be more involved, and sometimes it's a struggle not to be.
While gaining access to the teachers' social worlds was of paramount concern at the beginning of the research, withdrawing from the settings and disengaging from the participants' lives became a central issue as data collection neared completion. Because the project would cease and the setting itself would change with the end of the school year, everyone knew that our research relationship was what Adler and Adler (1987) call "time bound". However, because we had all grown quite close, leaving the setting and discontinuing our interaction and routines was bound to be difficult. To prepare for this inevitability, I began to talk about the impending closure to our work during the last month of data collection.

In view of the concerns expressed by several of the teachers at the beginning of the research, I felt that it was also important to leave the settings with some understanding of their perceptions of their involvement in the study. Thus as my time in the settings came to an end, I asked each teacher to reflect on her experiences over the course of the research.

As might be expected, several teachers talked about their initial discomfort during classroom observations:

I was nervous the first time you were here...I'm not sure why...I guess...having a peer observe you is disconcerting.

However, as I remained in the setting, such discomfort seemed to disappear:

As the year progressed, as you came back more often, I was less affected by your presence in the class, and you were never obtrusive.

Most seemed to consider that there were some benefits to having another adult in the classroom. One teacher indicated that another adult provides support:

I really enjoyed the presence of another adult in the class...somebody with the same background...somebody to talk to, to give some positive feedback...that's a really positive focus.
Another suggested that my presence stimulated her to think about alternative teaching arrangements:

One of the things I thought about was...in a class such as this, it might be beneficial...to have two people...to co-lead a class...you could work together.

Every teacher expressed the view that participating in the research encouraged them to think about their FLE teaching practices. Indeed, most talked about the opportunity to be reflective about what they do. One teacher said:

I think [the experience] has helped me as a teacher clarify my feelings about Family Life...I think I sit down and reflect a lot...but you get caught up in the teaching and just to sit back and say 'now what do I really believe'...was great...it helped me a lot.

Similarly, another revealed:

I probably thought more about what I was doing and why I was doing it...I was reflecting on what I was doing a little bit more than I would've been.

These comments suggest that there is considerable potential for teachers to benefit professionally through their involvement in ethnographic field research. Such benefits may include the opportunity to reflect on their practices and to interact and confer with another professional within the classroom setting. At the same time, the teachers' expressions of tensions at the beginning of the study underscore the importance of rapport development throughout a research project of this nature, and emphasize the significance of gaining access to the research participants' social worlds beyond surface levels. Had the teachers continued to feel uncomfortable with my presence in their classrooms, it is likely that both their involvement in the research and thus the data itself would have been limited. However, the teachers' candor during interviews and conversations, their demonstrations of commitment to the
study and their expressions of eagerness to read the final report indicated that they had developed a stake in the project and that access beyond surface levels had indeed been achieved.

After leaving the settings, I called each teacher to arrange for the final interview. In this way, I prolonged our interaction. Similarly, following the last interview, I sent each teacher a note thanking her for her participation and indicating my desire to keep in touch. Each teacher was contacted by telephone several months later and some of the data analysis and interpretation was shared with them for corroboration. Because these teachers had willingly opened their lives and their classrooms to me and because of my ethical commitment to them as participants in the research, I felt that it was crucial that I disengaged gradually.

Dealing With Subjectivity

The researcher's maintenance of marginality in the setting is critical for assuming the perspective of the person being observed on the one hand, and for viewing action from the perspective of the outsider on the other. According to Wilson (1977), it is the ability to view behaviour from multiple perspectives and the "tensions [inherent] in [the different] points of view" that prevents the researcher from engaging in biased subjectivity (p.259). To facilitate this "disciplined subjectivity", the researcher keeps a field diary, in which to record "interpretive asides" or notes about personal reactions to what has been seen or heard (Peshkin, 1988; Smith, 1982). In this study, the field diary was the principle means of reflecting upon my subjectivity, of raising questions about why I responded either positively or negatively to events in the classrooms and of identifying areas of potential bias. While space precludes reporting on all of these, some examples illustrate how I dealt with issues related to researcher subjectivity.
At the beginning of the research, I was concerned about the possible influence of my previous professional role as a supervisor of student teachers. I therefore made a point of being conscious of this past role and avoided making observations which were in any way critical of what the teachers were doing. When evaluative or judgmental comments did come to mind, however, I was careful to record them and to reflect on why they had emerged in the first place. Similarly, my past experiences as a FLE teacher were a potential source of bias. When I occasionally found myself thinking "what a wonderful idea" or "that's not the way I would do it", I again recorded these instances in the field diary and tried to reconsider the occurrence in terms of what it meant to the teacher within the context of her setting. I also considered the possibility that my past experiences in schools would make it difficult for me to "make the familiar strange" (Wolcott, 1985). Again, I used the field diary to raise questions about the events and activities in the settings and about the behaviour of the teachers. This reflexivity (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983) enabled me to monitor my subjective biases and to focus instead on uncovering and understanding the meanings of actions and events in the settings.

Validity and Reliability

A central methodological issue associated with field research is concerned with problems of validity and reliability, i.e., the applicability and credibility of research findings (e.g., see LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Merriam, 1988). Careful consideration of the various factors in the research process may contribute to strengthening both. A discussion of these issues will clarify how validity and reliability were enhanced in this study.

Validity is concerned with the accuracy or soundness of the data collected (internal validity) and the extent to which findings may be generalizable to other settings (external validity). Several features of
field research contribute to its generally high degree of \textit{internal validity}. For example, data are collected in the natural setting that reflects the reality of the participants being studied (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Because the researcher is the research instrument who collects detailed descriptions of the phenomena under study, firsthand judgments can be made about whether what was intended to be measured was indeed measured (Burgess, 1984). Moreover, the researcher's extended presence in the setting means that data can be validated and re-checked constantly. Internal validity may be further enhanced by using what Denzin (1978) calls methodological triangulation, or multiple methods of data collection. In this study, three methods of data collection were used: observation, interview and document analysis. Such methodological triangulation strengthens the soundness of the findings. Similarly, the use of "member checks", or taking the data and interpretations back to the individuals studied and asking whether the results are plausible strengthens internal validity (Merriam, 1988). Following data analysis, the six teachers in this study were given the portrayals of their curriculum conceptions for corroboration and during the final interview, some preliminary findings based on ongoing analysis were also shared with the teachers for validation. Finally, according to Merriam (1988), the clear explication of researcher biases (including the theoretical orientation guiding the research) also increases internal validity. In this study, not only are the theoretical assumptions and perspectives guiding the research explained, but the researcher's personal and professional biases were also made explicit through the use of a field diary.

\textbf{External validity or generalizability} in field research is often considered to be problematic (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Merriam, 1988; Woods, 1986). According to Merriam (1988), the issue centers on whether generalization from naturalistic field studies is possible, and if so, in what ways. There appear to be several approaches to dealing with this issue. For
some, generalizability is viewed in terms of traditional research designs, and it is either assumed that findings are not generalizable or attempts are made to strengthen it. In this latter view, the use of multiple cases to study the same phenomena, comparisons among cases and the use of sampling procedures enhance generalizability (e.g., Yin, 1984). Another approach to dealing with this issue suggests that in field research the aim is not to generalize to groups not studied, but to strive instead for comparability and transferability (e.g., LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Similarly, others suggest that "the general is manifested in the particular", and that "the search is...for concrete universals...by studying a specific case in detail and then comparing it with other cases studied in equally great detail" (Erikson, 1986, p.130). Still others propose that "reader or user generalizability" is most appropriate. In this instance, the reader determines whether the study's findings are relevant or applicable to their own situation (e.g., Merriam, 1988).

In this study, the selection of multiple cases according to some specified criteria was intended to increase the potential generalizability of the findings and corresponds to Wood's (1986) depiction of generalizability in field research. According to Woods, there are two opposing views of generalizability in field research: the ideographic (depth of understanding of a particular case) and the nomothetic (generalizing for theory development). He suggests that in field research these are not mutually exclusive but exist along a continuum. Thus, generalizability in field research may approach variations of these and combine elements of description, understanding and explanation. In this study the primary aim is for increased understanding of several cases which represent a range of variables. Although generalizability is not presumed, an effort was made to select cases on the basis of criteria perceived to be important. While these cases are not necessarily representative of the large population of school-based family life
educators (in that not all teach in urban areas or have similar training in the content and methodology of FLE), there is the possibility that their experiences might be similar to others in comparable situations.

Reliability refers to the extent to which research can be replicated. If the reliability of a piece of research is strong, other researchers using the same methods should obtain similar results. In this regard, field research is generally considered to be weak. Because the aim of field research is to understand events as they occur in their natural setting, variables are usually not manipulated. Whereas in experimental research variables are manipulated to control or explain variance among research subjects, in ethnographic field research, differences among subjects become part of the focus of study and no attempt is made to control for them. In addition, written reports of field research vary considerably in the comprehensiveness of the accounts of methods of data collection and analysis and make it difficult to perform replicative studies on the basis of a research report alone. Finally, lack of design specificity among many field researchers reduces reliability.

However, reliability may be strengthened through the use of several strategies, and where possible and appropriate in this study, careful consideration was given to these. For example, the research design and data collection procedures were carefully described and the methods of analysis were explained. The role of the researcher and the relationships of the researcher with those being studied were also identified (see Vidich, 1970). And, because social circumstances may influence the information revealed, descriptions of the "physical, social and interpersonal contexts within which data were gathered" were documented (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p.39).
Summary

This study employed the methods of ethnographic field research which is characterized by an emphasis on understanding social processes in natural settings. The aim of this research approach is to confront reality from the perspectives of those being studied. The major assumption guiding this research (that teachers are active agents constructing their worlds) corresponds to the assumptions that underlie the sociological perspective of symbolic interaction. Thus this perspective, which emphasizes the social construction of meaning, constituted the methodological orientation within which the research was conducted.

This research examined the ways in which teachers conceptualize or interpret FLE curriculum and the relationship of their curriculum conceptions to their classroom practice. The research design was a multiple case study of six female secondary school FLE teachers in a large metropolitan school district in western Canada. They were selected using judgment sampling based on the context in which the FLE program they teach is offered and on the length of their experience teaching this program. The methods used included participant observation, interviews and document analysis. The data were analyzed using a framework of conceptual categories drawn from the literature of curriculum theory and of FLE. Two emergent analytic categories were also identified.
CHAPTER IV THE FINDINGS:

TEACHER CONCEPTIONS OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION CURRICULUM

In this chapter, the findings of the study related to the first two research questions are presented. The conceptions of FLE curriculum expressed by teachers are individually portrayed, and their perceptions of the influences on these conceptions are identified.

Teacher Conceptions of Family Life Education Curriculum: Case Portrayals

The first question of this study focused on identifying teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum. These conceptions reflect the teachers' abstract beliefs and assumptions about FLE curriculum as they were expressed in formal interviews, in casual conversation and in guided writing activities in which they wrote about their definitions of FLE and responded to some statements about FLE. These curriculum conceptions are described using the dimensions of the theoretical framework delineated in Chapter II: 1) beliefs about the purpose and process of FLE; 2) beliefs about the role of the teacher in FLE; 3) beliefs about the learner and the teaching process in FLE; 4) beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE; and 5) beliefs about the family.

As the data were analyzed, central themes which characterized each teacher's conception of FLE curriculum became apparent. These themes related primarily to the teachers' understandings of the aims and purposes of FLE, and were used to label and describe their respective curriculum conceptions. For convenience, the conceptions are presented along a continuum from "micro" (i.e., emphasis on the individual) to "macro" (i.e., emphasis on the individual within the broader context of family and society).

The second question of the study concerned the influences which were perceived by teachers to have shaped their conceptions of FLE curriculum. These influences were derived from the analysis of interview data and included
the following factors which teachers identified: personal life experiences, professional development activities and contacts with professionals in the field, curriculum documents, academic preparation and mentors.

Each subject portrayal begins with a description of the teacher's personal and professional background and is followed by a characterization of her conception of FLE curriculum and an account of her perceptions of influences on its development. In keeping with ethnographic field research, these conceptions and accounts of influences are both descriptive and analytic, and represent the integration of data and interpretation which occurred throughout data collection and analysis. To protect anonymity, pseudonyms have been used, and only general biographical information is reported.

Case Portrayal: Julie

Biographical Information

Julie is in her late thirties, childless, divorced and remarried. Since completing a degree in home economics and a one-year teacher certification program, Julie has been teaching home economics (including the Central Valley FLE program) for approximately ten years. During this time, she has taught briefly in a small rural community and for an extended period in several secondary schools in the Central Valley School District.

According to Julie, she became involved in teaching FLE content during her first years of teaching in a small rural high school:

The first year I was there [in this school] there was no [FLE program offered]...so I got it started.

She indicated that her interest in the subject was in part a motivating factor:
I really enjoyed the topics...I liked the topics...and my Methods course [in university] had given me a guideline of what to teach and how to teach...and so I introduced it.

Since moving several years ago to this district, Julie has continued to teach FLE as part of the home economics program.

Curriculum Conception: "Authority of Facts and Information"

Julie's curriculum conception is characterized primarily by an emphasis on facts and information. This orientation is reflected in her understanding of the purpose of FLE and in her stated perceptions of the importance of information in accomplishing its aims. Her conception also reflects a secondary emphasis on advice and advice-giving, which is related to her beliefs about how knowledge (i.e., facts and information) is used and about her role as a teacher in FLE.

Beliefs About the Purpose of FLE

Julie's view of FLE appears to be based on the assumption that, throughout the life cycle, individuals and families will inevitably encounter problems and difficulties. In these situations, facts and information can be used to determine what to do and how to cope. This focus on problems is apparent in Julie's description of the purpose of FLE:

I think the purpose of [FLE] is to make life a little bit easier for kids, to prepare them and give them an idea that things happen out there...the topics that we cover are things that will happen to them throughout their life...everything we do in [FLE] you run into at some point in time in your life...and [FLE] really softens the blow almost.

Julie considers facts and information to be central in FLE:

I think facts are important...the information that you get [in FLE] you will use...every day of your life.
This centrality of facts and information is evident in Julie's perceptions of how it can assist in accomplishing the purposes of FLE. For example, she believes that information can help students to anticipate and to cope with certain inevitable occurrences in life:

I teach them about life...[and] some things to expect...or things that they'll be dealing with in their lifetime....and the information [in the course] helps them to cope with what is ahead.

At the same time, information can direct students toward resources which might be helpful in solving or coping with a problem:

You [as a teacher] can give them a lot of information and tell them what [help] is available...make them aware that there are places to go for help.

Finally, information can also be used to encourage or to convince students to follow a particular course of action:

I will try and persuade them...show them, give them facts...to show them that it's not the best way to do things.

Indeed, this latter view of the role of facts and information in FLE is reflected in Julie's perceptions of her roles as a FLE teacher.

Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher in FLE

Julie sees a dual role as a FLE teacher: imparter of information and advice-giver. Her role as imparter of information is reflected primarily in her comments concerning the presentation of factual information to students about what she calls "family life topics". Indeed, she describes this role as:

To give them [the students] information.

Of her advice-giving role she says:
I tend to give them [the students] advice...but I'm not judgmental, I don't say 'no, don't do it'...I try to persuade them by giving them facts...I try to have them see the problems and...the results.

It appears that Julie also considers information gleaned from her personal experience to justify some advice-giving:

I know some of the things I've gone through, and I think 'God, if I'd only known'...I'm almost like a parent I guess who knows that this and this should be done...part of it is my own experience.

The roles Julie describes imply an authoritarian view of the student-teacher relationship, in which the teacher selects content and presents facts as compelling evidence for pursuing a particular course of action.

Beliefs About the Learner and the Teaching Process in FLE

Julie envisions two dimensions of the learner in FLE: 1) a recipient or consumer of knowledge and 2) an active participant in learning. The first dimension is reflected in her concern with delivering certain information which, based on her personal perceptions, she presumes students need to know:

I decide what I feel is important [for them to know]...based on what I think that the kids need...to help them through life.

This view of students as consumers of knowledge is apparent in Julie's description of her use of worksheets and exercises to reinforce the content she teaches:

I think the exercises are [useful] because....it'll sink in more...it helps to ingrain it in their minds.

Similarly, she talks about students recalling information at a later date:

You never know whether they remember that much...[but] things will probably click in when they come to it [in their own lives].
Julie's stated use of tests as evidence that learning has taken place also depicts the learner as a consumer of knowledge:

I will give tests on the basic theory....and I think that's one of the ways you determine their learning and understanding.

At the same time, Julie appears to consider the students to be active learners, that is, students must translate new material into their personal frame of reference. Her comments about how students perceive certain topics that are introduced in FLE seem to reflect this notion:

If they're not experiencing it themselves, they can empathize to a point, but they really don't know anything about it.

This view of students as active learners also appears to be related to her stated use of discussions in her FLE classes. For example, she asserts:

In FLE I think kids learn by listening and talking and sharing their experiences [in discussions]...with discussion people can offer all their points of view...[so that] they can see that there are a lot of differences [in people]...not everybody is the same.

Julie's view of the students as active learners is also apparent in her comments about the use of student journals and discussion to determine how information is being personally processed:

I use the journals to see how much they have taken in...how much they've understood...and in discussions to a certain extent that happens too.

Thus Julie appears to perceive the processes in FLE to embody elements of directive teaching and receptive learning as well as the construction of personal meaning through experience and interaction.

**Beliefs About Knowledge in FLE**

The preceding suggests that Julie considers factual knowledge to be particularly relevant in FLE. At the same time, however, she appears to
recognize that such knowledge is personally processed or reconstructed by students. The former is reflected in her concern for the delivery and acquisition of facts and the application of these facts in personal and family living, while the latter is apparent in her concern for student interaction and the sharing of personal experiences. Julie also believes that personal experience is a source of knowledge. This is apparent in the role her own experience seems to play in the selection of some content to be learned. And, for Julie, facts and information interact with emotion:

In FLE we deal with facts...some facts, and then...we talk about gut feelings and emotions.

From Julie's perspective, however, there is a primary emphasis on information processing, where information is ostensibly used to solve problems and to convince students to follow a particular course of action. As the teacher, Julie provides the students with the necessary concepts and information.

**Beliefs About the Family in FLE**

According to Julie, families are an influence on individual development. She states, for example, that

they affect a person's personality.

She also considers that they perform quite specific functions:

[The family is] a unit that should fill basic needs, including love and security.

She describes families as potentially assuming many forms:

[A family] can be single parent, two parents and kids, a couple, and can include grandparents.

However, although she appears to recognize the impact of families on
human development, she makes surprisingly little reference to them when
talking about FLE. Indeed, she comments:

Actually I don't talk that much about families as such [in the course].
She talks instead about "the family section" that she teaches in her grade 12
course:

I do families in other cultures so that they can see how...other
families live and the different value systems...and we talk about family
roles.

Thus, her stated emphasis appears to be more on relationships in general:

I don't want to emphasize the family relationship...I emphasize
relationships in general...because I think everything we do in life is
going to be dealing with other people and communicating with other
people...your whole life is going to revolve around that...relationships
and family relationships too...you have to be able to listen and you
have to be able to...not stomp out of the room...but work things
through.

These comments suggest that Julie considers successful family interaction to
stem from successful interpersonal relationships, which may or may not include
those associated with families.

**Perceived Influences on Curriculum Conception**

According to Julie, her own life experiences have had the most
significant impact on her beliefs about FLE. She indicates:

I think...the most important influence for me, is myself and my
experiences...I've been married and divorced...and I can tell them more
from personal experience...and you know, some of the things I know I've
gone through, and I think, 'God, if I'd only known'.

Julie also talks about how she sees the curriculum guide to have influenced
her thinking about FLE:
...[the curriculum guide] presents the ideas and then I suppose I glom onto those certain...things I really enjoy and that I really develop and I feel there's an importance to them...[the guide] has been an influence on what I might teach but not in my feeling of importance [for teaching the course].

She also comments on her perceptions of professional development activities on her thinking about FLE:

It's [professional development] been very good in gathering information and in finding ways of presenting it...but in actually influencing my reasons for teaching it [the content], I don't think they've had that much of an influence.

In talking about her academic preparation, Julie states that an education course was more influential in her thinking about FLE than courses in content taken during her academic training:

I had all the university courses [related to the family and human development]...the standard ones that everyone takes...but they're just topics...[the education course] was really useful...in actually putting the course together to teach.

Thus for Julie, personal life experiences appear to have had the greatest influence on her curriculum conception (i.e., they have contributed to the development of her beliefs about the purpose of FLE and a rationale for teaching it). She perceives that other factors, such as the curriculum document, professional development activities and academic courses have influenced the content of and approach to what she teaches, but have had little impact on her beliefs about FLE in general.

Case Portrayal: Candace

Biographical Information

Candace is in her late thirties, divorced and the single parent of a preschool child. After receiving a Bachelor of Education with a major in home
economics, Candace has been teaching high school home economics for about ten years. She taught for one year in an isolated Native Indian community and since then has been teaching home economics in the Central Valley School District. During this time, she has taken two brief leaves of absence because, in her words:

It keeps me fresh, and makes me feel excited [about teaching].

According to Candace, it was not until she was teaching home economics in this large urban center that she first became involved in teaching FLE. The Central Valley FLE course was included as part of her teaching assignment, and she expressed some reluctance about taking it on:

I know when [the home economics coordinator] first threw me in there [to teach FLE] I thought 'oh no, this is really uncomfortable'...I felt I didn't have enough [academic background] to feel comfortable teaching it.

Curriculum Conception: "Skills for Living"

The beliefs that Candace expresses in her conversation and writing suggest that she views FLE to be a preparation for one's future encounters with the life stages through which all individuals inevitably progress. Her curriculum conception is generally characterized by a focus on the skills required for such passage through life. This interpretation of FLE as "skills for living" is particularly predominant in her views about the purpose and practice of FLE.

Beliefs About the Purpose of FLE

Candace assumes that individuals and families will probably encounter problems as they proceed through life stages. This concern with problems and difficulties is apparent in the way she defines FLE:
FLE is an overview of life at its broadest from birth to death and everything that can possibly happen in between at all the life stages...[it covers] just a lot of what they're going to get into...what they're going to have to deal with...in their lives.

She also believes that while not all people may experience the same problems or difficulties in life, FLE can help to prepare them should they have to contend with them:

It doesn't hurt them to go through these things...just so that if something does happen in their lives at a later date...they've had an introduction to it...it won't be such a shock...it will possibly take the edge off some of these more unhappy situations that they become for some of us.

From her perspective, the acquisition of skills will enable students to manage such future dilemmas:

I hope [in this class] they get a lot of different ways of looking at the same problem and different ways of dealing with the same problem...a lot of hands-on skills for some of the things they have to deal with.

Indeed, Candace appears to believe that certain skills are particularly essential for dealing with and solving life's problems. She refers to these as:

the basic skills of living...skills that they can really put to use.

In this regard, she considers communication to be especially significant:

The most important concept I feel....[in FLE] is the communication skills...the communication skills are always coming up, will always be coming up...and I just see it as probably the most important skill they can ever pick up for the rest of their lives.

She explains how she sees the relevance of communication for solving problems:

We [always] come back to communication and how you can work problems out...most of the students have problems with people in their lives...right now it seems to be girlfriends, boyfriends, teachers, parents and it's all communication.
Thus Candace's view of the purpose of FLE focuses on the acquisition of certain skills and awareness of the various life stages in order to prepare students to cope with potential problems they may encounter in their future lives.

Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher in FLE

Candace perceives that she has two principal teaching roles in FLE. Related to her perception of the importance of skill development is her view of her role as "director":

The teacher I can see as being a director...you can set the scene, you can tell them what it is you are wanting to achieve in this hour, and you can give them some tools for working at it.

In her role as director, Candace also views herself as modelling the skills that she teaches students. This is apparent in her description of how she helps to diffuse anger during class discussion:

The director [also] comes in where you have two students who are getting violent reactions from each other and we have to diffuse that and just get rid of the anger and let them see what they're really dealing with...the issues that they're dealing with...I think it's a good experience for the rest of the class...some of them are very uncomfortable around anger...because they've never seen anger dealt with in a positive way...or channelled to a positive purpose.

Candace also considers herself to be an administrator of the knowledge prescribed by the curriculum:

I'm giving them the materials...putting out the information that's out there...getting information across to the kids.

Both of these roles imply an authoritarian student-teacher relationship in which Candace directs, demonstrates and administers the content of her course. Her perception of such a relationship is illustrated in her comments about student input into course development:
I...give them the outline...and [say to the students] 'if you're not too interested in certain aspects of it, I'll give you the basics and we'll go on to the next, but you have to be willing to accept what I have to give you as far as the basics'.

Similarly, Candace's perceptions of students echo this kind of authoritarian relationship. For example, she says of her students:

They think they've got all the answers...[they're] so set in their beliefs...that I think many of them don't allow themselves to accept any other way except the way they know...and they're very, very unrealistic.

This implies that, from Candace's point of view, a central role of the teacher is to direct students in their learning and to assist them in expanding their frames of reference by providing them with the necessary concepts and information.

Beliefs About the Learner and Teaching in FLE

Candace has a dual view of the learner in FLE. The first view reflects a learner who is a recipient of knowledge. This view of the learner is apparent in Candace's description of the students as a "captive audience":

They're a captive audience [in FLE]...you don't have to let them leave...they are there to learn what you've decided that you feel is important information for them to learn...they don't necessarily have a lot of say in it...they are listening and discussing what I have chosen to be the topic.

In the same way, she talks about FLE as an opportunity to impose a few more ideas...into their thought structure.

Similarly, she comments that in a FLE class

The students are really just getting a lot of knowledge dumped on them.
This view of the learner as a recipient of knowledge is also reflected in Candace's stated approach to teaching this subject. For example, her rationale for the use of worksheets, her perceptions of the role of student notebooks and her approach to student evaluation all suggest that the learner is acquiring knowledge. She describes worksheets in the following way:

Worksheets are very important because...they help to bring back the things we do in class...they trigger a lot of things that we...discuss in class.

Similarly, she believes that student notebooks will reinforce what is taught in the classroom, and will provide a compendium of information about skills and strategies for future reference:

It is a tool that they can go back to five years down the road when they may find they're married with children and they're not very happy, and they may remember that they talked about it at some point in [FLE] and well, what did we talk about...so I say to them, this notebook of yours can be used as a tool later on...it's such an important tool for them...there's so much good information there.

Candace also refers to the acquisition of information in some of her evaluation techniques:

I've broken it down so that 65% is on the theory...[and] they can do very well on their theory...they can get 65% of their mark by...giving me what I'm trying to get out of them.

At the same time, however, Candace appears to also consider the learner in FLE to be emotionally responsive and individualistic. For example, she asserts:

Sometimes you put out an idea and you've got these 28 bodies all reacting....they're very open...they'll let you know very quickly whether something's working or not.

Similarly, she talks about the role of feelings in FLE:
There's freedom to express the way you feel...[and] expressing how you feel is very important in [FLE] because everyone else has to learn that the way you feel is quite valid for you and they have to accept that's how you feel...and we have so many different students...and sometimes they get into very heated arguments.

Such comments suggest that Candace sees the learner in FLE to have an emotional dimension, which may be somewhat separate from the cognitive dimension described earlier. This separation seems to be particularly apparent in her evaluation system. As noted previously, Candace primarily assesses students on the theory or content that she teaches. However, she also evaluates in another way:

They've got 15% [of their grade] that's a very difficult section...they have got to show some positive emotion and some willingness to risk...it's difficult because so much of what we do...is emotions, attitudes...accepting the way other people feel.

Candace's comments about the use of discussion in her classroom suggest that she considers personal meaning and personal experience to be an aspect of teaching and learning in FLE which is somehow related to the emotional dimension of the learner. For example, she talks about how students share personal stories during discussions:

We bring in a lot of stories, personal stories...we get more stories than we can really deal with...[and the stories] make it meaningful for them, they can relate it to their values, to their thinking and their experiences...it's actually the only way that the student can make it live for them.

Indeed, she indicates that the students' perspective is an important consideration:

The course really is dealing with people at 16, 17 years of age and their perceptions of life...and their viewpoint of what life is all about.
Thus, Candace views teaching and learning in FLE to be largely teacher-directed. Learning occurs through the acquisition of information which is personally reconstructed by students in terms of their own experiences and perspectives.

Beliefs About Knowledge in FLE

Candace's beliefs about the purpose of FLE as skills for living imply that the knowledge that is transmitted and acquired must somehow be practically useful in the students' lives. Indeed, she states:

The class is not a reality for them if it doesn't work at home or if they can't use this sort of thing at home.

Such knowledge appears to be largely factual and is primarily transmitted by the teacher. According to Candace, it is intended for use in skill development (e.g., knowledge of communication techniques and stress management strategies) and for problem solving (e.g., knowledge of community resources for personal assistance in a crisis). However, as the preceding description of her dual view of the learner in FLE suggests, Candace also acknowledges that knowledge is personally constructed through experience. Thus, her beliefs about FLE curriculum appear to encompass two views of knowledge: that which is factual and that which is personally constructed.

Beliefs About the Family in FLE

Candace believes that families are diverse:

Every family is a little bit different.

She also seems to believe that families are an influence on human development. She suggests that the students' family interaction is a factor in both their responsiveness and openness to FLE content:
[Some students] don't really grab onto an idea and do anything with it...and I sometimes think it has a lot to do with the home environment...how much attention kids get at home...did parents read with them when they were younger...do parents have a lot of interaction with their kids today?

She perceives that differences in some families may be related to their socioeconomic status:

I know [in another school] where parents were better off...the kids seemed to have much more of that home involvement...the kids here [in a blue collar area] seem to...have very little to do with their families on a daily basis...the parents seem to leave them pretty much on their own to find their own means of entertainment, of filling in time.

Candace considers the Central Valley FLE 12 course that she currently teaches to emphasize the family:

Right now, in [this course]...we're dealing with family as such...communication in the family, well-being in the family and the different stages of family and things like that...we just delve into every aspect of family and how they react and deal with issues.

Perceived Influences on Curriculum Conception

Candace comments that her personal life has contributed significantly to the way she thinks about FLE in general:

The biggest influence...comes from my own upbringing and from other influences on leaving home...such as working in a group home...and talking to people...a lot of life experiences.

She indicates that her problematic life experiences have influenced her to encourage students to consider alternative perspectives:

I haven't lived a real straight life...[and my experiences]...give me a feeling of understanding and empathy for these students who have a hard time dealing with, talking about some of these issues...I can understand [their point of view], and I can understand why they're saying what they're saying...and I'm not trying to change them, but I want them to see the other point of view.
Candace mentions the curriculum guide as being a significant influence on her thinking about the field when she first began teaching the Central Valley FLE program:

The curriculum, I think, has broadened my sense of FLE...I think I went into it with a very narrow perspective.

Similarly, she talks about the influence of other professionals in the field and professional development activities:

I think at the very beginning [these things] made a big difference because...the sharing was very important...getting new ideas for teaching the subject matter.

Candace perceives that her academic preparation is limited and that consequently it has contributed very little to her beliefs about FLE:

I've had one and a half units [of a family course]...and I may have had another one and a half unit course, and I just don't feel there's enough in those two...courses to feel comfortable in dealing with the whole curriculum...and I know when I was first throw into [teaching FLE] I said...'I've no basis for teaching this program'...and they certainly didn't influence what I think about FLE.

According to Candace, the most significant influence on her curriculum conception is her personal life experiences. While she considers the curriculum to have broadened her understanding of FLE as a field, she believes that other factors, such as professional development activities and her academic preparation, have had little impact on her thinking about FLE curriculum.

Case Portrayal: Karen

Biographical Information

Karen is in her late twenties, single and has never been married. After receiving a home economics degree and then a teaching certificate, Karen
taught home economics for a short time in a rural community.

Karen first began teaching FLE content when she moved several years ago to Central Valley School District. Upon hearing that her new teaching assignment would include the Central Valley FLE program, Karen recalls:

I thought 'no way, I can't teach that course because that's not me'...and then I went to a workshop...and realized what it was about...because [before] I was...looking at the teacher...who was teaching it [in my school]...and I thought 'there's no way I'm like this person and I don't know if I could be like that'...kind of airy-fairy and...into the touchy-feely kind of experience and I thought 'I can't do that'...and then I went to the workshop...and [the course] sounded really interesting...and before that I hadn't even looked at what the course was about.

Curriculum Conception: "Guidance and Advice"

Karen's curriculum conception is characterized by an emphasis on "guidance" in the preparation of students for life. This focus is particularly evident in her definition of FLE and in her perception of her role as a teacher in FLE.

Beliefs About the Purpose of FLE

Karen views FLE in terms of prevention. Her understanding of the purpose of FLE appears to be based on the assumption that problems which people might encounter in their relationships can be prevented through education. She states:

Instead of looking at how we can solve problems, if we could get skills so we don't have problems in the first place...not a reactive approach [to education] but more of a proactive approach...if they have all those skills and strengths beforehand then...hopefully the [problem] situations won't come up because they'll...have headed them off before they started.

For Karen, such prevention appears to center on encouraging and assisting students to follow a particular direction in their future lives. She believes that FLE is intended to:
teach students how to get along in the world...to help them see how they fit into the scheme of things...to look at how they can...have a good life.

This suggests that, from Karen's perspective, FLE may in part prepare students to be socialized into the adult world outside of school. Indeed, Karen alludes to this possibility in her description of how she sees FLE to fit into education generally:

I think education as a whole is to help you function when you get out into society...to relate, to practice for the bigger society...[and FLE] fits into that...because it helps you in later life.

Moreover, when discussing how the grade 11 and 12 Central Valley FLE courses are related, Karen implies that some of the content may be intended to simulate real life:

Well, I see [the grade 12 course] as okay, we've grown up, and now we're out of adolescence and then we just do the whole rest of the life cycle, and that's how I look on 12...and 11 is just specifically on adolescence...the relationship things.

At the same time, Karen claims that, through taking a FLE course, students should also learn about themselves in the present:

They should know about themselves and how they think...to look at themselves and sort of see why they do the things they do and what's made them the way they are...and maybe that would help them later on in their relationships...[and] help them to make better relationships.

Thus Karen's beliefs about the purpose of FLE center principally on preparation for life as adults and focuses on guiding students "in ways to help them lead healthy, successful lives".

Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher in FLE

The notion of "guidance" is also apparent in Karen's general perception of her teaching role. Indeed, she uses the word "guide" in her description of
this role:

I think [my role] is to sort of guide them...point them in the right direction.

In this respect, Karen perceives herself to be a resource person. She states:

I think it's important that I'm...the resource person or someone to guide them and they can come and ask me or I can say 'let's do this and try and figure it out'.

Related to this is her role as advice-giver. Although Karen appears to experience some tension with respect to this stated role, she acknowledges that she considers it to be an important one:

Maybe I shouldn't be giving them advice, but I do...they are quite comfortable with me and they ask me for advice and I like to help them out because I care about them...[and] if they don't get it from me I don't know where they're going to get it from.

As suggested in the comment above, she appears to see this advice-giving role to be related to her rapport with students:

I think I'm an easy person for the kids to talk to...I look at myself right now as...an older sister kind of thing.

Indeed, Karen seems to consider that she has an important role in establishing such rapport:

One of my prime concerns...is to make it a neat environment...[a] place that they feel they can be themselves and just...feel comfortable.

It appears, therefore, that Karen views her teaching role in FLE to be an interactive one. She administers to students and at the same time, students seek her involvement with them.
Beliefs About the Learner and Teaching in FLE

Karen considers that her students are in need of FLE. For example, she states:

[FLE] allows the kids to focus on themselves and to learn more about themselves and I think that's important...because I think in some instances at home...that they don't feel that they are important...and it's such a tenuous time in their life...[this course] might help a little bit...I can see some things going on in class and I would really like to know what goes on at home, because it just doesn't look good.

She also compares her own life and family with those of her students:

I don't know that many of them have a life like mine or a family like mine...I think some of the experiences that they've had I'll never see in my lifetime.

Karen suggests that her own positive experiences in her family and family life form a prototype for what she hopes to achieve in the course that she teaches:

My family background has made me feel really worthwhile as a person and has given me a lot of confidence as a person and just a lot of support...and all that has...made me what I am, and that is what I try to get across to the kids, that the support of family kind of thing—and it doesn't have to be mom, dad and a brother and a dog or whatever--is really important.

Her concern that the students acquire such a perspective on life is reflected in the following comment about how she sees her vision of FLE in general to be translated in her practice:

I think my [own experience]...colours the way I view things...and the values that I have and what I'm trying to get across to the kids...I think what I've done is right...and it's a whole lot different than what my kids have been doing or have been brought up to believe...and so I guess I stress strong families...and being able to communicate and to relate and interact positively in...healthy ways...with their family members.

Karen views students to be active learners. This view is apparent in
her perception of the role that students assume in planning the course:

I like their input...I like to give the kids the opportunity to...evaluate me and tell me what I'm doing and...what things that they want more information on...what they're interested in and what they want to talk about.

She also suggests:

They learn best by doing.

She indicates that, because of this belief, she uses games and "fun activities" quite frequently in her teaching:

It's important to use games...because then they can play and have fun and maybe learn something from what they're doing...if they like to do something, then I figure that they'll retain more...as opposed to sitting down and writing notes and memorizing...if they can do it, then they might remember it a little more.

This view of the students as active learners is also reflected in her comments about how she sees students to respond to note-taking:

When they take notes...they just shut off...they listen to what I'm saying and they write it down but they...don't get the meaning behind it.

Similarly, she considers discussion to be an important classroom activity. According to Karen, not only does it help to involve the students actively, but also it provides an opportunity for them to interact with the content of a lesson:

Just....making them think about what we did...you can't lecture some of these ideas and topics [in FLE] to these kids...they need to discuss it.

She indicates that her class discussions are like "talking":

I'll [start with] some [discussion questions] and those get us started...and then we...go off on our little tangents here and there and end up wherever...I don't structure my discussions to make sure that
they come to this end state...I [hope] that maybe we could get something out of it...get everyone involved.

However, Karen expresses some ambivalence with respect to her stated emphasis on active learning. In particular, she talks about information delivery and how she believes it is best accomplished:

I think there's a problem in how to get the content across...the content is so important but it's the delivery of the content that's a concern.

It appears that Karen is concerned that students receive some information but is uncertain about whether note-taking (as she calls it) is the most effective method in this regard:

I find they don't learn as well from the notes, but I don't know if they have the skills to transfer what we're doing [in an activity] into the theory part of it...I feel they need to take notes so that they have something concrete in their books so that they can...go back to it if they ever want to or need to.

Related to this is her concern about how she perceives her teaching role to be altered during note-taking:

[During note-taking] I get into that pattern, that teacher-centered pattern...[whereas during a discussion]...I'm not standing up talking down [to the students]...it isn't me talking to them...I'm with them, we're all talking together...the kids are involved.

Thus for Karen, teaching and learning in FLE reflect a concern with developing an integration between the presentation of information and its subjective internalization by students.

**Beliefs About Knowledge in FLE**

The preceding suggests that Karen considers the teacher to be the primary transmitter of knowledge in the classroom, but that students do
process knowledge or reconstruct it to make it personally meaningful. Karen asserts that factual knowledge plays a central role in FLE:

There is a knowledge base I think they have to have and...that content is important...it's important to get that content across.

At the same time, however, Karen also considers that students' knowledge of themselves is an important aim of FLE. Moreover, Karen appears to assume that the integration of this knowledge (both factual and self knowledge) should be used to guide the students in "getting on in life" and functioning in the adult world of families and relationships. This suggests a view of knowledge to be used for prescription, and which may validate or legitimize advice-giving and guidance for following a particular course of action in one's life. Indeed, Karen's description of her use of checklists of suggested rules of conduct imply that this may be the case:

It's something that's...printed...[and] published and it's a way of looking at things and so I can give them this and that is information but it's not necessarily what I think they should do, so in that way I'm sort of giving advice but I'm not...[because] it's not my values that I'm imparting to them...it's something I got from somebody else.

Beliefs About Families in FLE

As suggested earlier, Karen's beliefs about families appear to center on what she calls healthy positive interaction and the provision of emotional support for their members. She acknowledges that families are diverse:

There are all kinds of different families and...your particular one isn't necessarily the only type or the best type.

While she considers the form of the family to be somewhat inconsequential, she perceives that all families should ideally be concerned with imparting strength and feelings of self worth to their members:
I think it's [your family] a really important part of your life and if you have a good home life then other things go well for you and you can feel good about yourself...to have that strength at home is really important.

Indeed, she seems to view the family as an influence on individuals, as she states:

appreciating differences in...families...[may help us] to see why people are the way they are.

Perceived Influences on Curriculum Conception

For Karen, the positive experiences as she was growing up in her own family have influenced how she thinks about FLE in general:

What has happened in my life and my family...that is my greatest influence...[because]...my family background has made me feel really worthwhile as a person and has given me a lot of confidence as a person...and so all that has sort of made me what I am, and that is what I try to get across to the kids, that support of family kind of thing.

Karen identifies the curriculum guide as a significant influence on her thinking about the field when she first began teaching:

When I came into teaching [FLE] I didn't have a really clear idea of what it was...and then I read the document...and that was my guideline...my bible...that's what I went by...and tried to build everything on that.

As she gained experience, however, her contact with the guide has diminished, and she indicates that, as she has become more comfortable teaching the course, she has developed her own view of FLE:

When I first started teaching, I looked at the curriculum guide and I looked at what I guess was the philosophy and the rationale, and then I based it on that...and then I've just grown more comfortable...and then I've put in, I've emphasized...some sections more than others...when I first started I wasn't really comfortable with the whole subject matter...[and the curriculum guide] helped me with the theory stuff...[but] my family...what happened in my life...gives me the emotional stuff.
She perceives professional development activities and contacts with other professionals to have been less influential:

Sometimes it's helpful...like [talking about]...the order we might teach things in...or the content...but as far as communicating and talking with the other teachers...I'm still new and I don't quite fit in yet.

Karen believes that her professional education has had little impact on her thinking about FLE in general:

Aside from maybe one or two courses that I've had...not a whole lot [of my education] has had an influence.

Thus from Karen's perspective, personal life experiences have had the most impact on her beliefs about FLE curriculum. Although the curriculum guide was initially influential when she first began teaching the course, its influence has diminished as her experience has increased. She considers professional development activities and her academic preparation to have been only peripherally influential.

Case Portrayal: Paula

Biographical Information

Paula is in her mid-forties, married and divorced, and has grown children. She has a degree in home economics and a teaching certificate. Her first teaching experience twenty years ago took place overseas. After two years abroad, Paula has since taught home economics in several high schools in the Central Valley School District.

Paula first became interested in teaching FLE while working with a colleague who had been teaching it for a number of years. According to Paula, this colleague influenced her to become involved in teaching the subject:

We worked together...for [many years]...and she really got me interested...she's why I'm a [FLE] teacher today.
She explained that, as this colleague discussed FLE topics with her, she gradually saw their relevance for her own personal life:

She was teaching me [FLE] while we drank coffee...and...a lot of what I learned from her I put into practice at home, and that was helpful.

Curriculum Conception: "Self Reflection and Personal Insight"

Paula's curriculum conception suggests a focus on self reflection and personal insight. This emphasis is particularly apparent in her view of the intent of FLE and in her perceptions of her role as a teacher in FLE.

Beliefs About the Purpose of FLE

Paula's conception appears to be rooted in the assumption that relationships are the focus of personal and family life and that they may be improved or enhanced through self understanding. Paula's definition of the purpose of FLE reflects such beliefs:

FLE...encourages students to reflect upon themselves...past, present and future...and their relationships with others...[it] helps students clarify something about themselves and understand themselves within their own families and why they are the way they are...and look towards their other families or other relationships...and work on positive relationships.

Related to this is Paula's concern with the role of feelings in interpersonal relationships. According to her, one's feelings are integral to effective communication, which in turn influences one's relationships:

I think they have to know their feelings in order to communicate their feelings to...people with whom they have relationships...and I think it's really important in any kind of relationship to be able to communicate your own feelings...and you can't do that if you're not in touch with them.

This belief also underlies her stated emphasis on the examination of feelings in the FLE course she teaches:
One of my goals is to try to get kids to get in touch with their feelings...to think about their feelings.

Thus it appears that Paula is less concerned with solving problems or even preventing problems than she is with encouraging self understanding and personal meaning in life. Indeed, when talking about the goals for her course, she points out:

I want them to know that...there are no right or wrong answers in life and that life doesn't go on one predictable path, and that different people are different...there's [not] just one way of looking at something, one way of thinking about something and one correct answer.

Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher in FLE

As a FLE teacher, Paula perceives herself to have two principal roles: facilitator and nurturer. In view of her stated emphasis on the expression of feelings and self understanding, these roles appear to be related. For example, in her role as facilitator, Paula suggests that she fosters such ventures:

[I am] a facilitator, a person who sort of encourages them to do...certain activities because I think that they will help them to get in touch with themselves or understand something better.

Her nurturing role appears to complement this facilitating role:

I think there's a nurturing [that I do]...along with a caring and trying to bring the best out in them.

She also seems to view herself as an egalitarian member of the class:

I value the position that I hold when I'm sitting in the circle [with the students] as one of the group...and I feel very awkward taking myself out of the circle and setting myself up as 'the teacher'...the minute I do it I set myself apart...and I don't do it often.

According to Paula, in this capacity:
We're all teaching one another and we're all learning from one another...I learn from them and they learn from me...so there's this mutual exchange of ideas.

This suggests that Paula may assume a third role, that of teacher as learner. Indeed, she refers to her own personal learning which occurs as she teaches the Central Valley FLE program:

I'm learning about my own life by studying [FLE]...I make it relevant to my experience...it's made a great impact on me as a person.

Paula also appears to consider herself to be a model for the students:

I guess...[I] try to communicate with kids...to treat the kids in a way that models good communication skills in relationships rather than...sometimes the typical teacher communication is 'sit down, shut up, do the work'...that sort of communication I don't use.

Beliefs About the Learner and Teaching in FLE

Paula considers students to be unique and diverse:

I want people to look at kids as individuals...and some of them are struggling with pretty difficult situations...they aren't all the same [or]...experiencing the same thing.

She also believes that their needs and interests will influence their learning:

I don't think they'll learn...unless they're somehow relating [personally] to the content...if they don't somehow...say 'well this is relevant to me and I understand it in this way', they're probably going to forget it,

and that these needs and interests will be varied:

I want those kids to have learned what was important for them to have learned, which means that they have to make it personally relevant.

It appears that Paula's perceptions about the learner and learning are related to her view of teaching in FLE:
What is taught is important...but the way it's done needs to be...an attitude of acceptance...so that the kids aren't afraid to reveal what...they're thinking about...so that the teacher knows where they're coming from and can relate the content to their experience and help to make it relevant to their experience, so that they will actually internalize it and learn it.

This comment suggests that the teaching methods she uses are intended to facilitate learning for personal relevance. She says, for example:

I don't like worksheets...I don't know where to go with them...I don't know what to do with them...I don't know how to make them personally relevant for the kids.

She considers discussion or "talking" to be central to her classroom practice. She talks about discussion as providing an avenue for the exploration of different points of view:

I see discussions as a way of airing viewpoints on issues and ideas on topics...I try to...bring up a topic or an issue and then have people talk about that issue...as it affects them...it's a way of bringing many ideas onto the floor and...there are many different ideas that are given.

According to Paula, discussions also provide a forum for sharing experiences and feelings, and she encourages those who are willing to engage in these activities:

I try to encourage them to reflect [and] sometimes I reflect too...I try to get them to think about what happens to them...I get them to think about why they are the way they are, why they've become what they've become.

She also observes:

I think putting it into words...in front of a group helps them to clarify what they're thinking and feeling...sometimes just sharing it with another person sometimes helps them to deal with it.

She emphasizes, however, that:
If students don't want to reveal something, they don't have to reveal anything.

Such discussions appear to pertain to Paula's goals of personal insight and the examination of feelings, and reflect a focus on self reflection.

Beliefs About Knowledge in FLE

Paula considers factual knowledge in FLE to be secondary to students' attitudes and opinions:

I don't get them to take a lot of notes...or memorize a lot of facts...for most of the things we talk about there's no right or wrong answers, just think about the question and how would you answer the question...so they may leave [this course] more with impressions and attitudes rather than with content.

Indeed, Paula suggests that personal experience itself is a source of knowledge:

There's a lot of knowledge to be gained from life experience that people don't recognize as knowledge...and [the students] learn from kids who share their knowledge, whether it's their life experience or somebody else's life experience.

Paula argues that such knowledge is central in FLE:

In [FLE] you don't focus on the product, you focus on the person...I think through personal experiences people can learn and...if they learn what...other people experience...if it's personally relevant to them...then they'll remember...they won't learn anything unless they are...somehow relating [personally] to it.

Thus for Paula, knowledge is largely constructed through personal experience. For her, meaning arises from personal relevance.

Beliefs About Families in FLE

Paula describes families as diverse and varied:
Families are different things to different people.

To her, the concept of "family" is broad and inclusive:

I think about family in a really broad sense...like almost anybody...my idea of family is that it includes anybody with whom there's a relationship where there's some sort of commitment...any one of those people can choose not to be a member of their family.

She sees communication and interpersonal understanding to be central to functioning effectively in families:

If you're going to live in families and in relationships, you need to get along with other people and accept them.

Paula comments that, for her, traditional views of the family are problematic:

I don't think that traditional families and traditional roles serve...or fulfill our needs in this society...and I don't think that women can continue to follow in those traditional roles.

Such views appear to echo Paula's central emphasis on the expression of feelings and on self reflection and personal insight in teaching FLE.

Perceived Influences on Curriculum Conception

Paula indicates that her negative experiences with marriage have influenced her perceptions about FLE:

My life experience has really shaped how I feel about family...I came from a traditional family...and when I got married and had kids I expected it to continue forever...but he chose to leave me...and I was a single parent so all of a sudden I didn't fit in with the traditional family any more...so I want them [the students] to know that...life doesn't go on one predictable path...and I guess that comes from my own experiences.

She also talks about her experiences with a community self-help group as an influence on her approach to FLE:
My background [in this group]...that's a major influence...when it comes to the importance of feelings...and ways of expressing those feelings...and accepting responsibility for your own actions and not taking the actions of other people as...your own.

Another significant influence Paula mentions is a colleague. Indeed, she credits this colleague with influencing her to become involved in teaching FLE:

[My colleague] is why I'm a [FLE] teacher...if any person had any impact on my life it's [my colleague]...we worked together for [many] years in rooms side by side...and she really got me interested because previous to that I would have thought 'Family Life, I don't think I ever want to teach that'.

At the same time, Paula views her colleague to be instrumental in how she undertakes to teach FLE:

We used to talk a lot at coffee breaks or in the morning...I felt I learned so much from her...it started me thinking about families quite differently...she's been the biggest influence in the way I operate my class.

Paula states that the curriculum document has had little influence on her thinking about FLE:

I don't particularly like the curriculum document...and it doesn't do too much shaping of what I do...or what I think.

While she considers professional development activities and contact with other professionals to be minimally influential on her thinking about FLE, she believes that they serve an important purpose:

It gives you peer support...and that's important for a course like this...because...I don't follow the curriculum document...and I don't follow a textbook...but some strange things happen in [FLE] or you've got difficult situations to deal with...but you know if you have that [peer support]...you know you have someone to call on...it's important...and I used to do it more when I was first teaching [FLE].

Paula laughingly comments that her academic preparation for teaching FLE was:
so long ago, it's out of date.

Paula considers both her life experiences and her interaction with a colleague (or mentor) to have significantly shaped her beliefs about FLE curriculum. Other factors such as curriculum documents, professional development and academic preparation are viewed as having had relatively little influence on these beliefs.

**Case Portrayal: Allison**

**Biographical Information**

Allison is in her early forties, married and has one school age child. With the exception of one interruption when she first became a parent, she has taught in the Central Valley School District for about fifteen years.

Although she graduated with a bachelor's degree in home economics, she did not originally intend to pursue a career in teaching. After a year working in a field unrelated to teaching and to FLE, she returned to university and fulfilled the requirements for a teaching certificate in home economics.

According to Allison, she became involved in teaching FLE when she returned to teaching following a parenthood leave. She perceives that, although it was this life experience that inspired her to want to teach FLE, her personal interest in this area originated in her childhood:

As I was growing up...this was the kind of course that I would have loved to have been able to sit and [be involved in]...whenever the opportunity came up in Girl Guides, the little smatterings we had, I was fascinated.

When a position teaching the Central Valley FLE Program became available at her school, Allison volunteered to assume it and she has continued to teach in this area for the past seven years.
Curriculum Conception: "Personal Autonomy and Transformation"

Allison's curriculum conception is distinguished by an emphasis on personal autonomy and transformation. This focus is reflected in her rhetoric concerning the importance of recognizing inherent personal strengths and self esteem in human development and in her stated beliefs about the individual's capacity for change.

Beliefs About the Purpose of FLE

From Allison's perspective, FLE is intended to prepare students to create families of their own in the future. She describes the purpose of FLE as follows:

The purpose of FLE is to prepare the students for the families that they will establish in the future.

According to Allison, such preparation includes developing an awareness of what she calls one's "family of origin":

[FLE] gives you an opportunity to sit back and assess the family that you grew up in and your personal strengths from that family.

This appraisal of one's family of origin is important, asserts Allison, because it provides an opportunity to:

focus on the strengths that they've been given [by their families] and to build on those and to be aware of those and to ensure that those are then passed on to the succeeding generations.

Conversely, through examination of the family of origin, one may decide that changes are required in one's future family:

It [the family legacy] doesn't have to be accepted...you can [decide] what you want to ensure is passed on to subsequent generations...and break that cycle if it's [negative].
At the same time, claims Allison, FLE also provides students with the opportunity to consider the forces that impact on families and what recourse they might have as family members:

[FLE teaches] how you handle the external forces that are put back on the family...those external influences that impact on the family.

These views imply that the individual has a capacity for change, is independent and is capable of both effecting change and adapting to external pressures. Thus Allison's conceptualization of the purpose of FLE appears to focus primarily on personal autonomy as it relates to the development and management of one's family of the future.

Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher in FLE

Allison considers that she assumes several roles in teaching FLE. First, she sees herself to be a curriculum developer and a provider of information:

The material [in the curriculum] that is there to be learned is fascinating...I [as the teacher] turn that content into applicable useful classroom information.

She also directs the course of learning in the class:

The teacher's responsibility is to determine what the focus is going to be...what content and facts [are to be presented].

As a provider of information, Allison believes that she creates a foundation for future reference:

I really feel that...we are...putting in...some hooks, giving them some information...so that at some point, at a later date, they can latch on to them...they'll recall...they can understand.

Some of Allison's comments about information giving suggest that it may
sometimes be prescriptive in nature. For example:

I try to point out to these kids that there may be some ways that [family life] can be done differently...that maybe some of the ways they've been using [in interpersonal relationships] have not been all that effective and that there are some better ways...that would be more satisfying.

At the same time, however, she emphasizes that she is also a facilitator. In this role she believes that she facilitates the development of self awareness in students:

You want to encourage that reflective stance...to make them aware of their personal strengths...to raise their awareness...to help them explore their values.

Finally, Allison considers that she has a central role in creating a classroom environment which facilitates the kind of learning and teaching that she envisions in FLE:

To set up a situation where they feel comfortable that they can express their viewpoints without a fear of criticism...a safe environment...the teacher is responsible for establishing and maintaining that.

These teaching roles Allison identifies suggest that she views the student-teacher relationship to be an interactive one, in which although she directs the course of learning, the students themselves are also active participants in learning.

**Beliefs About the Learner and Teaching in FLE**

As suggested previously, Allison considers the students in FLE to be independent thinkers and active learners. Indeed, she describes them in the following way:

They are definitely in the process of thinking for themselves.
Allison's earlier statements about the influence of one's family of origin suggest that she believes that, to a certain extent, students are shaped by their environment. At the same time, however, she implies that they are capable of altering the impact of such influences:

"You can...try and change...turn around a really negative experience in your family of origin...if you come from a family where there was not that basic love and respect of you as an individual...then you do have burdens that you may carry....[but] you may be able to resolve them."

This capacity or potential for change suggests that Allison perceives learners in FLE to be autonomous and able to exert control over their own lives.

Allison believes that students learn in two ways:

"Every time you take in some information you have to analyze it and look at it...both logically as well as emotionally...you want them to look at it on an intellectual or what you would call the cognitive level as well as the affective level."

This dual view of learning is reflected in Allison's descriptions of the purposes of worksheets, in the role of discussion and in her perceptions about evaluation in FLE. According to Allison, worksheets reinforce the content presented in class:

"The worksheet is just to stimulate the ideas on an individual level so that they become accountable for that [information]."

However, worksheets sometimes serve another function:

"[Sometimes] worksheets force them to be a little more reflective and to become a little more aware of where their own personal thoughts are."

The role of discussion in Allison's classroom echoes this second purpose of worksheets:

"The discussions are for enhancement...it's an opportunity...to get another opinion expressed, another experience shared...and"
allowing...all of the students to reflect back on what do I think about this, how do I feel.

Allison's perceptions about evaluation in FLE also reflect the two levels of learning that she considers to occur, and she states that evaluation in FLE should encompass both. However, she has mixed feelings about the extent to which she actually accomplishes this:

We are talking about [evaluating] learning on one level of completing the answers...have they acquired the key critical points that you really wanted them to learn...and in the cognitive domain I very clearly set down all my evaluation criteria before I ever give out the assignment...as far as the affective domain...[where] learning is altering their attitude or behaviour...that I don't know...except that sometimes over the year you can begin to see some changes occurring.

Allison's views of the learner and of learning in FLE suggest that she perceives an integration of cognitive and affective learning to occur as students develop their self awareness, their personal autonomy and their capacity for change.

Beliefs About Knowledge in FLE

The preceding views of the learner and of learning imply that Allison considers that there is knowledge to be acquired in FLE. Such knowledge is perceived to be applicable in the students' future lives:

[In FLE] you have been able to provide some information that is somehow going to be useful in their life.

This knowledge appears to have both factual and subjective dimensions. The former is apparent in Allison's references to "the content", "the information" and "the facts" which either she delivers or which students research individually or collaboratively. The latter is apparent in Allison's concern for self reflection and self awareness. As she points out:
[Self awareness] comes when they realize that they had that [ability] all that time, but they just weren't aware of it...when they see that...it's a self discovering.

Related to this is her belief that personal experience is a valid source of knowledge and that both she and her students are sources of such knowledge in the FLE classroom. For example, she identifies her personal experience of motherhood as a source of knowledge in her class:

I'm viewed as a reliable source of information when it comes to human development because I am a mother.

Similarly, she says of her students:

Many of those students are coming in with very positive abilities...and the course...allows them to clarify...and their experience, their insights...can be shared with [others].

Allison's apparent concern with meaning and personal relevance in her teaching of FLE also reflects the view that knowledge has a subjective dimension. When talking about planning for learning in her course, she comments:

[I think about] how do you make that applicable for what they are doing...what is happening in their life right now, how they see it...you've got to give them [information] that is meaningful for them.

Thus it appears that while Allison considers factual knowledge to be important in accomplishing her aims in the course she teaches, she also seems to recognize that students process or reconstruct this knowledge to make it personally meaningful.

Beliefs About the Family in FLE

As noted earlier, Allison considers the family to be a powerful influence in peoples' lives. She asserts:
It's a force...to be reckoned with...and if they ever think that they can just leave it and walk away from it they're mistaken.

According to Allison, the power of this influence rests in its contribution to self development. For example, she claims that one's family of origin is the blueprint that you carry both physically and emotionally...what you have seen in your original family...or even what happened in previous generations....has an impact on your present-day family.

At the same time, she believes that change is possible:

It doesn't have to be accepted as the only way...you may not have come from a successful happy little 'Cleaver' family that we all envision but you still have an opportunity and indeed a responsibility to improve your own situation.

While Allison claims to organize her course around this concept of the family and the transfer of strengths from one generation to the next, she acknowledges that not all students in the future will establish families which include children:

Not everybody does end up being involved in a family [in the traditional sense]...but those personal strengths [from one's family]...can be built upon...and the succeeding generations can be any form...it doesn't necessarily have to be their family...it can be through their job or through other...activities.

Perceived Influences on Curriculum Conception

Allison cites a particular life experience as a major influence on both her professional interest and involvement in FLE. She indicates that she first became interested in teaching the Central Valley FLE program after she became a parent:

...when I came back [to teaching] as a parent...I came back realizing that this was the kind of stuff I would have loved to talk about as a teenager...and knowing that [a friend] was teaching this kind of stuff, I thought 'it's there'...and so [when a position in my school became vacant]...I said 'could I teach it?'
She also reveals that her experiences as a parent have provided her with additional insight into the importance of preparing students to be parents in the future:

...the parenting influence has really been just an incredible one...as a parent you realize what they have to have to be parents...and I feel it's [FLE] a chance to give them to talk about it [being a parent], to begin to develop their philosophy and find out some of the things that are involved...my particular one, I suppose, is to be aware of parenting so that you just don't rush into it.

Allison talks about her own family as an influence on how she thinks about FLE in general and what's important in teaching it:

I think my own personal family, the fact that I'm a parent watching my own child develop and...definitely my family of origin...my Mom has always been interested in relationships and things like that...those things give me...a focus,

and she comments on what she believes are other influences on her thinking about FLE:

Readings...I do a lot of reading...and courses, too.

While Allison views her academic preparation in FLE to be limited, she considers this to be somewhat beneficial:

I have never had an overall course or a direct focus given to me by a course...and probably it's influenced me...made me so open and receptive to anything...like I'm really a knowledge seeker...and I think probably had I gone through a structured course, I would probably tend not to be doing that.

For Allison, the experience of parenthood provided not only a focus for her teaching of FLE, but also a kind of personal justification for undertaking to teach it. Other experiences, such as reading, courses and family interactions, were also cited as influences on her thinking about FLE, but their specific influence was less clear.
Case Portrayal: Susan

Biographical Information

Susan is in her early forties and married with one preschool child. She has a degree in home economics education and has taught high school home economics for fifteen years in both rural and urban settings.

According to Susan, it was not until she began to teach in the Central Valley School District that she became involved in teaching FLE content. However, her interest in the field was stimulated during some work she did with student groups while teaching overseas at the beginning of her teaching career:

Teachers in the school were assigned groups of students to meet with on a regular basis over a period of time. They were called pastoral groups and we used to have a little bit of staff development...to help us with the groups, and that's when my interest was piqued in this kind of course material....and so that when I returned to [this province] I took a fair number of courses...that were related because I was interested...sort of counselling and family studies kinds of courses...and maybe in my subconscious I envisaged teaching this kind of material one day.

Upon completing these courses, Susan began teaching the Central Valley FLE course in conjunction with the home economics program, and has done so for the past ten years.

Curriculum Conception: "Personal Growth and Social Responsibility"

Susan 's curriculum conception reflects a concern with personal growth and social responsibility in the management and improvement of the quality of individual and family life. Such concerns are particularly evident in her perceptions of the aims and purposes of FLE and in her beliefs about how these are accomplished.
Beliefs About the Purpose of FLE

Susan's conception appears to be based on the assumption that FLE can improve the quality of individual and family life. This assumption is reflected in her view of the overarching intended outcome of FLE:

The nature of the subject matter...[in FLE] has the potential of enabling students to lead richer lives.

As Susan talks about the purposes of FLE, it appears that her interpretation of "richer lives" encompasses the development of personal growth and change, and enhancing one's interaction with society. For example, according to Susan, one of the principal goals of FLE is to develop one's capacity for growth and change. She describes how she sees this goal to be operationalized in a FLE classroom:

In a FLE class students have the opportunity to...see that 'I could have control over my life....and it doesn't have to be this way and just because my own family is like this, I can initiate some changes'.

Susan suggests that personal growth is fostered through the development of self esteem and through the acquisition of knowledge:

[FLE] lets them experience some things that will let them feel good about themselves...[and] through some exploration and learning....they get some information and some self esteem and some things that will allow them to be assertive in their own life [and] they can change.

According to Susan, the benefits of such development and change are many. For example, she suggests that the individual's ability to respond positively to social change and pressures is enhanced:

Students can get some ideas and focus as to...alternatives...other ways of handling issues...ways that they can deal positively with the changes that are happening around them.

This is important, she asserts, because
Society's changing more rapidly than [it once did]...and people have to contend with much more now than they ever have.

Susan also suggests that personal growth will impact positively on interpersonal relationships:

Being part of a family is not easy...[but] there are alternatives...and if they...learn to listen and communicate...there are going to be benefits in their lives.

At the same time, she also perceives implications that extend beyond the individual and the family. In this regard she asserts:

In FLE you have an opportunity to help them develop individually...and if you can...aid in their personal growth, I think that makes them better members of society.

Thus, Susan's conceptualization of the purpose of FLE appears to encompass both individual growth and social responsibility, and emphasizes the management and improvement of the quality of individual and family life.

Beliefs About the Role of the Teacher in FLE

As a teacher of FLE, Susan perceives that she assumes several roles. First, she considers that she provides the students with information:

There is a knowledge base...a theoretical base [in FLE]...that I try to get across.

Related to this is her role as curriculum developer in which she selects and organizes knowledge for student learning. In this role, however, she seems to consider the students that she teaches to be particularly influential:

I adjust [the curriculum] and...the information to the students I'm dealing with...maybe leave some of it out and add something else that...my students need or would be valuable for them.

She also suggests that she has a role in creating a classroom environment
which is conducive to the sort of teaching and learning that she envisions should occur in FLE:

I spend a lot of time...getting...the group together...and developing cohesiveness and a group feeling...treating each other as human beings and not putting anybody down...and after a while, they become very supportive of each other.....and they'll feel comfortable...to bring a problem [to class]...it's a safe place to raise an issue, to get some support, or to get some help.

A fourth role that she claims to assume is that of counsellor. According to Susan, in this role, students often seek her assistance or understanding for personal problems:

Because of the nature of the course material you are a counsellor, and the students often see you as a person who will understand if they have a problem and they do come to you...sometimes just being there and listening is enough for a lot of students.

Finally, Susan suggests that she is also a learner:

You learn a lot from the students in this kind of course because of all the interaction...it's not a one-way ride...both sides grow.

She indicates that, for her, such learning extends beyond the classroom into her personal life:

I think I've grown a lot personally...through teaching FLE and through taking the courses [required to teach it].

Susan's descriptions of her teaching roles in FLE suggest that she envisions an interactive student-teacher relationship in her classroom, where both she and her students participate in mutually responsive teaching and learning.
Beliefs About the Learner and Teaching in FLE

The preceding implies that Susan views students in FLE to be active learners. Her interpretation of the aims and purposes of FLE in terms of personal growth and change suggest that students are capable of self reflection and independent thought. According to Susan, the environment she attempts to develop early in the school year is intended to encourage students to be reflective, active participants in learning:

In the right environment and atmosphere in the [FLE] class there can be a tremendous amount of growth in a year...they're able to interact on a personal level..share information..ask opinions..see things from another perspective...or clarify things they've been wondering about.

Indeed, she says that students come to view their class to be like a family...they get quite close.

Such closeness, asserts Susan, facilitates interaction among students:

[An ideal] family is a place where you can kind of let your hair down and feel free to discuss anything...you feel safe in your family.

Related to this is Susan's conviction that the processes in FLE are equally as important as the content. She states, for example:

If you make the students feel like they're a significant part of the class...I think the learning will come...[and so] I spend quite a lot of time at the beginning [of the year]...on self esteem...interpersonal communication..I don't even worry about content for the first few weeks...once you've [got them interacting] you can move into the course content.

The foregoing remarks suggest that Susan believes that learning in FLE occurs interactively. This view is particularly apparent in her stated use of group work and discussion in teaching the Central Valley FLE program. According to Susan, group activities and class discussion assist students in learning. She claims that in small groups:
Students learn from each other...there's a lot of opportunity for a lot of interaction and there's that opportunity for them to help each other.

She also believes that this notion of group interaction sometimes helps to make what is taught more realistic for students. For example, occasionally group discussions may center on a problem which either the group or some of its members are encountering, and concepts studied in the course can be applied in dealing with it. As Susan points out:

I think to make [some of the concepts] realistic you have to use...them...there needs to be times when something comes up in class and I can say 'OK what can we do about it'...[and] sometimes there's an opportunity to use it in a situation so that they can see it in real life...and we work it through as a group.

At the same time, however, Susan also acknowledges that personal meaning facilitates learning in FLE. This view is evident in her beliefs about the roles of personal motivation and personal experience in FLE and in some of her perceptions about evaluation in FLE. Susan claims that students learn best when they have a personal motivation to learn. She suggests that such motivation may differ among students:

If they have some personal goals in mind...some aspirations and something they're working towards [they'll be motivated to learn]...for those that are just floating...it won't have as much meaning for them unless it's something that touches their personal life and they see some personal relevance.

Susan also indicates that the use of personal experiences enhances student learning. She states:

I do encourage them to give examples of personal situations...it's a point of reference for the students and they can relate to it.

Similarly, she describes how she tries to "personalize" knowledge in her teaching through the use of her own personal life experiences:
It's part of my way of making a point or trying to put across a point...if you personalize, people can relate to things...I like people to be personal and bring it to a level...that you can relate to and there's some warmth and it's part of life...it makes it more real.

Susan's comments about evaluation in FLE also suggest that there is a personal dimension to learning. For example, she says:

Some of their assignments you can't put marks on in this kind of a course...like when I have them view a film and ask them what the film meant to them...when it comes time to mark it there's such a variety of approaches....when you're marking ideas and a little bit of personal philosophy it's hard.

Thus it appears that Susan considers learning in FLE to encompass both personal meaning and social interaction as students develop their capacity for personal growth and change and their awareness of social responsibility.

Beliefs About Knowledge in FLE

Susan's views about learning and the learner in FLE suggest that she considers the body of knowledge associated with the field to be important in accomplishing the aims of FLE. For example, she states:

The content is important because you need some kind of a knowledge base from which to operate.

She believes that this knowledge will be internalized by students and useful later in their lives:

I hope students will gain some information that will be valuable to them should they reach a point in their life when they can sort of reach back and pull it out and say 'hey I learned this' or 'I'm aware of this, I could use this information at this particular time'...so hopefully they've got a bit of a theoretical base...some knowledge they can put to use.

At the same time, Susan suggests that students should acquire some self esteem through self knowledge:
Self esteem is important...and in FLE hopefully I can allow them...to see that yes, they have...ability, and yes, you can do it and perhaps let them experience some things that will let them see that or let them feel good about themselves.

As noted earlier, Susan argues that self esteem and self knowledge will provide the impetus to use the "knowledge base" associated with FLE to manage and enhance the quality of one's individual and family life. Thus, it appears that Susan views knowledge in FLE to have both factual and personal (or subjective) dimensions. Her beliefs about learning in FLE suggest that for learning to occur, the two must somehow be integrated.

Beliefs About the Family in FLE

Susan describes the family as:

an important and necessary part of society...[which is composed of] any group of people who live together for the mutual benefit of each individual.

However, she expresses concern that, because the family is changing and is experiencing considerable pressure from external forces, education is required for its survival:

The family and society are changing rapidly....[and] many of the functions of the family are being taken over by society at large...there are a lot of influences on [families]...and such a wide variety of negative things happen in families today...they really need some positive skills...to keep afloat.

She suggests that there are inherent difficulties in being a family member:

Being part of a family is not easy....it requires commitment and hard work.

She recognizes that there is increasing diversity among families:
Times are changing and there are all different kinds of families and there are all different kinds of situations, and we need to be tolerant of alternative lifestyles or alternative kinds of families.

Susan also considers families to be a force and an influence on individuals, especially where one's future family is concerned. She alludes to the family legacy of parenthood skills:

I think parenting...is one of the areas that people need a lot more guidance in our society at the present time...there are other ways of handling things besides the way their parents handled it.

Susan's beliefs about the family reflect her emphasis on social concerns and reinforce her view that personal growth and social responsibility are the central focus of FLE.

Perceived Influences on Curriculum Conception

Susan cites her experiences working with a pastoral group early in her teaching career as stimulating her interest in becoming involved in teaching FLE:

I...enjoyed meeting with the students on a regular basis...I was a house mother or something of that nature, and you become sort of the person that they go to...like a counsellor in our system...and I really became interested in the sort of material we did in the staff development class to help with our group.

After she returned to this country, she enrolled in courses related to FLE content, and shortly thereafter began to teach the subject.

Susan also talks about her husband's influence on her conceptualization of FLE:

My husband has a particular philosophical bent to life...and he has helped me to think more divergently...to look at issues from many perspectives...and we explore a lot of [FLE] issues together and he has been very instrumental in some of my personal growth...and he's definitely influenced the way I think.
At the same time, she considers her experiences with students to be an influence on how she thinks about FLE:

The feedback that you get from students...that they think what you're doing is worthwhile...[and] to see that personal growth.

However, she qualifies her statements about these influences:

I think from reading the amount that I do...reading the newspaper, reading the articles that I read...the magazines...and my beliefs just kind of evolve over time along with the interaction with students...it's a composite of a lot of things.

Susan talks about the curriculum guide as an influence on her selection of concepts and teaching materials rather than on her beliefs about the field:

I don't think that curriculum guides have shaped the way I've looked at FLE...I use them as a resource...and if I need something, I go and look for it...and if I find something that's applicable or appropriate, I use it, but I don't look at the guide as...that's the way FLE should be.

Susan comments that interaction with professionals has had little impact on her beliefs about FLE. She feels, however, that such interaction serves an important purpose:

One of the ways that meeting with colleagues and other professionals influences me is that I get new information...and new ideas for what I'm able to use in my classes...it doesn't influence the way I feel or think about FLE...but it can expand my knowledge base.

Susan views her academic preparation as somewhat limited:

At [university] I did take some courses in communication and communication in groups and family sociology...that would give me a bit of a background...although...nowhere near the kind of background that you need when you teach a course like this.

Susan perceives that a number of factors or circumstances have influenced her curriculum conception. Although she considers several life experiences to be
particularly significant, she believes that her conception reflects the influence of multiple events and situations.

Summary

The preceding case portrayals represent six conceptions of FLE curriculum. These conceptions were identified and described using the dimensions of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter III: 1) beliefs about the purpose of FLE; 2) beliefs about the role of the teacher in FLE; 3) beliefs about the learner and teaching in FLE; 4) beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE; and 5) beliefs about the family. They were characterized using the central themes associated with the teachers' expressed understandings of the aims and purposes of FLE. In order of their increasing emphasis on the individual within the family and society, the six conceptions were entitled: "authority of facts and information", "skills for living", "guidance and advice", "self reflection and personal insight", "personal autonomy and transformation" and "personal growth and social responsibility". These conceptions represent a range of beliefs about the dimensions of FLE curriculum noted above, and describe the ways in which six teachers conceptualize FLE curriculum.

The teachers in this study identified five factors or circumstances which they perceived to have had some influence on the development of their conceptions of FLE curriculum. These included personal life experiences, professional development activities and contacts with professionals in the field, curriculum documents, academic preparation and mentors. However, the teachers were often uncertain about the exact nature and extent of these influences. Although most acknowledged the possibility of the interaction of multiple influences on their conceptions of FLE curriculum, they were generally unclear about what these might be and about how they might interact.
The conceptions described in this chapter reflect the teachers' abstract beliefs about FLE curriculum which were articulated through interviews and writing and which in a sense are decontextualized, that is, they are separated from the context of the classroom. In Chapters V and VI, these conceptions are considered in relation to the context of teaching.
CHAPTER V THE FINDINGS:
CURRICULUM CONCEPTIONS IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE

This chapter addresses the third question of the study concerning the relationship between teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and classroom practice. In each of the six case portrayals, the contexts of teaching (including classroom structure and organization and teaching style) are briefly described and the relationships between the teachers' expressed conceptions of FLE curriculum and their classroom practice are explicated.

Relationship of Curriculum Conceptions to Classroom Practice

Examination of the relationship between teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and classroom practice entailed comparing the rhetoric and the practice of each teacher to ascertain whether classroom discourse and behaviour confirmed or contradicted their expressions of abstract beliefs about FLE curriculum.

As the data were analyzed, it became evident that there were both consistencies and discrepancies between teachers' abstract beliefs about FLE curriculum and their classroom practice. In addition, some unarticulated beliefs also emerged. Inconsistencies or discrepancies were actions or discourse which appeared to lack agreement with teachers' stated beliefs. Unarticulated beliefs were evident in the emergence of beliefs reflected in any dimension of the conception which was different from that previously articulated in interviews or in writing. Each of the curriculum conceptions is discussed in terms of their consistencies, their discrepancies and those beliefs which appeared in practice but were unarticulated in interviews or in guided writing.
Case Portrayals

Julie: "Authority of Facts and Information"

Context of Teaching

Classroom structure and organization. Julie's Central Valley FLE class was composed of 17 students who attended regularly: 2 boys and 15 girls. The class was predominantly Caucasian, with only two Oriental students in attendance. The class was of mixed ability.

Julie teaches the Central Valley FLE 11 course at Forest Hills Secondary, which is located in what she describes as "an upper middle class" area of the Central Valley School District. Her class is held in a clothing and textiles lab. At the front of the room, four large cutting tables were pushed together to make one "desk" around which the students sat during the class. Because the room was usually occupied by a clothing teacher (except during the hours when FLE was taught), Julie brought all the teaching materials she required for each class from another classroom down the hall. The teacher desk space in the classroom was not used by Julie. One small bulletin board next to the classroom entrance at the front of the room displayed visuals or information about FLE topics. The high windows along one wall contributed to a bright and sunny atmosphere in the classroom.

Teaching style. Julie's teaching reflected a structured yet casual and relaxed approach. Both she and some of the students were often late to class, and generally there was a flurry of activity as students entered the classroom and found a seat at the large "desk" at the front of the room. In the midst of such activity, Julie very quickly took attendance and organized her teaching materials. As the students prepared their notebooks and writing materials for the class, she frequently joked and laughed with them. Once all were settled, Julie usually handed back graded assignments or tests and then briefly introduced the topic of study for the class period.
During each class, considerable time was devoted to information delivery. While standing or sitting at the front of the room, Julie generally lectured, or had students copy notes or follow along while she read from note sheets. Such information delivery was interspersed with numerous student questions and comments, and periodically there was considerable noise and chatter as both Julie and the students engaged in dialogue. Occasionally, she had students work on activities or questions related to the topic being studied. On such occasions, Julie circulated around the table, as if assisting students or checking their progress. Almost every written activity was collected for grading and tests were administered frequently.

Julie's interaction with students was characterized by warmth and friendliness. She generally bantered and joked with them to gain their attention and cooperation, and she often used humour in her presentations to illustrate or to emphasize a point. Despite such familiarity, Julie expressed definite expectations for student achievement and behaviour, and her authority as "the teacher" was clearly understood.

Relationship of Conception to Practice

Julie's expressed conception was entitled "authority of facts and information". It was characterized by an emphasis on facts and information for coping with problems which she believes will potentially be encountered in life by most people and for presenting evidence to support following a particular course of action.

Consistencies. Consistencies between Julie's rhetoric and her practice were most apparent in her view of the purpose of FLE (a concern with problems and the anticipation of certain life events), in her assertions about information delivery as a means of accomplishing the aims of FLE, in her expressed beliefs about advice and advice-giving and in her view about
families in FLE (not a central concept in her course).

Julie's focus on problems was apparent in some of the content presented and in her classroom discourse. For example, one of a series of lessons on pregnancy was entitled "Problems of Pregnancy" and dealt with such potential difficulties as ectopic pregnancy, placenta previa, pre-eclampsic toxemia and Rh incompatibility. In this same unit of study, students were shown a film about genetic disorders which might occur during pregnancy. And, in a series of lessons about contraception, the various problems associated with each method were identified. Julie's classroom discourse also revealed frequent use of the word "problem". When introducing a film on teenage parenthood she said:

This just shows some of the problems if you don't use birth control.

During a discussion about infant feeding and the introduction of solid food, she commented:

Put the [pablum] at the front of their mouth and this causes the sucking motion...if you put the [pablum] at the back of the throat it will cause them to gag and this may create a problem...they'll reject it from then on.

And, during a presentation about the stages of child development, she stated:

If you miss the learning stage for some things, it's a problem later on.

Julie's concern with preparing students for potential life events seemed to be most evident in her selection of course content. The topics covered appeared to relate to some of the life events which most people encounter: dating, human reproduction, pregnancy and birth and child development. This concern was also apparent in comments she made when teaching about these topics. For example, when talking about ending relationships, she said:

It happens to a lot of people.
And, after students had viewed a film on teenage parenthood, she commented:

You'd be surprised...it [teenage pregnancy] still occurs...people still get pregnant at a young age whether they want to or whether it's an accident.

Information delivery was central in Julie's classroom practice. Of the fifteen classes observed, ten were devoted almost entirely to reviewing or lecturing about information related to the topic identified for study. Julie also made frequent reference to facts and information. Her classroom discourse was punctuated with phrases such as

It's just some information...you never know when you might need to know these things

or

I just wanted to go through some of the information.

Similarly, she made extensive use of note sheets (which included information about various topics) and lists of definitions and terms. In a unit on human sexuality, for example, students were required to complete a diagram of the male and female reproductive systems and to correctly label each structure; in conjunction with this they were to complete a corresponding list of definitions. A four page note guide listing all forms of contraception and explanations of their efficacy was used to teach about birth control. A similar series (ten sheets) was used to teach about pregnancy and fetal development. During a unit on child development, students were required to take notes on physical, cognitive and social-emotional growth at various developmental stages.

Julie's use of worksheets to reinforce such content and her use of tests to measure what students had learned of this material appears to reflect her view of the learner as a recipient of knowledge. Indeed, Julie referred frequently to impending tests, using phrases such as
You should know what this is [for the test]
or
You have to know these terms [for the test]
or
Remember to memorize this [for the test].

Advice and advice-giving were also apparent in Julie's classroom practice. As indicated in her interviews, she did seem to try to use information as a source of authority, i.e., to convince students that a particular course of action was preferable or desirable. For example, while lecturing about human reproduction, she concluded her description of how conception occurs by pointing out:

[Therefore] the body is designed to encourage reproduction...you have a three day period [if intercourse occurs during ovulation] which is very dangerous for getting pregnant...so if you don't use birth control, you're taking a chance.

Similarly, after identifying several environmental factors and their potential contribution to birth defects, she declared:

So you shouldn't be taking anything into your body other than food...even coffee and tea...you should be cutting down on them...you should check whether you have antibodies for German measles before getting pregnant...if you go to the dentist you'll have to say 'sorry I'm pregnant, I can't have X-rays'...you'll just have to suffer through [morning sickness]...if you're not an alcoholic you should be able to go nine months without a drink.

On at least one occasion, Julie appeared to invoke "authorities" to support the point she was apparently trying to make. During a discussion about the advantages of breast feeding for infants, several students questioned the feasibility and practicality of offering a baby the breast at every feeding and suggested instead that periodically using a bottle might be a useful alternative. Julie disagreed, saying:
Well, they [the authorities] don't recommend that you use a combination of breast and bottle.

She then went on to outline a number of reasons for why "you shouldn't use bottles when breast feeding", all based on "the experts' point of view".

Sometimes, however, Julie appeared to simply give advice, as if offering her opinion about a worthy course of action. For example, in a discussion about jealousy in relationships, she commented:

Well [jealousy] might even keep you on your toes...in marriage if you're too complacent, they could be gone before you know...so you have to be aware...you have to temper it...too much jealousy might drive them away.

On another occasion while talking about ending a relationship she suggested:

Well you do finally have to pull yourself together...there's no point in wasting your life being depressed.

While talking about the birth control pill she offered this advice:

Remember this is a business and prices will vary...so you should check around.

The preceding confirms that Julie's beliefs about her roles as a family life educator (imparter of information and advice-giver) were reflected in her classroom practice. Moreover, as noted previously, her view of the learner as a recipient of knowledge was also apparent. Her use of various teaching methods also seem to support her stated views about the learner and teaching in FLE.

Although Julie used numerous exercises, worksheets and note guides to convey and reinforce course content, she also relied on class discussion. As she suggested in an interview, discussions in her classrooms were used to share experiences and to share different points of view. A discussion about dating, for example, included student experiences with ending a close relationship. A discussion about the development of egocentrism during
adolescence centered on student exchange of experiences with parents and their peers with respect to this concept. Julie also posed questions which fostered such discussion and which encouraged students to relate information to their own experience:

How many of you have done [or felt] that?

or

Do you know of anyone who has...?

or

Thinking of yourself, now.....

This practice appears to reflect her view of the learners in FLE as active learners, who must translate new material into their personal frame of reference.

Julie's perception that the family is not a central concept in her interpretation of FLE was also evident in her classroom practice. In none of the classes observed, did she refer explicitly to the family or to family relationships and interaction. While these concepts were implied in topics such as pregnancy and child development, they were notably absent from classroom discourse.

Inconsistencies and unarticulated beliefs. Julie's classroom practice revealed evidence of an unarticulated purpose of FLE which was somewhat inconsistent with her stated beliefs about FLE. As noted earlier, Julie's statements about the purpose of FLE imply a concern with assisting students to cope or to deal with life problems they may encounter. However, her classroom discourse and practice suggested that she was also concerned with the prevention of such problems. For example, while Julie's information about contraception may have been intended to assist students in dealing with the problem of choice of contraceptive method, it also seemed to encompass an
intent to inform in order to prevent teenage pregnancy. Indeed, at one point Julie advised the students:

Remember, if you don't use birth control, you're taking a risk.

This series of lessons was followed with a film on teenage parenthood, in which some of the potential difficulties inherent in teenage pregnancy were depicted. Similarly, while the lessons on child development included references to some of the problems that parents might potentially encounter during child rearing, they also incorporated specific suggestions about "what not to do" or "what to be aware of so this or that won't happen".

A second inconsistency between Julie's rhetoric and practice was reflected periodically in her use of some teaching methods. For example, although she states that exercises and worksheets are used for learning, at times they also seemed to be used for classroom control. The following episode illustrates this point:

As students began to work on the definitions, the noise level escalated rapidly. Julie interjected, saying "Sh, sh...let's get this done". When the noise did not subside, she called out "Now you'll have to hand this in...I'm going to give you only ten minutes...you're wasting time". There had been no previous indication that this assignment was to be collected.

Similarly, while Julie ostensibly uses discussions for the exchange of student experiences and points of view, in the classes observed discussions were more predominantly concerned with student questions about the content of the lesson and with requests for advice. For example, in a lesson on fetal development, a student asked about "old wives tales" concerning the shape of a mother's abdomen during pregnancy and the sex of the fetus. This appeared to prompt a series of questions concerning sexual intercourse during pregnancy, the presentation of the baby during birth, strangulation of the baby by the
umbilical cord, caesarian sections, how do you know when to go to the hospital, what are contractions and increase in breast size during pregnancy.

Less frequently, students asked for advice. During a presentation about human reproduction, for example, a student asked why her menstrual cycle was so irregular and what she should do about it. Such questioning by the students introduced additional topics and contributed to some "re-construction" of the curriculum in the classroom.

Candace: "Skills for Living"

Context of Teaching

Classroom structure and organization. Twenty-four students were enrolled in Candace's FLE class: 1 boy and 23 girls. The class was of mixed ethnicity (including Portuguese, Sikh, Chinese, Fijian, Vietnamese and Caucasian) and of mixed ability.

Candace teaches the Central Valley FLE 12 course at Seaview Secondary which is located in what she describes as "a lower income, working class" area of the school district. The class was held in a clothing and textiles lab which she shared with another teacher. The students sat around large cutting tables which were arranged in groups of two or three at the front and back of the classroom. Sewing machines lined the periphery of the classroom. Next to the door, a tall filing cabinet and large wooden desk delineated Candace's space at the front of the room. A bulletin board near the classroom door contained a display of photos from a children's party held early in the school year. One wall of windows flooded the classroom with light and contributed to a bright and sunny atmosphere.

Teaching style. Candace's teaching and classroom organization were calm and relaxed. Although the students in her class were talkative and she spent considerable time at the beginning of each class encouraging them to be quiet, she did not raise her voice or speak sternly. She routinely took attendance
at the beginning of every class by calling out each student name and expected
the students to respond appropriately. Most of Candace's teaching centered on
talking. When delivering information, she generally handed students note
sheets and read through them out loud, and periodically expanded some points
or commented on them or raised questions about them. Often such information
delivery evolved into a discussion of an issue which was apparently triggered
by the information contained in the notes. Candace moved around the room as
she taught, sometimes sitting on the edge of a table and sometimes standing at
the back or side of the classroom. When students were assigned written work,
Candace circulated from table to table checking student progress, assisting
students who were having difficulty or chatting casually about student
concerns or interests and about topics related to FLE.

Her interaction with students was open and friendly. As just noted,
Candace talked with students individually and in small groups about their
personal concerns and interests. Some time in every class was devoted to
student comments and anecdotes. During these interludes, Candace listened
attentively and occasionally commented in a positive or humorous way. The
students seemed to appreciate her dry wit, and there was an abundance of
chatter and laughter in all the classes observed.

Relationship of Conception to Practice

Candace's expressed curriculum conception emphasized a focus on the
development of "skills for living" and for dealing with the problems and
difficulties people generally encounter as they progress through various life
stages.

Consistencies. Consistencies between Candace's rhetoric and practice
were most apparent in her stated beliefs about the purpose of FLE (skill
development in preparation for life stages), in her expressed views regarding
students in FLE (as individualistic and emotionally responsive), in her
perceptions about the teaching process in FLE (although teaching is centrally focused on facts, personal meaning facilitates learning) and in her beliefs about her teaching roles (particularly that of curriculum administrator). As well, her beliefs that families are diverse and an influence on individual development were evident in her practice.

Her focus on preparation for life stages was apparent in both her discourse and her practice. For example, her language often implied that FLE was intended to be a simulation of adult life. When talking about topics to be covered over the course of the school year, she commented to students:

We have to get you out of the house first, so we'll be doing this [developmental stages] and children will be coming later.

She described an activity in which students were to care for an egg as they would a newborn infant saying:

You'll have a pseudo-experience of being a parent...which will give you the bare minimum of what it's like to be a parent.

At the same time, Candace also frequently referred to the "preparatory" nature of the course. For example, after a guest speaker had presented information about the growing aging population in North America, Candace pointed out to the students:

I felt that [the speaker] made a very good point of trying to tell you that it is your responsibility to be concerned about aging because in 20 or 30 years....your parents will be old.

And, when introducing a unit on parenthood, Candace commented:

There are more and more people who are concerned about becoming better parents...this course will give you a lot of the basics and make you think about parenting.

As might be expected, much of the course content reflected a concern with preparation for the future. Topics such as developmental periods of life,
young adulthood, preparing for parenthood and aging parents pertain to various stages of the human life cycle.

Candace's description of FLE as the development of skills for living is central to this notion of preparation. In the classes observed, Candace focused considerable attention on the skills associated with budgeting and time and stress management within the context of preparing for life as adults. During the unit on stress management, for example, she talked about her perceptions of the relevance of stress management for the students' future lives:

It's very important to know how to deal with [stress]... we should be spending a lot of time [in school] helping you to deal with it... giving you positive ways of alleviating or dealing with it... if you don't learn to deal with it... it can become a physical problem after a number of years... and we do face stress in our lives... the stresses are different at different stages.

She also appeared to teach specific skills. In order to determine the costs associated with establishing one's own residence after graduation from school, she had students compile a detailed budget and assess their eating habits. Similarly, when teaching about stress management, Candace had students practice visualization techniques and the manipulation of acupressure points on the body as ways of reducing stress. Such techniques were generally incorporated into student notebooks. When beginning to teach stress management, she instructed the students as follows:

I'd like you to build a list in your notebooks of techniques for relieving stress.

Indeed, Candace's view of the notebook as a repository of information which could be referred to in the future was reiterated to students on several occasions. When teaching about parenthood, she said:

I would suggest that you keep all these [handouts] because in five or ten years you can look back on them.
This focus on the acquisition of information echoes Candace's description of her teaching role as curriculum administrator and her view of students as recipients of knowledge. In her classroom, she did appear to administer the curriculum, frequently making comments such as

They say in the [resource book]
or

By the sounds of the notes....

Similarly, she often talked about the course content in ways that suggested it was to be dispensed to the students. At the beginning of one class she announced:

I'm going to get going onto the next unit...it has an interesting assignment that you have to do later on.

In another class she reminded students that

There's a whole section [of notes on discipline] that you'll be getting over the next few weeks.

Indeed, in almost every class observed, Candace actually handed out numerous sheets which contained information or lists of statements and questions related to the topic under study. It was common practice for either one of the students or Candace to read such notes aloud to the class. Related to this was her focus on information delivery. Phrases such as

There are some terms you should know
and

There's lots of good information in these [handouts]

were common in her classroom discourse.

As she suggested in interviews, Candace did seem to make a point of relating content to what she calls "the student's perspective" and she often
encouraged the students to think about their own lives in relation to course material. During a discussion of developmental life stages, for example, she asked:

What is middle age? What does it mean to you?

When talking about disciplining young children she posed the following question:

Think about your own environment...is it easier when you know what's expected of you?

And, in her introduction to stress management she commented:

I want you to list the stresses that you've gone through [during the past three days]...and I'd like you to think about how you react to stress.

This attention to the students' perspective was also apparent in discussions in Candace's classroom. Open-ended statements or questions were generally used to begin a discussion, which then seemed most often to take the form of opinion and experience sharing. Candace appeared to direct these discussions, asking questions such as

Are there any you don't agree with?
or

Does anyone have something else they feel like sharing?
or

Can everyone accept that?

These examples of concern with the students' perspective suggest that her perception of the learner in FLE as individualistic and emotionally responsive is reflected in her practice. Similarly, these observations also suggest that Candace does view knowledge as being personally processed by students.
Candace's perception that families are diverse was particularly apparent in her attention to the customs surrounding death and dying. Some reference to family diversity was also evident in her discussion of issues relating to abuse and divorce and in her lessons concerning resource management. Similarly, her belief that families are an influence on human development was evident in her concern with the role of parents in stimulating and nurturing their children. It is interesting to note, however, that although Candace's course is ostensibly concerned with issues relating to the family, the concepts associated with families were covered in a single unit of study, and explicit references to these in other segments of the course were notably absent.

**Inconsistencies.** One inconsistency associated with the use of worksheets and evaluation was evident. While Candace professes to use these for learning purposes, it appeared that on some occasions, these were also used for control. In one class, following a reading of "Ecclesiastes", students were assigned to answer questions about how the family life cycle is related to the Biblical verses. Candace instructed the students that,

> there's to be no talking...you have five minutes and then we'll discuss it.

As the students began to work, the noise level gradually escalated. Finally Candace interjected, saying,

> If you don't give yourself a chance to think about it, you'll never know how it might feel.

Although the students initially appeared to settle down, almost immediately the noise level rose again. At this point, Candace announced:

> When you finish the question, put your name and block at the top...I'm collecting them...I want to see whether you were thinking or not.
This comment seemed to contribute to an almost instant reduction in noise, and students appeared to then focus individually on the assigned questions.

**Unarticulated beliefs.** Some unarticulated beliefs were also apparent. For example, there was evidence of an additional purpose of FLE which was concerned with guidance and advice. This was evident not only in some of the content presented but also in her classroom discourse. Topics such as "How Can We Deal With Anger?", "How to Help a Grieving Friend", "Positive Approaches to Parenting" and "Ways to Provide Caregiving for Aging Parents" indicate that such information is intended to encourage particular courses of action. Candace's occasional advice-giving or use of prescriptive statements reflected a similar focus. For example, while talking about parenthood Candace asserted:

> A lot of reinforcement [of behaviour] is going on without parents being aware that reinforcement is going on...so you've got to think about what you're doing and how your little one is perceiving it.

During a discussion about the benefits and disadvantages of doing volunteer work, she commented:

> Sometimes you might feel uncomfortable or embarrassed...but that's all right...just do what your heart tells you to do.

In another class in which teenage parenthood was the focus, Candace pointed out:

> If you're going to have sex, there are [some] questions you need to ask yourself...am I ready to be a parent?...do I have the money to be financially responsible for a child?

A second unarticulated belief observed in Candace's classroom was related to her perceptions of the teaching roles she assumes. In addition to those which she herself identified, two additional roles were apparent. The roles of disciplinarian and classroom administrator (as opposed to curriculum
administrator) were particularly predominant and appeared to take up considerable time in each of the classes observed. At the beginning of each class, Candace devoted at least ten minutes (and sometimes more) to taking attendance, dealing with student lateness, assignments and excuses for absence. She also spent some of this time instructing students to "please be quiet", "could I have quiet please" or "sit down...please try not to talk". At times, her role as disciplinarian seemed to override her other teaching roles and appeared to influence the progress of the class. The following situation during a discussion about developmental stages illustrates this point:

She asked: "What is the difference between adolescence and pre-adolescence?" One student commented: "There's a 'pre' in front of one". The other students erupted in laughter. She continued with her questioning, asking: "What is the difference?" Many students were still laughing and there was considerable chatter. Although she called out "Quiet please...let's get on with this", there was no discernable reduction in the amount of noise. She appeared to give up on the pre-adolescence and continued on with "the young adult". Rather than asking students, she offered the information about the young adult herself. Gradually, the students settled and the teacher resumed questioning.

Indeed, on at least one occasion, Candace mentioned her concern about this kind of occurrence to the students:

[The other class] is so much farther ahead just because we can talk and not be bothered with all these interruptions.

Karen: "Guidance and Advice"

Context of Teaching

Classroom structure and organization. Karen's FLE class was a coed group of 24 students: 9 boys and 15 girls. Of these, there were 6 special needs students and an adult worker who regularly attended class with them. All students were Caucasian and had differing ability.
Karen teaches the Central Valley FLE 11 program at Cornerbrook High which is located in what she describes as an area of "some professional families, but also some who are not that well off". The class is conducted in a clothing and textiles lab. As is typical of most clothing labs in Central Valley schools, there are several large cutting tables which constitute desk space in the classroom. At the beginning of the school year, Karen's students sat at these tables in small groups, and consequently they were spread out around the room. Midway through the year, however, Karen pushed four of the tables together to form one large "desk" around which all the students sat. Right behind this "desk" was a bulletin board which covered the entire wall and which was devoted to displays of FLE topics. These bulletin board displays were always colourful and professional in appearance, and corresponded with each unit of study or topic covered. Because this school was built over sixty years ago, the ceilings are high and the windows are tall. These features contributed to a bright, airy feeling in the classroom.

Teaching style. Karen's teaching and classroom organization was characterized by order and creativity. Karen's class always began promptly after the final bell and all teaching materials for the class were organized either at her desk or at the large table at which both she and the students sat. She introduced each class by indicating the plan for the hour, from which there tended to be little deviation. Each lesson usually included some information delivery followed by discussion, a game, an activity or a worksheet. Games and activities formed a central part of Karen's teaching, and students generally expressed pleasure when they discovered that these were part of the lesson.

Karen's interaction with students was friendly and upbeat. She often used their adolescent jargon in her discourse and expressed interest in their clothing, in their relationships and in their extra-curricular activities. During seatwork, Karen always walked around the classroom and chatted briefly
with each student about either the topic being studied or about their personal interests and activities. To gain their cooperation, she frequently joked and " kidded around" with the students. The atmosphere was warm and lively, and it appeared that students enjoyed being in her class.

**Relationship of Conception to Practice**

Karen's professed curriculum conception reflects a concern with the prevention of problems and the preparation of students for life as adults, and is characterized by a focus on "guidance and advice".

**Consistencies.** Consistency between Karen's rhetoric and practice was particularly evident in her description of the purpose of FLE (guidance in preparing for the future and in preventing problems), in her perception of the teaching roles she assumes in FLE (guide and advice-giver, and creator of a comfortable classroom environment) and in the processes of teaching that she envisions to be appropriate for FLE (integrating the presentation of information with the subjective internalization of knowledge).

Karen's emphasis on preparation for the future was apparent in some of the materials and content selected for study and in her classroom discourse. Although she indicated that the grade 11 course that she teaches is generally concerned with adolescence, some of the topics covered did seem to pertain specifically to future adulthood. In this regard, topics such as "Moving Out on Your Own", "Establishing Meaningful Relationships" and "Sexual Decision-making" appeared to be especially relevant. However, Karen's concern with preparing for the future was most apparent in her classroom discourse. For example, she began an introductory lesson on relationships by saying:

**OK.. I'm just going to give you a quick rundown on your [future] lives.**

In another class she prefaced a lesson on establishing meaningful relationships by stating:
You guys will be getting to this stage in your lives soon.

Indeed, she explicitly referred to the future when later in this series of lessons she said:

You are never prepared for these things in relationships, like breaking up.

And, when a student commented that "if we could do all this we'd be perfect", Karen replied:

This is just to help you later on.

In this instance, the comments of both student and teacher suggest that Karen's goals of preventing problems and preparing for the future were reflected in practice.

Karen's concern with providing guidance for students is related to her stated focus on preparation for the future. This emphasis on guidance was reflected in her selection and presentation of considerable prescriptive content. For example, she presented students with information about "what to look for in a steady relationship", "how you can maintain friendships with people", "ways to decrease jealousy" and "how to avoid power struggles". Indeed, at one point, Karen indicated to students that such information might be useful for future reference:

I...think that sometimes it's good to have this stuff written down...you might want to look at it sometime.

Periodically, Karen also appeared to offer advice to students. For example, when talking about meaningful relationships she commented:

Listen to your guts...if something's happening inside...often that's right.

And, when a student suggested that once married "you can't tell them [the
husband or wife] you don't like things and stuff", Karen replied:

Oh yes you can...you should do that...just because you're married doesn't mean everything's going to be hunky dory...if they don't want to change, they won't...no matter how much you love them.

These examples indicate that Karen's view of her role as a guide and as an advice-giver are reflected in her practice. As well, on several occasions after class, individual students solicited advice and she appeared to dispense it. For example, one day a student approached Karen about a relationship problem. Karen spoke with the student quietly for a few minutes and concluded the discussion with the comment:

Remember, you don't have to put up with that.

Similarly, her role in creating and maintaining a classroom environment conducive to student interaction was also evident. At the beginning of one class, Karen announced that one student was having a birthday and then had class members sing "Happy Birthday". On most occasions when students worked on activities either individually or in small groups, Karen seemed to make a point of circulating among them and asking about their weekends and their extra-curricular activities as well as the task at hand.

Karen's beliefs about teaching and learning and about students in FLE were also evident in her classroom practice. Most lessons included some content delivery (usually at the beginning of the class), followed by either discussion or student activities. Content delivery was characterized by what Karen called "notes" or "taking notes". Indeed, she often introduced a lesson using phrases such as

You guys ready to write?...we have notes today

or

What we're going to do today is take notes and then...
We have to take our notebooks out today.

Such note-taking appeared to constitute the "knowledge base" that she is anxious for students to acquire. Some of these notes represented information about a topic (such as kinds of values, human reproduction systems or theories of decision-making), while others were prescriptive in nature (how to avoid power struggles, how to avoid jealousy in relationships and how to maintain friendships).

Discussions in Karen's classroom were, as she suggests, distinguished by "talk". In fact, Karen frequently used the word "talk" when referring to class discussions. Phrases such as

OK...no more notes....now we're talking

or

Today we're talking about...

were common in Karen's classroom discourse. Students themselves also used the word "talk" to refer to this method and, on several occasions, were overheard to comment

Oh boy, we get to talk again today.

Such discussions were generally stimulated by questions posed by Karen and developed as students responded to these questions, made comments or raised issues.

Karen's stated use of games and activities as learning strategies was also apparent in her classroom. For example, in the classes observed, students either played games (such as "Mate Trait Rummy") or developed their own games (such as "The Values Game") and, on one occasion, they were required to create a dialogue for a situation which was then used for role playing.
The previous descriptions imply that Karen's perception of the student as an active learner was evident in her practice. Indeed, she not only solicited student input into course development but also seemed to relate the content to students' experience. Evidence of the former was apparent in the following excerpt from a discussion initiated by Karen:

What kinds of things would you guys like to talk about?...do you want me to give you [more] information or talk from what you already know?...let's get some ideas.

Evidence of the latter was apparent in Karen's discourse as she presented course material. During a lesson on decision-making, for example, she said:

I know I've done that...made a decision based only on my immediate wants....how about you?

When talking about power in relationships, she asked:

In your lives, what causes power struggles?

And, in a lesson about establishing meaningful relationships, she stated:

I want you to think about yourself for a few minutes...is how you perceive yourself the way others perceive you?

Inconsistencies. Two inconsistencies between Karen's expressed beliefs about FLE and her beliefs in practice were apparent. Although Karen asserts that activities and evaluation are used for learning purposes, they appeared to also be used periodically for classroom control. For example, following the game "Mate Trait Rummy", students had been assigned to discuss some questions related to the game. The noise level increased steadily over a period of five minutes and eventually Karen called out:

So you guys are working on the questions and your summaries so I can collect them?
Prior to this, students had only been told to "discuss these in your groups", and not that they were to be handed in. While such occurrences were infrequent, they did raise questions regarding the intended and actual purposes of activities and evaluation.

The second inconsistency related to Karen's role as advice-giver. While Karen seemed to believe that it was appropriate to give advice to students and to present considerable prescriptive content, at the same time it appeared that in some areas, she believed that such guidance is inappropriate. For example, when introducing a unit on sexuality, Karen said:

You realize that you have to take responsibility for your own sexual behaviour...sexuality is a personal decision and I can't tell you what to do...but I can give you some information.

Unarticulated beliefs. Karen's classroom practice revealed that there was also evidence of an unarticulated second purpose of FLE. Karen's expressed beliefs imply that FLE is intended to prepare students for functioning in the adult world of families and relationships. However, classroom observations suggest that a broader purpose, concerned with social issues as they impact on individuals and families, may also guide her practice. For example, as part of her course she included discussions about racism, homosexuality, freedom of expression, cults and mind control. Indeed, Karen frequently appeared to place the content she was teaching into a socio-cultural perspective. When talking about jealousy in relationships, for example, Karen suggested:

Customs relating to jealousy differ according to the culture....in some cultures jealousy doesn't exist because it's A-OK to swap partners.

She then proceeded to identify the Inuit culture as an example. In another class, Karen talked at length about how expectations for marriage and singlehood in North America have changed over the past two decades.
One additional point is important to note. Although Karen expressed very definite views about the importance of the development of positive healthy families, surprisingly little reference was made to families or related concepts in the classes observed.

Paula: "Self Reflection and Personal Insight"

Context of Teaching

Classroom structure and organization. Paula's FLE class was a coed group of 23 students: 5 boys and 18 girls. The students represented several cultural groups including Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, Fijian and Native Indian. Of these groups, however, the Chinese students (approximately half the class) predominated. The class was of mixed ability.

Paula teaches the Central Valley FLE 11 program at Riverside High, which is located in what she describes as "a low income area" of the Central Valley School District. The class is held in a foods lab in the basement of the school. A green and yellow colour scheme and fluorescent lighting overhead brightens the classroom which, because of its location, has almost no natural light from windows. Although the room is divided into eight kitchens with a table and seating for four in each, when teaching FLE, Paula has the students move the chairs from the kitchens to form a semi-circle at the front of the room. When students are doing written work they remain at the tables in their original configuration. Paula's desk and filing cabinets are located at the front of the room, immediately in front of the only blackboard space in the classroom.

Teaching style. Paula's teaching was characterized by conversation and, in almost every class, both she and the students sat in a semi-circle. Classes typically began with informal chatting about school events or extra-curricular activities. Once attendance was completed, Paula introduced the topic for the day by saying "we're going to talk about" or "let's talk
about". Although she sometimes gave students note sheets or handouts related to the topic to be studied at this time, more often she began by having students share an idea or an experience, or by asking a question. Lessons then evolved as students raised issues or related anecdotes, or as Paula herself recounted an experience or posed questions. Students did not take notes, and only infrequently engaged in small group discussion. Most classes centered on unstructured large group discussion and interaction.

Paula's interaction with students was warm, friendly and relaxed. She smiled and laughed a great deal with them and frequently expressed interest in their individual lives. She often voiced her concern for their problems or difficulties, whether these were related to their home situation or to their school life. While checking attendance, she always inquired about those students who were absent that day or who had not been attending for an extended period of time. The students appeared to relate positively to her and many stayed for a few minutes after class to chat informally with her. In class, students often inquired about events in her personal life which she had shared with them.

Relationship of Conception to Practice

Paula's expressed conception of FLE reflects a focus on "self reflection and personal insight". Paula appears to be less overtly concerned with either solving problems or preventing them, and seems to center her attention on recognizing and communicating feelings and improving relationships.

Consistencies. Correspondence between Paula's articulated beliefs and her classroom practice was evident in her view of the purpose of FLE (the communication of feelings may enhance relationships), in her beliefs about teaching in FLE (teaching and learning for personal relevance) and in her perceptions about her role as teacher in FLE (facilitator, nurturer, model and egalitarian class member).
A focus on feelings was apparent in Paula's discourse, in her selection of student activities and in the expression of emotion in the classroom. During class discussions, Paula frequently talked about feelings or referred to feelings. For example, when students were describing their experiences as the "parent" of an egg for a week, she questioned the students about their feelings regarding the experience. Questions such as

How did you feel about that?

and

How did that [experience] make you feel?

and

Do you think real parents feel that way sometimes?

permeated the discussion. While assisting students to prepare for a debate on abortion, Paula asked one group:

How does [their pamphlet on abortion] make you feel?

And, during a discussion about abuse in relationships, Paula asked a student who had expressed abusive behaviour toward a sibling:

How do you feel about it now?.

Some student activities also encompassed feelings. For example, when investigating the topic "Getting Help for an Unplanned Pregnancy", students were required to visit a clinic or agency and, as part of the assignment, to answer the question:

How did you feel about going there?

As a means of reflecting on class discussions, students were also required to keep a journal. At the beginning of class one day, Paula reminded students of her expectations regarding their journal entries:
I really like feeling statements in journals....how did you feel when we did this?....or what feelings you had in the class about what we did...put that feeling statement in...that's the sort of thing I really like in the journals.

In the classes observed, there was also evidence of expression of emotion.

Some was apparently spontaneous. For example, several students appeared to be crying following a viewing of the movie "The Color Purple". Paula noticed this and said:

Well, I watched it last night and did my crying then.

In one instance (during a discussion about loss and grieving), it appeared that Paula prompted an emotional response:

[The comment made by another class member] seemed to prompt a student to talk about her friend who had died of cancer. Paula asked: "How did you feel?" The student replied: "Sad". Paula repeated this and added questioningly: "Angry? Depressed?" Suddenly the student began to sob. Paula reached over (this student was sitting right next to her) and placed her hand on the student's shoulder and began to gently rub the student's back. The class was silent. When asked about wanting to leave the classroom, the student declined, and the discussion continued.

However, later in this class, she apologized to the student:

I'm sorry I did that to you.

Related to this emphasis on feelings is Paula's concern with self reflection and personal insight. These were particularly evident in class discussions and appeared to form both the substance and focus of many of the lessons observed. Self reflection (which frequently took the form of self disclosure) was apparent in the ways in which both Paula and some of her students chose to reveal their personal experiences and their feelings about them to the rest of the class. Indeed, at one point Paula herself said to the students:

Every time you let out your feelings...you are taking a risk...if I open
up to someone and let that person know something that's very personal and private, that person could blab it to the world...actually I do that all the time in [this class]...I take a risk when I tell you things about myself.

Such reflection and disclosure occurred during class discussions and seemed to be stimulated in part by the topic under study. For example, when abuse in relationships was the subject of discussion, several students verbalized their personal experience of abuse. The following student account from this class discussion is representative of this disclosure:

My father was an alcoholic...he used to beat me up for no reason at all....the next day after beating me up he would say 'I'm sorry'...then one day he started hitting me and I hit him back and he never hit me since that day.

During a discussion about loss, another student talked about having confused feelings:

I get totally depressed....I've been hurt so many times...the only people I'm living for is my friends...it's life I can't handle...I personally think I'm better off dead.

References to personal insight were also apparent in class discussions. It appeared, for example, that the discussion in which students shared their experiences as the "parent" of an egg was at least partly intended for this purpose. One student concluded a description of the experience by saying:

I have enough trouble with myself...forget a baby.

To this Paula responded:

I think it's very important that people get to know themselves before becoming a parent...there's a lot to growing up....to knowing yourself outside of living with your parents...so if you learned that about yourself, it was a good experience for you.

Similarly, Paula spent one class having students think about their childhood. She introduced this class by saying:
Did any of you go home and find out what you were like when you were a baby?

While this exercise was included as part of a unit on child development, according to Paula, it was also intended to help students reflect on why you are the way you are.

Paula's beliefs about teaching in FLE were also consistent with her classroom practice. As the preceding suggests, Paula used discussion extensively to provide students with the opportunity to share experiences and feelings. Such discussion reflected her apparent concern with learning for personal relevance, and relates to her perception of the centrality of personal meaning in the construction of knowledge. This also appeared to be reflected in those classes where some specific content was to be covered. In keeping with Paula's expressed beliefs about teaching and learning in FLE, information delivery (as in formal lectures) was noticeably lacking in her classroom and students did not take notes. In fact, at the beginning of one class in which Paula had notes on an overhead transparency, she announced:

You can write it down if you want...but you don't need to...I'm just putting it on the overhead so you can look at it while I talk about it.

Those classes which were concerned explicitly with facts and information were still conducted using a discussion format. While discussing some information about child development, for example, Paula used a list of facts about development to generate discussion among students. Using her own child as an example, she began by illustrating a point about rapid growth in infancy. Students then recounted incidents related to growth and development from their own and others' childhood. While presenting information on infancy, Paula invited a young mother and her baby into the classroom. Paula introduced the class by asking:
Now...what's the first question that comes to mind?

The lesson was developed through student questions and dialogue between the mother and Paula.

In a similar way, a class on human sexuality and contraception was developed using questions generated by students. Paula (and the students themselves) then responded to the questions. She referred to this class as a "round table discussion". Indeed, most discussions physically assumed a circular format. For large group discussions, Paula always insisted that students sit in a circle. At the beginning of the school year she firmly indicated to the students:

I do not want you sitting behind tables [for discussion].

And, when she began class apparently knowing that some students would arrive late, it was common for her to say:

Let's make a nice small circle...we'll expand to include anyone who arrives late.

As the preceding suggest, Paula's perceptions of her role as facilitator in the classroom were displayed in her practice, and she provided activities which appeared to support her understanding of the purpose of FLE. For those students who chose not to participate openly in discussions, the course journal served a similar purpose. Similarly, her perceived role as nurturer was also apparent in the way she talked to the students, expressed concern about them and attempted to foster their self esteem. She frequently used phrases such as:

Good, you've done really well

or

I know you can do it.
When one student dropped out of school, Paula commented to the rest of the class:

I'm sorry that [this student] is gone...I hope all goes well for [the student].

She also appeared to try to give students a second chance or the benefit of the doubt. When several students had not completed some assigned work, she sent them to the library to research the topic, saying:

You don't want to get zero on this.

Paula's belief that she models good communication skills was also evident in her practice. Her classroom discourse reflected the "constructively open communication techniques" that she discussed with students. In this regard, her considerable use of "I statements" to talk about her feelings concerning various issues in class discussions were particularly noteworthy.

Finally, her roles as a learner and egalitarian class member were also evident. Except when introducing a film or guest, Paula always sat in the circle with students. She actively participated in each discussion by sharing her own thoughts, feelings and experiences. Indeed, at the end of one class, she commented:

I find [this topic] interesting because I'm rethinking and reassessing my past relationship.

During a presentation about AIDS by guest speakers, Paula sat as one of the "audience" and frequently asked questions, suggesting that she is seeking knowledge and learning.

Inconsistencies and unarticulated beliefs. Paula's classroom practice revealed that there was evidence of an unarticulated purpose and teaching role which were somewhat inconsistent with her expressed beliefs about FLE. An
underlying conception of "guidance" was reflected in Paula's classroom practice. This unarticulated focus was apparent in advice-giving and in prescriptive statements or suggestions. While Paula asserts that "there are no right or wrong answers in life", her classroom discourse suggested that such may not always be the case. For example, when talking about becoming a parent Paula declared:

Life changes when you have a baby...so if you want to experience life...do things...it's probably better to wait [before you have a baby].

During a discussion about relationships and abuse Paula advised:

This [the control of money by one spouse] can happen a lot in married relationships, especially where there's only one income and it's that of the male...it doesn't have to happen...you should, in a relationship, even if you're not earning the money, have some that you can do with what you want.

While discussing child development, she commented:

In all families the parents need to watch out when the younger child comes along.

And, when talking about children and parents, she suggested:

I would suggest that it's a desirable thing for a parent to give a reward for desirable behaviour after it happens...not before...it's a better idea to have people motivated by something intrinsic, inside the person, rather than outside...like a bribe.

Related to this unarticulated purpose was a counselling role which Paula assumed with some students. This role was characterized by her use of techniques such as reflective listening and empathy when students solicited advice or related a personal problem during the course of class discussion. For example, when a student recounted family problems, Paula responded by saying:
You must be feeling frustrated...it sounds like you're unhappy with the way things are.

Later in the dialogue between Paula and the student, she asked:

Can you talk to them about this?

When dealing with another student problem about relationships, Paula commented at one point:

Now maybe we're getting to the real source of [this student's] anger.

At the conclusion of this dialogue, Paula suggested:

You've got a lot of work to do on this relationship...I hope you'll work on it.

Occasionally Paula actually offered advice to such students. In the case of the student with family problems, she advised:

Your self esteem does not have to be completely tied up with your parents...maybe you need to listen more to what other people say about you.

When talking with another student about encouraging the use of contraception in the relationship, she suggested:

You can say 'I'm not ready to be a parent'...Tell him it's important to you and if he still says no, then think about what he values more.

Although in the interviews Paula expressed very definite views about the diversity of family forms and the ways in which she perceives traditional family roles to be inappropriate, there was surprisingly little explicit reference to these in her classroom discourse. And, while many of the topics which were included in Paula's class (such as child development, child abuse and emotional abuse in relationships) have implications for families, such implications were not addressed specifically.
Allison: "Personal Autonomy and Transformation"

Context of Teaching

Classroom structure and organization. At the beginning of the school year, Allison's FLE class was composed of 20 students who reflected a range of ability and who attended regularly: 6 boys and 14 girls. Mid-way through the year, however, 3 new female students were enrolled, increasing the attendance to 23. There were 3 Oriental students with the remainder Caucasian. One student was disabled.

Allison teaches the Central Valley FLE 11 program in a combination foods and clothing lab. It is situated on the ground floor of Mountainview High School, which was located in what was described as an upper middle class area of the Central Valley School District. The room reflected the era of the early 1900's in which it was built: high ceilings and long, narrow windows with leaded panes along one wall. The room was originally a combination foods and clothing lab and, although the foods lab area is still used for foods classes, the sewing machines have been removed and the clothing area is now used only for FLE. The pale yellow walls and several rows of fluorescent lights contributed to a "sunny" atmosphere in the classroom. Several bulletin boards (one on a front wall and another on a side wall next to the door) displayed posters related to FLE topics. A large wooden desk and two filing cabinets delineated Allison's space at the front of the room. Several large tables were pushed together to form a rectangular student seating area for this class. This seating arrangement never varied.

Teaching style. Allison's teaching was characterized by organization and efficiency. Every class began promptly after the final bell, and students were expected to begin work on a series of questions listed on the one small blackboard. Once these had been completed, Allison then reviewed her agenda for the class, and proceeded with her planned activities. She was pleasant and friendly with the students, and often inquired about their involvement in
work and school activities. At the same time, she was brisk and businesslike when it came to completing designated tasks. Each lesson was clearly outlined and organized and was usually completed in the time allotted. Students were expected to listen when she stood with her arms crossed or her hand raised. While teaching, she circulated around the periphery of the tables or stood in the center, off to one side. She regularly posted student grades and gave an accounting of how tests and assignments were assessed.

Relationship of Conception to Practice

Allison's expressed conception of FLE curriculum embodies a focus on the recognition of personal strengths and self esteem, and on the individual's capacity for transformation of one's family of the future. Her stated purpose is understanding the influence of one's family of origin on one's self development and preparing for establishing a family in the future.

Consistencies. Consistencies between Allison's stated beliefs and her classroom practice were most apparent in her views of the purpose of FLE (for preparing students to establish their own families), in her perceived teaching roles in FLE (information provider, director of learning, facilitator and creator of a comfortable classroom environment), in her beliefs about learning in FLE (learning is, in her words, both cognitive and affective) and in her beliefs about families in FLE (an influence on self development and a social unit capable of transformation).

As might be expected, Allison's belief that FLE should assist students in establishing their own families in the future was reflected in the topics studied. Units such as "Pregnancy and Birth", "Child Development", "Human Sexuality" and "Intimate Relationships" reflected an emphasis on the creation of families and relationships within them. This emphasis on future families was reinforced through Allison's classroom discourse. For example, during a class discussion about heredity and environment, Allison pointed out:
That's why you're taking this course guys...I'm looking to the future...when you're parents.

And, in response to a student comment about children and discipline, Allison suggested:

That's why it's so hard to be a parent...and why you have to look at these things.

Related to this is Allison's stated focus on autonomy and one's ability to change one's future family. This focus was also evident in Allison's discourse:

I guess the question is do you want to break that cycle [in your family]...taking courses like this you become aware...to break that cycle or keep it going if it's a good one...this way you're in control.

Indeed, Allison did seem to encourage students in developing such awareness. During discussions, she provided numerous opportunities for assessing the influence of one's family of origin. In a discussion in which students shared their personal experiences of parent-child interaction, Allison emphasized:

This is why we have to teach you guys about parenting now...because you get selective amnesia...and can't remember what it was like to be [a child].

Later in this same class, after talking about some perceptions of their parents' lives, Allison concluded:

Even if your parents aren't aware of it [the family of origin research] you guys will be and can use it in bringing up your own children.

Other discussion topics in subsequent classes included "what was your first childhood memory?", and "what do you remember about when you first found out about the facts of life?". Allison also selected some activities which reflected similar purposes. For example, students completed a scrapbook about
their childhood which included photos and information about their growth and development from infancy to adolescence. In addition, Allison had students complete an exercise entitled "Me as a Child" which she described to the students as follows:

What I'd like you to think about are childhood memories...and make a timeline...including the highs and lows...significant events in your life...remember you are all products of your past.

According to the handout accompanying this assignment, the purpose of the activity was to:

Learn about your early beginnings [so that] you can discover things about yourself and build your self concept.

Allison's perceptions of her roles in teaching FLE appeared to be reflected in practice. During classroom observations, her role as information provider seemed to predominate, as approximately half of the classes observed were devoted primarily to information delivery. In almost every class, considerable time was spent defining terms, collating facts or taking notes. Allison herself repeatedly used the word "information" and referred to facts and information in her classroom discourse using the following phrases:

This is information I want you to know

and

I want to make sure you know the facts about it

and

We're going over the information now.

Such information providing was sometimes prescriptive in nature and appears to relate to Allison's perceptions of how she "points out" to students. For example, while talking about parent-child bonding during infancy, Allison pointed out:
It's at eight months is when bonding occurs....I would almost tell people to go back to work for the first eight months because it's not until eight months that the bonding begins.

In a discussion about child development she indicated:

A point I want to make is that a child explores with its senses....and a child should be allowed to explore its environment...the responsibility of the parent is to make the environment safe...[the child] has great potential...[but] if it doesn't have stimulation that potential won't develop...you've got to give stimulation to that child.

Related to Allison's role as information provider is her view as director of the course of learning in the classroom. Such direction was apparent at the beginning of each class. As students entered the classroom, she drew their attention to the blackboard on which was outlined the "roll assignment". This assignment consisted of an outline of the events and activities for that day's class and some questions related to the topic being studied. Students were expected to complete these as Allison took the roll. Allison also seemed to direct the course of discussion. For example, in the middle of one discussion she stated:

I'm going to divert here for a minute because...I think it's important.

For the most part, she appeared to keep the students "on topic" during discussions. When students began to talk about experiences unrelated to the topic under discussion, Allison appeared to listen for an idea or comment which was related, and then indicated "that's the point I was trying to get you to think about" or "that leads into what I was wanting to talk about".

Allison's facilitating role was apparent in the ways in which she not only provided students with the opportunity to share personal experiences but also in the ways in which she encouraged them to do this. She generally prefaced such reflective discussion with remarks such as:

Can anyone give us some personal examples?
Do you have any personal experience to share?

Allison also appeared to encourage students to reflect by engaging in self-reflection herself. She began a discussion on childhood memories, for example, by saying:

I want you to share some of your earliest childhood memories...and I'll start off.

Related to this is the role that Allison envisions she has in creating and maintaining a comfortable and uncritical classroom environment. Her interaction with students was characterized by caring and respect. For example, she often seemed to make a point of greeting students as they entered the classroom saying "Hi, how are you?" She also appeared to give students recognition and positive reinforcement for their accomplishments. When handing back an assignment she remarked:

You've all done such a wonderful job on [this assignment]...I want you to know that I appreciate all the work you did.

After a guest speaker in the previous class, Allison commented:

I was really impressed with the quality of questions you asked yesterday.

Allison expressed concern about their comfort in class. In discussions where students were encouraged to share experiences, she generally stated:

You have the right to pass on this if you don't feel comfortable sharing.

Similarly, during a film on birth, she told the students:

If it starts to bug you, remember head between your knees.
Allison's beliefs about what she calls the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning in FLE were also apparent in her classroom practice. Allison's concern with facts and information reflected her emphasis on the cognitive learning. This attention to cognitive learning was also apparent in her classroom discourse. She spent considerable time delivering information and frequently employed the words "facts" and "information" in so doing. During a lesson on child development, for example, she remarked:

What we want you to know is what these [developmental stages] are.

In another class she emphasized:

I want you to know these terms so that you can understand them and use them in observations.

When talking about evaluation with students, cognitive learning also appeared to be central. While reminding students about an upcoming test Allison commented:

Study hard for it please...there's a lot of information from the sheets and the questions we've worked on.

Similarly, as she handed students a short review quiz at the beginning of a class she declared:

It's just a check to see if your basic information is solid...we're doing this as a factual test...making sure you have the information.

Sometimes Allison explicitly referred to the distinction that she sees between cognitive and affective learning. For example, prior to a lesson on human reproduction she indicated:

I want to use this [lesson on reproduction] as an information lesson....and from there go on to intimate relationships...so we have the facts but then get into the personal and the emotional.
It appeared that affective learning was more of an individual or personal undertaking. While introducing a discussion about sexuality, Allison asserted:

I'd like to have this as a bit of a discussion...I'm not meaning to embarrass anyone...I just want to bring out some attitudes...sex is a very personal decision...and I hope nobody goes away feeling like they've been told what to do...I just want to get out attitudes and feelings.

Indeed, most discussion seemed to focus on affective concerns. As noted previously, in discussions students were encouraged to share and to reflect on personal perceptions and experiences. Thus, Allison's practice appeared to encompass her expressed beliefs about the integration of cognitive and affective learning in FLE and about knowledge including both factual and personal dimensions.

As suggested earlier, Allison's beliefs about the family as an influence on one's self development and as a social unit which can be transformed were evident in her classroom practice. The topics she presented and her discourse associated with these indicate considerable consistency between her espoused beliefs and her practice.

Inconsistencies. Some inconsistency was apparent in one of Allison's expressed beliefs about the purpose of FLE. Although she states that FLE provides an opportunity for students to identify the personal strengths which their families of origin have bequeathed them, there was little evidence to suggest that this aim was being accomplished. While several activities and some discussion did focus on childhood memories and personal experiences and family dynamics, on no occasion did students actually reflect on their legacy of personal strengths. Moreover, it was unclear whether students were to realize these personally or intuitively, or whether this would be the subject of a specific series of lessons.
Another inconsistency was apparent regarding Allison's stated view about the students as autonomous learners and independent thinkers. While she may conceive of learners in FLE as capable of autonomy and independent thinking, her classroom practices suggest that she tends to respond to them more as recipients of knowledge who come to know in both cognitive and affective ways. This was particularly evident in her emphasis on information delivery and in her focus on the students' acquisition, comprehension and application of knowledge. In the classes observed, standardized questions and assignments were used for the entire class and no apparent provision was made for alternative approaches to learning. Attention to affective learning appeared to occur primarily through discussions in which students were provided with the opportunity to express their feelings and opinions. While many students demonstrated through their discourse that they "are in the process of thinking for themselves", it was unclear how Allison was assisting them to actually develop personal autonomy and independent thinking and the capacity to effect change in their own lives.

Similarly, although Allison expressed the belief that evaluation in FLE is intended to measure knowledge acquisition and to determine attitude and behaviour change, in her classroom evaluation also appeared to be used for classroom control. For example, as the noise level escalated while students were ostensibly working on an assignment, Allison called out:

There shouldn't be any talking...marks are being taken down if you're talking about something other than the assignment.

While such occurrences were infrequent, they do raise questions about the real and intended purposes of evaluation in Allison's classroom.

Unarticulated beliefs. Allison's periodic use of knowledge for prescription suggests an unarticulated concern with guidance. While she appears to see giving guidance as part of her teacher's role in FLE, such
concerns were not explicit in her description of the aims and purposes of FLE as she expressed them.

Susan: "Personal Growth and Social Responsibility"

Context of Teaching

Classroom Structure and Organization. Susan's FLE class was originally composed of 11 female students who attended this class regularly. As the school year progressed, however, one student left the program. These girls represented considerable ethnic diversity and included Native Indian, Negro, Sikh, Fijian, Greek and Portuguese students. The class was of mixed ability.

Susan teaches the Central Valley FLE 12 program in a small portable classroom set off from the main building of Oakland Secondary. This school is located in an area of the Central Valley School District which Susan described as encompassing "a mix of middle class and working class" neighbourhoods. It was a sunny room with one wall of windows and several green plants on the sill. Blackboard space extended along one end and one side wall of the classroom. Colourful posters depicting stages of child development and collages portraying families and student aspirations for the future covered the remaining wall space. In the center of the room, student desks were arranged in a semi-circle facing Susan's desk. In front of her desk stood a small stool on which she often sat while leading class discussions. Behind Susan's desk, a bookcase, some filing cabinets and a set of bookshelves filled the corners of the room.

Teaching style. Susan's classroom organization and her teaching reflected order and respect. At the beginning of each class, she articulated her plans and expectations regarding the activities to be covered and assignments to be completed, and usually outlined these on the blackboard. To gain the students' attention, she spoke quietly, yet firmly saying "I'll ask you to be quiet now please" or "I'd like your attention now please". During
each class, there was generally a period of information sharing and some time for small or large group discussion or a written activity. She displayed considerable animation in her teaching, and frequently used facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice to convey enthusiasm or to emphasize a point.

Susan's interaction with her students reflected interest and concern. She often asked them about their extra-curricular activities and always took time to talk with them about any special school events such as a Valentine's Day noon hour dance and a Grad Breakfast which most of the students had attended.

Relationship of Conception to Practice

Susan's expressed conception of FLE emphasizes "personal growth and social responsibility" for managing and improving the quality of individual and family life.

Consistencies. Consistency between Susan's rhetoric and practice was apparent in her beliefs about the purposes of FLE (for personal growth and social responsibility), in her beliefs about the family in FLE (being a family member requires work), in her perceptions about her teaching roles in FLE (information provider, curriculum developer, creator of a supportive classroom environment and learner) and in her views about learning and knowledge in FLE (learning is interactive, and both factual knowledge and personal experience are relevant)

Susan's beliefs that FLE should assist students in their personal growth and in their awareness of social responsibility were reflected in both the content presented and in her classroom discourse. Topics such as "health issues and their environmental impact" and "sexual harassment in the workplace" reflected a concern with social issues which impact on individuals and families, and were related to the development of social awareness and
responsibility. Topics such as "the stages of relationships" and "the critical stages of human development" indicated a focus on personal growth and development as it pertains to individual and family relationships.

Susan's classroom discourse reinforced this emphasis on personal growth and social responsibility. She frequently referred to growth and change in conjunction with much of the content she presented. For example, in a discussion about factors which contribute to marital success, she posed the following question:

What if one person [in the relationship] grows and changes a lot and the other doesn't...what's likely to happen?

She went on to indicate that "openness to growth" is a factor which tends to increase the chance of success in marriage. Similarly, when talking about emerging adulthood and the development of maturity, she pointed out that although their physical growth is complete, adults do continue to change and develop as they age. She used career change as an example:

We are seeing a lot of people having four different careers in a lifetime.

Susan also talked about social change. While discussing marriage, she said:

Society's perceptions of marriage and relationships are changing.

Reference to such change was also apparent in discussions about changed social perceptions of people who are unmarried and about the growing number of families in which both partners work outside the home.

The notion of change was also evident in Susan's discourse concerning the potential for making changes in one's life and in one's circumstances. For example, while discussing mate selection practices, a student commented that she disliked the strictures imposed on her by her culture with respect to the selection of a marriage partner. To this Susan replied:
It's a transition time...your parents came from their country with a value system and you're in the middle of it...people like you are breaking ground....for your children it will be different.

At the same time, she suggested that alternatives to some life situations and practices which may be potentially unfulfilling or unacceptable are possible. When talking about the stages of an intimate relationship, she pointed out:

There's lot of choice [about] what you want to happen at every stage.

When discussing conflict resolution, she suggested:

There are all sorts of things that might work [to resolve conflict] in a positive way.

And, in response to a student's concern about how she will have a marriage partner chosen for her by her family, Susan asked:

But will it always be this way?

Susan often raised questions and encouraged students to think about how such alternatives might be accomplished. During a discussion about sexual harassment she asked:

What helps to eradicate a problem like this?

In another class, while discussing conflict in relationships, she assigned a series of case studies and gave students the following instructions:

I want you to figure out what you would do...think about constructive ways in which these could be handled.

Susan's belief that FLE can assist students to improve the quality of their personal and family lives was also evident in her classroom practice. One day she drew the students' attention to the fact that many females tend to drop science and mathematics in school or to not pursue these areas in their
post-secondary education. She stated:

What happens [if you drop math and science] is that you set yourself up for a low paying job... so struggle [with it]... you'll be thankful later on.

And, when talking about entering a marriage relationship, she declared:

There are some things that will make a marriage healthy when you get into it.

Susan's concern with social responsibility in FLE was also apparent in her classroom discourse. She frequently talked about social issues and referred to social responsibilities. For example, in a unit on family health and wellness, she referred to environmental issues such as the local storage of PCB's and the contamination of fish with industrial chemicals and their potential influence on the health of the city's population, and, as noted earlier, she also talked about sexual harassment. While raising such issues, she referred to the role that individuals might play in resolving them. When talking about the health care system, she posed the following question:

When is there a time that we do have control?

As a student suggested that "election time" was one way of trying to exert control, Susan briefly discussed the role of elections and ways in which the public might have some say in what is done about health care. Involvement in political action was reiterated during a discussion of adult responsibilities and social expectations as part of maturity. After inquiring who had voted during the last election, she asked:

Did you think about what you were voting for and why?... that's just a little bit of what society expects of adults.

Susan's classroom discourse revealed that she believes that social responsibility is intended to benefit not only the individual, but also
families and society as a whole. This broader concern was particularly apparent in the discussion of health issues. When introducing the topic, she stated:

When someone is not healthy...it affects the people around us, the individuals around us, it affects our families...[and]...healthy families make a healthy society...so it's not just the individual, we can take it further afield.

Similarly, when discussing the sexual harassment issue, she pointed out:

If you do something about it...who are you also helping?...not just yourself but all the others who come after you...if employers see that that kind of behaviour is not going to be tolerated...might it deter them from behaving this way?

Susan's frequent use of news items in her classes highlighted this social element of her beliefs about the purpose of FLE. When introducing a unit on child development, she referred to the recently reported "wilding incident" in a large North American city, in which several adolescents harassed and molested a female jogger. As she described the incident to the students she asked:

What about the development of those children?...can you make some assumptions about their development between the ages of 1 and 14?...maybe it wasn't all positive and maybe we need more people with good parenting skills.

And, when discussing AIDS as a health issue which is impacting on individuals and families, she referred to a case which had been reported in the news:

There was an incident in [another city] some months ago...a man [who] knowingly had AIDS...was still out there continuing his activities...it was on the TV and in the newspapers...and he eventually turned himself in...and there are lots of issues connected with this.

She then proceeded to raise some of these issues with the students.

Susan's expressed beliefs about the family were consistent with her practice. Her belief that being a family member requires work was frequently
evident in her classroom discourse. When talking about marriage relationships, for example, she commented:

Relationships are work, hard work.

Her view of the family as an influence on individual development was particularly apparent during classes on child development. She talked about the roles that parents might assume as teachers and as nurturers with their children:

When you read to a child...there's lots of things happening...you may have your arm around them so there's warmth and caring and communication...there's so much you can teach.

And, as suggested in the description of her views of the purpose of FLE which were reflected in her classroom practice, Susan did emphasize the social dimension of the family.

Susan's perceptions of her teaching roles were consistent with her practice. Her role as information provider appeared to be most predominant and was evident in both her discourse and her classroom practice. Indeed, she often used the word "information" when presenting lesson material to students or when talking about the content to be covered. During each class she devoted some time to information delivery. For example, when studying a unit on families, Susan indicated

I'll give you some more information about families and being a strong family.

While introducing a lesson on family health issues, she began by saying:

I want to...cover some information on mental health from a different perspective.

When starting a unit on child development, she stated:
I'm going to go over...three theories [of child development] this hour and I'm going to give you a package with all this information in it.

Such information was intended to be useful in the future. While introducing three theories of child development, she asked the students:

Would there be any value in knowing information about child development for your own children?

When a student answered affirmatively, she agreed, adding

You may not use the theory but it may help you to understand what the child is doing...and how they develop.

And, as she introduced a package of materials and exercises on interpersonal communication, she remarked:

It's really useful in your own life.

Similarly, the information she presented on sexual harassment was intended to be used for change and to foster assertiveness in the students' lives. Indeed, after a student had mentioned an incident at work that she felt had occurred because she was a female, Susan commented:

You people are in a position where you could make a difference so that another doesn't have to go through that...I wanted to give you this [information] because it's useful for you to know.

This description of Susan's role as information provider reflects her belief that factual knowledge is important in accomplishing the aims of FLE.

Susan's role as curriculum developer was also apparent in her classroom practice. As stated in an interview, she did seem to take students needs into account when developing her course. The issue of sexual harassment was apparently discussed because several students were actually experiencing this in their after school jobs and in a class they attended prior to this class. As Susan commented when she introduced this topic:
I wanted to give this to you for several reasons....I've heard from several of you that these things happen in your jobs...and you're quite frustrated by it.

At the same time, however, she also made decisions about what they should know based on her own interest in the topic and on her beliefs about its importance. While talking about child development, she stated:

We're spending a lot of time on language [development] because I'm really interested in it...[and] I feel so strongly about books enriching a child's life.

Susan's role in creating and maintaining a positive and supportive classroom environment was most apparent in her interaction with the students. In this regard, she made considerable use of positive reinforcement in acknowledging student accomplishments. Following a series of community experiences, Susan asked the students to talk about them. However, before each one did this, she made a point of commenting on how she perceived their performances in these experiences. She said to a student who had visited a home for senior citizens:

I would like to say that you had a special way with the senior citizens...sometimes when you're 16 or 17 older people dismiss you and it's nice when they feel that you really care about them.

She made similar positive comments for each student.

The "group feeling" that Susan says she is concerned about achieving was evident in more subtle ways. For example, when I first entered the classroom to begin observations, Susan introduced me and said to the students:

Don't be intimidated...she's one of us now.

The way in which she structured the class physically also seemed to reflect a "group feeling". As noted earlier in the description of the classroom, student desks were arranged in a semi-circle. While teaching, Susan either
stood or sat in the middle of this circle. She appeared to want to foster this feeling of belonging in the group, as she always noticed when any desks were facing in another direction. One day, for example, she requested that all the desks be turned in to face the group, and remarked:

I like to be closer to you...I don't like having my back to any of you.

Finally, the "group feeling" was evident in the way students interacted with each other and with both Susan and me. They generally arrived in class as a group, and spent considerable time before the class started inquiring about each other's weekend, their part-time work or class assignments. Indeed, the beginning of most classes was spent with Susan and the students chatting informally for a few minutes about a variety of topics, such as school events or assignments, articles or books, or leisure activities. On the few occasions I was present for the morning break, students always asked whether they could bring Susan and me coffee or something from the cafeteria. And, on each of my arrivals, the students greeted me, asked how I was and "how are things going?"

Susan's counselling role was most obvious outside of class time. While doing an interview one day, we were interrupted several times by students who wanted to talk to her about personal or school-related problems. Other than the reference to students approaching her about harassment at work, this counselling role was less apparent in the classroom. However, as part of her teaching, Susan occasionally shared examples of students who had approached her with personal problems in the past. During a discussion about stress and how some people use drugs and alcohol as ways of relieving stress, she related the case of a student in another school who had been an alcoholic and had begun to write notes to her about her problem. She explained to the students:

Obviously she needed an outlet...I should tell you that there was a happy ending to the story...she went to AA.
Susan's expressed role as a learner in FLE appeared to be reflected in her frequent references to what she has learned about herself and her relationships. Indeed, she often reflected on her past experiences in this way. One day while talking about maturity and settling down, she reminisced about her youth:

I could probably say that I was a drifter for a few years...but after moving around for [several] years...I was ready for some stability in my life.

When discussing conflict resolution, she commented:

In my relationship this [way of resolving conflict] has worked.

Susan's views about teaching and learning were also evident in practice. In her classes, she appeared to consider the students to be active learners, and capable of independent thought. While gathering materials to begin to deliver a class presentation a student asked:

What should we do?

Susan replied:

It's your presentation...I've given you the guidelines, now it's up to you.

And, when telling students about an upcoming assignment, she said:

It's the kind of assignment where you have to take the initiative.

Related to this is Susan's use of questioning during class discussion. She seemed to attempt to challenge the students, to encourage them to analyze and to look at alternative perspectives. In a discussion about mandatory AIDS testing when applying for a marriage license, most students indicated that they would favour this practice. Susan, however, appeared to challenge them,
and to make them think about the implications of such testing by saying:

So you wouldn't feel negative about this...any violation of your rights...what about your integrity being challenged?...what about if people have a relationship outside of marriage, then what?

When expressing her understanding of independence in marriage, a student suggested:

You don't have to do what he wants you to do.

Susan interjected, and remarked:

Couldn't it work the other way?...you telling him what to do?

And, while discussing the use of illegal questions in job interviews, a student asked:

If you don't answer it, wouldn't it put them [the interviewer] off?...create a bad impression?

In response, Susan posed the following question:

Are you going to compromise your beliefs for a job?

In almost every class, Susan had students work for a period of time in small groups. In their groups, students generated questions or answers to questions for discussion purposes, brainstormed about a specific topic, or collaborated on a project. When introducing such group work, Susan's beliefs about how students learn from each other were often evident. For example, as she instructed students to form small groups to complete some questions about environmental health issues, she commented:

I want you in groups because some of you may have ideas that the others didn't.
There was also evidence of an attempt to try to deal with a group problem that the students were having with sexual harassment in another class they attended in the school. According to Susan, the students often arrived in her class very upset and angry, and on these occasions "it will take a lot of talking to calm them down". She indicated that she had encouraged the students to document instances of the teacher's conduct which upset them, but is not optimistic that they will act on her suggestion. Because many of these students were also experiencing sexual harassment at work, (and, as Susan said "they just accept it"), she decided to include some information about this topic, hoping that it might trigger an open discussion about the problem and how they might begin to try to solve it. Because the problem involved a colleague, Susan was reluctant to be more direct with the students:

I don't want to lead a discussion on it....I'm kind of in the middle...they will have to bring it up.

She devoted some time in two classes to this issue, and actually appealed to the students to verbalize their specific concerns as a group:

Are there any other situations [involving sexual harassment] that you want to talk about?...[no response from students]...[Susan paused and looked around at the students who were silent and still]...I've heard a lot of them informally and I know it's not easy to talk about these things in front of other people.

However, perhaps due to my presence, or due to concerns about professional ethics or because of the very personal nature of the concern which involved another teacher, a discussion did not materialize.

Susan's extensive use of personal experiences (both her own and those of the students) in her classroom practice corresponds to her view that personal meaning facilitates learning and that knowledge has a personal dimension. She appeared to try to relate content to the students' lives by asking questions such as:
What would you want [in a relationship]?

or

What does that mean to you?

or

Let's bring it to reality...what would you [do or think]?

Her use of personal examples was extensive. To illustrate an idea or a concept, she almost always referred to her own life experiences. Indeed, she often prefaced such illustrations with the phrase

I'll give you an example from my life.

Similarly, she frequently referred to her personal knowledge of some of the content. For example, when talking about how small children need security, she commented:

I know [that] from having [my child].

On another occasion, she outlined the stages of relationships, saying:

I've been in a long term relationship for [many] years...and this diagram [of the stages] makes a lot of sense.

Such remarks reflect consistency between Susan's beliefs about learning and knowledge in FLE.

Inconsistencies and unarticulated beliefs. Although there was no evidence of inconsistency between Susan's rhetoric and her practice, there was evidence of an unarticulated purpose of FLE. This purpose was concerned with guidance and the preparation of students for the realities of life as an adult and was apparent in her classroom discourse. Indeed, she referred repeatedly to "reality" and "the real world". Such references implied that she was attempting to point out that students need to prepare for this reality. For example, when talking about love, she commented:
We get a lot of information about love from the media that isn't reality...a lot of myths...sometimes it's given a lot of attention and meaning that is not reality.

She then proceeded to talk about what might be "realistic when it comes to love". Sometimes this apparent concern with preparing students for life as adults seemed to be related to her own experiences. While students presented possible solutions for a case of couple conflict about whose family to visit during the Christmas holidays, she interjected emphatically:

I'll tell you folks, it's not that easy...it's very difficult.

She then went on to explain the difficulties that she had experienced with respect to this issue. During this same discussion she commented on a list of potential couple conflicts:

Most of you are not in relationships yet, but I can look at these and think some of them for me are right on...they aren't for you yet, but they will be, I can tell you.

And, when talking about relationships, she pointed out:

One thing about relationships is that they are work...hard work...you can't just sit back and hope that it will happen...as my husband says 'it's tough living with someone else'.

Thus, while Susan articulates the purpose of FLE to be concerned with personal growth and social responsibility, it appeared that she also views FLE to be concerned with guiding students in preparation for the realities of life as they will encounter it as adults.

Summary

Analysis of the rhetoric and practice of each of the six teachers in this study revealed that there were both consistencies and inconsistencies between their abstract beliefs about FLE curriculum and their classroom
practice. Consistencies were apparent in several areas. First, there was substantial evidence of consistency in the FLE purpose which teachers had expressed in interviews and in writing. Teachers not only conveyed their stated purpose in their classroom discourse, but also in their selection, organization and presentation of content and in the use of class activities and course documents (such as course outlines, handouts, worksheets and assignments).

Second, in most cases, teachers' stated beliefs about their teaching roles were also reflected in their classroom practice. As well, the factual and personal aspects of knowledge that teachers described was apparent in their practice. The former was evident in the use of note guides, note-taking and in the presentation of facts and concepts associated with various topics, while the latter was evident in the sharing of personal experiences and the use of discussion as a forum for such sharing.

Finally, in most cases, teachers' expressed beliefs about learning and teaching in FLE were evident in their practice. For example, Paula's expressed belief that teaching in FLE should facilitate personal relevance was apparent in her emphasis on the sharing of feelings and personal perceptions about various FLE topics, while Karen's view that learning in FLE should be fun was evident in her frequent use of games and activities in her classes.

In contrast, very few inconsistencies were noted. Those that did appear were diverse, with little commonality among the six cases. One inconsistency, concerning a discrepancy between the expressed and actual use of evaluation, was apparent in the practice of three teachers. Thus, it was apparent that the consistencies and inconsistencies were not equal and, in every case, the consistencies between beliefs and practice exceeded any inconsistencies.

In addition, some beliefs appeared in practice but were unarticulated in interviews or in guided writing. These were evident in both the purpose of FLE and teaching roles. For example, in the classroom practice of four of the
teachers, there was evidence of an unarticulated prescriptive purpose, that is, encouraging students to follow a particular course of action. Similarly, a previously unarticulated classroom management role which was associated with administrative and disciplinary duties emerged in Candace's practice, while an unarticulated counselling role appeared in Paula's practice.
CHAPTER VI THE FINDINGS:

THE CONTEXT OF TEACHING AND IMAGES OF CURRICULUM PRACTICE

In this chapter, two themes which emerged during data collection and analysis are presented. These themes were evident in all six settings and include tensions and constraints associated with the context of teaching and four images of curriculum practice.

Tensions and Constraints

This study has examined teacher curriculum conceptions in relation to classroom practice. Such examination, however, cannot be separated from the context in which practice occurs. Indeed, contextual factors very likely contribute to conflict between beliefs and practice or to the reinforcement or formation of certain beliefs. Thus, contextual considerations which emerged as the data were analyzed are noteworthy. In particular, in both interviews and classroom observations it was evident that certain tensions and constraints impacted on the teachers' curriculum practice. These might either interfere with their practice or influence them to do things in which they do not believe. "Tensions" includes conditions or situations which the teachers perceived to contribute to stress or discomfort in their work or which give rise to a dilemma or conflict. "Constraints" are factors which teachers perceived to limit or confine their practice.

Those tensions and constraints which the teachers talked about in the initial interview were used as sensitizing concepts during classroom observations. Those which became apparent in practice were confirmed or substantiated in the final interview. Some of these tensions and constraints were directly related to the context of teaching while others were indirectly related, and concerned the subject matter of FLE.
Contextual Tensions and Constraints

Contextual tensions and constraints arose from the setting in which teaching occurred and appeared to relate primarily to the institutional nature of schooling and to the students with whom the teachers interacted.

The Institutional Nature of Schooling

As might be expected, all of the teachers considered time to be both a source of tension and a limitation on their classroom practice. Such tension was apparent in expressions of concern about accomplishing course goals and teaching the topics that they had planned to teach. For example, Julie alluded to some tension associated with time when following her course plan:

I have every day blocked out...throughout the year...and I have to be able to cover each, because if you get behind the kids start getting bored...and also I have a lot of films and if we get behind and the films come at the wrong time...then you're way off.

Indeed, Julie's classroom practice often reflected a sense of urgency with respect to time. She frequently emphasized "getting through this material" or "we have to hurry and finish this".

Paula also noted that time interferes with what she hopes to accomplish:

Sometimes you can't do what you want to do...you have an idea in mind of where you want to go and what you want to say and all of a sudden other things are happening, and I never find that I have...enough time to accomplish the goals I have fixed in my mind.

She also indicated that time restrictions due to the structured format of school classes are troublesome:

Sometimes you'd like to continue in discussion with one person...but...There are all these people in class, and you just get started and then the bell goes...if we could go on and on for hours...if every class was a weekend retreat...and we could talk about anything we wanted to talk about, that would be great...but time in class is so limited.
All teachers perceived that a lack of time restricted their ability to prepare for teaching FLE. For example, Candace suggested that lack of time prevents her from developing course materials that would be more suitable for her purposes:

If I had more time to work with [the unit on family dysfunction]...maybe I would come up with something I'd feel much more comfortable with and I'd feel is more honest.

Paula indicated that lack of time interferes with detailed curriculum planning for her course. Following a class one day, she commented:

Planning is a joke...who has time to do real planning?.

Such time restrictions appeared to be related to both the nature of the course and institutional expectations and requirements. With respect to the former, the volume and scope of material included in the curriculum is of particular concern. As Susan observed:

This course is like no other...sometimes I dream about having a piece of chalk and a math book...that's it, it's all in there...[in FLE] you're always collecting...some of the theoretical stuff remains constant but it gets out of date very quickly, and you always have to be on the alert for new material and updated versions of old material...it's a never-ending process...there's no one book that does it all.

Candace's comments underscore this point:

Time, we just don't have time...things move too quickly...information changes too quickly for us to keep up with it...many of us feel that we could use a fulltime clerical typist/researcher to put together the material that we should be teaching, not the material we taught two years ago...we don't have time, there isn't time.

Karen expressed a similar view:

There's always stuff that's changing....I don't have the time that I would like to spend to find out more stuff.
For most of the teachers, certain administrative duties (such as attendance and evaluation) contributed to some tension. For example, Susan indicated:

A lot of it [teaching] is...paper work and running around doing things that aren't connected with the classroom and the students....if you only had to deal with your lessons and the students, life would be a dream...but it's all these...little extra things....zillions of pieces of paper that you have to fill in, keeping statistics, report cards and all that sort of thing.

Time spent on such activities was evident in every classroom, as all teachers devoted some class time to taking attendance (although some spent more time on this than others) and to dealing with administrative bulletins and directives.

Activities related to evaluation also consumed considerable class time. In almost every class, teachers and students engaged in some dialogue about evaluation issues. These included handing back graded assignments or tests, reminding students about upcoming assignments or tests and expressions of concern about student performance on these. Similarly, all teachers talked about the time they spend outside of class marking or preparing evaluative instruments.

Evaluation was also viewed by these teachers to be a tension in that most believed that much of the course content was difficult to evaluate. A comment from Candace reflects this concern:

It's difficult in [FLE] because so much of what we're doing is changes...it's emotions, it's attitudes, it's accepting the way other people feel, and how do you put a number on that?

At the same time, however, institutional requirements and student expectations made evaluation a kind of "necessary discomfort". Karen alluded to this in an interview:

You know, you do have to do the marks thing...you could give a subjective mark...and a lot of what we do is subjective...but...people will always question it.
Susan also talked about this tension:

The students are very mark oriented...and it's very difficult to get away from...and sometimes the mark is more important than the process, and that is very frustrating sometimes...some of their assignments you can't put marks on...[but] that's the first thing they look for...mind you we are [oriented toward marks] too...you have to come up with a mark for a report card and you've gotta have some way of getting it.

Indeed, student perceptions about evaluation appeared to reinforce the emphasis on it. As Allison pointed out:

If [FLE] is going to be important, they [the students] have to put something into it, and if they're going to put into it, then there will be marks...realistically...for some students marks are the motivators.

Karen suggested:

I think it [evaluation] keeps them a little bit on their toes, like they're not sloughing off, or asking 'why do we have to do this kind of thing?'

Similarly, Julie commented:

If you don't have evaluation...they may get lazy...and so they don't do the things...you have to let them know you're going to check that it's done because otherwise they don't do it...so it's a bit of an incentive, I guess.

For Paula, however, evaluation is not only a tension but also a constraint:

[Evaluation] is very, very difficult...it just doesn't seem to fit with this subject...you have to be careful choosing a report card comment because most of them are put-downs or advice or all those things that I say aren't good for interpersonal communication...and it's difficult to grade something when all you can grade it on is the amount of effort the kid put into it...because there are no right or wrong answers, you can't give many tests, and so you add up numbers and say 'well this is the mark you get'....our marks are totally subjective, and there's this judgment involved, and I keep telling kids that judging people...is not really very good because it harms interpersonal relationships...and so I'm doing exactly what I tell them that they shouldn't do, but I have to because I'm a teacher and that's my place...I don't know that the evaluation is always relevant or important...but I do it.
This tension surrounding evaluation was also reflected in Paula's classroom practice. She rarely had students complete written work or tests, and on at least one occasion indicated to the students:

"Write something down and I'll collect it...you see, I'm having trouble collecting marks."

The Students

Most of the teachers considered the students themselves to be a limitation on their practice and to contribute to some tension within the context of the classroom. Such limitations and tensions were apparent in expressed concerns about student expectations regarding FLE, in comments about the developmental stage of the students, in instances of student resistance and discipline and, for some, in references to issues concerning the ethnicity and socioeconomic status of students.

According to several of the teachers, students enrolled in FLE generally expect that the academic demands placed upon them will be different than in other subject areas. For example, Allison stated:

"They [the students] push themselves to such a high degree in the other classes that they don't see this class as being part of that...the electives are seen as something you're taking because you want to...they don't mind working but they don't want to have the same kind of stress, and reading and concentrating and pulling out the facts and data."

Julie made a similar observation:

"The kids complain [about notes]...because they do it in other classes....they say 'oh we have to do it in such and such a class and all the other classes and why do we have to do it in here?'...cause [FLE] is supposed to be the easy course...not too much homework."

Karen commented:

"[FLE] is linked to Home Economics, and Home Economics you know...well what do you do in Home Economics but cook and sew...and why do you need to take notes in that?"
Indeed, in some classes many students seemed to expect that FLE focuses on talk and discussion, and that notes and evaluation are minimal. It was common to hear students in almost every classroom complain about taking notes, and comments such as:

Do we have to do more notes?,
This is so much work.
and
How come we have to do this in here [FLE]?

were pervasive. In contrast, students frequently verbalized their enjoyment of discussions. The preceding examples suggest that such perceptions and expectations of students may be in part related to the elective nature and non-academic status of FLE.

Some teachers indicated that the developmental stage of students constitutes a limitation in FLE, that is, students are not always ready to learn about certain topics. For example, Candace suggested:

I realize that the students aren't going to get into it [the course content] anywhere near the way I am into it...some of it just isn't meaningful at this stage in their lives...parenting for example...is too vague and theoretical.

Allison echoed a similar concern:

The students tend to be self centered...and because of that, they are not really that concerned about the parental relationship or even considering the future...so one of the big limitations is where the students are at that particular moment.

Somewhat related to this were instances of student resistance. This was evident to some extent in every classroom, and was characterized by students challenging or opposing course content or points that a teacher was attempting to make. For example, to convey the realities of parenthood, several teachers
required their students to care for an egg as one would care for an infant for a few days. While most students appeared to do the assignment willingly, many also questioned how realistic the experience was. For example, a student in Paula's class indicated:

The egg just isn't a real baby and it's hard to think of it as a baby.

When Candace asked her students to "tell what your strong and weak points as a parent might be", one student suggested:

But we're not parents...how do we know?

And, when Julie had students list the qualities that they might look for in the ideal date, several students disagreed with the exercise. One said:

This is stupid...you don't put stuff down on a list when you're thinking about dating someone.

Another suggested:

You'd never find someone this perfect.

For some teachers, discipline presented a tension. Such tension appeared to be related to the need on the one hand to have a warm, accepting classroom environment, while on the other, occasionally having to discipline students who were inattentive or uncooperative. Paula's comments reflect this dilemma:

How you deal with discipline problems becomes quite difficult because you don't want to fall back on the [traditional] methods that teachers use.

Karen voiced a related concern about balancing teacher authority and freedom of expression in the classroom:
I don't want to lose too much control...[it's easy] for them to get into little groups and chat about what happened at the party on Friday night.

While discipline problems were only occasionally apparent in the classrooms observed, it was evident that their appearance did contribute to some tension. For example, when Karen sent two students from the room because of misbehaviour, the remaining students were silent and unresponsive for several minutes afterward, and attempts to continue the discussion which had been under way were hesitant and stilted. Apart from the disruption of the class, there also seemed to be a feeling of discomfort among the students.

Although such incidents were infrequent, they raise a question about a potential tension between traditional views of student-teacher authority relationships and the perceived need to develop a classroom atmosphere in FLE which is accepting, open and non-threatening. Indeed, most of the teachers indicated that they themselves are more open and less authoritarian in FLE classes than in the other classes they teach. In this regard, Karen stated:

I'm more relaxed with my [FLE] kids...they know me a bit better...you have to be more open with them...if I'm in another classroom or teaching area, then I'm different and I have sort of a different style...in FLE I'm closer to being me as me being a person than in other areas.

Julie also perceives that she is more relaxed in FLE:

I'm much more relaxed in [FLE]...because things just sort of flow...differently.

Paula indicated that she interacts differently with students when she teaches in other subject areas:

I tend to be more rigid and less concerned with the individual in [other Home Economics classes].

For some teachers in this study, issues of ethnicity and SES represented both a tension and a constraint. For Susan, the cultural backgrounds and
customs of some students place a limitation on what she says she tries to achieve in FLE:

You're fighting a lot of other areas or pressures that students have in their life...a lot of them have...cultural commitments...if you're talking about setting goals and making plans for life...they know deep in their heart that when they get out [of school]...there's somebody lined up for them to marry...I find that extremely frustrating...and I haven't run into a student yet who is willing to fight it.

Susan did attempt to address this issue in her classes. While discussing marriage and mate selection, she explicitly talked about cultural differences in the ways that these events are approached, and inferred that such practices can be changed.

For Allison, the socioeconomic background of the students she works with places a constraint on some of the content she teaches:

I do have a difficulty when we start talking about resource management and money comes into it...I just am not quite comfortable with how to deal with that whole thing...[because] we're dealing with kids at this school...who have so much in the way of financial resources that you talk about managing and they just sort of laugh at you because they don't even see it as a requirement...[so] that's one area I don't do.

Only three specific examples of attention to ethnicity were observed. When discussing grieving, Candace had students present the beliefs and customs of their cultural groups and both Susan and Karen referred to cultural norms with respect to marriage and intimate relationships. However, in most of the classrooms there was generally little evidence of specific attention to either ethnic or socioeconomic considerations. Most teachers suggested that ethnic differences "just come up" in class, and that they usually don't consciously plan to address issues related to ethnicity other than to talk about cultural differences with respect to families and to marriage and mate selection.

Given the variety of cultural groups represented in some of the classes, this was surprising.
Tensions and Constraints
Associated with the Subject Matter

Some tensions and constraints pertained specifically to the prescribed Central Valley FLE curriculum and to course content (i.e., values), to the place of this program in the public school curriculum and to teacher concerns about their academic or professional preparation to teach the course.

The Prescribed Curriculum

Although the teachers in this study considered curriculum documents to have influenced their thinking about the field of FLE only peripherally, they all appeared to view the curriculum as prescribed knowledge and content to be covered in their classes. This view was evident in their language when talking to students about the Central Valley FLE program in general and in frequent references to distinctions between the content of the grade 11 and grade 12 courses. Language which suggested a view of the curriculum as discrete segments of content to be covered was apparent in most classrooms. When talking about the course to students, comments such as:

- We're on a new unit today.
- We'll finish this section today.

were common in almost every setting.

Similarly, language which conveyed a sense of urgency and motion was also used in conjunction with the curriculum. For example, it was common to hear phrases such as:

- We have to get on to [the next topic].
- We're almost through this section.

and
We've got a lot to cover today.

For some teachers, such movement through the curriculum occasionally seemed to represent anxiety or tension. For example, it was not uncommon to hear remarks such as:

Now we've got completely off the topic.
Let's get back on topic.

and

We've got quite a lot to cover...we'll have to speed things up,
suggesting that there may be some pressure to progress through a particular range of curriculum content within a certain timeframe.

The notion of curriculum as prescribed knowledge and content was also apparent in frequent references to distinctions between the content in the grade 11 and grade 12 programs. In most cases, there seemed to be well-defined boundaries between the two courses. For example, when some of Karen's students asked about discussing marriage in the class, she responded:

Not this year...next year you do marriage, babies and eggs [an assignment where students are "parent" to an egg for a week].

Similarly, in Candace's classroom, when students began to talk about babies and childbirth, she stated:

Let's get off the topic of babies...if you're [taking the course] next year, it's one of the topics we'll be covering.

Values

The teachers in this study expressed discomfort about values in FLE. Values represented a source of tension for most teachers in several ways. First, while everyone acknowledged that values are part of the content of FLE, they all expressed some concern about not imposing their personal values on
students, introducing personal bias into their teaching or contradicting family values. Some indicated that they make a conscious effort to avoid promoting specific values. Allison said:

It is tough for me to make certain that I am not imposing my values on them...[because] there are certain points that I...really feel strongly about.

Similarly, Karen commented:

I don't want to put my values on them...my values are fairly strong...and may be totally different from what the kids and their parents' values are, and their parents may be A-OKing something and I may be saying that is wrong, wrong, wrong...and that doesn't make them feel very good about themselves or their family...and that's why I'm tense [when it comes to values in FLE].

Julie expressed a similar concern:

I try not to say 'well this value's a good value and that value's a bad value'....I try not to pass judgment.

Susan indicated that the expression of personal values is difficult to avoid when teaching FLE, but that one does need to exercise caution:

You cannot separate how the person, what the person thinks and feels and their biases...from course content like [FLE]...you do have to be super careful...like when a student asks 'what do you think I should do?'....I think you have to be really careful about imposing your values...and if you feel very strongly about an issue, and that comes through, you may be imposing.

These teachers' classroom practice, however, revealed that they were not always successful in keeping their own value positions hidden, in taking a neutral value stance toward particular issues or in not advocating specific values. This was most apparent in the way they frequently dispensed advice or made prescriptive statements. Occasionally, they actually used phrases such as "I think it's important" or "this is important to me" in conjunction with specific concepts or ideas.
Despite their concerns about not promoting certain values or revealing their personal values, most of the teachers also believed that, from time to time, their personal values would probably be disclosed either explicitly or implicitly. Candace suggested that she will reveal her values when students request her to do so:

As a teacher I try not to let them know what my values are until after...they've aired all theirs...and they do ask me what my values are...and sometimes my values come out very strongly.

However, some values were not considered to be open to public declaration in the classroom. For example, Candace indicated:

I try not to even let them guess what my values as far as abortion is concerned because I don't feel that's my role to tell them whether abortion is right or wrong.

Susan pointed out:

If I was talking about things like integrity, honesty...all those sorts of virtues...I would feel totally okay about promoting those kinds of values in a classroom...controversial issues, where there is not a lot of agreement...well [she shrugged her shoulders and laughed].

Indeed, all believed that it is appropriate to promote some "universal" values (such as honesty, justice and freedom).

Related to this was a second tension concerned with how to handle values in the classroom. All of the teachers talked about teaching what they called "values theory". This seemed to focus on facts about values rather than the process of valuing. Karen commented about such theory:

There's a body of knowledge [about values]..and I think it's important that they know...that there are definitions of [values], and that everything in your life is based on...your values...I think they need to know about that.

Similarly, Julie talked about a "values unit" that she teaches:
The actual topic of values is just, okay, here's a whole bunch of values...and they tick off the ones that they have...and it's just helping them to pinpoint what values are.

Paula stated:

I've tried to get kids to talk about values, think about universal values...frequently I'll give them a textbook to read about values, because I feel insecure.

A predominant belief among all of the teachers was that if students were given the opportunity to share their points of view on a variety of issues, then they would learn about values and about how values differ. For example, Julie stated:

Values come up [in class]...it just happens...it isn't planned and I think values of people are brought out with the topics that are discussed and people are made aware that people do have different values.

Analysis of classroom observations indicated that, while students were given the opportunity to share their points of view, discussion of differing value positions and of the possible reasons associated with these was noticeably absent.

Finally, three of the teachers expressed some discomfort associated with a conflict between certain values either reflected or not reflected in the curriculum guide and their personal values. Paula talked about her feminist values and her beliefs about pro-choice:

[The curriculum guide] doesn't take a stand on feminist issues...and it doesn't address the pro-choice issue...there's no way I can teach from the perspective of a different value system than my own...I can't teach from a feminist and a non-feminist perspective at the same time...and I can't teach from a pro-life and a pro-choice perspective...they're incompatible.

Susan's first experience with value conflict occurred some years ago, and concerned issues about teaching sexuality (which, at that time, was not
explicitly included in the Central Valley FLE curriculum, but which could be taught at the discretion of individual schools):

I felt that the students were ready for some information [about sexuality] and could handle it...but the administration was being super cautious...my personal belief was that I don't care who said what, I was going to [teach it]...and I had to walk...cautiously in that situation...the students wanted the material and felt totally comfortable with it, but it was like other people...were imposing their values on the situation, and I disagreed with that.

Candace referred to what she believes is the superficial and inadequate treatment of some topics in the curriculum:

There are some areas in the curriculum where I've not agreed with the approach that's been taken...[for example] the stress issue isn't a big area...and I think it should be a hell of a lot bigger...in the child abuse area...there are so many labels for everything and it just seems so casual...and I wonder how much good we're doing...we could be doing more damage...and I feel uncomfortable with it.

The Place of the FLE Program in the Public School Curriculum

The place of the FLE program in the public school curriculum also contributed to some tension for most of the teachers. Their concerns generally focused on retaining their place in the public school curriculum, and related primarily to issues of enrollment, the elective nature and non-academic status of the course, overlap with other school programs and the credibility of FLE as a school subject.

Most teachers viewed student enrollment as a factor in maintaining the place of their course in the public school curriculum. For example, Allison pointed out:

As a teacher [in FLE] the final analysis comes down to how many students are in the classroom...numbers are always the accountable part...if the students are not enjoying the class they will not sign up...you have to make certain that you are pleasing your market...you've got to work for your job, if you're going to have it.
Related to this are the elective nature and the non-academic status of FLE in the public schools. As Karen put it:

I want to get more people into my program...and I still think the idea is, it's a place where the 'non-academic' kids go.

As noted earlier, student expectations about the academic requirements of FLE echo this perception.

Some teachers expressed concern about overlap with other courses in the school curriculum. For example, to avoid duplication of content, Allison adjusted her course:

That side [resource management] was so adequately covered in [another course] that any time I tried to bring it up...they'd say 'hey we've done all of this at a far more extensive level'...so I've tended to say my focus will be on the human resources.

Julie, however, viewed such potential duplication as encroaching on the curriculum territory of FLE. When students commented one day that they had already studied a particular topic in another course, she replied:

I know that [the other course] does a lot of our stuff.

When a student suggested that maybe the reverse was true, she responded:

No, no...[FLE] is the original one.

Finally, the credibility of FLE as a school subject was cited by several of the teachers as a source of tension. Karen's comment alludes to this:

I have such a sort of tugging inside of me that FLE is an important course...and there's a lot of theory behind it...and it's not just some rinky dink course that you take because you've nothing else to fill your timetable.

Allison views the credibility of FLE to be related to the standards set by the teacher. She commented:
Evaluation in FLE is really critical if you're going to have a valid program...because otherwise it's an elective and they're going to see it as just a discussion class and it's going to be seen as an easy class...I have to have standards, otherwise it would be a joke.

Professional Preparation Issues

Most of the teachers expressed some concern about the adequacy of their professional preparation to teach FLE. Two teachers indicated that they consider their limited preparation to actually constrain their teaching of the subject. Paula stated that her lack of exposure to teaching values and dealing with values issues in the classroom limits her teaching of this content:

I feel I don't deal with it [values] very well...I've got this problem of deciding where to be judgmental and where to be non-judgmental ...some day I'd like to learn better how to deal with values.

Karen remarked that, although she considers discussions to be important in FLE, she feels somewhat insecure when leading them:

I haven't had a lot of experience in a discussion kind of setting and that was kind of getting me down...so I really don't feel comfortable because I don't know if I have the correct techniques or how to bring everybody back in and involve everybody and all that.

Images of Curriculum Practice

As the data were analyzed, several images of curriculum practice emerged. The word "image" is used to characterize the pictures of curriculum practice which emerged and which were constructed through the analysis and interpretation of the data of observations and interviews. While these images

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1 Connelly and Clandinin (1988) use the term "image" with respect to teachers' curriculum practice to mean "something within our experience, embodied in us as persons and enacted in our practice and our actions" (p.60). In this study, the term "image" is used in the more conventional way, i.e., a representation, mental picture or likeness (Webster's Dictionary, 1988).
are not considered to be part of the teachers' curriculum conceptions, they may reflect the influence of curriculum conceptions on practice.

These images were manifest both in teachers' classroom practice and discourse, and were evident in all six settings. Although some images first became apparent during initial interviews and acted as sensitizing concepts in classroom observations, most images emerged directly from observational data and were explored further and corroborated in final interviews.

The images of curriculum practice were labelled "stories and storytelling", "personal life experience", "a female orientation" and "prescription". Because no one image was more predominant in the data, they are reported in no particular order of importance.

**Stories and Storytelling**

A central image of curriculum practice that emerged almost immediately in all classroom observations has been entitled "stories and storytelling". This image was apparent in classroom discourse and in the pedagogy or practice of teachers. Stories appeared in the data as short narrative or anecdotal accounts of events which, in most cases, were real rather than imaginary. These stories were usually structured around some problem or difficulty and included a recounting of the events leading up to it and its resolution. Occasionally there was a "moral" to the story.

**Stories in Classroom Discourse**

Stories and storytelling were pervasive in classroom discourse. Indeed, the word "story" itself was used frequently by both students and teachers. On numerous occasions, students in most settings were heard to make remarks such as:

Let me tell a story.
I've got a story, too.

Similarly, teachers referred to their own stories. For example, while talking about birth control, Paula said:

Remember that story I told you about my friend who got pregnant the first time she had sex...?

Teachers appeared to acknowledge stories and storytelling to be an important part of classroom discourse. In one class, for example, Candace actually pointed to a student whose hand was up and commented:

We have a story here...let's listen please.

Similarly, at the beginning of class one day, Julie's students recounted numerous stories related to what apparently had been the topic of discussion in the previous FLE class. Julie appeared to be conscious of the time, however, and after listening to several of these stories, she finally said:

OK, no more stories...we have to get on to the next section.

Such stories were purported to be based on real experiences and were most often recounted during discussions concerning a topic or concept which had been specified by the teacher. For example, in a class discussion about stress, Candace asked the students about the things that they consider to be sources of stress in their own lives. As a list of stresses was generated, students related personal anecdotes and incidents in conjunction with each. At one point, students were so eager to share these, that they were all talking at once. Candace interrupted, saying:

Class...one at a time...I know you've all got a story.
Similar incidents occurred in all of the classrooms.

At times, teachers actually solicited stories from the students. Such requests for stories generally seemed to occur when participation in a "sharing" activity was required. For example, in a class about sexuality, Allison asked students to recount their memories of when they were first told about "the facts of life". After the students had shared their stories, she said:

This is my personal story

and then related her "story" of some early memories of a conversation that she had had with her mother about reproduction and sexuality.

Stories as Pedagogy

Teachers themselves made extensive use of stories and storytelling in their teaching. These stories appeared to be gleaned from two principal sources: the media and personal experiences. Stories derived from the media included news items and events associated with TV talk shows. For example, in a discussion about reasons why people marry, Karen recounted the following story which was taken from a recent local news item:

For most people, love is the number one reason why people marry....but not for everyone...remember [a prominent local businessman]?...I read in the [newspaper] yesterday that his marriage lasted three months and she got 3.1 million [dollars] out of the deal.

She went on to briefly describe the prenuptial agreement and the alleged events leading up to the breakdown of the marriage. During a discussion about sexual harassment, Susan recounted an incident reported in the news about a man who, as a result of his subversive activities concerning girl-watching in a public swimming pool, was the focus of a law suit.
In all classrooms, the content of stories was concerned with real life experiences. As Paula pointed out:

All the stories I tell are real life experiences.

Such stories were either related to the teachers' own personal experience or to the experience of a relative, friend or acquaintance. Teachers often introduced these stories to students using phrases such as:

I'll just share a personal experience with you.

or

Let me tell you about my own experience.

or

I can tell you a story from my experience.

These stories did have a purpose. In all of the classrooms, stories were used most often to illustrate a point or to reinforce content. For example, while Susan was discussing how North American customs of mate selection differ from those in other parts of the world, she commented:

I've told you the story of my friend...who didn't see her husband until the day she married him...her father had arranged the marriage when she was a baby...and she knew she would not see him until then.

According to the teachers, stories also impart realism to the content. As Karen suggested:

Stories play a pretty big role [in my classes] because it (sic) makes the theory or information I'm giving more real...if you can tell a story that illustrates what you're covering then they'll be able to remember it better.

Candace echoed this view:

They [the students] remember through stories, through experiences...whether it's their own, their neighbour's, their best
friend's...they remember things because it's happened and it's real and it's not something they read.

Susan talked about how she considers stories to personalize content:

...my feeling is that if you personalize knowledge...it brings it down to a level where there's....some warmth and it's part of life.

Although stories were most frequently used to reinforce content, they also appeared to perform another function. On some occasions, teachers told stories to convey advice to students. For example, during a discussion about health care issues, Susan suggested to students that people "really should shop around" for a doctor. She then began to recount a story about the experiences of a family member by saying:

Listen, you don't have to do anything you don't want to...I would have a dead [sibling] today if [he/she] had listened to a doctor.

She went on to outline the details of this family member's decline in health, and concluded her story by saying:

This doctor [who was eventually consulted] said that if he/she had done what the previous doctor had suggested that he/she would be dead...doctors are not gods....get a second opinion...get a third or fourth opinion...you do what you feel good about.

Most teachers suggested that student sharing of stories in class encouraged them to see different points of view. As Candace said:

I think it [storytelling] also opens up other peoples' values...not necessarily their own, but...whoever's story it was...it's how other people have dealt with certain situations....and everybody thinks of it in a personal way...'well, how would I have dealt with this...how would I have reacted'.

Similarly, Allison stated:

I encourage them to share stories...and I think it's part of that public declaration of values...I see it as an opportunity [for] somebody of
their own age group to present how they see it and it just gets another opinion being expressed.

Paula espoused a slightly different view of the role of stories in her classroom:

I think stories help the students to clarify what they're thinking and what they're feeling about their own life experiences.

Storytelling also appeared to contribute to some curriculum construction within the context of the classroom, that is, during storytelling, additional topics and concepts were often introduced. During a discussion about reasons why people marry, Karen indicated that at one time, people married if they became pregnant. She concluded by saying:

You realize, of course, that if you get pregnant you really don't have to marry the person, you know.

This comment seemed to prompt a student to relate an anecdote about an individual who sued their sexual partner and claimed a legal responsibility to marry because of pregnancy, which in turn led to another story about a couple who had divorced but then became pregnant and so remarried. These stories appeared to contribute to a short discussion about the law and legal responsibility with respect to sexual relationships. While this topic was somewhat related to reasons why people marry, Karen had clearly not planned this as a focus for her lesson. Once she clarified some of the legalities associated with sexual relationships, she continued to outline additional reasons (apart from pregnancy) why people marry.

Thus, in the classrooms observed, stories and storytelling constituted a method for conveying and reinforcing the content of the curriculum. The focus of these stories was primarily personal life experiences. This focus on life experiences was also manifest in a second emergent image of curriculum
practice entitled "personal life experience" in which these experiences formed the content of stories. While there is some overlap between these two images of curriculum practice, they are discussed separately so that distinctions between their apparent roles or functions in curriculum practice (i.e., stories and storytelling as a teaching method and activity, and personal life experience as content) are clarified.

**Personal Life Experience**

A second significant image of curriculum practice that emerged from the data of classroom observations has been labelled "personal life experience". This focus on personal experience was evident both in classroom discourse and in the selection and presentation of course content. The presence of personal life experience in content and classroom discourse was substantiated in interviews, as the teachers talked about their perceptions of the relationship of life experience to their teaching of FLE.

**Personal Experience in Classroom Discourse**

Classroom discourse was permeated with references to personal experiences in the form of stories. Through stories, students and teachers alike revealed both their own personal experiences and the experiences of others. Although students sometimes shared personal experiences at the teachers' request, they also offered their personal experiences voluntarily and often quite spontaneously. For example, during a discussion about "counterwill" in Allison's class (which, according to Allison, refers to the common practice of children "disagreeing with their parents just for the sake of disagreeing"), there was a flood of personal examples from students. Many of the students seemed anxious to talk. Hands were up, as if wanting to catch Allison's eye. One student described her own experiences of exerting
counterwill with her parents and tried to explain why she thinks she does this. Another talked about her often stormy relationship with her mother. Several related specific incidents of arguments and disagreements with their parents. As one experience was related, others followed in quick succession.

Perhaps this may be due in part to the central use of personal experiences by the teachers themselves. As Allison herself commented:

I tell lots of my experiences to encourage the students to do the same.

Indeed, most teachers acknowledged that they do use personal experiences extensively in their teaching of FLE. For example, Susan stated:

I tend to put a lot of myself into my teaching....I use my personal experiences a lot with the kids,

and Paula said:

I'm very open about my life experiences [in my FLE classes].

According to the teachers, personal experiences in the classroom play an important role. For example, Paula indicated that the use of personal experiences in the classroom assists in understanding others:

I think experiences help people to understand me a little bit better, that I've experienced life a little bit differently...[and]...I think it helps other people in the class to get in touch with a variety of life experiences that are going on...and I think through those, people can learn what other people experience.

She also viewed experience as a source of knowledge:

There's a lot of knowledge to be gained from life experience that people don't recognize as knowledge.

Similarly, Allison suggested that her personal experience of some of the content makes her a credible source of knowledge about some topics:
I'm viewed as a reliable source of information when it comes to human development because I am a mother and I have a young child...I feel that...you have to have the students' confidence that you are a valid source of information. For instance, I don't feel that I am valid when it comes to the adolescent experience because of growing up in a different era...so my adolescent experiences, I feel, are really out of date, and so I share very little of that with the students.

Personal Experience in the Selection of Content

Related to this view of experience as knowledge was the apparent influence of personal life experience in the selection of course content. For some teachers, determining what to teach was somehow related to their own experiences. For example, Julie said:

There are objectives...and I follow some and don't follow others....probably I decide...what I think the kids need, to help them through life...and I guess it's partly based on my own experiences.

Candace reflected:

A lot of what I teach in that course [FLE] comes from my getting turned on to things somewhere else, in workshops or with people that I'm talking with or experiences that I've had....like the unit on grieving...it just fit my life right then, and teaching that unit became very important...and that was a unit that, yes I would teach before, but I'd do it very quickly....this year I was so excited about it.

And Paula indicated:

I don't teach from a book, I don't teach from worksheets, I don't teach from the curriculum guide....I teach from what I've learned from [my life].

For other teachers, the personal experiences that students were encountering sometimes influenced the selection of content. As Susan pointed out:

Sometimes the students have incredible needs in one area...[in one class] they [the students] had all kinds of personal problems that they were trying to deal with...and you think 'crisis management...wow, these students really need this' and...they almost ask for it, and so you might spend a lot more time on that particular area that you would with
another class that are totally together and they don't need a lot of crisis management.

**Personal Experience in the Presentation of Content**

It appeared that personal experiences also assumed a role in the presentation of curriculum content. Although stories were identified earlier as a pedagogical tool, the content of these stories was largely based on personal experiences. In addition to using personal experiences to emphasize a point or to reinforce content, some teachers stated that their own experience of some of the life events that are included in the FLE curriculum facilitated teaching about them. In this regard, marriage, childbirth, and parenthood were most frequently identified. For example, Candace said:

> I know I spend much more time in those areas that I feel I have some expertise in or some background...parenting, for instance has been a unit that...one year I just handed them all the sheets for parenting and said 'here'. It's so dull and unless you've got a kid....this is so boring...and that's how I felt about parenting...now that [I'm a parent] I find it more interesting teaching it...and I have those personal stories that I can put in that make it interesting...and if I didn't have those [experiences] firsthand...I can't say I've got anything to add to those...sheets.

Susan cited child development as an area that, since she has had a child, she teaches differently:

> Before I [had my child] and I was teaching child development, it bored me to death...I did very little, because I couldn't....I knew it was boring the kids and I didn't like boring them...[but ] it held no meaning for me, and less for them, so I always handled it in...a group project or something of that nature. And now I can be more enthusiastic because I have had some real life experience myself....you know the information is the same regardless [of whether you've had a child] but...when you're teaching the class, it's the emotional component that's important...for me, there's more there, now that I've had the experience to back up the book information.

Classroom observations substantiated these claims; both of these teachers did draw extensively on their experiences as parents when teaching about parenthood and child development.
Such remarks suggest that some of the teachers in this study view their own life experiences to be significant in their teaching of FLE. The role of life experiences in this respect, however, differs from the perceived influence of personal life experience on curriculum conceptions. Where the latter appears to influence a teacher's general orientation to teaching FLE (including beliefs about the purpose and process of FLE), the former seems to facilitate such teaching. Susan's comments highlight this difference:

I really realize that you have to go through some of that stuff yourself before you can be real with the students....if it's real for you, it makes it real for the students.

While teaching a unit on child development, Julie repeatedly expressed a lack of confidence about teaching the material:

I'm just not that confident about teaching this stuff [on child development].

When asked what it would mean for her to become confident in this area, she replied:

Have kids.

Karen (who also does not have children and who is not married) expressed a similar view:

Probably from the emotional standpoint it would...be a good idea to have these experiences.

At the same time, however, she voiced some reservations:

I can't help it if I don't [have some of these experiences]...as far as the theory and whatever, I think there's a lot of good resources that explain [these things]...and I guess you can talk to your friends who have had those experiences and...you can use that, or bring people in.
It is interesting to note that, where Karen had had experiences in certain life situations or events such as engagement, a love relationship or life as a family member (i.e., as a daughter), she spoke more from her personal experience.

One additional finding regarding the relationship between life experience and the teaching of FLE is noteworthy. Most of the teachers perceived that, as a result of teaching FLE, they have personally benefited in a variety of ways. As Susan commented:

I've grown a lot personally...through teaching [FLE]...it's made me grow as a person..and [in some ways] it's benefited my relationship with my husband.

Candace's observation echoed these remarks:

I have learned so much about myself as a result of teaching the students all these things...it's been an interesting learning process for me...it's really made a difference in how I feel about my own life.

Paula suggested that teaching FLE has both improved her life and provides her with the opportunity to examine her own life experiences:

It's made a difference in my life....I think that teaching [FLE] has been good for me in my own relationships with my family....and I think teaching [FLE] affects you as a person...because it's so personal and because you're thinking about relationships...I reflect on my relationships...on my communication....and I make it relevant to my experience.

Evidence of this latter comment was apparent in several of her classes. For example, following a discussion about abusive relationships, she said to the students:

I find [this topic] interesting because I'm rethinking and reassessing my past relationship.
The foregoing suggests that, for some teachers, there may be a reciprocal or interactive relationship between their personal lives and their professional teaching roles, that is, the teacher derives some personal benefit from interacting with the content, while at the same time, the teacher's personal experiences impact on what is taught and how it is taught.

A Female Orientation

A third emergent image of FLE curriculum practice has been labelled as "a female orientation". Although there were males present in five of the six classrooms observed, the conversation and concerns of females predominated. In observations this was evident in student-teacher interaction and dialogue, in specific references to female experiences and in some instances of gender bias. This image of female orientation was explored further in final interviews, as the teachers reflected on their perceptions of the influence of gender on teaching FLE.

Student-Teacher Interaction and Dialogue

In the classrooms observed, girls appeared to interact with teachers more than boys did. In all settings girls both asked and answered more questions and more actively entered into class discussions. This prevalence of female discourse was most apparent during discussions in which students were asked or encouraged to share opinions or personal experiences. In one class on human sexuality, for example, Allison asked students whether they recalled their introduction to the "facts of life". Several girls began to share their recollections immediately, and a dozen female hands were raised, as if waiting their turn. Allison appeared to recognize that many students were eager to talk about their memories, and announced:

Everyone can have a chance to tell if you do remember where the first facts [of life] came from.
She then went around the tables at which students were seated, apparently giving each student an opportunity to share a personal story. Of the six boys present in the class that day, only one shared an experience. As Allison pointed to him, he responded:

I learned from a man in grade seven.

When she approached the other boys in a similar manner, each one replied:

No, I don't remember.

In contrast, all the girls shared their experiences, and did so at length, furnishing details concerning who told them what, when and where, and sometimes revealing how they had responded.

During a discussion about constructive communication techniques, an extended conversation developed among a number of girls and Paula. The following excerpt from this interchange illustrates the predominance of female discourse that was apparent in many of the classrooms observed:

The teacher said: "OK, let's start with [an example of an 'I statement']....I feel angry...somebody give us a behaviour description". One of the girls sitting to the teacher's immediate right said: "When my boyfriend doesn't pick me up", and she proceeded to relate the events surrounding his failure to pick her up as planned. Although the teacher periodically asked questions related to the communication techniques she was attempting to teach, another girl interrupted and talked about the time her boyfriend had neglected to pick her up. She indicated that she knew he was with a friend of his who he really likes to be with. The teacher responded: "So you're saying he thinks about himself and his happiness first?...the next time he suggests picking you up, I'd say 'forget it!'" She and several other female students laughed. As the laughing faded, a number of girls began to offer advice about what she should do in the future. The teacher interjected, saying: "I think you should be honest without hurting his feelings". The student in question replied: "But he hurt my feelings". The teacher commented briefly that such behaviour would perpetuate hurt, and then several female students who appeared to support the girl's apparent belief that, because her boyfriend had hurt her, suggested that it would be all right to hurt him back. Another girl suggested: "Well you should have just left". The student in question replied: "Well I did". Another girl suggested: "Well next time he is supposed to pick you up, just leave". The teacher interjected: "But that makes her as irresponsible as he is". The girl with the problem continued: "But then I'm at his beck and call".
teacher commented emphatically: "No, you're not!" The girl then said: "He'll get mad if I leave". The teacher replied: "So let him get angry". At this another girl commented loudly: "Let's run her life for her in the classroom".

Following more laughter, the interchange about the boyfriend and what to do continued for another seven minutes. During this time, only the several girls who had initially offered advice, the teacher and the girl with the problem were involved in the discussion. The rest of the class (including the five boys who were present) appeared to listen.

Such dominance of female discourse, however, did not mean that males in the classroom were ignored or silent. Teachers did attempt to involve boys in discussion and frequently actively solicited their opinions and their male point of view. During a class on child development, for example, Paula asked the boys in the class:

Do you ever think about what it's going to be like when you're a father?

In a discussion about jealousy in relationships, Karen described how men deal with jealousy differently than women, saying:

Men, feel free to jump in here at any time.

The boys themselves spoke out, sometimes in response to or challenging the female discourse. In a discussion about emotional abuse in relationships, Paula's continual reference to the abuser as "he" and to the abused as "she" appeared to prompt one boy to ask:

Is this [discussion of abuse] all looking through her eyes?

Similarly, while Karen read out a list of "lines that boys use to get girls to have sex", a boy commented:

This is depressing...it makes the guys always look bad.
In a previous class about dating, as girls expressed their agreement with the statement that "guys like to play the field whereas girls like to go steady", a male remarked:

You guys are generalizing, and that's not fair.

However, while there was evidence of a "male voice", it appeared that, in the classes observed, it was often somehow subordinate to the female discourse. Indeed, males sometimes seemed to be uncomfortable and hesitant to engage in dialogue about the male perspective in relation to gender issues. And, when gender differences were left unexamined, an impression that sexual stereotyping is accurate and acceptable was created. The following excerpt from a discussion about the potential negative consequences of premarital intercourse illustrates these points:

The teacher asked: "Would [loss of self respect] be any different for a guy than for a girl?" One girl said: "It depends on the individual...but on the whole it's more expected that a guy loses his virginity". She went on to distinguish between the terms "slut" and "stud". Two boys in the class seemed somewhat agitated during this discussion, and looked as if they wanted to say something. One boy tentatively suggested that the word "sleaze" might better describe both guys and girls who "sleep around". A girl interjected, saying: "You never hear a guy putting down another guy [for sleeping around]...but they do for girls". Another girl pointed out what she called "the double standard...for a guy it's a compliment to be called a stud, but for a girl it's a total insult". The teacher seemed to agree, and gave an example from the days when she attended university, where "if a guy had slept with thirty girls it was almost a sign of respect...that he should be respected". One girl seemed to notice the two boys who were still agitated, and who were mumbling comments unheard by me. This girl said: "Come on....we want a guy's opinion". One of the boys said: "We'll just get killed if we say anything". The teacher smiled, adding: "Out of class, you mean?" The boy nodded, but said nothing. The teacher laughed and then said: "You've handled this very well...in terms of society condemning the woman...it's steeped in social tradition...as a kind of protection for mothers and society's future offspring".
Female Experiences

Teacher dialogue was frequently characterized by reference to female experiences. For example, while handling an infant during a baby observation, Paula commented:

It's funny...how the urge to have a baby comes back on you.

When talking about breast feeding, Allison remarked:

[Breast feeding] is a natural activity but not a painless act....I never knew it could hurt like that, even after preparation...that's what I said after I had my baby.

She also reflected on her experience of childbirth:

I had to laugh [during the film on childbirth]...they didn't show the mother's face when the baby's head was being born, and I'm not surprised. That's probably the most painful part....but then it's over, it's finished...I used to have really bad menstrual cramps, but this was nothing, giving birth was nothing...I kept asking 'when's it going to get as bad as menstrual cramps?'

When talking about marriage relationships, Susan talked about the importance of women continuing their female relationships after marriage:

I love being with my girlfriends...going away for a weekend with them...or out for dinner...I've heard of situations where the man will not allow the woman to go out without him or she can't go out of the house...I couldn't handle that...I need freedom in a relationship.

Although she acknowledged that the discussion was one-sided because we're all female in here,

there was no discussion of how male friendships might be maintained following marriage.

Indeed, much of the content in the classes was presented from a female point of view. Discussions of human reproduction and sexuality focused extensively on the female reproductive system, concentrating on menstruation
and ovulation. In contrast, very little (and in one classroom, nothing at all) was mentioned about sperm production. Similarly, lessons on pregnancy tended to focus on the physical and emotional changes occurring in the mother. The father was mentioned only peripherally, as a "source of support" or "labour coach" and the emotional changes he might be experiencing were not addressed. Discussions of birth emphasized the mother's experiences and, once again, the father was portrayed as "the coach" or "a support for the mother".

**Gender Bias**

Related to this emphasis on female experiences in these classrooms were occasional instances of gender bias, that is, statements were sometimes made which appeared to undermine males. For example, when Julie was discussing birth control, she indicated:

The advantage of using condoms is that there is male involvement...it's kind of nice that he has to be responsible too.

Later in this class, a student asked a question about the male birth control pill, to which Julie replied:

One of the problems with it is that men are not as committed to it...remember, they don't get pregnant.

These comments seemed to imply that females are more responsible than males where birth control is concerned, and no provision was made for a consideration of the roles and responsibilities of both sexual partners in the use of birth control. Although such statements were infrequent, they did seem to reinforce the female orientation of much of the classroom discourse.

**Perceptions About the Influence of Gender on Classroom Practice**

Several teachers in this study recognized the influence of their female point of view in their teaching. For example, Candace stated:
My biases come out as a female...when we get into heated discussions, we're not thinking about the male point of view necessarily.

Similarly, Julie suggested:

I do angle a bit more to the feminine point of view...because I am a woman and I have more of an understanding of that point.

Paula claimed to have a feminist perspective:

I teach from a woman's perspective...from a feminist perspective...[and] I probably teach more to the girls in the class.

Indeed, two of the teachers suggested that FLE should be female in its focus. When asked how a woman might present both male and female points of view in the classroom, Julie replied:

I think women are probably a lot more open and a lot more willing to talk about different things...[such as] pregnancy and childbirth...I don't know much about [these] in that I haven't experienced it myself which would be the same as a man, but I can empathize, I think, a lot more than a man can...I guess it's [the course] more in the woman's focus as opposed to the man's focus.

And, when asked to comment on the predominance of female discourse in her classroom, Paula stated:

I think that the discourse is female because it's nurturing...and I think that families require a nurturing discourse....so if a nurturing discourse is female, then [FLE] must be female...it should be caring, it should be concerned, it should be nurturing, it should be all those feminine qualities.

Others, however, appeared to have a somewhat different viewpoint. For example, Karen indicated:

I think a lot of what is taught [in FLE]...isn't gender specific....I never really think of gender as a real problem...sometimes I present a female point of view...on purpose...because I think that the kids have been brought up....where females may not be as important and I always like the girls to feel that they are important and what they have to say or what they do is important and it counts, and that we are all individuals and we are equal.
Susan remarked:

I don't see it [FLE] as a feminine area...I see it as an area that's really important for both sexes.

And Allison commented:

I'm not a feminist...I just try to always approach the topic from a uni-sexual [point of view].

Most teachers indicated that they tried to "bring in the male point of view". As Julie put it:

A lot of it comes out as a female opinion....and I try to make it even, like if it comes out girls' opinion, I say 'OK you guys, now what do you think about this? What's the male opinion?'

Because Susan's class is composed entirely of girls, she includes the male point of view as follows:

I get them [the girls] to try and give what they think might be a male point of view...sometimes, if they're doing...surveys, they can go out and get a male point of view and...bring it into the class.

Paula appeared to include the male point of view by frequently acknowledging the limitations of her gender in presenting some course material and encouraging males to respond. For example, during a class about birth control, a boy asked whether a girl might stop taking the Pill so that she can become pregnant and "entrap" the boy. After this possibility had been briefly discussed, Paula thanked the boy who had raised this issue, saying:

Keep bringing up the man's point of view...being a woman, it's hard for me to step into the man's shoes.

At the same time, however, there seemed to be a perception by several teachers that the socialization of boys contributes to this emphasis on female discourse in FLE. Candace suggested, for example, that:
Boys are not great discussion people...they're not used to sharing feelings.

Allison talked about the differences that she sees between girls and boys during discussions:

The whole discussion technique with guys is very different. They are not as supportive with each other in a vocal manner...they're not as affectionate to each other in a verbal manner.

Paula commented on how some boys appear to be uncomfortable in FLE:

I've got a few boys in the class who are uncomfortable....maybe the topics that we talk about are uncomfortable, maybe sitting in the circle is uncomfortable...most of them are very quiet boys.

**Prescription**

The final image of FLE curriculum practice that emerged from the data has been labelled "prescription". Although this image was reflected primarily in the discourse and classroom practice of teachers, it was also reflected to a lesser extent in some student interaction with teachers. This image was evident in suggestions of rules of conduct for personal and family living, advice-giving by teachers and advice-seeking by students.

**Rules of Conduct for Personal and Family Living**

Prescription or suggestions for rules of conduct for personal and family living were sometimes apparent in the organization and presentation of content. For example, in a class concerned with building and maintaining relationships, Karen instructed the students in dealing with interpersonal conflict. She introduced the topic by saying:

...here are some ground rules that you should establish for when you have a conflict....if you're gonna fight, here are some rules to follow.
In subsequent classes, students copied notes about "how to avoid power struggles", "what to look for in a steady relationship" and "how to end a relationship". Other presentations of prescriptive course content were evident in the classrooms observed. Some of these included "ways to deal with and reduce stress", "when death strikes: some ways you can be of help", "how to deal with anger", "how to interact with someone who is dying" and "steps a woman can take to prevent birth defects".

Prescription of correct or preferred conduct was also apparent in teacher discourse. Such prescriptions were generally offered as the culmination of a lecture or a discussion or to point out something considered to be important or essential. For example, at the finish of a lesson on ending relationships, Karen concluded:

The point I'm trying to get across is that if you have any second thoughts don't get married....don't get married just because you think you ought to.

Similarly, during a discussion about identifying abusive relationships, Paula remarked:

The point is...if you are answering 'yes' to a lot of these you need to ask yourself 'is this relationship I'm in an emotionally abusive relationship and am I in danger of becoming isolated from the support of others?' Think about what happens if your boyfriend or husband dies...the point is you should always maintain contact with other people....it doesn't matter whether you're dating or married...you need other people.

In another classroom, following a lesson on child development, Julie commented:

a child at this age looks sheepish when they've done something wrong...and this is a critical point....they look so cute and you just want to laugh, but you can't...otherwise they're going to learn that mom or dad is a real pushover....so it's quite important to understand these things.
Sometimes prescriptions were implied in teacher discourse. For example, during a session where students shared their experiences as the "parent" of an egg for a week, Paula commented:

I hope that each time you think about having a baby that you remember they're babies for a short time only...I'm not trying to discourage you because parenting is a wonderful experience but it's challenging too...a lot of people tend not to think beyond the 'I'm having a baby' stage.

Although not presented as "rules of conduct", the statement implies that there is a preferred way to act, that is, students should not only think carefully about making the decision to become parents, but should also perhaps delay the experience of parenthood. On another occasion, she suggested to students:

If you don't open up, all your relationships will be superficial, implying that people should be open in their relationships with others. However, no evidence was presented to support this claim.

Advice-Giving

There was also considerable evidence of teachers giving advice or stating opinions about a recommended or worthy course of action. Such advice was generally unsolicited and was related to the content of a lesson. For example, when talking about the "morning after" pill which is sometimes administered to prevent conception, Julie remarked:

If pregnancy occurs, you should probably abort the fetus because it [the medication] can affect the fetus.

While discussing the development of sexual values, Allison stated:

I think you should talk to teachers [about values and sexuality]....although teachers say that they don't want to give their values...and I say that too....my values do come out....I think you should also go home and ask [your parents] 'what are your values?'...and then make up your own mind.
In situations such as these, most teachers appeared to recognize that they were offering advice. After talking at length about how infants and young children should be properly fed, Allison concluded by saying:

This was a quick little lecture, a sermon about food and its impact on children later in life.

Following a lesson on building and maintaining relationships Karen declared:

Remember, you don't hurt or beat up people you love...it's totally unacceptable...and you shouldn't tolerate any sort of physical or emotional violence...I'm telling you...here's my preaching...don't do it.

Advice-Seeking

At times, advice was requested of teachers by students. Periodically, students asked teachers what to do for either a real or hypothetical problem situation. During a discussion about birth control, a student asked Paula:

What if your boyfriend doesn't want to use protection?

She responded:

Just let him know how important it is to you to finish adolescence without an abortion and how important it is for you not to get a disease. Say 'I don't want to be punished for the rest of my life'.

Students sometimes appeared to seek advice of the teacher outside of class. Following a class discussion about relationships, for example, a student approached Karen prior to leaving for the next class and asked her quietly about a relationship problem. Karen spoke with the student briefly, concluding with:

Remember, you don't have to put up with that.

According to several teachers, such solicitation of advice is not uncommon. As Karen commented:
They are quite comfortable with me and they ask me for advice, and I like to help them out because I care about them.

Susan made a similar observation:

They will come up with a situation or present a situation and they will want comments on it...and the comments usually come out as advice.

Perhaps due to the nature of the subject matter in FLE, students perceive that the teacher is qualified to advise them on questions concerning what course of action to take in their personal and family relationships. Indeed, Susan's comments suggest that this may be the case:

Because of the nature of the course material...the students often see you as a person who will understand if they have a problem...and they do come to you [for counsel].

Summary

The teachers in this study talked about and experienced tensions and constraints that impacted on their classroom practice. These included contextual tensions and constraints (which related to the institutional nature of schooling and to the students) and subject matter tensions and constraints (which related to the curriculum and to the some of the curriculum content, to the elective or non-academic status of FLE and to teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of their professional preparation for teaching FLE). While these tensions and constraints are not considered to be part of a curriculum conception, it is likely that they cause some beliefs to be in conflict or that they reinforce or influence the formation of some beliefs which are embodied in a curriculum conception.

Analysis of the data revealed four images of FLE curriculum practice: "stories and storytelling", "personal life experience", "a female orientation" and "prescription". These images of curriculum practice were primarily evident in classroom observations and were apparent in all six settings.
Although not considered to be part of the teachers' curriculum conceptions, these images may in part reflect the influence of curriculum conceptions on practice and yield insight into ways in which FLE curriculum is interpreted in practice.

In Chapter VII the potential relationships among tensions and constraints, curriculum conceptions and curriculum practice are discussed. As well, the relationship of curriculum conceptions to the images of curriculum practice is examined.
CHAPTER VII  DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings presented in Chapters IV, V and VI are discussed. These findings are discussed in relation to the three research questions: 1) what conceptions of FLE curriculum do FLE teachers express?; 2) what factors do they perceive to have influenced these conceptions?; and 3) what is the relationship between teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and classroom practice?

Teachers' Conceptions of FLE Curriculum

Although teachers' conceptions of FLE curriculum were labelled according to differing views of the purpose of FLE, one important similarity was noted across all conceptions, and this was a focus on the future. While some teachers were concerned with the prevention of future problems, others with solving or dealing with future problems and still others with creating change in the future, all conceptions were based on the assumption that students require preparation for their future lives. This similarity is at least in part related to the nature of FLE subject matter which emphasizes the development of individuals in their "present and future family roles" (National Council on Family Relations, 1984, p.1).

The two most significant differences among conceptions of purpose were 1) differing emphases on cognitive (intellectual) development versus affective (feelings and attitude) development,¹ and 2) differing emphases on the

¹Coombs (1989) points out that the tendency among educators to "draw a sharp distinction between affective and cognitive attributes of persons" depicts attitudes as "affective attainments, devoid of any cognitive content." He argues that this distinction is inaccurate, for, "having an attitude involves having certain beliefs about the object in virtue of which one has feelings and dispositions...[and] it is impossible to characterize the feelings and dispositions implicit in an attitude without reference to the beliefs underlying them; they are inextricably bound together" (p.5,6). However, because both the teachers in this study and the literature of FLE differentiate between cognitive and affective concerns, such distinctions are included in this discussion.
individual versus the individual within the context of the family and society. To a certain extent, the first of these differences is not surprising, for, as Fisher (1986) points out, much of the literature of the field reflects disagreement about whether cognitive or affective development should be emphasized in FLE. Indeed, Wright and L'Abate (1977) identify "the cognitive versus affective approach" as one of the major issues facing FLE (p.177). Similarly, Moss and Elbert (1987) suggest that, although much of the academic preparation of family life educators has centered on "cognitive and rational thinking", FLE has "always been fraught with affective concerns" (p.2).

The second difference was more surprising, given that all teachers acknowledged that the concept of "family" is fundamental to FLE. In spite of this acknowledgment, in at least one case, not everyone described the purpose of FLE using the word family or, indeed, the concept of family. It might be that this difference emerged because of the curriculum itself. Only the grade 12 course examines "the relationship of humans and their environment" from a "more general perspective (the family and the community)", while the grade 11 course is intended to provide the opportunity to examine these relationships from a "specific point of view (the individual)". However, only one of the two grade 12 teachers expressed this broader perspective, while several of the grade 11 teachers focused on the individual within the family. Thus it is unlikely that the curriculum guide itself shaped these perspectives. Other factors which were not identified in this study may contribute to this difference.

The teachers in this study articulated a range of views concerning students, the nature of teaching and learning and corresponding student-teacher relationships in FLE. In the two conceptions which emphasized information and skills, students were depicted primarily as consumers or recipients of knowledge, teaching was described as directive and student-teacher relationships were generally characterized as authoritarian. In
contrast, the other conceptions portrayed students as generally active learners, teaching as interactive or non-directive and student-teacher relationships as cooperative or egalitarian. These views echo Moss and King's (1970) three categories of learning approaches "to one or more of which marriage and family life teachers generally are biased" (p.79). According to Moss and King, the thinking-oriented approach emphasizes facts and information, the group-oriented approach emphasizes student involvement through group interaction and the sensitivity-oriented approach focuses on "sensitivity experiences...in which [the student] confronts himself and his reactions to various experiences" (p.79).

Such differences in beliefs about students, teaching and learning also reflect several common educational metaphors. Among the conceptions articulated by the teachers, child-centered (focus on the individual experiences of students), teacher-centered (teacher guides students in learning) and knowledge-centered (acquisition of facts and information) approaches to education (Taylor, 1982) were evident. Similarly, differing orientations to curriculum in general were apparent in the conceptions. For example, a view of the learner as a consumer of facts and information reflects what has been called a "transmission" orientation to curriculum, while a view of the learner as an active participant in learning reflects a "transaction" orientation to curriculum (Miller & Seller, 1985).

These differences also reflect some characteristics of Hammersley's (1977) "types of teaching". The first two types--discipline-based and programmed teaching--portray the teacher in variations of authoritative, directive teaching roles which are generally based on a defined curriculum and in which knowledge acquisition is the goal of teaching and learning. In the third type--progressive teaching--the predominant teaching role is that of a guide and concern with process and interaction is central. The fourth type--radical non-intervention teaching--describes the teacher role as that of
participant or member and the orientation to teaching is particularistic, focuses on process and involves a very low degree of teacher direction. The variation of the teachers' beliefs suggests that, in keeping with the literature of education, the teachers in this study reflected no shared view of students and how they best learn in FLE, of student-teacher relationships and of how instruction in FLE ought to occur.

Although the teachers articulated several of the general roles and expected teaching behaviours which appear in the literature of education (i.e., curriculum developers and facilitators), they expressed a somewhat unique interpretation of the facilitating role. A teacher's facilitating role is frequently described in conjunction with creating a classroom environment that promotes learning (Heck & Williams, 1984). The teachers in this study, however, appeared to view this role as both making certain events or processes associated with FLE possible or easier (such as providing a warm, accepting and non-threatening classroom environment or encouraging self reflection) and helping or assisting students in some way (such as giving students advice, counselling students or encouraging students to follow a particular course of action). These perceptions about their facilitating roles may be related to the personal nature of the subject matter in FLE. While it is likely that teachers in all school subjects consider themselves to facilitate learning, facilitating roles such as those just described may be less common. The teachers in this study did view themselves to be in a somewhat unique position with respect to students and their problems and concerns about personal and family living and it is possible that their perceptions of themselves as "facilitators" are related to the nature of the subject matter discussed in their classrooms.

Several of the teachers also considered themselves to assume the role of learner in FLE. In this role, they cited the benefits (e.g., improved relationship skills, greater self insight) that teaching this content has had
on their personal lives. It is likely that this role is related to the nature of FLE subject matter. While it is assumed in the field that family life educators should have accepted their life experiences and gained insight into their own feelings and attitudes concerning FLE topics (Arcus, 1979), it is unclear when these tasks are ideally accomplished. One teacher in this study (Paula) indicated that teaching some of the FLE content has provided her with the opportunity to reflect on and to assess her own life experiences. She also identified the relevance of the content to her personal life as a motivation for becoming involved in teaching FLE. This example raises the issue of potential conflict between personal goals and educational goals in the teaching of FLE. Although a teacher's personal learning might enhance the teaching of FLE content, if such learning becomes personal therapy, then teaching may conceivably be undermined.

Interestingly, none of the teachers talked about assuming any roles specifically associated with classroom management (e.g., classroom administrator or disciplinarian). It is possible that these roles are either somewhat "taken for granted" (in that teachers of all subjects likely assume such roles) or that they see distinctions between what Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) refer to as "the work of teaching" (related to the realization of educational goals and the personal aspects of teaching) and "the job of teaching" (concerned with the realization of bureaucratic goals and the organizational aspects of teaching). Alternatively, these teachers may perceive that the personal nature of FLE subject matter somehow alters or precludes these roles. Indeed, the fact that most of the teachers indicated that their teaching behaviours in FLE are different from those in the other home economics courses that they teach suggests that they may consider discipline and administrative duties in FLE to be more peripheral, less likely to be encountered or less valued.
All teachers talked about two aspects or dimensions of knowledge in FLE. Everyone recognized factual knowledge to be important in FLE. In addition, they perceived that such knowledge is processed personally and that personal experience is a form of knowledge which is valid content in FLE.

These beliefs about knowledge may be related to the nature of content in FLE. For example, although facts constitute the knowledge base in FLE, these facts are related to personal events and situations. Moreover, because much of the content in FLE is lived personally, knowledge in FLE may be "personal" in a way that knowledge in some other subjects is not. Thus, the teachers' perceived centrality of the personal dimension of FLE knowledge and of knowledge gained through personal experience may be related to this characteristic of FLE content.

At the same time, these views of knowledge may also in part be related to the teachers' gender. According to some (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986), women perceive their relationship to knowledge differently than do men. They claim that women enhance factual knowledge by using intuition, personal meanings and self understanding, and that women view knowledge to be connected with and not separate from experience. However, Belenky et al (1986) also suggest that similar characteristics may be found in men, and thus whether gender is indeed a factor in this study is unclear.

Influences on the Development of Curriculum Conceptions

All of the teachers identified life experiences as the single most important influence on their beliefs about FLE curriculum. The nature of these experiences varied, as both positive (e.g., a happy childhood in a warm and supportive family) and negative (e.g., divorce) experiences were reported. Such experiences were perceived to have shaped not only their view of the purpose of FLE but also their perceptions of the value of teaching it. In some cases, a particular personal experience (e.g., becoming a parent)
contributed to an interest and involvement in the field. Similarly, life experiences which were professional in nature (i.e., working with a group of students in a professional counselling capacity) were also mentioned.

The apparent centrality of life experiences in the formation of these teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum parallels Nespor's (1985) finding that teachers' beliefs are significantly influenced by certain "critical episodes" in their pasts and reflects Wolfson's (1985) observation that "what guides us in our curricular thinking is the world view we have constructed...[which is] an integration of our personal histories, our psychological insights, our values" (p.69). Indeed, Goodson (1988) and Hargreaves (1986) claim that teachers' life experiences, their lives outside of school and their "latent identities and cultures" significantly shape their views of teaching and of the ways in which they set about it.

Related to this is Goodson's (1988) assertion that such life experiences are historically situated, that is, different events at different points in time may exert different influences. Although the teachers in this study perceived certain life events to have influenced their current thinking about FLE, it is possible that future life events may constitute new influences and that the passage of time may alter their perceptions of the influences reported.

This finding also supports Miller, Schvaneveldt and Jenson's (1981) conjecture that the personal involvement with the subject matter in FLE may colour the perceptions of those who teach it. The fact that both negative and positive personal experiences were reported by teachers to be influential in their thinking about the field suggests the potential for considerable interpretation of the stated aims and purposes of FLE in general. Indeed, the variation in the extent to which the concept of "family" was included as a focus in teachers' interpretations of FLE curriculum may in part be related to such influences. It is possible, for example, that unhappy or negative
experiences with marriage or family life may contribute to a de-emphasis on the family as a social unit and to a more central focus on the individual and individual relationships.

Although the teachers talked about curriculum documents, professional development activities and academic preparation as possible influences on their thinking about FLE curriculum, they were unclear about the exact nature and extent of these influences. Their comments suggest, however, that most perceive the major influence of these factors to have been on their thinking about FLE content.

Curriculum documents were considered to have had the greatest impact on the teachers' thinking about FLE during the first few years of teaching this subject. Indeed, several of the teachers referred to the guide as their "bible" during this time. However, as experience teaching FLE was gained, use of the guide diminished. While most seemed to believe that the guide had not significantly influenced their beliefs about the various dimensions of FLE curriculum, all teachers suggested that the guide does influence their selection of content.

Professional development activities and interaction with other professionals in the field were also perceived by the teachers to have had an impact on their perceptions about FLE content. According to the teachers in this study, these activities influenced their selection of content and, occasionally, the methods for teaching it. Some also suggested that professional development provided an opportunity for collegial discourse and a source of support when difficulties in teaching the content or in dealing with student concerns were encountered. This perception appeared to be most predominant during the first years of teaching FLE. None of the teachers indicated that professional development has significantly influenced their beliefs about the purpose of FLE.
While teachers claimed that curriculum documents and professional development activities have had only peripheral influence on their beliefs about FLE curriculum, their comments also suggest that they may underestimate the cumulative influence of these factors. For example, curriculum documents appear to have had different influences at different times in the teaching careers of these individuals. Most teachers admitted a reliance on the document early in their teaching of the subject. It is likely that, during this time, they assimilated the FLE philosophy and rationale presented in the guide. However, as their experience and confidence teaching the course increased, they may have begun to develop a more "personalized" conception of the curriculum. To a certain extent, the range of expressed purposes among the teachers supports this conjecture. Similarly, while professional development activities frequently present only FLE content (and occasionally ideas for teaching it), some of these activities have focused specifically on the use of the curriculum document itself (Larson, 1987). Moreover, four of the teachers in this study have participated in the evolution of the current Central Valley FLE curriculum, i.e., they have taught previous versions of this curriculum and some have been involved in its revision. Such experiences may have had an impact on their current curriculum conceptions.

The possible underestimation of the influence of curriculum guides and professional development by the teachers in this study may in part reflect Grumet's (1987) observation that peoples' recollections and personal accounts are often selective and that "autobiographical consciousness" and autobiography do not always coincide. This underestimation may also be related to Willinsky's (1989) conception of teachers' "inherited scripts". According to Willinsky, because teachers practice in an institutional setting (and in a certain subject setting) which embodies a wide range of practices and routines, it is likely that their thinking reflects an "institutional element" which may be inherited over time and which teachers themselves may
not consciously recognize. While this conjecture does not explain differences among conceptions, it may account for some similarities.

Although it is reasonable to expect that academic preparation would have some influence on a teachers' beliefs about a field of study, all of the teachers in this study claimed that their professional education in FLE was generally confined to a few courses on FLE content (e.g., human development over the life span; family interaction) which they believe were unrelated to the teaching of FLE as a school subject. Their apparent lack of formal training in the broad philosophy of the field may have contributed to the diversity of perceptions regarding the purpose of FLE. And, although in recent years scholars have made significant progress in delineating the body of content in FLE and in clarifying the definition of the field (e.g., Arcus, 1987, National Council on Family Relations, 1986), there is still evidence of some inconsistency and uncertainty concerning the use of the term "FLE" and its associated philosophical assumptions (Arcus, 1986). This confusion may also be reflected in the variation of interpretations of FLE curriculum found in this study.

It is interesting that only one teacher referred to the possible influence of the context of teaching (i.e., the students she teaches) on her perceptions about FLE curriculum. None of the teachers mentioned the possible influence of their gender, ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds or of their own experiences as students, factors which may potentially shape teachers' views of their work in classrooms (Britzman, 1986; Bullough, 1987; Gaskell & McLaren, 1987). It is likely, for example, that some views of the student-teacher relationship may stem from their own experiences as students. None of the teachers referred to the nature of the subject matter in FLE as an influence on their beliefs about the curriculum. Although they all talked about the uniqueness of this subject and perceived that they approach this
course differently from others they teach, they did not articulate the possible role that the subject matter itself may have on these beliefs.

It is also interesting that none of the teachers mentioned their professional socialization into either home economics or FLE teaching and the potential influence of the existing patterns of behaviours and values of these groups of professionals on their views of FLE. According to Olson (1988), entering into and participating in a particular school or teaching culture requires that participants learn "the rules" constituted by that culture. He points out that different groups and societies of teachers have "distinctively different cultures, and that those who join them are enculturated in quite different ways" (p.168). It is reasonable to expect that the Central Valley FLE teachers constitute a distinctive teaching culture and that as teachers assume teaching responsibilities in this subject area and attend professional development programs for this group, they will acquire some of the behaviours and perspectives of the culture. The teachers in this study, however, seemed to be unaware of this potential influence, suggesting once again Willinsky's (1989) "inherited script" which teachers may unconsciously internalize.

Alternatively, Lortie (1975) claims that, due to the relatively loose entry conditions, socialization into teaching is largely "self-socialization", where "one's personal predispositions...stand at the core of becoming a teacher" (p.79). According to Lortie, the socialization sequence in teaching "leaves room for the emergence and reinforcement of idiosyncratic experience and personal synthesis...[and] teachers seem to emerge from their induction experiences with a strongly biographical orientation to pedagogical decision-making" (p.79, 81). This view of professional socialization supports the earlier observations concerning the apparent influential role of personal experience on teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum.

The foregoing suggests that it is probable that teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum are the result of multiple influences and that the relationship
among them is complex. The perceived predominance of life experiences, however, implies that teachers may assimilate ideas from a variety of sources (including curriculum guides, professional activities and academic courses) and that these are somehow mediated through their life experiences, be they personal or professional in nature. It appears, therefore, that these teachers expressed a personal vision of FLE which was not exclusively dependent on the context in which they teach. Indeed, although most of the classrooms in which these teachers taught represented considerable ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, their expressed conceptions of FLE generally did not articulate a concern with such issues beyond explicitly recognizing diversity among family forms.

When discussing influences on conception formation, it is important to comment on the development of conceptions over time. As suggested earlier in this discussion of influences, the conceptions articulated by teachers in this study are not necessarily static and situations and events at different points in time may contribute to their continued evolution. During the course of this study, there was some evidence of such evolution. For example, mid-way through the course of the research, Karen attended a conference which appeared to give rise to some questions about the way in which she was currently conducting her FLE class and about her beliefs concerning the teaching of FLE. She talked at length about how one speaker at the conference had described FLE as "child-centered" and "organized around discussion of issues important to students". While she expressed some disagreement with this approach ("I do feel they need a knowledge base to work from"), she did reorganize her classroom to make a discussion circle and openly solicited students' ideas for future discussion topics. These discussion ideas were then incorporated into the remainder of the course work for the year. While these changes did not appear to significantly alter her general conception of FLE curriculum, they do reflect an external influence on her thinking about it. This occurrence
parallels Nespor's (1985) conclusion that, over time, teachers may show a mixture of stability and change in their beliefs. Change, however, is most likely to occur through "conversion" or a "gestalt" rather than through the systematic presentation of evidence for change. Such change reflects Schutz and Luckmann's (1974) contention that one's world view or "lifeworldly stock of knowledge" is the "result of the sedimentation of subjective experiences of the life-world" (p.8). These experiences are cumulative and one's world view is therefore subject to change through experience.

Curriculum Conceptions in Classroom Practice

The Role of Curriculum Conceptions in Practice

For all teachers, consistencies between abstract beliefs about FLE and classroom practice were considerable. In particular, teachers' stated purposes of FLE, their beliefs about teaching roles and their views of knowledge and teaching in FLE were evident in their classroom practice. This high degree of correlation between teachers' rhetoric and their practice is somewhat in contrast to several field studies (e.g., Adler, 1984; Duffy, 1982; Lederman & Zeidler, 1987) which found that teachers' conceptions of their subject matter were mediated considerably by institutional mandates and the contexts of teaching. However, these studies examined "academic" subjects such as reading, science and social studies. It is possible that the "non-academic" or elective nature of FLE may in part account for this difference. Indeed, Nespor (1984) points out that "teachers in different content areas are [likely] influenced in different ways by contextual factors" (p.5). In Nespor's study, high school mathematics teachers felt much more pressure from standardized testing and the presence or absence of ability grouping in their classrooms than did teachers of other subjects. Similarly, in Schmidt et al's (1987) study, textbooks significantly influenced elementary mathematics teachers' decision-making about content.
Although there is a prescribed provincial curriculum for the Central Valley FLE course, the one textbook that is authorized for use is seldom used by any of the teachers in this study and there is no standardized testing in this subject. Teachers are free to supplement the curriculum with a range of materials (and most do so) and to cover the curriculum content (or to supplement it) in whatever order and with whatever methods they consider to be most appropriate. Indeed, the guide recommends that teachers "draw on their own backgrounds and experience" in making decisions about curriculum content. Moreover, the guide notes that while "all curriculum topics and concepts identified in this guide should be covered in order to achieve the goals of the program", at the same time "not all learning outcomes [listed in the guide] need to be included". These broad guidelines may actually facilitate or reinforce differing perceptions of FLE purpose and varying interpretations of a focus on the individual versus the individual in family and society. There is little interference from the school administration concerning the teaching of the program, and teachers appeared to consult administrative personnel only when potentially controversial topics (such as abortion) were to be included in class discussion. The only overt demand imposed on these teachers is student grading. However, as just noted, such grading is not based on standardized testing and teachers are free to evaluate as they see fit.

These features appear to allow for considerable teacher autonomy in FLE, that is, teachers are not made as accountable for the course material covered and their students' mastery of it in the same way that perhaps teachers of academic subjects are. Moreover, because each teacher in this study was the only one responsible for teaching the Central Valley FLE program in her school, teacher autonomy was further strengthened and allowed for considerable latitude in decisions about the focus of the course and the content to be covered. According to Ball and Lacey (1980), this is a significant
consideration, for "the subject department [in a school] is...an arena of competition...of competing paradigms and definitions...[and] agreement and allegiance within a subject department cannot be taken for granted" (p.151).

For the teachers in this study, competition for student enrollment in FLE was not an issue within their own subject departments and thus agreement about what should be taught in the course, how and when were also not at issue. These teachers were, therefore, virtually free to do what they deemed to be appropriate. Such teacher autonomy, however, raises questions about its potential misuse, for, as Schmidt and Buchmann (1983) point out, curriculum decisions that "simply reflect the personal likes and dislikes of teachers are problematic" (p.170).

Very few inconsistencies between beliefs and practice were noted. The most obvious inconsistency (which appeared in the practice of three teachers) concerned the intended and actual use of worksheets and evaluation. According to Hammersley (1977), discussions of inconsistencies in individual's accounts of situations or in their speech and action are frequently based on the assumption that consistency is a "normal" state and that inconsistency is due only to the influence of external events and situations. While conflicting pressures may result in inconsistencies, in this study it is not presumed that the inconsistencies noted were solely due to such external factors.

At the same time, however, it is likely that some of the inconsistencies between teacher rhetoric and practice do reflect the influence of external factors. For example, the periodic use by several teachers of seat work and evaluation for classroom control instead of for the expressed purpose of determining student understanding may represent the impact of such influences. According to Gitlin (1987), secondary schools increasingly house "a growing number of...students who refuse to play the school game...and who often disrupt the classroom". Consequently teachers are left with "little choice but to find ways to exert control" (p.113). Moreover if, as Gitlin suggests,
grades are a kind of "social currency" which students must acquire in order to complete school and enter the adult world of work, then the use of evaluation to exert control is not surprising. When this set of circumstances is coupled with the belief that, in FLE a warm, non-threatening and accepting classroom environment is important for successful student-teacher interaction, it may be that "traditional" approaches to discipline are somehow unacceptable to these teachers.

Unarticulated beliefs were evident in two areas: the purpose of FLE and teaching roles. The emergence of unarticulated purposes in practice may be explained in several ways. For example, interview questions may not have probed deeply enough to uncover the range of meanings which teachers attach to FLE or teachers may not have considered all of their beliefs about FLE to be worthy of mention. At the same time, these unarticulated purposes may reflect the influence of beliefs which are, as Aoki (1977) puts it, "unconsciously held and unavoidably used" (p.52). The source of such beliefs is difficult to determine. As suggested earlier, they may derive from personal experiences. Julie's negative experiences with a first marriage and subsequent divorce may account for the unarticulated preventive focus which appeared in her practice. These beliefs may also stem from the curriculum guide. For example, Karen's practice revealed a second, broader, purpose associated with social issues which impact on individuals and families which is apparent in both the guide's philosophy and rationale statements. Similarly, the unarticulated prescriptive purposes of four of the teachers may in part originate in the curriculum guide. Teachers may interpret the program's concern for individual and family well-being to embody prescriptions for achieving this well-being.

Some unarticulated teaching roles (i.e., Candace's disciplinarian and classroom administrator roles) may reflect responses to the demands of the context of teaching, while another (i.e., Paula's counsellor role) may be related to this teacher's unarticulated prescriptive purpose. While the
former likely reflects the influence of the context of teaching, the latter may reflect the influence of unconsciously-held beliefs or the influence of the subject matter. As noted earlier, the nature of FLE content is such that teachers (and students) may perceive counselling (and advice-giving) to be an appropriate teaching role.

Curriculum Conceptions and Tensions and Constraints

The data suggest that some tensions and constraints associated with the contexts of teaching were influences on teachers' curriculum conceptions in practice. In this regard, both those associated with the institutional nature of schooling (such as the need to discipline students and the institutional requirement for evaluation) and the subject matter of FLE (i.e., values in FLE) appeared to mediate certain elements of teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum. To some extent, this circumstance parallels the findings of several studies (e.g., Bawden & Duffy, 1979; Duffy & Anderson, 1982) which revealed that, in practice, teacher beliefs about their subject are filtered through and modified by a variety of contextual influences and their associated tensions and constraints.

However, Nespor (1984) asserts that the relationship between teacher beliefs and the contexts of teaching is more complex than the studies just cited suggest. According to Nespor, although the contexts of teaching may influence and mediate the nature of teacher beliefs, the beliefs themselves may influence the ways in which teachers perceive and respond to the contexts in which they teach. Thus, it is likely that there is an interactive relationship between context and beliefs, and that the realization or impediment of beliefs in practice may be related to the ways in which teachers interpret and cope with constraints inherent in their teaching contexts.

This interactive relationship between beliefs and context may further explain the general consistency between teachers' expressed beliefs and their
classroom practice in this study. It may be that the six teachers in this study cope with contextual constraints such as time, the structured format of classes, institutional expectations and requirements (i.e., attendance and evaluation) and even the students themselves in ways which they perceive do not significantly compromise their expressed beliefs about FLE curriculum. Perhaps, as Nespor suggests, these teachers have "learned the practical limits of their autonomy and [have] developed strategies for performance geared to assuring their survival within those constraints" (p.80).

Although all teachers talked extensively about tensions and constraints in their work, they seemed to be able to "work around them" or, in some cases, to ignore them altogether. For example, although Paula considers evaluation to be both a tension and a constraint in her FLE teaching, she has apparently adopted a strategy for dealing with it. Because she believes that evaluation in FLE serves no useful purpose, she does not design her course around tests and grading, but instead recognizes that, periodically, marks are required and thus either develops a project for students to complete or collects student journals or some reflective student writing. Similarly, although several teachers believe that many students are not developmentally ready for some of the material included in the FLE curriculum, they still continue to teach it. Thus while students are perceived to be a constraint on what they hope to accomplish in FLE, these teachers appear to not respond to them as a constraint, that is, students do not significantly alter their beliefs in practice.

This interactive relationship between beliefs and context of teaching may also account for some inconsistencies which were evident in the rhetoric and practice of some teachers. Allison, for example, talks about students as autonomous learners and independent thinkers. Her practice, however, suggests that she most often responds to them as recipients of knowledge. It may be that the pressures of time and the requirement for evaluation impact on her
beliefs about students and compel her, for her own survival, to adopt a
different approach to students in practice.

Many of the tensions and constraints that the teachers in this study
talked about represent the struggles and conflicts which most teachers
typically encounter in the culture of teaching. According to Bullough (1987),
"tensions [in teaching] do arise...between the values [of the system] and
one's own personal interests" (p.86). As well, these tensions and constraints
may reflect teachers' "personal struggles with the broader intentions of the
institution" (Willinsky, 1989, p.258).

Such struggles give rise to what are referred to as "dilemmas" in
teaching (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Lampert, 1985, 1986) which represent conflict
between institutional values and teachers' personal beliefs. For example,
although there was no explicit requirement that they do so, the teachers in
this study appeared to experience some pressure to "cover" the prescribed FLE
curriculum. At the same time, they expressed concern about adjusting their
programs to account for differing student needs and interests. To the extent
that teachers perceived these aims to be contradictory or in tension with each
other, the pressure to accomplish both reflected a teaching dilemma.

Similarly, institutional requirements and expectations concerning the
monitoring of student productivity and learning and maintaining classroom
control seemed to be at odds with the teachers' belief that the learning
environment should be comfortable and non-threatening. Some of the teachers
confronted a dilemma when they encountered situations where they were obliged
to be authoritarian and were required to discipline or to overtly push
students to achieve.

The teachers in this study also experienced some tensions and
constraints which are not necessarily common to all teachers but which are
somewhat unique to the subject they teach. For example, the issue of values
in FLE, limited professional preparation and the place of the Central Valley
FLE program in the public school curriculum were identified by the teachers as specific subject matter tensions and constraints. These factors may influence or reinforce beliefs about FLE or cause beliefs to be in conflict.

The tensions associated with values in FLE appeared to contribute to some contradictions among the beliefs of the teachers in this study. These were evident in the dichotomy between explicit value orientations in the teachers' definitions of FLE purpose and their belief that values should not be promoted in FLE. These divergent beliefs suggest that teachers are unclear and/or confused about the role of values in FLE and about the potential relationship between the educator's values and the program in use. Such confusion may have contributed to the substantial emergence of prescriptions during classroom practice, in spite of the fact that most of the teachers had not articulated a prescriptive focus in their program. In this regard, concern about imposing or imparting values to students in FLE may contribute to a conscious denial of prescription in some teachers' articulated definitions of purpose. When working with course content in practice, however, this prescriptive focus may surface somewhat unconsciously. This occurrence may indicate that teachers are unclear about the broad purposes of FLE and the role of values in accomplishing them. In turn, such confusion may be related to a lack of adequate professional preparation in FLE theory and philosophy in which these issues are generally addressed.

This confusion surrounding values in FLE reflects an ongoing problem in the field (Arcus, 1980, 1986; Harman & Brim, 1980) and highlights the dilemma encountered in education generally concerning how public institutions can deal with values without encroaching on the private sphere (Strike, 1982). Because of the nature of the subject matter, this dilemma is heightened in FLE. While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine this issue, it raises an important question about the ways in which family life educators are professionally prepared to address values in FLE. The findings of this study
reveal that not only do these teachers experience tension and confusion about the place of values in FLE, but also that their personal values do play a role in the translation of FLE curriculum in practice.

The tension surrounding values further underscores the issue of professional preparation in FLE which most of the teachers considered to be limited and, in some cases, to be a constraint on their teaching. This finding parallels several national surveys (e.g., The Vanier Institute of the Family, 1971) which indicate that lack of adequate preparation for teaching FLE is a major concern of both teachers and administrators. It is possible that the rather limited attention to diversity and ethnicity in most of the classrooms may be partly attributed to lack of professional preparation. While the teachers appeared to recognize the diverse backgrounds of the students they teach, it is possible that they have difficulty in dealing with the associated value differences. Most adopted the stance that discussion will reveal value differences and no attempts were made to actively explore differing value positions.

It is conceivable that professional preparation may also have contributed to the development of teachers' beliefs about values in FLE. Many made reference to a widely-used approach to values education called "value clarification". In this approach, particular values are not presented, but students are taught how to choose and to clarify their own values (Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1966). The teachers in this study reflected similar beliefs about the teaching of values in FLE. This view of values, however, seems to clash with their expressions of explicit value positions when defining the purpose of FLE and may ultimately cause some beliefs to be in conflict. As Arcus (1980) points out, this view of values does present a dilemma for family life educators for, although "we do not want to impose values and make value judgments for individuals...we do have some specific value principles in mind" (p.165).
Finally, the place of the Central Valley FLE program in the public school curriculum was the source of some tension for the teachers in this study. It is likely that, because the teachers were concerned about establishing the credibility of FLE as a school subject and about maintaining its place in the public school curriculum, they acted in ways that they perceived would help them to achieve these goals.

The non-academic status and the utilitarian or practical tradition associated with home economics (and FLE) in this province has historically contributed to its somewhat tenuous claim on the public school curriculum. During periods when educational philosophy emphasized the development of the whole child and individual and social concerns were prevalent, home economics has expanded in the school curriculum. When educational philosophy has stressed intellectual development, however, home economics has experienced contraction in the school curriculum (Thomas, 1986). The teachers' concerns about making their FLE course academically credible may be related to this characteristic of the course and, for some, may have influenced perceptions about the role of factual knowledge in FLE. Thus, to a certain extent, these concerns may have mediated the constraints and tensions which they perceived to be associated with evaluation. While they expressed difficulty with evaluation in FLE, they also recognized that "having standards" (i.e., evaluation standards) implied some academic credibility in the eyes of students as well as in the eyes of the broader educational community.

According to Goodson (1983b), "the [career] interests of teachers...are broadly interlinked with the fate of the specialist subject communities" (p.404). During a recent period of curriculum conflict concerning the retention of the home economics FLE course in the provincial public school curriculum (Thomas, in press), it is likely that teachers realized the potential loss of the FLE dimension of their teaching positions. It is possible that this concern strengthened their professional commitment to
teaching FLE. According to some (Nespor, 1984; Woods 1981), various forms of commitment in teaching may either promote or impede the realization of teachers' beliefs in practice. The stake that the teachers in this study have in the FLE curriculum may reinforce their dedication to teaching it and reaffirm their belief in the importance of this subject.

**Curriculum Conceptions and Images of FLE Curriculum Practice**

The four images of FLE curriculum practice identified in this study ("stories and storytelling", "personal life experience", "a female orientation" and "prescription") emerged primarily from classroom practice and thus constitute the "enacted" or unofficial FLE curriculum (as opposed to the curriculum in documentary form). These images will be discussed in relation to this notion and to the notion of the "implicit" (as opposed to explicit) curriculum.

The images of "stories and storytelling" and "personal life experience" appear to reflect the teachers' concern with the development of personal meaning in FLE and encompass their view of personal experience as a form of knowledge and their perception of the personal nature of knowledge. Stories (and the practice of storytelling by both students and teachers) constituted a method for conveying and reinforcing curriculum content while personal experiences formed the content of such stories. According to Egan (1987), "the story...reflects a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world" (p.2). Thus a story is a "way of knowing and remembering information...it restructures experiences...[so that] isolated and disconnected scraps of human experience are bound up into something whole and meaningful" (Livo & Rietz, 1986, p.5).

The pervasiveness of personal narratives (stories of personal life experiences) in all six classrooms reflects this sense-making of experiences and seemed to allow both teachers and students to connect their lives with
curriculum content in a personally meaningful way. This parallels what Moss and Elbert (1987) refer to in FLE as "linking the [internal] world of the self to the external world of subject matter" (p.1) or, as Grumet (1976) puts it, "our stories create a linguistic bridge between our public and private worlds" (p.587). Moreover, the sharing of personal narratives emphasizes the perception by most teachers that personal experience is a form of knowledge from which others may learn. Indeed, teachers perceived that their "personal knowledge" (i.e., their personal experience) of some content facilitated their teaching of it. Thus their view that knowledge arises from within the person rather than from external sources (i.e., people must personally process knowledge) was both manifest and reinforced in their curriculum practice.

The "female orientation" image of FLE curriculum practice appears to be related primarily to gender rather than to the curriculum conceptions themselves. Given the fact that all teachers and the majority of students in all six classrooms were female, the emergence of this image is not surprising. At the same time, however, it warrants closer scrutiny.

As suggested earlier in this chapter, it may be that these teachers' views of knowledge are a reflection of their gender. If this is the case, then this aspect of their curriculum conceptions (as well as some of their curriculum practice) may reflect the influence of gender on their work as teachers. Several writers (e.g., Gaskell and McLaren, 1987; Grumet, 1988) suggest that gender influences both pedagogy and the curriculum in the classroom. According to these writers, the "public" and the "private" realms of women's lives are not separate spheres, that is, their experiences as women in their private lives (such as mothering, caregiving, nurturing) and in their public lives (as teachers) are intertwined. Indeed, a recent study on the relationship between teachers' personal lives and their professional roles concluded that, for female teachers who are parents, there is a "clear and direct extension of the role of mother to the role of teacher" (Pajak & Blase,
It is conceivable that the personal nature of the subject matter in FLE intensifies this presumed linkage between the public and the private. Thus it may be that the centrality of personal experiences in both the conceptualization and practice of FLE curriculum and the caring, nurturing and concern with closeness and feelings which were evident in their classrooms embody a kind of "intersection" of these six women's private and public lives.

The potential relationship between the subject matter of FLE and gender may also be examined from another perspective. According to Somerville (1971), not only has FLE historically had a "public image...of a female-centered discipline" but enrollment in FLE has also traditionally tended to be predominantly female (p.289). While Somerville's comments about enrollment are historically situated, according to Kostash (1987), even today "the subject and the classroom population are not unconnected" (p.96). Kostash suggests that more girls tend to enroll in "classically feminine subjects" (such as psychology and home economics) which represent a departure from the majority of classrooms which, she claims, are "dominated by male discourse" (p.98).

The classrooms in this study were characterized by female discourse and, although boys were present in five of the six classrooms, the discourse of females predominated. Several factors may account for this. The predominance of girls in the class may inhibit the boys and make it difficult to generate dialogue about both male and female experiences. It may also be that, as several of the teachers suggested, boys are socialized differently than girls and their propensity to engage in discussions which focus on feelings, for example, is somewhat limited. Indeed, Belenky et al (1986) assert that "women's talk" is different in both style and content than men's talk and that women tend to focus on "the everyday, the practical and the interpersonal" (p.17). The subject matter of FLE, however, reflects similar concerns, as it focuses on peoples' "everyday lives" as family members and on their
interpersonal relationships. Thus it is quite possible that the gender of both teachers and students interact with content to contribute to "a female orientation".

The fourth image of FLE curriculum practice, "prescription", reflects the normative concern of the curriculum with the well-being of families, the stated purposes in the guide of "assisting" and "encouraging" students and the rationale that "young people need" this education, and thus the appearance of this image is not surprising. Moreover, whether it was articulated it or not, guidance and prescription formed part of each teacher's understanding of the purpose of FLE. To a certain extent this is also not surprising, for according to several writers (Broderick, 1964; Harman & Brim, 1980; Kerckhoff, 1964) the provision of guidance and the giving of advice in FLE is longstanding. For example, Kerckhoff (1964) indicates that, in recognizing inadequacies in family life, early family life educators largely directed their efforts at "correcting a bad situation" and convincing people to do what was right to improve the institution of the family (p.898). As suggested previously, it may be that teachers perceive that the aims and purposes of FLE may be accomplished through prescriptions, while both students and teachers alike may believe that the personal nature of the subject matter justifies advice-seeking and advice-giving.

The foregoing suggests that the images of curriculum practice which emerged in this study are, to a certain extent, shaped by elements of the teachers' conceptions of FLE curriculum. These images exemplify Aoki's (1988) "first order" or the lived, subjective curriculum and represent the "enacted" or unofficial curriculum of FLE. This "curriculum as lived experiences" reflects the ways in which teachers and students have assigned meaning to the notion of "FLE". Curriculum as lived experience embodies the "mutual understanding that develops between teacher and children about what the class is about, where it can go" (Jardine & Clandinin, 1987, p.478). The images of
practice therefore provide some insight into the ways in which the FLE curriculum is socially constructed within the context of the classroom. Such construction, says Wolfson (1985), indicates "how teachers and students together respond to and make meaning from the world around them...emerging from [their] personal interests and biographical experiences in interaction with the cultural setting" (p. 69, 57).

At the same time, these images of practice may also reflect what is frequently referred to in educational literature as a "hidden" or "implicit" curriculum of FLE (e.g., see Cornbleth, 1984; Martin, 1976; Vallance, 1980). According to Martin (1976), an implicit curriculum refers to that which is not openly intended for students to learn but which students may learn or in fact do learn as a consequence of instruction. Such potential or actual learnings differ from explicit or openly intended learnings (such as those stated in curriculum objectives or in designated curriculum content) and are often "taken-for-granted rather than acknowledged or examined" (Cornbleth, 1984, p. 29). While some writers consider an implicit curriculum to encompass the social learning which occurs as a result of schooling (e.g., Dreeben, 1976; Eisner, 1979; Jackson, 1968), it may also include the messages which are conveyed in classrooms as the official curriculum is enacted (e.g., see Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). The teacher's use of language, learning activities, selection of content and curricular priorities are all sources of an implicit curriculum (Martin, 1976) and transmit attitudes and values about such things as what knowledge is of most worth, what purposes and whose interests such knowledge serves and what it means to know something (Giroux & Simon, 1989).

The four images of curriculum practice which emerged in this study underscore some central issues in the curriculum field. In particular, these images highlight the continuing debate about the role of theory in curriculum. If curriculum practice reflects the interaction of multiple factors (including
situational elements, teachers' beliefs and the curriculum subject matter), then how might theory inform such practice? These images also raise questions about the way in which curriculum practice is construed. While it is often depicted as a technical activity, centering on educational means and ends, the images suggest that it is also an interpretive activity, encompassing the ways in which participants understand and assign meaning to the curriculum. These distinctions echo Aoki's (1988) first order curriculum (i.e., curriculum as lived, subjective experience) and second order curriculum (i.e., curriculum as abstract prespecified learning experiences) and raise questions about the possible relationship between the two. What, for example, do such distinctions say about the form of curriculum guides and their role in curriculum practice or about the role and responsibilities of the teacher as a curriculum developer?

While this study did not set out specifically to examine either the enacted or an implicit curriculum of FLE, the emergence of images of curriculum practice provides additional insight into the ways in which teachers' beliefs about curriculum are related to their classroom practice and about the role of these beliefs in the transformation and construction of curriculum in the classroom. At the same time, these images situate teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum within the classroom and reflect the interaction among teachers' beliefs, students and the subject matter of curriculum.

Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the study have been discussed in relation to the three research questions. There were both similarities and differences among the teachers' conceptions of FLE curriculum. While similarities among the conceptions appeared to reflect the nature of FLE subject matter, differences suggested differing views of the educational enterprise in general.
Although teachers considered personal life experiences to have exerted the greatest influence on their beliefs about FLE curriculum, it is likely that other influences, such as curriculum documents and professional interaction and socialization, have also contributed to the formation of these beliefs. The perceived predominance of life experiences, however, suggests that these may play a central role in conception development and contribute to a teacher's "personal vision" of FLE curriculum.

While both inconsistencies and unarticulated elements of conceptions emerged in classroom practice, the generally high degree of consistency between articulated beliefs and practice suggests that these teachers' beliefs significantly influenced their practice. Several factors may account for this. In particular, the non-academic or elective status of FLE may contribute to considerable teacher autonomy and facilitate the realization of beliefs in practice.

At the same time, some beliefs did appear to be mediated by the context of teaching. Factors such as the institutional nature of schooling and characteristics of the subject matter likely contributed to the appearance of inconsistencies and unarticulated elements in classroom practice. However, teachers' interpretations of contextual characteristics and their strategies for coping with these also appeared to facilitate the realization of some beliefs in practice.

The four images of FLE curriculum practice reflect the interaction of teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum with the students and the subject matter. These images therefore yield insight into the ways in which FLE curriculum is transformed and enacted within the context of the classroom. In Chapter VIII, the study is summarized and some conclusions are outlined.
CHAPTER VIII  SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the purpose, the method and the findings of the study are summarized. Conclusions are outlined and some recommendations for further research are offered.

Summary

During the past two decades, FLE in schools has expanded considerably and, in many schools, such programs are increasingly becoming mandatory. Although it is generally recognized that the teacher is critical to the success of these programs, little is known about the nature of the practice and of the role of the teacher in FLE or about the ways in which FLE is interpreted in practice. This ethnographic field study addressed this problem by examining how some teachers conceptualize FLE curriculum and by determining the relationship between their curriculum conception and their classroom practice. The specific research questions were: 1) What conceptions of FLE curriculum do FLE teachers express?; 2) What factors do they perceive to have influenced these conceptions?; and 3) What is the relationship between teacher conceptions of FLE curriculum and their classroom practice?

Three areas of literature were reviewed. First, the literature of FLE served as the subject matter context of the study. This literature indicated that, although some research has focused on family life educators in schools, little attention has been given to the examination of FLE practices in the classroom. Second, because this study was based on the assumption that teachers' beliefs guide their curriculum practices, research on teachers' thought processes was also reviewed. This literature suggested that teachers' beliefs play an important role in their classroom practice. Finally, the literature of curriculum theory and practice provided the theoretical context for the study.
From this review of literature, a framework was developed which guided both data collection and data analysis. The dimensions of this framework were: 1) beliefs about the purpose and process of FLE; 2) beliefs about the role of the teacher in FLE; 3) beliefs about the learner and teaching in FLE; 4) beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE; and 5) beliefs about families in FLE.

This study employed the methods of ethnographic field research which is characterized by an emphasis on understanding social processes in natural settings. Because it is assumed in this study that teachers are active agents constructing their worlds, the sociological perspective of symbolic interaction (which emphasizes the social construction of meaning) constituted the methodological orientation within which the research was conducted.

The research design was a multiple case study of six female home economics FLE teachers in a large metropolitan school district in western Canada. These teachers were selected using judgment sampling, based on the socioeconomic status and ethnicity of the school and a minimum of three years experience teaching FLE. Home economics family life educators were selected because there was an established provincial curriculum which reflects the broad purpose of FLE as defined in the literature.

Three methods of data collection were employed. Interviews (both formal and informal) were used to gather biographical information, to elicit abstract beliefs about FLE and FLE curriculum, to gain insight into possible influences on the development of FLE curriculum conceptions and to clarify observer understandings of actions and events. Classroom observations of teacher discourse and interaction provided both a focus for talk about practice and about the relationship of beliefs about FLE curriculum to practice, and were a cross-check to validate data from interviews. Observational data were gathered in the form of field notes. During the course of the research (eight months corresponding to the school year), each teacher was observed for
fifteen hours. A cross-section of the major components of the FLE curriculum being taught was observed. Documents already present in the settings, such as the official curriculum document, course outlines or handouts developed by the teachers, and some guided writing completed by the teachers at the request of the researcher were analyzed. The former were used to identify evidence of beliefs about FLE curriculum in use and to verify data from other sources. The latter was used to elicit abstract beliefs about FLE curriculum.

The data were analyzed using the framework of conceptual categories drawn from the literature of curriculum and of FLE. As well, two emergent analytic categories ("tensions and constraints" and "images of FLE curriculum practice") were identified and were used in the data analysis.

As the data were analyzed, six conceptions of FLE curriculum were identified and labelled according to the central themes associated with the teachers' expressed beliefs about the aims and purposes of FLE. The six conceptions, listed in order of their increasing emphasis on the individual within the context of the family and society, were entitled: "authority of facts and information", "skills for living", "guidance and advice", "self reflection and personal insight", "personal autonomy and transformation" and "personal growth and social responsibility". These conceptions reflected both similarities and differences. Similarities appeared to be related to the nature of the subject matter of FLE, while differences suggested differing views of the educational enterprise in general.

The teachers perceived several factors to have had some influence on their conceptions of FLE curriculum. Of these, life experiences were considered to have had the greatest impact on their thinking about FLE. Both positive and negative personal and professional life experiences were identified. Curriculum documents, professional interaction and academic preparation were also identified as possible influences, but were believed to be peripherally influential.
The perceived centrality of personal life experiences in the formation of curriculum conceptions suggests that these may exert considerable influence on the development of a teacher's "personal vision" of FLE curriculum. However, it is likely that other factors, such as professional interaction, professional socialization and curriculum documents themselves are also influential.

Analysis of the rhetoric and practice of the teachers in this study revealed that there was considerable consistency between beliefs and practice. Consistencies were most apparent in the teachers' stated purposes of FLE, their beliefs about teaching roles and their views of knowledge and teaching in FLE. Although there was also evidence of inconsistencies and some unarticulated beliefs in their practice, in every case these were exceeded by the consistencies.

The generally high degree of consistency between beliefs and practice implies that the teachers' curriculum conceptions were significant influences on their curriculum practice. In part, this may be due to the non-academic or elective nature of FLE which affords teachers considerable autonomy in teaching. At the same time, however, some beliefs appeared to be mediated by the context of teaching, that is, factors such as the institutional nature of schooling and the subject matter itself.

Two additional themes which were evident in all six settings also emerged during data collection and analysis. The first was entitled "tensions and constraints" and encompassed factors which contributed to stress or discomfort, which gave rise to a dilemma or conflict, or which limited or confined the teachers' curriculum practice. These included both contextual tensions and constraints and subject matter tensions and constraints. The former related to the institutional nature of schooling and to the students, while the latter related to the curriculum and the content of the curriculum,
to the elective or non-academic status of FLE and to teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of their professional preparation for teaching FLE.

The second emergent theme was entitled "images of FLE curriculum practice". The first image was labelled "stories and storytelling" and was reflected in the classroom discourse of both students and teachers and constituted a teaching method and activity. The second image was labelled "personal life experience" and was evident in classroom discourse and in the selection and presentation of course content. The third image, "a female orientation", was apparent in student-teacher dialogue and interaction, in specific references to female experiences, and in some instances of gender bias. The final image was entitled "prescription" and included suggestions of rules of conduct for personal and family living, advice-giving by teachers and advice-seeking by students.

These four images of FLE curriculum practice reflect the interaction of teacher beliefs about FLE curriculum, the students and the subject matter. These images therefore provide insight into the ways in which FLE curriculum is transformed and enacted in the classroom.

Conclusions

Several conclusions may be drawn from this study regarding FLE curriculum conceptions, their possible influences and their relationship to classroom practice. This study demonstrates that, as the literature of curriculum suggests, teachers do interpret curriculum individually and may or may not share the curricular intents or views of teaching and learning intended by curriculum developers. These findings substantiate Olson's (1981) claim that teachers "domesticate" curriculum to fit with their personal educational beliefs. At the same time, however, the similarities among the conceptions suggest that these teachers did have a common view of the overarching aim of FLE which was concerned with future preparation and that
they shared some beliefs about knowledge and content in FLE and about the role of the teacher in FLE.

The findings indicate that it is likely that both similarities and differences among the conceptions arise from the interaction of multiple influences. These influences appear to be both situational (i.e., factors related to the circumstances of teaching, such as the nature of the subject matter) and experiential (i.e., teachers' life histories or biographies). While the teachers considered their life experiences to have had the greatest impact on their beliefs about FLE curriculum, it is quite probable that their professional interactions, the personal nature of the subject matter and FLE curriculum documents themselves have also been influences. The perceived predominance of life experiences, however, raises the possibility that teachers assimilate ideas from a variety of sources and that these are then mediated by life experiences. The fact that much of the subject matter in FLE is lived personally by teachers may intensify the significance of personal life experiences in this regard. Thus these conceptions may be described as personally derived rather than based on the context of teaching and appear to reflect the teachers' "personal visions" of FLE curriculum.

This study revealed that the teachers' conceptions of FLE curriculum were significant influences on their curriculum practice and confirms the belief in the field that, to a great extent, the teacher is the FLE curriculum. The considerable consistency between teachers' articulated beliefs and their practice suggests that the conceptions acted as a kind of framework which the teachers used for justifying and explaining their actions and which gave meaning to their curriculum practice.

Some beliefs, however, did appear to be mediated by factors associated with the context of teaching, which may have contributed to some inconsistencies between beliefs and practice and to the emergence of some previously unarticulated beliefs. At the same time, the ways in which
teachers interpreted and coped with their contexts of teaching appeared to facilitate the realization of some beliefs in practice. This suggests that there is an interactive relationship between teacher's beliefs and the context of teaching.

For the most part, these contextual factors were related primarily to the subject matter itself rather than to general institutional influences. In particular, the issue of values in FLE, the perceived limitations of professional preparation and the place of FLE in the public school curriculum may have contributed to the reinforcement of and conflict among some beliefs. This finding suggests that FLE teachers may experience influences on their practice which are unique to their subject and that in the study of teacher beliefs, factors associated with the nature of the subject matter and the socio-historical characteristics of the curriculum may be important considerations.

The images of curriculum practice which emerged in this study underscore the centrality of teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum in their curriculum practice and provide additional insight into the role of beliefs in the translation of FLE curriculum in the classroom. Of particular significance is the extent to which these images reflected the influence of personal life experience. Teachers' personal experiences appeared to influence not only some beliefs about FLE curriculum but also their curriculum practice. In this respect, personal life experiences sometimes contributed to the rationale for the course, influenced the emphasis on different topics in the curriculum and formed much of the content of what was taught. These findings support Miller, Schvaneveldt and Jenson's (1981) conjecture that the close personal involvement with the subject matter may colour the perceptions of those who teach it, and verify Woods' (1984) contention that "the curriculum and the self are in dialectical interplay" (p.239) and that a teacher's self finds expression in as well as gives expression to a curriculum area. These
findings also underscore the belief in the field that family life educators require both insight into their own feelings and attitudes concerning family life topics and acceptance of their own life experiences.

These images of practice also situate teachers' beliefs about FLE curriculum within the classroom and indicate that teachers' beliefs interact with both the students and the subject matter of the curriculum. This interaction contributes to the character of the curriculum in use and suggests that while teachers' beliefs do play a central role in the translation of curriculum, other factors may also exert an influence.

Recommendations

Although the methods of ethnographic field research have been little used in FLE, the findings of this study suggest the significance of these methods for addressing some of the central questions in the field. In particular, ethnographic research could make important contributions to understanding the FLE process and to clarifying the potential effectiveness of FLE programs, two research concerns which thus far have been inadequately addressed (Miller, Schvaneveldt & Jenson, 1981).

Several specific recommendations for further research emerged from the findings of this study.

1) The centrality of personal life experiences in the conceptualization and practice of FLE of teachers in this study suggests that additional study of the role of personal life experience in the practice of FLE is warranted. Further research might be undertaken using an additional sample of family life educators to determine the extent to which this phenomenon is evident among school-based practitioners.

2) Although this research did not specifically study gender, it emerged as a potential influence on both beliefs about the FLE
curriculum and FLE curriculum practice. Because in this research only female teachers were studied, additional studies of male as well as female FLE teachers might reveal the extent to which gender influences both FLE curriculum conceptions and FLE classroom practice.

3) Although the teachers in this study considered the curriculum guide to be only peripherally influential in the development of their beliefs about FLE, the fact that some believed it to have been significant when they first began teaching the subject suggests that more attention might be given to the examination of the role of the curriculum guide in the development of teacher beliefs.

4) Because these teachers' conceptions appeared to be personally derived, studies of the development of these conceptions over time may be important. Both longitudinal studies and the use of life history methodologies may help to clarify the relationship between life experiences and the development of beliefs about FLE.

5) In this study, values emerged as a source of tension which appeared to contribute to some conflict within teachers' conceptualizations of FLE curriculum as well as some conflict between their conceptualizations and their classroom practices. Because values are also identified as a central issue in the field, studies which specifically examine the ways in which values and value diversity are handled in FLE classrooms, teachers' value stances and the relationship between teachers' values and the values reflected in FLE curricula may yield additional insight into this issue.

The specific recommendations for further research refer to the school-based context of FLE. However, FLE also occurs in other settings. Because the educator is considered to be important in all settings, other studies
addressing similar questions might be conducted in religious or community contexts to examine the role of personal experience in practice.

Although a small, select sample was studied in this research, careful attention to methodological issues strengthened the findings. While these may not be generalizable, they do provide new insight into the central role of the teacher in FLE, and have implications for both professional preparation and curriculum development in FLE.
REFERENCES


Appendix A
THE PROVINCIAL FLE PROGRAM IN HOME ECONOMICS*

Philosophy and Rationale

The provincial FLE curriculum which constitutes the Central Valley FLE program in home economics is developed from "an ecological perspective". According to the guide, this perspective reflects an interactive relationship among individuals, families and their environments. At the grade 11 level, this focus is manifest in the study of "the growth and development of the individual and the interactive relationships between individuals, families and the surrounding environment," while at the grade 12 level, this focus is characterized as study of "the evolutionary nature of the family and the larger community." Thus in grade 11, students examine "the relationship of humans and their environments...from a specific point of view (the individual)," and in grade 12, students study such relationships "from a more general perspective (the family and the community)".

According to the guide, the program is intended to address the general educational goals of the province through the development of students' "positive attitudes toward themselves and their world." The rationale for the program is based on changing structures and roles in families which emphasizes the need to provide young people with the "opportunity to explore the dimensions of family functioning, the development of the individual, and relationships of people to their social and physical environments."

*The specific program is not cited in order to protect the anonymity of the research participants.
Program Goals

The general aim of the program is to "provide students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities to meet the challenges of our dynamic and complex society." The specific goals are to:

1) develop an understanding of self in relation to others;
2) recognize the interdependence of self, family and environments;
3) develop skills and knowledge for effective life management; and
4) become active and contributing members of the community and society.

The grade 11 course is organized around four topics: 1) Individual Resource Management; 2) Human Development; 3) Personal Growth; and 4) Interactive Relationships. Under these topics are subsumed 16 "key concepts".

The grade 12 course is organized around three topics: 1) Family Resource Management; 2) The Adult Years; and, 3) Changing Lifestyles and Relationships. Under these topics are subsumed 15 "key concepts".

The guide notes that the five processes of communicating, decision-making, problem-solving, valuing and goal setting are to be integrated throughout.
Appendix B

CONSENT LETTER

[date]

[name]  
[position]  
[school]  
[address]  
[city, prov.]  
[postal code]

Dear [Subject]:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research entitled "Conceptions of Curriculum and Classroom Practice: An Ethnographic Study of Family Life Education Teachers".

As we discussed at our first meeting, I will arrange to conduct two interviews with you and to observe you teach several lessons in one of your FLE classes over the course of this school year.

I look forward to working with you on this project and thank you once again for your involvement.

Sincerely,

Jane Thomas

Copy to:  [name]  
Principal
Appendix D

PRE-OBSERVATIONAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1) The field of FLE:

a. To prepare for this interview, you spent some time completing two written activities. Tell me your impressions of them...

b. In activity 1 you described FLE as ........................................ Can you tell me more about that? (purpose, rationale for FLE)

Probes: What do you see to be distinct or unique about FLE as a subject area?

Tell me about what you think should be taught about the family and family life in FLE.

What place do values have in FLE?

How do you see problem-solving, decision-making and communication to be part of FLE?

If appropriate, ask about any of the terms described in Activity 1, e.g., Next to the term "X" you wrote "Y". Can you tell me what that means? Can you tell me more about that? Etc.

c. In Activity 2 you prioritized some of the ways in which students might be involved in learning in FLE. Tell me about how you came to choose these particular items...why are they important to you? Are there others not listed that you think are important?

You marked several items as having low priority for you. Tell me more about that....

Probes: What do you see to be the role of the teacher in FLE? Why?

2) Curriculum content and practice in FLE:

Tell me about the [FLE] course(s) you teach.

Probes: How do you decide what to teach? (Role of students, parents, others?)

Comment on the role of the curriculum guide in your teaching of [FLE].

What do you see to be the central or most important concepts in FLE? Why?
Pre-Observational Interview Guide

What do you think FLE should teach?

How important is content in teaching Fmgt? Why? Sources of content?

3) Teaching:

Tell me what it's like for you to be a teacher.

Probes: What do you like about teaching? What do you dislike? Why?

How would you describe your teaching style generally? In [FLE]?

What influences what you do as a teacher? Would this be true for all subjects that you teach?

How have you changed as a teacher since you first began teaching? Why?

How would you describe a good student-teacher relationship?

How do you think students learn best? Why? What about in [FLE]?

4) Education:

What do you see to be the purpose of education?

Probes: How does FLE fit into the overall concept of education?

5) Biography:

a. Tell me about your education: Where did you go to high school? When? How would you describe your high school?

What university/universities have you attended?

What degree(s) do you hold? When received?

Any professional certificates, diplomas?

Tell me about your professional preparation for teaching FLE.

b. Tell me about your background as a teacher:
Appendix D Contd...
Pre-Observational Interview Guide

How long have you been teaching? Present teaching status (full-time or?)?

Where have you taught? (schools, district, number of years)

[I understand that you're a department head...tell me about that.]

What courses do you presently teach?

How did you come to teach [FLE].

c. The research requires that I learn a little bit about your personal biography: Can you tell me your age...? Tell me about your family....
Appendix E
POST-OBSERVATIONAL INTERVIEW

1) We've had a lot of experiences during the last eight months...you'll recall that one of the first things we began talking about was your definition of FLE. Tell me again briefly how you would characterize FLE...what do you see to be its purpose, why teach it, and so on....

[If discrepancies from first interview, clarify, then ask why different.]

2) What do you consider to be limitations on these views as you try to realize them in practice?

3) You've talked about FLE to mean...what would you identify as the most significant influences on your thinking about FLE in that way?

4) "Checking" questions (to clarify observational data and previous conversations).

[While the questions in this segment of the interview guide generally pertained to each of the six teachers, most of the questions were phrased specifically for each teacher and included their language and their circumstances. To avoid undue repetition and to reduce length, only the central issues which formed the focus of these questions are outlined below.]

a. Values and prescriptions in FLE.

b. "Stories" in FLE.

c. Personal experiences in FLE.

d. Choice of curriculum topics over the course of the school year.

e. Teaching methods and resources used in classes.

f. Evaluation in FLE; how learning is determined.

g. Female discourse in FLE.

h. Ethnicity, S.E.S. and FLE teaching.

5) A final question...I recall that, at the beginning of our work, you expressed some [concern, hesitation...] about having an observer in your classroom. Now that the project is completed, tell me your perceptions of the experience....

6) How do you think you've changed as a result of the experience?
Appendix F

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Date: June 1, 1989
Subject: Post-Observational, Subject #1

I 1. Now, we've covered a lot of material during
2. the last eight months and one of the things
3. that we began with was your definition of
4. Family Life Education. What I'd like you to
5. do now is just to tell me briefly how you
6. would characterize Family Life Education.
7. What do you see to be its purpose? Why do you
8. teach it? And so on.

R 9. The purpose of Family Life is to prepare the
10. students for the families that they will
11. establish in the future. And one of the
12. things I realized is that many of those
13. students are coming with very positive
14. abilities and skills already and that doesn't
15. mean that they shouldn't have it because the
16. course allows them to clarify. And also their
17. experience, their insights, their skills can
18. then be shared with those who have not had
19. such a positive environment. So what I really
20. see the purpose is, is twofold.... So that in
21. effect the overall thing is to have the skills
22. to make them maintain a successful
23. relationship, a successful family in the
24. future. The family being whatever is their
25. definition of family. Just so that they can
26. make those successful connections with other
27. human beings.

I 28. Now you mentioned on a couple of occasions,
29. sort of in exchanges that we've had in
30. conversations, the importance - and these were
31. your words - "self-responsibility as kind of
32. an umbrella term for Family Life." Can you
33. expand on that for me a little bit please.

R 34. I think that there's a real tendency in our
35. society to blame other people for the way
36. things are. And I really see self-
37. responsibility as saying...Not all of them are
38. going to take the ball that I throw out to
39. them, but at least they are aware of it and
40. there may be some hooks that they can latch
41. into at a later date.

I 42. You talked quite a bit about family origin in
43. the first interview and I noticed that during
44. several of your classes you also referred
45. either explicitly to 'family of origin' or
46. implicitly to what is family and the influence
Appendix G

SAMPLE PROTOCOL

Date: February 23, 1989
Subject: S5

1. techniques used in relationships as emotional abuse...(she put up this chart on the OH)...OK
2. ...one of the techniques used by people...and it can happen in teenage relationships...is isolation...what does this mean?" Student responses included "grounding", "no contact with other people." The teacher nodded and then said: "Now think of this in terms of a relationship between two adolescents or a husband and wife." A student suggested that "you're just with that person and they ignore you." The teacher replied: "That's different...think about who's being isolated from whom...in this book, the victim is being isolated from everyone except the abuser...think about that in terms of a teen relationship." A student suggested that "he won't allow you to see your friends." The teacher said: "OK...he might say 'I don't like your friends, you can't see them any more'...why is this so bad...why is it abusive?" One student said: "It inhibits you from being free." Another said: "They're not able to be a whole person." To these the teacher responded: "Right, but there's a reason why it's abusive...the abused person feels alone...and as they are isolated they become dependent on the abuser...you don't have any contact with others...if you have no contact you have no support system...the only reality you know is the reality of the abuser, the values you come to accept are those of the abuser...you're trapped...where do you go?"

34. Someone suggested leaving. The teacher said: "You can always leave...theoretically we're all free to do that...but abusers usually use more than one technique." She then read a passage from the book about a man who abuses a woman and the ways in which he attempts to isolate her from her friends and relatives. She said: "Every time your friends come over he's so insulting that they never want to come back." One of the girls added: "He also makes you feel like you're doing something wrong." The teacher agreed and then went on...
"The purpose of these written activities is to stimulate your thinking about what you believe about Family Life Education. The nature of the questions and statements included in these activities are such that there are no correct or incorrect answers. Please record your frank opinions. Your responses will remain absolutely confidential."
Activity 1

In your own words, write a brief definition of Family Life Education.

The following list includes some terms commonly associated with Family Life Education. Record any thoughts you associate with each of them:

family -

values -

family interaction -

human development -

problem-solving -

decision-making -

communication -
Activity 2

Family Life Education Through The Life Cycle

INvolvement In Learning*

There are many different ways in which students/participants may be involved in learning in family life education. For each of the following statements, indicate whether this would have a high, moderate, or low priority in your own family life education program.

H M L 1. Helping students feel they are significant members of the learning group.

H M L 2. Stimulating students to reveal sensitivities and attitudes they have towards various aspects of a subject area.

H M L 3. Stimulating students to expand their frame of reference - to open their thinking to issues not previously considered or considered from a limited perspective.

H M L 4. Helping students become active verbal members in group discussions.

H M L 5. Stimulating students to reveal the intensity of their sensitivities and attitudes.

H M L 6. Providing opportunity for students to experience and practice inquiry or discovery techniques.

H M L 7. Helping students understand and appreciate the roles they play when in a group, and their consequences.

H M L 8. Providing the opportunity for students to feel the intensity and to perceive the nature of the sensitivities and attitudes of other students.

H M L 9. Providing purposeful intervention experiences in which students may analyze and determine relevant information.

H M L 10. Helping students expand their role-play abilities.


*Adapted from J. Joel Moss and K.F. King. Involving students for productive learning in marriage and family living classes. The Family Coordinator, January 1970, 78-82.
Appendix H Contd...
Guided Writing Activities

H M L 12. Providing the students with opportunities to explain why significant things are significant.

H M L 13. Stimulating students to correctly assess themselves as to their uniqueness and similarities in comparison with other students.

H M L 14. Stimulating students to look for imaginative answers rather than conforming ones.

H M L 15. Providing students with assurance of their own power in the productive exploration and solution of issues.

H M L 16. Helping students to empathize with others to enhance their ability to commit themselves to a relationship.

H M L 17. Providing opportunity and support for students in creative reorganization of ideas.

Rank order those items which you indicated you would give high priority, beginning with the one you believe has the highest priority.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.
Activity 3
(Optional)

To further facilitate the researcher's understanding of teacher beliefs about family life education curriculum, participants in this project may wish to keep a reflective journal in which they record random thoughts about classroom experiences and activities. This activity is optional. Should you decide to keep such a journal, entries need not follow any specific format, and the number and nature of entries are entirely at the discretion of the participant. Prior to the final interview, these journals will be shared with the researcher and, as is the case with the other written activities, all responses will remain absolutely confidential. Please indicate your preference with respect to this activity by checking the appropriate space below:

_______ Yes, I agree to keep a reflective journal in which I will record random thoughts about Family Management classroom experiences and activities. I understand that I may write as much or as little, as frequently or as infrequently as I wish, and that the researcher will have access to the journal prior to the final interview.

_______ No, I do not wish to keep a reflective journal. I understand that this decision will in no way jeopardize my participation in this research project.

Signature: ____________________________

Date: _______________________________