ARTICULATING CURRICULUM RE-VISIONING EXPERIENCES WITHIN AN (INTER)NATIONAL COLLEGE'S EXPERIENTIAL STUDIES PROGRAM

by

JOAN ELLEN SILVEY

B.A., Lewis and Clark College, 1971

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction

We accept this thesis as conforming

to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

1998

© Joan Ellen Silvey, 1998

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of _Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction_

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date _July 3, 1998_

ABSTRACT

How shall we understand curriculum re-visioning in the Experiential Studies program? This study seeks to explore and constitute new understandings of curriculum re-visioning in an (inter)national college setting where teachers work as a team, where change can occur in response to students and where the curriculum-as-live(d) *and* curriculum-as-plan are at play. Multifaceted questions and struggles emerge in the gaps between our experiences of planned curriculum *and* curriculum alive with student and teacher interactivity.

The study attempts to actively engage in understanding (as a journeying into potentials) through retrieving, re-writing, constituting, re-creating and giving voice to curricular experiences, uncertainties, and possibilities. The text of the study listens to and re-writes the multiple voices of teachers' experiences and conversations emerging from interviews with five Experiential Studies teachers and from my journalized experiences as an Experiential Studies teacher. Adding to the teachers' voices are those of students in the form of short anonymous samples of students' writings and those of scholars as found in the literature.

The aim and results of this inquiry are not situated in the production of patterns, answers or univocal meaning, but in the openings and spaces of possibilities and further questions. As the reader interacts with/in the text, re-searching into the myriad gaps and ambiguities becomes spaces of possibilities where new understandings and questions are

constituted.

Emerging from the multiple voices in these writings is a picture of Experiential Studies re-visioning as stammering, questioning, responsive, ongoing and interrelated conversations and activity. Grounded in *and* stirred by the interactive possibilities among teachers and students, uncertainty, questioning and dialogue generate ever-changing curricular understandings and re-visions. "At the heart of teaching is an agony, not an essence" (Jardine, 1992, p. 190). The agony of pedagogy is a living through with others, with change, with uncertainty and with/in difference. Spaces of metonymic possibilities are present here and openings are created to allow movement in/to and between curricular signification *and* multiplicities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am because we are
We are because I am
(An African worldview, cited on p. 70)

DEDICATION

To my parents:

Patricia and Jack Silvey

They were my first teachers and they instilled in me a love of learning.

Their willing and interested support and encouragement for educational endeavors are among the many life enriching gifts that they have given to me and many others – gifts that will continue giving for many generations.

STRAND ONE

Generating Questions

The Contextual Site of the Study – An International College

In contrast with the school year in Canadian schools, the international college in this

study begins its school year in the spring, in common/unity with the Japanese

educational time frame that begins in April and ends in March.

> *Between two cultures, students and teachers live in an*
> *(inter)cultural landscape of beginning and ending times - the*
> *season of beginning gives life to Japanese imaginings of cherry*
> *blossoms touching the ground and school children returning to*
> *classrooms **and** to Canadian memories of snow lit mornings*
> *fading into daffodils and students daydreaming about the end of*
> *school days...we begin together in-between two cultural views of*
> *seasonal time.* (my journal entry, 1995)

In this study, I am both re-searcher and teacher in an (inter)national college situated in

Canada. The students are Japanese international students, the majority of whom return

to Japan to find jobs after two or four years of study with the college. I have been

situated within the (inter)cultural and (inter)language life of the college for eight years.

Each day that I walk into the school, I take a step into a third culture - a space that is

both Japanese *and* Canadian, a space between Japanese *and* English/Canadian

languages, cultures, and thinking. Together with the students, other teachers and staff

members, I am, we are, in the *midst* of cultures.

One student wrote in his Experiential Studies course journal of his experience of being

in the midst:

> I am in Canada as a Japanese now, so I can experience two
> cultures. In addition, I am learning at a college that is recognized
> by B.C. and run by Japan. Therefore, I am a bridge among three
> different cultures.

Another student wrote in his journal,

> We are living in three cultures. I am sometimes
> confused with this strange environment.

The College en/visions itself as part of a global and internationalized community and it

strives to offer language and cultural opportunities that allow students to discover

globalist perspectives, values and learning. Amidst all of the (inter)cultural textuality of

the college is a guiding philosophy:

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
...to educate students to develop a global perspective and become
culturally informed citizens of their home country.
...an atmosphere where students do not feel isolated as foreign
students in a foreign country but they learn to become independent
within the community in which they are living and comfortable
interacting in any culture.
...committed to providing a comprehensive learning environment
designed to promote:
Independence of spirit
Understanding of other peoples and cultures
Co-existence, developing from a sense of world community
(College Catalogue 1996-97, p. iv).

The (Inter)national College's two year certificate and four year diploma programs are

situated amongst three locations – Tokyo, Japan; a small town in British Columbia; and

a large urban centre in British Columbia. This study is specifically situated in the small

B.C. town where the first year of studies takes place in an (inter)cultural and

(inter)linguistic landscape among approximately 200 Japanese first year students, three Japanese liaison staff, 15-18 Canadian teachers, and a staff of about 25 Canadian administrative and support people. The first year campus interacts with the small town community in which it is located, the Tokyo office which initially recruits and later assists students with job placement upon graduation, and the College's urban campus where students complete their second, third and fourth years of studies.

In the initial stages of planning and visioning of the college, there was much literal and figurative movement back and forth among each of the three locations. Ten years later, dialogue and re-vision continue to occur within and among the three sites of the college, partially due to the changing educational, cultural and economic priorities in Japan and Canada, the growth of the college, the challenges of (inter)cultural communication and the commitment by staff and faculty to provide quality programs. Change and learning from change are constants in this young college.

The First Year Curriculum – Open to Change

Experiential Studies, the program/course in question in this study, is situated among about ten other language and content courses in the first year of studies. Composition, reading, listening, speaking, pronunciation and grammar skills are taught in discrete courses and are also interwoven into content courses that focus on global and Canadian issues.

College curriculum is open to change. Teachers and administrators have created a framework curriculum/program that is regularly open to re-vision. Teachers working in teams headed by a Curriculum Head have the opportunity and response/ability to write and re-write curriculum in every course area. Pervasive or fundamental changes must be approved by all three administrative locales, but other creative and framework changes within the curriculum are set in motion by the teaching teams. Possibilities for changes within the curriculum are generative - coming from students, teachers, classroom (inter)action, and administration. Curriculum re-visioning is nurtured by teachers who bring forward their research, concerns, needs, experiences and discoveries to the curriculum/teaching teams. For example, a curriculum/program change that was initiated and enlivened by the first year teaching teams in September 1996 was a cross-curriculum proposal that: a) changed the Listening/Speaking from three hours a week to six hours, b) gave pronunciation skills a more specified scope and sequence; c) changed the Grammar/Composition course from six hours a week to three; d) dropped grammar as a discrete skill-based course, and e) incorporated grammar systematically into many courses. These curricular program changes grew out of individual teachers' and teaching teams' responses to students' needs, student evaluation and the living curriculum in the classroom. In this way, it could be said that the college lives in "the tension that propels the generativity" of possibilities (Jardine, in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 126).

The Experiential Studies (E.S.) Program: An Overview of First Year

This study is situated in the Experiential Studies (E.S.) program in the first year. The

purposes and community focus of the E.S. program remain constant throughout the first,

second, third and fourth years of study, but the content varies each year. The following

description from the College Catalogue (1996-97) outlines the first year E.S. program:

> Experiential Studies provides classroom and community experiences
> which develop language, thinking skills, and cultural understanding. The
> community provides a setting for students to practise their language skills
> in a natural context. Students can choose from a variety of community
> placements and community education courses. (p. 4)

The Experiential Studies course and program focuses on students' personal and cultural

experiences, cultural understandings and misunderstandings, language and strategies for

intercultural navigation, observation and reflection skills. Classes meet for two hours

each week to focus on different elements of Canadian culture throughout the year. In

Term One, survival language and topics such as banking and shopping are practised,

Canadian homes and family life are contrasted with Japanese home life, and the

language of Canadian geography and travel are studied. In Term Two, students and

teachers ask, "What is Culture?" This question looks at culture models, components of

culture such as education, and cultural stereotypes. In Term Three, cultural values are

explored and there is an emphasis on communicating critical cultural learning

experiences that have been explored during the year.

The classroom is only one of several sites where student – teacher (inter)action occurs in

Experiential Studies. In the first year, the E.S. teacher is also the Faculty Advisor for

the class of approximately 16 students. The advisor meets for individual interviews with

each student for 15 minutes every other week. Students write weekly journals that often share their important and intimate journeys and questionings of their first year in rural, Canadian, residential, educational and cultural surroundings.

The Experiential Studies Program stretches from the classroom into the community and back to the classroom. Classroom study of language and cultural issues partially aims to support the field trips and E.S. community placements. Community placements provide cultural and language immersion experiences for students. Students participate in community placements such as home visits, Canadian cooking classes or community volunteer agencies for one to two hours a week. Students receive an evaluation for their community participation that equals 30% of their final grade for Experiential Studies. Students communicate their observations, questions and reflections about their community experiences in their reflective journals, in class and in interviews with faculty advisors.

Emerging Questions

As other curriculum teams do throughout the college, the first year Experiential Studies teaching team of about 14 teachers engages in the response/ability to re-write and revise the course curriculum on an on-going basis. The E.S. teaching/curriculum team, individually and as a group, invests a great deal of time and energy writing and re-writing course goals, strategies and materials, particularly for terms two and three. "Teaching" culture and the (inter)relationship of language and culture have sparked many puzzling questions and possibilities. For example, students are asked to reflect on

their experiences in Canada and to create projects and presentations on cultural

components such as education or family life. As well, teachers ask students to compare

Japanese and Canadian culture. Some of the questions that I have heard from teachers

(and have expressed myself) in meetings and in the faculty room are:

> How can stereotyping be avoided when students have limited experience
> and research opportunities?

Are we over emphasizing differences that can lead to cultural stereotyping and
misunderstanding?

> Are we generating curriculum that "thingifies" culture as a
> noun by trying to define and pinpoint it?

Are we encouraging students to look at the surface (e.g. buses are late in Canada,
but they are never late in Japan) of cultural movement?

> Although we delve into personal and cultural values and ideology,
> students tend to go to the surface of their experience in their projects and
> presentations. How can we best encourage them to look deeper?

> > Where are language and cultural differences
> > hindering or assisting students and teachers to
> > fully explore possibilities?

What questions should we be asking?

> How do we provoke students into asking their own questions?

Are students' and teachers' quest(ion)ing and struggle leading to constructive
curricular change and re-vision?

The following anecdote taken from my journalized notes (1996) reveals some of the

quest(ion)ing that grows in the midst of students and teachers in Experiential Studies.

in the classroom...

In the first term of Experiential Studies, when the students have just arrived in Canada, we look at customs in the home. As a type of referential learning, although we don't call it that, we call upon the students to compare Japanese customs to Canadian customs in the home. Inevitably, most students say that Japanese always take off their shoes in their homes, but Canadians do not. I always mention that in my house, people always take off their shoes and that many Canadians take off their shoes because of wet conditions outside. However, the stereotype/preconception does not seem to change for most students.

in experience...

During the term, small groups of students go to a Canadian home for tea and cookies. Students come back to the class to compare and share their different experiences. Some students tell how they had to take off their shoes, and some tell how they did not.

As teacher, I have assumed that the experiences of the group "clarify" or give concrete knowledge about this particular Canadian custom/noncustom.

in reflection...

I was surprised, therefore, to find a journal entry in second term from my most articulate student regarding the Canadian shoe custom. She had just completed eight weeks of weekly visits to a Canadian family for her E.S. community placement. She was surprised by the fact that she had to take off her shoes in a Canadian home. Why, she asked, do some Canadians take off their shoes and some do not? Why don't all Canadians agree to do the same thing? Why is there this inconsistency in the culture?

in re-reading...

In her journalized questioning, I see struggling. Possibly she is struggling with her pre-conceptions of Canadian customs and with her idea that this particular custom differentiates Japan from Canada. It also seems that she is reflecting on and struggling with the differences between Japan and Canada in terms of standardization of customs. Why, she seems to ask, can't Canadian customs be more consistent and definite like Japanese customs, so that she, a Japanese woman, could know the customs with certitude.

As teacher, I struggle as I read her thoughts. Whether or not to take off one's shoes in the house seems like such a small detail in the discovery and understanding of cultural practice. I re-member all the information,

discussion and experiential learning that we "covered" in the previous six months. I am awakened by her re-visiting and questioning of something she experienced and discussed the first few weeks she was in Canada.

Quest(ioning)...
Questions arise for me.

> *When and how does experiential learning change or not change one's perceptions?*

Does each experience re-new questions and evoke new understandings?

> *What role does language play in experiencing the first few weeks as a student is immersed in English?*

How does language (information and discussion) and experience (a visit to a home) interact with intercultural understanding?

> *How does calling upon differences between cultures create and hinder intercultural understanding?*

> *Where is there room in the curriculum for constituting and re-constituting, re-understanding, re-experiencing and re-visiting knowledge?*

How can I bring more possibilities of intercultural understanding to this small custom when I bring it into the classroom again?

As a teacher writing/re-writing curriculum, I struggle with how much new cultural information, discussion and exploration needs to be accomplished in a one year course and where to make room for re-visiting as a generative act something as small as taking off one's shoes in the house.

As part of the E.S. curriculum/teaching team, I am teaching, faculty advising and, in rotation with others, leading the curriculum team. My own and others' curricular storying and questioning moves and opens this study into inquiry, writing and re-writing

of the changes and re-visioning of the Experiential Studies curriculum. Taubman (in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) invites us to "infect others with our perplexity" (p. 232). Perplexity abounds in the curricular re-visioning of Experiential Studies and this study hopes to infect self/others with questionings and possibilities.

The Study's Question

This study seeks to understand and re-search curriculum writing and re-writing in the (inter)cultural and (inter)lingual context of the Experiential Studies program.
The study is in avoidance of fixed meanings (Trinh, 1989). It is not in search of meaning or answers, but is, rather, in search of opening and constituting new awareness and understandings. Understanding, as a verb, is an ongoing process, an experiencing, a partial and potential journeying (Jardine, 1992).

As soon as the E.S. curriculum plan is constituted, it begins to be re-shaped and re-constituted by the E.S. teaching/curriculum team in the context of the lived experiences of the students, teachers, and program. Together with students and other teachers, we move with multifaceted questions and struggles into the many gaps between our experiences of planned curriculum *and* curriculum alive with student and teacher interactivity. These questionings and struggles lead to the central question of this study: How shall we understand curriculum re-visioning in the Experiential Studies program?

Other questions further to the central question of the study are: How, what, where and to whom do E.S. teachers listen in curriculum re-visioning? Where, what, who informs

curricular practices and becomings? How shall we understand the interlingual and

intercultural spaces within which students and teachers articulate curriculum

experiences in the Experiential Studies Program? Are the ever-changing Japanese and

Canadian cultures, the third culture of an (inter)national college, the linguistic spaces

between English and Japanese, and other to-be-discovered interspaces places where new

understandings might be constituted in this study?

How shall we understand curriculum re-visioning in the Experiential Studies program?

This study attempts to actively engage in understanding (as a journeying into potentials)

by retrieving, re-writing, constituting, re-creating and giving voice to curricular

experiences, uncertainties, and possibilities.

The Language and Landscaping of the Text

This study strives to be open-textured both in the language and landscaping of text.

Open spaces between parts of words, groupings of words and movement of text on and

across the page are offered as an invitation to the reader and the writer to enter into the

writing in order to create new possibilities.

> Interpretive-Interpretable writing is open-textured, leaving room for the
> new eruption of meaning, leaving room for the new...(Jardine, 1992, p. 77)

> The... text asks that the reader 'write' while reading: to more
> deliberately bring to the reading his or her own experiences
> as a way of filling what Iser (1978) calls the 'gaps' in the
> text...there is more space for the reader. (Sumara & Luce-
> Kapler, 1993, p. 390)

The text is landscaped in hope of loosening the firmness of writing and thinking, of

creating ears with which to listen to the readers, and of shaking loose "creative and

plural readings of a text" (Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 8).

Beneficiaries of the Study

This inquiry benefits the re-searcher, teachers who shared their conversations and "re-

wrote" their stories, and those who actively enter into the reading of the study. Sumara

and Luce-Kapler (1993) suggest that the reader and the writer create the interbeingness

of text. The interbeingness of the text includes all the voices that write and re-write in

the text, the re-writing of those voices on these pages and the readers as they "re-write"

the text in the act of reading. Writing is not simply the delivery of some *thing* to the

reader. It is the engagement of the writer and the reader with the writings that creates

possibilities for generating new understandings.

> As a more accurate representation of life itself, the writerly text is
> more open, more ambiguous, and more unpredictable...If the reader
> commits her or himself to this kind of text and engages in 'writing'
> while reading, the initial feelings of discomfort often lead to a
> deeper understanding of one's self and living situation. (Sumara &
> Luce-Kapler, 1993, p. 390)

Through this study, I hope to encourage further questioning and to generate new ways of

moving, listening, understanding and entering into curriculum re-writing and re-

visioning. In turn, these re-newed possibilities may benefit students and teachers living

together in learning situations.

STRAND TWO

Re-search Approaches

Theoretical Texturing of the Questions

> ..theory no longer is theoretical when it
> loses sight of its own conditional nature,
> takes no risk in speculation, and circulates
> as a form of administrative inquisition.
> (Trinh, 1989, p. 42)

Although I am both teacher and administrator at the college, I strive to approach this

study without pre-determined answers – theoretical or other-wise. I enter into this

questioning recognizing that inquiry into living situations leads to both speculative and

conditional constructions.

Therefore, the questions of this study are informed with multiple texts that serve to

provoke more questions, possibilities and awareness into the midst of the inquiry

landscape. Six threads of theoretical texturing are explored through the following

questions: where is knowledge found or constituted; how is the binary of theory and

experience situated; where is meaning constructed; what curriculum imaginaries are at

work in this study; how does the understanding of other/self permeate our

metanarratives; and how is the concept of "re" understood in this study?

Where is Knowledge (know / ledge)?
(...at the margins? on the ledge? in places of risk?)

Trinh Minh-ha (1989) writes of the movement away from the modernist view of

knowledge as something that is universal and built on oppositional binaries. She

suggests that what is necessary now is "the radical calling into question, in every

undertaking, of everything that one tends to take for granted..." (p. 40). With this in

mind, I approached the familiar Experiential Studies course and a familiar curriculum

process with a "calling into question...of what one tends to take for granted".

Questioning myself, other teachers, the planned and living curriculum and the theories

that surround pedagogy lead me into unknown changing territory. Calling into question

becomes a way of avoiding the privileging of what has been determined and of making

room for newly constituted learning.

> The questions that arise continue to provoke answers,
> but none will dominate as long as the ground clearing
> activity is at work. (Trinh, 1989, p. 40)

The ground clearing at work in this study comes forth in the re-cognizing of a double

movement between what is "known" and what is being constituted.

Ground clearing is a clearing away of givens, the opening up of gaps, and the allowing

of ambiguity and ambi-valences.

> The 'true' is always marked and informed by the ambivalence of
> the process of emergence itself, the productivity of meanings that
> construct counter-knowledges in medias res, in the very act of
> agonism, within the terms of a negotiation (rather than a
> negation) of oppositional and antagonistic elements.
> (Bhabha, 1994, p. 22)

Bhabha highlights the ambivalence of "...the process of emergence"; as the 'true'

emerges, so do the opposites. Negotiation between the production of meaning and the

production, at the same time, of "antagonistic elements" requires affirming the

possibilities of all. Possibilities summon questions and landscapes into which the inquirer can allow, rather than negate, both *and* all, where the inquirer can negotiate between emerging knowledges alive with ambiguities and cracks. Trinh Minh-ha (1989) invites us to welcome knowledge where

> ...in-between grounds always exist, and cracks
> and interstices are like gaps of fresh air...   (p. 41)

Without cracks, gaps, ambi-valences, movement and in-between spaces, knowledge is in danger of becoming objectified, flat, defined and dogmatic. Questioning, as a quest into in-between places and risky margins, brings us into uncertain territories where new awarenesses can be constituted. Taubman's (in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) suggestion that we "infect others with our perplexity" (p. 232) encourages questioning to give rise to more questioning that can, in a communicable playful way, generate knowledge-as-activity as much as knowledge-as-some*thing* that can be known.

Theory and Experience

> ...theory is suspicious, as long as it remains an
> occupied territory.   (Trinh, 1989, p. 42)

Trinh's occupied territory refers to a patriarchal and dominant societal view, but "occupied theory" can be expanded to those who hold that their position is correct, that knowledge is power, that knowledge is strictly universal, non-personal, unchangeable and "either/or". When personal experiences inform the realms of theory, universality and rigidity begin to break down.

> Practical knowledge born of lived experience" is "contextual,
> affective, situated, flexible and fluid, esthetic, intersubjective and
> grounded in the body.   (Clandinin in Britzman, 1991, p. 50)

Universal knowledge based on oppositional binaries leads to the commonly viewed binary of theory and experience. Britzman (1991) asks how lived experience shapes our thinking about pedagogy and the nature of knowing and learning. What is the relationship of experience to knowledge and academic life? She suggests that there must be a dialogic relationship among knowledge, lived experience and theory. What does that dialogic relationship look like? Where is it situated and how is it nurtured? These are important questions for others and for me in the context of developing and teaching the Experiential Studies course.

Kondo (1990) suggests that the binary of theory/experience must be seen as permeable, allowing the personal and experiential to take their place in academic discourse. Discourse can begin with experience. The teachers interviewed in this study often begin with their immediate or re-membered experiences. Experiential discourse is in continual conversation with theory according to Kondo (1990) because what we value as experience is a discursive production that assumes some theoretical underpinnings. When the binary of theory and experience is loosened and becomes "permeable", then it is possible to move into new textual territory

> ...where the borderline between theoretical and non-theoretical writings
> is blurred and questioned, so that theory and poetry necessarily mesh,
> both determined by an awareness of the sign and the destabilization of
> the meaning and writing subject.   (Trinh, 1989, p. 42)

This study strives to bring the poetry of live(d) experience into re-writing and producing new understandings.

Where is Meaning?

The destabilization of meaning – the slippery signifier - makes room for multiple

meanings, storying and poetry. Is the search for meaning, therefore, a necessary

component of inquiry? Britzman (1991) posits that theorizing either leads to a search

into how things do or don't work in order to find explanation or solutions *or* it leads to a

search for meaning that is constructed through interpretative movement among the

narratives, the storying and the surrounding perspectives. Britzman works with

constructive interpretative re-searching in an attempt to find situated and contextual

meanings.

On the other hand, Britzman suggests that "while personal meaning is the sense each

individual makes, it can never be reducible to one essential source" (p. 14). It is this

very inability to reduce re-searching down to one essential source that brings Britzman's

assertion of theorizing as a search for meaning into question. Britzman's search for

meaning shifts when she asserts that "the meanings one makes from practice are in a

state of continual and contradictory reinterpretation as other contexts and other voices

are taken into account or are ignored" (p. 15). Can the search for meanings in relative

fixity, a fixity that can only be established temporarily, be considered a search for the

essential?

Like Britzman, this study recognizes that continual and constant re-interpretation occurs

within changing contexts, but, unlike Britzman's re-search, this study is not an attempt

to unearth or search out essence or meaning. This study only hopes to constitute new understandings, further questionings, and new awareness – poetic and other-wise.

Curriculum Imaginaries

As the word "curriculum" is used and referred to liberally in the title, questions and text of this study, it is necessary to inquire into the rhizomian nature of curriculum imaginaries. Curriculum theorists have imagined the word *curriculum* as part of many different worldviews. The field of curriculum inquiry is expanding to the discomfort of some educators such as W.A. Reid (1992) who contends that such diversity may lead us into confusion and loss of credibility. Modern and post-modern educators have written volumes of differentiated texts examining, exploring and naming the changing curricular conceptualizations. Inquiries into every aspect of curriculum ask questions such as: what and how do we practice and do *it;* how do we think about and imagine *it;* what and who is at the centre of *it;* what and who is privileged, hidden or unhidden; is *it* a noun or a verb? Curriculum scholars (Aoki, 1988; Doll, 1993; Eisner, 1979; Grumet, 1992; Pinar, 1975 – to name only a few) call for the exploration of new curriculum landscapes in which students and teachers are situated. In light of all that can be, has been and is being voiced about curriculum, this is only a brief look at some of the emergent curriculum imaginaries and worldviews that inform this study.

> If we want to come to know the assumptions we make about
> humanity and world, we need to learn to stop our ongoing
> world, and to reflect upon how we make sense of our world by
> uncovering and dis-covering the root metaphor(s) to which we
> unconsciously subscribe.   (Aoki, 1983, p. 333)

As Aoki reminds us, it is important for educators to be mindful of the curriculum language, imaginaries and metanarratives to which we subscribe. In the midst of curriculum controversy, and in contrast to Reid (1992), Aoki (1988) regards the tensionality among past, present and emergent curriculum orientations as a symbol of hope for possibilities of renewal and generative change. With hope comes the challenge for educators of how to bring the generative and creative possibilities resulting from different and ambiguous curriculum discourses into the classroom (Doll, 1993).

In this study, I call upon a curricular landscape in which three imaginaries inspire the understandings of curriculum: curriculum-as-plan, curriculum-as-live(d) and a third space that moves between the two orientations (Aoki, 1993). These three imaginaries provide sites for grouping and informing the growing multiplicities of curriculum thinking and movement.

Curriculum-as-Plan

The curriculum-as-plan invites words such as objectives, curriculum guides, goals, strategies, units of study, ends-means evaluation, training and skills (Aoki, 1991) and the metaphor of curriculum as production (Kliebard in Pinar, 1975). Curriculum theorists such as Tyler (1949) present curriculum planning in a logical sequential manner that assumes predictable and measurable outcomes. The early production, ends-means approach to curriculum voiced by Tyler and other educators hinges on setting and

implementing objectives to produce a pre-determined end product. "The problem for the educator or educational technologist is to bring the system under control so that the goals it seeks to attain can be achieved" (Eisner & Vallance in Pinar, 1988, p. 409).

Schwab (1962) also envisions a curriculum-as-plan with a structure of systematic learning patterns that lead to verifiable truths. Schwab's structure metaphor leads into his view of curriculum as practical and concerned with the maintenance and improvement of patterns of action which should lead to coherent relevance (Schwab, 1969). Schwab's linear perspective assumes that life can be explained with relative certainty and predictability, thereby supporting the practicality of planning, controlling and evaluating learning and knowledge.

A predominant limitation of the curriculum-as-plan has often been that specialists develop the curriculum and then hand it down to teachers for implementation. Teachers must be trained in the strategies, methodologies and underlying premises of a curriculum potentially divorced from their experiences and those of their students. The curriculum-as-plan orientation is a linear, logical and productive one that fails to include the key players – the students and the teachers. Situated outside the classroom and outside lived experiences, the curriculum-as-plan sets the stage for obtaining and evaluating informational knowledge, facts and theory.

Curriculum-as-Live(d)

Whereas the curriculum-as-plan is a sheltered place for fixed perspective, the

curriculum-as-live(d) is an open humanistic space where students and teachers can

move around. The live(d) curriculum acknowledges the multiplicity of reasons,

perceptions, values, and experiences that students and teachers bring with them and

gives legitimacy to the wisdom of each participant (Aoki, 1993 Spring). Listening and

being attuned to the students and self are teachers' challenges in a curriculum-as-live(d)

imaginary (Aoki, 1991).

In the curriculum-as-plan, objective knowledge can be recovered and disclosed, but in

the curriculum-as-live(d), knowledge is not separated from personal experiences,

thereby allowing the subjective to blend with the objective (Grumet,1992). Robert K.

Brown, representing phenomenology that lives with/in the curriculum-as-live(d), points

out the pitfalls of keeping the subject and object separate:

> Objectification is the act of making the world fit into distinct dichotomous
> realms of subjects and objects. This dualism stresses the independent existence
> of things in the world and obscures the interactive, holistic existence of reality.
> (in Pinar & Reynolds,1992, p. 49)

The subject and subjectivity are not left out of a living curriculum landscape that affirms

the interdependence and relatedness of all that dwell there.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) suggest that curriculum is situationally experienced by

people interacting with other people, processes and surroundings – *all* that occurs in the

classroom. They view curriculum as experiences growing out of past, immediate, and

future situations. This brings to mind Kliebard's (in Pinar, 1975) imaginary of curriculum as travel or curriculum as journey. If it is so, it is a journey into personal, practical and affective knowledge that is situated in the mind and the body. In the curriculum-as-live(d) imaginary, curriculum knowledge comes from the classroom and the players involved (Synder, Bolin & Zumwalt, 1992). Grumet (1991) goes further to say that the heart of the curriculum is the determination of what matters, and what matters comes from students and teachers in the living classroom. Curriculum "writers", attuned to the voices and experiences of those who dwell in the curriculum-as-live(d), allow the curriculum to invite students and teachers to enter into animated (inter)action.

A Third Imaginary: Moving Between Both

Living in the tension between the plan and the living experiences and needs of students and teachers leads to the search for a third imaginary. The third imaginary is not "a linear movement *from* curriculum-as-plan *to* curriculum-as-live(d) experiences" (Aoki, 1986, p. 9), but rather a doubling that weaves in and out of both while simultaneously generating something new. Some of the tension that results from moving between both occurs when teachers know that "...'implementing' the curriculum-as-plan in this year's lived situation calls for a fresh interpretative work constituted in the presence of very alive, new students" (Aoki, 1986, p. 8). Struggling, stammering, and taking risks generate aliveness that is teaching. Aoki suggests that moving *"between"* calls for teachers to dwell adeptly with/in tensionality, rather than trying to overcome the risks and struggles. Teaching becomes a

generative place full of ambiguities, paradox and ambivalence – not a comfortable place, but one of lively multiplicities and possibilities.

The (inter)textual space between curriculum-as-plan *and* curriculum-as-live(d) is a place of *ands*, a place of dialogical spaces. Aoki (1991) suggests that dwelling in such a place is one of "dialectic between complementaries with a logic of its own" (p. 9). This dialectical logic does not provide curricular answers or solutions. Instead, it opens up spaces and questions with/in which educators, together with their students, are striving, struggling and enlivening new possibilities of both.

Three Imaginaries...

These three curriculum imaginaries open ways of understanding and moving into curricular landscapes. Daignault (in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) puts curriculum into motion by adding to the infinite metaphorical possibilities of curriculum as journey, passage, transition and travel. Curriculum worldviews are in motion and in re-writing all the time. Movement between them, without negating what has come before, creates opportunities to weave many strands into curricular texturing. Curriculum definitions are endless and changing despite the objection of some traditionalists who maintain that "curriculum is a set of activities involving teachers, learners and materials" (Reid & Walker, 1975, p. 247). Amidst all the words, the brushes and colors with which to paint the curriculum landscape, a re-sounding question, one that Daignault also asks, emerges: what language(s) should curriculum be speaking now?

Other / Self

> How can the human world live its difference;
> how can a human being live Other-wise?
> (Bhabha, 1994, p. 64)

The way that we understand 'other' is crucial to teaching and curriculum re-visioning.

We are, as Aoki (1994) affirms, "involved with others in the tensionality of difference."

Working with others in difference is difficult, a site of struggle and tension. Teaching

teams such as the Experiential Studies team struggle to create meaning and to find

consensus with others (in difference) in and out of the classroom.

> A challenge to educators in global education is the question of how
> otherness of others is understood. In the Western Eurocentric imaginary,
> the other is typically enframed within the discourse of 'self and other,'
> understood as a binary, each of self and other represented as substance
> and entity unto itself. Further, within this binary, primacy is typically
> given to the first named, and the other, positioned as a decentred being,
> becomes a secondary, distanced other.
> (Aoki, 1995b, p. 196)

Sometimes distanced and understood as a binary or sometimes seen not as separate but

different, the Other with a capital "O" in this study could be language and culture. The

"others" could be students and teachers originally from different parts of the world

speaking different languages and living different cultures. The "others" could also be

the other teachers in the curriculum/teaching team. Experiential Studies teachers and

students strive to avoid the primacy of one over an other and to actively make space for

difference and others (Other).

Bhabha (1994) poses that in the midst of difference is ambivalence and doubling. Dwelling with/in doubling and ambivalence that does not demand monological existence opens up a space for difference. Dwelling in the ambivalence of difference is both a movement that does not transcend difference *and* a movement that gives rise to being changed by 'other' – intersubjectivity.

As the self comes into the space of others in pedagogy or into the Other, "where the shadow of the Other falls upon the Self" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 60), and vice versa, the subject/self changes, shifts, becomes ambivalent, ambiguous. "What constitutes us as a self, is the recognition of others...intersubjectivity" (Usher & Edwards, 1994, p. 61). This study endeavors to journey into curricular openings where intersubjectivity and difference are alive and where negotiation, not negation, of /in difference is possible. To constitute change and possibilities, we must move between the spaces of other and self. Self can only construct imaginaries based on one's subjectivities – a partial construction. As teachers and students stretch towards understanding Other and others, they no longer stand firmly planted in only one language, culture or imaginary. How do students and teachers come to understandings between self and other in ambivalence, in difference? Where do the "inter" (between) spaces emerge? In what ways does pedagogy offer a place for experiencing other/Other and for allowing identification within multiplicity, multivocity, ambiguity, new ways of knowing, and constituted learning together?

"Re"and Re-writing

In this study, 're' is a conceptualization that moves between traditional understandings

of 're' and constitutive imaginings of 're'. Lyotard (1991) describes the traditional

concept of 're' as a means to return to a starting point, to a beginning that is exempt

from preconceptions and prejudices. Lyotard (1991) moves away from the traditional

way of thinking towards re-writing as a 'working through' that is not guided by a

concept of an end, but that has finality. Working through is a passage into

> ...listening to a sentiment. A fragment of a sentence, a scrap of
> information, a word, comes along. They are immediately linked
> with another 'unit'...By proceeding in this way, one slowly
> approaches a scene, the scene of something. One describes it.
> One does not know what it is. One is sure only that it refers to
> some past, both furthest and nearest, both one's own past and
> others' past...It is what presents the elements of a picture...Re-
> writing means registering these elements. (Lyotard, 1991, p. 31)

Out of Lyotard's registered elements, re-writing, comes construction. The constructed

metamorphosizes as a constitutive newness. Re-writing in this study is the process of

re-turning without prejudice to re-view what is emerging, interacting in the present with

all that can be seen and felt *and* moving through and registering what is newly

constructed without an end in site (sight). Lyotard suggests that re-writing has finality,

but a re-writing of finality suggests otherwise. As researcher, I am re-writing, but the

reader is also re-writing. Readers move into the writings, register their own elements

and create new constructions. The re-writing continues every time a reader enters into

the text and moves beyond it.

Methodological Approaches

> ...any metaphor we use for guiding inquiry can be justified in part on its
> heuristic power to help us see things in ways we could not see before. The
> metaphor should allow us to gain a broader view, to generate concerns,
> questions ...or to generate alternative perspectives and fresh descriptions.
> (Carson in Reeder & Wilson, 1978, p. 61)

This study does not rely on any one approach to inquiry, but moves intertextually,

between approaches, weaving threads from many. Echoing the 'Kristevan' notion that

each text is interdependent with the many other texts that preceded it gives rise to a

freedom from univocity and essentialism.

> Interpretation proceeds out of the belly and the breath and, because of
> this, it lives in the midst of multiple interdependencies which it cannot
> fully name. There is no single naming, [uni voce], that would name once
> and for all, not even its own naming. (Jardine, 1992, p. 82)

Although the question of this study looks at the articulation of experiences, this study is

not primarily guided by phenomenological approaches or a "calling for univocal

discourse to give it a voice" as Jardine (1992) characterizes phenomenological studies.

Many voices inform the constructing and de-constructing, the writing and re-writing, of

a study leading out of articulated experiences. Kondo (1990) brings our attention to

some of the difficulties inherent in voicing experience as re-search and inquiry:

> The difficulties (are) of conveying the multidimensionality of
> experience in a linear, discursive medium, and the problems of just
> how we *do* go about imparting a sense of pattern in our experiences
> and in the materials we bring back from the field. (p. 42)

In this study, I re-write and construct themes as they emerge from the lived narratives of

experience, but this is not the only way in which the reader can enter into re-writing the

study. If there are enough gaps, other interpretations, constructions and creative

imaginings will occur.

Interpretive inquiry calls upon us to engage in the action of understanding through visiting and re-visiting multiple interpretations from which new questions and insights are constituted. Interpreting ways of understanding becomes a process of generativity. Understanding is not an end point, but rather the beginning of possibilities and becomings. The Experiential Studies program provides a locale where interpretive inquiry can re-search multiple understandings of (inter)cultural and (inter)linguistic spaces in which curriculum re-visioning occurs.

> Interpretive-Interpretable writing is open-textured, leaving room for
> the new eruption of meaning, leaving room for the new,
> leaving room in anticipation of agonizing, regenerative...
> (Jardine, 1992, p. 77)

Questioning in this study and in curriculum revisioning is done "in anticipation of agonizing" and regeneration. Because of the multiple layers that are generated in an intercultural and interlingual landscape, a great deal of agonizing, struggle and discovery occur. For example, teachers and students tend to want to "pin down" and define a cultural discovery as understanding. Teachers as curriculum writers want to be able to base lessons and strategies for learning on their defined understanding of the differences between Japanese and Canadian culture. However, as teachers and students explore and struggle to reach cultural understandings in the classroom, new layers of understandings, even contradictions, often emerge. Shifting occurs. "We are 'founded,' but not on solid ground but shifting, generative ground" (Jardine,1992, p.83).

The aim of this inquiry is not to produce patterns, answers or meanings, but to open into a space of possibilities. This inquiry is not in search of the meaning of experience, but of newly constituted understandings of how we, E.S. students and teachers, move between and within our multicultural curricular experiences. This inquiry is not a search for the essence, the essential, but is instead, a re-searching into the myriad, gaps, and ambiguities as generative spaces of possibilities.

Methodology

This study begins with the hope of constituting new understandings of curriculum re-visioning in the (inter)national college setting where teachers work as a team, where change can occur in response to students and where curriculum-as-live(d) *and* curriculum-as-plan seem to (inter)play. I attempt to open up and explore the question of this study and its emergent themes by re-turning to and re-writing reflections, points of experience, and critical incidents that come from interviews with five E.S. teachers and from my own journals as an E.S. teacher. Throughout the study, the text listens to and re-writes the multiple voices of teachers' experiences and conversations as they are transcribed from interviews and as I have observed and journalized them. Adding to the teachers' voices are those of students in the form of short anonymous samples of students' writings and those of scholars as articulated in the literature.

Representation is a concern in any inquiry. I began this study with a curriculum area and focus in mind and I approached E.S. teachers with direct open-ended questions. I recognize that by setting the parameters of the inquiry, by choosing the strands and themes that emerge from our conversations, by selecting particular stories or writings, and by interpreting context, I am participating in the slippery and contested concept of representation as Stuart Hall (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Hall, 1995) refers to it and that I am moving in between the multiplicities and assumptions that accompany re-presentation. What occurs, emerges and is generated with/in and out of conversation is constituted primarily with/in the intersubjectivity, the interbeingness, of the speakers, listeners, writers and readers.

> Once the subjects enter into inquiry, the distinction
> traditionally maintained between them and researchers
> collapses and both become knowers. This change in turn
> requires us to redefine knowers as people who understand
> and learn.   (Messer-Davidow, 1985, p. 16)

> When we are diverse knowers who insert
> ourselves and our perspectives into inquiry, then
> knowing becomes a collective (and generative –
> *my words)* endeavor. (p. 16)

Because of the generative and intersubjective nature of inquiry that creates collective knowing, I cannot make any claim to re-presentative fidelity to what emerges from the writings or teacher interviews in this study. Instead, I hope that what springs forth constitutes new mindfulness and opens up spaces and gaps for further questions, possibilities and creativity.

(Inter)views

The interviewing of five Experiential Studies teachers is devised to bring multiple

voices into this study. I didn't anticipate the keen interest and surprises that I was

pleased to feel during each and every interview. Marjorie McIntryre once spoke to a

UBC class and said that when she is doing research, she lives in the space that she is not

the expert. When asking questions, she expects to be surprised. I forgot to expect it, but

I was surprised at the excitement I felt as I listened attentively to my colleagues, as we

entered into a space together, as we/i followed the threads of their thinking, experiences

and discoveries.

> interview : *entrevoir*: to see one another, to meet "inter":
> between, among, in the midst, located between, carried on
> between, occurring between, shared by or derived from
> two or more, between the limits of, within, existing
> between... our views

In my journal (1997), I wrote the following poem in an attempt to poetically describe my

experiencing of inter-view (*entrevoir*) shared with the E.S. teachers:

> *I/i struggle and move in between*
>   *listening to their*
>   *words*
>   *like a technician arranging and sharpening*
>   *her instruments*
>   *(these can be used later!)*
>   *and*
>   *contiguously*
>   *listening to the rhythm*
>   *gaps*
>   *lifeforce*
>   *emanating*
> *from what is (un)said*
>   *musical notes i can h(ear) with-in*
>
> *e-motion i can see and feel   moving*
>   *between others and self*

Sketches of Six E.S. Teachers

As a way into the experiences and thinking of other Experiential Studies teachers, I sent

letters to past and present E.S. teachers (a total of 14 teachers) requesting their

participation in an interview/conversation. In return I received five consent letters. The

only criterion for participation was that the teachers had been or were currently teaching

in the E.S. program. I count myself as the sixth E.S. teacher to inform this study as I am

re-searching my journalized conversations and experiences with/in teaching and being

part of the curriculum team in Experiential Studies. The five interviewed teachers and

myself all have different backgrounds in Experiential Studies and this led, I believe, to

an interesting tapestry of conversation and emergent strands. Pseudonyms (Catherine,

Arthur, Elisa, Daphne, and Lynne) are used for the five teachers interviewed.

The first teacher was part of the original development of the Experiential Studies

program and actively taught in the E.S. program up until just before the time of the

interview. At the time of our conversation - before and during - he had had time to

reflect on and re-view his experiences both in the college and in the E.S. program.

The second teacher was also part of the original development of E.S. and is currently

teaching in the E.S. program. She has experienced a lot of changes in the program, in

her leadership role in the program and with the curriculum team. As a current E.S.

teacher and member of the curriculum team, she continually has ideas for more changes.

The third teacher taught in the E.S. program for many years before she pursued other

educational areas. At the time of our conversation, she had re-entered the Experiential

Studies world with her new perspectives and understandings of Japanese students.

The fourth teacher also taught in the E.S. program for many years before she moved into

a third year program in which she was able to be a teaching team of "one" giving her the

space to make larger curriculum re-vision at a more advanced level than first year.

The fifth teacher has been with the college from the beginning and has taught in the E.S.

program for many years. She is currently teaching E.S. and is an active member of the

curriculum team. She wants to continue teaching E.S. in the future.

The sixth teacher, myself, was originally hired to assist with the development of the E.S.

course/program and to teach in the program seven years ago. Many changes have

occurred since that time. Although I have served in a leadership role in E.S., at the time

of the interviews, I was no longer a curriculum head, but continued to teach in the

program and participate on the curriculum team.

Narrative/Anecdote

> One way to keep moving is to understand that the stories we tell,
> however provisional, always exclude other stories, which may also be
> true.   (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 494)

Although narratives never tell all the stories, the writing and re-writing of anecdotes and

narratives help us to move into the interspace between lived experience and theorized

experience. In this study, teachers' experiences, this researcher's journalized experiences and students' writings are explored as a way to open a conversation with what emerges through searching, researching, writing and rewriting. Narratives, anecdotes and retrievals of live(d) experiences of E.S. teaching and curriculum re-visioning are a re-writing. In this sense, the writing of experience is both a re-creating and a creating of new experiences and awarenesses as the writer and reader interact with the text. Searching and re-searching themes uncover metanarratives and "imaginaries" (Aoki 1995a) and bring them into the interpretive discourse.

Narrative can mask contradiction and difference and leave stories untold. However, with an understanding of their provisional nature, these stories hope to act doubly to produce and re-create text and discourse where new understandings, experiences, and knowledge become imaginable.

> To understand curriculum as deconstructed (or deconstructing) text is
> to tell stories that never end, stories in which the listener, the
> "narratee," may become a character or indeed the narrator, in which
> all structure is provisional, momentary, a collection of twinkling stars
> in a firmament of flux.   (Pinar & Reynolds (Eds.), 1992, p. 7)

STRAND THREE

Curriculum Re-visioning as Understanding Experience

Teachers in the *Experiential* Studies program engage in recurrent conversations

questioning the changing and elusive concepts of *experience* and *experiential*. In what

ways is the course truly *experiential*? What constitutes experience? How are

experiences valued and evaluated? How do cultural differences inform students' and

teachers' notions of experience? Where and how are experiences provided and created?

What are the conditions that make experience meaningful and educational? These

questions are part of the ongoing questioning and struggling that teachers *experience* in

the teaching and re-visioning of the E.S. course. Elisa and Catherine express this

struggling in the following ways:

> We articulate more about our experiences with E.S. than we do
> about the student experiences with E.S. I sometimes think if we
> could just take the energy that we put into understanding E.S. and
> transfer it, we'd have students just blowing us away. (Elisa)

> Why are we always debriefing our classes in E.S.?
> This year I have to talk about it or else I feel like
> I'm drowning... (Catherine)

> We share it because everyone is doing it and so almost
> everybody you bounce off is having an E.S. experience. (Elisa)

Teachers and students are experiencing, looking back, questioning, communicating and

sharing their experiences together and individually.

> Experience is divided and deferred –
> already behind us as something to be recovered,
> yet still before us as something to be "produced."
> (Culler, 1982, p. 82)

Culler reminds us that experience allows for double movement. Experiential Studies

teachers and students move from experiencing to recovering what has been experienced

and to producing or constituting new understandings and possibilities.

In and Out of the Classroom

Experiences in and out of the classroom are places of possibilities and learning in

Experiential Studies. The students' E.S. Course Description for the second term of the

first year states,

> The purpose of this class is to help you *understand* Canadian culture and
> to help you *reflect* on your *experiences* in Canada. As you *learn* more
> about Canadian culture, you may also *learn* more about Japanese culture.
> Speaking, writing and *communicating* about your *experiences* are
> important parts of Experiential Studies (*my emphasis*).

Students' experiences are thought to come from: "natural" experiences they encounter

by being in a Canadian community and by living in a residence with other Japanese

students; more structured experiences in the form of a community placement; and

learning experiences with/in the classroom. Students receive 30% of their final mark for

participating in a community placement from the placement host. The other 70% comes

from classroom work given by the teacher. Teachers ask students to complete written

and oral assignments reflecting on their natural and structured experiences and

communicating their cultural and other learning that comes from these experiences.

Elisa enjoys the interactivity resulting from structured, natural and classroom

experiences. In the following, she refers directly to the Community Placement

experience,

> I like the interaction I get through journals about the experience and I
> like the interaction I get in interviews about the experience and I phrase
> a lot of questions about the experience.

The roles of the teacher and the curriculum appear to be those of encouraging and

provoking understanding, reflection, learning and communication of students'

experiences. This curricular direction could be an echoing of Susan Stinson's aesthetic

view that "curriculum comes to form as art does, as a complex mediation and

reconstruction of experience" and that " curricular thought and action rest upon the

principle of developing experience" (in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995,

p. 567-8). The teaching of Experiential Studies could live in the Grumet landscape

where "the curriculum provides new experiences for the student, which stands out

against the ground of ordinary experience, both revealing and transforming it" (in Pinar,

Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 548). In the developing, reflecting on,

revealing, learning from or transforming experience is a question that Daphne asks,

"What is experience?"

What Counts as Experience in the Curriculum?

In Webster's Dictionary (1987), experience is said to come from the Latin *experientia* –

the act of trying. Experience is defined as "a direct observation of or participation in

events as a basis of knowledge" and as a "practical knowledge, skill or practice" derived

from that direct observation or participation. On a more esoteric note, experience is

defined in Webster's as "the conscious events that make up an individual life",

"something personally encountered, undergone or lived through", "the act or process of

directly perceiving events or reality" and, in a sweeping global sense, "the events that

make up the conscious past of a community or nation or mankind generally (p. 437).

Teachers in the E.S. program question themselves and their students about 'real' or

ordinary experiences, "the process of directly perceiving events or reality" and about the

act of being "conscious" in experience. Is this in keeping with Grumet's suggestion

that curriculum reveals and transforms ordinary experience? Where is the curriculum-

as-live(d) responsible (response/able) to create or inform experience? Catherine

suggests that teachers must be concerned with providing direct or real experiences for

students:

> We have to give students real
> experiences. As we are an experiential
> program, we really have to give
> experiences. (Catherine)

> Being does not distribute
> itself into regions, the real is
> not subordinated to the
> possible...
> (Foucault, M. 1977, p. 187)

Catherine responds to her own concerns for 'real' experience with an understanding of

the experience of being that is, as she suggests, often a hidden perception:

> The best experience students have is the college itself and the
> way we are teaching them, but they don't perceive that too much
> and maybe we don't perceive that enough. (Catherine)

Elisa also speaks of the importance of being in the curriculum-as-live(d), of being

present with experiences in the present:

> Here I am in ES creating artificial experiences sometimes like field trips...and in fact, under my nose is something happening that is really important..vital and I'm not even mentioning it – it's not surfacing because it's not part of my 'curriculum' and I'm missing the boat.

Elisa recognizes that a curriculum-as-plan that makes room for a curriculum-as-live(d) allows experiences and experiencing to "surface" as interactive possibilities springing from her living classroom.

Intercultural Experiencing

> We want them to come here and experience Canada. Without making them Canadian, we're still trying to open them up to the Canadian idea of experiencing. (Daphne)

Daphne perceives cultural differences at play when Canadian teachers ask Japanese students to go out and *experience* as a form of learning. Daphne characterizes the "Canadian idea of experiencing" as going out and looking at things, looking at the people, having one's eyes open, using all the senses, smelling, breathing and taking things in. In her view, this is more natural for Canadians than for Japanese students. She suggests that Japanese students stand back from their experiences more readily than Canadians do.

> Students go and they have their camera and they look for the perfect photo shot. They look and go, 'Oh how interesting' and if somebody is really strange looking they'll avoid looking at them and if someone's really sad, they'll avoid looking at them.
>
> They come away thinking, 'that was a great experience'. If you ask them to describe it, they just say 'I felt good', 'It made my heart feel warm', 'It was very beautiful'. What does that mean to you? 'I felt good ', 'It made my heart feel warm'...no, no, What does it mean to

> you?. So, here it is Experiential Studies and we're providing them
> opportunities for experience, but what is experience? We have a totally
> different expectation than they do with that culture. (Daphne)

Daphne's characterizations of Canadian experiencing and Japanese experiencing come directly from her very personal experiences and stories and focus on one ingredient, culture. However, to say that differences and expectations of experiencing are only cultural leaves out other likely factors such as age, personality and communicative differences. The age difference between teachers and students is one factor influencing ways of experiencing. E.S. students are usually 18 to 20 years old. Catherine points to age and cultural differences when she says,

> There are two things about these students: one is that they are young
> and the other is that they are Japanese. These two things together
> means you just have to have guided reflection of experience.

Personality differences can also shape the ways in which one enters into experiencing. In any culture, there are some people who are more engaging and interactive and some who are more introverted and silently observant. Those who reach out and communicate more easily may be able to extend their experiences externally.

Part of the extension of experience is the ability to communicate about it. Some people are more communicative than others. In the case of Japanese students, the level of English ability is also a factor in determining whether or not students are coming from a different understanding of experiencing textured by their inability to express themselves in English. However, Ashcroft (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995) reminds us that "cultural 'distance' detected at this point" may not be "a result of the inability of

language to communicate, but a product of the 'metonymic gap' installed by strategies of language variance" (p. 302). Even with communicative English skills, are students dwelling in the gaps between their experience imaginaries and the variance of Japanese and English? Culture, age, personality, language ability and cultural signifiers are potential factors influencing perceptions of experiencing and the notion of experience for students and teachers.

Language Communicating Experience

In E.S., students are asked to communicate their experiences and what they are learning from their experiences by writing, speaking and performing. Communicating one's experience is considered an important part of the learning process and is, therefore, academically required and validated. Is experience of little significance without reflection and the ability to communicate what has occurred and what has been learned? Arthur turns that question around and suggests that "students develop communicative and cultural skills from experiences." For Arthur, experiences are the learning grounds for students where they must take the risk to engage in the experience and to communicate in a new culture. Daphne agrees.

> Going into the community, those are the tests. If you
> have to go to the Women's Centre and give a
> presentation on something, that's probably the biggest
> test you're going to have experientially. ...We could do
> this with all of our students. If they are going to give a
> presentation to the community, they are going to try a
> whole lot more than if they are going to give a
> presentation to their class. We could be doing a lot more
> of that. (Daphne)

What is the role of communicative language in experience?

> Whorf and Sapir's thesis is that "language functions not simply as a device for reporting experience, but also, and more significantly, as a way of defining experience for its speakers" (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995, p. 301).

If language defines experience for the speaker, does this mean that language creates experiences for the speakers or that language is separate from experience? Looking from a post-colonial viewpoint, Ashcroft (in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995) says no. Although language communicating experience may be partially constitutive for the speaker/writer, it must also live in context. Ashcroft suggests that language is neither before nor after experience, but rather it is situated in the world *"in practice"* – a moving changing process. Ashcroft points to Margaret Atwood's discussion of a North American Indian language "which has no noun-forms, only verb-forms. In such a linguistic culture the experience of the world remains in continual process" (p. 301). Language and the narrative of experience, as Ashcroft observes further, do not need to *"reproduce* the experience to signify its nature" (p. 302). Instead, meaning and understanding are produced when and where language, the writer (speaker) and the reader (listener) come together in context. This situated 'co-mingling' suggests that the significance of experience and its constitutive possibilities are becomings that extend through communication with others.

Re-writing experience can lead to constituting possibilities *and,* if language and reflection are seen as definitive, conclusive positioning. Communicating experience can open up ambiguous and questioning places *and* it can hide contradictions. An example of these 'doubled' places emerges in my journalized anecdote (1996) about the E.S.

class multi-media projects performed in front of all students in the final term.   Students

are asked to *communicate* (skits, speaking, music, video, presentation, dance, etc.)

cultural learning that they have *experienced* during the past year.

A favorite experience that students like to portray at the end of the year in their multi-media projects is that of buses arriving late in the small town where the college is located. From my own experience in Japan and from what students say is true, Japanese buses are timely to the point where some bus stops have an automated system that announces that the bus will be arriving at a given time to the minute. Students enjoy portraying the experience of waiting for a Canadian small town bus which arrives anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes late depending on the weather or even, believe it or not, 5 minutes early so that they miss the bus altogether. They show their own incredulity at having to wait, of the bus driver's seeming indifference to the lateness and at the easy going conversation the bus driver and the passengers may engage in while loading or unloading.

Re-viewing the experience of encountering these differences - of feeling shocked and amazed at first - is fun for students because by the end of the year, they have become accustomed to difference. Some of them have moved into the middle between the cultures.

In the multimedia projects students are encouraged to not only show their experiences but also to reflect on and communicate what they learned. The process of being in the experience, stepping outside it and adding words to it can lead to positioning, conclusions and concrete definitions that do not allow for the shifting ground upon which we stand in any cultural context.

One group made the following conclusion: "untimely transport = laziness." The unspoken conclusion accompanying this was that Canadian bus drivers are lazy and/or that Canadians as a group are lazy.

Other groups focused on how Canadians, in their experience, don't apologize when they are late as Japanese would be sure to do. Canadians don't seem to accept blame for their actions. One of the conclusions about this led to the group's question, 'Why don't Canadians apologize?'

> *Re-writing experience can lead to concrete conclusions,*
> *generalizations and stereotypes, but it can also bring more*
> *questions and new possibilities. One group moved between*
> *cultures as they carefully closed their presentation with these*
> *ideas:*
>
> *there are many kinds of Canadians and many kinds of Japanese;*
> *we don't have to be angry about differences;*
> *we don't have to do the same things; and*
> *"A kind mind is the CENTRE OF THE WORLD."*

Communicating and re-writing experience need to leave room for ambiguity,

unanswered questions and inconclusiveness. One student writes of the changing nature

of the world and of how we view experiences with/in our worlds:

> Nobody knows the world accurately because it is changed
> everytime and each person has their own points of view toward it.

Is the world (including stories, speakers, and listeners) changed each time someone tells

the story of her or his experience?

> Wolf (1992) reminds us that 'experience is messy,' and 'when human
> behavior is the data, a tolerance for ambiguity, multiplicity,
> contradiction, and instability is essential'... Similarly, Flax (1987)
> reminds us, life is 'unstable, complex, and disorderly'
> (in Khamasi, 1997, p. 144).

With/in the multiple, ambivalent and contradictory nature of experience – both this *and*

that and the interspaces between – is also the stammering of language struggling to

communicate.

Re: Reflecting on the Meaning of Experience

In Experiential Studies, it is not enough to simply have or tell the stories of experience.

Students are also asked to reflect individually and with others on their experiences as a

way into understanding and creating meaning out of their experiences.

> Meaning does not lie in experience. Rather, those experiences
> are meaningful which are grasped reflectively.
> (Schutz in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 546)

Can meaning be "grasped" and held through reflection? Rather than serving as a means

to obtain, hold or certify meaning, how can reflecting loosen and open places where new

understandings and possibilities can be constituted?

Webster's Dictionary (1987) defines reflection as "turning back." Daphne uses the

terms 'thinking back' to describe the reflective process. She posits that 'learning' about

one's own culture is facilitated when one steps away from certainty and the familiar and

'thinks back'.

> Students enjoy thinking about their own country because
> people tend to grow up a lot in ignorance until they leave
> and are forced to think back. (Daphne)

As students think back and reflect on their previous and current experiences, teachers

find that they too must engage in a reflective process, as Elisa describes it.

> I'm learning maybe to be a little more reflective about
> my own thoughts and feelings with them in the same
> way I'm asking them to be reflective. And, I have found
> that they are receptive to that. (Elisa)

Elisa perceives that thinking back, stepping back and reflecting may take time, added

experience, and other maturing processes before one is able to generate meaning from

one's experience.

> Sometimes reflecting back on experiences needs some time and we
> ask students to reflect pretty quickly. We ask them to have an
> experience, to write about it right away, talk about it right away and
> make meaning of it right away often very soon or within the first year.
> Sometimes they are simply not ready or they haven't valued it until
> they step away from it and look back and they find the value. (Elisa)

> Sometimes they'll come back and talk to me about something that
> they did in the Experiential Studies class two or three years ago
> that is really exciting now, but that wasn't at the time. (Elisa)

Students create their own value from experiences and in their own timeframes.

Reflection is not an instant re-play, but sometimes a long journey that occurs in

conversation with many other experiences and ideas. If reflection is allowed to be alive

with tentativeness and movement, the re-writing and meaning of experience resides in

flux.

> Theorizing is a tentative process of reflection about one's experience
> for that purpose of becoming an author of that experience.
> (Kincheloe in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 57)

Are we authors and/or authorized by our experiences? Britzman (1991) posits that by

reflecting on, interpreting and taking action on our experience, we give it meaning,

thereby shaping and authoring it (p. 34). Arthur puts forward that "valid answers must

come from students' own experience."

Elisa finds that students are able to engage in and create more significant learning from

experiences that are occurring in the classroom 'on-the-spot' than from outside sources.

> An interruption to my class turned out to provide me with a
> cultural comparison that was more meaningful than ...something

> that isn't from their own experience at all or is from some expert
> in some book. (Elisa)

Students must be actively engaged in their own experiences and the meanings they

create in order to shape and 'author' them.

In the present moment and in reflection, experience is not necessarily a teacher.

Britzman (1991) refers to the common myths of experience: experience is the best

teacher; therefore, we learn from experience, and experience is a map of preordained

paths that lead to essentialized truths. If learning from experience is a myth, how can a

curriculum grounded in *experiential studies* be a place of learning and knowledge? In

place of these myths, Britzman invites us to consider that "experience is never the

stable, transparent or knowable phenomenon we hope it will be" (p. 118). Diana Fuss

(in Britzman, 1991) goes further to say that,

> the problem with positing the category of experience as the basis of
> ...pedagogy is that the very object of our inquiry...is never unified, as
> knowable, as universal and as stable as we presume it to be...Belief in the
> truth of Experience is as much an ideological production as belief in the
> experience of Truth (p. 168).

Volosinov (in Britzman, 1991) points to experiencing that is not an object, a thing or a

lesson that can be held, learned or neatly packaged.

> Volosinov argues that consciousness and experience have no
> independent reality outside how our cultural codes deploy
> knowledge. 'We do not, Volosinov writes, ...see or feel an
> experience – we understand it. This means that in the process of
> introspection we engage our experience into a context made up of
> other signs we understand' (p. 218).

Introspection and reflecting become important for sifting through the assumptions,

processes and forces that underlie what appears as meaningful in experience and, in turn, help us to reflect on the multiple discourses that inform our sense of the world.

In Experiential Studies curriculum re-visioning, teachers are looking for ways into experience, observation and reflection that do not result in conclusiveness and concrete answers. They are looking for ways that allow students and teachers to move into questioning, listening to others and self, and creating new understandings of the multiplicities that inform "our sense of the world." In the next strand, this study looks at teachers' articulation of curriculum re-visioning as questioning, listening, following and not following students' and teachers' experiences emerging within Experiential Studies.

STRAND FOUR

**Curriculum Re-visioning as
Quest(ion)ing...Listening...Following...** *and* **Not Following**

Questioning, listening, following and not following are recurring themes coming from

the (inter)views with all of the E.S. teachers as they look at ways of entering into

curriculum re-visioning. In E. S. curriculum re-vision, there appears to be a circular

movement between and among listening, speaking, following the same and different

paths, questioning, understanding and not understanding, being present, attending to the

silence and unspoken communications, replicating, using what is set out, not following

or changing what has been, moving in new directions and responding. These curricular

responses and interactions occur with students, other teachers, the curriculum-as-plan

and the curriculum-as-live(d).

The Quest(ion)ing Students...

Questioning and encouraging students to ask questions is central to some teachers'

curricular understandings and changes. Experiential Studies students come to Canada

from a Japanese school system and culture where students do not often speak in class.

One student wrote this comment in a 1997 program evaluation survey,

> I really want you to understand the difference of
> education system. I mean, I know that volunteer answer
> is important but I can't change myself so soon. I was in
> that system for 12 years.

F.E. Anderson (in Cogan, 1995) would agree. Anderson outlines the characteristics of

Japanese student behavior as "rarely initiate discussion, seldom ask questions for clarification, seldom volunteer answers and only talk if there is a clear cut answer to a question" (p. 36). In E.S. classes, most, but not all, students do not ask questions in front of other students. Students do not appear to *generate* learning from their own questioning. Is it possible that students can be inquisitively *wondering* even though they aren't *asking?* Are students' questions blocked by the lack of vocabulary and skills in a second language? Is a teacher's goal then to provoke wondering *and* verbalizing of that wondering/questioning space - to provoke verbal and written interchange?

> The process of getting them to question is
> what drives my curriculum. (Daphne)

In this statement, Daphne uses a movement metaphor; quest(ion)ing is curriculum in motion. She continues with movement metaphors for her teaching – pushing, turning, and bringing back...

> ...to push these students, to challenge these students and to get them
> to think critically. So if they happen to latch onto a topic that starts
> them questioning, then that's exactly what I want so I'll just keep
> pushing. And, if it turns into an issue or a debate, which it has done
> even this year, because people will disagree, then we want to find out
> what more Canadians think, so it starts into an interview and a survey.
> Then, bring that back and then there's more discussion and debate...it's
> like this is what we are supposed to be doing.

Daphne sees teaching as a challenging and a questioning. These activities may emerge in her classroom because she is among Japanese students who are coming from a different school system or she may see all teaching and learning in these motions. Questioning is, for Daphne, a struggle towards critical thinking, a struggle towards

experiential knowledge and a challenge to be open to new ideas.

> If you're critically thinking, you're supposed to be
> questioning things, but before you start questioning
> things, you have to be open to ideas. (Daphne)

In these words, Daphne positions "open to new ideas" as necessary before questioning

can occur. Can questioning things also be the process that leads to openings and

possibilities of new ideas – a circular movement in reverse? Is one necessarily

privileged over the other?

Daphne sees the need to move students into questioning. Arthur calls for a similar way

into the curriculum: "How can we provoke the need to learn? How can we challenge,

stimulate, provoke?" Daphne answers the question in part with the following,

> I guess the biggest thing that I feel we can do is if we get them to
> question things instead of to just go out and maybe experience
> something and it flits over their head and they don't really look deeply.
> But, if we can get them to probe and think and ask questions and stop
> and reflect, then I guess that's the goal of what we're/I'm doing.

Arthur and Daphne call into question the role of the teacher. The teachers (and the

curriculum?) look for ways to provoke, challenge and stimulate students; they look for

ways to get students to probe, ask questions, and reflect. Is curriculum re-visioning one

of looking for new ways to launch students into some kind of active inquisitiveness?

In the following narrative, Daphne re-writes her and the students' movement in

questioning, listening and changing that emerges out of the students' questioning of

themselves in the midst of experiencing.

We had an experience this year with this group where we went on a field trip to the Slocan Forest Products. Prior to going they had read numerous articles and heard about numerous articles in their major class. And, they had all made up some kind of opinion based on that. Most of them were sort of environmentally biased opinions.

Then they went on this field trip and listened to Slocan Forest Products forester and forest technician tell them the wonderful things that they are doing and how these baby trees are going to be fine and there's nothing wrong with ripping out all the trees and there's nothing wrong with clear cutting because in effect they're coming back. And through silva culture, they are watching these trees and tending these trees and they are responsible for five years after they put all the effort into these trees. Therefore, this is not a problem - clear-cutting. They might have mentioned a few things like the soil not being strong enough or the soil washing away, but the students didn't really click into that.

They all came back thinking, 'Oh, I was wrong. This person told me some new information. Therefore, I have to change my opinion.' Until one of the students kind of went,
'Listen to us. We went and listened to one person's point of view and we've all changed our minds? Where's the thinking?'
It's like thank you one student!

She said, 'Maybe we should be reading more and asking more questions instead of just saying, ' Oh I'm wrong and changing our opinions.'

Questioning and not questioning...experts and no experts...opinion and no opinion...In her storying, Daphne moves between spaces where she doubts the critical thinking (quest(ion)ing) of her students *and* where she affirms their ability to initiate inquisitive learning. These Japanese students appear to be moving between multiple ways of thinking and being, between cultures, between their first and second languages, between internalizing and externalizing their questions and thoughts, between comfortability and risk. Daphne sees her teaching role as one of providing ambivalent (doubled values) experiences in order to provoke students' questions and critical thinking.

"Learning takes place in uncertainty" (Arthur) – A Place of Questioning

The place of uncertainty, of no fixed address, is where Arthur resides. He asks himself

and his students to go "farther and farther from the realms of security" to unknown

places of possibilities. In a 1994 UBC talk, Ali Rattansi explored the landscape of

ambi-valence with the reminder that relative fixity can be established at any time, but

that any fixity is only temporary. Inquisitive learning asks students to enter into

ambivalence, risk, and a shifting fixity – to become part of the questioning landscape.

Within uncertainty and risk there is tension. Arthur asks, "how do we keep students'

attention (*at-tension – my words*)?" He finds his own answers when he travels, together

with students, in/to risky and uncertain learning landscapes.

> ... the structure of certainty... as soon as you use it, it's no longer
> certain - it has served its purpose. It's given you a direction and you
> can't begin from a standing start - you've got to be running along, so
> you need that kind of direction to get going....
>
> Working with the students, that's what we want to do. We say this is
> the direction we're headed; we give them a great big push at this
> instant, in this direction, just so it is moving. But, once it is moving,
> you let it go; you give them the chance to explore and the chance to
> be wrong...
>
> Sometimes you get a student who is saying, 'I'm not really sure, but I
> want to say this...'. Well, it doesn't get any better than that.
> To acknowledge that I don't know but I'm saying it to process it,
> immediately gives you a roomful of responses whether they are voiced
> or not. (Arthur)

Arthur's setting things in motion and letting go facilitates creative and constitutive

opportunities with/in students and himself. In this way, Arthur does what Aoki (1995b)

suggests when he restates Greenlaw's perspective that " urges us to have students move

into enunciatory spaces of intersecting texts where effects are not so much discovered as constituted within the dynamic tension of the interspace." (p. 195)

Are places of dynamic tension generated from places of uncertainty? I ask Arthur about what happens if he and the students are in an uncertain insecure place feeling their way together, but learning is not occurring. What happens when learning is replaced perhaps by confusion, fear, refusal, or frustration? He replies that he always tries to "gear the teaching so that discovery is within their grasp", but if the road they are all taking isn't working, he also feels free to stop mid-stream (or mid-direction) and move a different way. "Okay, let's try something else." He might re-turn to the activity or quest(ion)ing with the group later or they might move on. jan jagodzinski (in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) calls for *humane flexibility.* He writes that only when curriculum journeys are plotted with so much precision that there are no risks, do they become repressive. Flexibility, journeying, and becomings are part of the flexible and humane curricular geography.

> Becomings belong to a geography, they are
> orientations, directions, entries and exits.
> (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 2)

Arthur always comes to his E.S. class with several different scenarios as to where they might go together on that day. He trusts they will find their way with him being both present and absent, prepared and prepared to listen, attending and moving.

> *I listened to Arthur and I was a/mazed. Could I do that?*
> *I am attending and listening to my students; I am shifting,*
> *responding, altering and making space in the plan for my*

students, but I have never imagined we could stop in the middle of something, move into uncertainty, drop it and move in a new direction completely...

Strangely, in the E.S. class following the conversation with Arthur, it just happened - we came to a place in the road and we stopped. Stopping when things weren't happening and going a different direction didn't "work". I felt like I hadn't fulfilled my obligation as a guide, a teacher, and one student was angry with me afterwards...but, something opened up, something loosened up, a space emerged for us, the class and me, to create and re-create together...next time.

(my journal entry, 1997)

Arthur's and my re-writings of our classroom curricular experiences evoke a reminder that setting something in motion does not necessarily determine its direction.   Cameron Fahlman, another teacher, voices his "pedagogy of uncertainty" with these words,

> From a postmodern perspective, I believe that we need to embrace a pedagogy of uncertainty to invite the lived-world of the student to enter our classroom.
> (in Aoki & Shamsher, 1993, p. 85)

Elisa also moves into places of uncertainty when she loosens her hold and makes room for curriculum-as-live(d).

> I'm learning a wee bit to loose the reins a wee bit, being a typical teacher who likes to have control of 50 minutes in a 50 minute class. (Elisa)

Elisa tells this story about letting go of control and of moving into places of attending, uncertainty and tension by keeping her silence, by allowing silence, by listening and quest(ion)ing with her students. Elisa's story:

> When there was a Mexican student in the class, the group was trying to make a decision and we had probably three and half minutes of absolute silence. Absolute silence.

It was killing me and it was killing my Mexican student. Her body language was 'how much longer are you going to let this go on? Isn't this ridiculous? Isn't somebody going to make a decision?'. She was wringing her hands and batting her eyes and throwing her body around as I allowed the class to try and resolve this.

When they finally did, and I thought we had a solution and we got back into the class so to speak, I asked them if they had noticed our observations, if they had noticed my...because a couple of times I had interspersed - (I did allow it to go three and half minutes, I timed it, with nothing) - 'Come on now. Look at the time, it's ticking away. You're going to have to make a decision' and this kind of thing.

Did they notice that and how uncomfortable
          we are with silence?
                              *("We" meaning a Canadian and the
                              Mexican student – my note)*

So I used it as a moment to teach a very significant cultural difference that they could have observed if they had watched my actions. And, then, I asked them if this is the way that they would make decisions in Japan and a couple of students said that they wanted to talk about that.

Elisa and her students (three cultures) entered into cultural difference in silence, the

"contour of difference" (Bhabha, 1994) and the spaces between difference. In North

America, silence is often a place of uncertainty and tension. Silence may be interpreted

as uncertainty on the part of the North American speaker and as wisdom and

thoughtfulness on the part of the Japanese speaker. Observing and moving into the

moment of silence generates unplanned discussion in Elisa's class.

"It's so quiet". A substitute teacher in training makes this remark when she is visiting

my class as they are doing an activity in small groups. I am taken aback. She is

listening and hearing a silence that I no longer hear. Perhaps my ears are wide and

flapping like Dumbo the Elephant picking up the minute traces of inter-active language

as students engage in an inquisitive process by asking each other questions and

brainstorming answers on paper. I hear mostly English, some Japanese, thinking, struggling, uncertainty, giving up, encouraging, questioning, agreeing, and disagreeing. "It's so quiet". I listen with different ears and hear a soft silence that is practically inaudible. How my ears have become attuned to the sounds of my students!

It's the Listening that Matters...

In conversation with Catherine, a lot of feeling and energy comes forth when she talks about bringing questions to students and then really listening to where they live in their answers and their further questioning. David Jardine emphasizes teaching as "waiting, listening, attending" (Jardine in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995). Listening emerges as central to Catherine and other teachers' curriculum-as-live(d) and to possibilities for immediate or future curricular re-visioning.

Catherine brings quest(ion)ing and listening into the centre of her classroom:

> I had this argument with a teacher...and he said, 'What if you don't know the answer?' and my reply is that the answer doesn't matter. It's the question that matters. You throw those questions at the students...regarding any topic and whatever the students answer - that's what we listen to. That's the student's perception. We take the students where they are...let them tell us.

Questioning *and* listening to students' perceptions are part of Catherine's curriculum: the students tell the teachers. Catherine also calls for listening as a way into understanding and change.

> How shall we understand students? Listen to them.
> How shall we understand teachers? Listen to them.
> We have to experiment and change to understand.

For Catherine, listening is not simply a passive exercise, but an opportunity for action. Listening is an active part of her re-search for understanding and curriculum re-visioning. She calls upon herself and others to move what is listened to into experimentation and change. Could she have asked the question, 'How do we change? We listen.' To go towards understanding, she suggests that we have to actively try something and welcome changes.

In the following story, Daphne's story, understanding and not understanding give a female student her voice to ask to be listened to.

Daphne's story...

After preparing the class for a discussion, Daphne checked with the group, "Does everyone understand? Okay, good, begin." One student sat there shooting daggers at her with her eyes, so she asked, "What can I do for you?" The student just got furious. She didn't *understand* anything that was going on around her and she "was stuck in the space" of *not understanding*. She yelled, "I don't know what to do. I don't understand. I don't get it". Daphne's reaction was, "Great!". They were communicating. If the student hadn't gotten angry and reached out she would have stayed stuck between the languages, between the cultures, without learning anything. Reflecting on her story, Daphne questions how teachers can get students "to the point where they get angry, where they are desperate and they do something!" Out of not understanding and not being understood comes the voice of the student to which the teacher can listen.

In Daphne's story, there are different ways of listening. She "listened" to the student by attending to her body language. Then, she asked a question and listened to the answer. They communicated because of inter-action, action coming from both the teacher and the student. Communication between teacher and student seems like an obvious part of classroom experience, but communication that facilitates learning by both the teacher and the students requires attention to the spoken and unspoken needs and challenges of each student.

> Any time there is a challenge like that (*from a student*) it is beneficial because it teaches us what we need to do, how to make the changes that are the most appropriate. We are learning a lot about where they're coming from when they challenge us. (Daphne)

Catherine and Daphne *listen* for ways into understanding, risk and change. Listening brings about action and also requires active receptivity and awareness as Daphne reminds us.

> We can try to be aware...We have to be aware that there are spaces between. I think that's the biggest thing. I don't know how we can understand. We have to really try to be receptive and that's not easy.

Listening evokes being present in receptively hearing others. In listening, we are allowing both the spoken and unspoken to enter into the present moment where we are situated and where we inter-act with others.

To be present in the listening, teachers must live with/in some silence. To be present in listening can lead to a type of absence. As the absence of the 'author' ('authoritarian') makes room for the reader, the absence of the teacher ('authoritarian?') makes space for

the student to be heard. With presence comes an absence or quieting of self so that there is room for waiting and attending to other. "Presence is not originary; it is constituted" (Culler, 1982, p. 106). Catherine's words, "You throw those questions at the students...regarding any topic and whatever the students answer - that's what we listen to", evoke the teacher's physical presence attending to the students and at the same time a type of absence of the teacher. Authoring and presence are actions that occur *between* two people where becomings can grow in the middle (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987). The teacher actively gives space where speaking *and* listening, questioning *and* answering, presence *and* absence can grow in the middle *between* teacher and student.

Bill Ashcroft (1995) in reflecting on constitutive language, looks at conversation "as a 'situated accomplishment' for the face-to-face interaction... The central feature of such activity is *presence,* the presence of the speaker and the hearer to each other constituting language as communication" (p. 321). Ashcroft and his fellow editors, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995), in their introduction to the chapter "Body and Performance", write about presence as being a bodily presence that is necessary for interactive responsive communication.

> Bodily presence and awareness in one sense or another is one of the features which is central to post-colonial rejections of the Erurocentric and logocentric emphasis on 'absence', a rejection which positions the Derridean dominance of the 'written' sign within a larger discursive economy of voice and movement. In its turn this alter/native discursive and inscriptive economy which stresses the oral and performative is predicated upon the idea of an exchange in which those engaged are physically present to one another.
>
> ... In practice the oral only exists and acquires meaning in the possibility

of an immediate and modifying response, existing therefore only
interactively with its whole speech or movement event. In other words
the real body is acknowledged in such an exchange in a way in which the
'pale' material concerns of recent theory are readily dissolved. (p. 321)

The body includes all the senses, the complete listener in response. Ashcroft, Griffiths

and Tiffin view presence as a physical response/ability and with this view, absence can

be seen as a lack of response. Moving between the Derridean emphasized view of

absence and the above emphasis on presence brings the possibility of both. This kind of

interactive exchange calls for being physically present with the responsive attunement of

all the senses *and,* at the same time, bringing an absence of 'author' or 'authoritarian',

an absence of agenda, theory, or ego.

Allowing both presence and absence to live actively in the inter-change among students,

teachers and curriculum-as-live(d) opens the classroom communicative landscape. In

class related notes, Dr. Ted Aoki points to the Japanese *yu-mu* 有無 in calligraphic

brush strokes by June Aoki on the cover of a November copy of "JCT An

Interdisplinary Journal of Curriculum Studies". In Japanese, *yu* 有 is presence and

mu 無 is absence. Dr. Aoki's notes describe a way of being in and with both:

> *Yu-mu* as both 'presence and absence' marks the space of
> ambivalence in the midst of which humans dwell. As such,
> Y*u-mu* is non-essentialist, denying the privileging of either
> 'presence' or 'absence', so deeply inscribed in the binarism of
> Western epistemology. As the groundless ground in traditions
> of wisdom, the ambiguity textured in *yu-mu* is understood as a
> site pregnant with possibilities.

Situated in both presence (*yu*) and absence (*mu*), teachers are free to move into a place

of listening that includes presence and absence and into "a site pregnant with

possibilities" for students, teachers and interactive responsive curriculum

vision/revision.

Listen/Hear...

When I listen to a classroom talk by Dr. Tetsuo Aoki, he reminds us that the Japanese

kanji for "*listen*" 聴 and "*hear*" 聞 are made up of several Chinese characters.

In the older form of "to listen", 聽 , there are six different characters signifying

heart, undivided attention, fourteen eyes, ear and king. The newer form of "to listen", 聴

, is made up of three characters signifying heart, fourteen eyes and ear.

According to a Japanese teacher, and as the characters show, there are multiple

meanings of the Japanese word *listen:* "to listen to; to give an ear to; to be all attention;

to be all ears". In the word *hear* 聞 , there are two characters: one is *ear* 耳

and it is situated between the character for *gate* 門 . In *Illustrated Japanese*

Characters, the *hear* character includes the meanings of "to hear, to listen, to obey

(because *gate* often signifies boundaries), to be known".

Both the *listen* and the *hear* characters evoke important ways of being within listening

and hearing: listening with your heart, listening intently, attending, being attentive,

giving undivided attention, having an open heart and an open ear, seeing what is listened

to with multiple senses, being in the middle between the gates – not positioned on either

side, and allowing others to be known. As teachers enter into curriculum-as-live(d),

they enter, with their students, with each other and themselves, with the text and with

the college, into a landscape of listening and hearing with multiple senses, an open heart

and attention that does not come from divisiveness.

> The echo has much to teach us. If we
> listen for echoes, and we listen to
> them, our listening can grow in
> wisdom.
> (David Levin in Aoki, 1991, p. 31)

Teachers Questioning (Listening to) Themselves...

Inquisitive curriculum (re)visioning can originate and occur as teachers ask themselves

questions. Catherine tells of how she re-views her curriculum in Experiential Studies

and in most of her classes,

> All you need to do is sit down at the beginning of the class and sort
> of think of how am I going to introduce this and how am I going to
> inspire the students.

Living in *How*, not *What* leads teachers to a potentially less tangible, less concrete

curriculum. Because the E.S. curriculum is considered by some teachers to be very

open-ended with few concrete strategies in place, and because of the potentially

responsive nature of the course due to the additional advisor/advisee relationship, all but

one of the five teachers spoke about how they and others scramble for ideas, ways, and

activities that they can engage in with their students.

Elisa comments that sometimes teachers are

> pulling the strings and the strings don't always lead to a whole, so you
> grab a string from the (resource) binder and you try it and it may or
> may not work. But, what does it lead to? So, there's a fragmentation
> that takes over that I'm not happy about. I don't want my work to be
> as fragmented as it sometimes is. On the other hand, I like the
> chance to go in and try a brand new idea and see if it'll fly, so

it's a double-edged sword.

Is the doubling of the "double-edged sword" a way of being in a curriculum-as-plan that includes activities and *things* to do *and* in a curriculum-as-live(d) where the students and the teacher move together and "try a brand new idea" that comes from the teacher and/or the students?

Arthur talks about how he tries to avoid the search for some *thing* to do with his class. He tells his approach to Experiential Studies classes,

> The thrust should be '*How* am I going to do this (concept/content) today?, not '*What* am I going to do?'

So often "what" is privileged over other questions. Do the answers to "what" questions lead us to things, thingified knowledge? If so, is this a generative place of possibilities? In Term Two, the E.S. course asks the students, "What is Culture?" Could it be asking, 'How is culture?' or 'Where is culture?' Arthur's teaching is grounded in "inquisitive learning" and the asking of *how*,

> How do I lead them to new discoveries about themselves and our/their culture?

Teachers quest(ion)ing and listening to themselves appears to be contiguous with the questioning of and listening to students – a linked chain, interrelated activities in dynamic curriculum-as-live(d) re-visioning.

Following and Not Following...

Experiential Studies teachers speak of following their students, other teachers, and the curriculum, *and* not following other teachers and the curriculum. The teachers

characterize "following" as being open to and responding to influences exerted by

students' abilities, present realities and expectations; teacher ability and inclination; and

expectations from the college administration. Listening, being open, responding and

giving undivided attention to all the influences brings about questions of how and

whether or not to follow the expectations, requirements and needs of the many voices in

every classroom.

> ...the ability to let things come as they present themselves.
> Following that sort of attitude, every moment, every now is an
> 'opening oneself to'.   (Lyotard, 1991, p. 32)

To whom and to what do teachers open themselves to? There are many influences that

inform a teacher's curricular choices and decisions of who and what to follow and not

follow, and in which direction? Catherine and Daphne describe the influences and

considerations that accompany them on their curricular journeys.

> The influences that are significant are student ability, higher level or lower
> level and the requirements of the course and the requirements of the college
> and the requirements of the students. (Catherine)

Daphne adds the following to the above list of influences:

> personality of teacher, expectations of the community, expectations of
> staff, expectations of administration, ...a lot of different things.

Both Catherine and Daphne voice the pluralities that teachers everywhere are often

asked to follow, listen and respond to in their daily teaching life and in curriculum re-

visioning.

Where are the influences that inform a teacher's curricular choices and decisions of who

and what to follow and not follow, and in which direction? This question generates

images of curricular journeying, of moving in the same or different directions as others, of negotiating new places and challenges.

> The spacial-temporal experience of "line" is continually informed by the body's negotiation between becoming *lost* and finding *a direction*. Such journeys are always packed with ambiguity, paradox, and, above all, surprise. It is the feeling that new vistas, new elevations, new edges are always presenting themselves as each new step is taken. (jagodzinski, in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 161)

The "line" that teachers travel is between many spaces and influences. Moving between possible directions that can be followed, or not, is a journey, as jagodzinski imagines it, full of ambiguity, paradox and surprise. It is a journey into the space between the curriculum-as-plan *and* the curriculum-as-lived – a journey into surprising new vistas. Following *and* not following emerge as ways of responding, questioning and opening into Experiential Studies curriculum re-visioning.

Following Students...

> The curriculum is year to year and class to class as I learn. I follow the class.
> (Arthur)

Following can signify many ways of being. Taubman (in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992) goes further than is necessary when he invites teachers to

> give a provocative invitation, then follow where the student leads until there remains only a duet of two people moving as one to the same beat, which remains unconscious. (p. 222)

Two people as one moving to the same beat takes the risk of negating difference and assuming complete knowing and understanding of other. However, to follow where the student leads is a common thread emerging from conversations with E.S. teachers. How

do teachers follow their students? What attitudes and guides do they take along on the

journey?

Daphne suggests that following requires receptivity, openness and awareness in the

classroom.

> We have to really try to be receptive and that's
> not easy. Even though you think you are, once
> you get on your kick and you're focused and
> you're trying to teach the curriculum and you're
> going with it, as soon as you follow that path,
> you're not as open.
>
> Any time you follow any strong path,
>   you're not as open.
>
> So, in order to be open, you have to be really flexible in
> your path. Okay, this is my curriculum, but...this is my
> plan for the day, but..... Students might come in
> depressed, they might come in tired, they might come in
> extremely happy, you might go faster, you might go
> slower, you know, and something might happen to one
> of them that starts something else in a different direction
> and you start learning more about each other...

Receptivity, openness and flexibility are foundational in Daphne's teaching. She opens

her curriculum-as-plan so that it is a flexible path. She is prepared to be surprised into

following a different direction, a new place of learning. In a discussion of the inter-

relatedness of feminist theology and curriculum, a reference to Nel Noddings' writings

echo Daphne's understandings: "In *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral*

Education, Noddings (1984) proposed an ethics based on caring grounded in receptivity,

relatedness, and responsiveness" (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 655).

Curricular creativity is contiguous with a teacher receptively following and acknowledging her inter-relatedness with her students.

<p align="center">"Your group creates your curriculum." (Elisa)</p>

"Your group" as Elisa phrases the classroom also includes the teacher. Margaret Olson (in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995) speaks of the classroom as a "shared space where the contents of the room hold personal meaning for all who inhabit it...The presence of teacher and students pervade the space, not as isolated individuals, but as a mingling of thoughts and actions, each enhanced by the other" (p. 431). Teacher and students dwelling together in an inter-related space that enhances others is a classroom image that emerges from some of the stories and voicings of the Experiential Studies teachers.

Elisa characterizes following as responsiveness – a responding to others *and* self – individuals *and* group.

> I think it (*the E.S. course)* is largely group driven. The group dynamic and the fact that there is an unspoken freedom that if I didn't accomplish as much in geography as I had hoped, I'm writing my own geography exam and so I can be more *responsive* (my italics). The group demands that I be more *responsive* (my italics) because they are a special group in that you know you're going to be with them all year, you know you're advising them, you're getting to know them and you're not passing them on (*to another teacher- my note*).

> Their individual needs are surfacing and you're kind of trying to use that in the classroom to an advantage. Coupled with the freedom to say, "Oh well, they didn't learn 10 important cities in Canada - so what? We did this instead because that's where the energy was and I'll just test this....I get a license to kind of allow the group to be like that and then the group itself does I think bring forth that energy." This is good, but sometimes frustrating. (Elisa)

For Elisa, response-ability is following by being attuned to her students' individual needs and allowing the group to "surface" and "bring forth that energy." She identifies the Experiential Studies curriculum as the condition that allows her the kind of response-ability that produces a form of curricular autonomy and "license". Although the ability to respond to students appears to be influenced by more "license" in the Experiential Studies curriculum than in other courses at the college, is this the major ingredient necessary in a responsive curriculum? Elisa points to other factors that are linked to response-ability. Allowing the group to be as it is, to create its own energetic, and to be "group driven"; recognizing where the energy is and going with it; and advising students and affirming their 'specialness' are all ways that Elisa enters into and follows the group dynamic that is both her self *and* others.

In *The Call of Teaching*, Aoki (1993) refers to Levinas' call for "the authentic relationship between a human self and a human other"(p. 74). This is a call for self allowing the other, "the self's responsibility to others". (p. 74)

> For Levinas, the "and" in the "self and other" becomes an
> intertwining movement of "responsibilities" and "rights."
> And for him, the otherness of others is the ethical binding
> that allows us to be human. (p. 74)

Other/Self notions carry varying cultural, linguistic and pedagogical signifiers. In a University of B.C. classroom discussion (1994), a classmate from Kenya, Jennifer Khamasi, speaks of an African way of imagining and moving between other and self as

roughly translated in these words:

> I am because we are
> We are because I am

In this African worldview, response-ability to others and to self and the rights of others and self seem to be intertwined and interrelated in a way that doesn't isolate or deny both. Although Elisa may not phrase her understandings of spaces of response-ability to others *and* self – the individuals *and* the group – in African wording, she moves into an interrelated pedagogic space of following by allowing, recognizing, freeing, giving license, and responding to that which is surfacing in others and self.

Surfacing and expanding are very physical metaphors for students' more mental and emotional becomings. I imagine students coming up from the depths of a lake to the surface of the water; I imagine students becoming larger and larger like a balloon filling with air. Surfacing and expanding are visible *and* invisible actions that teachers are attuned to as they review and revise their curriculum landscape. Catherine reflects on one of the ways that she follows her students into new territories:

> If they (the students) start to expand, you can go with it.

In attunement to others *and* self, following implies willingness to enter into change and a willingness to "go with it".

> A personal responsibility for change is...a response to the
> call of the other.   (Carson, 1992, p. vii)

If Carson is including the Kristeva 'other within us – the stranger within us' – then "the call of the other" is not a denial or absence of self. Being *able* to follow students and

being willing to respond to "the call of the other" (inclusive of self) and to move

between and with/in the calls are, for E.S. teachers, shaped by many factors: the

response-ability built into a cross-college curriculum, the license for change within that

curriculum-as-plan, and the teachers' response-ability to hearken to and be changed by

the calls, the surfacing and the expanding of others *and* self.

> *...two and two to make a dance*
>
> *the mind dances with itself*
> *taking you by the hand*
> *your lover follows*
> *there are always two*
>
> *yourself and the other,*
> *the point of your shoe setting the pace*
> *if you break away and run*
> *the dance is over*
>
> "The Dance" by William Carlos Williams
> (in MacGowan, C. (Ed.), 1988, p. 407)

Following and Not Following Other Teachers...

The "two" in the dance of Experiential Studies could be both the *two* of students and

teachers and the *two* of teachers and teachers. Throughout the year, there are E.S. team

meetings and team discussions with those who are teaching the course that year. As can

be expected, there are varying worldviews, points of view, styles, methods, response-

abilities, schedules, and fluctuating feelings of creativity in attendance. Some teachers

have a class with "lower" entry level language ability students for the year and others

have the "upper" level entry students. The E.S. classroom curriculum often emerges

differently for one level compared to another. My personal experience as an E.S.

teacher is that colleagues are continually assisting and following (or not) each other with the ups and downs that occur because the course has space for openness and response to student needs and levels of language ability.

Some common questions and pleas for assistance that can be heard in the faculty lounge and elsewhere sound something like these: "What should I do with my E.S. class? They don't seem to get what I'm doing. What's happening in your class these days? How are you creating some discovery and participation with your group? What works and doesn't work?" These have been my own questions and I have heard various versions of them by every teacher at some time in the faculty lounge before or after an E.S. class experience. For me, re-searching with colleagues springs from looking for ways into response-ability with my class. I can often hear the calls, but sometimes I need creative assistance from other teachers to find ways to enter into inter-change with my class. Inter-change evokes in-between spaces where change and creativity are possible and where possibilities can multiply.

Elisa and other teachers talk about re-turning to colleagues for new ideas and ways that sometimes work and don't work. The generating of multiple possibilities in curriculum re-visioning partially comes from the inter-change among faculty members re-searching new directions and paths together, as Elisa explains,

> Influences on curriculum are the class itself and, I would also
> have to say, the faculty and where they're at and the
> discussion that we've had. I think I'm often influenced by a
> plan or a path that somebody else has. Sometimes that's
> really good because they have a really good idea that works for
> me.

However, for Elisa, following the plan or path of another teacher can lead both to

creative openings and, sometimes, to problems.

> And, sometimes that's really bad because I try to pluck
> out of their plan, parachute into mine and it doesn't fit. I
> get the fragmentation... cause it's not my style. (Elisa)

Catherine echoes a similar concern in trying to fit others' curricular ways of being with

students.

> I find it very stressful to have to use something that other people have
> designed because they have the good ideas and it's hard to put it on paper.

Choosing to follow and not follow other teachers becomes a process of listening to self

with/in the context of others. Others can assist in opening possibilities that can be

completely or partially followed and not followed if a teacher is also attuned to herself

and her students.

Where are the influences that inform a teacher's curricular choices and decisions of who

and what to follow and not follow, and in which direction?

> We have formal leadership that has changed, that has given direction.
> But, we also have informal that comes from just the faculty member
> who bounces into the faculty room and says 'Look at this great thing I
> did - this worked.' And you look at it as a colleague and say, 'Gee that
> looks good. How can I weave that into my class. And sometimes it
> weaves and sometimes it doesn't. (Elisa)

Elisa's weaving metaphor evokes different strands, multi-colours, thicknesses, and

textures being woven into her curriculum re-visioning as she follows and does not

follow other teachers. These multi-coloured strands of conversation and inter-change

among teachers come together informally and often generate curriculum re-vision for

the entire teaching team.

> I see that next year everybody'll be doing it and it will become part of the curriculum even though we didn't write it down and put it in there and legislate it. I think there is some curriculum development that's happening by going in there and experimenting and coming back out and sitting around the faculty lounge and saying, 'this worked for me - try it'. (Lynne)

Gudmundsdottir (1991) invites us to consider that "listening to other teachers' stories is

one important way of ...learning" and that what has " been called 'recipe knowledge'

(Huberman, 1983) " is a practical knowledge that is tested intuitively as teachers talk

together before and after trying something in the classroom (p. 211). Lynne uses the

verbs "doing", "happening", "going in there", "experimenting", "coming back out",

"sitting" and "saying" to describe Experiential Studies curriculum re-visioning among

faculty. Without writing something down on paper and making it part of the formal

curriculum-as-plan, re-visioning is occurring in action and movement. Teachers try

curricular ways by experimenting with their classes and then re-turning to other teachers

for re-viewing. In this way, teachers are in the midst of each other and in the midst of

following, not following and changing together.

> We've been a bit chameleon as a faculty.
> We have allowed E.S. to change
> as we have changed
> and
> as dialogue and discussion around this course has changed.
> (Elisa)

Following the (dancing) Curriculum...

> ...it's constantly changing, it's like a dance. (Daphne)

> The horizon is always shifting; as soon as it is reached it has
> already moved...The subject is always in the middle of this movement,
> caught in a dialectical changing relationship between itself and
> what it knows. (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 58)

Moving in the midst of curricular shifting and re-visioning invites questions about

structure, consistency and outcomes. Catherine situates herself between the movement

of change and the fortification of structure. She includes both.

> If you don't have a structure you are following, then
> you can change and it still won't work. (Catherine)

With/in the E.S. curricular team, there has been lively debate over the years about the

possibilities of following the curriculum-as-plan when the needs and responses of

students and teachers are always changing.

> *Recently, I opened the binder that houses the E.S.*
> *curriculum – goals, objectives, units of study,*
> *suggested activities and handouts.*
>
> *I turned to Term Three and looked at what the*
> *college calls "the framework" curriculum – the*
> *basics of what should be covered and achieved.*
> *It looked rather bare.*
>
> *The E.S. faculty lounge discussion that day had*
> *revealed a rich tapestry of themes, activities,*
> *directions and orientations that were not*
> *reflected, except peripherally, in the binder.*
> *What actually happens in E.S. is in the midst of*
> *changing as the students and faculty are*
> *themselves. The binder stood like a functional*
> *diving board from which to launch into partially*
> *unknown creative waters.* *(my journal, 1997)*

The curriculum-as-plan necessarily identifies goals, objectives and end-points for the

learning process within the curricular parameters. When teachers choose to follow or

not follow the plan, are there dangers that the curriculum-as-live(d) will abandon the

curriculum-as-plan?

> Is it *(change)* deliberate or is it just that we've all sort of been
> jamming together in the faculty lounge for years and that we are
> ...developing a group mind and slowly the group mind is evolving?
> Now, we may be doing individually different things in the classroom
> but I think the end result is very similar. (Lynne)

> I constantly have much more that I want to accomplish
> and I constantly walk out of my classroom
> underachieved in terms of what I hoped to accomplish.
> (Catherine)

Lynne and Catherine point to what educators have historically been concerned with:

outcomes and end results – curricular and/or personal. Can one teacher and a class of

students living in a "shared space" (Olson in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman,

1995) achieve the same outcomes and end results as another class? Do "end results"

include what each person learned about themselves and others? Lyotard (1991) offers

these two ways of looking at ends and aims,

> ...this is the ambiguity of the word *end*, aim and cessation: the
> same ambiguity as with desire...(p. 29)

> This end is of course not knowledge, but the approach to a 'truth'
> or a 'real' which is ungraspable. (p. 33)

Lynne proposes that E.S. teachers, through different ways of being with their students,

achieve the same end results. When Lynne asserts that the end results are similar, is she

allowing for a difference in degree that can become a difference in kind? Stuart Hall (in

Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995) invites us to look at difference in two ways:

> There is the 'difference' which makes a radical and unbridgeable
> separation: and there is a 'difference' which is positional, conditional
> and conjunctural, closer to Derrida's notion of *differance*, though if we
> are concerned to maintain a politics it cannot be defined exclusively in
> terms of an infinite sliding of the signifier. (p. 226)

Can the end result be to recognize, constitute and make room for "positional,

conditional and conjunctural" difference? Can structure, consistent outcomes and end

results be with/in Bhabha's "contour of difference" which is "shifting and splitting" (in

Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995, p. 32)? Can the ever-changing landscape that

recognizes and allows difference, allow for structure as well?

Like Lynne, Elisa is willing to entertain difference and to trust that students and teachers

are coming to places of learning as they evolve together. For her, the changing nature of

the curriculum is

> not so serious in the hands of professional people all of
> whom are working basically for the students. I don't
> think it is a big big problem that we continue to evolve a
> lot with this course ...including the leadership that is
> provided formally and informally. (Elisa)

> In terms of all teachers participating actively in developing
> the curriculum, again it has its weaknesses in that it's
> tough to be consistent, but it has its strengths with a rich
> diversified group of people, there's a lot of creative energy
> going into E.S. that all of us can benefit from. (Elisa)

As I listen to Elisa's words, I hear the richness of diversity and I re-call Bhabha's post-

colonial renunciation of cultural diversity as it is privileged over cultural difference. In

the following passage, he conceives cultural diversity as a static noun and cultural

difference as a fluid verb.

> Cultural diversity is an epistemological object – culture as an object of
> empirical knowledge – whereas cultural difference is the process of the
> enunciation of culture as 'knowledge*able*', authoritative, adequate to the
> construction of systems of cultural identification. If cultural diversity is a
> category of comparative ethics, aesthetics, or ethnology, cultural
> difference is a process of signification through which statements *of*
> culture or *on* culture differentiate, discriminate, and authorize the
> production of fields of force, reference, applicability, and capacity.
> (Bhabha in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995, p. 206)

Bhabha represents cultural diversity as a static object and cultural difference as a living

process that empowers those who are living with/in the difference. Difference is not

minimized into "anodyne liberal notions of multiculturalism" as cultural diversity can

be. Instead, difference constitutes knowledge and is "a process of signification" and a

process of enunciation.

Catherine describes her creativity as coming out of difference,

> I'm not always sure that our goals are consistent, that we are
> reaching for the same goals, but I have liked the opportunity to
> use some creative energy...

Allowing difference opens up possibilities to constitute knowledge and to follow the

movement inherent in a curriculum-as-live(d).

And *Not* Following...

> I have the freedom because I'm not following the curriculum. (Daphne)

> Some people follow it very closely because there
> are some teachers who desperately need that
> structure, some people follow it more loosely.
> (Daphne)

> Sometimes I have been most in the present *not* with the curriculum.
> (Catherine)

Daphne and Catherine speak about being free and in the present – freedom and presence

in absence of what could be called curriculum-as-plan. For Catherine, sometimes not

following the planned curriculum opens a space for being the most present with her

students. In the absence of following the planned curriculum, freedom to engage with

students here and now in the present opens up. Are being *with* the curriculum and *not*

with the curriculum mutually exclusive? Are there lingering traces of absence in

presence and presence in absence? In reflecting on Catherine's words, "in the present

not with the curriculum", I re-call Dr. Aoki's meditation on *yu-mu,* Japanese for

presence *and* absence:

> *Yu-mu* as both 'presence and absence' marks the space of
> ambivalence in the midst of which humans dwell. As such,
> Y*u-mu* is non-essentialist, denying the privileging of either
> 'presence' or 'absence', so deeply inscribed in the binarism of
> Western epistemology. As the groundless ground in traditions
> of wisdom, the ambiguity textured in *yu-mu* is understood as a
> site pregnant with possibilities.

Are curricular possibilities generated when teachers and students are residing in the

ambiguities of both presence and absence and in the ambi-valence of following *and* not

following?

Weaving in the Next Strand...

Each of the E.S. teachers brings stories about being with/in the class as it is happening now, as students and teachers are becoming, feeling, moving, observing, listening questioning, and following in a shared, uncertain and generative space together.

> It is the negotiated reality of the curricular journey
> between teacher and student that generates paradox,
> ambiguity, and surprise – the essence of creative thought.
> This must be reclaimed in our post-modern period.
> (jagodzinski, in Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, p. 168)

In listening, questioning, and responding to/with students, and thereby following and moving into "a negotiated reality of the curricular journey" (jagodzinski), questions of validity and meaningfulness arise. How and where is meaning constructed in a negotiated curricular journey? Arthur feels strongly that "valid answers must come from their own experience". Arthur and other teachers also question where, how and what constitutes meaning in and out of the classroom. Validity, value and meaningfulness are slippery words that reside in ambivalence and ambiguity. Strand Five re-writes the search (and re-search) for meaning and validation in the Experiential Studies curriculum re-visioning.

STRAND FIVE

Curriculum Re-visioning as
Re-searching Meaning

In the curriculum re-visioning of Experiential Studies, questions of meaning and value emerge. Experiential Studies is a course that attempts to bring basic communicative English into context of cultural learning and experience. The combining of these three themes sparks questions and controversy about the meaningfulness or superficiality of the curriculum. What informs the controversy and questioning of curricular meaning in E.S.? There isn't much discussion needed as to the value of basic language skill courses in the college. Students and teachers agree that communicative English language skills are necessary for studying and learning content. There appears to be a natural meaningfulness assigned to being able to communicate in English, even though there is disagreement among students and teachers as to the time, detail, methodology and emphasis that should be given to English skill development. To increase the 'validity' of the E.S. curriculum, Lynne suggests that it was necessary to add "survival orientation language units to give it some value - rather than the more abstract things like culture." Most of the other courses attempt to call upon students' experiences, build English skills and study content in context. What provokes inquiry and discussion into what is or isn't deep, valued or meaningful in E.S.?

There are some unique elements in E.S. that give rise to teachers' concerns about the limitations or possibilities for curricular depth, value or meaning: a) a short time frame

due to only two one-hour classes a week; b) expectations of "deeper" affiliations

between E.S. students and their advisors (the E.S. teacher); and c) evaluation of the

experiential community placement as 30% of the final academic evaluation of the

course. Contiguous to the external elements that promote dialogue is the personal and

more internal struggling that occurs with/in teachers and students when they question

the meaningfulness of the curriculum they are learning and teaching. Lynne, Arthur,

Elisa, Daphne, Catherine and I bring forward questions about the conditions in E.S. that

do or don't generate superficial learning, depth, value, evaluation, and meaningfulness

and we look to the multiple conceptions, interpretations and possibilities that inform

these words.

The Surface and Beyond

Arthur, Daphne and Elisa are particularly concerned about only touching the surface or

not going beyond the superficial in the teaching and learning occurring in the E.S.

classroom.

> ...in two 50 minute classes, I feel like we're maybe touching the
> surface and introducing stuff, but they aren't mastering anything
> we are giving them until they experience it. We give them a little
> bit of information about travel, and then they travel. (Daphne)

>> I like to think still that our ultimate goal....isn't just surface and
>> that learning some intuitive things about culture, and in
>> particular, getting beyond the surface levels of culture are being
>> accomplished by all teachers. (Elisa)

These teaching concerns are echoed by Ivor F. Goodson. In 1992 Goodson

characterized a teaching life as one of intersections where "the surface" and "the deep"

have a place:

> First, there is the personal intersection for...a life is lived on two
> levels...the *surface* and the *deep*...Second, the life operates at the
> intersection of context, as in issues of race and gender. Third, the
> teacher's life operates at the intersection of life as experiences and life as
> text... (in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 769)

Goodson's words appear to depict life as two dimensional and trapped in the binaries of

surface/deep and *experience/text*. However, he does bring to light some of the

important considerations interwoven into a teacher's curriculum re-visioning: surface,

depth, experience, text, and context. Goodson suggests that harmony across these

"levels" is desirable. However, the questioning, struggling, discomfort and disharmony

among these word/places may be part of the vitality of a curriculum-as-live(d) for

students and teachers.

> A lot depends on how willing students are
> to go beyond the surface. (Elisa)

Elisa wonders about students' abilities or willingness to go beyond the surface – to

explore more fully, to look beyond the obvious, to question and reflect. To facilitate

students going beyond the surface, teachers must be open to the same process. In a

discussion on the implementation of curriculum change (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, &

Taubman, 1995), several scholars (Bussis, Chittenden & Amarell, 1976; Connelly &

Clandinin, 1991) point to how teachers must be open to changing their thinking in order

for the curriculum to change. This implies that going beyond surface curriculum or

curriculum re-visioning is an interactive process that includes willingness and openness

to change on the part of the students *and* teachers. Elisa recognizes this when she says,

> I'm learning maybe to be a little more reflective about
> my own thoughts and feelings with them in the same

way I'm asking them to be reflective. And, I have found
that they are receptive to that. (Elisa)

What are the conditions that determine what is on the surface, superficial, and what is

not? By changing the noun, "surface", to the verb, surfacing", we make space for action

and possibilities to grow and emerge. Is a curriculum-as-live(d) responsive to and/or

created by whatever is surfacing? While enlightening the concept of multiculturalism,

Aoki (in Aoki & Shamsher, 1993) warns that what *surfaces* is not necessarily

comfortable, and may provoke dialogue and inquiry.

> Understandings of "multiculturalism" discomforting to
> many are surfacing. Shall we ignore them or allow
> dialogue to flow made possible by their surfacing? (p. 91)

Arthur says that he has "abandoned superficial learning" altogether. He avoids topics

and units that only present the facts or that do not provoke discussion and inquiry on the

part of the students. He looks for ways into a topic that will urge the students to stretch,

think, struggle. He prepares a class plan with which he himself has struggled to find

multiple possibilities *and* he comes into the class ready to abandon that which is not

stirring the students and himself *and* he responds to the possibilities as they are

surfacing. The *surface* becomes a bubbling place of multiple understandings, questions

and dialogue.

Looking for Depth

A friend of my son came to visit
recently, and I told him about the
huge pond in our neighbor's
field...After discussing that it would
be over his head if he fell in, over
my son's head, and even over *my*
head, he asked, "If a hundred year
old man stepped in it, would it be
over *his* head too?" I answered,
"yes, it's *that* deep."
(Jardine, 1992, p. 225)

> I continue to strive for topics that are
> meaningful and give some depth. (Elisa)

Jardine's story and Elisa's words bring us into multiple understandings and the slippery

ambiguity of the concept of depth. Looking for depth can catch us in verticality that

privileges a hierarchy of *what* is meaningful over what is not, without leaving space for

multiple meanings and questioning. By adding other dimensions, depth can also

become a horizontal chain of signifiers that avoids binary oppositions and hierarchy.

> Poststructuralists moved from a depth model of understanding to
> a ...horizontal plane.
>
> The signifier is freed from the signified to become a free-floating
> signifier which can be defined only by other signifiers...One result
> is that words such as "meaning", "subject", "object", "true", and
> so on lost their tacitly assumed value and substance, and
> remained only as arbitrary valorizing terms to organize and
> legitimate (or delegitimate) signifying chains or discourses.
> (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, p. 461-2)

Opening up understandings of depth and recognizing the slipperiness of any signifier

gives room for play and inquiry into the legitimization at work in curriculum re-

visioning.

One conception of 'depth' that Catherine and Daphne speak about is the possibility for

more trusting or confidential contact with students outside of the classroom due to the

advisor/advisee relationship. This association facilitates, in some cases, more

communication about students' feelings and inner thoughts.

Catherine and Daphne reflect on how "deeper contact" with students is developed and

the rewards that this kind of contact (opening) brings to them.

> The rewarding experience for me is the deeper contact
> with the students that we have which comes about
> through the interviews and which comes about from
> having them for the whole year, and the whole ambiance
> around that that they know that you are the teacher to
> be with them for the whole year and they make that
> effort and you make that effort. (Catherine)

> I think the most rewarding experiences are simply being able to
> connect with the student. So, if you have the student for a
> longer period of time and you also have opportunities for
> interviews, working on their end of year project, working on
> Open House together, whatever you've got as an opportunity to
> work with them one on one or a small group, that's what helps
> develop the rewarding experiences. (Daphne)

This kind of depth, freed from verticality, could be pictured as links created

horizontally, and/or places and gaps where students and teachers can move into

openings between fears, loves, misunderstandings, questions, and other confidences.

Daphne portrays another type of depth as an adding, linking, and exploring.

> We spend a lot of time first learning how to observe and
> then adding to the depth of students' observations and
> then adding to the depth of their writing about their
> observations, so that it is not totally all surface. That's
> the biggest challenge. (Daphne)

Daphne uses "we" when describing some of the steps she uses together with students to add depth to learning. Together, they learn how to observe carefully, to add to and expand each other's observations and to extend them through writing. When looking for curricular depth, teachers and students can look in/to, and move in, many directions, thereby adding links to their learning and opening places for further expansion.

Where Do We Place Value?

> Although I think that there is real substance in examining what
> is culture and looking at education and celebrations and the
> components as we do, I think that we have not got enough new
> material for the students to really sink their teeth into and value
> as important learning. (Elisa)

What do students and teachers *value* as important learning? Is it content that is "substantial", new material or something that students can "sink their teeth into" as Elisa suggests? Who defines valuable learning and how is it determined and demonstrated? Lynne, an original curriculum developer of the E.S. program, remembers that at first the E.S. course wasn't valued by administration, teachers and, sometimes, students: "We've always had this issue of the relevance of E.S. for the classroom." In Lynne's opinion, it was necessary to add survival language skills into the classroom curriculum to add to the *academic relevance* of experiential studies. The questioning of academic relevance partly springs from the inclusion of community placement experiences in classroom assignments and evaluation. The E.S. Community Placement Options were (and still are) questioned and "we could still get into philosophical discussions about the E.S. Options, but ...I think the importance of it is that students do value it as an experience" (Lynne). On in-house student surveys

conducted over the years, the majority of the students consider their E.S. Placement Options to be important. By assigning a 30% academic value on active participation and attendance in the community placement, the college could be said to reinforce (or reward) the value of experiential learning. The inclusion of something outside the classroom and outside the 'control' of the teacher into an academic mark assigned by the teacher is controversial among E.S. teachers.

> *One student who was earning a C- in classroom work, but received 30/30 in a community volunteer placement, had a final mark of C+ for the term. The teacher was upset. Did the student really do **excellent** cooperative participation, English speaking and attendance in the placement? Her work and attendance in class were poor. Aren't most volunteer agencies very subjective, giving a student an excellent mark when they may or may not have shown excellence? An A+ = Excellent. In an academic setting, very few students, if any, receive A+. How can this be justified in the experiential portion of the mark? One teacher said that the course work and the experiential component were like apples and oranges – how can we combine them in evaluation? (My journal, 1996)*

Re-writing the above journal entry brings me to a site of many questions. Which discourses of knowledge are teachers and students privileging? What ways of knowing are we validating out of our own subjectivities? Is there space for experiential learning to be subjective and ambiguous *and* assessed and academically graded? Can evaluation be subjective *and* objective? With Experiential Studies situated in the classroom *and* in the community – doubly informing – can we live with apples *and* oranges – ambivalence (double values)? Tensions between "received knowledge and lived experience" are ideological according to Britzman (1991). Values, ideas, beliefs,

investments, power, status, competence and discursive practices all press upon our

concepts of knowledge and interpretive possibilities. The transpositioning of

knowledge and experience in pedagogy impels teachers and students to question and

bring awareness to the subjectivities, values and interpretations in which they are living.

Elisa strives to bring awareness to the *value* of Experiential Studies for her students.

She finds that the value of the course is not obvious to students in the same way it is in a

language skills course or a content course such as Canadian History.

> I never have to *validate* the importance of other courses; I never
> have to justify that they're important. I feel that I'm still doing
> that often in E.S. as I'm trying to *validate* for students -
> something they can't do for themselves. (Elisa)

Is validation "something they can't do for themselves" because the students are Japanese

and are unaccustomed to a course that reflects on and questions cultural experience?

There are very few objective tests and exams that can be given in E.S. classes. Most of

the Japanese students at the college have just completed a high school education that

was primarily a preparation for university entrance exams. Discussion, questioning,

reflection and the generating of multiple understandings found in Experiential Studies

are not the usual methods of preparation for standardized exams. Do students have to

be directed to the "validity" or valuable possibilities of Experiential Studies, as Elisa

suggests, partly due to cultural differences?

The determination of significance and value is different for different individuals with

differing subjectivities, including cultural ones. Elisa wonders how the curriculum-as-

live(d) can make room for dialogue and negotiation among teachers and students – for

intersubjectivity – in the exploration of what is valuable.

> I may have thought that something was less
> significant, but the students thought it was extremely
> significant. I think as a teacher, I sometimes thrust
> something upon them that they let me know they
> don't value; and maybe I don't give them enough
> chance to let me know what they really do find
> significant and go with it. (Elisa)

Dialogue and negotiation suggest some predetermination of what is of curricular value.

In interactive learning and teaching, what and how value is perceived can also emerge

unexpectedly in the moment or later in reflection as Elisa points out.

> The homeroom types of things come into the ES classroom and I
> sometimes resent the time it takes. On the other hand, I
> sometimes sit back and watch the students, as I did just
> recently, trying to decide what they wanted to do for Open
> House because they couldn't serve octopus. And, I sit back and
> watch that evolution of decision making and I think to myself,
> this is experiential studies at its best. I'm not guiding this, but
> they are having an experience where they are trying to do
> something in my culture from their culture. And instead of
> thinking 'Oh I've lost this 10 minutes from my class', I
> sometimes find myself thinking, 'What an incredible 10 minutes
> this is.' Again, I'm not sure that they perceive how *valuable* it is
> until much later. But, I see in it sometimes that I'm tapping my
> toes and going, 'I had so much to do this class' and I've stopped
> myself and said, 'What's happening here is really good. You're
> seeing a leader emerge that's surprising you' and that's what's
> happening right now. (Elisa)

When questioning and determining value, we can begin by bringing awareness of the

subjectivities and interpretations of self and other(s) and by allowing space for

ambivalence and multiple values. Among students and teachers, constituting value and

what is valued or valuable becomes an interactive and intersubjective activity.

Searching for Meaningful

The challenge is to create *meaningful* E.S.
classroom experiences for our students. (Lynne)

> [lived experience should mean
> experience that is fully alive, full of
> lives that go beyond my wanting
> and willing, *including* (perhaps
> *especially* including) my
> phenomenological want of essence.
> (Jardine, 1992, p. 154)

Britzman (1991) invites us to consider that "...reality does not take on an immutable and

unitary presence" (p. 51). When the same is applied to meaning, it is unhooked from an

essential, transparent or univocal "presence." Bhabha (1994) examines the production

of meaning in language inside and outside of cultural contexts – contexts that are

relevant in a classroom of Japanese students taught by an English-speaking Canadian.

> The reason a cultural text or system of meaning cannot be sufficient
> unto itself is that the act of cultural enunciation – the *place of*
> *utterance* – is crossed by the *differance* of writing. This has less to
> do with ...varying attitudes to symbolic systems within cultures than
> with the structure of symbolic representation itself...the structure of
> symbolization. It is this difference in the process of language that is
> crucial to the production of meaning and ensures, at the same time,
> that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent (p.36).

A student writes:

Differences of culture confuse us,
other culture's people,
because sometime we can't understand
why Canadians think different from Japanese,
although it is so natural.
We did an exercise in ES class about it last class.
Actually, at that time, I couldn't understand that
class's meaning.

> Bhabha goes on to say that

the pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication
between the I and the You designated in the statement. The
production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in
the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general
conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance
in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in
itself' be conscious (p. 36).

Bhabha posits that inherent to the production, communication and interpretation of

meaning are self, other and a Third Space of the conditions and contexts of language

that are called into play. The results, as Bhabha suggests, are ambivalent meanings and

a recognition that "the meaning of utterance is quite literally neither the one nor the

other" (p. 36), but somewhere in between. Bhabha's re-writing of meaning serves to

remind us of the complexity and ambiguity inherent in communicating and generating

meaning in any context, including differing cultural and pedagogical contexts.

*In a faculty meeting where a new innovation is being
discussed, a Japanese teacher/counselor who teaches the
Japanese course to all students asked, "What does this
mean? What is the purpose of this?"*

*I hadn't thought of approaching the innovation in this
way. Some of us were already grappling with the logistics
of the change. When we enter into his questioning, we
also enter into the midst of the multiple Japanese and
Canadian perceptions and understandings of signification
and meaningfulness. We enter into (inter)cultural
con/textuality where meaning cannot be taken for granted,
where language, context, and other/self awareness must
navigate between slippery ambi-valences. (my journal
entry, 1995)*

Bill Ashcroft looks to where language and meaning are "mutually constituted" and

contextually situated. In the same way that a word has multiple meanings interdependent

with its 'situatedness', so too meaning becomes a multiplicity of located, situated

possibilities.

> Words are never simply referential in the actual dynamic habits of a
> speaking community. Even the most simple words like 'hot', 'big'...have
> a number of meanings, depending on how they are used. Brought to the
> site of meaning which stands at the intersection between two separate
> cultures, the word demonstrates the total dependence of that meaning
> upon its 'situated-ness'.
> (Ashcroft in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995, p. 300)

Ashcroft suggests that "meaning and the understanding of meaning can occur because

the language encodes the reciprocity of the experiences of each conversant. It is the

situation, the *'event'* of this reciprocal happening which 'tells', which 'refers', which

'informs" (p. 299).

Bringing Bhabha's and Ashcroft's insights about the production of meaning to the

curriculum re-visioning process, leads to revisiting Elisa's exploration of the slippery,

complex and interdependent nature of significance and meaning/fullness.

> I may have thought that something was less significant,
> but the students thought it was extremely significant. I
> think as a teacher, I sometimes thrust something upon
> them that they let me know they don't value; and maybe
> I don't give them enough chance to let me know what
> they really do find significant and go with it. (Elisa)

When the production or communication of meaning is not assumed or taken for granted,

it becomes an actively constructive process. Elisa wonders how and where she can

encourage dialogue with her students so that together they are constructing meanings in

a curriculum-as-live(d). This is an ongoing process as meanings change, multiply and

re-write themselves.

Any meaning or identity (including our own) is provisional and
relative, because it is **never exhaustive...**
(Appignanesi & Garratt, 1995, p. 79).

> Meanings are never closed and 'finished'
> but open and negotiable. There is never a
> final interpretation because we never reach
> a final perception...Meaning is derived
> from an active process of involvement and
> participation. It is drawn out, created,
> constructed...(Slaughter, 1989, p. 267).

Who and what determines deep, valuable and meaningful learning? The work of curriculum re-visioning individually and as a team suggests that some determination must be made. E.S. teachers, using their own subjectivities, choose what to value as learning goals and objectives for the course. However, if predetermined value can live concurrently with openness to what emerges with/in the living classroom, the curriculum can become a springboard for generating meaningful possibilities and inexhaustible possibilities of meanings.

> Meaning is thus a plentitude.
> (Kondo, 1990, p. 35)

STRAND SIX

Revisiting the Writings of the Study:
Three Metonymic Moments

In lieu of a conclusion or summary, Strand Six is a 'working through' that is not guided

by a concept of an end; it is a returning to re-view what is emerging in the study,

interacting in the present with what is, and registering what is newly constructed without

a conclusiveness in mind (Lyotard, 1991). In search of opening and constituting new

awareness and understandings, rather than fixity, this Strand is a re-visiting of Jardine's

"ongoing process, ...experiencing, (and)... partial and potential journeying" (This study,

p. 10) with/in the study.

Metonymy is at play in the writings of this study and three metonymic moments

emerged in the revisiting and re-reading of the study – a story of a metonymic opening

to life; the metonymic possibilities with/in Experiential Studies; and the interrelated

curricular becomings in the emptiness (*mu*) of "independent existence".

Invitation – (In *life)* – A Metonymic Moment

The writings in this study are "more concerned with opening up...vantage points than

arriving at a destination..." (Eisner, 1979, p. viii), and I am reminded of a vantage point

in Yamada's story at the end of Trinh's (1989) book. This is a story where there is both

a yearning for invitation (*vit – life) and* not receiving it. In the story, the old woman

becomes thankful for *not* getting what she wants. There is a joyous affirmative moment

within a negative one as she witnesses a memorable site that grows in the midst of

metonymy.

A BEDTIME STORY

Once upon a time,
an old Japanese legend
goes as told
by Papa,
an old woman traveled through
many small villages
seeking refuge
for the night.
Each door opened
a sliver
in answer to her knock
then closed.
Unable to walk
any further
she wearily climbed a hill
found a clearing
and there lay down to rest
a few moments to catch
her breath.

The villagetown below
lay asleep except
for a few starlike lights.

Suddenly the clouds opened
and a full moon came into view
over the town.
The old woman sat up
turned toward
the village town
and in supplication
called out

Thank you people
of the village,
if it had not been for your
kindness
in refusing me a bed
for the night
these humble eyes would never
have seen this
memorable sight.

Papa paused, I waited.
In the comfort of our
hilltop home in Seattle
overlooking the valley,
I shouted,
"That's the END?"

Mitsuye Yamada, *Camp Notes*
(in Trinh, 1989, pp. 150-151)

In the Midst of Metonymy...

Metaphor and metonymy, vertical and horizontal signification, are at play in metonymic

moments. Metaphor, which symbolizes or identifies something of similar qualities,

tends to privilege, in the tradition of Aristotle, thought over language (Chaitin, in

Makaryk, 1993). Metaphor can be described as a vertical signification where the

signifier and signified are directly related. When language and meaning do not form a

direct fixed relationship, ambiguity – a site where difference is alive – is possible.

Metonymy moves into the ambivalence and interdependence of *what is* **and** *what is not*.

A horizontal signifying chain allows links to difference and space for presence *and*

absence, invitation *and* refusal, thing *and* no-thing. . As soon as something becomes

fixed or concrete – doesn't its opposite (shadow) immediately appear?

> The 'true' is always marked and informed by the ambivalence of the process of emergence itself, the productivity of meanings that construct counter-knowledges in medias res, in the very act of agonism, within the terms of a negotiation (rather than a negation) of oppositional and antagonistic elements.   (Bhabha, 1994, p. 22)

Bhabha highlights the ambivalence of "...the process of emergence"; as the 'true' emerges, so do the opposites.

Metonymic language, rather than replacing something with a similar word or image, constitutes corresponding interconnected relationships – a horizontal signifying chain. "Jakobson asserted that the process of contiguity and similarity ... form the basis not only of literary styles but also of all language and thought, including everyday speech, even unconscious formations such as dreams" (Chaitin in Makaryk, 1993, p. 590). Metonymy coupled with metaphor informs the Lacanian primacy of language over thought that could be depicted as, 'we don't write with ideas, we write with words'. Without privileging one over the other, writing with words *and* ideas brings metaphor *and* metonymy into play.

Within the juxtaposition of words, where space is created between two signifiers, meaning is generated. Here, there is metonymic movement between signifiers and signified, signifiers and signifiers and vertical and horizontal signification.

> Writing is a signifying practice wherein significance emerges in the play between signifiers and signified.   (Aoki, 1994, p. 7)

Looking for depth can catch us in
verticality that privileges a hierarchy of
what is meaningful over what is not,
without leaving space for multiple
meanings and questioning. By adding
other dimensions, depth can also become a
horizontal chain of signifiers that avoids
binary oppositions and hierarchy.
(This study, p. 85)

> The destabilization of meaning – the slippery
> signifier - makes room for multiple meanings,
> storying and poetry. (This study, p. 17)

Metonymy allows words and meanings, deconstructed and "opened up", to move

between the verticality of metaphor and the horizontal links of metonymy. This

movement allows the signifiers to slip,

    to open, and

        to create gaps and fissures where possibilities, new

    understandings and contiguous meanings can be constituted.

The openings, the *ands*, between signifiers where ambiguity and ambivalence arise are

places where multiplicities, new understandings and possibilities can grow.

> And in-dwelling in that space of AND that grammarians
> call a con-joining place, I found that the space for joining
> with others is also a space of opening up-a space of
> becoming, a generative space of pleasant ambivalence, of
> tensioned doubled valences.
> (Aoki ,1995b, p. 198)

In the *Ands*, in the spaces between one position and an other, are opportunities for

plurality, multivocity, difference and the displacement of binary thinking. Here are

places for a non-exclusionary *both* – places for metonymic spaces, movement and possibilities.

Experiential Studies – a Metonymic Space of Possibilities

Emerging from the multiple voices in these writings is a picture of Experiential Studies re-visioning as stammering, questioning, responsive, ongoing conversations.

> With/in the multiple, ambivalent and contradictory nature of experience – both this *and* that and the interspaces between – is also the stammering of language struggling to communicate. (This study, p. 44)

Grounded in *and* stirred by the interactive possibilities among teachers and students, uncertainty, questioning and dialogue generate ever-changing curricular understandings and re-visions. Even as these words are going on/to the paper, Experiential Studies is undergoing a new kind of curriculum and program re-vision. The college is consolidating into one campus and questions are arising as to the curriculum and program that will emerge in a new curricular and community landscape. Teachers are re-searching ways to create understandings and openings into the ambiguous notions of "experiential" for new students, teachers and administrators. There are fears of losing what has become, stammerings of what is and is not, and hopes for what will emerge. We are in the midst of change, as always. "We are subjects in process. There is no fixed center subject" (Hasebe-Ludt, Duff, & Leggo, 1995, p. 71) in Experiential Studies and in pedagogy.

> What he is becoming changes
> as much as he does himself.
> (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 2)

> *What actually happens in E.S. is in*
> *the midst of changing as the*
> *students and faculty are themselves.*
> (This study, p. 76)

As I am (we are) writing, we are (I am) changing. As curriculum is being "written", it (we) is (are) changing. We (I) need to re-write almost as soon as I (we) have written. Writing is re-writing as we enter into language together, "where the shadow of the Other falls upon the Self" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 60). Engagement ("re") in the other, changes the authors, changes self. Authors are displaced, moved to the margins and changed as soon as they are involved with others. When authors stop being the author; when two people don't work together but between the two, then stories of becoming emerge (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987). What comes into being and into view is neither the voice of other or self, but that which emerges between the horizontal and vertical metonymic interactions of those voices – curricular becomings occurring *between* the many voices.

> We are subjects in process. There is no fixed-center subject, no
> monolithic, uniform, sovereign, autonomous subject position which is
> inherent ... Instead, we are floating subjects, plural subjects, moving
> subjects constantly influenced by and influencing processes of
> formation, information, reformation, conformation, deformation, and
> transformation.   (Hasebe-Ludt, Duff, & Leggo, 1995, p. 71)

Together, we are working in the tensionality of difference. We are struggling with the language of modernity. We are stammering in creativity.

Listening to six female Japanese students
as they negotiate the meaning of various
characters in Kanji... One student writes
some characters trying to approximate the
sound of an Anglophone name. Five other
students stand by discussing in Japanese if
the sound/Kanji is correct. One student,
the writer, keeps erasing and changing as
other students contribute new
understandings. Together, and without
conclusion, they agree to a "final" written
creation. No/thing is conclusive.
Questions and wonderings are still
comfortably hanging in the air, discussions
for another time... (my journal, 1998)

Together, and without conclusion, we are engaged in curricular becomings, re-writing

and re-visioning in the midst of, and changed by, our many voices.

In the Emptiness (無 *mu)* of "Independent Existence"

Nothing has any *inherent* existence of its own when you really look at it,
and this absence of independent existence is what we call "emptiness".....
When you think of a tree, you tend to think of a distinctly defined object;
and on a certain level, ...it is.
But when you look more closely at the tree, you will see that ultimately it has
no independent existence.
When you contemplate it, you will find that it dissolves into an extremely subtle net of
relationships that stretches across the universe.
....everything in the universe helps to make the tree what it is; ...
it cannot be isolated from anything else....
This is what we mean when we say things are empty;
that they have no independent existence. (Rinpoche, 1992, p. 37-38)

The subtle net of interrelationships ensures that students, teachers, curricular re-

visioning, change, meaning, and significance are not isolated from each other. When

the generation of value or meaning is seen in the context of interdependent existence

and interrelated activity, "multiplicity grows from the middle" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987,

p. viii). As Rinpoche (1992) points out, the tree, on a certain level, is distinct from other

objects, but upon looking closer, one begins to perceive how the tree is only made

possible by its interrelatedness to everything in the universe. With/in emptiness, there is

a metonymic movement between vertical signification or distinct definition *and*

horizontal connectiveness that "cannot be isolated from anything else".

> Situated in both presence (*yu*) and absence
> (*mu*), teachers are free to move into a
> place...that includes presence and absence
> and into "a site pregnant with possibilities"
> for students, teachers and interactive
> responsive curriculum vision/revision.
> (This study, p. 62)

Being present in the recognition that together, in interdependent difference, we generate

multiple understandings and further questions is not always an easy, free or comfortable

place. "At the heart of teaching is an agony, not an essence" (Jardine, 1992, p. 190).

The agony of pedagogy is a living through with others, with change and with

uncertainty.

> The way that we understand 'other' is crucial to
> teaching and curriculum re-visioning. We are, as
> Aoki (1994) affirms, "involved with others in the
> tensionality of difference." Working with others
> in difference is difficult, a site of struggle and
> tension...the Experiential Studies team struggle(s)
> to create meaning ...with others (in difference) in
> and out of the classroom. (This study, p. 24)

In the emptiness that characterizes the absence of independent existence, everyone and

everything help to create what occurs and emerges in curricular becomings. As one

person and/or thing changes, everyone/everything changes. As one question or meaning

arises, more are generated. Where are the places of ending in the midst of interrelated

activity and becomings?　　　　無

Bibliography

Aoki, T. T.(1983). Observation experiencing ethnicity as a Japanese Canadian teacher: Reflections on a personal curriculum. *Curriculum Inquiry, 13*(3), 321-332.

Aoki, T. T.(1986). Teaching as in-dwelling between two curriculum worlds. *The B.C. Teacher, April/May.*

Aoki, T. T. (1988). Toward a dialectic between the conceptual world and the lived world: Transcending instrumentalism in curriculum orientation. In W. Pinar (Ed.) *Contemporary curriculum discourses,* (pp.402-416). Scottsdale, AR: Gorsuch Scarisbrick.

Aoki, T.T. (1991). *Inspiriting curriculum pedagogy: Talks to teachers.* Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Printing Services.

Aoki, T.T. (1993, Spring). Legitimating lived curriculum: towards a curricular landscape of multiplicity. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 8*(3), 255-268.

Aoki, T. T. & Shamsher, M. (Eds.) (1993). *The call of teaching.* B.C.: B.C. Teachers' Federation Program for Quality Teaching.

Aoki, T.T. (1994). Journalizing as Writing/Re-writing: Recovering and constituting/re-constituting meanings of lived experiences. Prepared for a workshop atCanadian International College, B.C.

Aoki, T. T. (1995a). "In the midst of doubled imaginaries: the pacific community as diversity and as difference". An invited address for Imagining a Pacific Community: Representation and Education Conference, Vancouver.

Aoki, T. T.(1995b) In the midst of language education and global education. In M. Chapman & J. Anderson (Eds.). *Thinking globally about language education.* UBC: Research and Development Studies.

Appignanesi, R., Garrat, C., Sardar, Z. & Curry, P. (1995). *Postmodernism for beginners*. Cambridge: Icon Books.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (Eds.) (1995). *The post-colonial studies reader*. London & New York: Routledge.

Barthes, R. (1975). *The pleasure of the text*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Bhabha, H. (1990). Interrogating identity. Identity Documents 6.
Portions of this article appear in H. Bhabha. (1994) *The Location of Culture*.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

Britzman, D.P. (1991). *Practice makes practice. A critical study of learning to teach*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.

Carson, T. R. (1986). Closing the gap between research and practice: Conversation as a mode of doing research. *Phenomenology + Pedagogy,4*(2).

Carson, T. (1992) Collaboratively inquiring into action research. Edmonton: University of Alberta.

Chaitin, G. (1995). Metonymy/metaphor. In I.R. Makaryk's (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of contemporary literature theory: Approaches, scholars, terms* (pp. 589-591). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Cogan, D. (1995). Should foreign teachers of English adapt their methods to Japanese patterns of learning and classroom interaction? *The Japan Association for Language Teaching, 19*(1), 36-38.

Connelly, R. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (1988). *Teachers as curriculum planners*. (pp. 3-10) Toronto, ON: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Culler, J. (1982). *On deconstruction*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Deleuze, G. & Parnet, C. (1987). *Dialogues*. New York: Columbia University Press

Doll, Jr., W.E.(1993). Curriculum possibilities in a "post"-future. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 8*(4), 277-292.

Duncan, James & Ley, David (Eds).(1993). *Place/cuture/representation*. London & N.Y: Routledge.

Eisner, E.W. (1979). *The educational imagination*. New York: Macmillan.

Foucault, M. (1977). *language, counter-memory, practice: selected essays and interviews*. In D. Bouchard,(Ed). New York: Cornell University Press.

Gadamer, H.G. (1986). Philosophical apprenticeships. 177-193. MIT Press.

Goldberg, N. (1990). *Wild mind: Living the writer's life*. New York: Bantam.

Grumet, M., (1992). Existential and phenomenological foundations of autobiographical methods. In W. Pinar & W. Reynolds (Eds.). *Understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text* (pp. 28-43). New York: Teacher's College Press.

Gudmundsdottir, S. (1991). Story-maker, story-teller: narrative structures in curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 23*(3). 207-218.

Hall, S.(1990) Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.) *Identity: Community, culture, difference* (222-247). London, UK: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hasebe-Ludt, E., Duff, P., & Leggo, C. (1995). Community with/out unity: A postmodern reflection. In M. Chapman & J. Anderson (Eds.). *Thinking globally about language education*. UBC: Research and Development Studies.

Jardine, D.W.(1992). *Speaking with a boneless tongue*. Bragg Creek: Makyo Press.

Khamasi, J.W. (1997). *Exploring school advisors' practices: Dwelling in/between the tectonic spaces.* Doctor of Philosophy Thesis. University of B.C.

Kondo, D. (1990). *Crafting selves: Power, gender, and discourses of identity in a Japanese workplace.* Chicago: U of Chicago Press.

Krall, F. R. (1988). From the inside out – personal history as educational research. *Educational Theory,38* (4), 467-479.

Lacan, J. (1994). In R.Usher & R. Edwards. *Postmodernism and education.* New York: Routledge.

Low, M. (1996). the 'double me': the action of (ESL) writing. A paper submitted to Dr. Aoki (UBC) in response to the comprehension question: What is it to write, doubled in languages and cultures?

Lyotard, J. F.(1991). *The inhuman.* (Chapter 2). Stanford University Press.

MacGowan, C. (Ed.) (1988). *The collected poems of William Carlos Williams – Volume II, 1939 – 1962.* New York: New Directions.

Messer-Davidow, E. (1985). Knowers, knowing, knowledge: feminist theory and education. *Journal of Thought, 20*(3), 8-24.

Musgrave, S. (1994). *Musgrave landing: Musings on the writing life.* Toronto: Stoddart.

Pinar, W. (Ed.) (1975). *Curriculum theorizing, The reconceptualists.* (pp.84-85). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Pinar, W. (Ed.) (1988). *Contemporary curriculum discourses.* (pp. 402-416). Scottsdale, AR: Gorsuch Scarisbrick.

Pinar, W., & Reynolds, W. (Eds.) (1992). *Understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text*. New York: Teacher's College Press.

Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, W. M., Slattery, P. & Taubman, P.M. (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Counterpoints-Peter Lang.

Reeder, K. & Wilson, D.C. (Eds.) (1978). *Language, culture and curriculum*. Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, U.B.C.

Reid, W.& Walker, D.F. (Eds.) (1975). *Case studies in curriculum change: Great Britain and the U.S.* London & Boston: Routledge' Kegan Paul.

Reid, W. A. (1992). The state of curriculum inquiry. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 24*(2), 165-177.

Richter, L. (1994*) Constituting and re-constituting in the tensionality of in-between curriculum planning and living curriculum* (MA thesis). University of Victoria.

Rinpoche, Sogyal (1992). *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Schwab, J. J. (1962). The concept of the structure of a discipline. In H. Giroux, A. Penna & W. Pinar. (Eds.). (1981). *Curriculum & instruction, Alternatives in education* (pp.51-61). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Schwab, J. J. (1969). The practical: A language for curriculum. *School Review 78*(1), 1-23.

Slaughter,R. A. (1989). Cultural reconstruction in the post-modern world. *Journal of Curriculum Studies 21*(3), 255-270.

Sumara, D. J. & Luce-Kapler, R. (1993). Action research as a writerly text: locating co-labouring in collaboration. *Educational Action Research, 1*(3), 387-395.

Suzuki, D. & Oiwa, K. (1996). *The Japan we never knew: A journey of discovery* Toronto: Stoddart.

Trinh, T. Minh-ha (1989). *Woman native other*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Torbert, W. R. (1972). *Learning from experience*. New York & London: Columbia University

Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Usher, R. & Edwards, R. (1994). *Postmodernism and education*. New York: Routledge.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1987). Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc.

Willinsky, J. (1995). Language, nation, world. In M. Chapman & J. Anderson (Eds.). *Thinking globally about language education*. UBC: Research and Development Studies.

APPENDIX A

Introductory Letter / Consent Form

APPENDIX B

Sample Interview Questions

1.   Teaching:
        What are some of the challenges and rewarding experiences you are having and
        have had as a teacher in the Experiential Studies Program?

2.   Developing Curriculum:
        Teachers in the Experiential Studies team have participated and are participating
        actively in developing the curriculum for the overall course and for their own
        classes.
        What influences do you find to be significant - in or out of the classroom -
        when developing the overall curriculum or when making changes to suit your
        classes?

3.   The question being posed in this study is: "How shall we understand the
        interlingual and intercultural spaces within which students, teachers and
        curriculum writers articulate experiences in the Experiential Studies program?"
        Could you please speak to this question.