

**Relationships of power:
Exploring teachers' emotions as experienced in interactions with their peers.**

by

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Emotions play a significant role in the lives of teachers, especially in their interactions with their workplace peers. This research uses a case study approach to explore this topic through the medium of an asynchronous on-line discussion group. Twelve public school teachers, eight women and four men, from BC, Canada, volunteered to participate anonymously in a 12 week on-line forum.

The study was guided by three research questions: 1) How do teachers make sense of their emotional interactions with their peers? 2) How do these understandings change through discussion with a group of peers over 12 weeks? 3) What understandings of the emotional processes of school culture emerge when teachers discuss and reflect on these emotional aspects of their work in a collaborative setting?

The participants responded to weekly focus questions and also initiated their own discussion topics. They were introduced to alternative perspectives of emotion, including the social constructionist, feminist, and discursive. They were asked to focus on everyday interactions with their peers and to suggest what the emotions they experienced and observed achieved within the group. They were also encouraged to pay attention to the

feeling rules in their staff meetings and to notice which emotions they thought were deemed appropriate to be expressed and which were deemed inappropriate.

Initially the participants used a number of strategies based on the individualized and psychological perspectives of emotions to make sense of their interactions. During the discussion group they were able to discuss their interactions in a safe non-judgemental setting and to reinterpret them in light of new information. Competition, patriarchy, and neo-liberal education policies were seen to influence the dynamics of the workplace.

Two mechanisms which appeared to link the teachers' individual, private experiences of emotions with the culture of the school were the use of the words "positive" and "negative" and the norms embedded in the feeling rules of each school. These mechanisms both constrained and allowed the expression of certain emotions, opinions, and points of view in the workplace, thereby highlighting the political role of emotions. Symbolically the forum represented a collective space within an individualized world.

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Dedication

I am dedicating this dissertation to the memory of

“Lynn”

who died, aged 55, on May 31, 2009 from cancer.

She was a passionate and compassionate teacher
who cared deeply about and supported her students and their families.

Chapter 1: Introductions

In this chapter I first introduce the twelve teachers who comprised the group of participants. I then introduce the problem, describe my interest in the topic, and give a brief introduction to the literature in order to situate my inquiry within it. Next I describe the purpose of my inquiry, give my understanding of emotion and emotional experiences, state my research questions, and briefly outline my conceptual framework. I end with a description of my stance as researcher.

The Group

I have chosen to begin by introducing the teachers who took part in this research because I want to give you, the readers, the opportunity to meet the people behind the names. Had it not been for their willingness to engage in the on-line forum this research would not exist. During the three months on line they shared their joys and their vulnerabilities with each other and with me. In the following chapters you will hear their voices as they “talk” with each other on-line. Unfortunately one of the things which happens in a written report is that the participants are often referred to simply as “the participants” in an almost disembodied way. By introducing them at the beginning I hope to make them “real.” Relationships are at the heart of this research so it is fitting that I present to you the teachers you will be meeting in later chapters.

Beatrice

At the time of our interview Beatrice was in her ninth year of teaching as an English and Special Education teacher at a secondary school of 750 students. She had returned to university after a brief career in retail management and started teaching when

she was thirty. Her BA was in English and History and she attributes her interest in labour issues partly to her history studies. Although she didn't plan initially to be a teacher she decided to go into education because she saw it as a vehicle for activism. She has been very involved with her local teachers' association and with the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) provincially.

Beatrice said she was drawn to the study when she saw the information on the BCTF Social Justice list-serve because it was about emotions and also mentioned the current educational context. She said that "the combination of political and emotional pretty much sums up my whole being." Her response to the changes in education since 2002 has been very emotional and she was pleased that someone actually wanted her to talk about it because her family and colleagues were tired of hearing about her reaction. Indeed, she said, her reaction is so different from that of her peers that she has wondered if there is something wrong with her. She contrasted her reaction to the stripping of the teachers' contract by the provincial government in 2002 with that of her peers. "I thought we should be rioting in the streets and other people were like 'Well, okay this sucks, but do we have to take a day of protest?' and I really did feel that people were kind of annoyed, whereas I was devastated."

Ben

Ben had been teaching for thirty-five years and was still enjoying the profession. He taught Science at a senior secondary school. He recalled seeing the letter about the research in his local teachers' association newsletter. He was marking papers at the time. He read it "and I just got thinking about it. Actually I stopped what I was doing, and I just went back and picked it up again and I thought, 'You know that's a neat idea.'" Ben went

on to describe how a few days earlier the staff had discussed a “rather hot and heavy topic” at their regular staff meeting. He said that “some people were getting a little bit red faced and were holding their pens, white knuckled, making little scribbles on their agendas.” When he read about the research he thought that it would be an interesting topic to explore “or even just to be involved in and talk to somebody about it, because in teaching emotions do run high.” He thought that a better understanding of emotions would help people learn how to deal with conflict on staff better and he was also interested in where the on-line discussion would lead and how it would affect the way he sees things in the school. “The school year is always a roller coaster ride, of feelings and everything else, both kids and staff, and maybe to look at that process or look at the year in a different light, it might change the way I do things.”

Bronwyn

Before Bronwyn went into education she worked in children’s day care and as a driver for the local Handydart bus. She graduated from her BEd programme the same month as she celebrated her fortieth birthday. At the time of our interview she had been teaching for fourteen years and was in her seventh year as a Grade 6 “generalist” teacher at a middle school comprised of 520 students. She had recently completed her master’s project on the effects of globalization on education with particular reference to professional development. Bronwyn has been active in local teacher associations since she began teaching and is also involved in the union at provincial level.

Bronwyn responded to the project because she believes emotions are important. “I totally believe that a teacher’s emotional life is completely reflected in their professional life.” Bronwyn is often called on to mediate disagreements on staff. She believes that

people's ability to resolve a problem largely depends on their ability to address the emotional issues underlying it. "People being uncooperative with each other are being uncooperative usually because they are defending themselves at an emotional level. So if you can figure out what that emotional issue is and make that safe, then the willingness to cooperate on the other issue on the surface usually comes into play."

Edgeee

Edgeee started teaching in 1999 after having a number of other occupations including a stay-at-home mother and a columnist for a local newspaper. At the time of our interview she was teaching a class of Grade 7 students in an elementary school of just under 300 students. She observed that many teachers don't like taking the Grade 7 age group but she likes "a little attitude" and she enjoys helping the students "take that attitude and work with it." Edgeee was in her late thirties when she began her BA. She wanted to go into teaching "to make a difference in the world." She believes that students benefit hugely when they have the confidence to hold conversations and communicate with adults. She encourages them and helps them learn how to express their opinions respectfully.

Edgeee saw the information about the research on the BCTF Social Justice list-serve. She said that the prospect of engaging in a conversation about emotions and feelings and seeing how other people deal with their situations really appeals to her. She added that often it doesn't feel safe to talk to family and friends about what goes on day to day so that having a group of people who all have the same background appeals to her. "You don't have to explain things because everybody has a common understanding." The aspect of community also appeals to her. She thinks "it's high time we had some sort of

format for teachers who wish to have a safe place to discuss these things and not worry about chastisement or loss of job.”

Harmonie

Harmonie has been teaching French and Spanish in secondary schools for nine years. She is in the fifth year at her current school which comprises 500 students and 30 teaching staff. Harmonie’s bachelor degree was in French and her master’s was in French Literature. She said she hesitated a few years between doing her MA and her BEd because she was thinking about doing a PhD. In the end she chose to take the BEd but still intends to pursue the PhD “when the time is right.” “But,” she said, “teaching can just kind of take over your life.” Harmonie is involved as Professional Development chairperson at her school.

Harmonie responded to the research topic when she saw it on the BCTF Professional Development list-serve because she finds the greatest struggle of being a teacher is managing her own emotions. She said she thinks of emotion as an intuition of some kind. “I feel I can sense negative energy and it makes me feel negative.” She explains that she is “easily triggered by negativity” and so she is “just learning how not to be angered, annoyed, disappointed. I think I’m starting to learn that now.”

Kernel

Kernel is in his twenty eighth year of teaching. He graduated from UBC with a BEd. in Industrial Education and has recently completed a master’s in Technical Education. He said his interest was piqued by the topic of the research because he had

taken a few courses in culture while doing his master's and was very interested in the topic. He thought the research sounded as though it would cover cultural issues.

Regarding his thoughts about emotions, Kernel said he was interested in the connection between conscience and emotions. He had been reading a number of books about sociopaths and wondered how "these people operate." He observed that if people cannot feel emotions they are not able to tell right from wrong. He also talked about the effects of cultural conditioning on emotions. He noted that secondary school teachers need to have a measure of control over their students but not be "cold-hearted." He also described how the lack of a staff room in his school had contributed to a fragmentation of the staff.

Lil

Lil started teaching in 1980 and taught high school French for 22 years. Then, tired of teaching "avoir" and "etre," she decided to change assignments. To that end she took an on-line master's degree in Library Studies from the University of Alberta and, at the time of the interview, she was in her second year as a teacher-librarian in the largest elementary school in her district with 380 students. The school was not funded for a full-time librarian so Lil also taught French and was the Literacy Coordinator.

Lil responded to the study originally because she thought it was about stress and, at the time when she read about it in her local teacher association newsletter, she was experiencing an emotionally upsetting time. Her doctor told her that she was exhibiting classic menopause symptoms and suggested she took time off work, but rather than taking weeks off before Christmas, Lil decided to go on a four day week. When she found out the research was about emotions and peer relationships she thought it sounded

interesting and so decided to participate. She said she had enjoyed good relationships with staff during her 26 years teaching and wondered what other people's experiences were.

Lynn

At the time of our interview Lynn was in her twelfth year of teaching and in the third year in her present school. Teaching was her second career. She took her professional education year after she had gained her BSc in Bio-chemistry but didn't enjoy the practicum so she chose to work as a lab technician. That career lasted for twelve years until changes at the hospital where she worked meant that she no longer interacted with the patients. She then upgraded her teaching qualifications and added a Special Education diploma. For most of her first nine years teaching she was a teacher-on-call. Sometimes she got temporary contracts teaching Science, Math, and Library.

Lynn decided to contact me about the research after she read about it in her local association newsletter. She explained that she was having some "emotional discomfort" around staff meetings. As a Special Education teacher in a secondary school Lynn sometimes needed to share information with the rest of the staff and she said the only way she can do that is at a staff meeting. On the last occasion, as on some previous occasions, she was met with "rudeness and cat-calls" from certain teachers. Lynn said she had left the meeting feeling angry, resentful, and embarrassed and "angry because I'm embarrassed, because why should I be embarrassed?" She said she was curious to hear about other teachers' experiences because she feels somewhat isolated. Her school building was recently renovated and only a little space was allotted to a "pokey little staff

room” which leads her to speculate that most of the staff probably feels “remarkably isolated.”

Malph

When I interviewed Malph she was in her seventeenth year of teaching and her fourteenth year in BC. Her first three years of teaching were in Saskatchewan where she had gone to high school and where she had raised her children. She then decided to move to the coast. She had taught Art in a number of senior secondary schools and was in her fifth year in her present school where she teaches Media Arts.

Malph was drawn to the topic because she said she has “struggled a lot in my career around the emotions that erupt in teaching, particularly amongst colleagues, and I find that it is a taboo topic. It’s very taboo.” She thinks that research about emotions is very important and she said she finds it shocking that people in authority in schools and school districts have no background in understanding or even acknowledging the importance of emotions. “This is a job of human relations and yet all of our leaders are ignorant, or their hands are tied, and they won’t even venture into the topic of emotions. So when emotional situations heat up, or grow, or escalate, they walk away; they turn their backs and walk away. And it is the heart of what we do.”

Richard

Richard took his education degree while he was in his 40s. Teaching, he said, was always something he had had “on the back burner” and he went back to university when it was possible financially and time-wise. He completed his BEd in 2002, worked as a teacher-on-call for one year, and then secured yearly contracts teaching Grade 9, 10 and

11 Science in a senior secondary school of 700 students. His previous careers had included geologist, insurance salesman, and baker.

Richard saw the notice about the research project on his local teachers' association list serve. He described how at first he had "read it with interest and I didn't think anything of it and then I came back to it, like I usually do - I think I saved it - then I came back to it." It aroused his interest because it involved reflecting on his profession and "that is something new teachers are told can be very helpful" so he saw it as an opportunity "to make a conscious effort of it for my own personal growth." Also he was interested in the process of "active research" and thought it would give him some experience in how it was done "just in case I want to further my education."

Rusty

Rusty is in his thirty-second year of teaching. He majored in Geography and Geology and, after a year in child care services, he took his professional year. He also took a diploma in Library Studies. He began his career as a librarian and social studies teacher in a high school and then moved to middle school where he stayed for 25 years. When his district closed middle schools he moved into an elementary school, which, he realized was what he was "cut out for." He said he wished he had known that right from the start.

Rusty said he was drawn to the research because he thought it was about "teacher stress" and, because he is very involved in his local teachers' association, helping people who are stressed is a concern of his. In addition his wife, who is also a teacher, went through a stressful period a few years ago. He hoped to get an understanding of some of

the issues that cause stress for teachers and also of how to support people when they are feeling under pressure.

Sophie

At the time of our interview Sophie was teaching French Immersion in a large dual track elementary school of 700 students. It was her first year teaching and she considered herself fortunate to have been able to get a full year's contract. She was, in fact, teaching in the school in which she had done her final practicum the previous year and which she had also attended for several years as an elementary student. Sophie taught a class of 28 Grade 4 and 5 students. At the beginning of the year she had started out with a straight Grade 4 class of 19 students but, when under-enrolment in the district necessitated realignment of classes in schools, the configuration of her class changed. She retained only nine of her original Grade 4s and the Grade 5s who were added were students she had taught the previous year as a student teacher.

Sophie said that she responded to the project because it sounded as though it would be a "really interesting and useful sort of thing to be thinking about." She thought it was especially important in her first year to make some time for herself to think about her emotional wellbeing. Sophie was also curious about who other teachers turn to for support. She wondered if they use their peers as emotional support or whether they talk to friends outside of school. Sophie said that her mother, who is also a teacher, is fairly patient in listening to her. On the other hand, her friends sometimes say, "That's enough. I don't want to talk about eight year olds all day with you!"

Problem

Academic investigation of emotions has traditionally taken place within a biomedical framework, in the disciplines of psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, and emotions have been regarded as individual, internal, inherent, and private states (Lupton, 1998). However, during the last three decades the topic of emotions has attracted attention from researchers in many other disciplines including sociology, anthropology, philosophy, history, literary studies, and cultural studies (Woodward, 1996). The research in these disciplines has challenged the priority claim of the psychology discourse. The socio-cultural perspectives suggest that emotions are not purely natural or biological events but are socially and culturally shaped and maintained. These perspectives also suggest that emotions serve as a significant moral force in maintaining the very social and cultural processes from which they are derived (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). This is effected in part by the *feeling rules* which indicate which emotions it is acceptable to feel and express within each group and which it is not (Ellsworth, 1994). Moreover, recent developments in the neuro-sciences challenge the traditionally held view of emotion as the antithesis of reason and suggest that rather than being opposed to rational processing as previously believed, emotions are actually integral to the reasoning process (Damasio, 1994).

Despite this recent broadening of academic interest in emotions, the common language and scholarly discourses still tend to characterize emotions as private experiences, located in the individual (Boler, 1999). Indeed, in North America the perception persists that emotions are “natural” phenomena which we must learn to control. Additionally, we are socialized not to express many of our emotions publicly.

According to Planalp (1999) emotions are particularly mysterious to many middle class European Americans because the suppression of emotions has become a way of life.

Moreover, the attitude that emotions are opposed to and inferior to reason still remains.

The fact that in everyday social and workplace settings many people continue to regard emotions as inner and private, means that they interpret their emotional experiences based on these understandings and are thus unaware of the political and social ramifications of their emotional experiences. This in turn means that they are unaware of the social control exerted by the group through the medium of emotions and thus do not confront or challenge the feeling rules established by the group. In this way people unwittingly become complicit in maintaining and perpetuating hegemony in the groups in which they live and work.

In spite of the increased academic recognition of the socio-cultural perspectives in which emotions are viewed as inter-subjective and interactional phenomena, there has been little detailed investigation of emotions as part of everyday personal, cultural, and political life (Harding & Pribram, 2004). Such research could explore the processes by which emotional experiences are constructed within a group and lay the foundation for a critical reflection on these processes. In this inquiry I take up some of these issues by exploring the emotional aspects of teachers' relationships and interactions with their peers in the workplace and inquiring into the place of emotions especially as mechanisms of group control, in maintaining the status quo, and silencing dissenting voices.

My Connection with the Topic

My interest in teachers and emotions stems from personal experience. I had been a teacher for over twenty years before resigning after being placed in the position of

having to “bump” a colleague and friend in order to claim a position in the rehiring process. For the following few years I designed and presented professional development workshops for teachers based on the idea of personal development as professional development. I also conducted staff development sessions for individual schools. During these workshops teachers often raised the issue of emotions; they talked about feeling delighted, excited, happy, and joyful, as well as angry, guilty, frustrated, disappointed, regretful, and sad. I could find very little research on teachers’ emotions to inform these workshops and yet I realized from my personal experience of being laid off and from the workshops I was presenting that emotions were of great importance in teaching and in teachers’ lives at school. They were important not only to the teachers’ personal health and wellbeing but also to the health of the workplace. When teachers talked to each other in the professional development sessions they expressed relief at being able to discuss emotional topics with colleagues and discover that they had similar experiences. It seemed that the topic of emotions and emotions themselves were not talked about in school even though they exerted so much influence. Indeed, there was a stigma attached to acknowledging and talking about emotions in the workplace. While it was true that emotions were experienced in relation to the students it was also clear that collegial relations presented emotional challenges. I realized that if I was to learn more about the importance and meaning of teachers’ emotions I would have to go to graduate school and research the subject myself. When I applied to graduate school I named my area of research interest as “Teachers and Emotions.”

For my research in the master’s counselling programme I interviewed five elementary school teachers about a time when they had felt out-of-step with their peers;

in other words, about a time when they perceived themselves to be thinking and feeling differently from the majority of the teachers on their staff about an important educational issue. One teacher chose to focus on his experience when he disagreed with the new format of the intermediate report card. Another teacher discussed the introduction of a new phonics programme in a kindergarten class. I explored the nature of the experience and how the teachers perceived their wellbeing had been impacted. All of the teachers I interviewed had experienced some sort of censure and even harassment from their colleagues for not conforming to the majority view. They all found it expensive emotionally to express an opinion which was out-of-step and felt isolated from and by their colleagues. As I progressed with the interviews I became increasingly aware of the part played by the culture, especially the feeling rules in each school, and of how emotions were socially constructed. I wondered how things might have been different for the participants if they had been able to meet together, share their experiences, and gain support from each other. Would this have lessened their isolation and given them courage to challenge the attempts made by their peers to intimidate and silence them?

From my continuing conversations with the participants I became aware that the interviews had “sensitized” them to the roles of emotions within their workplace and to the norms and rules about expressing emotions. One participant, Kate, had two teaching assignments. She felt out-of-step in one workplace but not the other. The following year she took up a full-time assignment in another school and she reported that she was able to observe the feeling rules and dynamics from the edge, and then make choices about how she interacted, rather than allowing herself to be drawn into one group or another. Kate’s participation in the research helped raise her awareness and enabled her to view the staff

interactions and her own emotions in her new situation from a critical perspective. In addition, discussing her situation with me helped validate her as not being “the crazy one” and to lessen the isolation she experienced. For my doctoral inquiry I decided to follow up on two aspects, namely the idea of teachers talking together about their emotional experiences and also having the discussion last long enough for the teachers to become more aware of their emotions and to consider emotions from other perspectives.

Situating this Research in the Literature

The topic of teachers and emotions has received sporadic attention in the research literature even though teaching has been recognized as an emotional business (Hargreaves, 1995). The humanistic education movement of the sixties stressed the importance of self-knowledge and emotional self-awareness for teachers. Patterson (1973) emphasized the significance of the interpersonal relationships with students as a major condition for learning. Some researchers (Jackson, 1968; Lortie, 1975; Waller, 1961) alluded to emotions, sometimes indirectly, as they described life in schools from a sociological perspective. Emmer (1991) and Coleman (1994) expressed concern about the influence of emotions on the teacher’s performance in the classroom, calling for a systematic study of teachers’ emotions in the classroom. Emmer maintained that research on teachers and teaching has emphasized the cognitive and behavioural aspects and placed too little emphasis on the emotional, while Coleman observed that teaching is a “volatile emotional experience” and that emotions “may be one of those things that teachers do not talk about” (p.152). He suggested that the fact there were so few studies concerning the emotional life of teachers was an indication of the low regard for emotions in society.

Recently research about teachers, teaching, and emotions has received more attention. In the fall of 1996 the Cambridge Journal of Education published an issue devoted to the topic. In her guest editorial Nias (1996) observed that the lack of consideration of emotion in research and in teacher development implied that teachers' emotions are not thought of as worthy of serious academic or professional consideration. The perspective taken by many of the authors of articles in the issue was that a consideration of teachers' emotions could lead to more effective teaching in the classroom.

A number of articles about teachers and emotions have originated from a project spearheaded by Hargreaves (2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2004) in which he investigated the emotions of educational change. This research was prompted by the fact that, despite careful planning, many educational reform efforts failed because there had been no serious consideration of the emotional impact on the teachers. The research team interviewed 53 Ontario teachers and used the data to throw light on teachers' emotions in relation to students, parents, administrators, and colleagues.

Zembylas (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2005a) has also published a series of articles based on the research he conducted with one participant, a teacher whom he observed and interviewed over a period of three years. Zembylas uses post structural, discursive, as well as social constructionist lenses to analyze his data. His interest is in the emotional rules of the context, the agency of the teacher, and the part played by emotions in constructing teachers' identity.

These articles indeed focus on the emotional world of teachers from a variety of perspectives but there has been little exploration of the emotional dynamics of the school

as a workplace. Most of the data in research on teachers and emotions has been collected through single interviews of individual teachers, through teachers' journal entries, and through observation in the classroom. Sturdy (2003) points out that each approach to collecting data privileges and silences certain characteristics of emotions. Interviews privilege the individual person and the dominant view of emotions as personal and private (Fineman, 2000c). Observation may afford insight into short term emotion dynamics but silences personal and social history (Sturdy).

My research addresses both of these issues. Firstly, I focused not only on the individual teachers' perspectives but also on the relational aspects of emotions which can be places of power, influenced and nuanced by the workplace context. I sought to understand the significance of the emotional aspects of peer interactions in the present climate of neo-liberal reforms with the emphasis on performativity and accountability which encourage competition and mutual and self-surveillance. According to Reay (1998) staff relationships are not simply interactions playing out in schools but they are located within and influenced by government and local policies. Secondly, the twelve participants in the research engaged in a discussion in an on-line asynchronous forum over a period of twelve weeks. I chose the medium of computer mediated communication because people often find it vulnerable to talk face to face about sensitive topics. I also chose the condition of anonymity for the participants because I thought that would also lessen the vulnerability and enable them to talk more freely to each other. The 12 week period allowed the participants to observe and reflect on emotional aspects on an on-going basis and have the opportunity to reinterpret and re-narrate their experiences in the light of hearing each other's experiences and in the light of information I gave them

about the social, cultural, and discursive theories of emotion. Thus this research adds to the discourse of teachers and emotions by focusing on the way in which teachers come to understand their emotional experiences with their peers through reflection and discussion within a group and by connecting the individual experiencing of emotions with the influence of social structures and other hierarchies within the school and within the field of education and global neo-liberal policies. The lenses I used were those of emotions as socially and discursively constructed. This study also presents a holistic view of teachers' work that acknowledges the importance of emotions and deepens the understanding of the individual, social, and organizational emotional processes of working life in schools.

I framed the research as a case-study as I needed an approach which allowed me access to a number of aspects of emotional experience at the individual, the relational, and the discursive levels and which allowed an exploratory framework.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study was to explore the emotional aspects of teachers' relationships with their peers and further, to explore what happened when they had the opportunity to discuss these experiences with each other in an on-line setting over a period of time. The purpose was also to explore if and in what way these individual experiences were connected with the schools' cultures. Specifically it examined how teachers experienced, expressed, reflected on, and made meaning of the emotional world in relation to their peers and workplace.

Understanding of Emotion

The term “emotion” and the phenomenon it represents have been difficult to define and describe. Cornelius (1996) maintains that in the discipline of psychology the answer to the question “What is an emotion?” depends on whom you ask and when you ask it. Despite an apparent lack of unity among the phenomena called “emotions,” a concept of emotion has emerged (Fridja, 2000). Scherer (2001) states that there is a tradition of positing at least three major components of emotion, namely; 1) physiological arousal, 2) motor expressions, and 3) subjective feeling. As I set out on the research my understanding of emotion was informed by the descriptions cited above and by Clark’s (1990) description of emotion “as an awareness of some combination but not necessarily all of the following elements: (a) external situational cues, (b) changes in physiological sensations, (c) expressive gestures, and (d) a cultural label” (p. 328). In addition I subscribed to Burkitt’s (1997) idea that emotions are multi dimensional complexes, which do not necessarily originate from within the person, are essentially relational and communicative, and have socio-cultural components.

The teachers involved in the inquiry used the word “emotion” in their own way. “Emotional experiences” were understood as the stories which the teachers related to each other. Their accounts were how they decided to narrate their subjective experiences of the emotional aspects of their interactions with their peers. The stories that they told may not have been exactly as they happened for, as White and Epston (1990) explain, “in striving to make sense of life, persons face the task of arranging their experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of

themselves and the world around them” (p.45). In constructing a narrative people decide consciously and unconsciously which events to put in and which to leave out.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers make sense of their emotional interactions with their peers?
2. How do teachers’ understandings of their emotional interactions with their peers change through discussion within a group over a period of time?
3. What understandings of the emotional processes of school culture emerge when teachers discuss and reflect in a collaborative setting about the emotional aspects of their work?

Conceptual Framework

I approached emotions from two perspectives. Firstly, I approached them as constructed socially and culturally within relations of power (Boler, 1999; Frijda & Mesquita, 1994; Griffiths, 1988) and secondly, from the discursive perspective. Until recently the study of emotion has tended to be the study of the individual person, with academic and popular theories of emotion privileging inner, private characteristics over social ones. In contrast, White (1993) suggests that we need to think of emotions as being outer and public and to pay more attention to the social processes which produce culturally meaningful emotions. Social construction theories hold that emotions are cultural products that owe their meaning and coherence to learned social rules (White). They are constructed within a culture to serve particular social purposes and function as a basic internal mechanism of social control in maintaining a stable, social order (Kemper, 2000). If we transgress the norms which govern the way we are supposed to feel about a

particular event or interaction there are social consequences. Emotions serve to restrain “undesirable” attitudes and behaviours by modifying interactions between group members according to what seems to be in the group’s best interest at the time, thereby sustaining and endorsing cultural values. A group’s norms and rules about feelings are taken for granted, as the natural state of affairs. The way we respond within our cultural environment is influenced and shaped by these norms. Our responses, in turn, support the group’s core ideas and values, thereby perpetuating them; it appears that we are not normally aware that this is what we are doing (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). In fact, Markus and Kitayama speculate that “societal integration” may well require us to be unaware, to prevent core cultural ideas from being challenged, thus preserving the status quo.

The discursive perspective also conceptualizes emotion “as not simply located in the individual ... but rather as reflecting linguistically embedded cultural values and rules” (Boler, 1999, p.6). The discursive perspective also focuses on the constitutive role played by language. “Discourses do not simply reflect or describe reality, knowledge, experience, identity, social relationships, social institutions, and practices. Rather they play an integral part in constructing them” (Lupton, 1998, p.26). A view of emotions as a discursive practice “leads us to a more complex view of the multiple, shifting, and contested meanings possible in emotional utterances and interchanges and from there to a less monolithic conception of emotion” (Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990, p. 10).

My Role as Researcher

Earlier in the chapter I described how I had been drawn to the research. In this section I continue to describe my connection. In her introduction to the Cambridge

Journal of Education issue on emotions Nias (1996) speculated that one of the reasons for a lack of research on teachers' emotions was that inquiring into others' emotions might bring one too close for comfort to one's own. Indeed, when I was unsure of my direction in the initial stages of my master's research, a friend suggested that I needed to write my own story first. I took her advice and spent many months journaling to clarify why I had chosen to research teachers and emotions. Of course, some of the reasons were obvious to me; the circumstances of my leaving teaching ten years previously had been very emotional. I had especially experienced anger at the way in which I felt teachers (and I) had not been respected and shame that I had not spoken out and been more assertive about the process. As I journaled I came to understand more clearly the systemic influences embedded in the way teachers had been laid off and rehired and the cultural constraints against speaking out. What was more surprising to me was how deeply I was still feeling the loss of teaching, the loss of my community, my contact with teachers, and with children.

Once again in my doctoral research it was important for me to connect with my motivations for pursuing this particular vein of research. Emotions, my own and other people's, continue to fascinate and occupy me, both in an intellectual and a felt sense. As I have read about other approaches to emotions, especially socio-cultural perspectives, I have become more intrigued with how emotions function in groups and how these play out in relationships. Six years ago I had the opportunity to return to the school system, this time as a counsellor in elementary schools. My return to public education was significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, on a personal level it was very satisfying to return to a profession which I enjoy and in which I feel "at home"; secondly, it allowed

me to reconnect with my teaching peers so that I was no longer a university student researching “them.” In other words I feel that I closed the distance between myself as researcher and teachers as participants. Thirdly, my counselling assignment has given me the opportunity to work in a number of different schools and with a number of different staffs. I have seen and experienced first hand the intensification of teaching. I have participated in staff meetings, staffroom discussions, private conversations, union meetings, and Student Support Services meetings; I have organized and facilitated inter-agency care team meetings for students at risk; I have been asked to designate students as “severe behaviour” in order to secure funding from the government; I have intervened in classroom situations in which teachers have had to cope with several children with special needs and insufficient teaching assistants; I have spent hours filling out forms required by the accountability and auditing processes; and I have experienced how difficult it is to speak out and resist the process. I have also experienced the difficulty of knowing who to trust amongst my peers to talk to about disagreeing with the present policy trends. Staffs are very fluid today compared with fifteen years ago. Many teachers are part-time and the annual lay-off /rehire process means that staffs are continually changing. It therefore takes time to seek out like-minded peers.

Since power was part of the research focus it was important to me to think about what power I had as researcher and how I was going to situate myself with regard to it. Prior to starting the research I considered what role I should take in the group. After thinking about the pros and cons, I decided that I would take an active part in facilitating and directing the process because the subject of emotional experiences is a very broad one and there were many directions the discussion might follow if the participants were

left to their own devices and, while this would be interesting, it might not serve the purposes of my research. As the research progressed I felt more comfortable with having decided to take the initiative. It caused me to recognize once again the importance of being aware of and acknowledging one's power.

Outline of the Study

In the following chapters I develop the ideas expressed in this first chapter. In chapter 2 I present the Literature Review as a setting for this research. In chapter 3 I describe my methodology and method, and in chapter 4 I document the forum and the discussion group process. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are devoted to the research findings and interpretation, however before these chapters I include a description of some of the interactions the participants recounted. In chapter 8 I draw together some threads from the previous three chapters highlighting connections between them, and in chapter 9 I present my conclusions and implications of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

I have constructed the literature review to give an overview of the topics which are relevant to my research and which help to situate it within the context of current theory and empirical research. In the first section I discuss a number of approaches to the topic of emotion. Next, I present organization literature which focuses on emotions and the workplace. Following that I concentrate on literature from the discourse of teachers and emotions. In the final section I look at the context of education today and focus on the changing nature of teaching and the teacher's subjectivity.

Emotions

Introduction.

Although emotions punctuate almost all the significant events in our lives, the nature, causes, and consequences of the emotions are among the least understood aspects of human experience. It is easier to express emotions than to describe them and harder, again, to analyze them. (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000, p. xiii)

The question "What is emotion?" is "deceptively simple" according to Jaggar (1989), who maintains that "the variety, complexity and even inconsistency" (p. 147) of the way in which emotions are viewed in daily life and in scientific contexts make it difficult to answer. Moreover, she concludes that it may be impossible to construct a manageable account to cover "the apparently diverse wide range of phenomena covered by the term 'emotion'" (p. 147). How then does one attempt to answer the question? Solomon (2000) suggests that while on the face of it the question is a quest for a

definition or a conceptual analysis, at a deeper level it is also a quest for an orientation, in other words, “How should we think about emotion?” (p. 9). A perusal of the various literatures and discourses of emotion reveals a plethora of orientations as well as conceptual analyses and definitions. For the purposes of this review I am focusing on some of those orientations. I agree with Solomon when he says that an informed understanding of the positions of emotion today requires an appreciation of the philosophical background which has shaped our thinking and attitudes. For that reason I have chosen to focus first on the foundational orientations of the philosophical and psychological perspectives. From there I turn my attention to other approaches which I have chosen on the basis that they are most pertinent to my study. I devote a section to psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic approaches because many of these ideas permeate popular discourse. Next I focus on the social construction of emotions and include here an explanation of feeling rules. This is followed by sections on the feminist approach to emotions, the phenomenological approach of Denzin (1984) and, finally, the discursive approach.

Philosophical Perspectives

Although philosophers have been concerned about the nature of emotion since before the time of Socrates, the discipline of philosophy has mainly concerned itself with the pursuit of reason (Solomon, 2000). The dominant attitude towards emotions was that they were disruptive and dangerous because they interfered with clarity of thought and could lead people astray. A metaphor which has often been invoked to describe the relationship between reason and emotion is that of master and slave with “reason being firmly in control and the impulses of emotion safely suppressed” (Solomon, p. 3). This

metaphor illustrates two dichotomies which have persisted throughout the years and still exist today. Firstly, it conceptualizes reason and emotion as two different, conflicting, and antagonistic aspects of the soul. Secondly, it identifies emotion as inferior, more primitive, and less intelligent than reason.

Another dichotomy was set up by locating the emotions in the body and reason in the mind. Rene Descartes (1596-1650), who is often regarded as the father of modern philosophy, and Spinoza (1632-1677) represent two views about the mind-body dichotomy. Descartes was fundamentally a scientist and mathematician who was fascinated by the unique autonomy of the human mind and reason (Solomon, 2000). He disdained the body, insisting that the mind is a separate substance from it. According to Solomon, Spinoza regarded emotions as a form of “thoughts” that, for the most part, misunderstand the world and consequently make us miserable and frustrated. He promoted the idea that we are not and cannot be in control of our own lives. We need to accept the idea that our selves and our minds are a part of God. Many of our emotions, namely those which are passive reactions to our unrealistic expectations of the world, will leave us hurt, frustrated, and depleted. By contrast, the active emotions, which emanate from our own true natures, heighten our sense of activity and awareness. Spinoza proposed a complex metaphysics in which all substance is one. Mind and body are aspects of the same being (Solomon).

The relationship between emotions and ethics has been a point of dispute throughout the years. Solomon (2000) refers to Aristotle’s interest in the place of emotions in ethical concerns. He considered that anger was a natural reaction to an offence and was a moral force which could be cultivated. He discussed the circumstances

in which it is appropriate to get angry, those in which it is not appropriate, and what intensity of anger is justified in those situations (Solomon, 2000). In the Christian perspective of the Middle Ages the emotions were essentially linked with self-interested desires. Greed, gluttony, lust, anger, envy, and pride were designated as sins. Love, hope, and faith were not classified as emotions but were accorded status and equated with reason.

Two philosophers from the Enlightenment period Hume (1711- 1776) and Kant (1724 -1804) differed in their perspectives about the relationship between emotions and morals (Solomon, 2000). For Hume the emotions formed an essential part of ethics. There are “good” emotions and “bad” emotions. Pride is a good emotion but its opposite, humility, which he described as “an unpleasant feeling brought about by the idea that we are inadequate or deeply flawed beings” (Solomon, p. 8) is a bad emotion. Hume also defended the importance of “moral sentiments” like sympathy which, he argued, is a universal feature of human nature and is the foundation of society and morality. Kant, on the other hand, grounded ethics on reason and not emotion, thus reinforcing the distinction between reason and emotion. He dismissed the latter as “inessential to morals at best and intrusive and disruptive at worst” (Solomon, p. 8).

Over the years the terms “emotion” and “passion” have been applied to a range of phenomena reflecting changes in theories about emotion. Neither word has referred to a single, orderly, natural, class of phenomena consistently. Various feelings, desires, sentiments, moods, and attitudes have been dominant at different eras depending on the social, moral, cultural, and psychological factors existing at the time. Often it was not

emotions as a group that were focused upon but a particular class of emotions or a particular emotion and its role in the manners or morals of the time (Solomon, 2000).

The influence of dichotomous thinking throughout the ages as evidenced in the separation of reason and emotion and the devaluing of emotion, continues to be felt today; however some philosophers, among them Solomon (2000) and Nussbaum (2001), are seeking to rehabilitate the emotions. Solomon (1993) takes issue with what he calls the well established models of emotions and argues that, rather than “irrational disruptions or involuntary occurrences which are visited upon us” and over which we have no control, they are activities or “structures we place in our world” (p. 108). Moreover, it is through our emotions that we constitute and make meaningful our subjective world. Emotions should therefore have a central position because they give meaning to life by illuminating what is important. Solomon holds that an emotion is a judgment about our selves and our place in the world; it is the projection of the values and ideals, according to which we live and through which we experience our lives. “Reason makes contact with the human values only through the passions” and without the guidance of passions “reasoning has neither principle nor power” (Solomon, p.58).

Nussbaum (2001) also argues for a perspective in which emotions are not unthinking forces which render a person passive but for one in which emotions denote situations which are personally important and relevant to a person’s wellbeing. Nussbaum believes that emotions have cognitive aspects because they are founded on beliefs and values. To her emotions are

suffused with intelligence and discernment and contain in themselves an awareness of value or importance. Instead of viewing morality as a system of

principles to be grasped by the detached intellect and emotions as motivations that either support or subvert our choice to act according to principle, we will have to consider emotions as part and parcel of the system of ethical reasoning. (p. 1)

Psychological Perspectives

I begin this section by examining the concept of emotion in general and its constituent components. I then look at three of the approaches identified by Cornelius (1996), namely the Darwinian, Jamesian, and Cognitive.

Griffiths (2004) claims that the psychological states and processes which are included in the everyday category of “emotion” are not similar enough to allow a unified scientific psychology of the emotions. Indeed many other researchers acknowledge that emotions are a difficult construct to define and operationalize because “emotions” are not a natural class (Fridja, 2000). They form a heterogeneous group which contains many different states and conditions which have been included for different reasons and on different grounds (Rorty, 1980). These points are illustrated by the claims made by academics and researchers about the number and identity of emotions which exist. According to Ortony (1995) Fridja claims to have identified 18 emotions, Kemper 4, Oatley 5, Tomkins 9, and Izard 10. As a result research about emotions has caused challenge and debate in the field of psychology, nevertheless, despite this apparent lack of unity among the phenomena called “emotions,” a concept of emotion has emerged (Fridja, 2000). Scherer (2001) states that there is a tradition of positing at least three major components of emotion, namely: physiological arousal, motor expressions, and subjective feeling. Two further components, the behavioural and the cognitive, are also sometimes included. Scherer identifies physiological arousal as including changes in

body temperature, respiration, and cardiovascular activity, as well as trembling, muscle spasms, and feelings of constriction of internal organs. He explains that these changes occur because the emotion-eliciting event disturbs the body's homeostasis regulation and launches it into preparing the appropriate adaptive responses, for example producing the necessary energy for appropriate actions of fight or flight. Motor expression refers to changes in facial and vocal expression as well as in gestures and posture (Scherer).

According to Darwin's theory, these expressions are rudiments of former behaviours; for example, clenching the teeth is a rudiment of a biting response. Some scholars explain emotional expressions in terms of their communicative functions whereby they broadcast the reaction of the individual and the intended behaviour to other members of the group (Scherer). Subjective feeling refers to the internal sensations which people can describe in ways which distinguish between a number of qualitatively different feelings. The words "emotion" (the process as a whole) and "feeling" (one of the components) are often used interchangeably (Scherer).

Scherer (2001) notes that there is a need to include a more specific behavioural component to the "emotion syndrome" in the form of behaviour preparation or action tendencies. Both the physiological and expressive components refer to the preparation for action in a general and unspecific way, whereas the notion of more specific action tendencies suggests a more explicitly motivational function whereby the individual is prepared to deal with the specific threat which arises (Scherer). In addition, in the light of recent developments in the cognitive field, there has been increasing recognition that emotions may have very strong effects on perceptual and cognitive processes such as attention, thinking, memory, problem solving, judgment, and decision making, so a

cognitive component has also been included. Although it is widely accepted that these five components constitute emotion, psychologists disagree about which components are the most important and if they should all be included in a definition (Cornelius, 1996; Fridja, 2000).

Cornelius (1996) has identified four general theoretical approaches in what he calls “the scientific study of emotions,” namely the Darwinian, Jamesian, Cognitive, and Social Constructivist perspectives. Each approach has its own assumptions about the nature of emotions, how to construct theories, and how to conduct research about them. In this section I give a brief overview of the first three and deal with the social constructivist perspective separately in the next section.

In his landmark book “The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals” Charles Darwin (1969) described the facial expressions and gestures that accompany several emotions. He theorized the evolution of these expressions and movements using natural selection as a framework for understanding not only the expressions but also the emotions themselves. He posited that emotional expressions must be understood in terms of their functions and thus their survival value (Cornelius, 1996). Darwin concluded that these expressions were universal. Ekman (2003) claims that his own research indicates this universality for a small number of what he terms “basic” emotions, namely: happiness, sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and surprise. These basic or primary emotions are seen to represent survival-related patterns of responses to events in the world. All other emotions are thought to derive from these basic ones. Ekman also introduced the term *display rules* to account for the ways in which people learn to mask their expressions of emotion as part of their socialization into a particular culture.

Theory and research in the Jamesian tradition was inspired by William James' article in 1884 "What is an emotion?" in which he equated emotions with the perception of bodily changes (Cornelius, 1996). James insisted that it would be impossible to have emotions without bodily changes and that these always come first. Like Darwin, James considered emotions to be more or less automatic responses which helped an organism survive events in its environment but, whereas Darwin focused on the expression of emotions, James focused on the experience. The experience follows a specific sequence namely:

1. The perception of an exciting fact or object by a person.
2. A bodily expression such as weeping, striking out, or fleeing the situation.
3. A mental affection or emotion, such as feeling afraid or angry.

(Denzin, 1984, p. 17)

Researchers have pointed out several inconsistencies with James' theory but the most important feature which he described is the notion that each emotion must be accompanied by a unique pattern of bodily responses. Researchers in this tradition have continued trying to identify unique patterns in physiological changes for each emotion.

Two central assumptions of the cognitive perspective are that thought and emotion are inseparable and that emotions are dependent upon appraisal (Cornelius, 1996). Appraisal is the process by which we judge whether events in our environment are beneficial or harmful to us, whether they are threats to our interests, and whether we should take action to deal with them. The process of appraisal, which is not necessarily a conscious and deliberate act, results in a state of readiness for action. According to Cornelius, Lazarus codified a specific and different pattern of appraisal for every emotion

and found that a change in the appraisal pattern can bring about a change in emotion. For example in one experiment young men's emotional responses to a gruesome film were significantly altered when the researchers provided them with different ways to interpret and thus appraise the events of the film.

Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapeutic Approaches

I have included a brief overview of emotion as it is considered in the therapeutic discourses because many of the ideas and language from this literature inform the everyday speech of people when they are discussing their emotional experiences and emotional wellbeing.

Freud's work was a major influence on emotion theories in the twentieth century despite his inconsistent use of terminology for "affective" states and his concentration on anxiety (Nye, 1996). Freud theorized that affective states were located primarily in the id and derived from the instinctual drives of sex and aggression. The expression of these drives was inhibited by social and personal moral standards. This set up an internal conflict between the forces of the id and those of the rational ego whose function was to suppress them (Nye). As a result the individual would consciously experience anxiety but would have no idea of its origin because it lay outside of consciousness in the unconscious (Denzin, 1984). In addition, according to the hydraulic principle, the forces of the repressed emotion would create increased pressure for the emotional state to find alternative expression (Nye). The symbolic meanings of the emotion would have to be uncovered through dream work, free association, and psychoanalysis.

Anxiety was seen to have a signal function in that it alerted the conscious state to dangers from outside or inside and it provided an impetus for the individual to take action

(Hochschild, 1983). A well integrated adult could use this signal to pay attention to and deal with any threats. If no action was taken it is likely that the threat of anxiety would increase and the person would put in place defence mechanisms to protect the ego. Alternatively, the anxiety could increase and incapacitate the person (Hochschild). Freud's division of the psyche into ego, superego, and id reflected the western view of the nature of emotion (Nye, 1996). Emotion was relegated to the id which also contained the life force. The task of the ego and superego was to check the id's coarse and base impulses. In the classical psychoanalytic view emotions are seen generally as drive-related and as needing to be discharged or tamed.

Other psychotherapeutic theories focus on different aspects of emotion.

Behavioural theory focuses on the clinical problem of modifying undesirable affective states or moods such as anxiety or depression. Treatment strategies have focused on deconditioning and exposure and the elimination of maladaptive emotional responses. Cognitive approaches have isolated automatic thoughts, irrational beliefs, and self-statements as mediating between the event and the emotional response to it. Cognitive therapists have concentrated on eliminating the "faulty" cognitions by rationally challenging underlying beliefs.

The humanistic and experiential therapeutic traditions have regarded emotions as important motivators of change. Emotion is seen as an orienting system that provides the organism with adaptive information (Greenberg & Safran, 1989). In client centered therapy, therapeutic change involves the client experiencing fully in awareness, feelings that have been denied or distorted in the past. The goal is not to eliminate feelings but to help clients become aware of their meaning and to become more responsive to them.

Recent memory research and experience in post-traumatic stress disorder have shown that reliving emotional experiences can be detrimental to a person's emotional well-being.

In many of the experiential therapies there have existed fashions for different types of interventions. "Venting" was one such vogue. Clients were encouraged to beat mattresses or scream into pillows to "let it all out." This intervention was based on the hydraulic principle of emotion becoming "bottled up" and needing to be released before it became dangerous. Subsequent research called into question the wisdom of such "rehearsing," claiming that it reinforced violent behaviour (Tavris, 1982).

Feminist approaches to therapy rely on using the emotions as knowledge about the person's situation. Whereas other approaches have tried to modify or eliminate emotional responses, the feminist approach looks at the whole situation, the personal and the political, and in some cases affirms that the emotional response the client is feeling is an appropriate response in the circumstances. For example, for a woman who has four children, is living on welfare, and has recently left an abusive relationship, depression and anger are appropriate responses to her situation. Some feminists have decried therapy because they say it depoliticizes women.

Social Construction

In this section I first outline changes which contributed to the emergence of the social construction approach to emotion and then I examine the social construction perspective itself.

Towards the last quarter of the twentieth century several events occurred to challenge the ways in which academics had traditionally viewed emotion. Firstly, there

was a change in epistemological assumptions. Post-modern challenges to the doctrine of one single truth opened up the way for a variety of perspectives on emotions to be considered equally to have claims on the truth. Secondly, as studies in cognitive science gained respect, theorizing about the mind was no longer looked down on. One of the by-products of this broader conceptualization of psychological phenomena was a healthy respect for the study of emotion. Thirdly, studies in anthropology were challenging the notions of the universality of emotions. While continuing to acknowledge the role of biology, they gave greater weight to the part played by culture in the generation of emotions. Fourthly, the influence of George Mead and the interactionist perspective in sociology encouraged research and theory building in the realm of the influence of social effects on emotions. Fifthly, researchers in neurology were demonstrating that there were other ways of conceptualizing the emotions. Lastly, the study of emotions was also being legitimized by new measurement techniques, a variety of reliable methods, and approaches to empirical questions, as well as new ways of conceptualizing behaviour and feeling (Kavanaugh, Zimmerberg, & Fein, 1996; Lewis & Haviland-Jones, 2000).

In the introduction to his book “The Social Construction of Emotion” Rom Harre (1986) poses the rhetorical question “What is an emotion?” (p. 4). He then proceeds to describe how, when psychologists are researching emotions, they have to struggle against the illusion that there is actually something “there.” The thinking that there is an abstract and detachable “it” which can be researched has led to what he calls “intellectually anorexic accounts” by academics (p. 9). Researchers have abstracted an entity called anger, or love, or grief, and tried to study it instead of recognizing that “there is a

concrete world of contexts in which there are angry people, upsetting scenes, and sentimental episodes” (Harre, p. 4).

The development of the social construction perspective forms the basis for many other perspectives of emotions as it moves the emphasis from the inside of the individual to the social cultural realm. There is a great deal of variation in the beliefs of the constructionists’ (also called constructivists in some traditions) perspective for, as Oatley (1993) points out,

social constructionism is at present an approach to understanding emotions rather than a theory, though the approach does contain some fully developed theories of aspects of emotions. The importance of this approach for understanding emotions is that it offers views below the surface of our emotional interactions, suggests purposes for emotions that other approaches would find hard to accommodate and gives form to a question which persistently fascinates us namely how appropriate emotions are to circumstances. (p. 341)

For social constructionists, emotions are cultural products that owe their meaning and coherence to learned social rules. While researchers in other traditions have acknowledged the part played by culture, for example in regulating emotional displays, the social constructionists’ claim is more radical because they assert that in order to understand what emotions are all about it is necessary to look at what they accomplish socially. Each culture’s attitude towards emotions is reflected in the dynamics of everyday interactions in which certain feeling states are highlighted and celebrated, while others are ignored or punished. Emotions are constructed within a culture to serve particular social purposes. Thus, the most significant emotions of any group are related to

the group's collective understandings of what is "good" and what is "moral" (Markus & Kitayama, 1994).

Cultures have their own feeling rules about how they regard certain emotions and events. Feeling rules are

those which inform us that what we feel may be inappropriate (too intense or too mild, too long or too brief in duration, suitable or unsuitable for someone with our social identity) or that our manner of expressing our feeling is acceptable or outré. (Hochschild, 1983, p. 48)

These rules are constituted by the norms of the contexts in which we interact (Kemper, 2000). In this way, emotions function as a basic internal mechanism of social control in maintaining a stable, social order. As I previously mentioned, if we transgress the norms which govern the way we are supposed to feel about a particular event or interaction, there are social consequences. We may be punished by the group by being ignored or isolated by them. The expression of the appropriate emotion in a given situation demonstrates to the community an individual's commitment to the cultural values of that community (Armon-Jones, 1986). Thus emotions serve to restrain undesirable attitudes and behaviours and to sustain and endorse cultural values. A major social function of emotions appears to be modifying interactions between group members according to what seems to be the group's best interests at the time. The social environment provides group members with feedback about their emotions; this feedback might strengthen an emotion or might encourage its repression. In other words, social feedback supports self-regulation.

According to Thoits (1990) emotion norms indicate the expected range, intensity, duration and/or targets of specific emotions in given situations. She observes that norms are indicated most clearly by statements including the terms “should,” “ought,” “must,” or “have a right to,” in reference to feelings or feeling displays (p.181). She says that people spontaneously refer to the norms when talking to each other about their own or other people’s emotional experiences; for example, a parent may say to a child “You should be more grateful” or “You ought to be ashamed of yourself”; or a friend may say “You must be happy about that new job” or “You have a right to be angry about that letter” (p. 181).

Sometimes people’s feelings do not conform to the norms. Emotional “deviance” refers to experiences or displays of affect that differ in quality or degree from what is expected in a given situation (Thoits, 1990). Thoits questions under what conditions individuals are willing to endure sanctions for their unconventional reactions or even enlist the support of others to alter the rules of feeling. In other words how and when do emotion and expression norms change? She observes that certain subcultures such as gay communities, “swingers,” and encounter groups appear to be organized around unconventional emotions or emotional behaviours. Similarly protest movements may be sustained by a sense of outrage or anger at perceived injustice or oppression. Thoits questions how sub cultural and protest group members create and legitimize new emotions norms because, she says, often the more powerful segments of society refuse to grant the legitimacy or rationality of the group’s deviant feelings. Protest group members are likely to be motivated by their emotional reactions to situations of injustice, oppression, or threat; but their protests are likely either to fall on deaf ears or to elicit

negative sanctions from those who are perpetrators of injustice. Thoits suggests that it may be necessary to engage social support for feelings that are deviant in the eyes of the majority, to become legitimized. New norms are created when feelings are shared, validated, and understood by others, thus deviant emotions may become normative when there is prolonged contact between individuals who feel the same way, or when a threshold number of such individuals is reached, or when powerful authorities issue ineffective threats or incentives for conformity, or when there is a charismatic spokesperson for the group (Thoits). Thoits considers that sharing deviant feelings may be crucial in the transformation of similar others into counter-normative groups and social movements.

Feminist Perspective

Feminist philosophers have challenged the traditional philosophical and popular views of emotion as individualistic, natural, private, and universal and they have proposed an epistemology of emotions (Boler, 1997; Griffiths, 1988; Jaggar, 1989). They dispute the view that perceives emotion as disruptive and subversive of knowledge, maintaining instead that “emotion is vital to systematic knowledge about the social world and that any epistemology which fails to recognize this is deeply flawed” (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p.193). Stanley and Wise also consider emotions to be a legitimate source of knowledge, because they are “minded and rational responses to given situations” (p. 196).

According to Boler (1997), contemporary feminist philosophies of emotion can be characterized, in part, by the following:

1. They challenge the traditional separation of emotion and cognition.

2. Emotions are not private but, rather, must be understood as collaboratively constructed.
3. Emotions are viewed not as gender specific but gender related - for example, it's not that women don't get angry in public or that men don't feel shame, but there are gendered and cumulatively specific patterns to emotions that can be identified. (p. 222)

Feelings are a source of knowledge and, as such, should be treated seriously (Griffiths, 1988). When we communicate feelings and share experiences with others, we may generate new knowledge and new understandings of social and political relationships and of power structures, as happens in consciousness raising groups. Within western cultures people have been encouraged to control and even suppress emotions but Griffiths contends that we need to be in harmony with them, attend to them, and reflect on them.

In a hierarchy the social norms and values that predominate tend to serve the interest of the dominant group so the emotion responses constituted within the group help to ensure its own perpetuation (Griffiths, 1988). These responses are often accepted as the "natural" responses, the way things are. Our embedded reactions prevent us from seeing alternatives (Jaggar, 1989). According to Jaggar, "They limit our capacity for outrage and lend plausibility to the belief that greed and domination are inevitable, universal, and human motivations" (p.159). It seems, as Thoits (1990) points out, that people do not always experience the conventionally acceptable emotions, they experience deviant emotions. For example, sometimes we may feel satisfaction instead of embarrassment when leaders make fools of themselves, or resentment rather than

gratitude for welfare, or revulsion for socially sanctioned ways of treating animals. Jaggar calls these “outlaw emotions” and suggests that they are usually experienced by subordinated or marginalized people. When individuals experience these unconventional responses in isolation, they may be concerned, confused, and even doubt their sanity. On the other hand, when these responses are shared with, and validated by, other people, those individuals can form a subculture defined by norms and values different from the prevailing ones. These outlaw emotions can motivate new research by providing the political motivation for investigation. Outlaw emotions enable us to see the world differently (Jaggar).

Denzin’s Phenomenological Perspective

In response to the question “What is emotion?” Denzin (1984) answers that “emotions are self-feelings” (p. 3) and it is this notion which forms his central thesis in his book “On Understanding Emotions” in which he takes a social phenomenological and symbolic interactionist approach to emotion. He states that he wrote the book because there was no serious phenomenological account of emotionality as lived experience in the literature of emotions. The two central tenets of his approach are that self-feelings lie at the core of emotional experience, and that emotionality lies at the intersection of the person and society. His framework represents self-feelings as having a threefold structure:

1. A sense of feeling or experiencing an emotion, for example, fear.
2. A sense of the self feeling the feeling.
3. A revealing of the inner, moral meaning of this feeling for the self. (p. 50)

At the individual level people come to know themselves through their emotions. “Emotion is a lived, believed, situated, temporally embodied experience that radiates through a person’s stream of consciousness, is felt in and runs in his (sic) body” (p. 66). Denzin’s approach emphasizes the processual nature of emotions. “Self-feelings are sequences of lived emotionality, often involving the feeling and experiencing of more than one specific named emotion” (p. 42).

On the interaction level Denzin (1984) claims that emotions are not mere cognitive responses to physiological cultural or structural factors. They are interactive processes best studied as social acts involving interactions with self and interactions with others. Denzin claims that for “true or authentic emotional understanding to occur two individuals must produce a common field of shared experience that they can enter into” (p. 145). He calls this “feelings in common.” He describes a process which he calls “emotional infection or contagion” as a situation where there is a transference of one person’s emotional state to another person in an entirely voluntary process. He gives the example of a lonely and somewhat depressed man walking down the street by himself, going into the tavern and, in the friendly atmosphere, feeling his loneliness easing away. The emotion of the people in the pub has entered his stream of consciousness and without intending to, he has taken on the feelings in the room.

Denzin (1984) also identifies and describes a state he calls “emotional identification” which, although similar to infection, differs in that one person is lost in or subsumed in the other. This state is present in the relationship between movie stars and their fans, in certain forms of religious ritual, and in transference process in psychoanalysis.

In describing these two states, feelings in common and emotional identification, Denzin (1984) draws attention to an aspect of emotion which does not receive much attention in academic literature, namely that of the “concrete emotional stream” (p. 152), or the way in which people experience being influenced by the emotional energy of others. These aspects are considered in esoteric writings and in the popular discourses of self-help books and alternative healing practices and are a large part of the folk discourses of the phenomena of emotion. Candace Pert (1999) in her book “The Molecules of Emotion” describes a potential scientific explanation of the phenomenon.

Denzin’s (1984) perspective brings attention back to the personal everyday lived experience. He argues that “the sociological study and definition of emotions must begin with the study of selves and others” (p. 61).

Discursive Approaches

The discursive approach conceptualizes emotion as “not simply located in the individual and not simply biological or privately experienced phenomena, but rather reflecting linguistically embedded cultural values and rules” (Boler, 1999, p. 6). This perspective foregrounds the political implications of emotions as sites of power and resistance. Boler maintains that “emotions are political in the sense that within western cultures it has served the dominant interests of patriarchy and capitalism to view women as naturally caring and nurturing and as tending towards over emotionality” (p. 6). These are characteristics which are used to justify women’s exclusion from institutions of power.

The discursive perspective also focuses on the constitutive role played by language. “Discourses do not simply reflect or describe reality, knowledge, experience,

identity, social relationships, social institutions, and practices. Rather they play an integral part in constructing them” (Lupton, 1998, p. 26). Boler (1999) suggests that common language and scholarly discourses tend to characterize emotions as “located in the individual, ‘natural’ phenomena that we must learn to control, and ‘private’ experiences many of which we are taught not to express publicly” (p. 8). Only recently has the characterization of emotions being internal, irrational, and natural been exposed and questioned. A study of emotions as discourse keeps attention focused on the fact that emotions are phenomena that can be seen in social interaction, much of which is verbal. Emotional discourse as an approach to emotion can construe emotions as about social life and emotion talk as issues of sociability and power, in other words the politics of everyday life.

Lutz (1990) suggests that, “Emotion discourses may be one of the most likely and powerful devices by which domination proceeds” (p.75). She compares the discourse of emotions to Foucault’s characterization of the discourse of sexuality in which he claims that power creates sexuality and its disciplining. Lutz suggests that in a similar fashion, power can be seen to create emotionality. Emotion is constructed as “relatively chaotic, irrational, and antisocial, thereby legitimating the need for control by authority” (p. 69). The dominant discourse of emotion has legitimized the hierarchical distinction between men and women; reason and strength are connected with men, and emotion and weakness are connected with women. It also reinforces the public/private distinction and, thereby, the regulation of social order (Harding & Pribram, 2002). The separation between private/home/emotional/female and public/work/rational/male still exists, generally speaking, in today’s world.

The issue of public and private spheres is one which presents a conundrum for teachers and schools as workplaces. On the one hand schools are public in the sense that they are institutions and workplaces and on the other hand, the people who work in them, especially in elementary schools, are expected to display and use in their work the characteristics commonly attributed to women which are not deemed valuable in the public sphere. In other words teachers are expected by the public and by themselves to be caring and nurturing towards the students.

Lutz (1990) explores the rhetoric of control that frequently accompanies women's, and to a lesser extent men's, talk about emotion. She notes that language contains a set of metaphors applying to the control of emotions. People talk about managing, coping, handling, dealing with, and disciplining either their own emotions or the situation seen as creating the emotion. In a study in which she interviewed men and women and asked them to talk about their emotions, she noted that twice as many women as men talked about controlling their emotions. She speculates that this could be because women come to identify both themselves and their emotions as undisciplined and so they discipline their emotions themselves, thus doing away with the need for more coercive outside control. She also suggests that women are concerned about counteracting "the cultural denigration of themselves through association with emotion" (p.75).

Harding and Pribram (2002) also address the discourse of emotions and suggest that Foucault's analysis of power, subjectivity, and discourse is useful for the investigation of the cultural construction of emotion. Harding and Pribram describe Foucault's approach to discourse as "an organizing principle that produces and orders the phenomena of which it speaks and compels and constrains that which can be thought,

spoken and enacted” (p. 413). When applied to emotions, discourse establishes what can be felt an admiration for, revulsion of, or a disinterest towards. Using Foucault’s analysis of the operation of modern power, Harding and Pribram suggest that emotions may be viewed as “strategic formations” that continually interact with other “strategic formations” such as gender, family, law, science, medicine, and psychiatry. For example, discourses of nationalism and patriotism can be understood to produce the emotions of loyalty and pride; similarly the emotions of pride and loyalty can be understood to engender patriotism and nationalism (Harding and Pribram).

Harding and Pribram (2002) suggest that emotions are part of the reproduction of culture and subjectivity always within power relations. They refer to Jaggar’s (1991) concept of emotional hegemony. The ideological function of discourse on the emotions works to maintain members of dominant political, social, and cultural groups in power and aligned with reason, and to marginalize subordinate groups, such as women and people of racial minorities, who are associated with emotions and viewed as biased and irrational. Women are also required from an ideological perspective to express emotions more openly than men. The assignment of reason and emotion bolsters the authority of dominant groups and discredits subordinate groups thus creating an emotional hegemony (Jaggar). Emotions work to position individuals within structures of dominance or relations of power. However, as Jaggar suggests, when contradictory emotions are felt by sufficient numbers of people they form the basis for the constitution, in discourse and history, of sub cultural experiences and groups.

*Emotions in the Workplace**Introduction*

I am including literature from organizational studies as it incorporates many concepts, such as emotional labour and feeling rules, which have relevance to the workplace of teachers. The research on which I have concentrated is that of critical organization theory which, Mumby and Putnam (1992) state, emerged during the 1980s as a significant contributor to the understanding of organizational phenomena. Critical scholars challenged the managerial bias in traditional organizational research by showing how organizations function as sites of domination and exploitation. Much of the critical research addresses issues of ideology and power in the workplace and tries to undermine the traditionally regarded normal ways of organizing. Researchers used feminist approaches in studying organizations and focused both on the way in which patriarchy promotes particular understandings of knowledge and on male domination in organizations (Mumby and Putnam).

The phenomenon of emotions in the workplace has emerged as a significant theme in critical organization studies which explore power issues. In 2000 Fineman referred to emotions as a sub-discipline in the study of work and organization. Four years later in a review of a book about workplace emotions Rafaeli (2004) refers to the fact that the “idea of emotions as part of work and organization is in vogue” (p. 1344). The number of books and articles which have appeared on the topic “legitimate the simple idea that people cannot park their emotions along with their cars when they come to work in the morning” (p. 1344). Rafaeli suggests that business and management scholars need to come to understand emotions in order to understand work and organizations. He also

asserts that when one tries to understand emotion one opens “a Pandora’s box of multiple disciplines, variables, dimensions, research methods, and dilemmas with no one clear or firm set of answers” (p.1344). In the rest of this section I deal with some of those issues.

Emotion Research in Organizations

Sturdy (2003) adopts Burkitt’s (1997) view that emotions can be seen not simply as expressions of inner processes but “multidimensional (thinking, feeling and moving) complexes or modes of communication which are both cultural and corporeal/embodied and arise in social relationships of power and interdependence” (p. 82). Sturdy makes the point that the multifaceted nature of emotions and the numerous approaches associated with a range of disciplines (for example: biology, psychology, sociology, history, linguistics, and philosophy) mean that emotions remain knowable only in a partial sense. He observes that in each study researchers generally focus on only one or two particular aspects of emotion at a time; for example, the behavioural, physiological, linguistic, cultural, cognitive, or social structural aspects. Researchers may explore these aspects in relation to specific emotions (anger, hope, happiness, etc.) or using particular frames, for example, emotion as judgment, emotion as communication, or the control of emotion. Fineman (2000c) asserts that for anyone researching emotions it is essential to clarify the approach one is using. Sturdy also points out that methodological approaches reflect choices made by the researcher, perhaps intentionally or maybe without thinking, and reflect certain epistemological assumptions.

Many organization researchers choose the social constructionist approach to investigate emotions within the group. Harlos (2000) describes the social constructionist approach as acknowledging both biological and environmental factors as predominant

influences on human nature. Fineman (1999) states that there is so much that is “learned, social, interpretive, and culturally specific in the meaning and production of emotions, that strictly biological in-the-body explanations soon lose their potency” (p. 296).

Fineman also conceptualizes emotion in organizations as socially embedded and states that he would like to see a theory that builds explanations inter-relationally.

Rafaeli and Worline (2001) emphasize the social and interpersonal nature of emotions:

Just as we are essentially social, so are our emotions. It is within these social collectivities that emotions emerge. Clearly individuals do have intimate, personal, private emotions ... yet more often than not our emotions are inextricably bound up with other people and our participation in our social worlds. Emotional lives are not independent of the context in which they occur, and one of the most powerful emotional contexts people participate in is the organizational work context. (p.96)

Regarding how these emotions are constructed within organizations Rafaeli and Worline say that the norms and rules which accompany any organizational context can and do influence emotions, although this is not always recognized.

Bendelow and Mayall (2000) claim that emotions are shaped and given meaning in part by social or cultural forces and thus provide links that bridge mind and body, individual, society and the body politic. They also argue that emotions provide the missing link between personal troubles and broader public issues of social structure as suggested by Mills (1959) in “The Sociological Imagination.”

Critical organization researchers find investigating emotions challenging. The dominant discourse holds that they are private and hidden thus making it difficult to access them. Fineman (2000c) observes that research participants find it difficult to talk about emotions and wonders how else they could be accessed for research purposes. Each discipline has traditionally researched emotions from its own perspective, thus only certain aspects of emotions have been explored. The aspects which researchers access depends on the framework or epistemological and ontological stance they take. Sturdy's (2003, p. 99) table highlights which characteristics of emotions are privileged and which are silenced depending on the approach used (see Figure 1)

Approach	Possible insight	Privileges	Silences
Observation	Short term emotion dynamics	Emotion (compares feeling)	Personal and social history
Interview	Construction of authenticity	Individualism	Real-time emotion
Autobiography participation	Rational-emotional interplay	Subjectivity	Objectivity
Discourse	Diversity of meanings, emotions	Dominant texts	Non-discursive
Social structures	Power and emotional tension	History and cultures	Interaction and transience
Non-traditional data	Non-rational knowing	Humanism romanticism	Objectivity closure

Figure 1. Selected approaches to emotion research adapted from Sturdy (2003).

How Emotions are Perceived in Organizations

Organizations are often presented as rational enterprises (Fineman, 1999) which capitalize on the ability to think in order to maximize gains. The early foundation of modern management, expressed in the ideas of the scientific management of Frederick Taylor, advocated strict control over the human elements of organizations in order to construct a system that would operate by near machine-perfect rationality. These ideas created a form of ultimate order and control that has informed organizational theory ever since (Fineman, p. 291). Similarly Weber (as cited in Fineman, 1999) envisioned a bureaucracy in which “flows of information and action are structured by rules that keep out love, hatred and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional evidence” (p.291).

The concept of the rationality of the organization has been upheld traditionally by organizational theorists and researchers. It has been assumed by many theorists that because emotions were associated with irrationality and the feminine they were given no place or acknowledgement within organizations (Shields, 2005). Shields maintains that this perception was somewhat over-simplified and has been challenged by more recent research. The division between emotion and rationality was more nuanced than commonly described. Shields claims that strong emotion was thought of as manly and women’s emotions were cast as “mere emotionality.” Men were also assumed to have better capacity than women to harness the power of emotions in the service of reason. Feminine emotion was inferior and ineffectual (Shields). So it transpires that certain emotions were and still are acceptable to express while others were not and still are not. “Aggression, forcefulness, assertiveness, confidence, and competition are in. Weakness, submission, modesty, and caring are out” (Shields, p.101). The former are regarded as

necessary and even encouraged in the quest for business success, while the latter are seen as unimportant and inappropriate outside of the female domestic sphere. Interestingly, the emotions deemed acceptable in business are so naturalized in many work contexts that they cease to be regarded as emotions at all (Rafaeli & Worline, 2005). Rafaeli and Worline give the example of the commodity traders on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade who have worked in essentially the same way for over one hundred and fifty years. For a large part of this time there would have been an unstated but shared assumption that emotions had little or no place in the world of work. Yet the work requires and always has required emotion: “aggressiveness and sometimes anger mixed with an enforced calm that is punctuated by rushed excitement” (Rafaeli & Worline, p. 101). The organization requires the use of the men’s emotions to compete in a tense atmosphere and to fight for their customers (Rafaeli & Worline). Organizations tacitly incorporate into their culture those emotions which serve their interests and control and regulate those such as anger and frustration which are seen as disruptive and unacceptable (Rafaeli, 2004; Rafaeli & Worline, 2001).

Fineman (2000b) notes that even though more attention has recently been paid to emotions in organizations, the latest organizational behaviour texts for students of organizational studies make little or no mention of emotion. Of the books he reviewed, one spends a paragraph on “emotional conflict” when discussing types of conflict; another describes emotions in connection with type A and B personality traits; and a third briefly mention the concepts of emotional intelligence, emotional exhaustion, and emotional stability, but devotes considerably more text to job satisfaction and stress. Fineman claims that students of organizational studies are not introduced to the emotional

complexity of life in organizations. Thus, on the one hand there is silence about emotions in organizations and on the other hand they are tacitly acknowledged and used; certain emotions are harnessed and channelled to serve the corporation. Often these emotions are manipulated into existence.

Commodification of Emotions and Emotional Labour

Employees who once voluntarily served with a smile are now being mandated to smile as part of the conditions for being hired (Fineman, 2003). They are being required to manipulate their own and their customers' emotions. Fineman describes a training seminar in which new telephone sales personnel are coached in the art of invoking positive feelings in customers and "making it easy for them to say 'yes'" (p. 32). Common words and expressions such as "sorry" and "no problem" are considered to have negative connotations and are to be replaced by a range of positive, up-beat sounding or "sexy" words such as "certainly" and "rest assured" (Fineman, p. 32). Trainees are instructed to use this language in all areas of work and even at home to avoid "getting out of the habit." The aim of the conversations, which are monitored through random eavesdropping by supervisors, is to leave the customers with the impression that the salesperson was genuine and natural in order to secure a sale. Thus, what looks as though it is spontaneous is not and what looks like a genuine feeling is not. At the "Disney University" the employees are taught "The Disney Way" described by one new recruit as getting "doused with pixie dust" (Fineman). Emotional indoctrination is fine-tuned through written rules such as, never embarrass a guest, never improvise with scripts, always make eye-contact and smile, greet and welcome each and every guest, say "thank you" to each and every guest, demonstrate patience and honesty in handling

complaints. A naturally cheerful, outgoing personality used to be considered a hiring point for employees who would be working with the public; now those attributes are regarded as emotional competencies which can be taught to sales staff. Hochschild (1983) observes that while there have always been public service jobs, what is new is that they are now socially engineered and thoroughly organized from the top (p.8). Workers who engage in face-to-face encounters in places such as banks, supermarkets, airlines, holiday firms, hotels, and fast-food outlets are provided with “scripts.” Managerial control is exercised through surveillance methods such as “mystery shoppers,” spy cameras, and customer satisfaction questionnaires (Fineman). While positive emotions are commodified, unwanted emotions are controlled. Managers at fast food outlets invent ways to stimulate employees’ moods so that negative feelings are suppressed. Employees are constantly reminded to leave their problems at home and report to work in a good mood (Fineman).

The shaping of emotion for commercial ends is now pervasive. Corporations shape the way emotion is to be performed, as well as the work that goes into making it look good. The idea of emotional labour captures the intra psychic and the interpersonal work that people have to do to create the prescribed demeanour whether it is the ever-present smile, the cheery voice, the politeness under pressure, or the suppression of annoyance and fatigue (Hochschild, 1983). The term “emotional labour” was coined by Irving Goffman and developed into a construct by the sociologist Arlie Hochschild in 1983 in her book called “The Managed Heart” which was based on her PhD dissertation. For her research she investigated the emotional lives of flight attendants. She defined emotional labour as “the labour which requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order

to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (p.

7). In the case of the flight attendants they were expected to produce in their passengers the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe place. Hochschild describes how the company laid claim not only to the physical actions of the flight attendants as in how they handled the food trays and so forth, but to their emotional actions in putting on a smile. The workers Hochschild talked to often spoke of the smiles as being “on them” but not “of them.” They were seen as “an extension of the make-up, the uniform, the recorded music, the décor of the airplane, and the daytime drinks, all of which together orchestrated the mood of the passengers” (p. 135). For the flight attendants the smile is part of their work, a part that requires them to coordinate self and feeling so that the work seems to be effortless. Similarly part of the job is to disguise fatigue and irritation. It is easier to disguise fatigue and irritation if they can be banished altogether and this calls for emotional labour.

Emotional labour involves “surface acting” and “deep acting” (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2000). Ashforth and Tomiuk describe the former as being when people simulate emotions without actually feeling them. They might do this by using a combination of verbal and non verbal cues, such as facial expression, posture, or tone of voice. Deep acting is when people actively work to shape their actual emotion so that their expression of emotions is consistent with their experience of emotion (Ashforth & Tomiuk). In other words, surface acting focuses on outward behaviour and deep acting focuses on inner feeling. Nowadays many organizations expect workers not only to display prescribed emotions but to actually feel them. The cost of doing this work can be that workers become estranged or alienated from their genuine feelings. The potential split between

what the workers “display” and what they actually experience has been called “emotional dissonance” which, like “cognitive dissonance,” is experienced as an uncomfortable and unpleasant situation to be in. In many cases it can lead to decreased job satisfaction and exhaustion (Ashforth & Tomiuk).

Regulation of Emotion Through Feeling Rules

Emotions are also regulated in the workplace by feeling rules and norms of emotional experience and expression. As I have previously discussed, the feeling rules in social settings and organizations tend to reflect the dominant interests, thus in an organization culture the feeling rules would reflect the interests of the management. From the point of view of the organization and managers it is necessary to regulate “undesirable” emotions, in other words those emotions which might stand in the way of productivity. Feeling rules also govern the way the workers themselves interact. Meyerson (2000) describes two groups of medical social workers who worked in two separate hospitals. She focuses on the difference in the attitude to and treatment of burnout in the workers. In one hospital burnout was regarded as an individual failing and was treated as an illness to be cured. The workers were blamed for not coping properly. The supervisor gave workshops on how to avoid burnout. In the other hospital burnout was considered a normal consequence of the work and a healthy response. The workers developed ways to cover for each other. They regarded emotional control as undesirable because they used their emotions in their work as sources of connection and insight. The first hospital had developed a culture in which control and suppression of emotions was the norm. The individual was the locus of the disease and the cure. In the second hospital

emotions were respected; the emphasis was on the relational aspects and valuing emotional ways of knowing (Meyerson).

Emotional Intelligence

A recent boost to the recognition of the place of emotions in organizations was the publication of two books by Daniel Goleman, “Emotional Intelligence” in 1995 and “Working with Emotional Intelligence” in 1998. *Emotional intelligence*, a phrase coined by Peter Salovey in 1990, or *EQ* as it is now called, has taken root as the new answer to a whole range of organizational problems and is supposed to be an antidote to the traditional focus on cognition or reason, but Fineman (2000a) asserts that EQ is, in fact, an intellectualization of feelings. Fineman views EQ as another instance of the commodification of emotions and another example of the way in which they are being transformed into a marketable product. The underlying aim of EQ is to refocus emotions to enhance control of self and others. Goleman (1995) categorizes emotions as bad and good. Bad feelings or states include impulsiveness, abrasiveness, arrogance, and preoccupation with image. Good feelings are empathy, composure, and self-assurance. Other feelings like jealousy, rage, envy, desire, fear, guilt, boredom, vindictiveness, shame, disgust, and hurt are not even discussed (Fineman).

According to Goleman (1995) emotionally intelligent people know their emotions, manage their emotions, motivate themselves, recognize emotions in others, and handle relationships. The promise of EQ is that it provides what employers want; it is profitable for business outcomes. Fineman (2000a) argues that EQ ignores the psychoanalytic perspective which holds that our defence mechanisms often cause us to be unsure of the emotions we are experiencing so that many of our emotions defy conscious

control. Also, we often experience our emotions as mixed and changing. EQ writings imply the opposite; that one's feelings are "mostly identifiable (after appropriate training) in a clear, discrete, form, and ready for manipulation, such as suppression or embellishment, towards managerial/corporate ends" (Fineman, p.111).

Teachers and Emotions

In this section I have chosen to concentrate on three areas: the special issue of the Cambridge Journal of Education which focused on teachers and emotions; the research by Andy Hargreaves; and the research by Michalinos Zembylas. I have chosen the latter two because of the way in which they have developed their ideas and the detailed nature of their analyses.

Groundbreaking Journal Issue

The publication in 1996 of the special issue of the Cambridge Journal of Education was designed to draw attention to the topic of emotions in teaching and teachers' emotions. Some educators recognized that efforts to improve teachers' skills in the classroom had relied on cognitive and behavioural approaches and neglected consideration of the emotions. Nias (1996) claimed that this neglect reflected that "emotions are not deemed a topic worthy of serious academic and profession consideration" (p. 294). This special edition of the journal attempted to illuminate the importance of teachers' affective development. Articles were commissioned from researchers in many countries including England, Canada, the United States, Australia, and Belgium. They covered many educational settings from infant schools to universities, and dealt with issues ranging from everyday concerns to the experience of being

inspected under the OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) regulations in England. The researchers took the perspective that emotions are deeply rooted in cognitions and that feelings, perceptions, judgments, and emotions are interconnected; they also held that emotions, although experienced individually, are a product of socio-cultural interaction (Nias).

In her editorial Nias (1996) summarized and synthesized points made by the authors and drew attention to what she felt were important concerns, some of which I outline below. All the articles were testament to the deeply held feelings of teachers and the emotional nature of the job of teaching. Nias surmised that the deeply emotional nature of the work arises, in part, from the fact that teachers' work involves "intensive, personal interactions, in crowded situations, with large numbers of energetic students who are frequently spontaneous, immature and preoccupied with their own interest" (p. 296). Not only do teachers have to control this mixture of energies and needs, but their job and public expectations require them to direct the energy into approved channels. Teachers were seen to feel passionately about their pupils and to exhibit joy, enthusiasm, and excitement at their successes and disappointment, frustration, and depression at what they perceived to be their failures. Nias expressed concern at the close personal identification some teachers have with their profession and at the degree to which some teachers rely on the classroom for their sense of self-esteem. Teachers also invest in the values they believe their work represents; they make emotional commitments to value-directed goals which are often of an ethical nature. They repeatedly have to make decisions which are complex and also set in morally ambiguous contexts. Nias contends that there are no agreed upon technical or moral principles teachers can call upon to

justify the rightness of their professional judgments or the ethical decisions. The more profound and personal their commitment to particular ideals, goals, or priorities the more extreme their reaction when these are threatened or contested. Teachers reacted angrily to perceived challenges to their deeply held beliefs (Nias).

Emotions were seen to be not simply in teaching but also a response to teachers' working conditions, and the increasing frequency with which teachers have to defend their sense of who they are. As social and political pressures, resulting from government policies, impact the teachers' lives and workplaces, teachers' emotions are increasingly seen as reactions to their working conditions. In fact, Nias notes that teachers' most intensive, hostile, reactions come from encounters with other adults, including parents, colleagues, school governors, and inspectors and when they talk about the effects of changing educational policies on them and their work. Nias also noted that the theme of loss was apparent in many of the articles. Teachers referred to a loss of status which resulted from de-professionalization and reduction to technician status. They said they felt mortified and humiliated and they experienced a loss of autonomy and of influence and control.

Since the focus of the edition was on teacher development Nias (1996) included suggestions from the articles as to how teachers and teacher educators could deal with the topic of emotions for pre-service and in-service teachers. It was suggested that the telling of stories could help teachers become aware of and accept the elements of power, conflict, and politics behind teachers' feelings. Stories could also show how teachers can come to terms with and productively use their emotions. She suggested that "teachers can

grow personally and develop professionally through making a narrative whole of their lives to search for self and self-understanding” (p. 304).

Nias (1996) noted that the absence of a discourse of teachers’ emotions meant that it was difficult for the authors to get beyond the descriptive and analytic layers to deeper levels of understanding. Fortunately, the increase in research on teachers and emotions has enabled a deeper and more detailed examination of some aspects of the topic. I now turn to two researchers/scholars who have written extensively about teachers and emotions; they are Hargreaves and Zembylas.

Hargreaves

Many of Hargreaves’ more recent articles (2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2004) were written as part of a large study which focused on emotions of educational change. I will deal with those in more detail shortly. First I will examine an earlier article written in 1991, together with Tucker, when Hargreaves investigated the topic of teachers and guilt. It was of note because it differed from previous inquiries into teachers’ emotions in which the focus had been guided by the researchers’ own particular pet subjects (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). Hargreaves and Tucker, in contrast, took their topic from qualitative accounts in which teachers had talked about their emotional responses to their work. This article was also important because teachers’ emotions were viewed in the context their working conditions.

In the article about guilt Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) outline the history of the research trends which have led up to investigation of teachers’ emotions. They maintain that the central purpose of educational research is the improvement of learning. In order to improve the quality of learning it was thought necessary to investigate and understand

teaching. This search resulted in the discourse of teacher effectiveness which sought to identify teacher behaviours that correlated with positive student outcomes. It was thought that if good teaching could be identified, then good learning could be produced. This proved an elusive quest as it was difficult to establish consistent characteristics of effective teaching. Characteristics varied according to the context, which included subject matter, types of students, and the teachers' thinking processes (Hargreaves & Tucker). Researchers therefore thought that if they could understand and codify teachers' thinking, they would then be able to solve the problem; so they concentrated on cognition. Increased understanding of teacher planning, decision-making, personal-practical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, teacher reflection, and teacher experience, led to understanding how teachers are cognitively able to understand, perform, and select effective teaching behaviours. However, it did not show why teachers choose to select or do not choose to select effective teaching strategies on different occasions. Hargreaves and Tucker maintain that the solution lies in the context of teaching and the self of the teacher. They assert that it is important to look at the classroom as a social, practical, and political environment for learning and to look at the teacher as an individual, in order to understand why teachers do what they do. In order to achieve this Hargreaves and Tucker chose to approach their research through symbolic interactionism, which, they said, allowed them to highlight the dimension of feeling as well as thinking and to connect emotions with the context of teaching. They assert that in symbolic interactionism, teaching is more than a set of technically learnable skills; it is given meaning by the teachers' evolving selves, affording insights into their meanings and purposes, within the realistic contexts of their work environments (Hargreaves & Tucker). Prior to their

research Hargreaves and Tucker studied qualitative accounts of teachers discussing their work and noted that they talked about certain emotional responses to their work, including anxiety, frustration, and guilt. They recognized that guilt was a central emotional preoccupation of teachers and chose to investigate its origin, its meaning, and its consequences. Among the causes, they found that the open-endedness of the job of teaching meshed with the persona of perfectionism and led to unrealistic expectations as to what the teachers could expect of themselves. When they failed to live up to their expectations they experienced guilt. Another source of unrealistic expectations were the models of expertise and effective teaching which Hargreaves and Tucker maintain were based on “over-confident claims regarding the supposed findings of research about effective practice” (p. 500). These, too, contributed to teachers’ experience of guilt. Moreover, these models of competence made it difficult for teachers to confide in each other for fear of being construed as incompetent. Hargreaves and Tucker suggested that if shared standards and limits could be established among professional communities of teachers at the level of the school then it would be likely that feelings of excessive guilt could be averted and the damaging consequences of burnout and cynicism be avoided.

In the late 1990s Hargreaves undertook a project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) dealing with the emotions of educational change. This particular project was motivated by the fact that many seemingly sound educational reform strategies had failed because emotional aspects of educators’ reactions had not been taken into account. The motivation for this research then, was to enhance educational change. To this end Hargreaves interviewed 50 teachers across Ontario for between one and two hours and used the data from the interviews to

address a number of emotional issues including teachers' relationships with students, parents, leaders, and peers.

In one article Hargreaves (2001a) focused on the relationships between teachers and their colleagues. He noted that in the stream of research which had promoted teacher collegiality as the antidote to teacher isolationism and part of the solution to effective teaching, there had been no agreed upon or clear definition or description of collegiality. He maintains that collegial relations are a combination of closeness and distance and he developed the framework of emotional geographies to capture this dynamic.

- Personal geographies: delineate how close to or distant from one another people become in the personal aspects of their relationships.
- Cultural geographies: refer to the differences of race, culture, gender, and disability, including different ways of experiencing and expressing emotion that can create distance between people and lead them to be treated as stereotypes.
- Moral geographies: refer to interactions in which people pursue common purposes and feel a sense of accomplishment together, or where they are defensive about their own purposes, and unconcerned or in disagreement about the purposes of others.
- Professional geographies: describe how definitions and norms of professionalism either set professionals apart from their colleagues or open them up to exploring professional issues together.
- Political geographies: refer to situations in which differences of power and status can distort interpersonal communication or in which such differences can be used, not to protect people's own interests, but to empower others.

- Physical geographies: of time and space can bring people together over long periods so that relationships might develop, or can reduce these relationships to strings of episodic interactions. (p. 509)

Using these guidelines Hargreaves (2001a) identified four broad areas of emotionally significant aspects of teachers' relations with their colleagues: 1) appreciation and acknowledgement; 2) personal support and social acceptance; 3) cooperation, collaboration, and conflict; and 4) trust and betrayal. He noted that teachers cherish appreciation and getting positive feedback, but it is not necessarily forthcoming from parents and other adults. The likeliest sources of recognition, reward, and appreciation would seem to be colleagues; interestingly, Hargreaves noted that teachers did not report many incidents of this type in their interviews. In fact, it appeared that sometimes teachers only heard positive things when they were retiring or when they were ill. When their colleagues appreciate their efforts and endorse their moral purposes, teachers feel they are on the right track.

Teachers often look to each other for support, especially as it is difficult for non-teachers to appreciate the severe demands of the job. In Hargreaves' (2001a) research teachers made references to social acceptance and affiliation and to being socially involved. Friendliness rather than friendship was clearly important to teachers. They experienced a more general need to be accepted, liked, included, and supported. Hargreaves suggests that there can be a downside to this sort of need. Teachers showed reluctance to challenge their colleagues, and were often inhibited about expressing opinions or raising contentious issues. Their cautiousness about making enemies limited intellectual discussions and professional disagreements; thus, the need to be accepted

may discourage disagreements. Hargreaves contends that there need to be norms of professional purpose that allow disagreements.

The presence of conflict was the most frequently cited source of negative emotions among teachers (Hargreaves, 2001a). Teachers generally tended to view conflict and disagreement in their schools as a problem and as a source of negative emotions, to be avoided rather than embraced. Teachers valued thinking alike and being on the same wavelength. Most instances of conflict seemed to be provoked by differences of opinion about the purpose of schooling or other educational issues. Very often differences in purpose and practice are normally avoided or treated with “politeness.” In a profession with a strong equality ethic teachers are reluctant to be seen to be stepping on toes. When conflict does occur Hargreaves notes that its wounds can be deep and lasting. Teachers reported feeling frustrated, devastated, and personally attacked. Teachers typically avoid conflict by establishing norms of politeness and non-interference, or by clustering together with only like-minded colleagues who share their ideas and beliefs. This reduces teachers’ capacity to work through differences and learn from disagreement. They worry that airing disagreements will harm working relationships. Often there is not sufficient trust that the relationship will survive let alone grow (Hargreaves).

Hargreaves (2001a) recommended the building of strong professional communities where teachers regularly confer praise on one another and receive active support. He urged teachers to develop the type of friendship in which they could raise and deal with issues of professional difference and disagreement and make norms and practices of debate and inquiry central to the schools professional culture. He envisaged this being underpinned by a commitment to active caring for and about colleagues to

build stronger emotional and intellectual understanding, rather than close or cloying friendships that affirm consensus and identity among few teachers and have superficial kind of politeness or friendliness.

Zembylas

Zembylas (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2005a, 2005b) is another educator who has theorized and researched extensively the topic of teachers and emotions. He has used feminist and post-structural lenses to theorize about emotions as political sites and he has drawn extensively on Foucault's work on discourses and technologies of the self. The bulk of Zembylas' work concentrates on the interaction in the classroom between the teacher and students.

He characterizes his conception of emotions as resting on four assumptions:

1. Emotions are not private or universal and are not impulses which simply happen to passive sufferers. Instead emotions are constituted through language and refer to a wider social life. This view challenges any sharp distinction between the "private" domain (the existentialist and the psychoanalytic concern) and the "public" domain (the structuralist concern).
2. Power relations are inherent in "emotion talk" and shape the expression of emotions by permitting us to feel some emotions while prohibiting others (for example, through moral norms and explicit social values e.g., efficiency.)
3. Using emotions one can create sites of social and political resistances. For example, feminist and poststructuralist criticism exposes contradictions within discourse of emotions, thus identifying "counterbalancing discourse" or

“disrupting discourse” (Walkerdine, 1990). These counter-discourses are sites of resistance and self-formation.

4. Finally it is important to recognize the role of the body in emotional experience.

This view is not related to any notion of emotion as “inherent” but emphasizes how embodiment is integral to self-formation; if emotion is understood as corporeal and performative then the subject appears in a new light in a way that rejects the individualized psychological self. (2005b, p. 26)

Zembylas’ book (2005b) and articles (2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2005a) are based on the ethnographic research he conducted with one elementary school teacher, Catherine, over a period of three years. His main purpose was to understand the emotions in teaching and thereby contribute to improvement in teaching and learning. Catherine had been identified by a faculty colleague as being an excellent and enthusiastic teacher who was interested in teaching science. Zembylas chose to investigate the teaching of this particular subject as he had realized that in his career as a teacher in an elementary school his personal love for science had ignited the students’ interest. His goal for the study was to “describe the role of Catherine’s positive and negative emotions in constructing her science pedagogy, curriculum planning, and relationships with the children, parents, and colleagues” (2005b, p.66).

He says that although his study began as an exploration of how children’s knowledge was legitimated in Catherine’s classroom, it soon evolved and focused on the role of emotions in her teaching. His original role as participant observer also evolved into participant collaborator as he helped with planning lessons and organizing and managing classroom activities. He felt that this role allowed him to make a meaningful

contribution and also allowed Catherine to feel more comfortable with his presence. He estimates that during three years he spent two hundred hours in the classroom observing science lessons and forty-five hours interviewing Catherine, in addition to numerous informal conversations and contacts. During the interviews they discussed in depth events in the classroom and also covered other topics such as her family and educational history, educational philosophy and practices, reflections on students and so on. Also, he asked a sequence of core questions which focused on how Catherine felt about particular emotions she had experienced during the classroom observations. These were taken from an approach known in cultural psychology as “the meta-emotion interview” (p. 69). This combination provided rich descriptions of emotions from three perspectives:

- 1) an awareness of her emotional experiences and their expressions in language and nonverbal ways, 2) the influence of emotions on her science teaching and the students’ emotional expressions, and 3) the social, cultural, and power influences on her emotions, including the classroom and school discourses on emotions.

(2005b, p.70)

Zembylas (2005b) developed a conceptual framework for studying Catherine’s emotions see Figure 2. At the heart is the view that “emotions are not only a matter of a teacher’s individual reality (intrapersonal level), but also social (interpersonal level) and socio-political (inter-group level) phenomena that are shaped by how teaching is organized and performed” (p. 96). The inter-group level refers to the relationships between the teacher’s emotions and the social and political influences from the classroom and school setting in which one teaches. It conceptualizes the personal and social levels within the wider context of the political and institutional setting, and includes topics

including emotional rules, power relations, and school culture. Issues related to Catherine's emotions are worked out not only in intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions but also are influenced by the "possibilities, constraints and conventions of the school contexts in which she teaches" (Zembylas, p. 106) which include conventions, norms, and policies about how science should be taught. These inter-group aspects are based on particular emotional rules which influence how emotions about some pedagogies are permitted and others are not encouraged. These aspects of her school culture influence how Catherine feels about particular pedagogies. Zembylas illustrates this with an incident from Catherine's experience.

<i>Individual Reality (Intrapersonal Level)</i>	<i>Social Interaction (Interpersonal Level)</i>	<i>Sociopolitical Context (Intergroup Level)</i>
<p>The history of how teacher emotions are <i>constructed</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions as evaluations • Emotions and their relevance to action • Ways of expressing emotions (physiological, behavioural) 	<p>How teacher emotions are <i>used</i> in teaching, and what possibilities they open for teachers and students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions in social interactions • Connections between emotions, beliefs, and knowledge (epistemological aspects) • Connections between emotions and values (ethical aspects) • Connections between emotions and self-identity. (ontological aspects) 	<p>How teacher emotions are relational, social, and historical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional rules, power relations, and school culture • Constructing histories and genealogies of particular emotions in science teaching • Possibilities to make emotional experiences the beginning of action and change • Relationships between genealogies of emotion and school politics

Figure 2. Zembylas' Conceptual Framework: The Role of Teacher Emotions in Science Teaching

Catherine's mode of teaching science was through an in-depth integrated approach which met the diverse needs and interests of her students and encouraged students to construct their own knowledge. This approach was unusual in Catherine's school, where teaching to the test was the norm. Some of Catherine's colleagues felt that she was different and asked her why she didn't teach like the rest of them. They claimed that her students would not achieve good scores on the standardized tests because she was not teaching content. Catherine withdrew from her colleagues and started to doubt her own beliefs and pedagogy. Her self-confidence suffered and she described feeling alienated and felt like crying most days. Zembylas (2005b) suggests that Catherine's emotions were shaped and influenced by the norms of the school culture which endorsed the teaching of science in a certain way. This is just one illustration of the way in which emotions are influenced by the wider political arena.

Zembylas (2003a) looks to feminist and post-structural theories to help understand the way in which emotions are constituted in relations of power. He cites Abu-Lughod and Lutz's assertion that "what people feel physiologically as emotion is generated in social, political and cultural encounters" (p.116). The way in which people manage their emotions in social interactions, allowing them free expression some of the time and keeping a tight lid on them at other times, reflects cultural norms, public values, felt commitments and "practices." Zembylas emphasizes that focusing on emotion as discourse does not mean that the notion of emotion as embodied is ignored. He suggests that we can acknowledge the embodiment of emotions without agreeing that they are "natural" phenomena rather than being shaped by social interaction. "To learn how,

when, where, and by whom emotions ought to be enacted is to learn a set of body techniques including facial expressions, postures and gestures” (Zembylas, 2003a, p.119).

Zembylas (2003a) proposes that if teachers become aware of the way in which emotions are constituted, they then have the opportunity individually or collectively to resist the norms and use their emotions as sites of action.

By developing an awareness of their emotional responses as a valuable source of information about one’s self, and using the power of emotion as a basis for collective and individual social resistance, teachers can sort their experiences, their anxieties, their fears, and their excitements and learn how to use them in empowering ways. (p. 121)

Ways in which teachers can develop this awareness about the role of emotions in teaching include sharing stories of their experiences with each other, developing mentoring relationships among teachers, developing teacher teams as forums for creating emotional and professional bonding, and encouraging teachers to engage in action research on their own practices. Through such activities as these teachers can create collective resistances, perceive themselves as sites of agency, and begin to challenge the norms.

The Teachers’ Context

Global Trends

In this section I focus on studies which are relevant to the larger context in which teachers are operating. Smyth and Shacklock (1998) argue that in order to understand the complexities of what is happening in schools and in teachers' lives locally, it is necessary to be aware of the wider context of what is happening globally.

While I have drawn mainly on literature from England and Australia, similar trends are being pursued in BC. Soucek (1999) explains that since the 1980s the global economic system has been dealing with difficulties created by a decrease in profits. Liberal capitalists, including members of agencies like the OECD and the World Bank, together with bankers, right wing think-tanks, and politicians, identified the problem as originating in four main areas:

1. a large public sector with its bureaucratic structure,
2. democratic structures of governance,
3. organized labour,
4. schooling, or, more precisely, the failure to respond to the need for a flexible and generically skilled labour force. (p. 222)

Consequently, during the late 1980s and 1990s nearly all English speaking, industrially developed countries undertook an extensive restructuring of teacher education, school curriculum, and the organization of schooling. Soucek seems to suggest that a sense of fiscal crisis was created in order to justify making the changes. The move aligns education with market disciplines so that it serves the needs of the economy or, in the words of Smyth & Shacklock, (1998) “schools are being construed largely as annexes of industry” (p. 11). Carter and O’Neill (cited in Ball, 1999) have identified five elements common internationally in policy making:

- Improving national economics by tightening a connection between schooling, employment, productivity, and trade.
- Enhancing student outcomes in employment related skills and competencies.
- Attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment.

- Reducing costs of education to government.
- Increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision making and pressure of market choice. (p. 10)

Since these policies do not logically and intuitively serve the interests of education, teachers cannot be trusted as a group to implement them; therefore the policy makers have to make sure that tight controls are in place to guarantee that teachers are compliant, obedient workers who will deliver the mandated curriculum in the mandated way (Ball, 1999).

The alignment of education with the market has been and continues to be engineered through a variety of interacting techniques. Some of these are subtle, covert, and illusionary. Using one such technique politicians manipulate a crisis and then take steps ostensibly as if to remedy it, but really bringing in another agenda (Berliner and Biddle, 1995). In their book “The Manufactured Crisis: Myths, Fraud and the Attack on America’s Public Schools” Berliner and Biddle describe the manufactured crisis in education in the U.S. Language and rhetoric also are used to create impressions. Smyth and Shacklock (1998) refer to “aerosol” words like “effective,” “quality,” and “excellence” which have been sprayed around by politicians and others in influential places. These words are then picked up, used, and interpreted by people in vastly different ways resulting in miscommunication, as well as deliberate manipulation (Smyth & Shacklock).

Hartley (1997) suggests that the “preferred solution” to managing the shift is to “assign control of strategy to government but to devolve to institutions and to individuals the control over the tactics which will implement that strategy” (p. 48). Thus the concept

of locally managed schools suggests a kind of power, of ownership and emancipation, to the professional and to the consumer; however, Hartley cautions, the “ownership is only of tactics - of the means, not the strategic ends. The ends are for others to decide” (p.48). He goes on to explain that “their decisions are wrapped up in the bureaucratic discourse of specifications, performance criteria, articulations and national guidelines” (p. 48). Hartley says that this discourse of “new managerialism” comprises two sets of vocabulary. One set is informed by the industrial metaphor and indicates the strategies used by government to maintain control over the workers; the other set, representing concepts of empowerment and ownership, structures the tactics by which the strategies will be implemented. There is an appearance of empowerment, of choice, and local decision making; the concept of self managing schools is appealing. Hartley suggests that professionals are meant to mix the two sets of vocabulary and accept them as if they were coherent, but he says that attempts to find internal consistency are met with confusion and cynicism because it doesn’t feel right or empowering. In other words this is another scenario in which an illusion is being created (Hartley).

Exercising Control Over Teachers and Curriculum

Recreating schooling in the image of the market entails, amongst other things, organizational restructure, ideological restructure, and reduced funding (Ball, 1999). An integral part of the process is casting teachers in the role of workers and assigning them the task of implementing policies and procedures into which they have had no input, in other words, the proletarianisation of teachers. Ball refers to the management techniques which are being used, as the “twin mechanisms of performativity and managerialism” (p.18). These “twin mechanisms” work together to exercise control over teachers and

education. Ball suggests that managerialism works from the inside out. It works on the culture and seeks to alter existing relations of power. “It plays a key role of the wearing away of professional-ethical regimes that have been dominant in schools and bringing about their replacement by entrepreneurial-competitive regimes” (p.19). Performativity, on the other hand, works from the outside in. It refers to the imperative for schools, as markets, to perform and justify their existence. This would include such things as accountability through the use and publication of performance indicators in league tables.

Ball (1999) uses Kikert’s metaphor of “steering at a distance” to convey the idea of government bureaucrats formulating policy and installing techniques such as TQM (Total Quality Management), the responsibility for the implementation of which is devolved to the local levels. This, coupled with the introduction of parental choice and new funding formulae, ensures that teachers will police themselves and each other because otherwise their schools may “fail” and they may be out of a job. Alternatively, if they are not seen by their colleagues and management to be pulling their weight, they might be deemed expendable in the site-based budget discussions. Eventually some teachers take on the agenda of the organization and, either through fear or because they genuinely believe the “reformed” way is the way things should be, they bring subtle and sometimes not so subtle pressure to bear on each other. Self steering occurs when workers have internalized control and engage in self surveillance and mutual surveillance to monitor themselves and, more importantly, monitor their peers (Ball). Smyth et al (2000) quote a teacher from their study of Gallipoli High School as saying, “People are very much aware these days of who is supposed to be doing what ... and peer pressure is definitely a factor” (p. 81). Ball refers to this as the micro physics of oppression.

Another area in which control is exercised is that of the curriculum. Education has been understood to be a moral and political undertaking. Throughout history there have been struggles over the control of the curriculum, both the explicit curriculum, as in what it taught, and the hidden curriculum, as in the way in which it is taught and the values transmitted. Industry has long had an interest in the inculcation of the work ethic and the training of a malleable workforce. Students have been conditioned by sitting in rows and responding to the bell. Now, it seems, there is a concerted effort, supported by powerful technologies of steering-at-a-distance and self-steering, to ensure that the curriculum is "tamper-proof." Many jurisdictions are mandating pre-packaged curricula complete with how-to videos. The teachers' "effectiveness" is measured by the students' results on standardised tests. This means, of course, that the content has to be measurable. In this way much of what used to be curriculum has been sidelined because it is not measurable.

The Subjectivity of the Teacher

As a result of policies that have been initiated, teachers have experienced changes in their work and in how they view themselves (Ball, 1999). Their work has intensified as more time is taken up with meetings and paperwork to document and track the tests and evaluative procedures (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). Continual cutbacks have made inroads into the supply of material resources and support staff so that teachers are required to do more work with fewer resources. There is less time for department meetings with colleagues. There is an atmosphere of fear and anxiety as testing and evaluation with the attendant stress of published results occupies more time and energy (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996). Teachers say that, against their better judgment, they teach to the test. They also spend less time on individual students and are guided more by the

aggregate outcomes (Ball, 1999). The children who are already disadvantaged become more disadvantaged. Collegiality is eroded as teachers do not trust each other any more (Hargreaves, 2002). The ethos of competition permeates the school. In this way the “company” can ensure that the employees are loyal to them because they have the final say over resources (Hartley, 1997). Collectivity is under attack and individual responsibility is being emphasized. Teachers assume that any fault or deficit lies within themselves (or their peers) and take the blame for problems which are systemic (Ball).

All this takes a toll on teachers’ well-being and sense of self. Cheng & Couture (2000) refer to the “divided life”(p. 70) of the teacher, by which they mean there is a growing split created by a sense of living one thing and believing another. They maintain that “to live outside of oneself is becoming a more common condition of teaching” (p. 70). Teachers suffer stress when they realize they become complicit by acting contrary their values and beliefs in their teaching (Nias, 1996). In England, there is a considerable body of work which links teacher stress with the restructuring of national education systems which began in the 1980s (Troman & Woods, 2000). Travers & Cooper (cited in Troman & Woods) argue that it is no coincidence that rising stress levels in the profession coincided with the introduction of the Education Reform Act in 1988. They say that since this time the nature and demands of teaching have changed. Similar trends have been noted in Europe, North America, and Australia.

In all of this restructuring the teachers themselves are being restructured. Ball (1999) compares the “authentic” teacher with the “reformed” teacher. He describes the authentic teacher as one who “bases the practice of teaching on the values of service and a shared language that provided for reflection dialogue and debate” (p. 28). Authentic

teachers would be aware of the moral purpose and political nature of education. Ball characterizes their work as dynamic as “they struggle and compromise, plan and act spontaneously, and improvise within and across contradictory roles and expectation, creativity and imagination are important” (p. 28). The reformed teacher undergoes a shift in consciousness and identity. “Efficiency is asserted over ethics” (p. 24). The values of service and altruism are displaced. The common purpose is survival in the market place and individuals should want what is good for the company. “Pragmatism and self interest rather than professional judgment and ethics are the basis for new organisational language games” (p. 25). Teachers are supposed to “recognize and take responsibility for the relationship between their contribution to the competitiveness of their organization and the security of employment” (p. 25). The reformed teacher’s practice is based on the achievement of targets set, and accountability, competition, and comparison (Ball).

Ball (1999) maintains that the new policies are not simply reforming teachers and reforming education but “they are bringing about profound shifts in education, the role, purposes, and values of the teacher and teaching - they are changing what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be educated”(p. 27). In the process teachers are not simply changed or improved; they are re-made. Mac an Ghail’s (1992) construction of a typology of teachers in an English comprehensive school illustrates the strategies that teachers use to cope with the restructuring of their role and their selves. Many teachers feel their identity is under attack and withdraw into cynicism, while others invent or reinvent themselves as New Entrepreneurs in alignment with the prevailing values and demands of the market school mentality.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have addressed the subject of emotion from a number of approaches including the philosophical, psychological, social constructionist, feminist, and discursive. I have also discussed emotions as they are dealt with in organisation literature, especially the critical organisation literature. I focused on some topics in particular including emotional labour, emotional intelligence, and feeling rules. I also reviewed selected literature dealing with teachers and emotions, especially in connection with their peers and the feeling rules. I then looked at the current context of education and some of the factors involved which affect teachers' sense of self and their relationships with each other.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I present an overview and rationale for the research design which I selected and developed for my inquiry. I include sections in which I describe the case study approach, I identify my underlying epistemological and ontological stances, and I outline my approach to discourse analysis. I also describe the methods I used to carry out the research. I include sections on participant selection and gathering data through interviews and an asynchronous group. I describe my data management and analysis processes and I conclude with sections addressing validity issues, representation, and ethical considerations.

Case Study

My decision to frame this inquiry as a case study was influenced by Yin's (2003) observation that "the distinctive need for case study arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (p.xi). The topic of my inquiry, that of examining how teachers experience, express, reflect on, and understand the emotional world in relation to their peers and workplace is, indeed, a complex social phenomenon. Stake (1998) identifies a number of different types of case studies, among them the instrumental case study, in which a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue. In my inquiry the on-line discussion was used to provide insight into the emotional aspects of teachers' relationships with their peers. According to Merriam (2001) the case study is an appropriate choice when the researcher wants "to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and its meaning for those involved" (p.19). In addition it allows for an intensive,

holistic exploration which is necessary when there is little previous research. These characteristics, together with the flexibility of the case study approach, were important features in my inquiry, allowing me to glean understandings of individual, social and organizational processes of working life in schools involving the emotions. Using a case study enabled me to stay open to emerging aspects without having narrowed the focus. It also allowed me to focus on the layers of personal, interpersonal, and contextual experience.

Merriam (2001) observes that, although there are many different descriptions of what the case study approach entails, the single most defining characteristic lies in its “bounded” nature. The participants in my study represented a bounded group of teachers with a shared interest in exploring emotional aspects of their workplace relationships. My study was also bounded by the predetermined length of time, the number of participants, and the focus of the inquiry. My inquiry fit into the interpretive case study category (Merriam) as I approached the topic from a social construction orientation and used a discursive lens to focus on the language and aspects of power embedded in language, as I discuss below.

Epistemology and Ontology

Berger and Luckmann (1966) in their groundbreaking book “The Social Construction of Reality” assert that

The basic contentions are ... that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyze the process in which this occurs. The sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises. (p. 4)

Schwandt (2003) suggests that in a fairly unremarkable sense we are all constructivists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. Most people agree that knowing is not passive and that there is not a simple imprinting of sense data on the mind. Knowing is active; the mind does something with the impressions it receives, at the very least forming abstractions or concepts. This means that human beings do not “find” or “discover” knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of our experiences and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experiences. Also there are historical and socio-cultural dimension to this construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, and language (Schwandt).

According to Gergen (1999) social constructionist ontology neither affirms nor denies the “world out there.” Heron and Reason (1997), however, claim that constructivist ontology holds that the real is a mental construct of individuals and that such constructs do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them. There can be many such constructed realities and they may be conflicting or compatible. Heron and Reason say that constructions are not more or less true but rather more or less sophisticated and informed. According to Heron and Reason, Von Glaserfeld thinks we cannot in any way know a “real” world and cannot even imagine it because we are not able to conceive of anything existing without the notions of time and space, which in themselves, are our own constructs. In fact some constructivists suggest there is no point to ontology because there are so many local and specific constructions (Gergen). Gergen offers the following guide which helps to distinguish between these ontologies:

- Radical constructivism is a perspective that emphasizes the way in which the individual mind constructs what it takes to be reality.
- Constructivism is a more moderate view, in which the mind constructs reality but within a systematic relationship to the external world. Jean Piaget and George Kelly are often associated with this position.
- Social constructivism argues that while the mind constructs reality in its relationship to the world, this mental process is significantly informed by influences from social relationships. Works of Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner exemplify this approach.
- In Social constructionism the primary emphasis is on discourse as the vehicle through which the self and world are articulated, and on the way in which such discourse functions within social relationships.
- Sociological constructionism puts the emphasis on the way understandings of self and world are influenced by the power that social structures such as schools, science, and governments, exert over people. Works of Henri Giroux and Nikolas Rose are illustrative of this approach. (p. 59)

In this research my approach is similar to the social constructionism and sociological constructionism streams. Kvale (1996) states that “in social construction the focus is on interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world” (p. 42). Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the local context and on the social and linguistic construction of a perspectival reality. There can also be a critical edge to this approach. Gergen (1999) suggests that “constructionism offers a bold invitation to transform social life to build new futures” (p. 159). He asserts that if we want to change things in ourselves, our

relationships, or our culture we do not need to wait for a set of laws, public policies, or the like. We have to take on the challenge of generating new meanings, of becoming “poetic activists.” “Through reflexive inquiry on our ways of constructing the world and the practices which these sustain, we open doors to emancipation, enrichment, and cultural transformation” (Gergen, p. 160).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a perspective on social life that contains both methodological and conceptual elements (Wood and Kroger, 2000). It involves theoretical elements, which are ways of thinking about discourse, and methodological elements which are ways of treating discourse as data. There are many varieties of discourse analysis due, in part, to its rapid development and to differences in the disciplinary origins of discourse analysis. It originated in branches of philosophy, sociology, linguistics, and literary theory and is currently being developed and carried out in a variety of other disciplines, including anthropology, communication, education, and psychology (Wood and Kroger). I have drawn from researchers in the psychology, sociology, and organizational studies fields as these seemed the most compatible with my inquiry.

The term “discourse” has a number of connotations and meanings (Mills, 1997). Mills comments that the term is frequently left undefined as if its usage were simply common knowledge. She says that it defies attempts to pin it down to one meaning as it has a complex history and is used in a range of different ways by different theorists. I identify two aspects of discourse which are relevant to my study. One of these aspects is described by Wetherell (2001) and the other by Phillips and Hardy (2002).

According to Wetherell (2001) discourse is the study of language in use and the study of human meaning-making. Once language use was the sole domain of language specialists, but recently social scientists have also become interested in language use because the nature of social life is changing and contemporary societies are now mediated by discourse. Post-structuralism and post-modernism, which Wetherell describes as the predominant intellectual movement of recent years, have focused attention on how knowledge is constituted. Fletcher (1998) explains that post-structuralist inquiry makes problematic the process of knowledge production and conceptualizes it as an exercise of power where only some voices are heard and only some experience is counted as knowledge. Language plays a role in mediating the relationship between power and knowledge (Fletcher).

Phillips and Hardy (2002) define a discourse as “an interrelated set of texts and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception that brings an object into being” (p.4). They give as a example Foucault’s allusion to the collection of texts of various kinds which make up the discourse of psychiatry and which brought the idea of an unconscious into existence in the nineteenth century. They claim that social reality is produced and made real through discourses and that interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. It is not individual texts which produce discourse but structured bodies of texts of various kinds. Phillips and Hardy claim we can understand how the concepts that make social reality meaningful are created by examining the nature of a discourse, including the methods of textual production, dissemination, and reception that surround it. They posit that the unique contribution of discourse analysis has been to insert the discursive level between

the text and the context. Traditional qualitative approaches often assume a social world and then seek to understand the meaning of this world for the participants; discourse analysis, on the other hand, tries to explore how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were created in the first place, and how they are held in place over time (Phillips & Hardy). While other qualitative methodologies work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists, discourse analysis endeavours to uncover the way in which it is produced. Discourse analysis examines language to understand how it constructs the social world, not how it reflects and reveals it. In other words discourse analysis views discourse as constitutive of the social world, not a route to it, and assumes that the world cannot be known separately from discourse. It also presupposes that it is impossible to strip discourse from its broader context and uses various techniques to analyze texts for clues to the discourses within which they are embedded (Phillips & Hardy).

There are differences of opinion about the type of data used in discourse studies. Some researchers and theorists are of the opinion that data need to be naturally occurring rather than researcher instigated, as in interviews. Conversely, Phillips and Hardy (2002) state that it depends on what the researcher is studying. Potter and Wetherell (1987) used talk in interviews as naturally occurring texts, because they were interested in how individuals constructed themselves and others with reference to race.

Billig (2001) says that if we wish to study cognitive phenomena like emotion we should not be searching for the hidden processes which are assumed to stand behind the use of these words. To search for such entities is a mistake. Instead we should pay attention to the way in which people talk about their emotions. He goes on to say that

when individuals speak they do not create their own language but use terms which are culturally, historically, and ideologically available. Writing as a social psychologist, he asserts that by studying people's "acts of utterance" we can study ideology. He describes ideology as comprising "the ways of thinking and behaving within a given society which make the ways of that society seem natural or unquestioned to its members" (p.217). In this way ideology is the common sense of the society. Through ideology the inequalities of that society will appear as "natural" or "inevitable." He gives two examples: one from a time in the past when the "habits of belief" made it appear natural that women should not be full citizens; and one from present times in which our "habits of belief" make it appear obvious that street sweepers should be paid a fraction of a company director's remuneration. These ideological habits can be deeply rooted in language and thereby into consciousness (Billig, p. 218).

In my inquiry into teachers' emotional experiences I was interested in looking at how the participants constructed their experiences, as well as looking at their attitudes and beliefs about emotions. I paid attention to the language they used, for example "appropriate," "productive," and "whining" and the assumptions underlying those words. I also paid attention to binary oppositions which were used, in particular "positive/negative," in order to examine what was being privileged and what was being marginalized. According to Peters & Burbules (2004), Derrida demonstrated how binary oppositions support a hierarchy of economy of value by subordinating one term to another. From a post-structuralist approach this is one way of accessing power.

Participants

Collecting data through interviews involves determining whom to interview. Merriam (2001) suggests that in case studies participants should be selected on the basis of what they can contribute to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study. Purposive or criterion-based sampling requires the researcher to establish the criteria necessary for selecting participants. In my case participants were required to be teachers in the public school system, live close enough to me to allow me to interview them, and be willing to participate for three months in an on-line discussion about emotional aspects of their interactions with their peers. The requirement that participants needed access to and familiarity with a computer might be considered exclusionary in some segments of the population, but most teachers use computers in their teaching and the majority have their own home computers.

When I was considering how many participants I would need I saw that researchers have noted that there seems to be no consistency about the number of participants regarded as optimum for a focus group. The suggested number of participants ranges from 4 to 12. For my purposes I wanted to ensure a diversity of opinion while at the same time not have people feel overwhelmed by a lot of entries to read and respond to. I also wanted the participants to feel that they could connect with everyone in the group. Beatty (2002) started with 25 participants, 8 of whom dropped out in the initial stages. An inspection of the frequency of "hits" of the remaining participants indicated that most of the discussion was carried on by 8 people. I decided that between 5 and 8 would be a practical number to generate discussion but that I might start with more to allow for some people dropping out.

In order to contact teachers who might be interested I visited the offices of the local teachers' associations in eight school districts on Vancouver Island from Victoria to Campbell River. I spoke to the presidents and explained my research. I thought that if I was asking presidents to publicize my invitation to participate to their members I wanted them to be able to assess my trustworthiness and credibility. They were all receptive to my request and published my letter (Appendix A) in their newsletter or on their local list serve. I had responses from six interested teachers. I decided that I needed to broaden my search so applied for an amendment to my original ethics application and posted the invitation to participate on the Professional Development and Social Justice list serves of the BCTF (British Columbia Teachers' Association). This time I received responses from 9 teachers, 6 of whom fit the criteria. This meant that there were 12 participants; 6 were from Vancouver Island, 4 from the Lower Mainland, and 2 from the interior of BC. They represented a cross section of ages, number of years teaching, types of school, and female/male balance as shown in Appendix H.

Gathering Data

As I described in the introduction, my present research topic developed out of the inquiry I conducted for my master's degree. I had decided that for my doctoral research I wanted to explore the emotional experiences of teachers within the group and in the school culture over a period of time; however, I was at a loss as to how I could conduct such an inquiry. I needed a method in which a group of participants could engage in conversation, or a series of conversations, which also could afford them the opportunity to reflect on their own emotional experiences and observe their own cultures in their schools. The obvious method would seem to be through a series of focus or discussion

groups, but the topic of emotions is a sensitive one and I thought that people might not feel comfortable about sharing their emotional experiences face to face. Also, the fact that the teachers would be meeting together and perhaps talking about situations in their schools would not provide safety as far as confidentiality was concerned. Fortunately, when I was at the CSSE (Canadian Society for the Study of Education) conference in Halifax in 2003, I heard Brenda Beatty (2002) give a presentation on her dissertation on the topic of the emotions of school administrators. She had used interview data gathered for a larger project in Ontario and she had also used an asynchronous discussion between administrators from many countries. The light went on for me at this point as I realized the potential of the on-line strategy for conducting my own inquiry. I decided that I would conduct individual face-to-face interviews with the on-line participants as well, at the beginning and end of the discussion period. I explain my reasons for this decision in the following section.

The data collection took place between December 2006 and June 2007. Most of the first interviews were held during January 2007 and the on-line discussion group started the first weekend in February and finished at the end of April. The exit interviews took place from May until early July.

Interviews

Interviews and focus groups are often used in case studies to find out things which cannot be directly observed (Merriam, 2001). In the case of emotional experiences this is very appropriate. Patton (1990) asserts that we have to ask people questions if we want to know about feelings, thoughts, and intentions, or behaviours that took place some time previously, or how people have organized the world and the meaning they have attached

to what goes on in the world. Thus the purpose of interviewing is to allow the researcher to enter the other person's perspective.

In some inquiries conducted through asynchronous groups, researchers noted a lack of reliability in the frequency with which participants posted contributions (McAuliffe, 2003) so I decided to conduct face-to-face interviews in order to establish rapport with the participants and my credibility as researcher before we started the discussion group. I saw these issues as being fundamental to building the trust that the participants would need in order to discuss sensitive issues on line with a group of unknown people. I also thought this might lead to a more solid commitment to participating. The interviews also allowed me to make an assessment of the participants' integrity and motivation for wanting to be part of the group. These were issues which had been raised by my committee in the proposal meeting. I thought that final interview would serve as an opportunity to debrief and thus partially fulfill my ethical responsibilities.

I constructed a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix C) with questions designed to elicit information about the participants' views and experiences in interactions with their peers and also give them the opportunity to talk about what was important to them regarding the issues under discussion. I piloted the interview protocol with some of my teacher colleagues. The questions seemed to get at the information I wanted, but I was to discover that this was not so when I was interviewing the actual participants.

In the pilot interviews I conducted with my teaching peers I focused the entire conversation on the topic of interest so the teachers were able to talk about their personal

theories, beliefs, and attitudes towards emotions. In the actual research, though, the interview served several purposes. In addition to talking about the topic I used the interview to review the ethical issues of consent, confidentiality, and the provisions for taking care of any emotional upset that people might feel during the discussion group. I also used the interview to reiterate the purpose of the research, to introduce the idea of other perspectives of emotion, to make sure that the participants understood how the group would be conducted technically, and to answer any questions they had. Thus the interview in the actual research served many more purposes than the pilot interview. As a result the time and attention I devoted to the research topic was limited.

Another difference between piloting the interview protocol with colleagues and using it in the research pertained to my relationships with my colleagues who already knew and trusted me and were somewhat familiar with my interests. This meant that I was comfortable asking them personal questions. With the participants I was more hesitant. Whether I went ahead and asked all the questions in the protocol or not depended on the level of comfort we had established and the participants' level of awareness about the topic. Thus there were some interviews in which I didn't ask questions specifically about emotional interactions with peers. Moreover, in the pilot interviews we tended to focus on specific incidents rather than abstract theories and beliefs. My colleagues often gave me examples of interactions and together we would tease out the various elements that had helped my colleagues make sense of these interactions. In the research the participants did not always offer specific examples for us to discuss. Sometimes I would follow up their responses by asking them to give me an illustration of what they meant. Also the participants tended to talk about emotionally

related topics that were important to them. For example, Lynn focused on her emotions concerning her students. In these instances I followed the participants' lead in these conversations because I thought it would give me an insight into what was important to them and because I thought they might be uncomfortable talking about their relationships with their colleagues.

I also conducted "exit" interviews. These again were semi structured in nature (Appendix E) and I had sent out the questions ahead of time so the participants had an opportunity to think about their responses if they chose to. The participants talked about their experience of the discussion group and reflected on changes in their understanding of their emotional experiences. They also talked about what worked for them or not as far as the logistics of the group were concerned. As I mentioned previously, I also viewed the final interview as an opportunity to debrief with the participants if that was necessary which I saw as fulfilling ethical requirements.

Most of the interviews took place in the participants' homes. Others took place in restaurants and hotel meeting rooms. I used a digital recorder to record them and transcribed them myself. The introductory interviews lasted between an hour and almost two hours. The final interviews were shorter and were between an hour and ninety minutes. I covered the mainland interviews in two weekends for both sets of interviews.

The process of the interviews was very moving and exciting. I participated in the conversation, sharing details from my life and telling the teachers about my motivation for conducting this study. Our discussions ranged over many topics and sometimes spouses and children joined the conversations for a while. At times I felt a tension between my role as researcher and how I would have interacted if I was conducting a

counselling session. I was very aware that I needed to pay attention to the participants' level of emotional arousal so that by my language and questions I did not inadvertently cause them emotional discomfort. In the letter of consent I had said that I expected we would approach emotions from an intellectual perspective although it was inevitable that if people mentioned upsetting experiences they might relive them. I was also aware it was not my place to intervene in a counselling role although if I had seen people in distress I would have acted according my ethical responsibility which I saw as making sure they were adequately supported emotionally, either by myself or by the resources they had named.

Gathering Data Through an On-line Asynchronous Discussion Group

It may seem counter-intuitive to ask people to discuss emotional experiences on-line since much emotional language is non-verbal but as I looked into the literature about asynchronous discussion groups, on-line therapy, and social presence, I decided that this method of data collecting would be viable. In the internet world, the virtual focus group is used as a method in market research but its use in academic research is limited and on-line focus groups for academic social research have been surprisingly slow to develop (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001). Bloor et al refer to Murray's study of health professionals in which asynchronous groups, consisting of 6 to 8 members, were on-line for four weeks. This length of time allowed conversation to develop and also encouraged active participation by setting a fairly brief period for interaction. Robson's group consisted of 57 people and remained open for two months with minimal guidance from her as researcher (Bloor et al.).

The asynchronous format proved to be very appropriate for gathering data about teachers' emotional experiences. Mann and Stewart (2000) have suggested that Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is a suitable venue for discussing sensitive issues which people might be reluctant to discuss face to face. The anonymity protects participants in what could otherwise be vulnerable positions. Many people feel vulnerable discussing their emotions, even with friends, so talking about them face to face in a group of strangers in a research setting, might be even more intimidating. Most of the participants said they felt less anxious about expressing themselves on-line than they would have done face-to-face. The asynchronous format also fitted with the reflective nature of thinking and writing about emotional issues and it allowed the instant reactions of people to remain private. This meant that if they were writing or reading something which was moving or upsetting, they did not have to present a face to the world. Their facial expression and body language remained hidden. Another aspect of the asynchronous format which the participants liked was that they were able to read and post at their own convenience. Some people posted late at night or early morning as noted by Ben who asked "And to you fellow listees talking about 3:00 am and all that, what is going on?? What kind of teacher are you? Don't you find that the normal 14-hour day is enough? I'm concerned about you."

The idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people explore and clarify their views in ways that would not be possible in a one to one interview. Groups tap into a different realm of social reality (Sim, 1998). Gaiser (1997) cites Morgan as stating that, "the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the

interaction found in a group” (p. 137). Thus interaction is the crucial element. Interaction is also the crucial element from a social constructionist perspective, as it illuminates the co-construction of knowledge.

Conferencing Format

Researchers report giving careful consideration to the type of software they used. They also report that they piloted the web-board before they started the research (Moloney, Dietrich, Strickland & Myerburg 2003; Seymour, 2001). I considered and tested a variety of web boards and social software before deciding to use the Mailman List Serve interface hosted by the University of Victoria. My criteria for selecting software included security and privacy issues. I also wanted a method of communication which would be easy to use. I did not want potential participants to be discouraged because of the technology involved. One of the major advantages of the list serve format was that the messages appeared in the participants’ in-box when they opened their email. This meant that they did not have to log into a particular website which would have taken more effort and energy. Another advantage of using a University of Victoria hosted site was the ease of requesting help. For example, I had piloted the list serve before using it with the group so the messages from the trial run were archived. I asked for them to be erased so the group would not have access to them. Apparently the university technicians do not usually erase the archives before the group is terminated, but on this occasion they accommodated my request. Similarly I received notification whenever there was a problem with the university hosted list serves. One week I needed to send out the focus for the week through private email because the university hosted sites were not functioning.

One of the disadvantages of a list serve is that it can become cumbersome as people reply to previous messages. This did become somewhat of a problem. I tried to ameliorate the situation by sending a weekly summary and synthesis of the previous week's discussion and I also sent a composite of the previous week's postings in what I called "brochure format" which meant smaller font, landscape orientation, and in three columns. I enlarge on this discussion in chapter 4, "The Forum."

Group Protocol and Discussion Topics

I constructed a group discussion protocol (Appendix D) which I gave to the participants at their interviews and also sent by email before the discussion started. In this document I set out guidelines and also a tentative schedule. I needed to keep a balance between being open to topics that came up for discussion from the group and focusing on the areas I needed for research purposes. I knew that the initial interviews would provide me with an idea of similarities and differences between people's points of view and beliefs about emotions. One of the things I became aware of in the interviews was the use of the words "positive" and "negative" and I was aware there were conflicting points of view. Bronwyn said that she did not see emotions as being positive or negative but embraced them all, while other participants talked about people and emotions as positive and negative. For example in my interview with Kernel I asked him, "Do you ever come across incidents or have you ever experienced incidents ... where people have disagreed or held a dissenting opinion on staff or in their department?" To which he replied, "Mr. Negative do you mean?" Everybody had used the words "positive" or "negative" in their interviews so I knew that this was a topic I wanted to explore at some point during the

discussion. I had thought I would probably introduce it after a few weeks, however, as I describe in the next chapter, it arose sooner than that.

Group Cohesion, Relationships, and Researcher's Role

A major point of concern in using an asynchronous discussion group is the ability of such a group to produce good quality data which are multilayered and afford access to co-constructed meanings (Witt, 2004). This ability depends to a large extent on the group's dynamics and cohesion. Group relationships are important for the development of trust which, in turn, leads to honest expression and disclosure. Some early researchers judged the online context as an unsatisfactory medium for personal exchange (Witt, 2004). In contrast, other more recent research indicates that small groups can and do work successfully in the online context (Wellman and Gulia, 1999). More importantly, group members sometimes report levels of relational intimacy and communication satisfaction similar to or greater than those experienced in face-to face groups (Hewitt, 2001).

As researcher and facilitator I was responsible for establishing a tone which would encourage openness and lead to cohesiveness and "good quality" data. I was aware that the task of developing an environment in which all participants feel free to contribute is qualitatively different in a setting which relies solely on textual communication from the same task in face to face groups (Mann & Stewart, 2000). I had already laid the groundwork for that by establishing a friendly tone in the interviews. I had also been thorough in outlining the nature of the group and my expectations of it. I had provided the participants with a copy of the group protocol both through email and hard copy. In face to face groups introductions are used to relax people and engender an easy open

atmosphere. I started the group by posting my own welcome message and suggesting they used the first week to post their own introductions (Appendix F).

I spent some time deciding how I would enact my role as facilitator. I researched what other on-line facilitators had reported. Some like Robson (Bloor et al, 2000) did not participate very much and let the conversation evolve. Others struggled with striking a balance between being too active and thereby possibly dominating, biasing, or inhibiting the discussion on the one hand, and being too passive on the other. Facilitators expressed the need to be sufficiently involved while at the same time making it clear to the participants that they wanted them to talk about their own experiences. I included a paragraph about my role in the pre-group materials.

I see my role as balancing my need to ask certain questions and look at certain aspects, with my wish to have the group develop the discussion. Once again, I think it will just work itself out as we go along, with input from everyone.

In face-to-face focus groups moderators are able to read body language and people's reactions. They can use visual cues to include and encourage reluctant participants and address them directly and immediately (Moloney 2003). In an online group these nuances are lost. Researchers report difficulties with making decisions about how to deal with participants who stop contributing to the discussion. Some researchers have used the "back channel" of private email to check in with those participants who have gone silent (Moloney 2003). I used the "back-channel" to email two participants who had not posted and also to check on the wellbeing of a couple of other participants. I describe these happenings in more detail in the next chapter on "The Forum."

Researchers also reported that the process of facilitating is very time-consuming and demanding. Checking for postings, composing responses to postings, and being attentive to the dynamics are ongoing tasks. Seymour (2001) warns that researchers must beware of burn-out. My experience was that it certainly was time-consuming especially as I was moderating the group which meant that before an entry was posted it came to me, I read it and sent it on to the list. I was aware that I wanted as short a time-lapse as possible between the participants emailing their posts and their appearance on the list. I checked my email regularly throughout the day. I also spent time composing summaries and syntheses of the previous week's postings as well as composing the next week's direction. During the first weeks of the discussion group I was also transcribing the interviews. I planned to send them back to the participants before the group was over so that they could read them through and see if there were any issues they had talked about in the interviews and hadn't mentioned in the group discussion. I wanted them to have the opportunity to include those topics if they wanted to. I found the most difficult aspect of the group discussion was trusting that the participants would continue to post. There was one week when there were only four posts and I wondered if the commitment was waning. As can be seen from the frequency of postings table (Appendix I) the group continued and, indeed, flourished.

The Nature of the Data

According to Scherer (1987) one of the major drawbacks to emotion research is the difficulty of studying "actual" emotions. He suggests that a potential solution to this predicament is the use of self-report techniques to elicit descriptions of emotional experiences. Scherer goes on to say that, even allowing for the fact that there are

“potential pitfalls in the form of reporting bias, stereotyping, social desirability, memory lapses and so on ... it is equally true that we could not study many aspects of emotion unless we rely on self-report” (p. 1). On the other hand, Dorothy Smith (2005) claims that “experiential accounts cannot give direct and unsullied access to an actuality. Actuality is always more and other than is spoken, written, or pictured” (p 125). Both of these statements describe how people talk about their subjective experiences. If a researcher is trying to find commonalities and is working from the perspective of an objective truth, then the fact that people’s self reports might be “contaminated” by “memory lapses” poses a problem. However, as I was working from a constructivist perspective, the fact that the descriptions of the subjective experience change over time and place, depending on the circumstances, is inherent in the perspective.

The data in this research project are the teachers’ descriptions and accounts of their emotional experiences as well as the discussions which arose out of those experiences during the on-line “conversation.” I was not looking for the “unsullied accounts” to which Scherer (1987) alludes and I do not believe such a thing exists. There were two aspects in particular in which I was interested; one was the teachers’ accounts of their subjective experiences, and the other was the language which they used.

From a social constructionist perspective the teachers’ own narration is constitutive of their experience. According to Smith (2005) experience arises only at the point where “what is remembered comes into speech or writing on particular settings among particular people and hence is never a pure representation of some original” (p.125). In fact she says that experience must be written or spoken to come into being. We generally think of experience as occurring before it has been told yet, if we think

about actual occasions of people speaking from their experience, we can see that “experience actually only emerges only in the course of its telling and telling is to particular people at particular times and in particular places or when written to a future reader or readers” (p.126). Sometimes decisions about how to verbalize experience are made consciously. White & Epston (1990) explain it this way: “In striving to make sense of life, persons face the task of arranging their experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of themselves and the world around them” (p. 45). In constructing a narrative people decide which events to put in and which to leave out. The particular stories which people tell about themselves, at particular times, and to particular audiences are valid as their own self-narratives. These self-narratives constituted the data that were analyzed.

Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data according to Marshall and Rossman (1995). Despite having prepared for the analysis process by thinking, reading, writing, and talking to people in the academy, I found myself quite daunted by the amount of data I had gathered and the scope of the research questions I had devised and I found myself agreeing with Marshall & Rossman that the analysis process is “messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating (p. 111). As Huberman and Miles (1994) point out, analysis is inherent throughout the inquiry, in the choices made regarding the study design, the conceptual framework, the research questions, and the participants.

Prior to beginning the research I had determined that my research questions and conceptual framework required me to use two approaches because I was paying attention

to two perspectives of emotional experience. The perspective which looked at the participants' intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences called for an interpretive analysis. The other approach which looked at how the experiences were socially constructed and embedded in discourse called for an analysis focusing on language and context.

I transcribed the interviews myself. I finished the first interviews while the group was still in progress and I finished transcribing the second interviews a month after conducting the last one in August 2007. I was now ready to start the data management and organization phase of the analysis process. I began by making graphical representations of the data to give me an overall sense of them. I included the two interviews and the postings for each person as well as my own postings. I charted the number of words for each interview and posting; I created calendars with the days for each person's postings; and I constructed frequency graphs for overall posts and individual posts (see Appendix I for example).

I was then ready to start familiarizing myself more with the actual text so my next step was to take each participant in turn and, starting with their first interview, moving through their postings and finishing with the second interview, I mapped out on chart paper what they said. I used different colour pens for different themes. This gave me a sense of the flow of their issues and a chance to see what topics, if any, they returned to more than once. For example Lil returned many times to talk about the two "super teachers" on her staff. I filled between three and five sheets of chart paper for each person depending on how long their interviews were and how much they had written. I hung the charts on my walls so that I could compare them with each other. While I was involved in

the process of charting I became aware of similarities and differences between the participants. I also started to see how they were making sense of their emotional interactions. I wrote in my dissertation journal:

I have just finished Rusty's charts; I am now getting a sense of how the participants interpret their interactions. Many of them have referred to their own personality characteristics and the "work" they have "done" on emotions. They also indicate a sense of self-identity; for example Rusty says he's not a war leader and Edgeeee says she's damned if she's going to keep quiet about what she thinks and feels.

I created headings which reflected these ways of making sense and added other themes which emerged as I was charting the data; for example a number of people had mentioned different instances of "competition" so I added that to the headings. I then transferred all the data to Nudist 1.2 version and used the headings as "nodes" to code all the first interviews. I subsequently coded the postings and second interviews, adding, discarding, and merging nodes as it seemed appropriate; for example I merged "actions taken by group members" and "changes experienced by group members" under the new node "significance." The units I used for coding were "meaning units" as described by Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997). They varied in length from a single word, for example, "whining," to a sentence or two, or a paragraph or two.

At this time I began to feel that I needed to have a more solid sense of the participants so I composed "snapshots" of each person including demographic information, their themes, their theories of emotions, and various other elements. I used only the information from the first interview because I wanted to be able to anchor people

where they started. I sent these to the participants to ask for their feedback. I have used shortened versions of these snapshots in the introduction to the participants in chapter 1.

My process after that time was a recursive one. I used the search function in NVivo to gauge which nodes had the most data coded and to search each node for each participant. I also began to use hard copy of the data. I found it easier to manipulate and rearrange. I took each research question in turn and organized the relevant data chunks. I moved back and forth between individuals and the group. I tried various methods of sorting the data both physically and on the computer. One method which I found very useful was to construct tables on the computer and cut and paste the appropriate data chunks into the cells. This allowed me to visually represent on one page issues interpersonally and intrapersonally. I also constructed tables to help me organize the analysis of the interactions which people related. I used headings to sort out the who, what, why, and when details of each interaction. Having taken the material apart, I finally returned to large chart paper and, using a different colour copy paper for each participant, re-assembled the data in response to the three research questions. I did not intentionally look for “themes.” My findings represent descriptions from the data which seemed to address the three questions. I grouped those “findings” according to their similarities and differences, and according to the issues which had received most attention in the interviews and discussion group as indicated by my searches in NVivo. However, Spradley (1980) notes that themes in social science refer to “any **principle** recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or implicit, and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning” (p. 141). In this sense the headings which I have used in response to my questions could be considered as naming themes.

Validity Issues

Introduction

Denzin (1997) referred to the dilemma of assessing the validity of qualitative research as the “legitimation crisis” (p. 13). He questioned the idea that “validity” is an appropriate concept for qualitative research since it presupposes privileging some points of view over others. Many scholars have reconceptualized what constitutes validity and what seems to be emerging is a set of underlying ethical criteria which take into consideration values implicit in respectful research as well as more particular criteria relevant to the individual paradigms. Lincoln & Guba (2003) describe the new emerging approach as being based on three new commitments:

- to emergent relations with respondents
- to a set of stances
- to a vision of research which enables and promotes justice

In addition to paying attention to Lincoln and Guba’s general standards I have chosen to approach the validity issue by reflecting on what I attempted to do in my inquiry and by seeking out practices which are congruent with those intentions and which facilitated fulfilling them.

Participant Validation

My intention in this research was to represent the participants’ experience as accurately as I was able. Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) referred to the “credibility of portrayals of constructed realities” and assert that “credibility is only awarded when the constructions are plausible to those who constructed them” (p. 151). To this end I built

opportunities into the research process to check in with the participants and make sure I was capturing their perspectives and meanings as closely as possible. For example in the interviews I checked with the person if I was not too sure what they meant as in the following example from my interview with Kernel.

J So when you're saying their emotions are bottled up, does that mean that they are not able to...

K It interferes with their communication skills.

In the discussion group I also asked for clarification of the person's meaning on occasion. One week I wasn't sure what Sophie meant when she said, "And it's not the same standards for everyone" so I asked her if she could give examples and she responded, "Judith, thank you for your post. I wanted to list a few of those things I mean when I'm talking about the standard not being the same." Also during the discussion group I sent out weekly summaries and syntheses to which people sometimes responded in their next posting. After I had transcribed the interviews I sent the transcripts and invited clarification and feedback. I also sent out the "snapshots" which I created about each participant, a draft of the findings in chapters 5, 6, and 7, and a draft of the dissertation. I invited feedback and suggestions. Some of the participants requested that I not include certain details which they thought might identify them.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the fact that the researcher is "part and parcel of the setting, context and culture he or she is trying to understand and represent" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 488). It acknowledges that the researcher has "embedded prejudgments and allows them to be critically scrutinized" (Gitlin, Siegel & Boru, 1993, p. 205).

Richardson (1994) asserts that “self-reflexivity unmasks complex political/ideological agendas hidden in our writing” (p. 523). The reflexive process is ongoing throughout the project. It does not mean that the researcher masks or “brackets” her assumptions; what it requires is that the researcher is aware of her presuppositions and how her values, beliefs, and ideologies may be influencing the research (Thomas, 1993). In fact there is no attempt to pretend that research is value free. What is important is that researchers “continually raise awareness of our own biases” (Janesick, 1998, p. 212).

I facilitated the self-reflexive process by keeping a journal in which I recorded my thoughts and feelings about the details of my study. I noted my assumptions and prejudgments as I became aware of them. I also wrote about the decisions I made, my areas of difficulty, and ethical issues.

Political Validity

Denzin (1997) and Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) have asserted that a good text exposes how race, class, and gender work their ways into the concrete lives of interacting individuals. Lather’s (1991) catalytic validity refers to “the degree to which a given research project empowers and emancipates a research community and directs attention to possibilities for social transformation” (p. 52). Directing attention to possibilities for social transformation can occur in many ways. As I have been engaged in my study, many political themes have been illuminated for me. When I have I shared my enthusiasm and excitement about new ideas with my family, friends, and peers they, too, have started asking different questions. During the on-line discussion the participants were exposed to new ways of thinking about issues of power and how power is embedded in culture and discourse. They also shared their insights with friends and

colleagues. Thus political validity is involved throughout the entire process of research not just in the written report.

Transferability

In interpretive research the reader interprets the text which the researcher produces. It is therefore up to the reader to decide which aspects of the case apply in new contexts (Wehlage, cited in Peshkin, 1993). All readers bring their own context of meaning and interpretation to an account and interpret it accordingly (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Interpretive accounts rely on empathic generalizability found in the experience of others, on their capacity to evoke, resonate, or touch a cord (Osborne, 1990). As Richardson (1994) expresses it, “There is no such thing as right - evocative writing touches us where we live in our bodies” (p. 521). To facilitate the process of transferability I have used the participants’ own words throughout the document.

Trustworthiness

Two features which contribute to the trustworthy aspect of my study and to which I paid attention were those of the audit trail and the length of time I spent “in the field.” Both of these aspects allow others in the academy to judge the thoroughness and rigour of my work. I have documented my thought processes and my decision making processes throughout but especially in chapter 4 on “The Forum.” I have also provided details of the questions I asked and of topics the participants discussed in Appendices F and G. My contact with the participants lasted between six and eight months, from the first to the last interviews.

Representation

The reporting stage is the culmination of the research and analysis process. The key aim is to present findings in an accessible form that will satisfy the research objectives and enable the audience to understand them. Creswell (1998) suggests that it is important to identify who the audience will be as they are the people for whom one is writing. According to White, Woodfield and Ritchie (2003), a number of writers have stressed the importance of giving a clear account of research methods as part of displaying the “credibility” of the evidence. Kvale (1996) notes that qualitative methods are often a “black box” which needs to be opened up to the reader. Written accounts therefore need to explain, not only how the research was conducted, but also why particular approaches were chosen to meet the aims of the research. The report needs to demonstrate that the explanation and conclusions are grounded in the data. Creswell suggests that researchers pay attention to the balance of descriptive, explanatory, and interpretive evidence. The challenge is not only to represent the social world which has just been researched but also to re-present it in such a way that it remains grounded in the accounts of the research participants while at the same time explains the subtleties and complexities found.

Denzin (2003) asks how we can “ever hope to speak authentically of the experience of the Other or an Other? And if not how do we create a social science that includes the Other?” (p226). Oleson (2003) makes the point that even when feminist writers are self consciously egalitarian in their research, there is still an imbalance of power and the researcher’s voice is privileged no matter how much the participants have influenced the work.

I have born these issues of audience, clear account, and speaking for the other in mind throughout my study. By identifying my intended audience as public school teachers and those involved in teacher development and in education in general, I have aimed at grounding my research in the lives of teachers and in their personal experience in school. I have moved between the practical and theoretical in a way which I have tried to be clear without being overly pedantic and essentializing. I have tried to indicate that, while there are similarities in people's experiences, there are no tidy "answers" and that the aim of this study was to open up an area for exploration and to shine the light on some hitherto ignored places. I do not claim that I am speaking for the Other. I am presenting what I saw as important and I acknowledge that my participation has shaped the final product. In addition I have written in a style in which my voice is evident (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). Britzman (1991) maintains that this is important because it draws attention to the fact that the story is the researcher's interpretation. No matter how closely the researcher works with the participants and has them read for accuracy of meaning, the final document is still the researcher's representation and it is important that this is evident.

I have presented chapters 5, 6, and 7 as responses to my three research questions. Each chapter consists of a number of sections and, for the sake of clarity and continuity, I have presented the findings for each section followed by the discussion for those findings.

Ethical Considerations

In any study in which people are interviewed or part of a focus group there are ethical concerns about risks to a person's wellbeing. This is particularly so in a discussion

about emotions. Even though I had emphasized that my plan was to approach emotions from an intellectual perspective I was aware that some participants might suffer emotional discomfort. I was very careful to express this in the letter of consent and at the interviews. On a couple of occasions I did phone participants to ask how they were feeling. On one occasion close to the beginning of the discussion group Sophie posted a message in which she indicated she was upset by events in her personal life and that they were compounded by expectations of being prepared for school the next day. Sophie and I talked for a while and I was satisfied that she felt supported and could access other resources if she needed to. On another occasion I phoned Lynn after she said she was feeling “queasy” after the discussion on complicity because, as a teacher without a contract, she felt vulnerable about questioning the status quo in her school. After our conversation I was satisfied that Lynn was not overly upset; she was observing and reflecting on her own situation which was different from those teachers with contracts.

There were also ethical concerns relating to the fact that everyone involved had access to the writings of the group. In the letter of consent I asked the participants to commit to not sharing that information with other people and also to destroying their files after I have defended my dissertation.

Despite my assurances that I would protect the anonymity of the participants I failed to do so in one case. As I describe in chapter 4, during the first interview process I discovered that one participant was a teacher at the same school of another whom I had interviewed previously. I made the judgment that as it was a large school and as their assignments were dissimilar their anonymity would not be compromised. Unfortunately one recognized the other very quickly because of certain details. I talked with both

participants involved and we decided that the person who had contacted me second of the pair would withdraw. This was a very salutary lesson for me and made me pay attention more scrupulously to other areas where there might be recognition. In some cases I asked people to reword messages or take out some details which might identify them.

In all aspects of the study I was guided by the guidelines of the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board and by the Codes of Ethics of the BCACC (British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors) and the BCTF (British Columbia Teachers' Association).

Chapter 4: The Forum

Introduction

In chapter 3 I described how the Halifax CSSE conference was a turning point in my research. I also outlined how I approached the discussion group. In this chapter I describe how those plans came to fruition.

The Preparation

I took care in preparing for the forum because I knew that the more I planned the easier it would be to deal with unforeseen events. I had spent time investigating and trying different platforms so that I had confidence in my eventual choice of the University of Victoria Mailman List-serve. I had researched literature about other on-line forums to find out what factors seemed to contribute to a successful group. I also relied on my knowledge and experience as a face to face group facilitator when choosing how to structure and sequence events. I also gave careful thought to my role as facilitator realizing that I would need to strike a balance between researcher, participant, and facilitator.

During my initial contacts with the participants by email and in the interviews I gave extensive information about the project and I also encouraged questions and suggestions. In the invitation to participate, the letter of consent, the interview protocol, and the information about the forum, I focused on what I felt were the two main aspects. Firstly, we would be looking at everyday current emotional interactions and secondly over the weeks I would introduce other approaches to emotions which looked at their social function. I also put out a tentative schedule stating that, while I wanted to be

flexible and open to topics which arose spontaneously, I needed to follow a certain path for my research purposes. I reiterated these aspects in the interviews themselves, as I illustrate in the following examples:

So in the discussion group itself ... I'm interested in the everyday emotional occurrences; I'm interested in just being able to watch just the ebb and flow of what happens everyday. (Interview with Beatrice)

I am interested in looking at emotions from other perspectives. Most of our academic perspectives on emotions, especially in education, are from the psychology point of view, and so I'm suggesting we start looking at these from sociological point of view. What function are the different emotions serving within the group? Some feminist writers and researchers have pointed out that within groups, such as our school staff, emotions generally serve the function of keeping the status quo, and serving the interests of the dominant power. So I'm interested in being able to see how that works in our schools. What are the nitty gritty, the little things? How does that actually work? What are the words we use perhaps? So what are the every day little bits and pieces? My curiosity around that is if we become aware of those "bits and pieces," then we can disrupt those patterns. (Interview with Bronwyn)

In planning how I would proceed for the 12 weeks of the forum I decided I would send out a message introducing a "topic of the week" each Monday, and attach a summary of the discussion that had taken place the previous week together with a composite of all the postings from that week. Although I was not too sure about the exact

timing I knew that I wanted to allow at least a couple of weeks for introductions, bonding, and ironing out any technical wrinkles. The next step would be to introduce the idea of noticing everyday interactions and I planned to do this by asking the group members to describe a pleasant interaction which took place one week and a “not-so-pleasant” interaction that took place the following week. I also intended to send excerpts from my literature review about other perspectives of emotions during the earlier weeks. During the second half of the forum we would focus on everyday interactions again but this time from a social perspective. We would look at what effect the interactions had on the group and possibly what functions they might fulfill. We would also look at staff meetings from a similar perspective. I constructed sets of questions to guide the group members’ observations of these interactions. Towards the end of the time I intended to encourage the group to reflect on what they had learned and think of ways in which the learning could be anchored in action.

In retrospect I realized that the format I had prepared was similar to the “Educating for a Change” model devised by Arnold, Burke, James, Martin and Thomas, (1991, p.38) which comprises five stages:

1. Start with the experience of the participants.
2. Look for patterns.
3. Add new information and theory.
4. Practice skills, strategize and plan action.
5. Apply in action.

After I had completed all the interviews I sent out a personal email to the group members explaining what to expect after I had uploaded the names and addresses to the

mail-list and giving instructions on the mechanics of posting. I also sent information about basic ground rules for the group (Appendix D) and invited other suggestions. In addition I included a brief paragraph about my perception of my role as I have mentioned in chapter 3.

The Launch

With these preparations laid it was time to “launch” the forum. I posted my first message welcoming the participants to the group and inviting them to post their introduction. I suggested they included whatever they felt comfortable sharing, “maybe think about what you would like to know about others and then share similar information about yourself just as you would in a face-to face group.” I also suggested they included what had drawn them to the group in order to establish some common ground.

The Group

At the beginning of chapter 1 I introduced the participants using my words; here now are the participants’ introductions to themselves as they posted them in the group. I have kept the order in which they posted and I have shortened some of the messages but maintained the integrity of what they said.

Hello all,

Well I just got in from my choir rehearsal and I’m pretty tired, but elated. I figure this might be as good a time as any to do a little intro. I’m in my first year of teaching (and making it, so far!!) I’m a...fifth generation teacher I think, and I definitely feel that it’s in my blood. More and more, every day, even when I feel like I did a terrible job that day (!) I’m learning that teaching is definitely my calling.

So, my mother is a music teacher and always exhausted, and I figured becoming involved with a group of people who are interested in our well-being, our emotional health, and our

interactions with our peers would be a good way to make sure I devote some time to checking in to my emotional meter. Also, I find when I'm not doing so well emotionally, getting out of my own head and heart and lending support to others really helps me feel better all around.

So that's me to start. I'm really excited about this project!

~Sophie

Hi Everyone-

I have been teaching for 26 years, K - 12, in six different schools, English and French immersion. I taught French for a number of years, then decided to go into library, so did my M Ed through distance learning. We did a lot of this type of posting, and discussing online, so I'm comfortable with it. I have a teenage daughter, a dog and cat, and enjoy cross-country skiing, reading, hiking, and watching PBS and Knowledge Network.

I'm looking forward to meeting everyone online, and to sharing our thoughts around emotions and feelings, in an educational context. The bottom line for me is that there are days when I like my job, and days when I love it, so I think I'm fortunate.

TTFN

Lil

Hi:

Well, I think I shall introduce myself as harassed and overwhelmed. Semester change did not go smoothly, as we invigilated too many exams. Too many students need adjustment to their programs so that classes begin to meet the Bill 33 requirements. Our learning assistance students have a huge impact on classroom environment, but they "don't count".....

I am a special education teacher. I love working with my students and usually my colleagues. I cannot stand the administrivia.

I think I wanted to find out what teachers in other places are experiencing, and how they deal with the 'stuff' that arises from ministerial edicts. Does anyone have any ideas of how to be long term effective for more students? How do you get rid of your frustrations?

I have started going to the gym regularly with my husband, so my fitness is improving. I sometimes think I am retreating, or hiding away because I am afraid I will just end up with even more to do.

Do other people feel like this?

Lynn

Hi all,

Thank you, Judith for inviting us to participate in this research. I too am looking forward to these conversations and explorations. I have chosen as my pseudonym Beatrice from *Much Ado About Nothing*. I like that she is witty and loyal and a sucker for love despite her bravado.

In real life, I am a secondary English and special ed teacher at a 8-12 high school in the interior.

This year I am job-sharing, so that I work M-W. The part time has allowed me to be at home with my two small children, although that has been more tiring than being at work, I think! Then in my spare time, I am active in my local teachers' association and in the BCTF, which I have been doing for seven or eight years. This is my ninth year teaching.

I was drawn to Judith's research because of the intensity of my reaction to the destruction of our contracts in January of 2002, and because I find teaching emotional on the best days and the worst days, and all the days in between. I find that despite having some wonderful colleagues who are also friends, and working on a staff of 40+ teachers, I still feel very isolated much of the time, and I wanted to explore that further. (Maybe like Lynn suggests, it is hiding to avoid even more responsibility.)

I also wanted to be counted in research that would consider the emotional impact on teachers of the political and policy decisions that have been made in the past few years. Sometimes, I fear that like the literary Beatrice, "I was born to speak all mirth and no matter" because it is so hard to face those effects, but other times I have struggled to find mirth or even social graces when the matter weighs heavily.

I am eager to hear more from everyone.

Beatrice

Richard here.

Greetings to all! I'm in my 3rd year with full-time contracts teaching grades 9, 10, 11 science, and anything else that helps the cause. Student population is approx. 650. I find all staff

supportive...I would say humour, in and out of the classrooms, keeps us going. We occasionally swap classes just for new experiences, fun, support, challenge.

Start up of semester 2 is always hectic. A shirt and tie this week sets the tone for me...while others are still in their Hawaiian shirts and shorts. Great variety in approaches to students amongst staff.

I'm here to "listen" and share. This project will be my leather couch for the next few months. I'm hearing frustration out there. I quit beating myself up after my first month of teaching...my wife reminded me that teaching is just a job. Would anybody like to approach this as a starting point for conversation?

You are all in my highest regard,
Richard.

Hi

I have been a grade 6 classroom teacher, a middle school social studies and teacher librarian, and a high school teacher librarian and social studies teacher. I am active in our local union and the BCTF. My interests are family a 6 and 13 year old, golf, union work.

I am interested in this project because of a personal experience – seeing my wife burn out in special education and I am trying to help a number of teachers in our local who are very stressed out. I hope my involvement will give me some insight into what I can do to help members in the future.

My experience has been that the most stressed out teachers are the ones with provincial exams to deal with, English teachers at the High Schools, special ed. teachers and itinerant staff who have no size limits to their work load.

*Good luck to all,
Rusty*

Hi everyone,

By way of introduction, I teach in Middle School, am very involved in union work both at the local and BCTF level, have been an activist and feminist since I was 17, love spending time with my family and friends, adore movies, books, and music and like to hike and go for long dog walks. I love to travel and am interested in other people and cultures. Everyone in our family loves to discuss things: politics, movies, local issues, social justice, books, and travel – practically anything is open for discussion.

The research Judith is doing really interested me - and I am sure that I will learn a great deal as we take this journey together. I just completed my master's and really enjoyed the research and writing process involved in that - so I was attracted to the idea of research that was exploring the role of emotion in our work as teachers

I find teaching, since the Liberal government came into power and declared war on teachers, a real challenge. It is hard to look into the eyes of the children who need help in my class and not be able to give them the time they deserve. I have watched services that they desperately need disappear. Bill 33 is a failure – and it fails the kids in my class who need the most help. I really dislike the injustice of that – and am really uncomfortable with the way these students are being ignored. The most needy are the most disenfranchised – that can never be good!

I still love working with the children and parents each year and I am grateful for the teachers I work with. I count many of them as friends and I am often inspired by them. Sometimes I think of giving up and going to work in Korea or Japan – or maybe in Africa – who knows? But I love my island and I love the moments in class when the students' eyes light and they smile, filled with pride at another challenge met. If they must endure these large classes and lost services, then I will give them the best that is in me to give. I will endure along with them but I will not endure in silence. I will speak for those students with special needs and for all the others whose needs are not being met – loudly and repeatedly. Somehow that helps to heal my heart.

Bronwyn

It's the middle of the night, but that's alright... I'll think whenever I can... At work there's no time... and that does seem a crime... but perhaps it's just part of the plan... lol!!!

After all, isn't it a measure of control to have everyone so busy that there is no time to think? Hmmm. Who decides that anyway? Midnight musings. Truth is, I'm a fully qualified peri-menopausal woman who has been teaching for only 7 years in the Greater Vancouver area and seem fond of teaching upper intermediate.

Being peri-menopausal, I am prone to middle of the night wakefulness and ready to sleep when its time to go to work. This makes for some interesting emotional states due to the chronic fatigue... and, of course, some interesting reactions with colleagues.

Why, therefore, do I call myself "edgee"?

Prior to becoming a teacher I did various stints with newspapers, magazines and online information sites ... and it didn't pay all that well. Of course, it did pay better than being a stay-at-home mom... which is what I did for the first 15 years of my adult life. I loved it... but time moves on... and, here I am... deep in debt from all the student loans... but now, highly educated with that M.Ed!

I love teaching for the autonomy and the creativity and the learning that I experience with the kids everyday. What I have found most interesting about teaching is the "milieu" right now. It is also sorta' scary to think about the emotional cost of being a "thinking" person in the elementary level of this profession... and how that has brought me to the point of being part of this project.

Here I am... edgeee as ever... looking for adventure and whatever comes my way... as this discussion takes us to new places in our understanding of each other, this profession and, of course, ourselves.

Nice to meet you all ... and I look forward to our experience.

Edgeee

Hi everyone,

I teach Modern Languages (and Planning) in the lower Mainland. This is my ninth year of teaching and I am just learning how to manage my emotions around teaching. Although there have been so many positive experiences and emotions that have occurred in my teaching career, I find that many conversations that I have with my colleagues focus primarily on the negative feelings. I am trying to shift the focus. For me, venting about frustrations seems like a necessary means of dealing with negative issues. But I don't want to fall into the trap of chronic complaining.

I want to shift my focus to positive feelings (especially regarding work).

I am grateful for the great students that I have, the positive administrative support and improved (although far from perfect) relationship between the BCTF and the government.

Harmonie

Hello Fellow Listees!

Semester start-up is always a few days of madness, followed by months of chaos, when one is on one's four by four semester. This year is no different than any others in that regard, even if it is year number 36 for me.

The pseudo-me is BEN, so-named because of a group of kids I taught many long years ago, when the hot TV show was "Grizzly Adams". It's not that they thought that my beard and long hair made me look like Dan Hagerty, but more like the bear!!! Such is the fun of teaching, and now these same "kids" are showing up as having offspring in my current school. So I guess I have grand-students!

In the past thirty something years I have taught Science 8-10, Physics 11 & 12, Earth Science 11, Geology 12, English 8- 11, Math 8- 12, Special Ed, Reading and Study Skills at Uni level and been a Summer School Principal for five years.

Apologies to Richard, but all this has taught me that teaching is not just a job. I have joined Judith's group because one can never stop learning, and this is one area that I have been interested in for a long time, without the opportunity to do much more than read articles about it, or go to one or two Pro-D workshops, once in a blue moon. I look forward to meeting all of you, electronically, and learn something new about what I have been doing all these years.

Cheers to all; see you in the cyberwhen.

BEN

Hello all,

My apologies for joining this discussion so late. At times there are just not enough hours in the day to do all we would like. I have glimpsed a few emails and I can see I am a little behind.

I started teaching in 1979 in Mackenzie BC after graduating from UBC. I taught there for 7 years and moved to my present location in 1986. I have been happily married for 27 years and have three boys aged 16, 20 and 22.

I originally started out as a shop teacher but over the years have taken on different subjects including math and history.....mainly to preserve my sanity in a very dynamic job in what I would describe as a very static context. Let me explain..... Teaching is a very challenging job as we are dealing with people who are themselves still struggling with growing up and making sense of the world. No day is really the same yet we, for years,

“process” (maybe not a great word to use but it makes a point) a group of students through a course or a grade only to pass them along and then start all over again.

How many times can anyone teach a specific grade and subject before it begins to affect them? I have always remembered a comment by my uncle 33 years ago when he heard I was to become a teacher. He told me that I would only last as a teacher if I did not take it seriously and only seven years at that. I am still here 27 years later but there was some truth to his comments.

You need to have priorities in your life that prevent you from being consumed by this profession. Family and Friends are my choice. Don't take everything too seriously and remember if you were to be run over by a truck today, someone else would be doing your job tomorrow...and probably doing just as fine a job.

I'd better sign off!

Cheers, Kernel

Hello all,

I have been teaching for 15 years now, and came to the profession after having two other separate careers. I confess that I am passionate about teaching, particularly in my field of visual arts, and I know that from a holistic viewpoint that teaching fuels me.

The last six years seem to have become extremely, and compoundingly difficult due to the political pressures around public education. The results, as I see things, seem to be a “dog-eat-dog” attitude that is growing through my school district, and consequently a lack of trust amongst colleagues. Common phrases amongst colleagues are: “I’ve got to protect what little I’ve been able to acquire”, “I can be replaced in half an hour”, “I’ve established this as my turf and will defend it.”

With money so tight, appeals for funds are presented in a competitive manner – departments and programs vie for funds knowing they must be acquired at the expense of another department or program. The result is that no request is honestly and accurately portrayed and colleagues hide information about spending and needs from other colleagues.

The code of ethics that we teachers are indoctrinated into the profession with is tossed out the door these days. They are known to prevent teaching success in this competitive milieu, and thus are regarded as ways of the past by “seasoned” staff who have learned alternative methods of acquisition and survival.

I was wondering if there is anyone in the group that teaches for private system. My conversations with teachers who work for private schools encourage me to believe that teaching conditions are softer in the private system – money is not such a hardship, and thus teacher stability is less threatened and working conditions are more friendly.

I am exploring alternate professions outside of teaching with the idea that if things continue in the downward spiral of “cutthroat and dog-eat-dog” I can exit and work elsewhere. Someone who shared my passion for the teaching profession but left it for similar reasons and is now working in a creative art job in the private sector tells me of her loneliness, and of her fond memories of the dynamism that teaching is. She tells me to remember all of the interactions that I encounter every day of my week- the many students’ lives I am a part of, the community I am an active and closely connected member of, and the hope that sits in the hearts of those who take my classes and those around me who want to teach. –All these are missing from her work day life. Without the emotional hardships we wouldn’t have the dynamism.

I hope I’ve contributed today. I enjoy reading the entries and am happy to be part of the group.

Malph

The Group Process

Sophie was the first person to post. In our final interview I acknowledged how much courage that must have taken. She replied that in our first interview I had mentioned that she was the youngest and had the least teaching experience in the group and she was concerned that the discussion might be rather abstract so she decided to take the initiative and set an informal, chatty, tone which was comfortable for her. During the week that followed several others introduced themselves. On the Saturday Harmonie posted her introduction and explained how she wanted to start focusing on the positive. The next message to appear was from Richard. It was his second posting and it began “Thanks, Harmonie, for reversing the tone to a more positive spin.”

I was concerned at this point because I wondered what effect Richard's comment would have on the discussion. The group had not been going long enough to have established norms, so I didn't know if another member would challenge him. I also thought that for me to respond would not be in keeping with the stance I had chosen for myself as facilitator. Richard posted his comment on Sunday and I was due to post another topic the next day, so I decided that this was my cue to introduce the topic of "positive and negative." I had intended to focus on this topic at some point during the discussion because everyone had used those words in their interview. So for that week's topic I asked the group to consider the words and what they meant to them. (See Appendix F)

The first person to respond to the topic was Edgeee who began enthusiastically "Brilliant topic, Judith! I was wondering how I was going to broach this business of "positive" that Harmonie brought up..." She then expressed her ideas about the use of the words "positive" and "negative." Harmonie responded almost immediately saying, "I don't mean putting on an artificial smile, pretending that things are going right when obviously they aren't." She then inquired if people knew the book "The Secret" (Byrne, 2006) or knew of the process of "Appreciative Inquiry" (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros 2003) both of which she said were about "focusing on what you want rather than what you don't want." She promised to post more information about them at the weekend. Edgeee responded that she didn't know of these and that she would look forward to hearing more. During that week Lil, Lynn, and Bronwyn responded with their thoughts about negative and positive. Bronwyn referred to the fact that emotions are often classified as negative and positive and said that she embraced the whole range of

emotions and that her darkest emotions had been the source of powerful transformation. In her response, Beatrice said that she had felt “shut down” by Richard’s comment. She said she has no problem with emotions like joy but it is the difficult emotions that she needed to explore and examine. She said that in school she has “to ignore what is really happening and how I really feel” but hopes she doesn’t have to do that “on this list” because we are supposed to be exploring “how we really feel.” I extended the discussion of positive/negative into the third week because some people had only just posted their introductions in the second week and I wanted to give time for another round of posts. At the same time I sent out a posting summarizing the discussion so far and adding some other opinions and quotations to encourage further discussion.

I return to the interaction which stimulated the positive/negative discussion a number of times during the following chapters. In so doing it is not my intent to judge the way in which Richard expressed his thanks for Harmonie focusing on the positive. The interaction illustrated how accepted and common in usage the terms are. It was, in fact, a very timely and helpful example.

Another item which was discussed during these first weeks was the “job of teaching.” In his introduction Richard had commented that he was “hearing frustration out there” and remarked that his wife had told him that teaching was “just a job.” He invited comments from the group. Lil, Ben, and Sophie responded. Lil said,

I also unfortunately disagree with Richard that teaching is "just a job." Of course in one sense it is a job with reasonable benefits and pension, etc. But I think to do it involves a degree of emotional investment. It has never been, for me, a case of working 8 - 4, with weekends and summers off. I go in to school most weekends

for 2 - 3 hours, just to stay on top. This is emotionally draining, but I would find it more stressful not to do it.

Ben said,

Apologies to Richard, but all this [35 years teaching] has taught me that teaching is not just a job.

and Sophie responded,

Richard, I like what you're saying re: it's just a job. I said that to a friend the other day. I said, it's important to remember that this job, whether a job or a calling or whatever you call it, for me it is my profession. It's not the be-all or end-all of me. It's the professional part of my life, and while most jobs cross the line somewhat into our social lives, emotional lives, etc. it IS my profession.

In the middle of the third week I introduced the next topic, that of "Complicity." I chose that subject because a number of people had talked about the effect of government policies, especially Bill 33 which was supposed to establish a limit of three students with special needs in each class. The guidelines had been over-ridden in some districts but superintendents and school boards were reporting that they had been adhered to. Members of the group talked about the way in which the students in most need were being short changed because the guidelines for designating children with special needs had been changed by the government. Beatrice quoted a friend who was on leave as saying "by continuing to do our best and be positive, we are complicit in the corruption of public education." I opened up the topic to the group as a whole to invite their thoughts on the matter.

At the beginning of Week 4 I brought the conversation back to the “here and now” by asking the participants to describe a pleasant interaction they had that week. My purpose was to encourage the group to focus on their own experience and to have them notice their emotional interactions on a daily basis in school with colleagues. The following week, I asked them to describe a “not-so-pleasant” interaction. Again, my intention was to encourage the group to monitor their own emotional experiences. I chose to use the terms “pleasant” and “not-so-pleasant” to avoid using “positive” and “negative” and to encourage the participants to connect with how they felt in their bodies. As the table shows (Appendix J) during Week 4 only three people described a pleasant interaction. Four more posted their pleasant interactions the following week; this means that four people did not post a pleasant interaction at all. During Week 5 (not-so-pleasant) only Lil posted a current interaction. In addition she posted an event from the past, as did Ben. Lil prefaced her story:

Anyway, on to Judith's request for discussion of not so pleasant interactions. One very big one happened about five years ago, so I don't know if it still counts.

Malph also posted a past interaction

I've had several very unpleasant interactions with staff over the years - about power and control over premises.

The trend to post “not-so-pleasant” interactions from the past continued through the following weeks. It was almost as if the forum was a place in which the participants knew they would not be judged and their feelings would be treated with respect so they felt safe to talk about incidents which had obviously had an emotional impact on them. I chose to

continue with the “pleasant” and “not-so-pleasant” interactions for Week 6 to allow time for more people to post on the topics.

The following week, Week 7, was Spring Break and again I chose not to post a new topic as I thought some people would be away. It would also give others a chance to respond to the previous weeks’ topics and to carry on with the other conversations they were having. In addition I was planning to send a number of attachments about alternative theories of emotion. I had also decided to send a summary, a retrospective of where we had been and a prospective of my intended path. Taking all this into account I thought there would be plenty for people to read and think about without adding a new topic. Also, since there was no school that week, there were no current interactions to monitor. During the week of Spring Break Bronwyn chose to post a past “not-so-pleasant” event. She prefaced it with:

So – the topic of the posting. This happened when I went to a very northern town (that will remain nameless) to work for 4 years.

Bronwyn’s story was about the treatment she and her daughter received at the hands of the staff at the school. Bronwyn’s and Malph’s stories drew this response from Lil:

I've been appalled by Bronwyn's story of shunning. I can hardly believe that educated professionals could do such a thing. Was there no recourse through mediation or the union, or something?? And being so spiteful to your daughter is beyond comprehension. I can relate to Malph's story of colleagues refusing to share office space, resources and money. It has never happened to me but a good friend of mine moved from junior high to senior high, to teach math, and was the first women in the department. She was not allowed access to the files of work-

sheets, but had to make up everything on her own, and wasn't even given a copy of the final exam until a week prior. Unbelievable.

And from Ben came these comments:

Reading over the postings for the last two weeks, I'm struck by one or two things.

The first is that I've led a relatively stress-free professional life.

He then went on to describe incidents from the past in which he had seen women teachers suffer injustices in the schools in which he was teaching.

After Spring Break at Week 8 I suggested focusing on everyday interactions again but this time from a social perspective, as well as looking at staff meetings from a similar perspective. I sent out a list of questions to help guide observations. Some people posted their observations about staff meetings and other interactions that week and these topics continued to be pursued over the next few weeks. Group members also continued to post past unpleasant events. In Week 9 Malph prefaced hers with:

A couple of daily interactions to present to the forum. The first is one that took place 5 years ago and still makes me not want to ever interact with the person.

And she went on to described the occasion when she had told her department head to “f*** off.”

In Week 10 Beatrice started by saying:

I finally thought of my other, unpleasant interaction with a colleague. Sorry it's so late. I know it doesn't have to be a huge story and this was a couple years ago, but it really brought out my worst emotions.

The story was about the time when she “bumped” a teacher who responded spitefully.

Thus by this time there were two main themes flowing. One theme was that of people recounting stories from the past and the responses of the group to those stories; and the other theme was the observations of staff meetings and feeling rules. The topic of looking at current interactions from a social perspective proved elusive. When I talked about it with Beatrice in her final interview she said that as soon as she went into school everything else went from her mind including phoning the garage to get the car door fixed. Ben said that he had forgotten for a while but then, on one occasion when he did remember, he found he was uncomfortable because he felt as though he was divided in the conversation he was having with his peers. He said it was as if he was holding the conversation and spying on it at the same time. I had a personal insight about this after the group finished. About a month later I was working in schools on a part-time contract. During those weeks I realized how difficult it is to remember to focus on an interaction. The immediacy of the demands of the students, other teachers, educational assistants, administrators, and parents not to mention the focus needed to prepare for the next lesson and clear up from the last, drive everything else out of one's head.

After Beatrice posted her story about bumping a colleague I looked at the amount of time left and thought about my responsibility as facilitator. I had noted the previous week in my journal, "Hope, compassion, and forgiveness - I need to introduce these into the discussion." Beatrice's story gave me the segue I needed. I wrote in a posting to the group:

Beatrice's story reminded me of my own which I mentioned in my introduction (all those weeks ago!) when I had been in the position of bumping a friend....After I read Beatrice's posting I went back and read the introduction to

my master's thesis where I had included excerpts from my journal documenting my process. At one point in it I talk about compassion and (self) forgiveness which I think are important in the healing process. I have decided to attach a part of this introduction as my way of sharing my personal process and honouring the stories you have shared.

It seemed important to me in the context of power relations to expose my vulnerability to the group rather than keeping my distance as "researcher." I had actually talked about personal stories in the interviews and in my introduction that first week; however, it was interesting for me to experience the feeling that I wanted to share as a way of reciprocating. I also shared my thoughts about my "role" as facilitator:

This seems to be the appropriate time for me to talk about an issue that I have constantly had to think about during our discussion – namely my role in the group. I saw my primary role as researcher and, as such decided that I wanted to "facilitate" the group in such a way that on the one hand I directed the focus so we would address areas I had predetermined for the research purposes, and on the other hand I did not unduly influence what people shared and how they shared it. I have to acknowledge that it was very difficult for me to maintain that restrained approach – I often wanted to respond straight away to a posting.

The topic of forgiveness which I raised in my posting sparked a discussion which carried on into the final interviews.

By now we were at Week 11 with only two more weeks to go. At this time I invited the participants to reflect on their participation, especially with regard to what they had found useful and helpful from the group. I also encouraged them to make a note

any changes they had found themselves making or intending to make as a result of their participation. I concluded,

Ben said a few weeks ago, teachers (some not all) love to talk and, while that is important, I think it is also important to anchor any new thoughts, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs, in action. This is part of the social change process.

In their final posts or in their interviews many participants shared how their awareness about emotional interactions had changed. Probably the most significant factor had been having a place to talk and share these aspects of their lives; to break the isolation which not being able to talk about emotional interactions imposes. I realized that the group had represented a safe place for the telling of previously untold stories and this fulfilled a need for the participants. This is an aspect of the research which I had not foreseen. It demonstrated so clearly the value of the group's existence not for the discussion which would provide me with data for my academic research but as a support and a community which provided something which was missing from the lives of the participants.

Group Numbers

Twelve people started out in the group but some left along the way for a number of reasons. The first person to leave was Richard because during the second week he recognized one of the other participants. This was my fault entirely. I had not realized until I interviewed him that he taught at the same school as another person who I had already interviewed. Influenced by my eagerness to include all the people who wanted to participate, I decided that their teaching assignments were so completely different and the school was so large that there was little chance of them recognizing each other. The

situation was further compromised by the fact that when the other person posted their introduction they did not use the pseudonym they had talked about using in the interview but used one which was derived from their name and by which they were known in school. I had not caught this when I monitored the first posting. Richard emailed me privately to let me know. I phoned him and we decided he would drop out of the group. We also talked about letting the other person know this had happened, which I did by phone. Richard and I talked to see if there was any way he could carry on in an individual fashion. I suggested he let me know how he would like to arrange it because I would need to submit an amendment to the ethics form. It transpired that we did not pursue that path. I did have a final interview with Richard and he said it had been difficult to set aside time for reflection without a structure. It was a shame that Richard was not able to continue. As a latecomer and a newcomer to teaching he would have had a different perspective to contribute.

During Week 7 I emailed privately two members, Rusty and Kernel, who had posted in the first couple of weeks but not since then. This was a difficult decision to make. On the one hand I appreciated that they were busy but on the other I felt that if they were still interested they would have posted more. I was also concerned that they might be regarded as “lurkers” by the other people in the group. So I sent an email asking them if they wished to continue. Both responded and said they would prefer to drop out. I was glad I had given them the opportunity to withdraw. Rusty said he would do an exit interview but Kernel preferred not to, but he said it was fine to use his data.

In Week 5 Edgeee mentioned travelling to the interior from the Vancouver area to visit her father who had Alzheimer’s and was in a care home. Four weeks later she

emailed me to let me know her father had died and she was going back to the Interior for his funeral. Although she had said she would get in touch when she returned, this didn't happen. Edgeeee chose to not contribute again. When we had our final interview she said that she didn't resume when she returned from her father's funeral because she had been disappointed in the level of engagement and thought that the group was very similar to teachers in a staff room in that they resisted engagement. The remaining eight participants contributed throughout the twelve weeks.

In retrospect I think that I could have started with fewer participants. I started with more people than I knew was the optimum group size to allow for people dropping out. I also realize that it would have been helpful for the participants at the beginning to have had a graphic representation with the 12 people and a few pertinent details so that they could keep clear who was who.

Feedback

In the final interviews participants gave feedback on their experience. Bronwyn talked about it being a "magical time" She would arrive home from school and turn on the computer as soon as she had "dumped" her bags to see if anyone had posted; Ben talked about printing off the postings at school then going into the quiet of his office at lunch time with his yellow highlighter and reading.

The participants said they valued the process and the opportunity to talk about emotions with other teachers. Bronwyn enjoyed the community and the opportunity to reflect in depth on her emotions. She realized the importance of connecting with others at a less superficial level. Sophie said she felt as though she had sat down with a group of older, wiser, people who modeled for her the process of looking at their emotions. She

talked about the value of learning from other people's experience. Ben enjoyed the process; he said it got the "grey cells" going. For Lynn the value was in seeing that everyone else was dealing with the same issues as her and that relationships on her staff were quite good compared with other situations she heard about through the group.

As I previously mentioned Edgeee was disappointed that there hadn't been more "engagement," by which she meant that people didn't respond to each other immediately and also take up issues in the way she had hoped. Beatrice also commented about there not being a conversational interchange, with frequent responses back and forth. She speculated that was because of the length of the postings.

In our discussion about whether they would have participated if it had been a face to face group, a number of people at first said "yes" they thought they would but then ended up realizing there would have been problems in that format, especially concerning the lack of anonymity. Ben said he enjoyed not having to compete for floor space with other people because he often finds it difficult to speak up in a group.

Harmonie, who had not responded very frequently, said that she found she was uncomfortable talking about emotions on line. She said that emotions change very quickly and so she was reluctant to express them in text because in that form they would still remain even after she was no longer experiencing them. She also said that she didn't think that people were particularly interested in her point of view. She thought that if Richard had stayed she might have connected with him more. Harmonie also came to the realization that she felt fear in putting forth her point of view.

The frequency with which the participants contributed and the length of the postings varied as can be seen from the table (Appendix I). Lynn commented that "we

had dissertations rather than conversations.” This was doubtless due to the fact that we were not using a threaded discussion medium, but I think that we had a more complex conversation than we would have done had we used a threaded discussion board. The participants synthesized topics rather than just responded to one or two threads. Some people said they found themselves procrastinating because of the time and effort they thought they needed to compose a message. Lil said she would set aside a couple of hours at a time. She would read, make notes, and then write. I had chosen not to intervene and say anything about the length of the posts. In retrospect it might have been a wiser for me to encourage people to contribute as they felt they had time and not to be deterred by the length of some postings, or I could have suggested a limit to the length of the messages.

Most of the participants said it had taken more time than they had anticipated and that they felt guilty about not posting more but Beatrice added that that was the nature of most teachers to feel guilty. They always wanted to “do more and be more.”

Back-channel

I let the participants know at the beginning of the group that if they wanted to email me personally they were welcome to do so. Two participants contacted me that way and I used personal email on two occasions to check on people’s wellbeing. I also emailed Rusty and Kernel to ask if they wanted to continue with the group. Each month when I sent the consent forms to be renewed I usually added a personal note.

My Experience of the Group Process

I have noted at times, through the description so far, some of my feelings and reactions in connection with the group. For example, I have noted how I felt about not

being careful enough to preserve the anonymity of one group member. I have also described how difficult it was to decide whether to act on asking the two who hadn't posted whether they wanted to withdraw or not. As well as these specific incidents I also felt a certain amount of emotional tension during the first few weeks, wondering if people were going to post and if the whole project would be "successful" or not. It was much more relaxing for me when I decided that I would trust to the foundations I had laid and that people would post as and when they were moved to. I realized that there was a lot going on in their lives: teaching, illness, report cards, and so forth, while my only preoccupation at the time was my research project.

I enjoyed the process. Very often I would feel that I wanted to respond to what someone had posted but decided in my role of facilitator I needed to hang back. In my postings I talked about some of the issues that were going on in my daily life and I let people know when I had been touched and inspired by their postings. At one point I had been invited to take part in a radio discussion at the UVic radio station about the privatization of education. At first I was going to decline because I don't think I speak well on my feet but then I thought about the activism of many of the people in the group and was inspired to say "yes." I later told the group about it in a weekly post and ended:

I think a lot of my courage has come from participating in this discussion with you all! Isn't this interesting? It certainly was not one of the outcomes/features that I thought about or anticipated. I have a strong belief in the power of the group and in social support – which is why I wanted to have a discussion group rather than individual interviews. I am interested in the way we create meaning together. This has been an unexpected gift!

Chapters 5, 6, and 7: Introduction

In the next three chapters I present the findings and discussion which speak to my three research questions. In chapter 5 I address the first question: How do teachers make sense of their emotional interactions with their peers? Chapter 6 deals with the question: How do teachers' understandings of their emotional interactions with their peers change through discussion within a group over time? In chapter 7 I focus on the third question: What understandings of the emotional processes of school culture emerge when teachers discuss and reflect in a collaborative setting about the emotional aspects of their work? I have interwoven the findings and discussion sections in each chapter.

Before I present the results I give some examples of interactions which the participants described. As I described in the previous chapter group members described current interactions and past interactions. I give illustrations of both.

Current Interactions

- Malph described how she had started opening up her computer lab when she was not using it so that other teachers could bring their students in and make use of the facility. "As a result, lots of teachers are taking me up on the offer, and since my desk is in here I work in the room during my prep and get chatting with them. I love it! I've met so many colleagues that I never knew before (remember I work in a school with 125 staff). Besides that we laugh and share and help each other out A LOT. And I've acquired new teaching strategies and new teaching materials and resources from it."

- Sophie talked about a conversation with a woman in her choir who is also a teacher. “I basically asked ‘How are you?’ and she responded with ‘Fine’ then she asked me. I said ‘Fine’ and then we both looked each other in the eye and she said, ‘Well actually I’m happy and positive on the outside, under that there’s a layer of irritated, under that there’s a layer of overworked. You?’ And I responded in like kind.” Sophie said that they talked for a minute about which was the greater feat – “To be able to show a smile to the world and hide the lingering under-layers, or to be able to admit these layers to each other at all!”
- Lil described a school Safety Committee meeting. “We are only six people on the committee, three teachers, one principal, and two CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) EA’s (Educational Assistants). We all get along well, and we just hee-haw our way through the meeting. It takes place after school, once a month, on Friday, and although nominally chaired by the principal, in fact one of the EA’s runs the meeting. She is funny, energetic, in your face and does a great job. It is a meeting I actually look forward to.”
- Beatrice described a couple of events; one where she had asked a colleague to mentor her while she taught a course which was new to her and another where she had encouraged a colleague to attend the new teachers’ conference. She described feeling good about having initiated these events.
- Bronwyn told of a humorous interaction with a colleague who was “Teacher in Charge” for the day and another where she shared a piece of student’s writing with her colleagues.

- Edgeee's on-going good relationship with a colleague set the scene for an interaction in which her colleague sought her out to confide in because he was distressed and he knew she was the only one with whom he could be "fully himself."
- Ben and Lynn both talked about their discomfort during staff meetings. Lynn reported that some of her colleagues had called out rudely and made "cat-calls" while she was presenting information relevant to Special Needs students at a staff meeting. Ben talked about feeling uncomfortable when the discussion got "hot and heavy" at the meeting and he was concerned that there was no good way to dissipate that energy.
- Malph was upset by the bullying tactics she perceived being used by some of the men on staff at her school.
- Beatrice talked about going into a colleague's classroom to borrow a teacher's manual and being ignored by him in front of his students.
- Lil described how she felt not respected when individuals and groups used the library as a meeting room outside of school hours without sending her a courtesy note; often she found coffee cups in the stacks or books left on the floor. Groups sometimes met there at a weekend when she was in working. She also talked about her feelings towards a couple of teachers on her staff that she could not "warm up to." She described them as "super teachers" who took on many responsibilities. She compared herself with them and felt that by comparison she was "nothing."

- Harmonie expressed sensitivity to the “negative tone” set by a group of older teachers on her staff. She also described an interaction with a colleague who wanted her in her capacity as Professional Development chair to change the days on which school ProD was held.
- Edgeee talked about some incidents where she had expressed her opinion which had been different from the rest of the staff and she had been made fun of.
- Beatrice felt isolated because her emotional reaction to the government policies, especially the stripping of the contract in 2002, was so different from that of her colleagues. She thought “we should be rioting in the streets” rather than just feeling somewhat annoyed as her colleagues seemed to feel.
- Sophie described how she talked with her colleagues to compare notes with them regarding the way she felt she was being picked on by the principal.

Past Interactions: Troubling Tales

Some participants told about incidents which had happened in the past as far back as ten years previously

- Bronwyn told of working in a small elementary school in a northern town and being shunned by four of the seven teachers. She recounted how they had “decided to ostracize me. They deliberately excluded me from planning events in the school and were frequently nasty to my face – as an example – there was a special holiday event planned for one of the holidays and all of the students in the 3 grades were included – all except my class!”

- Lil talked about the time when she was head of the French department and a couple of the younger inexperienced teachers previewed the exams with their students against her expressed wish.
- Malph described how for two years she had bitten her tongue as she was insulted and demeaned by the art department head. Finally one day “It was just after school at the end of the week. I had gone to my department head's office to tell her I had ordered a drying rack that our department had agreed to order and that I had been assigned to do the purchasing of. The department head had actually been going to order it for months and had not got around to it so at the last department meeting I said I would take on the job. When I told her, she replied that it certainly would be the wrong rack and that I should immediately phone and cancel the order.” Malph described how “I lost my cool and told her to ‘F*** off.’”
- Beatrice described the time she had bumped a colleague in the lay-off process and then had to take time off for maternity leave. The teacher whom she had bumped was given the temporary contract to replace her supposedly until the end of the year. As it turned out, Beatrice needed to return to work earlier than she had anticipated thus displacing the teacher once again. The teacher made things very difficult for Beatrice by setting the students against her and making unprofessional comments about her.

Chapter 5: In the Beginning

Introduction

In this chapter I present the findings and discussion relevant to my first research question, “How do teachers make sense of their emotional interactions with their peers?” I started with this question because I wanted to inquire into how the participants in the group thought about their interactions with their peers. I was interested in discovering how aware they were of the emotional aspects of their everyday life in school. I also wanted to find out about their implicit and explicit theories of emotion as well as their thoughts and beliefs about emotions in general. I wanted get a sense of these aspects in order to trace if and how their understandings changed over the course of the discussion. I described in the interview section of chapter 3 how I used the first interviews for a number of purposes over and above asking the questions I had prepared about emotional experiences with peers. When I realized that in some interviews I had not focused much of the conversation on emotional experiences of interactions, I was concerned that I might not actually learn how the participants made sense of their emotional interactions. However, close and careful readings of the first interviews and early postings provided some information about how the participants made sense of some of their interactions.

Wallemacq and Sims (1998) describe sense-making as “an integrated activity.” There were several factors to which the participants referred which were integral to their sense making. Some of these factors were explicit and some were implicit. As I examined those factors I realized that there were a number of “background” aspects. These included the participants’ awareness of and comfort with their own emotions and emotional interactions, together with their awareness of the emotional nature of teaching. They were

also aware of how the current situation in their schools might influence peer interactions. Against this backdrop were other factors which seemed to be specific to the particular interaction the participants were dealing with. I have characterized these as “strategies” they used in trying to make sense. Another factor which was important in their sense making was the language which they used in thinking about or talking about emotional interactions.

I present the findings and discussion under the following headings: 1) The background aspects which are (a) the participants’ awareness of and comfort with their emotions, (b) the participants’ values, (c) the participants’ awareness of the emotional aspects of teaching, and (d) the participants’ awareness of the current situation in their schools. 2) The strategies of making sense which are (a) noticing the event, (b) questioning the self, (c) understanding the perspectives of oneself and others, (d) attribution of personality characteristics, (e) comparison, and (f) talking to others. 3) Language.

Background Aspects

Participants’ Awareness of and Comfort with Their Emotions: Findings

Many participants talked about their comfort with emotions and how they usually “dealt” with or “processed” them. In Bronwyn’s early life she suffered physical and emotional abuse so she “was determined to do all the healing that needed to be done.” That meant that she spent a large part of her adult life “doing family of origin work in counselling.” She said she made “a lot of progress in accepting the whole range of emotions, because I went into the deepest, darkest emotions that I could ever find in my own life and faced them and overcame them and found ways to live with them.”

Bronwyn explained that as a result of her healing, she feels comfortable with her emotions. She thought that “a facility with one's emotional life is necessary for any personal growth, any ability to overcome difficulty.” Not only is Bronwyn comfortable with emotions she considers them an important spiritual element in her life.

Like Bronwyn, Edgeee also said that she experienced abuse as a young child and as a result has spent time focusing on her emotional health. “So as time has gone on I think I have come to a place where I think my emotions are my responsibility and I think what that means is: acknowledging them, paying attention to them, not always voicing them while I’m experiencing them, but thinking about them for a while and finding a way to articulate them.”

For Lil, menopause has meant increased stress and depression so she has started taking care of herself and her wellbeing differently. She said that she used to “stew” over things. “I used to turn them over in my mind and I used to wake up in the night sometimes thinking about them. Now I just don’t.” Now “I consciously say ‘Does it matter?’” She acknowledged, “That’s only come lately with age.”

In general it is only uncomfortable emotions which demand attention. Beatrice says, “I don’t feel the need to examine when I feel happy ... when I feel angry or defeated or demoralized, then I want to look at that.” Beatrice maintained that she is comfortable with most of her emotions. She considered herself to be fortunate because she is in a relationship where she is encouraged to explore emotion and she is in the habit of reflecting on her emotional interactions in order to make sense of them. She described how she has had to “unpack” a particular incident to try and understand her reaction to it.

For a number of years Ben was part of a discussion group which met on a weekly basis in members' homes. He said that emotions as a topic came up many times. "The differences between how men and women deal with emotions and how it is a big part of your life and the way you look at the world; the way emotions colour your input." So he had a certain comfort level in talking about emotions. He had also read the book "Emotional Intelligence" (Goleman, 1996) and tried to see how it applied to his class and his teaching situation.

Richard also said that he had read a fair amount about emotions a number of years previously as part of personal growth. He said, "I think I have a good awareness of my emotions and where they're coming from and how I deal with them. I'm very personal with how I deal with my emotions."

For Harmonie, emotions are "an intuition of some kind. I can sense negative, I feel I can sense negative energy, and it makes me feel negative, I feel bad." Having taught and practiced yoga she regards emotions as being stored in the body and she takes steps to release them through yoga and massage. She is also aware of the influence of her own inner dialogue in creating emotions in her mind. She realized this forcefully when she spent twelve days on a silent meditation retreat and became aware that she was creating her own thoughts and emotions.

Sophie said that she experiences emotions intensely and now is comfortable with that. She also reported that she knows herself "pretty well in terms of what I need to do" in order to understand her emotions or to deal with them. "My boyfriend likes to say that I'm just 'so reflective' ... and so I tend to just take some time for myself to acknowledge those [emotions]."

Participants' Awareness of and Comfort with Their Emotions: Discussion

The teachers who chose to participate in the study had explored and were comfortable with their own emotional selves to the extent that they were willing to participate in a study examining emotional experiences and asking them to contribute to an on-line discussion and face to face interviews. They brought their level of emotional awareness to their interpretation of their interactions with their peers. For some of them this included an awareness of the values which motivated their interactions.

Why do some people seem to be more aware than others?

Emotions have been traditionally devalued (see chapter 2) and, although there has been a recent surge of interest in emotional intelligence, many people are still not comfortable with their own emotional experiences. However, some people do become interested in and pay attention to their own emotions at some point in their lives. There are a number of reasons and motivations for this.

Childhood and family of origin issues.

Sometimes, like Bronwyn and Edgeee, children grow up in families in which emotion is expressed in destructive ways which harm the children in the family. Some of those children decide at a later point in their lives that they want to “heal” from those destructive ways. Some might seek counselling or other therapies and learn healthier ways of experiencing and expressing their emotions. Others, like Sophie, may have been exposed to depression within the family circle and have taken it upon themselves to learn about emotions in general and their own in particular.

Emotions may be disruptive.

Another reason people sometimes start to pay attention to their emotions is that their emotions disrupt their life more than they wish and in order to have a more peaceful existence they choose to examine their emotional experiences and find ways to regulate them. It was Beatrice who noted that it was only uncomfortable emotions which demanded attention. When Lil found that she was becoming unusually emotional she went to her doctor who advised her she was experiencing typical menopause symptoms. This led Lil to start becoming more aware of her emotions and learning how to regulate them.

Zeitgeist: Emotions become culturally acceptable.

Paying attention to one's emotions and clarity about what one is feeling are "abilities" which have received publicity in recent years through the popularization of the concept of emotional intelligence by Goleman. The publications of his books "Emotional Intelligence" (1996) and "Working with Emotional Intelligence" (1998) generated a flood of other books, articles, applications, and businesses on the topic. The concept had originally been proposed by Salovey and Mayer in articles in 1990 and a similar concept had been developed by Howard Gardner in his "Frames of Mind" in 1983 in his exposition of intrapersonal intelligence. The idea of personal awareness as a desirable personal characteristic has received attention at different periods throughout history. Foucault (1988) describes in his "Technologies of the Self" how the cultivation of self-knowledge was a desirable occupation at a certain period and amongst a certain segment of the population in the ancient Greek culture. Moreover, the often quoted invitation attributed to the Delphic oracle to "Know thyself" has been used as a focus in personal

growth movements. Richard talked about reading about emotions at a time in his life when he was looking at personal growth and Ben described how he and his wife met for a number of years with other people on a weekly basis to discuss issues to do with personal growth, self-awareness, and spirituality.

Affective orientation: Individual differences.

In Harmonie's case she identified herself as experiencing emotions as intuition and recognizing that she seemed to be sensitive to other people's energy. She was also aware of the bodily and mental components of her emotions. She may be among that group of people who are identified as seeming to be more tuned into their own emotions than the majority (Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield, 1990). People who are identified as "affectively oriented" are more sensitive to their emotions and what they are feeling than people who are not affectively oriented and who are more likely not to recognize or attend to emotions. "Non-affectively oriented people may think that emotions are superfluous ... and thus constitute a 'necessary evil' to be overcome" (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, p. 452). Affective orientation is conceptualized as a "predisposed individual difference" and is not the same as emotional intelligence which is conceptualized as a learned skill that can be improved with practice (Sojka & Deeter-Schmelz, 2008). It might be that the people who volunteered to participate in this research were "affectively oriented."

Recently Craig (2004) has noted that neurological researchers have identified a particular area of the brain which could account for why some people are more aware of their feelings than others. The brain area in question is an area of the forebrain which mediates a person's ability to perceive their heart beat and also is connected with the

personal subjective awareness of their inner body feelings and their emotionality. The size and activity level of this brain structure varies greatly among individuals. Individual differences in emotional awareness are predicted to be directly related to differences in the capacity for interoceptive awareness. There is also evidence that the neural basis for subjective feelings also provides the means for awareness of the feelings of others. Craig supposed that this is an innate quality but it could also be trainable.

Intensity: Individual differences.

The experience of the participants highlights individual differences in the intensity of emotional experiences. For example Sophie talks about how intensely she feels. In the academic discipline of psychology Larsen and Diener (1987) developed a scale to measure a construct they termed *affect intensity* (AI). Larsen, Billings and Cutler (1996) claim that research “has consistently demonstrated the existence of stable individual differences in the strength with which individuals characteristically experience their emotions.” In a 1986 study Larsen, Diener, and Emmons reported that participants whom they characterized as “affectively intense” tended to report stronger emotional responses even to ordinary day-to-day events than participants who measured low on the AI scale. According to the researchers “affectively intense” people also rated their emotional responses to events as more intense regardless of whether the event was mild, moderate, or severe, and regardless of whether it was pleasant or unpleasant.

While I was investigating the phenomenon of “affect intensity” I became aware of the way in which it was portrayed. In the articles I read researchers made connections between “affect intensity” and neuroses and bi-polar disorder as the following quotation illustrates: “Emotional intensity concerns the magnitude with which one typically

experiences emotions. It is associated with ... measures of somatic and neurotic symptoms” (Gohm, 2003, p. 596). As I was reading this I remembered an incident Sophie recalled during our first conversation when she was talking about the intensity with which she experienced emotions. She described how, when she was in university a couple of years previously, her class had been given a quiz based on Gardner’s (1993) multiple intelligences. She expressed relief at learning that experiencing emotions intensely was regarded as “an ability.”

I know that I seem to experience emotion very differently than other people. We did some talking about multiple intelligences and they had these quizzes and I remember one of the questions was ‘Are you able to experience emotion very deeply?’ I put ‘Yes’ because I get tremendously emotional about everything, but the idea that it was like an ability is interesting to me ... so that was a neat question.

In response I told her how relieved I had been twenty years or more ago when my doctor and I were talking about emotional experiences and she said, “Aren’t we lucky to have emotional sensitivity?” Until that time I had seen my own emotional sensitivity as a liability. As I was reading these articles about emotional intensity I became aware again of how the phenomenon has been pathologized and devalued by today’s culture.

Participants’ Values: Findings

Sometimes people are aware of and explicit about the values which influence their interactions. One of Edgeee’s values is honesty which to her means speaking up about her opinions. “And so I have just let people know what I think, and it took me 35 years to find my voice, it took me another ten or so to form my opinions, and be damned if I am

going to keep them to myself!” This value led her to voice her opinions about the broadcasting of hockey information over the PA system in her school and also the labelling of gifted children. She said that both of these interactions resulted in staff laughing at her behind her back.

Bronwyn’s values include being truthful in relationships. She also does not subscribe to the belief that people are superior or inferior to each other; in an institution like education people simply have different roles. These values lead her to “speak truth to power” at meetings and to speak up about how she is feeling in relationships.

Beatrice values making sure that all perspectives are heard and so she takes it upon herself at staff meetings to voice the other points of view even though she realizes she might incur the frustration of her colleagues because she is taking up time in the meeting and they want to go home.

Lil values her professional identity and competence. “For my twenty odd years that I taught at high school I was very competent, I did a pretty good job and I knew that. I was department head and my students did well in the grade twelve exams, and I was doing what I was supposed to do.” In her current assignment in the elementary library field she did not feel competent. “It’s a blow to feel that you’re not doing a good job even though you know that you are working hard, and although you’re trying to work out what you should be doing differently.” This influenced her interactions with her colleagues because she felt she had not been able to help them in the way that she should. It undermined her professional identity.

Malph values collegiality. In her interview and in her early postings she talked about the lack of opportunity for developing collegial relations which was due partly to

the physical structure of the school and the lack of space for everyone to gather together and partly to the culture of competition within the school and in the art department.

During the time of the discussion group Malph was able to manifest this value through her own creative opening up of the lab and providing good coffee.

Openness and honesty were valued by Sophie. She talked openly to her colleagues about her problems with the principal, asking them if they were having similar experiences. Her sense of openness and honesty was compromised when she talked to her principal and found herself saying “thank you for telling me this” rather than expressing what she was really feeling which was anger at feeling unfairly “picked on” by the administrator.

Participants’ Values: Discussion

The significance of people’s values lies in the perspective that values are intrinsic to the experience of emotion. According to a number of theories (see chapter 2) people experience emotions when their concerns are thwarted, threatened, or sustained. These concerns include personal values, goals, and needs. The group of people who responded to the invitation to participate in this research were likely to be people who have thought about and been aware of their values because the letter of consent alluded to the current government policies.

The values expressed by the participants included those of social justice, the importance of speaking up, professional identity, and personal relationships with colleagues. The participants experienced emotions when they were not able to manifest their values in their actions. For example, Sophie experienced anger and found it stressful when she realized she was being compliant instead of honest about her feelings in her

interactions with the principal. Lil found it distressing to think of herself as not a competent teacher in her role as librarian in a elementary school.

The participants found that it took courage to stand up for their values when they were not commonly held or expressed amongst their colleagues. Edgeee said that standing up for her values had cost her emotionally. Beatrice described how it takes courage for her to speak up at staff meetings. Both of these teachers were aware of the repercussions of acting in a way which was not sanctioned by the norms of the group. Edgeee through previous actions in which she spoke up about an issue found that she was cold-shouldered by the local teachers' executive who did take her up on her wish to be on a local committee. Beatrice knows that if she speaks up about certain issues the rest of her staff will roll their eyes and look at their watches indicating that they do not wish her to raise contentious issues. I develop this theme more fully in the section about staff meetings in chapter 7.

Participants' Awareness of the Emotional Aspects of Teaching: Findings

One aspect of making sense which seemed to be common to most of the participants was the recognition of the emotional tone of teaching. To Ben the school year "is always a roller coaster ride – of feelings and everything else both kids and staff." Participants described various aspects of school life which affected them.

Many of them referred to the emotional lives of their students. Sophie remarked on the intensity of emotions in her students; Lynn referred to the narrow range of emotions and emotional reactions in her students; and Lil talked about the intensity of the relationships between boyfriends and girlfriends in her previous high school position.

Richard and Malph both referred to the centrality of relationships and emotions.

As a newcomer to teaching after having pursued other careers, Richard was clear that emotions are central to teaching. “There is that element of emotion between you and the students, and you and the teachers.” Relationships are key. “My mantra is ‘Teaching is nothing but relationships.’ It’s all about relationships, that’s the top and bottom line.”

For Malph, also, a key aspect of teaching is the relational aspect. “This job involves human relations; this is a job of human relations.”

In her introduction to the group (see Chapter 4, p. 132) Beatrice described how her reaction to the destruction of the teachers’ contracts by the provincial government in 2002 was very different from that of her colleagues and led to her feeling isolated from them despite the fact that many were “wonderful colleagues who are also friends.”

Ben, Bronwyn and Malph refer to conflict between peers. Ben described how “emotions do run high” between teachers because there are often differences between them. “Sometimes differences of style, differences of opinion, what we should be doing.” He added that there are no good ways of settling these disputes without hurt feelings.

Bronwyn is often called upon to mediate between staff who are having disagreements. That experience together with her own personal awareness leads her to state that “the whole thing around teachers’ emotions is a central part of being an effective teacher.” She recognizes that

whether or not you are able to solve a problem depends on whether or not you can address the emotional questions underneath the problem. If you can look at the emotional motivation of the person, then you can solve the surface problem.

People being uncooperative with each other are being uncooperative with each

other usually because they are defending themselves at an emotional level, so if you can figure out what that emotional issue is and make that safe, then the willingness to cooperate on the other issue on the surface usually comes into play.

Like Ben, Malph has also been affected by disputes between colleagues. “I have struggled a lot in my career around the emotions that erupt up in teaching particularly amongst colleagues.” She described the situation where she sees people using their anger to bully in order to secure resources for themselves.

Harmonie is another participant who finds she is affected by other members of staff and their expression of emotion. “The greatest struggle of being a teacher is managing my own emotions.” She enlarged on what she meant by saying, “I guess I’m very sensitive and easily triggered by negativity and at my school there are an older group of teachers who have been there for a while and they kind of set the tone for the rest of the school which is not a tone I want to be part of; so just learning how not to be angered, annoyed, disappointed. I think I’m starting to learn that now.”

Sophie, as a beginning young teacher, was aware of the need “to work hard and systematically to ensure that I carve out the best emotional landscape for myself within my teaching career.” Her mother is a teacher and Sophie has been aware of the issues her mother has faced in collegial relationships in school so she wants to take steps to ensure she pays attention to her “emotional self.”

Participants’ Awareness of the Emotional Aspects of Teaching: Discussion

Ben referred to teaching as a roller coaster of emotions with students and staff. While the topic of this project concerns emotional interactions with peers, an interesting aspect is a consideration of how the emotional nature of the job and other relationships,

for instance with students and administrators or parents, are important because heightened arousal can predispose people to experience more intense emotional reactions than they would in calmer situations.

Conflicts.

One emotional aspect of schools identified by some participants concerned their reaction and sensitivity to the emotional expression by other teachers on their staff. Ben, Harmonie, and Malph all talked about being upset by their colleagues expressing strong emotions. Ben is uncomfortable with the “hot and heavy” discussions in the staff meetings although he recognizes that conflicts are bound to happen between teachers because there is a diversity of opinions about philosophy, ways of teaching and what schooling means. Both Malph and Harmonie used the word “struggle” to describe their relationship with their emotions. Harmonie says she reacts to and is sensitive to the negativity she feels from a certain group of teachers and Malph is disturbed by some of the staff using their emotions as vehicles for bullying and getting their own way. Neither Harmonie nor Malph explained what the struggle is about, although both women described situations in which they see and hear other people (mainly men) expressing emotions in an aggressive manner. Perhaps they struggle because they are angry, fearful, or disapproving of what they see and hear and are uncomfortable experiencing those emotional reactions. Other people’s anger often raises fear in the onlookers. Men’s anger can be especially frightening for women. Greenberg (2008) talks about three types of events which generate emotions. These are association, appraisal, and goal attainment. Association refers to emotion generated by external stimuli for example, a man shouting, which has previously been associated with emotional arousal. This could also include

someone's posture or facial expression. This helps to explain some of the non-cognitive and automatic aspects of emotional experience. People may become angry or fearful without knowing why or how the situation is affecting them. On these occasions it could be that another person's anger reminds an individual of distressing situations they have been in when they have been threatened by someone's anger.

Emotional contagion.

Another aspect raised by this issue and highlighted by the fact that three of the teachers, Harmonie, Ben and Rusty, chose not to eat their lunch in the staff room, is the phenomenon of emotional contagion. It has been suggested that people who are emotionally aware may also be emotionally more sensitive to other people's expression of emotion (Planalp, 1999 p.62). The concept of social contagion describes the process of "catching" other people's emotions (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). Social contagion is described as an involuntary response to other people's emotional expression. In studies exploring the phenomenon of contagion it has been observed that highly expressive people influence less expressive people more than the reverse (Sullins as cited in Planalp) and powerless people tend to be more susceptible to contagion than powerful people. Barsade (2002) uses the concept of emotional energy to enlarge on this phenomenon (p. 648). He describes emotional energy as referring to the intensity with which emotions are expressed and then communicated from one person to another. It involves a number of characteristics of the speaker's voice including pitch level, pitch range, loudness, and the tempo with which someone speaks together with non-verbal behaviour such as gestures and facial patterns. As a result, when the same emotion is expressed with greater levels of intensity, it results in more contagion. "People who

express their emotions more forcefully or expressively are noticed more and thus receive higher levels of exposure which allow for a better opportunity to transfer their emotions to others” (Barsade, p. 648).

Also those who are sensitive and responsive to others are more likely to “catch” emotions while people who are insensitive are more likely to “infect” others with their own feelings. One of the problems with contagion is that it is possible to be either too susceptible or too infectious. Planalp (1999) suggests that people can be so sensitive to others’ emotions that they are more in touch with others’ emotions than with their own. She cites Nathanson as noting that in families, people often accept the mood of the dominant member and that individuals may be “overwhelmed, buffeted about, and outright victimized by others’ feelings” (p. 63). Barsade (2002) suggests that research has shown that people respond differentially to positive and negative stimuli. Negative events tend to elicit stronger and quicker emotional, behavioural, and cognitive responses than neutral or positive events. People tend to pay more attention to and place more weight on negative information. This means that people are more likely to succumb to the influence of others expressing anger or frustration than they are to people who are expressing happiness.

Regarding the effect of social contagion, Planalp (1999) suggests that it could be important for people to develop skills of “counter contagion” and it would also be useful for people to realize that they can be so expressive that they overwhelm others and force their emotions on them. She does not enlarge on what she supposes these “counter contagion” skills to be, but it touches on a theme which I think is important not only in

teacher development but in a general awareness of working closely with people in any profession.

In the counselling development programme in which I participated as a graduate student, a large part of the practicum unit was devoted to the counsellor's own personal awareness. In sitting with clients we were aware that we needed to be "grounded," in other words, aware of our own emotions and thoughts and to be able to focus on the client without consciously projecting our own values and opinions. It is the basis of "being open" to the client. We learned to do this by focusing on our own breathing and to be aware of feeling our feet on the floor. When I returned to work in schools after having taken the counselling programme I was able to transfer those skills and realize their importance in the classroom when being buffeted by several needy children.

The phenomenon of social contagion was first written about in the 1990s. In an interesting recent development in neuropsychology researchers posited that mirror neurons are the cause of attunement to others (Barsade, 2000). In studies with macaque monkeys it was found that when the monkeys watched people move their hands neurons fired in the same way as when the monkeys moved their own hands in similar actions. The researchers posit that "The observers' neural activation enables a direct experiential understanding and an unmediated resonance" (p. 650). Keysers (cited in Barsade, 2002) has shown that observing someone else's emotions recruits brain regions in the observer which are involved in experiencing similar emotions and producing similar facial expressions. The use of facial expressions, voices, gestures, and body movement can transmit emotions.

Participants' Awareness of the Current Situation in their Schools: Findings

The teachers' interactions with their colleagues occurred within the particular context of the schools in which they work; however those schools are also affected by the local school district administration and by government policies, which in turn are affected by global trends in education. The participants referred to current conditions as settings for their interactions.

Bronwyn considered that the effects of the current and past policies of the government resulted in low morale amongst teachers who, she said, have "had it."

I think that we are in a time in B.C. where we really need to recognize that teachers have had it. They are so done. ... I recognize that a huge part of what's happening for teachers right now is morale, and this Government's constant, constant attacks.

She observed that the increased stress which is caused by the present situation has resulted in "a lot more finger-pointing." She went on to explain that "when someone's stressed they can't do their job, because no human being could; then teachers and other people too, start pointing the finger and that doesn't solve anything at all."

Harmonie related how at her school there were fewer teachers to run the same number of committees, clubs, and teams. She said that more anxiety comes with the work now because people are kept busy and are fatigued. She also thinks that the relationship between the union and the government creates tensions. "Some of the teachers have been in many strikes; during this strike [in 2005] there was a lot of bad feeling and negativity about the BCTF." She noted that at the time of the interview, "This is the first year since I've been teaching (nine years) that we are not fighting with the government."

Lynn listed the pressures the staff have felt that year. “Between portfolio and BCeSIS (British Columbia Enterprise Student Information System) and planning and institutional and provincial exams in the last three years it’s been terrible - a lot of stress for staff and the government keeps changing things you know and now they’re adding Planning 9.” Lynn noted that these pressures tend to isolate people. She observed, “You can share your feelings about it, but basically you have to deal with it, so you have to spend more time working – I think it isolates people more.”

Interactions on Malph’s staff are located within the context of what she referred to as the “dog-eat-dog attitude” that she perceives is growing through her school district. She observed that this attitude resulted in a lack of trust amongst colleagues. She illustrated what she meant by quoting a number of phrases which she hears her colleagues using. "I've got to protect what little I've been able to acquire," "I've established this as my turf and will defend it," "I need to sell my courses," "These are my courses and I have the first rights to teach them."

Beatrice also recognized that the current situation was one in which teachers tended to be judgmental of each other and she had noticed the judgmental trend in herself. As an executive member of her local Teachers’ Association she had been privy to cases which have been grieved by teachers who have been deemed not qualified by the local School Board for the positions for which they have applied. Also, as an employee, she has taken maternity leaves and needed to be replaced. This means that she had seen people rejected because, according to the board, they haven’t the “right” qualifications; and she had seen people whom she judges as not having adequate qualifications hired by the board. Thus Beatrice is aware of the apparent inconsistency and favouritism in board

hiring practices. She said that when she talks about those issues and uses examples to illustrate what she means, she is implicitly criticizing the people they do hire. She said that knowing the inside story and losing grievances not only makes her cynical but also judgmental of her peers. In addition, she observed, she sometimes tries to justify her judgments. “So ... I even participate in it; reprehensible as it is, and I think they make us like that.”

Participants’ Awareness of the Current Situation in their Schools: Discussion

Out of the twelve teachers who started with the group, nine were currently involved with local teachers’ association activities as school representatives or professional development chairpersons and several of them had been involved at one time or another with district and provincial committees. Those who were not actively involved were Ben and the two newest teachers, Sophie and Richard. This interest and awareness meant that the participants had thought about the current government policies and possibly their effect on the teachers’ relationships. There was agreement that there was more to do in less time and with fewer resources. The participants saw this intensification as having a number of results. Harmonie said that teachers were tired and fatigued which resulted in them over-reacting to each other; Lynn also talked about teachers being tired and when I asked her if the other teachers on her staff talked about the situation she replied that you can talk about it but “in the end you still have to do the extra work.” She felt that it isolated teachers more because the extra time they spent on working was not spent on socializing and talking to each other. Another effect was the inability of teachers to do the job as well as they wished and according to their professional standards and judgments about what needed doing to help the students “be successful.” These

conditions led to lowered morale (Bronwyn), more competition over resources and therefore a lack of trust between colleagues (Malph) and more finger- pointing and being judgmental of each other (Bronwyn and Beatrice.) These conditions all have repercussions on staff relationships which I will discuss in more detail in chapter 7.

When Beatrice was talking about the tendency for teachers to be more judgmental of each other, she described circumstances in which she too found herself implicitly passing judgment. Her comment “and I think they make us like that” is one which I will come back to later because it speaks to the structural influences on the teachers’ everyday lives and the mutual surveillance in which they participate (Foucault, 1988). It also speaks to the socially constructed nature of teachers’ relationships and the role of hierarchy. Rose (1996) talks about how the North American and European neo-liberal countries have a culture of individualism in which problems are seen as the problem of the individual. In this research part of my intention is to go beyond the individual and point to some of the ways in which situations are socially and discursively constructed.

Strategies of Making Sense

Against the backdrop of emotional awareness the participants called on other factors to help them make sense of specific emotional interactions. The process of making sense is motivated by our need to create a cohesive self. To do this we “shuffle through thoughts and emotions to make sense of experiences” (Weber, Rowling, & Scanlon, 2007). Wallemacq and Sims (1998) remind us that sense-making is a problematic process. People struggle with the process and are willing to accept some degree of confusion. Not everybody makes the same kind of sense in the same situation. In making sense we rely on our implicit and explicit theories and assumptions to interpret

events and our experiences. The participants in the study made sense of their emotional experiences by calling on a number of common-sense everyday theories about emotions, as well as their implicit understandings about emotions. They referred to a number of strategies including (a) noticing the event (b) questioning themselves (c) understanding others and oneself (d) attributing personality factors (e) comparing themselves with others, and (f) talking to other people.

Noticing the Event: Findings

In order for an event to register as emotional it has to be noticed. Sometimes people notice how they are feeling physically. Ben talked about a discussion at his staff meeting which was “hot and heavy” and which caused him to feel uncomfortable. “And it was kind of stressful, some people really had a lot to say, and a couple of people said things and they should have kept their mouth shut. I just sit back like this: ‘I don’t want to be here.’” Ben demonstrated what he meant by adopting a posture as if he was trying to make himself invisible. Beatrice described getting a “yucky” feeling in her stomach. Harmonie reported that she feels “bad” when she senses negative energy.

Lynn noticed her emotional reaction to the emotions she was feeling after a staff meeting. As noted previously, as Special Education teacher she had needed to take time at a staff meeting to explain a procedure concerning special needs students to the rest of the staff. Some teachers had responded rudely during her presentation. Lynn said she felt angry, embarrassed and resentful at the treatment she had been subjected to and then angry at the fact that she was feeling embarrassed when she had done nothing to be embarrassed about.

Sometimes people do not notice how they are feeling about a particular event until they start talking or writing about how they are feeling. Both Lil and Lynn had the experience of beginning to write and saying they had no emotional interactions to report but when they described their week they ended up realizing their response to an event was more emotional than they had realized. Lil wrote about staff not giving her courtesy notice of their intention to use the library for meetings. After writing for some time about the different groups who used the library and describing the mess in which they left it or their lack of courtesy in not checking to see if she would be working at the time they planned to meet, she said “I hadn’t realized I was so PO’d.” Similarly, Lynn began by saying it was an “emotionally neutral week” and proceeded to describe a number of incidents with students, administrators, and staff; she ended with “So much for emotionally neutral.”

Noticing the Event: Discussion

In order to make sense of an emotional experience a person needs to be aware of it. This might seem an obvious statement to make but many people have trained themselves not to be aware or not to notice emotional experiences (Greenberg, 2008). I will follow up on this point shortly but first I will address the way in which the participants noticed they were feeling emotional. As I have previously described (chapter 2) researchers (Fridja, 2000, Scherer, 2001) have identified different aspects of the emotional process which include physiological, behavioural, and cognitive. The participants referred to these aspects when talking about feeling emotional. Ben, Harmonie, and Beatrice referred to an embodied sense of feeling. Lynn referred to her

cognitive process, and Lil and Lynn talked about not realizing they were feeling emotional until they started to write about their experience.

The reasons why people might not notice an emotional reaction are important to our understanding of emotional aspects of relationships. Clark (2004) and Planalp (1999) suggest that emotionality is occurring all the time whether people are aware of it or not.

Even

seemingly routine cognitive and physical tasks such as reading a term paper, balancing the check book, glancing at a stranger walking down the street, or doing laundry are accompanied by emotions be they strong or weak. If our attention is caught in the action our emotions concern it. (Clark p. 402).

People are often unaware of what they are feeling. Sometimes that can be because the emotional tone is not of sufficient importance to register in conscious awareness (Planalp, 1999) and only sometimes does a “full blown ... emotional response burst loose, overtly or inwardly and the subject has an emotion” (Fridja, cited in Planalp). Very often people are not aware of what they are feeling because they have learned to ignore their emotions (Greenberg, 2008).

In the case of teachers in schools there could be a number of reasons why they might have trained themselves not to notice their emotions. Sometimes teachers might ignore their own feelings because other aspects of an interaction seem more important and command their attention. This might occur when teachers are focused on a student’s behaviour and ignore their own feelings. Also emotions might be seen as inconvenient and disruptive of the smooth running of a lesson or the day, so teachers might ignore or suppress their feelings in order to feel more in control.

Noddings (1996) suggests that one of the reasons emotion has been kept out of education and teaching is concern about “rational and professional functioning” (p.436). There is the fear that disruptive emotion will impair professional judgment. In addition it has become a mark of professionalization to be detached; to show emotion is considered to be vulnerable and weak. There are also unspoken expectations that a teacher acts “professionally” towards students and colleagues. To act professionally teachers are expected to ignore their emotions in certain circumstances but express acceptable emotions in other circumstances. For example Winograd (2003) found that as a teacher he was expected to show affection towards his students and enthusiasm towards his subject matter. He was also expected to avoid open displays of anger, to stay calm, to love his work, have a sense of humour and laugh at his own mistakes. To display the acceptable emotions and suppress the unacceptable emotions involved emotional labour, a concept I described in chapter 2 (see p. 67), in which people are expected to mask what they are really feeling and display the expected emotion.

Other reasons for training oneself not to notice emotions can include habits stemming from childhood when perhaps it was not safe to express emotion, especially if one lived in a family where there was addiction. Even in families where there was no addiction or turmoil emotions were often not acknowledged openly and were regarded as shameful. In these situation people learn to use strategies to regulate their feeling. Richards and Gross (2000) have distinguished two such strategies, reappraisal and suppression. Reappraisal consists of changing the way a situation is construed so as to decrease its emotional impact. Suppression consists of inhibiting the outward signs of feelings altogether. When these two strategies are compared with regard to influencing a

person's wellbeing, reappraisal has been found to be the healthier option; suppression of emotions has been seen to be detrimental to emotional and physical health (Richards & Gross).

Questioning the Self: Findings

One strategy which some participants used was that of questioning themselves about their interactions at the time they happened and even years later. Malph related a story about being a newcomer on staff:

I was the fourth member and newest member of that art department. Being the newest I was not given a space let alone a desk in the Art office but instead had to work from my Tupperware storage tub and sit in the staff room on my breaks. Even though there was tons of room in the BIG art office, and 2 computers, and some room in the SECOND art office. How did 3 other teachers have the right to occupy so much space and deny me any? Come November I refused to be treated so differently and simply boxed up the contents of a set of drawers and moved some of my stuff in. The arguments got quite heated - but his stuff was there! How dare I move it! - but I stood my ground. I teach my children and my students to share. I think my colleagues should too.

After that Malph was denied art funds and "power was exerted in courses assigned (not chosen, but assigned), storage space, and on and on." Even thinking about the event years later Malph still questions the other art teachers' motives and wonders if her actions caused their reaction. "My reaction is to second guess myself – 'Am I understanding this situation clearly?' 'This person cannot consciously be so cruel.' 'What would he/she be

thinking to cause him/her to behave that way?’ ‘Was I out of line?’” She questions if her actions were “out of line” meaning were they “inappropriate” for the situation.

Bronwyn also wonders why she was treated unkindly by the staff at the northern school where she went to teach.

I look back – hardly ever, I must admit – and wonder, “What was that about?” I can’t answer it. What makes us turn on each other? Did they sense my vulnerability (single parent, first time teaching with a contract, knowing no one) and decide I would make a good ‘victim’?

Like Malph, Bronwyn also looks at her own actions and asks, “What was my role in that?” She wonders if the other teachers were threatened by her strength. “Buying my own house, raising my children on my own, working hard and doing well as a professional.”

Malph and Bronwyn questioned other people’s motives and their own contribution to an interaction. In the case of Beatrice she asks herself whether the emotion she is experiencing in a particular situation is an appropriate one to express or not. She describes an appropriate emotion as one that will be viewed as “constructive and ... positive.” If she judges that it is not appropriate she might not express it.

Lynn questioned why she should feel embarrassed after the staff meeting. She reasoned that she was the one who had been treated disrespectfully and had done nothing to feel embarrassed about.

Questioning the Self: Discussion

Malph and Bronwyn both asked themselves about the motivations of the teachers who harassed them. Even years later Malph wonders if and how her actions caused the

other teachers' behaviour. Bronwyn too asks "What was my role in that?" Their reaction is similar to self-blame which has been described as "a pervasive tendency [among people] who have encountered negative, unexpected events" (Miller, Markman & Handley, 2007, p. 111). The phenomenon of self-blame has been studied in connection with people who have become ill and who blame themselves for their sickness and in connection with women who have been assaulted sexually and blamed themselves. A corresponding phenomenon is that of "blaming the victim." Many women who have been assaulted do not report it because they fear they will be blamed for being victimized (Idisis, Ben-David, & Ben-Nachum, 2007). One of the central explanations for the phenomenon of blaming the victim is the "just world" theory developed by Lerner (1980). This theory holds that people need to believe that they live in an environment in which each person's fate and fortune correspond to what he or she deserves; the notion of living in an unjust and unpredictable world is threatening and arousing (Lerner). Thus when blaming the victim people tend to think "You must have done something to deserve this." Correspondingly in self-blame there is a tendency for people to think "I must have deserved this." We can see the way that Malph and Bronwyn were treated by their peers could be very unsettling of the idea of a just world. There is a belief that teachers are different from other professionals in that they are charged with the moral leadership of young people. So to see teachers behaving in such a deliberately unkind way is very unsettling to one's idea of an ordered world. Malph says, "This person cannot consciously be so cruel." Bronwyn wonders "What makes us turn on each other like that?" These two interlocking tendencies are examples of how the culture of individualization manifests itself and shapes our way of thinking (Rose, 1996).

Understanding Others and Oneself: Findings

Sometimes the participants talked about their colleagues' motives when they were searching for an explanation that would make sense of their behaviour. Lynn speculated that the teachers who were rude to her probably wanted the meeting to be over and that was why they made cat-calls while she was speaking. There was another interaction in which Lynn was involved, this time in her role as staff BCTF representative. This interaction was over the issue of teachers being given the right to "port" or carry over their seniority from their current school district when they were applying for jobs in new districts. The issue had been negotiated by the BCTF as a provision in the teachers' last contract. Although the issue had been negotiated, the government determined the terms of its implementation; these terms advantaged some teachers and disadvantaged others. It was Lynn's responsibility to report to the staff on union matters. Some of the teachers on her staff who were disadvantaged by the provision expressed their anger. She said she had been "the recipient of some bitter diatribes." While not condoning their aggressive manner, Lynn said that they were probably worried about their future. She had learned that one of the teachers involved thought he might have to sell his house if he lost his job at that school because of the porting provisions. She had tried to understand his perspective as she tried to make sense of his aggressive manner towards her.

Harmonie also tried to understand the perspectives of the teachers she referred to as "negative." She said,

I think some of them are just burnt out; they are tired; they have been there a long time; and they're tired of being treated badly and working in a school that's run down and not getting the resources they need.

She indicated that she understood the reason for their “negativity” but she also said that she was “not willing to listen to that because I don’t see them taking action... they feel that they’re helpless and maybe they have made efforts to change things but it doesn’t help to just complain”

When Beatrice looked back at the incident in which the colleague she bumped called into question her professionalism and effectiveness as a teacher, she indicated that she could understand the teacher’s reaction. She could accept that the teacher “was threatened and angry.” She had experienced “the bitterness of losing her position,” then being rehired and feeling secure and “then having the rug pulled out from underneath her” again.

Just as the participants tried to understand the motivations of others as they made sense of their interactions they also expressed self-understanding. Both Malph and Bronwyn recounted how they had continually suffered at the hands of a particular person and that they finally “lost it” or decided to react differently. Malph explained how she had put up with being insulted and demeaned by the art department head for two years, She “had bitten her tongue” during this period but then finally reacted by telling her to “F*** off.”

Bronwyn explained her reaction to a teacher who had constantly harassed and criticized her about how she conducted union matters. She described how she had repeatedly tried to get to the bottom of the issue and resolve it amicably. Finally, after many incidents with this teacher, she felt provoked into responding differently.

I just decided that that was it. “I’m not playing fair any more. I’m going to give you a taste of what you give me frequently.” And so the next day I went up one

side of her and down the other and I did say, “If you ever go after me like that again I will file a harassment charge, so don't ever do that again.”

Sometimes participants mentioned a particular personal aspect in their current life which could affect the way they made sense of their interactions. For Edgeee being peri-menopausal meant that she did not always sleep which, she said, “makes for interesting emotional interactions.” Lil also declared herself “Peri-menopausal, permanently fatigued. I'm also suffering emotional highs and lows, not usually related to work, more to personal things, but tied in with being 52 years old and all the hormonal issues that go with that.” When Beatrice reflected on how she reacted in a previous incident, she acknowledged the possible influence of being post-partum and having “pregnancy hormonal levels.” For Harmonie it was a busyness and fatigue which rendered people including herself more likely to “overreact.” “It is a time when everyone is so tired and busy that all interactions become so sensitive and that my colleagues and myself tend to overreact to all stimuli (usually in a less positive way.)”

Understanding Others and Oneself: Discussion

Understanding why people act in certain ways helps us maintain a coherent set of assumptions about the world and about ourselves and it helps us keep control of how we think the world should be. Thus, if we act against our own values and principles or if someone else acts in a way that offends our sense of justice and decency we search for reasons which make sense. Our search may involve the coping process of reappraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) whereby we reframe how we are appraising a situation. Alternatively it might involve us calling on our empathy. When people have been hurt they sometimes employ empathic understanding to try and lessen the impact on

themselves and their beliefs about the way people should act. In both these situations making sense requires the integration of emotional and cognitive processes

Some of the participants used understanding in making sense of their colleagues' actions and attitudes. Harmonie understands that the teachers who are "negative" are tired and burnt out; Beatrice understands why the teacher she bumped was angry. Lynn understands why the teacher who berated her was angry about the porting issue. Understanding a colleague's actions even though we might feel hurt, may help preserve the relationship, but there are many implications to such an interaction. For example, in Lynn's case she could understand that the teacher from whom she received "the bitter diatribe" was upset at the thought that he might lose his job at the school and possibly have to sell his house; nevertheless, that doesn't mean that she has to tolerate his aggressive and disrespectful expression of emotion. Would the teacher have behaved in the same way if the staff rep responsible for reporting on the porting provisions had been a male teacher? One of the dangers of "understanding" others is that it becomes a reason for excusing and accommodating aggressive and bullying behaviour.

Some participants expressed an understanding of themselves and their reasons for acting in a way that contravened their expectations of their own behaviour. Both Malph and Bronwyn recognized that they had disregarded their own standards of respectful behaviour, but they could also understand what led them to that point of frustration. Malph understood that she had "bitten her lip" for two years and finally lost her cool. To lose one's cool in this type of situation sometimes leads to feelings of embarrassment and shame. One wonders at the type of climate in which Malph had existed for those years and the frustration and belittlement she endured, to finally lose it. Bronwyn had also

interacted respectfully for a number of years with the teacher on her staff who constantly harassed her about union matters. On the occasion in question Bronwyn made the decision that this time she was going to respond differently by giving her “a taste of her own medicine.” This was a considered response on her part. Afterwards she told the principal and the union president what had transpired because she was aware there would probably be repercussions from her actions.

Attribution of Personality Characteristics: Findings

Sometimes the participants referred to personality characteristics of their colleagues and themselves to help them make sense of interactions. When Lil spoke about her dislike of the “super teachers” at her school she thought that they and she all “probably had similar personalities, (managing and confident), and we just rub each other the wrong way.”

Beatrice reported having a conversation with a teacher whom she has regarded as “relentlessly negative.” He stopped by her room to talk about an issue and confessed that “he too dislikes bringing up points that others don't want to hear and he hates being ‘the bad guy’ but feels compelled to make sure that all sides are considered.” This is very similar to the way in which Beatrice thinks and acts. She remarked that she hadn't seen him in that light before and it made her wonder if others see her as “relentlessly negative.”

Another example of a participant making sense of interactions by attributing characteristics to the personality is the occasion when Harmonie, who is the professional development (ProD) chairperson in her school, talked about her interaction with a

member of staff who wanted her to change the days on which the school has ProD days. Harmonie described the teacher as “one of those people who never makes life easy.”

When some teachers at Bronwyn’s northern school were spiteful to her daughter, she consoled her by telling her that some people are “ugly on the inside.”

Attribution of Personality Characteristics: Discussion

Several of the participants in the study focused on personality traits to explain emotional behaviour, both their own and that of their colleagues. Smith (1995) suggests that “by focusing on traits as explanations for emotional behaviour in others, people overlook possible situational pressures.” He suggests that this is an effect of the individualistic nature of cultures such as Canada, United States, and Western Europe which he contrasts with collectivist cultures which include many cultures of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the individualistic culture of North America when people observe others expressing emotions, they often assume that the other’s personality matches his or her emotions as in “he lost his temper because he’s an angry person.” This type of personality attribution supports and issues from a view of the individual as a unitary being and not as a multiple identity who changes with the situation.

Comparison: Findings

People also make sense by comparing themselves to others. Lil compared herself with certain teachers on her staff and said that in comparison with the “super teachers” she feels inadequate. In another context she described the women in the reading club at school and she said of them, “I enjoy the company of all these ‘womyn’ - they are

articulate, reflective, and committed.” She did not say she included herself in this group but neither did she compare herself with them and find herself wanting.

Beatrice compares her reaction to the government policies with the reactions of her peers and she wonders if she is “wrong” because her reaction is so different from theirs.

So that was ... somewhat isolating, in fact it was quite isolating, because I felt angry with my colleagues and disappointed in them, and I felt like there was something wrong with me that I was reacting like this and they all weren't.

Comparison: Discussion

Social comparison activities have been recognized as important in the process of coping with stressful events (Taylor, Buunk & Aspinwall, 1990). The concept of social comparison originated with Festinger in 1954 (Wood, 1996). Festinger maintained that people need to have stable, accurate, appraisals of themselves (Taylor et al). This is especially true when people find themselves in challenging, threatening, or unfamiliar circumstances. They need to evaluate the situation, their resources, and their emotional reactions. One of the ways they obtain this self-evaluation is by comparing themselves with other people. Festinger originally proposed that people prefer to compare themselves with others who are similar to themselves. The theory was subsequently modified to state that it depends on the circumstances and that sometimes people prefer to compare themselves with someone who is very different. Specifically social comparison is defined as “the process of thinking about information about one or more other people in relation to the self” (Wood, p. 521). The phrase “thinking about” does not imply careful or even conscious thought. Wood identifies three processes involved in social

comparison. First is the acquiring of social information, which is followed by thinking about the information in relation to the self. This might entail observing similarities, or differences, or both. The final process is that of reacting to the comparison. This process could be cognitive, for example self-evaluating, refuting the comparison, or distorting the comparison; or affective, for example feeling jealous or proud; or behavioural which could include imitating or conforming. In Lil's case the result of the comparison was affective in that she felt herself "to be wanting." On the other hand Lil also compares herself implicitly with the women on her committee and presumably counts herself as like them.

Another aspect of comparing oneself with others is experienced by Beatrice. In her case she compared her own reaction to government policies with the reactions of her colleagues. In terms of intensity Beatrice's reaction was so different from that of her colleagues that she thought something was wrong with her. Her response to the policy provisions of the government over the last few years was one of outrage. She thought that the stripping of the contract in 2002 was mean spirited and would affect her career and her students in school for years to come. Beatrice said that when the union called a day of protest most of her colleagues thought it was a nuisance to take the day off but they went along with it whereas she thought "we should be rioting in the streets."

In this instance Beatrice experienced what Jaggar (1989) would call an "outlaw" emotion (as discussed in chapter 2) because it did not conform to the norms of what everyone else was experiencing. In other words Beatrice's reaction was not influenced by the predominant norms and values in her group. When individuals experience these unconventional responses in isolation, they may be concerned, confused, and even doubt

their sanity. This was precisely Beatrice's experience. She said she wondered if she was "wrong." Thoits suggests that when these responses are shared with, and validated by, other people, those individuals can form a subculture defined by norms and values different from the prevailing ones. It seems that Beatrice was not able to find others amongst her colleagues who felt similarly and was not able to establish a "subculture."

An aspect of comparing oneself and finding oneself to be different from everyone else is the experience of isolation. This is especially true in the context of emotional responses because it is through emotions that we connect and communicate with other people. If there is no one who shares our feelings then there is no connection. In Beatrice's case this was important because it was over a matter of great significance to her. Her emotions were motivated by her values of social justice and fairness which were central values to her.

Talking to Others: Findings

The strategies I have discussed so far are personal and private ways of making sense. The participants were also aware of the advantages of talking with others about their emotional reactions. Sophie, who was in her first year of teaching, said she talks to her mother who is also a teacher. She also wonders who teachers "who don't have a significant person in their life who is a teacher" talk to about the emotional things that go on in school. "Do many teachers use their peers as emotional support or do many people have emotional situations at school and then deal with them outside of school?" She recognizes the advantages of talking to people "who are at that same stage." She says that "everyone who's starting out is overwhelmed and has no time, and so we don't have those conversations, but it would be really helpful I think to find a way to do that."

Malph said that she has friends on staff who she says she is “close to.” She said they listen to each other “unload.”

Many of the participants joined the research project because they recognized the value of talking to others. They wanted to talk to others and compare notes. When Ben was explaining his decision to join the group he said, “I thought, ‘That might be an interesting topic to explore or even just to be involved in and talk to somebody about it’, because in teaching emotions do run high.” Ben says that he talks to his wife about his experiences in school. He mentioned specifically discussing with her the gender differences and his awareness of the emotional bullying he has noticed from principals in the past.

Beatrice was attracted to the group because she thought “Wow, here’s someone who wants me to talk about this” meaning her reaction to government policies. She said that the people in her household and the people on her staff were tired of hearing about her reaction. Beatrice’s partner is also a teacher and she says she often “debriefs” with him about her experiences in school.

It seems it is not talking to just anybody else but preferably to people who know what it’s like to be a teacher and who can be trusted. Edgeee regrets that she doesn’t have anyone to talk to about school matters. She says “Not only does it often not feel safe to talk to your peers about what goes on day to day it often feels unsafe to talk to your family and friends about what goes on in the day to day.”

Talking to Others: Discussion

The strategies I have discussed so far were internal cognitive strategies which people used to try to make sense of emotional interactions. The fact that they were

internal reflects the view of emotions that they are inner, private, and personal and are thought of as being one's own responsibility. Rose (1996) considers this part of the legacy of the neo-liberal ideology of creating a culture of individuality where there are no ties or connections to social structure.

The people who volunteered to participate in this research did so because they recognized the importance of talking to other people about the subject of emotions and wanted to have that opportunity. As I looked at how they made sense of their emotional interactions I saw that most of them already did talk to other people about their emotional experiences. They were aware of the value of emotions and of talking about them with other people. I discuss talking to others about emotions in detail in chapter 6.

Language: "Positive" and "Negative": Findings

The participants also made sense through the language they used when they were talking about their emotional interactions. During the interviews and early postings I became aware of the many words the participants used which influenced how they thought about their own and other people's emotional experiences. For example they used the words "whine" and "whiner" to refer to themselves and colleagues and to describe some conversations. They also used the word "appropriate" to evaluate their emotions. These words are not value neutral. In this section I have chosen to focus on just two words which occurred frequently in the interviews namely "positive" and "negative."

Some people used the words to refer to emotions themselves, dividing them into two groups: positive and negative. Sophie, Harmonie, and Beatrice used the label of "negative" without specifying any particular emotion. When Sophie refers to her own emotional states she said, "I don't see the intensity of emotion as a problem, unless the

emotions are negative; so I'm very happy to have improperly too high positive emotions, that's no problem." When Harmonie is making sense of her emotional reactions to some of the teachers in her school she referred to some members of staff who were "couple of troublemakers who are just there to cause negative emotions." Harmonie not only refers to some emotions as negative, she also attributes to them a negative energy to which she says she is sensitive. When Beatrice is deciding whether or not to express an emotion she is experiencing to her peers, she tries to judge how they will perceive that emotion. She said it "depends on what the emotion is – is it an appropriate emotion, or is it an emotion that's constructive, that will be viewed as being positive?"

Bronwyn, on the other hand, says that she is no longer able to think of her emotions as positive and negative. She says that she is "deeply committed to honouring the full spectrum of my emotions - just feeling them as they arise - no value judgment attached." She goes on to talk about anger and rage in particular. She says that now she welcomes her anger. "I am humbled by how profoundly important rage and anger, sadness and a strong sense of humour have been in rebirthing my soul and freeing myself from the trauma I experienced." She refers to her rage as "the strongest engine of transformation that has ever moved within me." She continued,

It has lifted me and carried me - phoenix from the ashes kind of transformation - through the darkest and most traumatic times of my life and helped me heal and given me hope. It has pushed me through fear and driven me to overcome challenges I never believed I could even face - but not only could I face them, I could grow past them and find within me resources I had not been able to imagine before my rage carried me though. I have survived a childhood of abuse (physical,

emotional and sexual) and a devastating divorce – and I am so very grateful for all of my emotions because they carried me through the process of healing – with the help of some very talented counselling.

To Bronwyn, being able to experience and value all her emotions was fundamental to being able to heal from abuse. She said it was also fundamental to her mental health and her spiritual life.

Sometimes the participants used the terms as if they were personality characteristics of themselves or others. Lil says of herself “I think I’m not very positive. I think I tend to look on the bad side, like half empty not half full.” This leads her to believe that she is different from some other members of staff who interact with students differently and, presumably, more “positively” than herself. Rusty refers to certain of his colleagues as “negative” and concludes that “somewhere in their background they are very bitter about some thing and they don’t care to look at the positive, or aren’t able to look at the positive, or see no value in that.” He says that he finds these people very frustrating to deal with because “personally I want to find solutions rather than just complain.”

Beatrice describes the conflict she finds herself in. She says “I want to be positive and see the positive, but what's happening isn't positive.” She is referring to government policies and their effect on classrooms and students. The situation is compounded because she has previously seen herself as a positive person and she said she feels guilty if she is negative. With regard to her relationships with the staff she says she needs to be more positive so that people will want to be around her, but in order to be positive she will “have to ignore what is really happening and how I really feel.”

The terms “positive” and “negative” were also used to describe the subject matter of discussions. Harmonie recognized that she is

not good at listening to people talking about something “ unless they are moving from that. I want to automatically say “Well don’t think about it that way. Here is a better way to look at it” And I don’t know that that is necessarily the right thing to do, but that’s where I’m at.

Language: “Positive” and “Negative”: Discussion

In this section I discuss some of the issues involved in the use of the words “positive” and “negative.” Critical Discourse Analysis goes beyond the level of describing and explaining and tries to look at the relationships between discourse and society and these words appear to be significant in regulating emotions individually and in the group.

As I described in the findings the participants used these words in a variety of ways; they used them to refer to emotions themselves, to describe individual people or personality attributes, to refer to situations, subject matter, and people’s opinions.

The labelling of emotions as positive and negative is a recurring theme throughout the interviews and discussion. In the examples I cited earlier in the findings, I quoted Sophie and Harmonie who referred to negative emotions but did not name the specific emotions to which they were referring. Bronwyn talked about no longer being able to think of her emotions as positive and negative, thereby implying that at one time she had thought that way. I also quoted Beatrice who said that before she expressed an emotion to her peers she considered how they would react and whether they would view the expression of that emotion in that situation as positive.

These findings raise a number of issues including the labelling of emotions as positive or negative and the effect of that labelling on how an individual experiences and expresses emotions. Both of these issues influence how the participants made sense of their emotional interactions.

The terms positive and negative have been used both in the discipline of psychology and in common parlance to talk about emotions. In the scientific study of emotions in the field of psychology the labels of positive and negative have been used to classify and distinguish between emotions for both descriptive and analytic purposes. The descriptors contain the idea of valence, however there is no agreement on what emotions are considered positive and which emotions are considered negative.

Kristianson (2003) wonders if the terms positive and negative emotions serve useful theoretical purposes. He claims that the term “negative emotions” has become “a grab bag of ill-assorted and often internally conflicting elements” (p. 364) in the emotion literature. He summarizes his point of view:

There are no emotions around which we can helpfully refer to collectively as “negative,” although there are of course painful emotions, emotions that incorporate negative evaluations of states of affairs, emotions that are negatively morally evaluated, and so forth. To put it bluntly, there is no such thing as a negative emotion. (p. 364)

The notions of polarity and valence might have been useful organizing principles in some respects in the earlier studies of emotion but Solomon and Stone (2002) dismiss the principles of polarity and emotional opposites as meaningless and misleading. According to these authors the concept of positive and negative polarity originates in the

field of ethics rather than the scientific study of emotions. Aristotle paired every virtue with two vices, one of excess and the other of deficiency; similarly medieval Christianity was based on virtues and vices. Solomon and Stone assert that this mediaeval thinking survives today disguised as science. Whether an emotion was considered positive or negative depended on the culture and its theory or conception of ethics. In Christian ethics pride and anger were considered deadly sins whereas the Greeks considered them to be virtues.

The labels of positive and negative continue to be used in a theoretical sense in the discipline of psychology. Solomon and Stone (2002) identified over 600 papers which had been published in psychology between 1961 and 2002 which explored and tested the concepts of positive and negative affect. They observe that the terms are used in an almost casual way which presupposes that readers will know what exactly is meant by them. They also claim that thinking in terms of positive and negative emotions is an example of lazy thinking which prevents the appreciation of the subtlety and complexity of emotions and leads to deceptive oppositional thinking. They reject the positive/negative organizational structure by referring to the fact that emotions are held to be multi-dimensional phenomena comprising cognitive, physiological, and subjective components and eliciting events; thus they do not lend themselves to be analyzed in terms of opposites. Moreover, they claim that the evaluation contained in the binary, “positive/negative” stems from the original ethical criteria and is therefore aligned with the moral binaries of “virtue/vice,” “good/bad,” and “right/wrong.” This affects how people think about specific emotions in their everyday experiences. Thus people would come to think of some emotions as good, right, and virtuous and others as bad, wrong,

and sinful. Solomon and Stone also argue that to characterize emotions as positive and negative is detrimental to serious research on the emotions.

As I described earlier the terms positive and negative are used to refer to other phenomena besides emotions. For example they are used as adjectives describing people and situations. Recently the word “positive” has been used to identify a new movement within the discipline of psychology, called “Positive Psychology.” The movement was founded by Martin Seligman who used his position of president of the American Psychological Association in the late 1990s and early 2000s to initiate a shift in psychology’s focus toward what he called “a more positive psychology.” He claimed that in the past a lot of time, money, and research had been devoted to understanding problems in living and to documenting ways in which people suffered psychologically and he maintained that little money had been spent in understanding what makes life worth living, enjoyable, and meaningful (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In the few years since the initiation of positive psychology a number of handbooks, textbooks, and edited books have been published; a Journal of Positive Psychology has been launched; and a number of international conferences devoted to the topic have been instituted. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi say that “positive psychology” is about valued subjective experiences including

wellbeing, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level it is

about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance and work ethic. (p.5)

Fineman (2006) says that the “positive turn offers a seductive discourse which presents a broad vision of the sunnier side of life where positiveness can be harnessed for noble individual and organisational ends” (p. 270). He purports that “it takes a moral ideological stand that positive is good. Positive subjective experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions are key for producing that which is flawless, flourishing, excellent, and honourable” (p. 271).

In her critique of the positive psychology movement Barbara Held (2002) expresses concern that the potential exists “for misinterpretation and misuse of the ideas ... by overly enthusiastic followers who could become tyrannical or relentless about the need in all circumstances for a positive attitude, optimism, or whatever else they deem as virtuous.” She believes that “extolling the virtues of the positive outlook” has been taken to excess in the last two decades both in popular and professional circles. People are exhorted to “smile,” “have a nice day,” and “look on the bright side” and they are expected to do this no matter what their circumstances.

Held (2002) suggests that the current emphasis on the positive can also be seen in popular culture in songs like “Accentuate the Positive” and “Put on a Happy Face” and bestselling books like Dale Carnegie’s 1936 success “How to Win Friends and Influence People” and Norman Vincent Peale’s 1956 book “The Power of Positive Thinking.” Both of these books, together with their associated seminars, CDs, and personal coaching, comprise a multibillion dollar industry today. In addition the last few decades have seen a

plethora of self-help books often based on the promotion of some form of positive thinking and offering advice on how to find happiness. The expectations to “be happy,” “see the glass as half full,” and “be positive” permeate everyday life. Held suggests that we are expected to “be happy” even at great emotional effort and cost. There are a number of sayings like “Cheer up, things could be worse,” “Stop complaining, it’s not that bad,” “Stop crying or I’ll give you something to cry about.” There are no sayings which give us license to feel unhappy, pessimistic, or sad when we are experiencing those feelings.

Held (2002) speculates that the pressure people feel to be happy could actually cause unhappiness and guilt. People might be tempted to think, “I should be able to feel better about this” and blame themselves for feeling depressed or “negative.” In the North American individualistic culture that could also lead to “blaming the victim” for not having the proper optimistic attitude. Feeling upset about the pain of life is not accepted as normal. Furedi (2002) claims that contemporary culture pathologizes “negative emotional responses to the pressures of life.” Considered in the light of Solomon and Stone’s (2002) description of the associations of positive and negative with the moral evaluations of good/bad, right/wrong, and virtue/vice, feeling bad is seen as “sick and immoral, pathological, and socially unacceptable or unvirtuous” (Held, 2002, p.981).

If people become afraid or constrained about expressing “negative” emotions they do not have the opportunity for emotional disclosure, which the stress literature and emotional labour research claims helps individuals cope with stress and buffer against health risks. Uncensored complaining has not been found helpful but “productive disclosure is good because inhibiting feelings takes physiological work and leads to

rumination” (Held, 2002, p. 982). Emotional repression has been shown to have deleterious effects on health.

Against this background I want to look at the examples of the participants using the words “positive” and “negative” which I documented in the findings. When she is talking about the intensity of her emotions, Sophie says that she sees intensity as a problem only when the emotions are negative. She is happy to have “improperly too high positive emotions.” She does not say what she calls negative emotions nor why they might be a problem. She simply uses the term “negative” which indicates that she assumes that people will know what she means in general terms if not in the particulars. The term “negative” conveys the idea that those unnamed emotions to which she is referring are undesirable, possibly because they are uncomfortable, painful, or disruptive, or all three. They are the emotions which are not valued and may also be judged in moralistic terms as bad or wrong. It is likely that emotions which are regarded as bad or wrong are also perceived as shameful and weak; people might therefore feel ashamed because they are experiencing “negative” emotions and they might be reluctant to express those emotions for fear that other people would regard them personally as being “bad” or “negative” for experiencing them.

What is the effect of labelling one’s own emotions as negative? If a person judges something as wrong or bad then they probably want to distance themselves from that object or disown it. The emotions which are most often labelled “negative” are sadness, depression, anger, dislike, and fear. These emotions are usually accepted as signals that something needs to be paid attention to in our concerns which includes our values and goals (Hochschild, 1983). Anger is generally thought to refer to boundaries which are

being crossed or goals which are being frustrated; fear is an indication that something of personal importance is being threatened; sadness is an expression of loss (Hochschild). If people distance themselves from their “negative” emotions they might deny themselves the opportunity to glean the knowledge those emotions have to offer about their personal and/or social situation. Not allowing oneself to explore “negative” emotions might also mean that one does not access areas of social injustice or oppression in one’s life. For example, if a teacher does not allow herself to access and question why she is feeling angry she might not recognize the ways in which she is being bullied by another member of staff. She might not be aware of or acknowledge social injustices and oppression being exerted by government policies, or the union, or the school administration.

When Harmonie is making sense of her emotional interactions she refers to a couple of teachers who, she says, are “trouble makers - who are just there to cause negative emotions.” Like Sophie, Harmonie does not specify which particular emotions she is referring to as negative. She relies on the listener understanding the general import of what she is saying, which is that the emotions are undesirable, not helpful, and do not contribute to the general harmony of the group. She also relies on the fact that listeners will agree with her assessment that people who cause negative emotions are “troublemakers” and generally “not nice” people.

What is the effect of Harmonie referring to these teachers as “trouble makers just out to cause negative emotions”? The importance of the statement lies not so much in figuring out what she means precisely but in what the statement achieves both in her own sense making of her emotional interaction and in the larger group process. If I look at Harmonie’s sense making from the same perspective as I did with Sophie then I could

surmise that Harmonie might distance herself from the “negativity” without figuring out what it is that disturbs her and what she can learn about how she regards her own emotions. Harmonie might think of the so-called negative emotions as being bad and wrong and of less value than the positive emotions. The result could be that she dismisses the people who express them together with the opinions or points of view they are expressing. Labelling someone as “negative” can be a means of dismissing their opinion.

The examples of Sophie and Harmonie were taken from their interviews with me. They were not contemplating sharing their thoughts with their colleagues. Thus they were their private thoughts and probably reflected how they experienced them in their internal dialogue with themselves. I have discussed the repercussions of possibly cutting themselves off from fully exploring those emotions and thus the information they carry about their personal situation.

Beatrice’s example is different from those of Sophie and Harmonie. Her situation involves her contemplation of whether she will say something to other people about how she is feeling thus making herself vulnerable to other people’s judgments. She tries to judge whether the emotion she is thinking about expressing will be perceived as “positive, appropriate, and productive” by her peers. If it won’t be judged favourably then she will probably not express it. This raises a number of issues. Although people refer to emotions themselves as being positive or negative, an emotion is always about something. Often the “something” that the “negative” emotion is about also becomes regarded as “negative.” For example Beatrice describes how she feels angry that the teachers in her school are not allowed to have keys to the office any more; the principal had the locks changed. She cites a number of reasons for being upset including that she

feels that it was an act of power by the principal and it inconveniences her when she is working after school and needs supplies from the office but the secretaries have left and the office is locked for the night. In her case her peers might regard her anger as “negative” and thus they might also regard her opinions about the situation as negative and so dismiss them.

Another issue Beatrice’s situation raises is that of how she decides how her expression of emotion will be received. What are the criteria by which it can be judged to be a positive, appropriate, and productive emotion? She will probably go by her past experience of how her colleagues have received previous expressions from her and from other members of staff. Do the criteria include not making her peers uncomfortable? When does emotional expression make people uncomfortable? Expressed emotions feel uncomfortable when they go against the norms of what is expected in the situation. The norms are established by the group over time and generally serve the status quo. Beatrice is not just thinking about whether the emotion is appropriate, she is also thinking about whether it will be considered positive, in other words good, right, and virtuous. People rarely want to be considered not virtuous by their peers nor do they want to be embarrassed or shamed in front of their peers. If Beatrice judges that she will not be well received then she will likely not express her emotion and the accompanying point of view or opinion. If she does not express the alternative opinion she does not challenge the status quo. When people see that their emotion is not acceptable or positive they may silence themselves before they express it, thereby silencing their own voice.

Bronwyn brings up another topic. As I described earlier, she no longer divides her emotions into positive and negative. This means she does not see certain emotions as bad

or wrong and so allows herself to experience them all fully and become aware of why she is feeling those particular emotions and use the information from them to help her make sense of interactions and her life. She says that her rage has led to life transformation, that it helped her heal from her childhood abuse.

Fineman (2006) also questions the separation of positive and negative emotions. He quotes Lazarus as likening “positive and negative to two sides of the same coin – inextricable welded and mutually informative” (p.274). He also observes that “it is out of our negative experiences that positive appraisals and meaning evolve and vice versa. They are in continual dialectical relationship” (p. 275). In fact emotions are usually subtle blends and nuances of those both regarded as positive and negative. For example happiness may trigger anxiety as a person worries about whether their happiness will last; love can be mixed with bitterness and jealousy; anger can feel energizing and exciting (Fineman).

Fineman (2006) also observes that in the psychoanalytic perspective “dealing with negative emotions, stressful events and disappointment is core to identity formation” (p. 275) which is an ongoing process that moulds moral character or strength. In this view avoiding or suppressing so-called negative emotions could be regarded not as life-embracing but as life-fearing. Moreover he claims that focusing exclusively on the positive represents a one eyed view of the social world. “A person’s ability to simultaneously experience positive and negative emotions towards the same person or situation and to appreciate the good in people who hurt one is emotional maturity” (p. 275).

I have already alluded to the fact that the words “positive” and “negative,” besides being used to refer to emotions themselves, are also used to describe people. Two of the participants Lil and Rusty used the words in this way when trying to make sense of their emotional interactions. Lil refers to herself as “not very positive.” She expressed this when she was talking about her teaching style and the relationships she has with students; she contrasted her style with that of some other teachers. The assumption in what she was saying was that some styles are more valued than others and, because her personality type does not lead her to be as informal and as expressive as other people, then her style is less valued and less desirable. She sees this as being a deficit.

Rusty refers to “negative” colleagues and surmises that they are bitter about something which happened in their past and either “they don’t care to look at the positive or aren’t able to.” He finds these people frustrating to deal with because he says that he wants to find solutions rather than just complain. It might be that these teachers simply hold a different opinion from him which they put forward when he expresses his opinion and, because they have a different opinion and are just as adamant about it as he is about his, he perceives them as negative. It would be interesting to know if they see him as negative, or perhaps he holds the same opinion as that held by the majority and the powerful, and thus his opinion is identified as “positive.”

The identification of a person with the attributes of positive and negative is highlighted by the example of Beatrice. In her introduction to the group she said she chose her pseudonym because she identified with Beatrice in “Much Ado About Nothing” who was “All mirth and no matter.” During the discussion group Beatrice talks about a conflict she is experiencing. When she thinks about what is happening in

education and in the schools she sees nothing positive and yet she had always considered herself to be a positive person. She raises the question of how can she be true to her emotions, which she doesn't identify specifically but which she would count as "negative" (they could likely be anger and despair) and remain positive. This conflict presumably questions her identity as a positive person. The fact that she disagrees with many of the policies which are being put forward by the government and in many cases upheld by school administrators means that she is in a position of disagreeing with the those with most power, a stance which is often characterized as "negative."

An additional issue is that Beatrice knows that socially people like to be around other people who are positive, who laugh and joke and who do not make other people feel uncomfortable because of the emotions and opinions they are expressing. She knows the truth of the old saying "Laugh and the world laughs with you, cry and you cry alone." She wants to be part of the group, she wants to feel that other people enjoy her company, and yet her values tell her that something is wrong which she cannot ignore. How can she ignore what is really happening and pretend that everything is okay? Beatrice expresses the dilemma that many people experience and which often results in people silencing themselves rather than expressing unpopular opinions. When people monitor themselves before speaking out and silence their dissenting opinions then the interests of the organization are being served and yet the repercussions are socially severe when their peers regard them as negative people and dismiss their opinions. These are aspects of self and mutual surveillance described by Foucault (1988) and also of internalized oppression in which the power of the masters is interiorized in the individual.

Conclusion

In this chapter I addressed the first of my research questions which was “How do teachers make sense of their emotional interactions with their peers?” I started with this question because I wanted to inquire into how the participants in the group thought about their interactions with their peers. It appeared that the participants habitually employed a number of strategies in trying to arrive at an explanation that made sense to them and still allowed them to maintain their belief in a just world. Most of them were uncomfortable with what they referred to as negative emotions and tended to avoid attending to and expressing those emotions. Most of the strategies they used were derived from emotion theories in the discipline of psychology and reflected the approach to emotions as being internal and personal. Significantly, all the participants recognised the value of talking about emotional interactions with trusted friends. In the next chapter I pursue the second research question and I take up the issue of communicating with others about emotions in an atmosphere of trust and safety.

Chapter 6: Twelve Weeks Later

Introduction

In this chapter I address the second research question which was, “How do teachers’ understandings of their emotional interactions with their peers change through discussion within a group over time?” My intention in asking this question was see how the participants’ understandings of their emotional interactions had changed and how the process of talking in the group influenced that change. I wondered in what way hearing about other theories of emotions and focusing on and talking about emotional interactions during the twelve weeks of the discussion group would have changed the way the participants made sense of their interactions.

I approached question two by looking for where the participants talked explicitly about what they had learned and changes they had made in the way they looked at their emotional interactions. Although there were a few common aspects there did not seem to be as many similarities between participants as in the response to the first question and there were no obvious “themes” which became apparent.

The participants noted many changes, in particular, their increased awareness of emotion in their everyday life and the ways in which that increased awareness influenced what they said and did. They attributed these changes in their understanding in part to their experience of being in the group. Significant features they mentioned included the validation of emotions; the feeling of safety and trust; sharing and comparing their experiences with others; reading, writing, and reflecting on their own and other group members’ posts; and the exposure to new and different ideas about emotions through hearing speakers and reading books and articles. In addition, thinking about the use of

language and becoming aware of feeling rules threw light on social aspects of emotional experiences. During the forum some of the participants wrote about incidents which had occurred in the past and which were still troubling them. Three of these participants, Malph, Beatrice, and Bronwyn described how their understanding of these events had changed during the course of the discussion. There were also some participants who were uncomfortable or disappointed with their on-line experience.

I have organized this chapter in four sections which address these results. In the first section I outline the changes noted by the participants; in the second section I address the various processes and phenomena which the participants said helped them to understand differently; in the third section I focus on the retelling of the “Troubling Tales”; and in the fourth section I concentrate on the participants whose experience was less than they expected.

Increased Awareness of Emotion in Everyday Life: Findings

Many of the participants said they had become more aware of emotions in their lives at school. This seemed to correspond to the “background” levels of awareness outlined in the previous chapter. The specific contexts in which they reported increased awareness included awareness of their own emotions as they reacted both to colleagues and students, and an increased awareness of colleagues’ emotions.

Lynn and Harmonie both said they had become more aware of how they reacted to other people. Harmonie said that learning about “how I react to other people’s emotions and how that makes me feel inside” was a very significant insight for her. Lynn became more aware of her reaction to her students and their circumstances. In our interviews she had described many incidents with her students at risk in which she felt

powerless to effect any change. She observed “I guess thinking about my response [to my students’ situations] is important because it is really easy to get bogged down in how horrific [their lives are].” She not only became aware of the emotional impact of her students’ circumstances, she also recognized that there are not many people with whom she can discuss these distressing situations.

Lil called the forum “an eye opener.” She said,

I'm far more aware now of emotions, overt and covert, my own and other people's. I do look differently at the staff and interactions with people now. I'm not trying to read into them but I'm asking “Now how did that make me feel?” or “How do I feel about that?” which I never used to think about before.

Both Lil and Richard became aware of how they react to conflict. In one of her last postings Lil said,

Something I wasn't really aware of, but which has come to me during this research, is that I think I am a conciliator. I don't like confrontation, either in my home life or my professional life. I try to deflect anger or stressful emotions. I need to face them, (not confront them in a ‘negative’ way) but acknowledge emotions, honour them, and try to resolve them.

The forum had also encouraged people to become more aware of emotional dynamics on staff which they had not noticed before. Although Richard had not participated for long he had continued paying attention to emotions. He said he became more aware of emotional interactions between colleagues.

I think it made me more aware that there is a lot of professional angst out there.

We tend to joke about it saying there are little fiefdoms or little divisions and we just explain it away, but there has to be open communication.

“Conflict is not necessarily bad” he said, “It’s a very useful thing. It’s just how you deal with it that’s the important thing.”

Ben described how he thinks we “get stuck in our little ruts.” He said the discussion group “just got me thinking about this sort of thing and looking at everyday situations. ... It got me a little more conscious of interactions on staff.” By comparing his experiences of teaching with those of other people in the group, Ben became aware that he had led a fairly “idyllic” career. He said that he had talked to women on his staff “in vague and general terms” about “bullying and department head nastiness” of the type that the people in the group had described and he learnt that “even the ones for whom it all seems to be going well, there are little undercurrents there that never get talked about.” He also described a couple of incidents from the past in which he had seen teachers get short shrift from administrators and followed it with: “So, what’s this all about?” He noted that the teachers in his examples were all women. He went on to say that he had discussed the situation with regard to gender differences with his spouse and that she had noticed the pattern over the years also.

Another area in which the participants increased their awareness was that of the staff meeting. Many similarities emerged with regard to the dynamics and feeling rules. I present those findings and discuss them in chapter 7 in the discussion about the emotional processes of schools.

A number of the participants reported changes they had noticed in the way they acted as well as how they thought about emotions. Actions included challenging colleagues who put down emotions; talking to others about their participation in the forum and initiating discussions about emotions; rethinking the way they interacted with colleagues; listening more carefully to what colleagues were saying and not saying; and initiating changes through professional development at school and district level.

Malph reported that whereas previously she might have ignored comments in conversations where emotions were denigrated she now speaks up in defence of them. “I can speak to people now that four or five months ago I would never have spoken to them about emotions.” She said that previously she would have let comments go by but now she is “willing to engage in conversation around that.”

Sophie and Malph both initiated conversations with colleagues about the subject of emotions and the benefits of talking about them. Sophie talked to others about her participation in the forum; she told them “I’m involved in this e-mail group talking about teachers and emotions” and she says “everybody seemed really into that.” She also instigated a social get-together. She and a small group of teachers went to the pub after school some nights to “debrief.” “My little karaoke thing we’ve been doing, we call it the ‘library meeting.’ That’s been a nice place for a little bit of talking. People really seem to think that that kind of space is very, very valuable.”

Malph recounted how she talked with colleagues about the opportunity “to talk to each other and share [what we are feeling]. Everyone says it is a good thing.” In fact Malph said that the most important aspect of the discussion group was the recognition of

the power of colleagues being able to share collegial experiences. I think that this was the big “aha” that came for me out of this.... how absolutely important it is for colleagues to be able to share stories. It’s an absolute must.

The physical structure of Malph’s school, in particular the small size of the staff room, worked against people being able to mix together and talk so Malph looked for creative solutions. She opened up her computer lab to other teachers to bring in their students when she was not using it. She also put on her coffee pot “with good coffee” in her room and offered it to colleagues.

It’s just my effort at addressing the need for a staff room feeling and not really being able to do it in the staff room in our school because it is so far away, because I don’t really have the time. A staff room excursion takes five minutes to get there and five minutes to get back, so this is a staff room feel.

Lil noticed everyday interactions on her staff. She noted

how important it is when you see somebody to say “Hello” to them, because now I notice when I go into the staff room in the morning, people are talking or they are busy and they’ve got their heads down, or whatever, if they look up and say “Hello” it’s completely different from if they keep doing what they are doing. And so I need to apply that to my own self, and to look up and say “Hello” to people. I’ve noticed that some people always do that, and others very rarely do that. I notice that I like the ones better who do. You feel more welcome, more accepted.

Both Ben and Lynn said that they try to listen more carefully to what their colleagues are saying. As I have previously mentioned Ben became aware of the different ways in which the women on his staff experienced the school.

Reading over the experiences of others in this group has ... made me more aware of the trials of some of my colleagues working in the same school that I find so pleasant. I listen more, especially when the message is not in the words. There are so many who are involved in a constant emotional struggle that the rest of us simply do not see. I am forced to wonder how much of this blindness is my own responsibility. Have I just been oblivious or too busy, or chosen not to see what is really there?

Two participants, Richard and Rusty, who did not complete the discussion group also talked about actions they were taking as a result of their increased awareness. Richard volunteered to be part of the professional development committee and was organizing a conflict resolution workshop for their next school professional development day. Rusty was advocating for his district to implement a scheme for mentoring beginning teachers as a result of reading about Sophie's experiences.

Increased Awareness of Emotion in Everyday Life: Discussion

I begin this section by discussing the issue of emotional awareness and its development in order to situate the findings I have just outlined. One of the purposes of this research was to see what happened when people began to look at emotions not only from a personal and individual perspective but also from social constructionist and discursive perspectives to see how they affected peer and group relationships and power. In order to try out a different perspective people first of all need to be aware of their own emotions. As I discussed in the previous chapter there are many factors working against teachers noticing their emotional interactions. Day and Leitch (2001) have commented that

Talking about emotion generates strong feelings and its relevance to school continues to be perceived by many as controversial. Teaching itself has only recently been acknowledged by some as work in which emotions are central. In most instances these are managed and regulated to ensure the efficient and effective running of the organization. (P. 406)

In order to encourage the participants to become more aware of their emotions in school I asked them for two weeks to focus on pleasant interactions with peers and for the next two weeks to focus on interactions that were not so pleasant. I also suggested that they paid attention to their body to see what they were feeling.

The importance of being aware of one's emotions has recently received much attention both in the popular press and in the academic realm. There are a number of emphases to this. From the health and wellbeing perspective people have been encouraged to become aware of their emotions because it has been thought that emotions have an effect on physical health. Maté (2003) names *awareness* as one of the steps to emotional competence. From a philosophical perspective Solomon (2007) claims that emotional awareness guides ethical living. Goleman (1995) suggested that people need to pay more attention to their emotions to become emotionally intelligent and to counter violence. Emotional awareness is seen as a foundation to psychological health (Greenberg, 2008). Awareness gives us information about how well we are monitoring our wellbeing in terms of whether or not we are meeting our needs, goals and values. Attending to and reflecting on our emotional experience allows us to make sense of it. It also allows us to distinguish between reactions that are pertinent to our present situations and those which represent the pain of unmet childhood needs. Maté (2003) says that we

can often tell the difference. When we judge that we are overreacting to a situation we are often responding to past unconscious needs.

From the critical perspective attending to and reflecting on our emotional experience can give us information about what group goals or purposes are achieved when we feel a particular way. For example Lil feels fearful and inadequate when she looks at the notice which the principal has put up in the staffroom which outlines all the teachers' "contributions" to the school. She perceives others are doing more than she is. She also fears that other teachers are judging her for not "pulling her weight." Their judgments could evoke in her the fear of social isolation and the fear of their anger. These are unpleasant feelings and to get rid of them Lynn might decide to take on more activities. If she did that she would be "complying" with the possible aims of the administration. This interaction also highlights the power of self and mutual surveillance.

In order to reflect on our emotions from different perspectives we need to be aware of them and pay attention to them. Emotional awareness, according to Greenberg (2008), is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. He suggests that there are five levels of awareness. The first and least complex level is that of physical sensations. Thus a person may become aware of their inner discomfort while watching other people in an argument. The next level of awareness is that of "action tendencies" which encompasses facial expressions and the physical way in which we respond. This could be similar to the way Ben described shrinking into himself. The third level is awareness of a single emotion – in other words "I feel angry." The fourth level is that of blended emotions which would be similar to Lynn's description that she felt resentful, embarrassed and angry about feeling embarrassed. The fifth level represents "higher order blends of emotional

experience in which a person has the capacity to appreciate the complexity of experience both in the self and others” (p.53). Greenberg’s description accounts for the complexity, subtlety, and nuances of emotions, unlike many academic and popular books and articles which discuss emotions such as anger and fear as if they existed as single entities and occurred by themselves; but, as we saw in Lynn’s description of her feelings, emotions do not come in a simplified form. Another aspect of the way emotions are often approached in the literature is that they are dealt with as if they were freestanding and, as Rom Harre (1980) says, there is no such thing as anger by itself, there is a person who feels angry at this time about this particular event.

Developing awareness is a question of practice according to Maté (2003). Many adults have spent a lot of time and energy ignoring their emotions and their bodies. He suggests that people need to pay attention to their inner states and trust their internal perceptions. This would be similar to Greenberg’s (2008) first level of awareness. Greenberg acknowledges that it is understandable that there is a strong human tendency to avoid painful emotions, nonetheless he suggests that the advantages to accepting and validating emotions include having a greater understanding of one’s emotions and a less simplistic view of emotional experience. People can learn to make sense of what their emotion is telling them and identify the goal, need, or concern that it is organizing them to attain. Emotion can thus both inform and move a person to action.

As I described in the findings, increased awareness took a different form for each participant depending on what was important for them in their lives and what caught their attention. Thus Lil, who was not comfortable with her relationships with some of the teachers on staff, became aware that she liked a couple of people even less than she had

thought she did. She also noticed how much more included she felt when people greeted her in the staff room. Lynn became more aware of the emotional impact on her of her students at risk and their life situations. Harmonie became more aware of how she reacted to other people's emotions; Lil and Richard both became aware of how they reacted to conflict. Ben's awareness encompassed the recognition that there was a difference between the way in which men and women were treated within the system. He became aware of and expressed the gender differences he saw in his school at the present time and also those he had noticed in the past. Most of the participants also wrote about the feeling rules they became aware of at their staff meetings.

The importance of increased awareness lies in its power. When the participants became more aware of how they were feeling they were then able to reflect on those feelings and what they signified. The purpose of being aware of their feelings was not to change them or suppress them but to consider them from different perspectives, for example through the social constructionist lens to see what they might mean in a group context. Thus when Ben observed the interactions between the men and women on his staff he became aware of the power imbalances and could start to question where they came from and how they were perpetuated.

As I described in the introduction to the chapter the participants named many factors which they thought contributed to their increased awareness. I will be presenting and discussing these aspects in succeeding sections. In addition to the factors which the participants named, it is likely that there were other factors which were inherent in the process itself and which the participants did not explicitly identify. I will discuss those first.

Greenberg (2002) suggests that a first step in raising emotional awareness is the symbolizing of emotions in language and the second step is the cognitive act of reflection. These two processes are integral to increasing emotional awareness and making sense out of our experiences. He claims that once emotions are expressed in words people are able to reflect on what they are feeling, create new meanings, evaluate their own emotional experience, and share the experience with others. There are many ways of symbolizing. People may write about emotional experiences in a journal which only they will read, or they may write about them in letters to friends, or in emails to post to a discussion group. Symbolizing may also be verbal as in talking to oneself about the experience or talking about it with friends or with a therapist. Thus it can take a written or spoken form and may be communicated with others or not. In the case of this research communicating with others, in both written and verbal form, allowed the participants to create their narratives about their incidents.

From the moment the participants responded to the invitation to take part in the research in November until the final interview which, for some of them, was the following June, they were probably thinking, talking, and writing about emotional interactions more than they usually did, or at least differently from the way they usually did. They talked about emotions with me in the interviews, they wrote about them and read about them on a daily basis for twelve weeks, and many of them also talked to other people about their participation and what that meant to them. In all these actions the participants were symbolizing their experiences in words and reflecting on them.

The members of the group did not know each other and this meant that when they posted their messages they had to give a certain amount of background information so

that the other people in the group would be able to make sense of what they were saying. Ben and Bronwyn both mentioned editing their messages so that they conveyed as closely as they could determine the message they wished to convey. Other participants also mentioned editing their posts. By writing and editing they were constructing a coherent narrative, one that made sense to themselves and to other people and one that integrated the cognitive and the emotional content. It is these activities of expressing emotions and emotional experiences in language and then reflecting on them which contributed to their increased understanding.

Paths to Understanding Differently

Many of the participants attributed their deeper understanding of emotions to a large extent to participating in the group. They cited a variety of factors which facilitated their understanding. These included group experiences, particularly the validation of emotions and the safety they felt while they were sharing and comparing their experiences; the process of reading, writing, and reflecting on their own and other group members' posts; thinking about new and different ideas to which they were introduced through hearing speakers and reading books and articles; and paying attention to and thinking about the use of language and feeling rules.

Group Experience: Findings

Validation.

One of the aspects of being in the group which influenced how the participants thought about emotions and emotional interactions was the fact that the group was established for doctoral research. Malph said,

I think that by looking at the emotions and how the emotions are involved in the profession you are validating them in the first place. That it is a doctoral dissertation so it has those credentials behind it which is important in the world in our work when we see those credentials behind something many tend to ... give it a little bit more attention.

Safety.

An important aspect of the group discussion was that of safety. Participants said that the feelings of trust and openness which had been generated in the discussion facilitated the expression of emotions. Bronwyn commented on the honouring and respect shown by people and the fact that group members did not judge each other's experiences. Others said that the fact that emotions were validated was instrumental in enabling them to feel safe sharing their experiences.

The stories Ben heard opened up a new perspective about gender differences in his school. It allowed him to recall and reflect on incidents which he had seen in the past but had felt he didn't have the resources to cope with. The forum seemed to provide a safe place to revisit those events that he had "chosen to put away in the back of the little grey cells. Not to be ignored, but deferred, because I had no means of coping with them at the time."

Two of the participants, Rusty and Harmonie, said they did not experience enough safety to make them comfortable sharing personal experiences with people they did not know.

Sharing and comparing.

In her introduction Lynn said she wanted to participate so she could find out from others what their situations were in their schools, what emotions they experienced, and how they coped with those emotions. Within a week of the discussion group after most people had posted their introductions Lynn responded with,

My first emotion, after reading many of your introductions, is relief. Other people feel like me- love working with their students, generally good relations with co-workers, angry or sad or frustrated (or all three) with the politics of our system. Oh, and putting in lots of hours.

For Lynn it was important to see how she fitted into the pattern and what the norms were. She felt isolated on her staff and she speculated that most of the teachers on her staff also felt isolated.

Reading about other people's stories helped Bronwyn reframe her experiences. One of the things I have learned from this group is that I have allowed myself to become more isolated because I have kept my emotions to myself more as I age. Being part of this group has shown me what I am missing. It has given me a world where I can live more fully, be more alive – a place where I can reflect on the experiences of others, their feelings and emotional responses to situations and thereby shed light on my areas of confusion, sadness and struggle. I have learned to frame things differently from seeing through the emotional insights of others.

Group members responded to the sharing of experiences in different ways. For Sophie, hearing about all the experiences, whether they were similar to hers or not, was important. As a beginning teacher she said she felt as though she had sat down with a

group of experienced teachers. What was valuable for her was teachers modeling the process of coming to grips with and working through emotional experiences. Both she and Lil commented on the similarity of the experiences that were discussed; even if group members themselves had not had a particular experience they knew of someone who had or they had heard similar stories. Malph found experiences useful if they were similar to hers.

What was most useful was when other teachers shared experiences that were similar to mine and that I hadn't had a teacher colleague forum for discussing. Here was the chance just to hear other people's perspectives on some similar experiences. It was very nurturing.

Group Experience: Discussion

There were several aspects which the participants cited about the experience of being in the group which influenced how they thought about emotions and their emotional interactions.

One of these elements was the fact that the group was established for doctoral research. It gave legitimacy to the subject of a discussion about emotions and therefore supported the valuing of emotions per se. This enhanced status of emotions encouraged the participants to discuss a subject in which they were interested but which they had little opportunity to pursue with colleagues because of the prevailing norms at work. The implicit validation that was given to emotions through the very focus of the research and establishment of a group contributed to seeing emotions differently. Sophie described how her friends and colleagues were envious of her participation in a group talking about emotions. Malph said that her biggest insight of the research process was the realization

of the importance of having someone to talk to about the emotional experiences which occur in school.

Another aspect related simply to the fact that they were part of a group and experienced the collaborative and community building aspects which are part of any group regardless of its focus. Sharing views and experiences about a common topic creates bonds and lessens isolation. The group members were able to share experiences and compare notes with each other resulting in a normalizing of their experiences.

Another factor was being able to communicate about emotions and emotional experiences with other people in a safe setting. As I noted in the previous chapter, many of the participants regarded talking with others about emotional experiences in teaching as important. Sophie, as a new teacher, pondered the question of who people talked to about their emotional experiences. Lynn and Beatrice talked about the experience of feeling isolated from their peers. Lynn felt isolated on two accounts; firstly, there was not much time to talk with colleagues about emotional reactions to government policies because of the extra work they all had to do and secondly, because she was unable to share with other people, for reasons of confidentiality, the concern she felt about the distressing situations some of her students faced. Beatrice felt isolated because she did not have colleagues who felt the same way as she did about taking action to protest government policies. Had she been able to talk to a larger group of teachers she would probably have found others who felt the same way. The discussion group provided a forum where people were able to communicate about their emotional experiences and to revisit their own experiences in the light of what they heard from the other group members.

It seemed that the most important aspect of the group was the fact there there was a group in which people could talk about emotions and tell about their experiences and be seen and heard. Bronwyn talked about the time as being “magical.”

Talking to other people about emotions connects us emotionally with those people. This is a fundamental part of relationships. Some of the participants alluded to the fact that when people do not connect with each other on an emotional level they cannot really know each other. Edgeee said “How do you know who I am if you don’t know what I’m feeling?” Beatrice said that at times she feels she leads a double life because her colleagues do not realize how fearful she feels about speaking up about issues. She thinks that they do not know how she is feeling on the inside and only see the competent, confident speaker which she presents to the world. “Emotions are inherently connected to feelings of closeness and trust and are intimately involved with the ability to deal successfully with relationships” (Greenberg, P8).

Participants indicated that trust and safety were important factors in the discussion group. These qualities needed to be present in the group for people to be able to share their stories. Edgeee had talked about not feeling safe talking about teaching to people who were not teachers and also sometimes not feeling safe to talk to other teachers.

In North American society emotions are considered personal and there are strong social norms that guide the appropriate and inappropriate disclosure of personal information (Planalp, 1999). There are also norms about disclosing personal weakness, and emotions, especially sadness and fear, are perceived by many to be weak. In addition, feelings of embarrassment and guilt can be a major impediment to talking about feelings because they tend to make people want to hide and withdraw from social interaction. So

people who are participating in a group discussing their emotional experiences are going against the norms on several accounts. They may therefore feel vulnerable to the judgments of others. It is not only the norms against talking about emotions which makes it vulnerable but the very nature of our emotional selves. We often feel that our emotional self is the very centre of our being and we need to be sure that people are not going to violate that part of us before we entrust it to others.

What made people feel safe? Listening without judging was very important. Bronwyn said that she felt there was a level of trust in the group because the participants did not judge each other's stories but simply validated them by accepting them. Group members let the stories stand and sometimes related a story of their own which was similar. When people told a story in response it wasn't through a sense of competition and telling a "better" story it was from a sense of collaboration and building understanding and community.

An important result of people feeling safe was that they were able to talk about experiences they had in which they perhaps felt a little embarrassed or ashamed of how they had acted or reacted. This may happen when we do not act in alignment with our values. For example, Malph talked about knowing that she should have acted with more grace, yet in spite of this she told her story, even though she was embarrassed by parts of it. The group were then able to reflect on her story and discern the systemic aspects which influenced both Malph and the head of the art department.

Another result of feeling safe is that people risk more disclosure which encourages reciprocation by others in the group. When we hear stories similar to our own it normalizes our experience and lessens a sense of shame or embarrassment. Power lies

in the shared experiences; so when people share similar stories or views and there is less shame and embarrassment in talking about them, they no longer feel so weak, isolated, or different. Lynn felt relief in learning that other participants felt similarly to her about their work.

Reading, Writing, and Reflecting: Findings

The process of sharing stories was enhanced by the asynchronous on-line feature of the discussion group which afforded participants the opportunity to read when it was convenient and to reflect without having to react immediately as in a face-to-face group. Many people commented how much they enjoyed reading the posts. As I noted earlier Ben described how he read them at lunch time and Bronwyn would make reading a priority as soon as she came home from school.

Beatrice said “I loved reading the postings.” She was impressed with the quality of thought that people put in, the level of background that they had, in terms of the quality of analysis that they brought. She found it really interesting and engaging. From a personal perspective she felt that she learned a lot. Lynn observed that there was a lot of reading because people posted “deep, thoughtful, and philosophical pieces which needed to be read at least twice.” Malph noted that reading was just as important as “talking.” There was the two sidedness of it. “At times it was important for me to talk, but at other times it was just really important just to read other people’s experiences.”

Group members said that the act of reflecting was an integral component in the learning process. Bronwyn talked about the importance of reflecting deeply and then thinking about her own experience in light of others' experiences. Lynn commented that there is not often time to reflect and that some teachers are like mothers and don't take

time for themselves. For Lil the best thing about the project was “being able to sit down when I wanted to at my convenience and respond and read and think and reflect.”

The writing process too was important. Bronwyn and Ben talked about being able to edit their writing to make sure it was as close to their intended meaning as possible. Both Lil and Lynn had the experience of starting to write believing there was nothing of emotional significance to write about and ending up realizing how upset they were about a particular event. Lynn ended up saying, “So much for being emotionally neutral” and Lil said, “I hadn’t realized how PO’d I was about it until I started writing!”

Beatrice discussed the difference between telling her friends and colleagues about her experience orally and writing an account of it for the group. She said that when she wrote about for it the group she was examining her actions and her emotions rather than telling the story to get a response from her friends. I discuss this in more detail in the next section.

Reading, Writing, and Reflecting: Discussion

As the participants wrote about their experiences and reflected on them they were engaged in the symbolization activity described by Greenberg (2008) as being essential for raising emotional awareness and making sense of an experience. Participants said that the process of reading and reflecting on other people’s stories was as important as writing about their own. Bronwyn described how reflecting on her own experience in the light of Sophie’s experience helped her reframe her own experience. Beatrice reflected on her story and came to understand it differently.

The term “reflection” was used often by the participants throughout their interviews and in their postings. They alluded to the fact that as teachers they should be

reflecting on their practice and that they often don't make time for that activity. The concept of reflection for teachers gained prominence with the publication in 1983 and 1987 of two books by Donald Schon on the "reflective practitioner." Reflection is also considered an essential feature of some transformative learning theories (Taylor, 2007); however, the nature of the reflection is important. Taylor says that often there is no distinction made between the various types of reflection which he identifies as content, process, and premise. He asserts that they are all treated as equally significant in changing meaning structures. He cites one author as claiming that educators predominately reflect within a taken-for-granted set of assumptions (context reflection) instead of testing the validity of those assumptions i.e., process reflection, and critically interrogating them i.e., premise reflection.

It is likely that the participants engaged in different levels of reflection at different times as they read each other's postings and wrote their own. They would also have reflected on the new information they received during the course of the research. This included the excerpts from my literature review on different perspectives of emotion, listening to Gabor Maté talk about emotions and health, and the discussion in the group about the language of "positive" and "negative." Aspects of the new information would have challenged their previously held assumptions. Beatrice and Lil talked about rethinking the meaning of positive and negative. In particular Beatrice said that not judging her emotions as "legitimate" or "not legitimate" enabled her to examine her story more critically and come to understand it differently.

One of the interesting aspects of the research group "telling" their stories was the fact that they were writing them rather than communicating them orally. The participants

enjoyed the fact that they could read and write at their own convenience and did not have to respond straight away. It also allowed them to distance themselves from their story. Beatrice described how she found that the act of writing was different from the act of recounting verbally. Planalp (1999) likens the act of writing to the process of catharsis. Greek drama was supposed to be a cathartic experience in which people experienced emotions by proxy and did not need to experience them in the raw. Achieving an appropriate distance from the experience was instrumental in achieving this effect. Planalp suggests that a similar process of distancing exists with writing. By putting an experience into words through writing, people move back and forth between the role of subject and object. When people write they are the subject and are constructing the account; moreover, when they are writing about their own experience they are also the object. Moving back and forth between these two roles seems to achieve the balance and distance that people need in order to deal with emotions effectively.

Exposure to New Ideas: Findings

Another feature which participants said facilitated a different understanding was exposure to new and different ideas which challenged their previously held assumptions. They gained insights through speakers, books and articles, and paying close attention to and discussing the emotional dynamics of the staff meetings and the use of language.

Malph heard Gabor Maté (2003) speak about the connection between emotions and health at a professional day workshop.

He assured us that the mind and body are ONE vessel, not two separate ones [and] when we feel something, it is indeed knowing. “Gut” reactions are deep knowing responses and are not to be ignored or suppressed, but rather acknowledged and

understood. His thesis is that the various medical sufferings that are increasing in our country, and our profession, are directly correlated and causally connected to emotional suppression.

As a result of attending this session Malph said that she had become a more “concrete fan” of emotions and was learning

through my heightened awareness of emotions through this study, that emotions are my highly reliable guide, they are a deep and powerful knowledge - thus I should not ignore them, nor suppress them, but rather embrace them and celebrate my capacity for them.

Malph and Lil found the information which I sent them about other theories of emotions thought provoking and instructive. Malph said,

And Judith, your opening work on your PhD paper tells of Socrates, Descartes, and Kant's ideas that emotions and reason are likened to opposing forces - separate, distinct, and even hierarchical. Painting emotion as opposite to reason is, to me, saying emotions are unreasonable, which I know, in my heart, is not the case.

Ben recounted that in his discussion group he and his friends

have explored the differences between male and female for many years, and the emotional side of the dichotomy has always been one of the major topics of discussion. Thanks, Judith for that little thing on feminism a couple o' days ago.

The “thing on feminism” was the excerpt from my literature review (chapter 2) in which I discussed the feminist approach to emotions.

Another feature which helped the participants understand emotions differently was the attention that they focused on emotions in the staff meetings by using the questions that were provided as a guide to observation (see Appendix F, Week 8). I present findings and discuss this aspect in detail in chapter 7.

Questioning the way language was used provided an important insight for some of the participants. Lil said that looking at “the different terminology” helped her see things differently and question,

whether ‘positive’ is good and ‘negative’ is bad; emotion is feminine and action is masculine. Those are things which I hadn’t thought about before. It got me thinking about them and thinking, ‘Yes, that’s right. I understand that. I’ve never thought about it like that before but I get it’. It’s really interesting.

Beatrice also said that the discussion about positive and negative changed how she thought:

Well I loved that you started with the positive and negative language. It’s changed how I think about positive and negative, for certain. And a couple of the people in the group commented that nothing is positive or negative, it just is what it is, with imposed values on top of it. I found that very useful and good for thinking about how we judge things.

She said that it had helped her in interactions with colleagues that had left her feeling a little bit defensive. “I now stop, in a way that I don’t think I used to before, and look at what’s happened there, and [look at] why I’ve reacted the way I have.”

Exposure to New Ideas: Discussion

During the time of the discussion group the participants found themselves paying more attention to materials to do with emotions; some of these materials were books and speakers they found for themselves and others were the excerpts I sent them from my literature review on different perspectives of emotion (see Appendix F for details). The provision of different perspectives of emotions was an intrinsic element which I had built into the design of the group. In the “Education for a Change” model (Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, & Thomas, 1991) which I outlined in chapter 4, adding new theory and information is an important step. Another way in which I added new information was by asking the participants to pay attention to staff meeting dynamics and giving them guidelines to direct their attention. I also composed a weekly synthesis of the participants’ postings and added references to other theories and posed questions. In this way the participants took up some of the themes and continued the discussion. One of the most interesting discussions which continued throughout the 12 weeks was that concerning language and the use of it. As I discuss in chapters 5 and 7 we explored the meanings of the binary terms “positive” and “negative.” The crucial element in hearing new information was that the participants were able to reflect on it and challenge their underlying assumptions.

Retelling “Troubling Tales”: Findings

In Week 4 of the discussion group I asked the participants to describe pleasant interactions which had occurred that week at school, and then in Week 5 I asked them to describe a “not-so-pleasant” interaction, one which maybe had left them feeling “uncomfortable, irritated, ticked-off.” As well as recounting current interactions some

participants wrote about events which had happened in the past. During the later weeks of the discussion and in the final interview Bronwyn, Malph, and Beatrice talked about how the group forum had helped them come to a new understanding about their past interactions which, to use Malph's expression, still "gnawed" at them.

Bronwyn

Bronwyn had told the story of how she had been shunned during her four years of teaching in a small northern town. She had taken the assignment because, at the age of 40, she was a beginning teacher and a single mother with student loans to repay. She needed a full-time contract which wasn't possible in the area in which she lived. She thought that she was not accepted into the community because she represented "an anathema: a single mother who owned her own home and who had a fulltime job." She was ostracized by four out of the seven teachers in the small school. In her final interview Bronwyn said that she had revisited her story in the light of the situation Sophie was dealing with. Sophie was experiencing problems in her relationship with the school principal. She felt she was "bearing the brunt of being picked on." Bronwyn saw both herself and Sophie as beginning teachers facing difficulties in their schools and she observed that Sophie was dealing with her situation with integrity and honesty. "The way Sophie was dealing with having such a hard beginning was different from the way that I dealt with it. And I think her way of dealing with it was more honest."

Bronwyn talked about the fact that, even though she values honesty in relationships, she did not respond honestly to the teachers in that northern school because her goal was to get a good report from the principal and superintendent and leave the community as soon as she could. She knew that if she confronted the situation it could

mean that the principal and local administration would be involved and would not be well-pleased. She admired Sophie for struggling to maintain her “inner/outer congruence” by saying and living what she felt and valued. She wondered if that was because Sophie wanted to continue to work in that community.

And I guess just basically seeing, we were dealing with a lot of the same issues, but seeing that someone else was genuinely being honest with the people and trying to figure a way through it, whereas I didn’t care. I got to the point where I was so fed up with the way that I was being treated that they were pieces on a chess board as far as I was concerned. I would feed them whatever line they wanted just to keep them out of my space.

Looking back at her experience Bronwyn realized that she would still act in the same way.

I had one goal. I wanted a very good letter from the superintendent and a very good letter from the principal so that I could get out of there; that was my one goal. It drove my whole life and I would have said anything to anyone to get that goal met. And Sophie’s not doing that. She’s genuinely engaging. And I’m not sure, I guess basically there’s an honesty to that genuine engagement that has more integrity to it than what I was doing. You know, I mean, they never got a truthful response from me to anything ever. They got a response that was studied and couched in “This is what my long term goal is and this is what you get” all the time. That was always where I was coming from.

Malph

Malph had told a story about being so frustrated over two years of being insulted and put down by her department head that she told her to “Fuck off.” Her account drew this response from Bronwyn.

Malph - my finest hour is a time when I told my boss to ‘F--- off’ and that happened 30 years ago! I still tell my children about it, my friends, anyone who will listen - and I am still delighted with myself for doing that. I think there are times when people violate our boundaries to such a profound degree that a resounding FUCK OFF is the only appropriate response!!

Bronwyn then continued with,

This brings up a funny incident for me - working as staff rep for our school - I gave a fellow teacher who was having difficulty with another teacher a ride home. She was all tense and upset and didn't feel she could take the bus home. She said the F word - then apologized. I encouraged her to go ahead and say it as much as she needed to. Together we screamed it, sung it, spoke it, chanted it, put it into different accents and screamed it some more. We laughed like crazy women in between! When I dropped her off, she said she felt much better. I did too and I wasn't even mad at anyone - just stress relief, I guess. I still smile remembering that drive.”

Malph responded “Bronwyn, thank you for your ‘Fuck off’ stories. You made me laugh at my own anger and frustration.”

In our final interview Malph said that one of the most useful things about the group had been “when other teachers shared experiences that were similar to mine and

that I hadn't had a teacher colleague forum for discussing those experiences. Here was the chance just to hear other people's perspectives on some of similar experiences."

Malph described how laughing at Bronwyn's story had allowed her to distance herself and then laugh at her own story.

The story about singing all the way home in her car - I laughed and I was also really able to appreciate my own, what until that time sort of gnawed away at me.

I was uncomfortable with my own experience that I hadn't totally been able to put it away, to fully process. It just ate at me and I couldn't figure out what it was.

Was it embarrassment? Or was I unhappy with my own inability to voice my concerns properly or was it that I was still so darn angry at that other person? And just being able to read her experience was great and then I could reflect on mine after laughing. Laughter is such a great remedy, being able to laugh at their experience, and then in turn be able to laugh at mine and then be able to process the whole experience for myself and learn from it.

Beatrice

In Week 10 Beatrice told her story about bumping her colleague. In our final interview she said that she told it in response to Bronwyn's story about being shunned. At one point in her story about working in the north, Bronwyn told how her daughter had been treated spitefully by two of the teachers. The point of connection for Beatrice was that in her own situation she perceived the welfare of her children was being threatened because the other teacher's actions were upsetting her and thus affecting her young son and unborn baby.

So I don't know if I'd be this emotional about it before I had kids, but when I read what they did to Bronwyn's kids, I was just shocked. And I was so amazed at her strength in terms of how she counselled her kids through it, and how they were all able to gain strength from it and take something positive or healthy or productive from it. I really wanted to tell a story to show that I could relate in some way.

Beatrice found that telling her story to the group had helped her "process" it and "let go" of it.

There was something about participating in the group and putting it out to the group, that I felt that I'd let go of it in a way that I have not felt by processing it one at a time with my friends, which was very interesting.

She attributed the process partly to the fact that she was writing the story rather than telling it orally.

I think part of it is that the process of writing is so different from the process of talking. ... I think that I thought more about my colleague's motivations and about mine. I thought more about my actions, and analyzed them a little bit more dispassionately than I had up until then. Quite often when I have told that story before it was to prove how evil she is and how I'm not, and this time it wasn't. It was just to tell a story examining my emotional responses and whether they were legitimate, not whether she was evil ... but whether I could understand how I had reached those emotional points.

Beatrice said that usually she wouldn't stop to ask herself "Why did that hurt your feelings? Was it because you thought she had done it to you personally?" Importantly, this time she found that examining those emotions helped her actually understand her

actions rather than try to justify them. “I found [that] to be quite useful and a different way of looking at the story.” Beatrice also said there were some points in her story that she needed to look back on and accept her emotional reactions rather than judge whether they were “legitimate” or “not legitimate.” She needed to look at the actions which came out of the reactions and examine to see if they were ones she felt she could defend “in terms of the principles which I think I believe in.”

Beatrice attributed her ability to reinterpret her story to the discussion in the group about positive and negative and to

the way emotion was validated. When we stopped looking at whether emotions were positive or negative and just validated what they were, that made it easier for me to step back and say, “Okay now why am I feeling like this in this situation?”

Retelling Troubling Tales: Discussion

In this section I revisit the incidents reported by Bronwyn, Malph, and Beatrice and note how some of the features I have discussed earlier in this chapter were significant in the reinterpretation of their events.

Individual Meaning Making

For Beatrice the process of writing was significant. Previously she had told the story orally to her friends. She also noted that the purpose was different. She was telling the story to try and understand her own and her colleague’s actions and reactions and rather than telling the story to prove “how evil she was.” Beatrice’s retelling demonstrates the importance of purpose and audience in the narratives we construct. She attributes her ability to look at the story from this new perspective to the discussion we

had had on positive and negative emotions. She was able to look more dispassionately because she was not judging and censoring her own emotions as being “legitimate” or not. Writing allowed her to distance herself from her experience and also allowed her to move back and forth between herself as subject and as object, a process captured in her question to herself, “Why did that hurt your feelings?” in which she dialogues between herself as writer and herself as object.

Beatrice’s experience illustrates the process of sense-making in which a person wants to create a coherent sense of self. We construct different narratives for different circumstances. Sometimes we construct a narrative for ourselves which allows us to make sense of an experience while preserving an image of ourselves which fits how we want to see ourselves and be seen by others. In this case we might foreground some information and minimize other aspects.

Malph attributes her ability to look at her story again to the fact that she had a teacher forum in which she was able to talk about her experiences and where she could hear other people’s perspectives on similar experiences. She also said that the laughter was important. It created distance which allowed her to step back and “weave emotions and thought together” (Greenberg, 2008) in order to process the experience which had “gnawed” at her. Laughing at Bronwyn’s story allowed Malph the distance to look at her own story with fresh eyes. Sophie too had reported how the laughter helped in her conversations in which she says the topic under discussion was very negative. Lil also recognizes that laughter leavened the discussion she had with her colleagues. According to Planalp (1999), Frankl used humour even in the death camps because he maintained that “humour more than anything else in the human make-up can afford an aloofness and

an ability to rise above any situation even if only for a few seconds” (Frankl as cited in Planalp, p.112). Most humour is based on altered perception which affords a new frame of reference. Both humour and laughter afford distance and allow one to see the world differently. They often help to reframe problematic situations.

Making Connections Through Stories

During the course of the discussion group the participants told many “stories.” They talked about events in their own lives and events they had heard about from colleagues, friends, and family. They would sometimes respond to each other with a story, saying, as Lil did, “I personally haven’t experienced that but here’s what happened in my sister’s school.” I am using the term “story” here in the sense that Kainan (2002) used it when she said that a story “is defined as an anecdote of limited scope with a concentrated single track plot reaching a rapid climax and then quickly subsiding. The plot is based mainly on an external event or happening centered on a principle character.” Telling stories seems to come naturally to people. Bruner (1990) asserts that storytelling is a fundamental aspect of being human. We make sense of the complex and unordered world of our experience by crafting story lines. The stories we hear and tell help us to connect our actions to our thoughts and emotions and enable us to imagine new possibilities.

There is a social purpose to story telling according to Langellier (1989). Stories are a means of connecting with other people. We decide to tell a particular story at a particular time for a particular reason and because of a particular audience. Langellier identifies five types of stories, one of which she calls “Personal stories” which are used as conversational interaction. In telling a story people choose, consciously or unconsciously,

to include certain elements and exclude others. They choose only those parts of the situation that suit their purpose.

I alluded earlier in this chapter to the fact that the participants knew nothing about each others' personal situations. This meant that when they were writing about their experiences they had to describe them in a way that the other group members would be able to understand their meaning. They had to explain how they felt, what they were thinking, what had happened, what it meant to them, and so on. In constructing their story or narrative the participants had to put together fragments from their experience which made sense. They needed to construct a coherent meaningful narrative not just for the group but for themselves.

The participants found that reading each other's stories helped them reflect on their own story and sometimes get a new perspective. They were able to compare their situations with those of the other members of the group and find out where they stood in relation to others.

During the first few weeks the stories the participants shared were mainly about interactions which had happened that week or in the last couple of weeks. They were experiences which the participants found emotional but not overly intense. By the eighth week it seemed the group had established a sufficient level of trust and support for participants to risk telling more vulnerable stories which had happened longer ago. The telling also seemed to set up an interaction in which people responded to each other with other stories. This type of interaction occurred often as the participants were reminded of similar or contrasting stories and shared them with the group.

When Malph told her story about swearing at the head of the art department Bronwyn quickly responded by telling two other “Fuck Off” stories as I have described in the findings. Another illustration of how one story invited another was an interaction between Bronwyn and Beatrice. After Bronwyn had told her story about being ostracized by members of the staff at her new school Beatrice responded with her story of what happened when she bumped a colleague. She explained in her final interview that the point of connection for her was that she saw similarities between Bronwyn’s story and the one she told in response insofar as the wellbeing of their children was threatened. The participants communicated and connected through their stories. I also experienced the sensation of wanting to contribute a story to the discussion. It is difficult to put into words but I had the sense of wanting to honour the story which Beatrice had told and the vulnerability she had expressed. It could also have been that it resonated with my own story of having bumped a colleague although I wasn’t consciously aware of that at the time.

Alternative Experiences: Findings

A number of people did not participate for the entire 12 weeks for various reasons. As I mentioned previously Richard left during the second week because he had recognized another member of the group, so his withdrawal was not of his own volition and, as a result, I haven’t included him in this group. Originally he had thought he would like to continue on his own with me. As it turned out, that proved a little difficult for him to structure so we didn’t connect again until the final interview. I have included his information in the preceding sections.

Two of the men, Rusty and Kernel, both contributed twice in the first two weeks and did not contribute again. At the sixth week I emailed them both privately and asked if they wished to continue. Both chose not to. Kernel said he was finding it difficult to make the time and he also declined the invitation to meet for a closing interview.

Rusty agreed to meet for a final interview. He said that the interactions on the forum had confirmed his opinion “that people view the world so differently and that there is a certain percentage of people who see everything as negative.” He had withdrawn partly because he thought the issues being raised in the forum were similar to issues raised in his local teachers’ association by “negative” teachers. He came to realize through his participation in the group that he becomes just as frustrated with “negative” people in written interaction as in face-to-face interaction. On the one hand he wonders why people don’t change how they are reacting, and on the other hand he realizes that “they can’t change who they are” any more than he can change who he is. One of his reasons for leaving the group was that when “I become convinced someone is that kind of person [i.e., “negative] I want to back away. I don’t want to become too close.... I just don’t want to be around, and I guess that’s a coping strategy.”

Edgeee participated until the seventh week when her father died. Although she did not withdraw formally she chose not to return to the group when she returned home. In our final interview Edgeee said that she found the forum disappointing because people did not interact more and respond to each other more quickly. She also said that when Harmonie asked her if she had read “The Secret” she said that thought “Oh this is just like the staff room again, in that this person perceives me as being negative and wants to guide me into a more positive realm.” She said the group represented “teachers resisting

interaction.” She wondered if the lack of response was a reaction to her postings and surmised that she might have intimidated people by her writing style or her strongly expressed opinions. Edgeee continued to pursue emotional awareness on her own. “I think that when I found the conversation to be somewhat less than what I hoped it would be, I continued to research on my own around areas of cognitive behavioural therapy, and thinking about how thought triggers emotion.”

Although Harmonie stayed with the group to the end she did not participate as much as she had originally intended. She said she didn’t feel enough trust to reveal herself to others and found it difficult to express her emotions on line. In spite of this, she said that she experienced valuable insights in the interviews. In her first interview she realized how she had been focusing on what she termed “the negative” and wanted to shift her focus to “the positive.” In our second interview she realized that she was fearful of expressing some of her thoughts and opinions to others. She also said that she found listening to other people's stories in the forum difficult because she had not had similar experiences. She said that she could be compassionate but didn't know where “to go with it.” Like Rusty, she also realized that she experienced frustration with people she saw as being negative, by which she meant people who complained but didn't take action to improve their situation. Another factor that affected Harmonie’s participation was that she didn't think anyone was interested in her point of view. She thought that if Richard had stayed she might have found common ground with him. Harmonie was a second generation Canadian and in her final interview she wondered if her cultural heritage contributed to her difficulty with expressing emotions to people she did not know personally.

Alternative Experiences: Discussion

All of the people who withdrew or who did not participate fully were forthcoming with their reasons and their opinions. Both Rusty and Harmonie expressed uneasiness with the on-line medium and began to question why they would make themselves vulnerable to people who they did not know. This is a personal preference and until the discussion group began they really had no indication of how they were going to feel. Once the forum got under way and they experienced discomfort they realized they were not going to be able to participate as fully as they had intended. In both their cases there were additional reasons that they did not participate.

Rusty stated that his motivation for participating in the group stemmed from his experience of seeing his wife burn-out and his wish to help other people in his own teachers' association. He was an executive member and he was aware that a number of local teachers were experiencing stress and so he thought he might be able to learn something from the group which he could use to help them. He seemed to have been disconcerted by the discussion which, he said, mirrored concerns which were being discussed in his local by "negative" teachers. In his final interview he attributed remarks and opinions to people in the forum which they actually hadn't made. It seems that he may have felt uncomfortable about the questions people were raising both in the forum and in his local. In his first interview he described himself as a peacetime leader not a war leader which seemed to indicate that he does not like dealing with conflict.

We did not discuss Harmonie's cultural background until our final interview. From the discussion we had in her first interview it was clear that she had given a lot of thought to emotions from a theoretical and an energetic perspective; she was very aware

of the importance of the emotional component of wellness; she was a yoga instructor and had also participated in meditation retreats. It was in retrospect in her final interview as we were discussing her reflections about the discussion group that Harmonie began to wonder whether cultural expectations that emotions are private and are not discussed with other people had influenced her participation.

Edgeee's disappointment was that the discussion group did not live up to her hopes and expectations. She thought that the group replicated the way in which teachers respond in school rather than being a group which was open to discussion. The particular interaction which initiated this thought was when Harmonie asked the group if they had read "The Secret." It would seem that Edgeee has often been confronted by teachers exhorting her to "Smile" and "be positive" when she has raised a dissenting point of view and she construed Harmonie's question to be in the same vein. It was interesting that it was the two people who had picked pseudonyms to reflect personality characteristics, Harmonie and Edgeee, who were engaged in the interaction I have just described and this interaction seemed to influence their experience in the discussion group. Edgeee did not consider anything useful in the research experience except for a brief interchange she had with Bronwyn.

The reasons some people chose not to participate fully were probably far more complex than I have detailed here. The important thing is that their experience is noted and recorded as significant. Their experience was in contrast to that of the people who found the group worthwhile.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have addressed the question of how the participants' understandings of their emotional interactions with their peers changed through discussion in the group over a period of twelve weeks. Most of the participants reported that they became more aware of emotions as they experienced them or observed them in other people. The discussion group provided a safe place for the participants to share and compare experiences, as they connected with each other through the stories they told. The asynchronous feature of the group made it possible to reflect and participate when it was convenient to them. This time factor together with the written nature of the communication and the non-judgmental environment allowed participants to examine their interactions with the intention of understanding their emotions rather than justifying their actions. The participants who told and reflected on interactions which had occurred a number of years previously and which were still troubling them, found their experience in the group helped them process and reinterpret the incidents.

While many of the participants enjoyed their group experience and learned from it others did not. Two of them reported that they were not comfortable talking about emotions on-line to people they did not know. A third was disappointed that the interaction was not more immediate. In the next chapter I look at the emotional issues of the schools' cultures which emerged during the discussion.

Chapter 7: School Culture

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the emotional processes of school culture which emerged both explicitly and implicitly during the participants' discussion. Emotions were often embedded in the participants' accounts of their interactions. My reason for looking at this aspect relates to the purpose of this research. One of the intentions was to explore and understand the way in which the norms governing emotions in school cultures are reproduced and to identify how they affect teachers' interactions with each other.

Prosser (1999) refers to culture as

The taken for granted set of expectations which affects how people think, feel and act. It shapes how they interpret the hundreds of daily interactions activities and work. A simple way of thinking about culture is "the way we do things around here. (p. 14)

However Britzman (1992) cites James Clifford as asserting that "culture is contested, temporal and emergent" (p. 57). She continues by saying that,

culture is where identities, desires and investments are mobilized, constructed and reworked. It is the site where antagonistic meanings push and pull against our sensibilities, deep investments and relationships with others. And consequently there is not one monolithic culture that communicates unitary meanings.

Circulating within ... any culture are an array of contesting and contradictory discourses that vie for our attention. (p. 57)

Thinking about culture in this way allows for the fact that school cultures would not be replicas of each other and also that not everyone in each school would experience

their school's culture in the same way. In fact the way that each individual participant interacts with his or her culture could vary from occasion to occasion. The experiences of each participant are unique to the particular situation at the particular time.

I found organizing this section a little problematic because the categories are not parallel but reflect issues about the culture which appeared to be significant. In chapter 3 I indicated that my choice of using a case study was to allow me to present a holistic exploration. The findings for this chapter reflect that holistic perspective. I have grouped my findings in response to this question under four headings. First, I discuss peer relationships and include sections on collegiality, conflict, and competition. Second, I focus on gender and emotions because gender seemed to interpenetrate peer relationships. In the third section I concentrate on staff meetings as one of the public arenas in schools in which peer relationships are performed and in which feeling rules are enacted. In the fourth section I focus again on the language of "positive" and "negative." In chapter 5 I examined the way in which the participants used the words in making sense of their interactions. In this chapter I examine the interaction in which Richard commended Harmonie for her turn to the positive and the effect of his remark on the group.

Peer Relationships

Introduction

Peer relationships are a major influence on the quality of a teacher's work life and emotions are usually part of those relationships whether we pay attention to them or not and whether they are expressed explicitly or experienced internally. Sophie told the group how her mother, who was retiring from teaching music in an elementary school, had said that she didn't want any celebration because of "repeated negative interactions with one

or two colleagues in particular.” Sophie said that she and her mother had talked about “how awful that is, that a few people could have such power to tarnish what should be a really celebratory time.” Bronwyn described her experience in the northern school at which she was ostracized as “four years in hell.”

The participants recounted many interactions with their peers both in their interviews and in the discussion group. These interactions included moments of laughter and enjoyment of colleagues as well as incidents of frustration, hurt, and anger. It became obvious over the weeks of the discussion group that the tone of the participants’ schools varied greatly. For example Malph described the competitiveness and bullying between the teachers in her school whereas in Bronwyn’s school the staff used consensus to arrive at decisions at staff meetings. The aspects of peer relationships on which I focus are collegiality, conflict, and competition.

Collegiality: Findings

Collegiality was an important aspect of school culture to many of the participants including Malph. She reflected on the value of talking with colleagues: “One’s colleagues understand, and share opinions and reflections of their own, thus the discourse is not venting, but rather it’s a discussion [which is] more emotionally fulfilling than venting.” She also regarded some of her fellow teachers as “colleagues in the profession of humanity. They are warm and genuine; they are wonderful people and with a very deep heart and with a very deep concerns both for each other and for kids.” She felt that there was

a tremendous need for teachers - people who work with people – to gather and “debrief” ... because such sharing of emotions amongst common individuals,

those who can empathize, is a vital requirement for one to move past the sorrow, the hurt, or the elation of the humanistic situation.

Getting together with colleagues in Malph's school was not easily achieved. She estimated that the staff room would hold about forty of the 150 staff. Even the washrooms seemed to be designed with the thought of preventing collegial conversations.

The women's staff washroom has two stalls and one sink. The size of the sink is probably two feet wide so you could not fit two people side by side in there to talk; it's impossible for two people to talk in the washroom – isn't that an effective way of deterring collegial communication?

Until recently there had been no common lunch time so that the school structure had prevented teachers from gathering together both through lack of a physical space and lack of a common break time. During the course of the discussion group Malph found alternative ways to create the community she was missing. The opportunity came about as the result of her being ousted by the technical education department from the lab she had been assigned for her media arts courses because they found her to "be an imposition on them." She was given an alternative location which she then opened up when she was not using it with her own students and invited other teachers to bring in their students. In this way she met many new colleagues.

Teachers share stories of their own kids, and pictures and even bring them by when I'm in working after hours. ... Besides that we laugh and share and help each other out A LOT. And I've acquired new teaching strategies and new teaching materials and resources from it.

In addition these teachers are people she would not have met in the normal course of the day “because they are business teachers and usually the business people and art people are on opposite sides of the room; but we are not here and it’s great.” Another source of commonality is “when they share with me a story or moment of their students’ enthusiasm, I witness their smiles and satisfaction with connecting with students.” These are moments which Malph found very satisfying.

Collegiality was also important to Sophie who taught at a large elementary school. She said that each day there would be different faces in the staff room; there were itinerant staff, district personnel, as well as teachers-on-call, and guests. She surmised that because of this situation a feeling of openness had developed. As a new teacher on a one year contract, Sophie decided that she would put effort into socializing with other teachers because she realized that it is easy to fall into a pattern of “not investing in relationships because you aren’t going to be around next year.” She talked to other members of staff about the problems she was having with the principal to see if any of them were having similar issues. She discovered that other beginning teachers were using similar practices to her with regard to students’ agendas, journals, and homework but, unlike her, they were not being reprimanded by the principal. She also talked with colleagues when the time for lay-offs was approaching. She wrote to the discussion group:

My district is talking about layoffs; it's my first time experiencing this. Between 40 and 95 they're saying I don't even have a contract so it doesn't really affect me I think. But I'm looking at the teachers on staff, new teachers, friends, and I can just feel it rising like an unspoken wedge between us already.

Despite this “wedge” Sophie described how she and another teacher, who was also vulnerable to being laid-off, talked about the situation.

Talk is everything. Get it out in the open. And I think if we can keep talking about what we're experiencing and our fears and sharing the information instead of hoarding our tidbits of power, as I think we all do sometimes - if we can do that, I think we can remain friends through all this.

Sophie saw this as “a bit of light, of hope.”

Sophie reported another conversation with a colleague which she described as a “whine session.” She continued,

afterwards we both said how we felt relieved, like we'd got something off our chests. And it got me thinking - it was all very NEGATIVE talk in terms of whining, only pointing out the problems, etc. yet we ended the conversation on a really positive note. I think the reason may be HUMOUR. We were able to see the absurd aspects of our problems and laugh about them together.

Sophie also initiated her “library club” where she and a few other colleagues went out for “terrible karaoke” after school some evenings. She commented that even if they didn't talk much about school matters there was an acknowledgement of the intensity of the day's teaching. “I think it's a really healthy thing, even if you're not talking, even if you're just sitting around listening to terrible karaoke, it's nice just to acknowledge that with others.”

In Lynn's school also there was no room for the teachers as a group to gather together. When the school was renovated “they constructed a pokey little staff room.” Lynn lamented the loss of opportunity for departments to get together, socialize, and

exchange information. She said that in the other high school in the district which had also been renovated there was a beautiful staff room big enough for the entire staff “How original!” she remarked.

It was not only a lack of common space and common break times which worked against some teachers finding opportunities to talk together, it was also the increased amount of work with which teachers had to cope which, according to Lynn, led to isolation. Indeed it was that sense of isolation which motivated her and some of the other participants to become involved in the research. Beatrice also felt isolated from her colleagues because she felt differently from them about political action. She raised an additional point which was echoed by Edgeee and Bronwyn. She said that she thought maybe her colleagues did not really know her because they saw her as being confident and outspoken, while inside she was feeling vulnerable. Edgeee worded it this way: “How can you know who I am if you don’t know what I’m feeling?” These comments draw attention to the fact that it was not just having a conversation with a colleague that was important; it was the emotional content of the conversation which affected the degree of closeness the teachers felt.

Lil’s experiences of collegiality came from the committee meetings in which she participated. One of these groups was a book club she had established in which teachers read and discussed recent children's literature. Lil said that her aim was to show them some of the newer materials, and “wean them away from some of the 25 year old novels they were teaching.” At one particular meeting they were discussing “The Breadwinner” by Deborah Ellis which is about a young girl in Afghanistan who dresses as a boy in order to earn a living for her family because her father has been jailed. Lil said that they

just got off on a tangent, and complained about how difficult our lives are, teaching, the students, report cards, etc. And then we realized that at least we weren't in Afghanistan, or Iraq, or Africa, or some other place where an education may not be possible for many children. We decided we had to stay political, teach these types of novels, show our students what is going on in other countries, and keep working to make a difference. (And keep meeting to complain every so often, also) I think, after the discussion, (the book was quite peripheral, actually) we felt a lot better. We had laughed, complained, worked through some issues in the school, refocused, looked at our situation from a global perspective, and it felt good. I enjoy the company of all these "womyn"- they are articulate, reflective and committed. As Malph points out, getting together to share stories and concerns, is important.

Whereas Malph and Lynn reported there was not enough room for people to gather in their staffrooms, other participants said that they preferred not to be in their staffrooms at lunch time. Ben said he stopped eating in the staff room a number of years ago when he was in a school in which the staff "complained and griped" at lunch time about "the kids, the situation, the union ... the way the administration ran things, and yet they would do nothing about it; it was a self feeding gripe session, a whole vortex." He said he was like a sponge and was "just soaking up all this bad feeling and all this griping and complaining" and he would go home "crabby." Although the situation is different in his present school where he has taught for the past fourteen years, he still tends not to eat in the staff room. "I'm not a staff room person at all any more; I'm not a group person either, but that doesn't mean I don't get along with people." He said he tried going at

lunchtime for a while, but “there’s the guys’ table and there’s the women’s table and the men just talked about sports.”

Harmonie said that the tone on her staff room was very negative. She recalled how teachers-on-call at her school have been shocked by the tone in the staffroom and she described how staff members “find the most negative stories in the newspaper and read them out.” Harmonie stopped eating there because she had lunch time activities with the students and she said she felt much better for it. Rusty also said that he stayed out of the staffroom at lunch time because some teachers created a “very negative tone.”

Collegiality: Discussion

I have used the term collegiality because this was the term used by several of the participants to refer to relationships with their peers but this term is somewhat problematic. There is controversy about exactly what teacher collegiality is. The term is often used interchangeably with collaboration and it is also used to refer to different levels or degrees of intensity of professional involvement with colleagues. De Lima (2001) observes that much has been written about collegiality yet there has been little consensus or definition about what it means.

The problem arises in part from the way in which the concept of collegiality has been used as a vehicle for school improvement (Hargreaves, 1991). After the publication of Lortie’s book “The Schoolteacher” in 1975, in which he identified teachers as being isolated, there was a movement to lessen this isolation in order to improve teacher and school effectiveness (Rosenholtz, 1989). Hargreaves pointed out that collegiality has been used as a managerial, manipulative technique and has been mandated in various contrived forms. Smyth (1995) argued that the notion of collegiality is not just a matter of

teachers conferring with each other. “It is an emerging form of central control in the guise of local autonomy. Collegiality is, therefore, much more than a desirable teacher to teacher relationship ... it is being used to control and engineer consensus” (p. 81).

Hargreaves (1992) asserted that “collegial energies may be harnessed ... to squeeze out dissentient voices and secure commitment and compliance to changes imposed by others. (p. 217).

To the participants collegiality seemed to mean the opportunity to talk to colleagues about issues which mattered and had emotional significance for them. For example Sophie talked with other beginning teachers about the problems she was having with her principal and later in the year she talked about the impending lay-offs with another teacher who could also be affected. In these conversations she made herself vulnerable by exposing her “weaknesses,” the fact that she was in trouble with the principal and the fact that she was anxious about being laid off. Malph talked to her co-workers about her participation in the research discussion group and about the importance of being able to talk openly about the topic of emotions and the reluctance of the school administrators to engage in personal dialogue with teachers. She said she and her colleagues remarked that it must be painful to operate day after day without making personal contact with others. Collegiality also meant initiating opportunities for colleagues to get together and talk about these issues in order to create alliances which were supportive. Malph made “good coffee” which she offered to other teachers and one of her colleagues set out snacks in the staff room and emailed an invitation to partake to the rest of the staff. Sophie and some of her coworkers went to the pub.

The participants talked about their need to connect with and communicate with others at a deeper level. The awareness of this need for connection was illustrated in the findings of the previous two chapters in which the participants talked about wanting to find someone to talk to about emotional experiences and knowing that was important to them. They realized and acknowledged the emotional impact of teaching not only with respect to working with children but with respect to working in the current educational milieu. There was almost a yearning for a deeper connection which led Bronwyn to describe the period of the discussion group as “a magical time.” It made her realize how much she missed that deeper connection in her everyday life and led her to say that she would take action to make sure she put it back in her life.

If this type of connection with other teachers is so important then one must ask why does it seem so hard to achieve? What are the barriers or constraints? Some of the participants pointed out that certain structural features of the school are not conducive to people gathering together to talk. Lynn and Malph both mentioned the size of the staffroom. Another structural feature is the distance some teachers have to travel to get to the staffroom; in a large school like Malph’s there is hardly time for some teachers to walk to the staff room and back during short breaks. Again in Malph’s case there had not been a common lunch time so not all teachers could get together anyway. Other barriers could include the general silence about emotions in schools (as I discussed in chapter 5) which stems in part from norms of not acknowledging emotional issues in the workplace; teachers’ habits of not noticing their emotions; and the lack of valuing emotions. The intensification of teachers’ work also inhibits teachers from connecting with each other. There is more work to be done, for example learning and using the digital data base, in

less time, and with fewer resources; all of which results in more stress. A further constraint could be the atmosphere in the school especially in a school like Malph's where there is a lack of trust and an increased surveillance of each other.

Another reason for a lack of deep connection could be a lack of shared values. According to Kelchtermans (2005), "Emotions reflect the fact that deeply held beliefs ... are part of teachers' self understanding." In other words, values are emotional and if we do not connect with other people and find that we share similar values we are likely to feel isolated, as Edgeee did, because other people did not speak up as she did. The deeper connections highlight the relational role of emotions whereby people can "know" each other on a more intimate level. This usually involves sharing fears and vulnerabilities as well as joys. Malph captured this aspect when she described some of her peers as "colleagues in the profession of humanity." She perceives a need for teachers to get together with each other to "debrief," to share emotions with those who can empathize. She observes this "is a vital requirement for one to move past the sorrow, the hurt, or the elation of the humanistic situation." In saying this she touched on an issue which many teachers do not discuss namely the distressed and distressing situation of some of their students. She is saying that it is impossible to ignore the sorrows of life which elicit many emotions. In professions such as social work, nursing, and counselling there seems to be a recognition of the heart-touching nature of the work which can connect a worker with the meaning of life in a very short time. There is very little acknowledgement of this aspect in the teaching literature or amongst teachers. Lynn talked about the horrendous situations some of her special needs students face and how she really needs to have a counselling specialty rather than a special needs certification in order to work with the

students and their families. In the teaching profession it is not often recognized that teachers may need emotional support to deal with some of these issues. In the practice of counselling, with which I am familiar, there is a tradition of counsellors having “supervision” sessions, sometimes with peers in a group or with another professional as a consultation. There are two main purposes of supervision; one is to talk about client cases with which the counsellor may need help and suggestions and the other is to support the counsellor in recognizing and processing her own emotional reactions and possible projections. In workshops which I have facilitated for teachers they have sometimes raised the topic of feeling powerless to help children who are in distressed situations. The fear of facing up to one’s own vulnerabilities and “hurts,” as Malph calls them, could be one of the reasons for the concentration on the positive which Edgeee spoke of. I will come back to this discussion later in the chapter.

Conflict: Findings

Many of the participants talked about conflict, both interpersonal and intra-personal. I will address interpersonal conflict first. Both Lil and Richard talked about how they had become aware during the discussion group that they tended to avoid conflict. Ben was moved to join the group because he had sat uncomfortably through a “hot and heavy” discussion as a staff meeting. He noted that “there are lots of differences on staff about styles of teaching and what to teach but there is no good way of dissipating the energy generated by those conflicts.” He said it is no longer “seemly to come to blows” although he thinks it often gets close to that. He hoped that an exploration of emotions would lead to being able to deal with potential conflict situations before there were hurt feelings.

Bronwyn often mediated in conflicts between teachers in her school and also between teachers and administrators. She said her most challenging cases occurred when people had done nothing about an issue until it escalated from a molehill into a mountain. She thought that in order to resolve conflict situations successfully the underlying emotional issues needed to be addressed first. Lynn also came to this realization after a staff meeting at her school at which the issue of student detentions was being discussed. Two new vice-principals wanted to unload the responsibility of dealing with “90 minute detentions” to the teachers. Until this time it had been the responsibility of the administration. Lynn said that the teachers’ position was “We want ‘nineties’ but we think that it’s the VPs’ job to deal with that, and we’re willing to help out once in a while, but we don’t think it should be our job.” She felt that in the staff meeting discussion the teachers didn’t really get to the crux of the matter which was the teachers’ vulnerability about dealing with discipline problems. She thought that because the underlying emotions were not addressed they did not resolve the issue.

Harmonie thought that “certain individuals create unnecessary conflict” at the staff meetings in her school. She continued, “We have been trying to teach our students the ‘Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.’ One of those is to think win-win, yet this is a habit we have not learned.” She observed that there tended to be a lot of unnecessary personalization and attacking which she thought could be avoided if people approached the issues differently and thought about each other's needs rather than just their own.

Some of the participants described on-going conflicts which contained elements of harassment. Bronwyn’s experiences of being ostracized by a group of teachers and of being harassed about union matters by a teacher in her current school were such

examples; so was Malph's treatment by the art department head who denied her funding and refused her contributions to the pool of report card comments. The teachers who laughed at Edgeee behind her back could also be considered to be harassing her emotionally.

Another aspect of conflict which became apparent in the accounts of past unpleasant events which many of the participants related was the long-term emotional effect of these interactions. The participants in the research still felt keenly the hurt from these conflicts with peers which had occurred a few years previously. Malph said that prior to the discussion group she had not had an arena in which to process the emotional content of her incident with the art department head.

Bronwyn observed, "Sometimes when I am dealing with power and emotions on staff, I wonder how much of what causes conflict is connected to our societal reluctance to acknowledge our "dark" sides. We are all expected to be so nice, so professional. Yet we have written about such painful experiences in our work lives, so obviously not everyone is "nice" or "professional."

I now turn to the experiences of intra-personal conflicts which some of the participants felt when they were faced with the dilemma of teaching students with fewer resources because of government policies. The teachers experienced conflict between their values of caring for their students and their sense of injustice and needing to stand up against the government policies. This dilemma became apparent in the conversation in which the participants discussed whether they were being complicit with the government's actions when they tried to do the same amount of work with fewer resources. Lil questioned, "As we work harder and harder, (and I'm working harder now

than ever before in 25 years), we are trying to cover up the deficits, and make things work for the sake of the students, but are we really doing the right thing?” Bronwyn added to the discussion.

I have the same concern as Lil and Beatrice’s friend about “being complicit in the destruction of public education.” If we continue to do more with less, are we supporting the government’s not so secret agenda of dismantling public education? And yet, when the eyes of a child look at me and ask for help, I see that human soul and I cannot walk away. I work longer and harder while at the same time feeling less and less able to be effective. I am only one human being. There is a limited amount of time and energy I am willing to give. Bill 33 brought us no relief! I will not move my boundaries any farther. The time that is mine is for me, my family, and friends and I will not move that line.

Conflict: Discussion

For the purposes of this discussion I focus on three main aspects of conflict. The first is the interpersonal aspect, the second is the on-going aspect of conflict in which I discuss the phenomena of harassment and horizontal violence, and the third focuses on conflict experienced intrapersonally.

Conflict is regarded as an inevitable aspect of organizational and workplace life and teachers are no different from other workers. As Ben suggested, teachers often disagree about effective teaching strategies, teaching philosophies, and values, amongst other things. Ben’s concern was that there needs to be a way of dealing with those energies or dissipating them otherwise ill-feelings may persist and fester. Bronwyn noted that if people do not deal with issues when they are molehills they become mountains.

According to Hartwick & Barki (2002) conflict has been defined in a number of ways. It has been expressed as “a struggle between at least two inter-dependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources and rewards, and potential interference from the other party in achieving their goals” (Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Perez, 2003, p.783). In the example of the conflict at Ben’s staff meeting the goal could be something as simple as teachers wanting to be recognized as having the “right” answer or the “right” opinion, and the potential interference could be someone else having a louder voice in the argument or seeming to win more people to their point of view. Scarce rewards could be the acknowledgement from peers or the approval of administration. In other words conflicts can arise in simple, routine, everyday situations. Many potential sources of conflict could offer teachers valuable opportunities for in-depth educational discussions but, as Hargreaves (2001) describes, teachers often deal with professional conflict by avoiding interactions and engaging in superficialities. When tensions surface teachers may react by feeling confused or personally attacked, and respond by distancing themselves from their colleagues. Theories of conflict tend to differentiate between cognitive conflict, which could be an opinion about the way to do something, for example a teaching strategy, and affective conflict in which emotions are involved; however, the two are often mixed. According to LeBaron (2002) emotions are present in any dispute that touches people’s ways of making meaning and their identities or concepts of self. Thus the teachers at Lynn’s school who were discussing detentions felt threatened emotionally because if they exposed their fears about being able to deal and cope with student discipline, they would be revealing their vulnerability. There are norms in many schools which militate against people acknowledging vulnerability

because, according to Lynn and Beatrice, that is considered to be showing weakness and causes teachers to lose status in the sight of their peers and administrators.

In the school setting where there has been an emphasis on teacher collaboration and collegiality in order to improve teaching practices, teachers are often uncomfortable to be seen as “not getting along” with each other. One of the interesting outcomes of the discussion group was the realization by two members that they avoided conflict. One of those people, Richard, organized a conflict resolution workshop for the next in-school professional development day. He was of the opinion that conflict needed to be handled constructively. While many schools and other workplaces put on conflict resolution sessions there is a lot more to resolving conflicts than learning the skills. In order to address the underlying emotional issues the participants need to be able to identify and understand what they are feeling and be willing to talk about those aspects. Additionally the facilitator needs to be skilled in working with people’s emotions. Unfortunately many conflict resolution workshops focus only on the cognitive aspects which means that the staff is no further forward in actually addressing conflict.

Bronwyn wonders about societal reluctance to acknowledge our “dark” sides by which she means our characteristics and parts of our personality of which we are not proud, for example our ability to be angry or vengeful or any of those other characteristics which are considered “not nice.” Maté (2003) suggests that emotional repression in most cases is expressed as niceness and that rage and anguish exist under a “veneer of niceness” (p. 43). If we suppress rather than acknowledge those emotions they may be expressed in unconscious and unhealthy ways. Repression dissociates emotions from awareness and relegates them to the unconscious realm. The “societal reluctance” to

which Bronwyn refers is due in part to the societal norms and illustrates how individual behaviour is influenced by those same norms.

Several of the participants experienced conflict which continued over a period of time. Malph's interactions with the art department head, Bronwyn's interactions with the teachers who ostracized her, and Edgeee's experience with the teachers who laughed at her behind her back were ongoing and thus could be construed as emotional harassment. Recently increased attention has been paid to workplace bullying which includes emotional harassment. In the majority of cases reported the perpetrators have higher status organizationally than their victims (Lewis, 2002). However, articles in the nursing literature refer to the occurrence of horizontal or lateral violence whereby peers bully or harass each other. According to Freshwater (2000) the term "horizontal violence" was originally used to describe the "inter-group manifestation of conflict that resulted from the oppression of colonization in Africa." Paulo Freire (1972) used the term in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" to indicate how members of oppressed groups lash out at their peers in response to oppression instead of attacking their oppressors. According to Woelfle and McCaffrey (2007) the concept of horizontal violence has been used to describe conflict in nursing because nurses can be construed as an oppressed group. Oppression exists when a powerful and dominant group controls and exploits a less influential group. It has been noted that nursing is predominantly a women's profession dominated by doctors who, until recently, have traditionally been men. Horizontal violence embodies an understanding of how oppressed groups direct their frustrations and dissatisfactions towards each other as a response to a system that has excluded them from power (Freshwater). Nurses have engaged in "aggressive and destructive behaviour" against

each other. They demean and downgrade others “through unkind words and cruel acts that gradually undermine confidence and self-esteem” (Woeflre and McCaffrey, 2007, p. 123). As I looked at the characteristics of horizontal violence and its connection with oppression I wondered if a case could be made for using the same terminology for teachers’ lateral bullying. Teaching in BC is a predominantly female profession and is increasingly so. Despite the recent increase in the number of women in administration, there are still more men in higher positions organizationally than women. In surveys about workplace bullying of teachers conducted in England and Australia it has been noted that that increased government pressure had probably contributed to the bullying. That could also be true for the teachers in BC in my study. As the work intensifies, teachers feel more oppressed and lash out at each other.

An aspect of bullying which is not often addressed is systemic influence and how bullying is socially constructed. The bully is treated as though he or she is an isolated person without any relationship to the social nexus. Yoneyama and Naito (2003) note that studies of bullying of students in schools treat bullying as an individualized social issue. Data have been collected which provide descriptions of such aspects as prevalence, frequency, intensity, duration, place of occurrence, and behavioural traits of bullies and victims (Yoneyama & Naito). It has been posited that some students bully because of certain personality or family background characteristics including parental neglect and exposure to violence and racial prejudice. Yoneyama and Naito observe that “normally in sociology a wide prevalence of a problem is regarded as a social issue worth examining as a potentially structural problem inherent in the particular social milieu” (p. 316). They also note that there is a limit to what individuals can do to solve their everyday life

trouble if it is associated with a structural problem. They cite Charles Wright Mills as saying that fundamental solutions come with a revision and change of the social structure. In other words, the personal is political.

The same sort of analysis which these authors use to understand student peer bullying holds true for teachers bullying each other. The term “horizontal violence” is useful because it focuses attention on the social structure as well as on the individuals. For example, when Lynn is shouted at by teachers at her staff meeting, she attributed their actions to the fact that they wanted the meeting to finish; significantly though, Lynn also reported that when incidents like this happen the administrator who is chairing the meeting does not restrain such comments but concentrates on “moving on.” Thus incidents such as this one can be seen within the power nexus of the school, the educational context, and society as a whole. From this perspective it is clearer how the structures and systems tacitly uphold and condone these tactics.

The silence about workplace bullying may stem not only from the perception that this sort of behaviour is expected and “normal” but also from the shame experienced by the people who have been bullied. In his study of teachers in further and higher education in Wales, Lewis (2004) found that many of them experienced one of the “self-conscious emotions,” namely shame, embarrassment and humiliation. He suggests that “in trying to better understand workplace bullying it might serve researchers ... to consider the importance of the shame construct, the ramifications of which are destructive, debilitating and long lasting.” People who experience shame are not likely to talk about what has happened to them with colleagues and so they don’t experience the reduction of anxiety and distress which the social sharing of emotions usually brings. The effects of shame are

compounded by another dynamic. It has been found with incidents of emotional abuse and sexual harassment of women there is a tendency for victims to blame themselves (Isidis, Ben-David & Ben-Nachum, 2007). This also happens in workplace bullying. As I described in chapter 5 both Bronwyn and Malph asked themselves what did they do to provoke being bullied.

Very often a phenomenon has to be named before it can be dealt with. For example once sexual harassment in the workplace was named people realised this behaviour was something they had been “putting up with” because they thought it was just “the way things were.” Currently there seems to be a silence around peer bullying. Researcher Marilyn Noble (cited in Morris, 2004) of Fredericton, New Brunswick has said that workplace bullying is

at the stage family violence was about 20 years ago. It has been around for a long time but suddenly we've put a name on it and we've made it discussable. There is a huge pent-up need to deal with it.

Several jurisdictions including European countries, Quebec, and Saskatchewan have enacted legislation to deal with workplace bullying and in most cases the employer has been made responsible whether she or he is aware of the bullying or not.

I now turn to discuss intrapersonal conflict. Many of the participants expressed distress at the conflict they were experiencing in not being able to give their students the time and attention they felt they needed. They especially felt that their children with special needs were being short-changed. In the nursing literature healthcare professionals have described having a troubled conscience when they feel they cannot provide the good care they wish to deliver and believe is their duty to give (Glasberg, Eriksson, & Norberg,

2006). Goals such as performing their work in a meaningful way are important to them and they experience distress when they are faced with situations in which they are prevented from taking the action they believe they should or they are asked to act in a way which contradicts their values. This phenomenon has been called “stress of conscience” (Glasberg, Eriksson, & Norberg). As I described in the findings, the participants were concerned that they were being complicit in the corruption of public education by working harder so that the cuts in resources should not affect the students. In chapter 2 I cited Cheng and Couture (2000) as describing how teachers experience their life as divided because of the growing split created by a sense of living one thing and believing another. Three of the participants, Malph, Beatrice, and Bronwyn expressed their conflict and ambivalence to their current positions in statements in which they considered the possibility of leaving teaching. Malph says “I am looking at another career and just playing with the idea, right now it’s just in the beginning stages. Do I leave teaching because of the sorrow attached to it or do I stay in it?” Beatrice described the situation in education which has resulted from the government policies and then said, “Actually, I love teaching, really. It's just hard to feel positive when you love your profession, but want out of it at the same time!” Bronwyn also feels divided, “Sometimes I think of giving up and going to work in Korea or Japan – or maybe in Africa – who knows?”

Competition: Findings

Many emotions including fear, anger, resentment, jealousy, arrogance, and complacency are engendered by and fostered through competition. They are often unnamed but permeate people’s attitudes towards each other and their workplace. In this

section I explore the various arenas of competition alluded to and experienced by the participants. These include competition within the organizational hierarchy; competition between subjects (secondary schools) or teaching areas (elementary schools); competition between peers over valued resources, for example equipment or teaching assignments; and competition instigated by school and local administrators. Much of the competition is for status, respect, and value within the school and sometimes it cuts across many of the areas of competition I have just listed; for example Malph's experience encompasses competition between academic and elective courses, competition between peers over teaching assignments, competition between peers over equipment, and competition between peers in areas of seniority and credentials.

In her interview and in her postings Malph described the effects of competition in the schools where she has taught. She referred to the atmosphere at her present school as "dog-eat-dog." Malph developed a media arts programme the second year she taught at her present school, a senior secondary with over one thousand students. "I did it out of survival," she explained. "When you teach an elective course, particularly in high school, it's a different kind of survival than in an academic course." Students have to take academic courses but elective courses are not compulsory and tend to be "shaped around the teachers' passions and the teachers' framework." Teachers create the course and then "sell it." If they "load it enough," in other words if enough students select it, then the course continues to run. If there are not enough students and the course does not run the teacher is assigned to take other classes out of her or his subject area.

When you don't teach in your field it's really difficult; you get bounced into math, into English, it's something different all the time, so you're constantly getting

different prep for that and you're expected to meet with those departments as well on a Wednesday morning so you're no longer in one department and [you are] now outcast and bounced around. You have less seniority in that other department and get the tough grades that they don't want; so it's a really demeaning experience.

The situation is complicated by the fact that there may be a certain number of classes filled but not enough to occupy all the teachers in that department. In Malph's department there are three art teachers each of whom teach seven blocks a year. If they do not end up with twenty-one classes the question is: "How do we divide up the load?" The teachers in Malph's department have a history of arguing over how the load should be divided.

Some people's philosophies are "We divide it evenly" and other people believe "No, I've been here the longest, I get all the load and you folks get less." [Others argue] "Well if you've been here the longest, I have the most education."

The creation of the media arts courses was a boon because the classes were "overfilled" so not only was Malph able to teach her full load but her two colleagues were able to benefit too. In spite of her success, Malph says that the issue is not necessarily "resolved" because if there were not full loads the art teachers would be back to arguing over who gets to teach what. "We've certainly opened it and talked about it and fought about it and there's been anger and tears and yet I don't know that it's been solved." Underneath the arguing Malph says

There's respect for my feelings, there's respect for Jim's feelings, and for Eleanor's feelings; we all know that when something in our loads doesn't go our

way, it hurts and it hurts very deeply and personally, and regardless of who has to suffer that hurt, we all respect and understand it.

Malph's overall summation is "It's all very competitive and that competitive nature is not fun and it also creates a lot of competition amongst colleagues."

As Malph explained, in some schools there is competition between academic subjects and elective subjects and then within each of those divisions there are other conflicts. Malph observes:

There's somewhat of a hierarchy – the academics are always thought to be the princesses or whatever – they're the golden boys. Departments fight for attention and there is always bickering. Is the phys. ed. department the best or tech. ed. or whatever? So there is always that real competitive nature that is ingrained and that is because of the competition for students; so it's built right into the system and I don't think many people question this.

Other participants also talked about the competitive elements between departments.

Harmonie said that in her school,

The science department thinks that they are so great. Well just lately we are getting a lot of ESL students and their English skills are not that good; they wouldn't be good in history or English literature and so the science classes are just really filling up like crazy. In math they're doing well too; so the science and math departments they think they're so great and so there's a bit of conflict.

When the history and English departments voice their concerns, "people just say 'Well its student driven. That's what the students want.'"

Although the potential for competition exists it does not have to be enacted. Lil's experience of dividing up the teaching load was different. She recalled that when she was Languages department head "we always sat down and divided up the classes, to make sure everyone got some Grade 8's, and to try to balance the preps." Ben's experience as a science teacher was "I don't teach Grade 9 any more, I've opted out of that. I specifically choose and let the principal know I want Grade 8s and I want 11s and 12s. I don't care for Grade 9 and 10." He also observed that:

A young teacher I know has left the profession because of the pressures of the "Old-Boy" system that allocates teaching assignments. She simply couldn't take it any more. My experience has been that the department will sit together and discuss teaching assignments, spreading the grades and levels around so that everyone has at least a shot at whatever classes s/he would like to take on.

Competition is not only over classes but also over resources. Once again Malph talks about how certain departments seem to get the lion's share of the new computers. She noticed that the teachers in those departments seem to be the ones who indulge in "emotional bullying."

I see people use their anger as a vehicle, shouting and yelling to convince and to gain control, and I see it as bullying ... it's all men from different departments who are very good at ranting and roaring and behaving in ways that I see as absolutely unethical and immoral. They threaten, they swear, they verbally put down publicly. And I'm still not sure that it's a causal link ... but it must be because they get the equipment; they get the courses; they get an incredible amount of stuff that other people don't get. I can't see any other reason.

Lil alludes to the competitive aspects in her position as librarian. Firstly she feels that librarians are not highly regarded by classroom or “enrolling” teachers. “Everybody thinks that library is where you go when you can’t hack it any more because it’s so easy.” She also said that she thinks other teachers regard her as “a bit of a luxury that I’ve got a bit of an easy do.” Lil talks about not feeling “credible” and reports how she has advocated for libraries and librarians. “I’ve been down to the school board and put on presentations; I’ve attended trustee meetings; I’ve sent letters; written to the news paper; and the whole thing wears you out because you are always justifying your existence.” She compares the need she feels to justify her existence with teachers from other subjects. “You don’t see math teachers scrambling about trying to explain how important they are – it’s very frustrating.”

The issue of non-enrolling teachers’ status is also alluded to by Beatrice and Lynn. In addressing the concern about the government’s redefinition of special needs categories, Beatrice says that the definitions are so narrow that many of “our students have been de-listed, so that now they are bringing the same learning problems and behaviour problems into our classes.” This means that these students no longer have IEPs [Individual Educational Plans] and don’t “count” so they cannot access special education resources of time, personnel, and individual or small group teaching. Beatrice says,

It can be very frustrating, and it pits classroom teachers against LATs (Learning Assistance Teachers) and other specialists responsible for the designations . . .

Very destructive to school communities, and, in the end, kids are not having their learning needs met.

Lynn describes another scenario which exists in her school. They “are having difficulty dealing with the large numbers of students whose reading level is far below what is expected when they reach high school.” This, of course, means that students are not able access “content” in all subjects. Lynn observes that “this causes negative interactions across staff, as the adaptations for these students are sometimes seen to be an imposition.” As Lynn is a special education teacher some of the staff consider it her responsibility to take on these students. She asks, “And where in the high school curriculum is there room to teach reading?”

Competition was an issue in Beatrice’s story about bumping a colleague. Her school district had initiated a process whereby at lay-off time certain positions were “bypassed” and the teachers holding those positions were “protected” and thus exempted from the seniority provisions. Teachers who had been laid off could grieve one of the “bypassed” positions if they had more seniority and believed they were qualified for the position. This is what occurred in Beatrice’s situation. She successfully grieved the position and was awarded the job for the following year. The teacher who had been bypassed suddenly found herself without a job. After being in the position for a few weeks Beatrice went on maternity leave and the teacher whom she had bumped was appointed on a temporary basis to cover the leave which, it was assumed, would continue until the end of the academic year. After the birth of her baby Beatrice was in the position of needing to return to school earlier than she had anticipated so the teacher was displaced again. “She was really bitter and really angry and she said horrible things about me” with the result that

when I got to school, the students were bitter. They commented openly about how I shouldn't have been allowed to come back. One student told another teacher that she had been told by the teacher on my mat leave that I was the devil ... Students hated me. I felt helpless and victimized, and I had to question my identity as a teacher.

Another aspect of competition was noted by Lil although she didn't name it as such. She described the incident:

Our principal has posted a list in the staffroom, with staff contributions to the "life of the school." Everybody has their name up there and what they volunteer to do extra. That's stressful!!! I'm on the safety committee, I have student book club on Fridays, and staff book club once a month. Enough for me at this point. I have done Pro D committee, Staff committee, volleyball coaching, etc., in the past, but right now I couldn't handle anymore, and I'm not going to jeopardize my emotional or physical health, just to measure up to what someone else thinks I should be doing. Or not. Wow, that sounds defensive.

We get a hint of the competitive and judgmental nature with which teachers survey each other when Lil explains:

I consciously say [to myself] "Does it matter? You've worked hard, for so many years; you can coast a little bit now." I used to look with disdain on those people that were coasting a little bit. I would say, "Oh, you know, they should be working as hard as I do." And now I say "No."

Beatrice is also aware that the competitive ethos leads to her being judgmental of her peers. As an executive member of her local Teachers' Association she has been privy

to cases which have been grieved by teachers whom the local School Board has deemed not qualified for the positions for which they have applied. Also, as an employee, she has taken maternity leaves and needed to be replaced. This means that Beatrice has seen people rejected because according to the board they haven't the "right" qualifications, and she has seen people whom she judges as not having adequate qualifications appointed by the board. Thus Beatrice is aware of the apparent inconsistency and favouritism in board hiring practices. She said that when she talks about those issues and uses examples to illustrate what she means, she is implicitly criticizing the teachers the board has hired. She said that knowing the inside story and losing grievances not only makes her cynical but also judgmental of her peers. In addition, she observed, she sometimes tries to justify her judgments. She concluded: "So, yes, I see it and I even participate in it; reprehensible as it is, and I think they make us like that."

Competition: Discussion

The findings illustrate that competition permeates many aspects of school life. Wotherspoon (2004) observes that from the outset of education in Canada "complex and contradictory dynamics [have left] the goals, structures, processes, and outcomes of schooling open to contestation" (p. 65). It is no wonder that Malph asserts that competition is ingrained and "built right into the system itself but many teachers do not question it." In the last few decades competition has been intensified by the implementation of neo-liberal policies. Neo-liberalism signifies "a market centred philosophy of life in which human beings and their actions are understood in terms of their market value and participation, intense competition is viewed as necessary" (Fenwick, 2003, p. 335). Bronwyn Davies (2005) observes that "a major shift in

neoliberal discourse is towards survival being an individual responsibility” (p.9). The elements of intense competition, individual responsibility, and survival and the fear which is associated with them become part of the neo-liberal subjectivity (Davies) and inform thoughts, actions, and emotions both on a conscious and unconscious level.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) to compete means “to enter into or be put in rivalry with, to vie with another in any respect.” In this sense it involves “endeavouring to gain what another endeavours to gain at the same time.” This means that there are winners and losers; often there is only one or very few winners but there are many losers.

In the context of formal competition, for example a sports event or music festival, the rules are formally articulated and the prize is clearly described. There is an understanding that everyone is expected to adhere to the rules and there is also often an appeal procedure if players or participants believe there has been an infringement. There is an expectation of fair play and a sense of trust among the players that the rules will be upheld. In contrast, in the context of competition within the schools at which the participants were teaching there were no such articulated rules and no sense of trust that there would be fair play.

Competition can motivate people in two ways. They may strive to achieve because they want the reward or prize, or they might strive to achieve to avoid painful repercussions of losing. Malph found herself in the latter category with regard to the way in which the art classes were divided up among the teachers in her department. The situation a teacher faces when she has to teach outside of her subject area is “a demeaning

experience.” Malph designed the media art classes out of a sense of “survival,” she did not want to be faced with teaching “the tough classes that no one else wanted to teach.”

The competition for status and recognition between teachers of academic subjects in secondary education has been well documented. Hargreaves (1994) discusses the “balkanization” of teaching in secondary school. The roots of the curriculum issues lie in the question of “whose knowledge is of most worth?” (Apple, 2004, xix). Apple says that decisions are made by those in power about defining the knowledge that is worth passing on to future generations. Ball and Goodson (1984) recognize the “socially and politically constructed nature of school subjects.” The structure and contents of the school curricula are the products of ongoing struggles; and the resulting status hierarchies are seen as constructed by the dominant powers (Ball & Goodson).

The subject hierarchies were referred to by both Malph and Harmonie. In Harmonie’s school it was the science and math departments who “think they are so great.” Malph observed that departments fight for attention, for who are going to be thought of as the “golden boys.” The winners in the competition receive status and recognition and usually they also receive the lion’s share of resources in the shape of time allocation, share of the budget, and location. In 1957 after the launch of Sputnik, “western” nations were concerned they had fallen behind in technology knowledge and were losing the space race. Countries including Canada, the UK and the US invested heavily in science education and developing new science curricula.

In addition to competition within the academic subjects themselves, there is also competition between the “academic” and “elective” subjects and the teachers of those subjects. Students need certain academic subjects in order to graduate but they are free to

choose between a variety of elective subjects which usually include art, music, and drama. Malph's situation illustrates issues of power involved in this arena of competition. In the spring term students who will be attending the school the following September attend for a day in order to "shop" for their classes for the next year. The teachers put on a display in order to "sell" their classes. They hope to sell to enough students so that their teaching load is filled and they won't have to teach in other departments. The influence of the neo-liberal market ideology is apparent in the language used. Malph, as the entrepreneur, has designed a new course in order to survive in the market place. She "sells" her product to the student who is the customer/consumer. Another market reference is used by the math and science teachers at Harmonie's school. When the English and history teachers express their concern over math and the sciences getting an overload of students, the math and science teachers respond, "It's student driven. It's what the students want," thus alluding to the supply and demand dynamics of the market place and casting the students as the customers.

Competition is not only experienced between departments but also within departments. In Malph's art department there is competition over who will teach the classes if there are not enough students to fill the classes. Department members fought and argued putting forth criteria for why they should teach classes thereby avoiding the unsatisfactory result of teaching in other departments. In the conflict the teachers invoke different criteria to support their claims. One teacher claims seniority, Malph claims education. Ultimately it depends on which criteria are valued more within the school and perhaps within the art department sub-culture as to whose claim will be given priority status.

Although there is the potential for teachers to compete with each other they may choose not to. Lil noted that when she was department head they shared out classes equally. Ben's experience was interesting. He said that he "let it be known" he did not want to teach Grades 9 and 10. One wonders if all teachers in his school could "let it be known" which grades they did not want to teach or was he treated differently because he was a man and/or because of his length of service (35 years). Ben described the situation of a young woman teacher who left because she could not stand the Old Boy network which governed the way in which teaching assignments were decided. Presumably she could not "let it be known" which classes she wanted to teach.

Another hierarchy which can give rise to rivalry and competition is that between enrolling and non-enrolling teachers. Those teachers who do not enrol classes, like librarians, resource room teachers, and special education teachers do not have high status in many schools. Lil refers to the commonly held perception that teachers become librarians when "they can't hack it any more." Lil is well aware of this disapproving attitude and thinks that other teachers regard her as having "an easy do." Lil described the strategies she has used to advocate for librarians and expressed frustration that Math teachers don't have to advocate for their subjects. Beatrice observed that the lack of regard for resource teachers pits teachers against each other.

Ben alluded to another arena of competition when he talked about conflict between staff members. He described how his colleagues argued over how to teach. It is reasonable to expect that teachers will have different opinions about approaches to teaching but Ben said that the teachers also had the attitude that "their way was the best." It seemed that these teachers had an investment in being "right" perhaps because they

have grown up in and worked in a system which rewards getting the “right” answer.

Chomsky (2003) maintains that the ranking of students in schools teaches them that “you’ve got to beat down the person next to you and just look after yourself” (p. 28). The prize in this competition is being “the best”; a teacher’s identity is perhaps invested in being “the best” because that is how they have gained and maintained status.

In schools there is often competition over material resources. Malph described what she regarded as the bullying tactics of some teachers at a meeting when they were discussing the allocation of resources. It could be that the schools’ resources were not adequate which may or may not be a deliberate ploy on the part of the various levels of administration, nonetheless the available resources could still have been handled in a fair and equitable way; but they weren’t. This led to some teachers resorting to aggression and bullying to try and secure resources for themselves.

Many of the arenas of competition I have discussed so far have to do with the attainment of what is regarded as status within the culture as a result of the various values and hierarchies within schools. There are other examples of competition which do not arise out of hierarchical status directly but which are initiated at local levels at either the district or school level. One of these incidents involved Beatrice when she was laid off from her teaching position and then used the agreed upon procedure to grieve the position held by another teacher. The procedure had been set up by the district administration, possibly with the agreement of the local teachers’ association; however, in an atmosphere in which everyone is fearful for their jobs, instead of attributing responsibility for what was perceived as an unfair procedure to the system, teachers become angry at each other. The “prize” being contested is that of having a job for the next year and avoiding being

laid off. In this competitive atmosphere teachers watch each other closely. They want to see what their colleagues are doing and how they are being treated by the administration. They watch to see if any one seems to be more favoured or gets rewarded more than others. Beatrice recognizes that the competitive ethos makes teachers more judgmental of each other and she realizes how easy it is to fall into that way of being. She has strong values and ethical positions and yet she finds herself at times being critical of colleagues. In her statement “I think they make us like that” she is acknowledging the influence policies have on the subjectivities of the teachers. When individual teachers make use of the grieving procedures for jobs they may incur the anger of the displaced teacher. In addition, the teacher who has initiated the appeal process may experience a sense of guilt or shame; at the very least they may experience the other teacher’s wrath. Perhaps the guilt concerns the feeling that one is complicit in the administration’s manoeuvres. By actively grieving the appointment a teacher may be perceived as doing more than those who are passively accepting their status as designated by administrative powers at the local level. The teacher’s action might bring the underlying lack of fairness to people’s attention. This is a difficult situation and one in which individuals may feel powerless, so rather than question the motives of the dominant power, they blame each other. In their actions they are exhibiting behaviour consistent with internalised oppression. The procedure which was set up by the local school board administration has the effect of pitting teachers against each other. The new policy governing the porting of seniority which Lynn talked about (see chapter 5) had a similar divisive effect on the staff in her school and, according to a BCTF staff person with whom I discussed this, it had similar effects in many schools throughout the province.

The incident Lil recounted about the principal posting a notice in the staff room listing staff contributions to the life of the school illustrates how administrative actions try to manipulate teachers to compete with and judge each other. The success of this manipulation can be seen in Lil's comment that in the past she had volunteered for many jobs but now she had cut back and was feeling defensive about having done so. In other words she immediately started monitoring herself and comparing herself to other teachers and the loads that they were taking on. She did not react to the fact that the principal had posted the notice. The competitive aspect was further highlighted by Lil's comment that earlier in her career she had looked askance at people she thought were coasting or not pulling their weight. This type of manipulation encourages comparison and competition between teachers and motivates them to think about how much they are doing and by comparison how little others are doing. The prizes offered in this competition are often the smiles and favour of the administrators.

Within schools there is the formal organisation hierarchy consisting of administrators, department heads, and teachers. In addition there are other informal hierarchies which, according to Hargreaves (1972), determine the status of every teacher in the school. He suggests that teachers strive for better status and so compete among themselves. In all of this striving there are winners and losers; there is also a sense of powerlessness because the values on which the hierarchies are based are not agreed upon by the teachers as a whole but are decided elsewhere and influenced by those with power in the system and in society in general. Hargreaves suggests that winners might feel pride, arrogance, and superiority while losers might feel sadness, shame, and a sense of inferiority. The competitiveness affects relationships between colleagues by eroding trust

and increasing individualism and isolation. There is resentment towards colleagues who seem to have more status, especially if it is perceived that they have gained it unfairly.

Chomsky (2003) asserts that schools “are extremely competitive because that’s one of the best ways of controlling people.” The increased competitive ethos makes itself felt in the “tone” of the school. Malph describes the situation in her school as “dog-eat-dog” where people are looking out for themselves and protecting their own interests. Troman (2000) refers to this when he talks about “low trust” schools and how they influence and affect peer relationships. The overall effect is the increasing individualization within the school and the potential breakdown of goodwill and community leading to isolation of individuals. Reay (2004) claims that the increasing competitiveness and individualizing which are fostered by neo-liberal policies give primacy to traditional male qualities. This is a point which I will discuss further in the next section on gender.

Gender and Emotion: Findings

In this section I am using gender as a social construct to refer to “the social expectations, social roles and social traits associated with being a man or a woman” (Citrin, Roberts, & Fredrickson, 2004). As I mentioned in a previous section Ben became aware of gender issues in his school. He saw how women teachers had been emotionally bullied by one principal he worked with. He recalled a female colleague who got fed up with the “old Boyism” which controlled the way in which classes were assigned. He also reported that a colleague with whom he has worked off and on with for many years

is STILL saying things such as, “I wonder IF I should ASK IF I can take a discretionary day to go and do..... (whatever)....?” My experience has been that

one does not ask for those things. One simply TELLS the AO what one's plans are, and then goes about them. She's nearing retirement and still has anxiety over approaching the AO about any such item.

He realizes that

There are so many who are involved in a constant emotional struggle that the rest of us simply do not see. I am forced to wonder how much of this blindness is my own responsibility. Have I just been oblivious or too busy, or chosen not to see what is really there?

Malph referred to the situations where she sees people “shouting and yelling” and using their anger “as a vehicle to convince and to gain control and I see it as bullying.” In response to my question “Is there a certain group of people who do that? Is there anything that would characterize them? I’m curious about who they are.” Malph responds:

They are personalities on staff and they are all men, which is interesting because I haven’t done women’s studies, and I haven’t centered myself out as a - you know - I wouldn’t say I’m not a feminist, but I am certainly - I didn’t think I blame men as a group for things, but I’m just seeing on this staff that it’s all men from different departments who are very good at ranting and roaring and behaving in ways that I see as absolutely unethical and immoral. They threaten, they swear, they verbally put down publicly.

In other instances of shouting and rudeness on staff, for example in Lynn’s and Harmonie’s cases, it has been men who have been identified as the actors.

In the foregoing examples it is mainly men who are identified as being rude and displaying anger aggressively but there are many other incidents which I have described

in other sections in which women are seen to be acting in an unfriendly and unkind manner. These include the women who excluded Bronwyn, the women at Edgeee's school, the woman who replaced Beatrice when she was on maternity leave, and the art department head at Malph's school.

Another area where gender seems to play a role is in the ability to "leave work behind." It is the women in the group who talk about the need to set boundaries. Rusty compares his approach to setting boundaries with that of his wife who had suffered from burnout. He said,

Typically I deal with stress; I set limits to my time. If somebody says 'Look do you have time for this?' if I do, I say so, if I don't [I say] 'I'm sorry, I can't do that' and I don't take every child's growth in my class to heart. If they're coming along with me, fine, if they're not, I will put the effort I can, but I am not going to worry at night about that sort of thing. But Joyce is not like that." He goes on to say that he thinks "men can segment their lives very easily ... most guys I know, once you close that door, it's behind you, it's over with ... I think guys can shut it off, the majority. But I really do not think it's as easy for a female to do that.

Gender and Emotion: Discussion

Patti Lather (1987) used the term "absent presence" to refer to issues of gender in education and, indeed, although I know that gender has profoundly shaped schooling, teachers, and teaching, its effects are difficult to distinguish because they have become taken for a "natural" state of affairs, in fact "school as an institution is often understood as gender neutral" (Gannerud, 2001).

There were only a few instances where the participants themselves drew attention to gender issues. One of those times was when Ben talked about his realization that women were the “victims” in the stories being told in the group discussion. This reminded him of incidents which he had witnessed in school in which women teachers had been treated unfairly by male colleagues. Ben said that he had discussed these gender issues with the women with whom he currently worked and he learned that their experience of school was different from his. He then reflected on his “blindness.” Kimmel (1993) suggests that the problem is that gender remains invisible to men. “Ubiquitous in positions of power everywhere men are invisible to themselves” (p. 29). Thus it could be that Ben simply did not see or it did not register as anything out of the ordinary because that’s “the way things were.” Another specific reference implicating gender was regarding men expressing anger. The teachers who shouted, yelled, and used their anger “to convince and gain control” at Malph’s school were all men and so were the teachers who were rude to Lynn.

Organization researchers have focused on how displaying specific emotions communicates status. In particular anger, frustration, and pride are associated with higher status workers, and sadness, worry, and guilt are associated with lower status individuals (Tanner, 2005). These status emotions also have gendered links. Men who expressed anger (non-aggressively) professionally were thought of as higher status than men who expressed sadness or women who expressed anger. Moreover the women’s anger was attributed to internal characteristics, for example “she’s an angry person” or “she lost control” while the men’s anger was attributed to external circumstances (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). Women are expected to be kinder and more modest than men and they

evoke critical responses from other people if they do not conform to these expectations (Brescoll & Uhlmann). Thus for the men in the participants' schools, to express anger could signify that they regarded themselves as higher up in the hierarchy than others on the staff. Equally, Ben's colleague who was anxious about asking for discretionary time off was displaying an emotion appropriate to her status within the hierarchy.

After I had written about these occasions on which men expressed their anger I looked at the incidents in which women had been cited as antagonists. As I mentioned in the findings these women did not appear to display anger openly as the men did. Their actions were quieter and were more passive-aggressive than the men's. It appeared as though the women's aim was to hurt emotionally and to isolate and freeze out their "victims" rather than to instil fear by displaying anger.

Phyllis Chesler (2003) begins her book "Women's Inhumanity to Women" with the words,

One upon a time, a long time ago, I believed that all women were kind, caring, maternal, valiant, and ever-noble under siege - and that all men were their oppressors. As everyone except a handful of idealistic feminist knew this was not always true. (p. ix)

She has now come to understand that women are capable "of cruelty and compassion, envy and generosity, competition and cooperation" (p. ix). Chesler suggests that one of the reasons it is difficult for a woman to acknowledge that "women, including herself, are aggressive and cruel is because these are not socially acceptable traits for women to have." (p. ix) In addition women rely on each other as confidantes and friends and differences in appearance or ideas are seen as threatening to egalitarianism. She suggests

that even the smallest difference can be interpreted by other women as abandonment” (p. ix). Chesler claims that women are reluctant to acknowledge aggression between women because they do not want to expose women, “who are already oppressed and maligned, to further harm” (p. x). Studies indicate that while women are not directly or physically violent they are highly aggressive and their targets are usually other women and children. Researchers found that women used “verbal abuse and indirect aggression” which includes “name calling, insulting, teasing, threatening, shutting the other out, becoming friends with another as revenge, ignoring, gossiping, telling bad stories behind a person’s back, and trying to get others to dislike that person” (Chesler, p.3). Cliques among women are the female equivalent to bullies; they “offer security to those who conform and cause insecurity to those who don’t” (p. 3).

Many of these characteristics alluded to by Chesler (2003) were apparent in the women’s treatment of Malph, Bronwyn, and Edgeee. Both Bronwyn and Edgeee suffered at the hands of a group of women, a clique, and all three of them could have been seen by their colleagues as being different. Certainly their contributions to the research group indicated that they were all strongly principled and articulate women and it is conceivable that other women might have viewed them as “different” and felt threatened by this.

Chesler (2003) suggests that “given the reality of female oppression, how women treat each other matters more not less.” She urges women to recognize that they have real power over each other and to use their power ethically and consciously. She quotes bell hooks who challenges “the simplistic notion that man is the enemy and woman the victim.” hooks maintains that we all have “the capacity to act in ways that oppress, dominate, wound.” Therefore it is the “potential oppressor within that we must resist”

(p.7). Chelser observes that women tend to choose peace over conflict which often means accepting the status quo and punishing any one who dares challenge it. She continues, “More women also need to choose ‘justice,’ which always challenges the status quo and which may be achieved only at considerable cost” (p.33).

Longino and Miner (1987) refer to competition between women as a “feminist taboo” and they hoped that by editing a book on the topic they would end the silence surrounding it. They note that feminists have been fiercely critical of male power games yet “have often ignored or concealed their own conflicts over money, control, position, and recognition” (p.1). They suggest if women could “muster the courage to examine the functions that competitiveness serves under both capitalism and patriarchy we might feel less guilty about being caught in its web” (p.2). These commentaries by Chesler (2003) and Longino and Miner indeed illuminate aspects of women’s treatment of each other which are often unacknowledged.

These examples of gendered emotions illustrate aspects of conflict and competition between women as well as men. All of them are influenced by the patriarchal structure of the school as an institution. Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2006) claim that patriarchy is seen as a key dynamic in structuring unequal relations between males and females within education. They describe patriarchy as

a complex and multi-levelled distribution of automatic power for men located in interpersonal relations and institutional structures. Social positions between men and women are hierarchically ordered, with men’s unequal access to disproportionate amounts of power resulting in the oppression of men over women. (p. 51)

However, as the findings indicate, women also exercise power over each other. I will take up this topic again presently when I discuss intersectionality.

In addition to referring to the oppression of men over women, the concept of patriarchy also accounts for the oppression of some men by other men. Recently in gender research there has been the discussion of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell, 2006) and other competing masculinities. Just as it is recognized that there is not a unitary discourse of femininities it is also recognized that there are a number of competing masculinities. Kimmel (1993) suggests that:

Men’s power over women is relatively straightforward. It is the aggregate power of men as a group to determine the distribution of rewards in society. Men’s power over other men concerns the distribution of those rewards among men by differential access to class, race, ethnic privileges, or privileges based on sexual orientation. That is, the power of upper and middle class men over working class men; the power of white and native born men over non-white and/or non-native born men; and the power of straight men over gay men. (p. 31)

The concept of “hegemonic masculinity” which is now widely used in discussions of masculinity refers to the “dominant and dominating forms of masculinity which claim highest status and exercise the greatest influence and authority” (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 2006, p. 206). Hegemonic masculinity is the “standard bearer” of what it means to be a “real” man or boy. Kenway and Fitzclarence suggest that currently “hegemonic masculinity” includes various characteristics such as

physical strength, adventurousness, emotional neutrality, certainty, control, assertiveness, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness, instrumental skills,

public knowledge, discipline, reason, objectivity and rationality. It distances itself from physical weakness, expressive skills, private knowledge, creativity, emotion, dependency, subjectivity, irrationality, co-operation and empathetic, compassionate, nurturant, and certain affiliative behaviours. In other words it distances itself from the feminine and considers the feminine less worthy. (p. 207)

It is evident from a consideration of the incidents of conflict and competition that the binary of gender is too essentialist to adequately describe the power relations between teachers. Flintoff, Fitzgerald and Scraton (2008) draw attention to the debates about ways to research and theorize difference in social life. They say that “structures of class, racism, gender, and sexuality are experienced simultaneously and cannot be reduced to independent variables” and they assert that the use of universalistic categories such as “woman” are recognized as inherently problematic. They have found the term *intersectionality* useful to describe “the complex political struggles and arguments that seek to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it” (p. 74). While I agree with their points here I also recognize with Reay (2004) that “Researchers are breaking down the unitary meanings of gender, race, etc. and that can lead to many foci and is potentially limitless, however it can impede generalizations across social groups which are necessary in order to promote social change” (p.33). Gender and gender relations are constructed and reconstructed through daily interactions with others and it is through the emotions experienced in those interactions that the power is “performed.” I enlarge on this aspect in the conclusion of this chapter.

Staff Meetings: Findings

Staff meetings, a focal point in a school's culture, were the site in which the participants observed the influence of the feeling rules. Most of the participants described their staff meetings and, while each person's experience was different, there were some similarities.

Time, encompassing both the timing of the meeting and the length of time the meeting took up, was a significant issue. Often staff meetings are held at the end of the day when people want to "escape" to their homes and families. Lil's staff meeting is held on a Friday after school. Her suggestion of an alternative day was voted down by her staff. Lynn's experience at a staff meeting motivated her to get involved with this research. She was giving information to teachers about Special Needs students and was met with "cat-calls and rudeness." She said that other members of staff, like the librarian, who also need to share information, are met with a similar response. Lynn speculates that the teachers who harass her want the meeting to finish so they can leave and this is the way they show their displeasure that she is "taking up time." Richard, who was a newcomer on his staff, told how staff members at his school had initiated a move to cut down discussion time. He observed, "they are almost stabbing themselves in the back by not giving themselves enough time to express how they feel." Many of the participants described how their peers discouraged discussion of issues through eye-rolling and other non-verbal behaviours.

Bronwyn says that "right now our staff meetings are pretty well oriented towards not going over an hour." The teachers express non-verbal messages to those who are speaking, indicating: "Keep quiet. Don't say anything." Those messages apparently come

“from about two thirds of the staff who are going to tolerate being there, but when 4.30 comes they are going to pick up everything and they are going to walk.” Bronwyn thinks that staff meetings should last no longer than an hour. “People are tired, they need to get home to their families, there are a lot of young people there with kids and they want to go home, they want to be with their families, and I understand that.” She says that “the few times that we have had good meetings have always been on the school change day, curricula implementation day. That’s one day where we have the whole day and things really get discussed.”

In Beatrice’s staff meetings there is also pressure to keep the meeting short; for this reason she says it “takes courage to speak up.” If she speaks she knows that “It takes up time – adds minutes before we can escape so I know I am holding people up. I brave it because I think certain issues must be challenged or alternative perspectives must be expressed.”

I used the concept of feeling rules in the questions I asked the participants about their staff meetings. To help them understand what I meant I sent an excerpt from my literature review which explained this concept in detail. It included the following quote:

“Feeling rules” are those which inform us that what we feel may be inappropriate (too intense or too mild, too long or too brief in duration, suitable or unsuitable for someone with our social identity) or that our manner of expressing our feeling is acceptable or outré. (Hochschild, 1983, p. 48)

Some staff meetings routinely begin with “good news” items. Ben observed that “Every meeting starts out with good news about members of staff and/or their families. Accomplishments, babies born, birthdays, or just plain silly stuff gets a mention.” There

are also refreshments. “We always have a tray of goodies, plus coffee or tea, juice and bottled water laid on by admin.” Bronwyn also lists the topics which are celebrated at staff meetings “Success in sports, fine arts, individual teaching successes, new babies, marriages, new staff.”

In Bronwyn’s school it is acceptable to express “happiness, a sense of celebration, and contentment. Irritation is sort of okay as long as it is brief and you are not too upset.” Lil said that at her staff meeting “anything can be expressed humorously. Frustration in humorous way, not a negative way, as that is whining.” There are certain emotions which it is deemed not appropriate to express in staff meetings. Bronwyn, Lil, and Edgeee list despair, open anger, sadness, annoyance, and sorrow as “not allowed or encouraged” by the “feelings rules” and thus by the staff in general.

In Beatrice’s school, too, humour is an acceptable way of talking about issues. She says, “It’s OK to be critical of students’ attitudes and lack of parental support” but it is “not acceptable to dwell [on these issues] as that is ‘whining.’” Lil also notes there is an accepted length of time for expressing emotion. “Generally the quicker you can move on the better, especially if you are expressing a negative emotion when you really need to find a solution for it.” Bronwyn concurs with this, “There is a real attitude of ‘move on – get over it.’”

Even when teachers are talking about policy issues which are affecting them like the “FSAs (Foundational Skills Assessment Tests) or government bullying,” Bronwyn says it is better to get annoyed rather than angry. In the same vein Beatrice suggests that it is also not acceptable to point out the contradictions between the government's goals for us and its lack of meaningful support to enable us to achieve them. For

instance, if we are talking about the school improvement plan and literacy is an element, don't bring up the closure of the library two days per week as an obstacle, because then you are just being negative, and dwelling on things that are beyond our control. That is whining and not productive, no matter how legitimate. And it's taking up time.

The way in which colleagues enforce these “rules” include non-verbal cues such as eye-rolling, looking at watches, and making comments out loud or to neighbours. Malph described graphically the response to her confrontation of the principal at a meeting when she said that she thought he was allowing himself to be bullied by the “shouters” on staff.

So there's people using emotions for power and yet nobody else will acknowledge that – if I bring it to the forefront which I've tried to do and say “Why is it that when he rants and raves and threatens and puts you folks down that he gets this equipment ?”... and I say “I think it's because he intimidates and bullies you” and as soon as I've used those words it's like “eeh” (audible gasping), you know you can hear the “fooh” (sucking in of breath through the lips) and “sshhh” in the room.

She concludes, “When I say the word ‘bullying’ it's like I said the worst word in the world.”

The issues of time pressure and feelings rules affect the discussion that takes place in staff meetings. Beatrice indicates that it takes courage to speak up because “you know you are taking up time.” In addition she sometimes feels frustrated

because I'll find myself in situations where I wish that I'd been stronger and I was angry and I had cogent arguments that I could have made, or at least shown how

angry I was, but I couldn't do it because I was tearful, and I would have lacked credibility and/or I didn't want to appear weak and so I just stayed quiet for fear of crying publicly.

This reminds her that

it's not acceptable to seem weak in any way, we can't admit we don't know how to do something or that we can't cope. That makes you lose standing with your colleagues and leaves you exposed and vulnerable to admin.

She cited a discussion which a colleague had tried to introduce about teachers' wellbeing.

"It's not acceptable to bring up the need to consider physical and psychic wellbeing because that is beyond our control and takes up time."

At Malph's school discussion is actively discouraged by the administration.

Malph observes:

It's not a meeting at all and those that are new and those that are a quieter nature or have different ideas, they don't get expressed because there isn't a forum for it and I know the administration, I know they say, "The last thing we want to get started in a meeting is a discussion because we don't know how to handle it."

Malph adds that some people

are comfortable enough on staff and have probably been there and have the history, the longevity enough, and also have the personality that they will speak up about an issue or question an issue or whatever, and their speaking up is often met with rolled eyes by many of the other staff.

At Ben's staff meetings teachers do get the opportunity to speak. "Business items are gone through quickly and efficiently, but no-one gets cut off if they have a real beef

that needs discussion.” Similarly Lil says that there is time for discussion at her staff meetings. In fact she thinks there is too much discussion. Her “principal likes to let ‘all voices be heard’ and sometimes people ramble on.” Harmonie also says there is too much discussion on items which should be decided by administration. “If we were to change the color of the toilet paper it would be brought to staff committee, which is just too much I find.”

Staff Meetings: Discussion

Staff meetings afford a time when all the staff can gather together in one place. The nature of the meetings and the amount of discussion and input the teachers have varies from school to school. The way the meeting is conducted depends on the leadership style of the administration and also the chairperson’s skill in facilitation. For example, Harmonie and Lil think that too much time is given to discussing trivialities at their staff meetings. At Lynn’s meeting the chairperson does nothing to address the disrespectful way in which some members address others. At Malph’s school, where there are 125 staff, the possibility does not exist for a meetings at which issues can be discussed by everyone. Instead those who have been there the longest or who are the “personalities” get their voices heard. In addition, Malph also observes that the administrators say they don’t want discussion because they would not be able to control it. Hargreaves (1972) says that staff meetings can be seen as “a mere exercise in public relations” since the administration is not bound by the views expressed by the staff. Ball (1987) said that discussions in staff meetings are typically initiated and controlled by the administration and the staff find themselves in a passive situation. They become recipients of information rather than participants in a discussion. Ball also refers to

Gronn's perception that in staff meetings administrators direct their staff to see part of the organizational world in their (i.e., the administrators') terms. The administrator has defined the situation and the staff are expected to fall in line with that view. Ball also claims that a staff meeting is a camouflage, a diversion. "The ritual of information giving and consultation is asserted over any substantive involvement in decision-making" (p. 240). The administration treats potential challenges to important matters as disruptions to the orderly conduct of the meeting or as beyond the scope of the agenda. In my own experience many teachers grumble about this but accept that it is "the way things are" and think that it cannot be changed.

Judging by the participants' descriptions of their meetings some teachers appeared to express resentment that they had to attend staff meetings. They seemed to begrudge the time. This could have been because the meetings are usually held after school at the end of the day when most teachers are feeling drained and wanting to get on with preparing for the next day or finishing with the present day's marking etc. The participants described how colleagues actively discourage discussion by non-verbal gestures and, in the case of Richard's school, by voting to cut out discussion. In this state of affairs it takes courage to speak up.

Where might this underlying feeling of resentment come from? Are teachers angry because they recognize that although there is the rhetoric of democracy, in reality the meeting is just for show and is one way in which administration and policy makers can not only remind teachers of their place in the organisational hierarchy but also have the power to enforce their compliance with regulations? Resentment has been identified as a common characteristic of oppressed groups (Barbalet, 2001; Musolf, 2003).

Sometimes it is consciously experienced and other time it is unconscious; in the latter case it can sometimes be explosive. It is described by Musolf as a reaction to treatment which is experienced as disrespectful, contemptuous, spiteful, or insolent and its object is a “defiant reaffirmation of one’s rank and value.” Resentment has sometimes been judged as a “nasty” emotion (Solomon, 1993). In contrast, Musolf cites Rawls as suggesting that the feeling of resentment presupposes equality and so it is linked with a sense of justice. Resentment incorporates a sense of being denied that which is our just due by people who unjustly have power over us and our life conditions. It can thus be thought of as a moral emotion (Rawls cited by Musolf). A crucial component of resentment is a feeling of powerlessness to take retaliatory action. Musolf suggests that people may perceive injustice if they think they have failed to “be successful” in life. Given the low status of teaching as a profession (Hoyle, 2001) and given that the men who are teachers are not as powerful in the organization as the administrators, perhaps some of the male teachers feel, albeit unconsciously, that they have not succeeded in the competition for achievement in life.

The experience of many of the participants is that nothing of importance to the teachers gets discussed. The agenda is set and does not include discussion on philosophical and ethical issues. Rusty said that good administrators make sure that potentially contentious issues are dealt with ahead of time. Ben said that at his staff meetings no one gets cut off if they have a “real beef.” The question is who determines what constitutes a “real beef”? Marshall and Scribner (1991) talk about “reality creation” in which “those with the power to determine which issues and questions are normal, relevant and critical and which will be viewed as illogical, irrational and wrong thinking,

are defining acceptable reality” (p. 351). They suggests that this type of “paradigm formation,” or setting of the parameters of the agenda, may be the most powerful micro political process in school organizations.

The participants described how expression of certain emotions was not deemed appropriate. Those emotions included despair, open anger, sadness, annoyance, and sorrow. When these emotions were expressed there was a sense from the rest of the staff that the people expressing them needed to “move on” and “get over it.” An allowance was made if humour was used in the expression of frustration. I will come back to this point later. The lack of expression of emotions means that issues about which individuals feel deeply are not discussed, validated, or taken seriously. This affects people on an individual level and can lead to a feeling of alienation and isolation, which is why some of the participants said that they volunteered for this research. In addition it affects the “health” of the organization and workplace. It does not provide a healthy environment for the teachers and, therefore the students.

Some teachers feel strongly enough on a matter of principle that they summon up their courage and speak out on issues. Beatrice and Edgeee both find there is an emotional cost to this. Their colleagues say there is no point in raising issues which one cannot do anything about. Beatrice says it is regarded as “whining.” The underlying issue here for some teachers seems to be a sense of powerlessness. They have no expectation that change will be forthcoming and so they wonder what is the point of raising the issue. They would sooner get home earlier.

Where do these feeling rules come from? Barbalet (2001) refers to Bourdieu as positing that norms are never guides for action but are outcomes of practices and are

therefore constantly subject to revision, differentiation, and instability. Generally they reflect the dominant interests. Emotions are known to excite people and passion can be contagious. If there were no norms governing the “appropriate” expression of emotions there would likely be more dissention and a more active pursuit of alternative agendas. The interest of the status quo and dominant power is served best by constraining people’s expression of emotion. Thus it is easy to understand why the administration would not want certain emotions to be expressed, but it is more difficult to understand why teachers would also wish to restrain emotions. I believe this reflects the values of western society in general where emotions are still thought to have no place in public or professional settings. The response of the other teachers to Malph’s questioning the administrators at the committee budget meeting demonstrates how uncomfortable people are when someone of lower status challenges and expresses anger to someone with more status. It would have been obvious to all the committee members that some men were “shouting and using their anger as a vehicle to get what they wanted” as Malph described it, but her confrontation and statement that she thought the administrators were being bullied made everyone feel uncomfortable. She had broken the rules. Musolf (2003) states that most people within a culture are conformist.

Beatrice observed that it was not acceptable to seem weak and to not be able to cope. Lynn also alluded to the teachers’ fear of seeming weak and feeling vulnerable about discipline. In school, control is a central issue which rests on negotiated accommodations between teachers and students. Students are not in school voluntarily so there is often an underlying resistance which always has the potential for erupting. In his discussion of the status of teachers in the public’s eye, Hoyle (2001) suggests that the

tenuous relationship between teachers and their pupils is a barrier to increasing the prestige of the profession. He stresses the fact that the potential for disorder is always present and that no other profession faces the problem of control with so few ways in which they can enforce order. According to Hoyle, the ever present need to maintain control and the consequence of even the partial loss of control shapes the image of the teacher in the public eye to the detriment of the professional status. Control is also an issue for the administration who need to be able to be seen to control their staff. Thus the administration at Malph's school did not want to have a discussion at the staff meeting because they felt they would not be able to keep control.

Some of the participants said that frustration and annoyance were acceptable according to the feeling rules if the topics were dealt with in a humorous way. Humour is seen to perform an affiliative function within groups and to increase cohesiveness. Greatbatch and Clark (2003) explain different theories of humour and the purposes for which they are used and the effects they achieve. The "disparagement and superiority theory" links humour to hostility and malice, viewing it as a way to increase one's self-esteem and feelings of superiority by disparaging and laughing at others. Relief theories explain humour and laughter in terms of "the diffusion of tension that has been either intentionally or unintentionally built up in a situation" (p. 1519). Incongruity theories contend that laughter is related to surprise following the resolution of perceived incongruities. Humour can also be used to lessen the threat of what a person is saying. It allows people to make a statement and deny the statement at the same time; they can pretend they were "only joking." Thus a person can introduce the expression of a forbidden topic while at the same time undermine the seriousness of it. The function of

the humour expressed at staff meetings would vary from context to context, but the common factor seems to be that it undermines the seriousness of what is being expressed.

It is apparent from what the participants said about the emotions which were not appropriate at staff meetings that the so called “negative” emotions of sorrow, anger, despair were not welcomed. Although the participants did not name it explicitly, it was obvious that fear was also seen as not appropriate as the participants talked about the unacceptability of being seen as weak. This seems to be based on not showing vulnerability. Control is central and that includes control of emotions.

Why are these emotions avoided or unacknowledged and what is the result of this avoidance? At one place Bronwyn referred to these emotions as “dark” emotions.

Greenspan (2003) also refers to them as dark because she says they are kept in the dark by our society. These emotions are shunned and treated as if they are weak, almost immoral, and something to be ashamed of. One of the reasons for this could be that they are painful emotions and difficult to tolerate. Sometimes people fear that they might not be able to survive them and that they will be overwhelmed by them if they allow themselves to experience them (Greenspan). As a society we advocate exerting control over them. We have a number of sayings like “get a grip,” “stay in charge,” and “get a hold of yourself” all of which are metaphors of dominance and subordination.

Another reason that people might favour avoidance of some of these “dark” emotions is the influence of recent body-mind research, some of which implicates emotions like anger in life threatening illnesses. However, what is not made clear, say researchers like Pert (1997), Maté (2003), and Greenspan (2003), is that it is suppressed emotions which are often the culprit. When emotions like anger are experienced and

expressed they do not get “stuck” in the body. In fact research has shown that patients who are grumpy and irritable have better recovery rates than those who are pleasant, smiling, model patients (Maté).

In recent years emotional pain, for example, grief and despair, have been pathologized. Greenspan (2003) claims that emotional pain does not mean we are sick nor does it represent a personal failure. In fact emotional pain is a universal fact of life. However, we live in a society in which emotions are denigrated and men have been raised from boyhood to disassociate from their emotions. When emotions are pathologized they are seen either as “bio-chemical irregularities” in which case they can be treated with chemicals or they are seen as problems stemming from childhood in which case inadequate parenting can be blamed and this can be fixed by therapy (Greenspan).

The irony is that it is precisely the failure to mindfully acknowledge these emotions that leads to some of the violence and destruction which people blame on lack of emotional control (Greenspan, 2003). Greenspan explains that the suppression of grief can contribute to depression, anxiety and addiction; that benumbed fear can give rise to irrational prejudice, toxic rage and acts of violence; and that anger often arises out of aborted grief, despair, and fear and it is used as a shield against vulnerability. She claims that addictions including to drugs, alcohol, work, power, consumerism, are often the result of the inability to tolerate painful emotions.

Greenspan (2003) introduces the concept of emotional ecology which connects the private experience of despair with the heartbreak of the world. By pathologizing certain emotions she claims we have lost the sense of despair, grief, and fear as being

universal experiences and as being responses, not just to personal situations but also to social and global conditions. She maintains that if the emotions were acknowledged within community rather than shunned or dealt with privately with a therapist there would be a release of collective emotional energy and motivation directed towards addressing some of the social injustices which give rise to the anger and despair. The expression of emotions could provide a collective rallying point for groups of people to address injustices like poverty and oppression.

I think that the emotional rules in place in the participants' schools are not so different from the emotional rules that govern many interactions throughout North American society. The participants said that the emotions of sadness and anger were not welcomed; that annoyance and frustration were allowed as long as they did not last long and it was even better if they were expressed with humour. Beatrice said that in her school teachers were not "allowed" to focus on the fact that there was contradiction between the policies of increasing literacy and cutting funding which resulted in the library being closed two days a week. The reasons given for the intolerance of raising such matters was that there was nothing they could do about it. It seemed that there was a sense of powerlessness and hopelessness which was difficult for people to countenance.

Revisiting the Language of "Positive" and "Negative": Findings

In chapter 5 which focused on how the participants made sense of their emotions, I discussed how they used the words "positive" and "negative" to refer to themselves, to other people, to their emotions, and to circumstances. I also discussed the repercussions this could have on the way in which people thought of themselves, other people and their emotions. I outlined how the concepts of positive and negative are aligned with good/bad,

right/wrong, and moral/immoral. In this chapter I look at the incident in the group in which a participant used the word “positive” and the effect it had on the group as an example of the type of interaction which takes place everyday within schools.

As I have previously described, all the participants had used the words “positive” or “negative” in their interviews and I had therefore intended raising the topic a few weeks into in the forum but it transpired that I introduced the topic the second week because of an interaction that occurred during the first week. Harmonie posted her introduction towards the end of the first week after a number of other participants had posted theirs. In her introduction (see chapter 4 for full text) Harmonie describes how she is just learning how to manage her emotions around teaching. She observes that, although there have been a number of “positive” experiences, she and her colleagues have focused primarily on negative emotions in conversations. She states that she is trying to make a change. “I want to shift my focus to positive feelings (especially regarding work). I am grateful for the great students that I have, the positive administrative support and improved (although far from perfect) relationship between the BCTF and the government.” Richard, who had already posted his introduction, quickly responded with: “Hi all. Thanks Harmonie for reversing the tone to a more positive spin.” The following day I was due to post the next topic and so I invited a discussion about what people understood by “positive” and “negative” (see Appendix F, Week 2). Group members responded with a variety of ideas and reactions and the thread of positive/negative continued to reappear throughout the discussion group and into the last interviews.

I will begin this section by summarizing some of the opinions and points of view expressed. Edgeee responded first. Her opening remarks were: “Brilliant topic, Judith! I

was wondering how I was going to broach this business of ‘positive’ that Harmonie brought up.” Edgeee said that she has had strong reactions to colleagues who tell her to “smile” and “be positive.” She is intrigued by the ideas of negative and positive and wonders if it is just at this point in history “when people immersed in negative realities are intent on looking only at the positives.” Edgeee compared the newspaper and business worlds, in which she worked for a number of years, with teaching and schools and maintained that she has never met “so many people in one place (in all my life) who are so intent on overlooking the negative -- as seeing negative stuff as a bad thing .” She continued by saying that in the business world no one really talked about being positive or negative but in her teaching experience she has found that any time teachers question or challenge “the way things are” they are labelled or dismissed as being negative. She also observes that “many teachers ... seem to be driven by a compulsive need to be positive and provide solutions.”

Harmonie clarified her position by saying that she didn’t mean “putting on an artificial smile, pretending that things are going right when obviously they aren’t.” She also agreed that “we need to experience, feel, and embrace the whole spectrum of emotions that range from negative to positive.” She asked the group members if they had heard of the process of “Appreciative Inquiry” (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros 2003). or of the book “The Secret,” (Byrne, 2006) both of which, she explained, are about “focusing on what you want rather than what you don’t want.” She said that the union (BCTF) and many school districts were starting “to look at this method of inquiry as a means of changing things for the better.” She concluded, “I think that it could bring our system out of the state of constant feelings of despair.”

Harmonie posted information about Appreciative Inquiry and its website which is where the following explanation comes from:

The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken; since we look for problems, we find them. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them. ... Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in an organization. The tangible result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the organization wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been. Because the statements are grounded in real experience and history, people know how to repeat their success. (Hammond, 1998, p. 6)

Harmonie also posted the website for “The Secret” (Byrne, 2006) which is a book and a DVD. The following excerpt is from the home page of the website.

The Secret reveals the most powerful law in the universe. The knowledge of this law has run like a golden thread through the lives and the teachings of all the prophets, seers, sages, and saviours in the world’s history and through the lives of all truly great men and women. All that they have ever accomplished or attained has been done in accordance with this most powerful law. Without exception every human being has the power to transform any weakness or suffering into strength power, perfect peace, health, and abundance. (<http://www.theseecret.tv/>)

Malph also talked about the perspectives illustrated by the book “The Secret” (2006) and Appreciative Inquiry. She suggested that

you can think of things in a negative sense and you can think of things in a positive sense. Both frameworks are addressing the same issue, for example

“Poverty.” You could go on and on about “We’ve got to stop the hurt against the poor” or you could say “These are some things that we could do to eliminate poverty” and that’s what you focus on which is far more constructive.

Beatrice said she was relieved to see my suggestion “that we discuss positive and negative as the terms relate to our emotions.” She said she had “felt shut down” when Richard responded that it was good to “have a more positive spin.” She then talked about her experience as it related to positive and negative. She said she sees so much wrong with the system “we are constantly being insulted, asked to do more with less, our students are being disrespected and exploited, and their needs not met” and she wants “to be positive and see the positive” but she says “what is happening isn’t positive.” She said it feels like “some kind of emotional disconnect. ... It's just hard to feel positive when you love your profession, but want out of it at the same time!” After having said this Beatrice said that she now felt like “SNL's (Saturday Night Live's) Debbie Downer, and like I should find a positive note on which to end.” She added that she is not a “perpetually negative person” and that she feels guilty when she is negative. She feels the same way about her place on the staff, “I need to be more positive so that people will want to be around me. So I have to ignore what is really happening and how I really feel.”

Ben described the “negative issue” as a “hot-button topic.” He finds himself “struggling against negativity all the time.” He named two kinds of “negative spirits that try to take down the dedicated teacher.” One is “the right-wing agenda of the current government” and the other is the “Staff-room Whine.” He also named as negative “the rehashing of bad experiences by many of my colleagues, who like to get on the staff room

rant once in a while.” He added that he gets “positives from all over the place, now that I have been teaching for so long (35 years). My positives keep me in this profession.”

Sophie described two interactions which she couched in terms of negative and positive. One interaction, she said, “was all very NEGATIVE talk in terms of whining, only pointing out the problems, etc. yet we ended the conversation on a really positive note.” She thought the reason may have been humour. “We were able to see the absurd aspects of our problems and laugh about them together.” She described another experience which she felt “touched on the positive/negative so clearly for me.” She had a conversation with a woman in her choir, also a teacher. They both responded “Fine” to each other’s inquiry of “How are you?” Then they looked each other in the eye and the other woman said, “Well actually I’m happy and positive on the outside, under that there’s a layer of irritated, under that there’s a layer of overworked. You?” Sophie says that she responded in like kind. “We chatted for a minute about which was the greater feat - to be able to show a smile to the world and hide the lingering under-layers, or to be able to admit these layers to each other at all!”

Sophie realises that how she responds in certain situations is different from how she is feeling. This has become apparent to her in her meetings with the principal who is reprimanding her.

And I’m noticing that I keep the negative emotions for my venting after the fact, and while I listen to my principal “give advice” I feel like the only appropriate emotion for me to show is GRATITUDE, “thank you so much for these great ideas from your experience.”

After writing this, Sophie apologized to the group, “Sorry the tone is getting kind of angry or something and I don't feel that right now as I write this” and then she reflected again on what she had just written “... interesting aside there about apologizing for angry or ‘negative’ tone eh?”

As I mentioned in the section on staff meetings, Lil and Beatrice identified the idea that if a person raises certain issues at staff meetings “you are just being negative, and dwelling on things that are beyond our control. That is whining and not productive, no matter how legitimate. And it's taking up time.” In our closing interview Beatrice reflects on this aspect some more.

The whole idea that it's okay to be positive; that it's not okay to be negative; because if you're positive you're being productive, you're doing good things in the school, you're of voice of action, and those are all positive. ... The positive people are all about helping kids. The negative people are all about whining. Beatrice connected this with Richard's comment “I'm glad you're getting onto a positive...” and she adds “and those of us who have real issues, we're not positive, we're not ‘moving on’ apparently.”

Bronwyn raised the subject of the relationship between language and thought. She references

Sapir and Whorf (linguists) [who] developed a hypothesis that says that there is a relationship between the language we have/use and how we are able to think about our world and behave in it. The parameters of a person's language/vocabulary have an impact on how that person is able to think.

She goes on to wonder,

If we have language that eliminates the dichotomy (positive and negative) of the labelling of our emotions, would we be able to fundamentally alter our world because we no longer have that binary system defining our emotions? Would we be able to conceive of and therefore bring into reality, a world where we are more holistic? If we saw rage and anger as being as fundamentally creative and life giving as joy and love, would we be able to make peace instead of war? Heal trauma instead of burying it? Find solutions instead of conflict?

Revisiting the Language of “Positive” and “Negative”: Discussion

After Richard responded to Harmonie I was aware that his message could be interpreted by the participants who had already posted their introductions, as a signal that some of what they had talked about was not the sort of thing he wanted to discuss or thought should be discussed. The group had not had time to establish norms of responding to each other and so I was uncertain if any of the participants would “call” Richard on his comment. By commending Harmonie for reversing the tone to a more positive spin Richard was, by implication, chiding those who had posted for being “negative”; in other words, he valued what Harmonie was expressing and did not value some of the views and emotions already expressed. I did not ask the participants how they had felt about the exchange but they might have been embarrassed because their self-presentation had been called into question, or they might have felt annoyed, as Edgeee seemed to, or they might have felt “shut down” as Beatrice said she did.

It is instructive to look back at how the participants had introduced themselves prior to Harmonie’s posting and to get a sense of what Richard thought of as “negative.” The people who had introduced themselves thus far were Sophie, Lil, Lynn, Beatrice,

Richard, Rusty Bronwyn, and Edgeee. The full content of their postings can be seen in chapter 4. The details in the participants' introductions to which I surmise Richard was referring include Lynn's introduction of herself as harassed and overwhelmed; Beatrice's description of her reaction to the stripping of teachers' contract in 2002 by the government and her expression of feeling isolated; Bronwyn's statements that since the liberal government had taken office she had found teaching hard because of the impact on the children; and, Edgeee's assertion that there was an emotional cost to being a thinking person in elementary school teaching. All of these points were made within postings in which the participants also referred to their enjoyment of teaching, their contact with their students and colleagues, and many other interests. The point I am making here is that if the postings were assessed line by line as positive or negative there would be an overwhelming number of positive statements. Richard's reaction was probably representative of a large number of people and illustrates the dichotomizing response many people have to certain issues.

What effect do a remark like Richard's and the use of the word "positive" have on people and their interactions? Edgeee said she has a reaction to people telling her to "Smile and be positive" and her observation is that when anyone questions the status quo they are labelled as negative. Colleagues thus put pressure on other teachers who are seen to question or express a dissenting opinion or even to talk about particular topics. The topics people had raised in their introductions included how they felt about the effects of government policies on classroom conditions and the fact that the students were being short changed because there was less money and classroom composition issues were not addressed. This connects with Beatrice's comment about what issues can be talked about

in staff meetings. She said that you cannot talk about issues which you cannot do anything about such as the contradiction between the literacy policy and the closing of the library. People and their opinions are not acceptable if they are not deemed positive. It is almost as if they, the teachers, are judged as being immoral. The pressure exerted by peers and by public opinion puts Beatrice in a difficult place. She knows that people who are considered positive are popular and those who are thought of as negative are not. She wants to be considered and consider herself positive but she sees so much wrong in the world of education that she cannot ignore how she is feeling. She says she feels guilty as if she is contravening the social rules. Beatrice suggests that in her school being positive means “being productive, doing good things in the school,” being the “voice of action.” Being positive reflects the attitudes, feelings and beliefs endorsed by the majority. “The positive people are all about helping kids. The negative people are all about whining.” In this way the teachers’ focus is kept on the students, and the difficult issues of ethics, policy, and philosophy do not get raised. This is similar to the reality creation issue I mentioned earlier (Marshall & Scribner, 1991) in which those with power decide which issues and questions are normal, relevant, and critical or “positive” and which are viewed as illogical, irrational, and wrong thinking, or “negative.” Once again, as in the staff meetings, it is not only administration who do the silencing but also colleagues.

Rusty, Harmonie, and also Kernel, in his introductory interview, referred to “negative” people on their staff. In this connection Ken Wilber (1991) suggests that “the projection of negative qualities is very common in our society for we have been duped into equating ‘negative’ with ‘undesirable’.” As a result of this equation, instead of befriending our “negative” qualities we alienate them and project them on to other

people. We then criticize those qualities and judge those people for possessing that characteristic without seeing it in ourselves. According to Wilber, Jung refers to this as projecting the shadow. Jung suggests that every person contains within themselves the potential for good and ill. As children grow up and develop they are socialized to realize that only certain emotions, thoughts, and behaviours are acceptable within their family and society. They gradually repress those unacceptable parts of themselves thereby forming their shadow. The irony is that those emotions or characteristics have more potential to harm and frighten us when they are unacknowledged. The process of owning or taking responsibility for one's shadow is to live with what Jung called the "tensions of opposites," holding both good and evil, right and wrong, light and dark in our hearts. I often wonder if that is the process which occurs on staffs especially with the members of staff who are labelled "negative." Hargreaves (1972) also refers to this process when quoting Elizabeth Richardson's explanation for labelling teachers. She suggests we use our colleagues to externalize the conflicts that we cannot handle in ourselves.

It is not easy for us to face in ourselves the good and the bad schoolmaster (sic), the strong and the weak classroom personality, the blind and perceptive student of human relations. We therefore look for mirror images, not of our total selves but of the irreconcilable parts, the bits we reject.... in the way the members of a staff group try to deal with their own internal conflicts by splitting off the good and the bad parts of themselves. They can all identify with the good teacher into whom they have projected their own best qualities and use him or her as a sort of ego ideal or ideal self. At the same time they get rid of their own ineffectiveness by

projecting it into someone who seems less competent than they feel themselves to be, using him as a scapegoat to carry their burdens. (Hargreaves, 1972, p.406)

In the following section I discuss the book and movie called “The Secret” (2006) and the process called “Appreciative Inquiry” (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003) to which Harmonie and Malph referred. They suggested that these ideas represented possible alternatives to address “problems” in organization and in the world. “The Secret” has enjoyed something of a cult following since its release as a movie on the internet in March 2006. It is based on the “law of attraction” and was reportedly influenced by the book “The Science of Getting Rich” by Wattles (1912). The website promises to reveal “the secret to prosperity, health, relationships and happiness.” According to the law of attraction people get what they think about. As an illustration of this “attraction,” the film shows a man who is worried about being late for a meeting who becomes stuck in a traffic jam and so, indeed, he arrives late. The law of attraction demands that one does not focus on what is “wrong.” Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider et al.) has been promoted, especially in organizations, as a process for organisational change. According to Fineman (2006) the underlying idea is that “fundamental revolutionary change occurs when the ‘positive core’ of organizational life is touched” (p. 280). Positive change is said to emanate from positive emotions that people feel when they are appreciated and valued. The Appreciative Inquiry process encourages people to recall and recount joyful experiences in the organization. It privileges positive experiences and times and counsels against “negative talk” and “deficit language.” The process focuses on major successes, peak performances, and positive visions. Fineman

contends that by exclusively favouring positive narratives Appreciative Inquiry fails to value the opportunities for positive change that are possible from negative experiences such as embarrassing events, periods of anger, anxiety, fear, or sadness. He characterizes the Appreciative Inquiry approach as “anti-learning” because it does not allow crucial information to be used and thus undermines the capacity for individuals and groups to engage in anything more than superficial changes. By focusing solely on positive experience Appreciative Inquiry fails to recognize the complex and emotionally ambiguous situations which exist in a workplace (Fineman). Books like “The Secret” (Byrne, 2006) and “Appreciative Inquiry” (Cooperrider et al.) present a very simplistic thesis which we find seductive because we want to be able to find a simpler way of living and dealing with our increasingly complicated world.

Bronwyn refers to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and raises the question of whether we could change the way we saw the world by changing our language. Sapir and Whorf developed their hypothesis, concerning the interaction between language and thought, during the early part of last century. Recently their hypothesis has been taken up in neuro-linguistics and termed the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis (LRH) (Tohidian, 2008). The LRH proposes that language influences the way people perceive and think about the world. According to Tohidian, there are four main views about the nature of the relationship between language and thought. Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis (LRH), largely associated with Whorf, holds that the language we speak influences the way we think; Piaget, claimed that the way we think determines the use of language; Vygotsky held that language and thought are independent but gradually become interdependent during infancy; and Chomsky proposed that language and thought are independent.

Bronwyn wonders, “If we have language that eliminates the dichotomy (positive and negative) of the labelling of our emotions, would we be able to fundamentally alter our world because we no longer have that binary system defining our emotions?” and she goes on to wonder what the effect might be of conceiving the world more holistically. Bronwyn raises the issue of binaries in connection with dichotomizing emotions, but her question could apply to any of the binary constructions which shape how we view and talk about our world. Chen (2008) discusses cooperation and conflict in organizations and suggests that usually these two experiences are treated separately or as though they are opposites. He proposes a framework for seeing how the two interrelate based on the Chinese tradition of synthesizing and integrating diverse elements. The Chinese philosophy of the middle way “stresses holism rather than analysis and paradox rather than exclusive opposites. The both/and perspective, a mindset that views paradox as comprising two interdependent opposites, is deeply embedded in the Chinese language. He illustrates with a number of Chinese words which are made up of two characters embracing contradictory ideas. For example, the characters

“inside” and “outside” together mean “everywhere”; “conflict” can be expressed by joining the characters for “spear” and “shield”; ... and “life” and “death” together become “turning point.” Perhaps the most well-known Chinese paradox is *wei-ji*, the Mandarin word for “crisis,” which is formed by combining the characters for “danger” and “opportunity.” (p. 291)

He continues:

In the Eastern context, paradox implies a consideration not of individual parts and their existence in a state of conflict, but of the whole and how it links diverse and

conflicting elements; consequently, it comprehends the interdependencies and interrelationships of the disparate pieces. It is a conception rooted in a long-held worldview of integration and balance. Based on the presumption that opposites are inherently interrelated, the middle way is a dynamic concept that seeks accommodation and inclusion. (p. 291)

Bronwyn's suggestion of looking for a different way of conceptualizing opposites holds promise in many areas of life

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored some of the emotional processes of school culture which emerged during the discussion group. I focused on aspects of peer relationships which included collegiality, conflict, and competition. I also examined the part played by gender. I then looked at the feeling rules and the language of "positive" and "negative" as two mechanisms which influence which emotions are expressed and which emotions are silenced. I am going to conclude by suggesting some connections which can be made from the preceding sections. I focus on the concepts of power and emotions.

The themes of hierarchy and competition wind their way through all the sections. There are the formal hierarchies of the organization which comprise the administrators, the department heads, and the teachers in each school. There are the hierarchies of the social structures which showed up mainly as gender but which also include class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Together with these formal hierarchies were the other informal hierarchies which are created through the acquisition of status according to the shared values of the organization; for example in secondary schools there were the hierarchies of academic subjects, and of enrolling and non-enrolling teachers. In addition

there are other informal hierarchies reflecting characteristics which are valued within the institution of education; these could include education credentials, the demonstration of clear thinking and articulate speaking. Other hierarchies would be based on what is valued within each school, for example competence, intelligence, the ability to control a class, sports team coaching skills. In addition to these hierarchies are a myriad others which reflect what is valued by society in general; attributes such as beauty, physique, extraversion, on so on. Clark (1990) maintains that “hierarchy is everywhere permeating social structure and everyday interactions” (p. 332).

In interactions with peers the amount of power each person can exercise depends on where he or she is standing within the hierarchies and which particular hierarchies are salient in the interaction. For example in Lynn’s interaction at her staff meeting when she was attempting to give information about special needs students and she was shouted at by a couple of teachers, she had very little status relative to the shouters because she is a women and they are men and she is a teacher of special needs students while they are teachers of academic subjects. Lynn may have had more education or credentials than the other teachers, she might also have been considered more “attractive” but those characteristics did not count in this interaction. However, in a different situation, for example discussing the special needs caseload with the other special needs teachers, Lynn may embody more power than her peers. All of the people involved are women and all are teachers of special needs children but Lynn has more education and more experience than the others. It is evident from this illustration that power is fluid. Foucault’s (1986) conception of power as something which circulates through people’s minds and bodies seems appropriate for this context. He suggests one should not attempt

to analyse power by “starting at its centre and aiming to discuss the extent to which it permeates into the base” (p.234). Instead, he says, we should be “concerned with power at its extremities in its ultimate destinations with those points where it becomes capillary in its more regional and local forms” (p. 234). These “points” could be the locations of the individuals at the time of each particular interaction. He suggests that “power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization” and as individuals “circulate between its threads” they are always in the “position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power.” This image allows for the different positions of each individual person relative to others and relative to the matter under discussion. In each interaction the participants would embody certain power accrued from their positions on all the hierarchies. Their power would only be relevant in a particular interaction with a particular person or people at a particular time. However status on some hierarchies is worth more than status on others; for example, in the participants’ schools gender and position in the organizational hierarchy count more than other hierarchies.

Questions of status elicit emotions and are elicited by emotions. In each interaction it depends on who has the most power as to whose emotions are legitimized as being “appropriate” and whose emotions are discounted as being “over reactions.” In the section about feeling rules the participants talked about what emotions were appropriate for what events. Shields (2005) suggests that “appropriateness” of emotions prioritizes whose interests are promoted.

Clark (1990) claims that the way emotions work in hierarchies concerns the creation and negotiation of power, rank, standing, and social place in the hierarchy. Construction of a sense of one’s place relative to others involves self-evaluation and

comparison with others. These processes evoke feelings such as pain, shame, pride, pleasure, and empowerment. Thus Lil compares herself with other teachers in her school, especially the two whom she calls the “super teachers” who are on many committees and are involved in many activities.

There’s a couple of workhorses on staff who take on everything, and you feel guilty. There’s one woman on my staff, Brenda, who does everything. She’s the university district numeracy leader, she organizes the ProD. Just in comparison you think ‘I’m nothing’ ... but the amount that she is doing, what she is accomplishing, is about three times what the average person does. How she does it, I don’t know.

In these self-evaluations Lil feels guilty and thinks, “I’m nothing” but in her interactions with the “womyn” on staff in the reading club she initiated, she feels a camaraderie and describes all the women as “articulate, reflective, and committed.” In her self-evaluation and comparison with the women in this particular interaction she obviously feels her power is more or less equal to theirs, this could possibly be partly due to the fact that she instigated the club and maybe she leads it.

In everyday situations we process a host of verbal and non-verbal cues that may evoke emotions which relate to our place relative to others. In the constant situation of the school and workplace we re-enact many of those evaluations and self evaluations each day and elicit those same emotions. Boler describes the teacher as “an assemblage of different lines of power” (2005, p. x). I would suggest that emotions are the conduits of that power.

Chapter 8: Collectivity: An Antidote to Individualization

In this chapter I look back at the previous three chapters and establish some connections between them. In chapter 1 I stated that the purpose of this research was to explore the emotional aspects of teachers' relationships with their peers, to explore what happened when they had the chance to discuss these experiences with each other in an on-line setting over a period of time, and also to explore if and in what way these individual experiences were connected with the schools' cultures. In other words I was interested in exploring connections between the individual emotional experiences and the culture of the schools and the social world in general. I wanted to see if it was possible to identify what Reay (1998) meant when she said that staff relationships are not simply interactions playing out in schools but they are located within and influenced by government and local policies. I was particularly interested in identifying mechanisms used in everyday interactions which accomplished the connection between the individual and the social world. In this chapter I make some suggestions about those associations and how they are articulated. In order to trace the links I first review some of the findings and discussion from chapters 5 and 7, I then look at findings from chapter 6 and discuss the significance of the on-line discussion group.

In chapter 5 I focused on how teachers made sense of their emotional interactions and suggested that the strategies they used were ones which reinforced the perspective of the individual nature of emotions and the constraints about sharing them with other people. In chapter 7 I looked at the emotional processes of the school cultures which emerged through the on-line conversation. I focused on aspects of peer relationships

which gave rise to emotional experiences, specifically collegiality, conflict, competition, and gender issues. Competition and patriarchy were seen to influence the dynamics of the workplace. In looking for links I was reminded of the feminist slogan “The personal is political.” In “The Sociological Imagination” Charles Wright Mills (1952) makes the connection between “the personal troubles of milieus” and the “public issues of social structure” (p.8). The jacket notes to Zygmunt Bauman’s (2001) “The Individualized Society” explains the link thus:

By bringing into view the many complex dependencies invisible from the vantage point of private experience, sociology can help us to link our individual decisions and actions to the deeper causes of our troubles and fears – to the ways we live, to the conditions under which we act, to the socially drawn limits of our imagination and ambition.

In chapters 5 and 7 I noted and discussed two processes which appear to be links between the individual, private experiences and the cultural or social. The processes or mechanisms were the use of the words “positive” and “negative” and the norms embedded in the feeling rules of each school. These mechanisms were affordances which both constrained and allowed the expression of certain emotions, opinions, and points of view in the workplace. In chapters 5 and 7 I examined both of these processes in detail. I gave examples from the participants’ interactions of how they worked to silence some opinions and emotions while validating and reinforcing other opinions and emotions. The emotions which the participants said were discouraged were those identified as the “negative” or “dark” emotions of sadness, anger, despair, and implicitly fear (see chapter 7). These are the emotions which Greenspan (2003) suggests connect individual people

with the pain of the world. Both of these mechanisms work through the binary process. They divide the world into two, validate one constituent of the hierarchy which automatically dismisses and devalues the other.

Before discussing these two mechanisms further I am going to enlarge on the concept of individualism. In chapter 5 I focused on the ways in which the participants made sense of the emotional aspects of their interactions with their peers and I identified certain strategies that the participants used in their sense-making. These strategies were based on theories developed within the psychological discipline of emotions in which emotions are regarded as individual, inner, and personal (Lupton, 1998). Most of these theories were developed in the academic discipline of psychology where researchers have tended to study single emotions and categorize them according to certain properties and dimensions (Solomon, 2007). The research on which these theories are based has, to a great extent, been experimental research carried out in laboratory settings and has involved the researcher manipulating the experimental conditions and measuring the emotions in an effort to document the variation in individual differences and to establish what is “normal” (Rose, 1996, p.58). This approach is described by Solomon as “an unfortunate reductionism, a tendency to ‘primitivize’ the emotions ... and clinically examine them through a microscope, so to speak, with tweezers and rubber gloves” (p. 5). This means, I suggest, that the theories are oversimplified and deal with emotions in very narrow and restricted conditions.

The individual approach that characterized the ways in which the participants made sense of their emotional interactions is a reflection of the individualism of today’s society (Rose, 1996). Bauman (2001) asserts that “Casting members as individuals is the

trademark of modern society” (p. 45) moreover he points out that “this casting is not a one-off act like divine creation; it is an activity re-enacted daily” (p. 45). The individualization is a recursive activity as “modern society exists in its activity of individualizing as much as the activities of the individuals consist in the day by day reshaping and renegotiating of the network of the mutual entanglements called society” (p 45). Thus in interpreting our emotional interactions as inner and private we re-enact the individualism each day. Bauman explains how individualization becomes apparent in the everyday world.

[People are told] if they fall ill it is because they were not resolute and industrious enough in following the health regime. If they stay unemployed, it is because they failed to learn the skills of winning an interview or because they did not try hard enough to find a job or because they are, purely and simply, work shy. If they are not sure about their career prospects and agonize about their future, it is because they are not good enough at winning friends and influencing people and have failed to learn as they should the arts of self-expression and impressing the others. This is, at any rate, what they are told – what they have come to believe, so that they behave “as if” this was indeed the truth of the matter. (p. 47)

In other words, people are held responsible for their own wellbeing and fate. Rose (1996) refers to this process as the “responsibilization” which, he says, is contributing to and even constructing the “enterprise culture.” Thus the ways in which the participants made sense of their emotional interactions reflected and, indeed, perpetuated the culture of individualism.

I am now going to explore some of the effects of silencing ideas, opinions, and emotions through language and feeling rules. I turn first to what happens when discussion of the so-called negative is discouraged. Maté (2003) talks, with tongue in cheek, about the “power of negative thinking.” He says, “as an antidote to terminal optimism I have recommended the power of negative thinking” (p. 244). He then goes on to clarify that what he really believes in is the power of thinking per se, in other words thinking about all aspects of a situation. He maintains that by qualifying “thinking” with the adjective “positive” we exclude those parts of reality that strike us as “negative” and this, he claims, can lead us into trouble because most people who espouse positive thinking seem to focus only on some of the facts and disregard all the facts they need to assess a situation. Maté is a hospital physician and much of his experience comes from families who are dealing with serious illness which is why he refers to “facts,” but his observation could be extended to also include perspectives, opinions, and ideas. Maté observes that study after study indicate that “compulsive positive thinkers are more likely to develop disease and less likely to survive” (p. 257). He maintains that “genuine positive thinking begins by including all our reality and it is guided by the confidence that we can trust ourselves to face the full truth whatever that full truth may turn out to be.” In fact he suggests that by denying or repressing what we think of as the negative observations, points of view, or states of reality, by avoiding confronting all of the facts, we keep ourselves in a state of anxiety. He suggests that the “compulsive optimism” form of positive thinking is a coping mechanism people develop as children when they are not psychically able to deal with all that goes on in their lives. He further maintains that “positive thinking” is “based on an unconscious belief that we are not strong enough to

handle reality” (p. 245). If people allow this fear to dominate their lives as adults they engender a state of “childhood apprehension.” He insists that “negative thinking is not a doleful, pessimistic view that masquerades as ‘realism.’ Rather it is a willingness to consider what is not working. What is not in balance? What have I ignored?” (p. 244). He acknowledges that “negative thinking of the honest sort” will lead into areas of pain and conflict people have avoided in the past but, he says, “it cannot be otherwise” (p. 244).

Thus Maté (2003) argues that many people who call themselves “positive thinkers” do not appraise situations critically but ignore some of the facts, emotions, and perspectives. In the discussion about positive and negative in the on-line forum Edgeee’s perception was that she had never met “so many people focused on being positive” as the teachers she had met since starting her teaching career. Why would that be so? Maté suggests that “compulsive optimism” is a coping mechanism which originates in childhood and may still dominate an adult’s life. I surmise with respect to teachers that this may be so but that there are also other reasons for their focus on the positive. Since Edgeee was referring to elementary schools I imagine most of the teachers she was referring to would be women. Women teachers are in a situation where they are expected by the public and also expect of themselves generally to be the carers and nurturers of students. In addition, they are often working with students who are distressed or who live in distressed conditions which they, the teachers, are powerless to change. Teachers also are the recipients of criticism and blame for the perceived shortcomings of education. The status of teaching and teachers is not high (Hoyle, 2001) and morale and tolerance for criticism are low (Troman, 2000). Consequently teachers are working in situations and conditions which could potentially arouse anger on many fronts but women in general

have been socialized not to express anger. When people repress anger they cut themselves off from the impulse and motivation which emanates from the emotion of anger for changing and improving their situation. Rather than experiencing their powerlessness, they find it less painful to focus on the so-called positive. Although I have concentrated on the women here it was not just women in the discussion group who avoided the negative. Richard commended Harmonie for making a turn to the positive and Rusty interpreted the discussion as being focused on the negative.

A consequence of focusing on the positive and sanctioning people who raise “negative” topics is that many issues are not discussed. Thus in Beatrice’s school the subject of teacher wellness was not discussed at a staff meeting. In Bronwyn’s school some teachers called her “negative” when she explained at a staff meeting that the \$350 which was being given to every teacher in the district for field trips and learning resources for their classroom was coming out of the board’s surplus which was accumulated, not because of good budgeting, but because the board decided to cut services for children with special needs by employing fewer Teaching Assistants and reducing Learning Assistance time. These examples illustrate that many issues which profoundly affect the lives and working conditions of the teachers and thus the lives and learning conditions of the students are not discussed.

I now turn to examine what happens when certain emotions are perceived as not being appropriate to be expressed according to the feeling rules experienced by the participants in their staff meetings. In chapter 7 I discussed how the expression of the emotions of anger, fear, grief, and despair are not only deemed inappropriate in schools but are also not acknowledged in society in general. I referred to how these emotions

have been pathologized (Greenspan, 2003). I also introduced the concept of emotional ecology which claims that it is through the so called “dark” emotions that people connect with the pain of the earth (see discussion in chapter 7). I want to continue that discussion now by considering the repercussions when individual people and society do not acknowledge and discuss the emotions of sorrow, fear, and anger. Greenspan (2003) maintains that when people become disconnected from their pain about conditions in the world they lose their ability to connect with each other and use their emotions as an impetus to act to alleviate suffering and oppression. Eco-activist Joanna Macy (Macy and Brown, 1998) has also written about this topic. Her doctoral work drew upon systems theory from which she explores the metaphor of feedback. She maintains that as “conscious, embodied beings endowed with multiple senses” (p. 25) we are geared to respond to events. For example, we instantly jump out of the way of a moving truck or we dash to put out the flames of a fire. Our ability to respond has been an essential feature of life throughout evolution. Macy and Brown explain that “in system terms, response to danger is a function of feedback [which is] the information circuit that connects perception to action.” Macy and Brown maintain that by repressing the emotions that register our perception of the pain in the world we are blocking the feedback loop.

They list a number of reasons we may repress these emotions including the psychological fear of pain, the perceptions that pain means we are unwell, the fear that it is immoral to experience despair, the fear that we would fall apart if we did experience despair, the fear of morbidity, society’s dictum to “keep smiling,” our guilt at being complicit and contributing to some people’s suffering by participating as consumers, our

guilt at our lack of action when governments engage in war-making activities, fear of causing distress to our loved ones and children by talking about what we feel, fear of appearing weak and emotional, and the fear of experiencing powerlessness. Macy and Brown (1998) maintain that the western model of being in control of one's life at all times discourages people from confronting issues which remind them that they do not exert ultimate control over their lives. As a result people shrink their attention to those areas where they believe they can exercise some direct control. In time this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy; the smaller the sphere of attention, the smaller the sphere of influence and people become as powerless as they feared to be. Repression takes its toll on people's energy and sensitivity to the world around them. In his study of Hiroshima survivors, Robert Lifton termed the dulling of people's response to the condition of the world "psychic numbing" (cited in Macy & Brown, p.34).

When people repress their emotions of sorrow, fear, and anger and concentrate on "business as usual" on the surface they often experience an internal split because they are still troubled underneath (Macy and Brown, 1998). The split causes people to feel isolated because they are not able to talk to others about what is deeply troubling to them. Not talking may produce a psychic dissonance whereby people begin to question their own sanity. People suffer alone and apart. They are unaware that others are struggling too and are thus deprived of mutual support. Macy and Brown suggest that repression results in a frantic and desperate pursuit of short term gratification and hedonism and in blaming and scape-goating. Although it is understandable that people repress emotions which are difficult to experience, Macy and Brown maintain that pain is natural and healthy. It only becomes dysfunctional when it is misunderstood and repressed. During the past three

decades Macy and Brown have developed a body of work which they call “the work that reconnects.” They present workshops which are designed to give people the opportunity to reconnect with the emotions which they may have repressed. People are able to reconnect with their pain in a safely structured, ritualized way, witnessed and acknowledged by the community. The idea which undergirds the workshops is that of deep ecology, developed by Arne Naess, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life and shifts away from the present day emphasis on the separateness of each individual person. I take up this point in connection with my research participants in the following sections.

Thus far in this chapter I have drawn attention to the fact that the strategies the participants used to make sense of their emotional interactions with their peers were ones which reinforced the perspective of the individual nature of emotions and the constraints about sharing them with other people; I have also recalled that competition and patriarchy were seen to influence the dynamics of the school cultures. In addition I have discussed two processes which influence the expression of opinion and emotions and I have looked at how that repression affects society. I now turn my attention to the discussion group on which I focused in chapter 6.

At this point I want to return to the jacket notes on Bauman’s (2001) “The Individualized Society” from which I quoted earlier in this chapter. A further quote says that “sociology can help us to see that if our individual but shared anxieties are to be tackled effectively they need to be addressed collectively, true to their social not individual nature.” For my research participants the discussion group provided the forum

for looking at the personal issue of concerns about emotions collectively from a social perspective.

My original intention in setting up the on-line group was to trace how the participants' ways of making sense changed in the light of new information and group discussion. As I described in chapter 6, the experience of talking in the group and paying attention to emotions made the participants more aware of their emotions and sometimes led them to articulate and make sense of their interactions differently. They also considered new information and theories of emotions which encouraged them to re-evaluate their previously held perspectives and assumptions. They thought critically about the use of language, in particular the use of the words "positive" and "negative" and they thought about how the feeling rules affected what they could and couldn't express. Importantly, the value of the research for the participants themselves was in having a place in which they could engage in conversation with each other about the topic of emotions and talk about emotional interactions. Malph, Beatrice, and Bronwyn had a chance to talk about issues which had bothered them a few years previously and they all found their reflections with a group of teachers helpful in processing the event and making new meaning.

There are two aspects which I now want to address; firstly, I am going to consider what the forum represented in its form of being a group in which people were invited to talk about emotional experiences, and secondly, I am going to examine how the particular way in which the forum was constituted, in other words as an asynchronous group in which the participants' identity was protected, supported, and enabled the examination of emotions and past emotional experiences.

Firstly, the forum provided a space which not only allowed and encouraged but also validated the discussion of emotions both from an intellectual perspective, in other words talking about emotions theoretically and philosophically, and also from a personal perspective of recounting emotional interactions and experiences. It was also a place where people talked about topics which elicited emotions; for example they talked about “the job of teaching” and their guilt about not doing enough; they also talked about their feelings about the government policies and how they affected what they could do for the children and the morale of teachers; and they also engaged with the contentious issue of their own complicity, of whether by trying to carry on and do the same work with fewer resources they were actually being complicit with the corruption of public education. The participants were able to discuss these issues in a forum in which they did not have to monitor what they were saying and what emotions they expressed, in contrast to the way in which they felt constrained to censor themselves at school. This particular issue was illustrated within the first week when Richard commended Harmonie for her “positive spin” and I opened up the discussion in a way which explored the use of “positive” and “negative.”

Symbolically the group represented a collective space in the individualized world. Many of the participants had expressed a feeling of isolation in school; here in the forum they were able to connect with others and lessen that feeling of alienation. In their work with emotions Macy and Brown (1998) are of the opinion that the connections people make with each other emotionally and about emotions are fundamental to taking action to counter the destructive and oppressive practices in the world. They maintain that the establishment of a safe place in which people are able to express and witness the

expression of those emotions which are commonly termed “negative,” in other words those whose expression is constrained by societal norms (except anger in “appropriate” situations), is fundamental to being able to reclaim and process those emotions both on an individual and on a social level, connecting them to the wider structural issues of power. Several of the participants talked about difficult emotions either directly or indirectly as these excerpts from four of the participants illustrate. Portions of some of these excerpts have been used before to illustrate other points but I think they bear repeating here.

Bronwyn:

I find teaching, since the Liberal government came into power and declared war on teachers, a real challenge. It is hard to look into the eyes of the children who need help in my class and not be able to give them the time they deserve. I have watched services that they desperately need disappear. Bill 33 is a failure – and it fails the kids in my class who need the most help. I really dislike the injustice of that – and am really uncomfortable with the way these students are being ignored. The most needy are the most disenfranchised – that can never be good! ... I love the moments in class when their eyes light and they smile, filled with pride at another challenge met. If they must endure these large classes and lost services, then I will give them the best that is in me to give. I will endure along with them but I will not endure in silence. I will speak for those students with special needs and for all the others whose needs are not being met – loudly and repeatedly. Somehow that helps to heal my heart. ... Sometimes I think of giving up and going to work in Korea or Japan – or maybe in Africa – who knows?

Harmonie:

In a previous message, I had promised to write more about Appreciative Inquiry. Below is the URL of a website and a quotation about what AI is. I know that our union and many school districts are starting to look at this method of inquiry as a means of changing things for the better. I think that it could bring our system out of the state of constant feelings of despair.

Malph:

At the school I teach at there are over 125 staff members and our staff room is the size of my little apartment living room. The staff washroom has only 2 stalls and the vanity is 20 inches wide with a tiny sink. There's no place for staff to gather and talk except in classrooms – even department offices are so small they cannot facilitate any sizable group. My point is there is indeed a tremendous need for teachers - people who work with people- staff to gather and "debrief", to "whine" as Sophie says, because such sharing of emotions amongst common individuals, those who can empathize, is a vital requirement for one to move past the sorrow, the hurt, or the elation of humanistic situation. Our "modern" school structures do not allow such informal moments just by the very nature of its design. But the result of this restriction is extremely detrimental to the emotional health of the workers it contains. ... I am looking at another career and just playing with the idea, right now it's just in the beginning stages. Do I leave teaching because of the sorrow attached to it or do I stay in it?

Beatrice:

I really feel like so much is wrong in the system and we are constantly being insulted, asked to do more with less, that our students are being disrespected and

exploited and their needs not met,.... But I don't just disagree with it or roll my eyes about it. I feel demoralized, disrespected, and depressed about it. The actions that this government and our local school board have taken against teachers and the BCTF and our local teachers' association and students don't just make me angry: they hurt my feelings. I really feel like we are working so hard and caring and doing our best, and where is the recognition for that (oh, I know: it's the new provincial teacher award that I'll be eligible for!)? Instead, it's insults at the bargaining table, insulting legislation, insults at the College of Teachers, an insulting teacher registry, and insults to our students and our professional judgment in standardized tests. And this is where I feel disconnected from my colleagues, who seem to just disagree and roll their eyes and carry on. They don't seem to feel the same level of emotional reaction that I do. ... Actually, I love teaching, really. It's just hard to feel positive when you love your profession, but want out of it at the same time!

It was not the purpose of the forum to explore specific emotions or to serve as a therapy group, but it was apparent from what some of the participants said that the group was useful to them in supporting and enabling them to process these difficult emotions and to form connections with others in the group. They felt empowered by these experiences to go out into their community and seek out and engage in conversations in which they validated emotions. The forum seemed to have bridged the private-public divide which has kept emotions private. Malph's last posting in the group captures this:

So my point here is that I'm learning, through my heightened awareness of emotions through this study, that emotions are my highly reliable guide, they are a

deep and powerful knowledge - thus I should not ignore them, nor suppress them, but rather embrace them and celebrate my capacity for them. Too bad that culturally we are still reluctant to give them so much credence. By separating mind from body, as our medical field sees emotion, and reason from emotion, as our pedagogical field sees emotion, we are isolating and denigrating emotion to a status of "counter" or "un" and thus we oppose it. BUT ... Emotion is our humanity. It is one of our greatest gifts. Enough with the oppression! Let's get it out of the closet and on to our sleeves. The next time I'm criticized for "emoting" I'm gonna emote more. :) I have loved and struggled through this study. Judith, AND ALL, thank you, for I think... no, I feel I have grown a bit.

Malph alludes to rethinking the value of emotions. The group has provided a space in which she and the other participants can challenge the norms governing the discussion of and valuing of emotions and thus contribute to establishing new norms. In her last post, Bronwyn also alludes to going out into the community:

One of the things I have learned from this group is that I have allowed myself to become more isolated because I have kept my emotions to myself more as I age. Being part of this group has shown me what I am missing. It has given me a world where I can live more fully, be more alive – a place where I can reflect on the experiences of others, their feelings and emotional responses to situations and thereby shed light on my areas of confusion, sadness and struggle. I have learned to frame things differently from seeing through the emotional insights of others. This has been a time of growth for me. I am going to try to create this in my community – much harder because the privacy has made it easier for us to be

wholly truthful and open about our emotions with each other. I will miss you all.

This morning, I am holding each and every one of you in my thoughts and sending good energy to all of you.

Bronwyn also raises the issue of whether she can recreate the group conditions in community without the condition of privacy which, she said, made it easier for the group members to be more truthful and open with each other. This brings me to the second issue which is a discussion of how the particular form of this forum enabled and supported the examination of emotions. In particular I focus on the conditions of anonymity and asynchronicity.

The fact that the group members did not know each other's identities (apart from the issue which led to Richard's withdrawal which I have described in chapter 4) meant that there was no previous relationship history of friendship or antipathy between the members which might affect the conversation. It also meant that the participants had no known mutual friends or connections. These two conditions meant that they did not have a social presence or an identity which they had assumed in the past and which they needed to preserve in this discussion. In other words they were free to construct themselves and present themselves to the group in whatever way they wished. A further consideration is that sometimes when people talk about emotional topics and examine their interactions they experience shame because emotions are considered by a number of people to be weak and therefore shameful (as illustrated by the findings in the previous chapters). Malph and Beatrice may have experienced shame when they reflected on their actions in their "Troubling Tales" but the fact that their identity in real life was unknown allowed them the freedom to "be truthful" as Bronwyn expressed it. The expression of

possible shame eliciting information was also afforded by the safety developed in the group.

The expression of deep and personal feelings can also occur in face to face interactions. People recount conversations they have had on flights where they have talked to strangers about personal issues. The significant element seems to be that the people are not emotionally connected and they have no expectation that they will develop a relationship and see each other again. These same conditions applied within the group. In the excerpts I quoted earlier in this section from Malph, Bronwyn, Harmonie, and Beatrice they are expressing deeply felt emotions. As already stated they do not have pre-existing relationships with the group and they have no expectations that there will be any continuation of the relationship when the group is over.

The asynchronous feature of the forum enabled and supported the examination of emotions in a variety of ways. The lack of visual cues, while sometimes being seen as a constraint, was in this case also seen as helpful. There were no social context cues or the usual indicators of status and power such as race, class, gender, age, and beauty. In an early posting Lil referred to Malph as “he” because Malph had not indicated she was a woman. The participants only disclosed such information as they wished to. The absence of visual cues is also important in the area of physical presence and turn-taking in the conversation. In face to face groups people convey power and meaning by their facial displays and other non-verbal behaviour. They may frown or sigh or change their posture to indicate displeasure or disagreement. They may lean forward to indicate they are claiming the next turn in the conversation. These actions are often inhibiting to people who are more timid and reflective. Ben said he is not good at speaking at meetings. The

asynchronicity meant that people could participate in their own time and without fear of being cut off or interrupted and thus not getting their turn, or of their contribution being met with disapproval. This does not mean, of course, that there are no power displays within this medium. People can show power by the length of the message they compose, by the language they use, by whether they acknowledge or withhold acknowledgement of other people's messages, however the conventional face-to face indicators are not present.

The on-line group afforded the participants a measure of control which they do not necessarily have in face to face groups. I mentioned in the last paragraph that the participants had control over when and how they participated. Another feature which afforded them control was the fact that they were writing instead of speaking. I described in chapter 6 how writing allows people to distance themselves and reflect on what they have written. The time lapse and the thoughtful process affords the opportunity for second thoughts before they post their contribution. It is possible to exert more control than when one is in a face to face group and may blurt out something spontaneously which one regrets immediately.

The asynchronous group was a novel space which did not have pre-established norms about the discussion of emotions, unlike the usual setting in which colleagues converse in schools. The participants had the freedom to develop their own rules which allowed them a sense of control and power which is often missing in discussions in other venues. The internet is also seen as a place where people connect differently. It represents a place of networking and grass roots groups, sometimes working towards social change. The internet is also seen as a place for discussing sensitive issues. People with many

different ailments and issues that are thought of as private and personal and are not easily discussed in face to face conversations participate in on-line chat groups and support groups. In these groups there is homogeneity; everyone is discussing the same illness or issue so there is an expectation that people will understand each other and there is a predisposition to establish commonality and rapport. The focus is on the issue and not the people. These expectations may have affected how the participants viewed the on-line forum which meant they were predisposed towards being more open than they would have been in a face to face group.

In conclusion the forum represented a space for looking at the personal issue of concerns about emotions collectively from a social perspective. The participants engaged in individual and group meaning making. The forum also represented a space in which the participants could voice concerns which were deemed “inappropriate” elsewhere thereby enabling them to experience a measure of control and power which is missing from other areas of their teaching lives. Another way in which some of the participants exhibited agency was by using the forum for what they needed, which was to recount stories and hurts from the past. During the passage of the discussion group we named and challenged the effects of labelling emotions as positive and negative and we exposed how the feeling rules constrained the discussion of certain emotions. In talking about the effects of neo-liberal discourse in higher education Davies (2005) says,

These discourses change but only after a great deal of individual and collective work has been done. In understanding the constitutive forces of any discourse we can begin the work of seeing how to dismantle it when we find ourselves controlled by a discourse that runs against conscience and stifles consciousness.

You could say that it is a vital part of academic work to understand the dominant and indifferent discourse through which inequalities of various kinds are put in place and held in place and to explore the means of disrupting them, over-writing them, of speaking a different kind of existence into being. (p. 2)

In the discussion group the participants were engaged in the process of understanding how the dominant discourses of emotions worked and finding ways to dismantle them. They acknowledged and gave voice to their “difficult” feelings which Macy and Brown (1998) suggest are the individual person’s connection to the pain of the world, and in so doing they connected with each other, thereby resisting the individualization which characterises much of today’s society, and creating opportunities to build community.

Chapter 9: The Conclusion

In this chapter I present both a retrospective and a prospective look at my research. In a series of reflections I look at (a) my own emotional experience of doing the research, (b) the concept of power as I came to understand it, (c) the process of the research in respect to whether I think I was successful in achieving my purpose, and (d) my research strategies. I then consider the implications of this research for teachers and teacher educators and I make suggestions for future directions.

My Emotional Process

As this inquiry is about emotions it seems appropriate for me to reflect on my own emotional experience of conducting the research. Looking back to the beginning of this project I realise how difficult it is to establish the “beginning.” Was the beginning when I entered the doctoral programme knowing I wanted to focus on teachers and emotions? Or was it when I left teaching in the public school system after having been pink-slipped for two successive years and having experienced great anger at what was happening in the system? Or was it when I used to watch the sunsets from my bedroom window as a young teenager and wonder if other people felt as deeply as I did? For as long as I can remember I have been intrigued, fascinated, and disturbed by the emotional side of life, however it was my experience of being laid off from teaching in the mid 1980s and being in the situation of needing to “bump” a colleague in order to get a job, as I described in chapter 1, that provided the “disorienting event,” to use transformative learning terminology, which led me to examine emotions not only as individual and

private phenomena but also as social and cultural phenomena which serve functions in the social world.

Engagement in research, whatever the topic, has the potential to be an emotional experience but specifically focussing on emotions increases that likelihood. I realized from my experience as a counsellor that discussing emotions might involve me in what is often referred to as a “parallel process.” This is the phenomenon whereby the counsellor may find herself experiencing emotions similar to those of the client; in other words the client’s issues raise similar issues for the therapist. In the first chapter I referred to Nias’ (1996) speculation that one of the reasons for a lack of research on teachers’ emotions was that inquiring into others’ emotions might bring one too close for comfort to one’s own. The issue of the researcher’s emotions is an interesting one. Zembylas (2007) describes how traditionally, academic research “emphasised objectivity and rationality and the feelings of the researcher were to be controlled as a nuisance to his or her exploration” (p. 66). There have been a number of articles in the last few years on the issue of researcher’s emotions. I agree with Harding and Pribram (2004) when they suggest that “the investigator’s ability to feel with the subject enables conversation and the re-telling of experiences and confidences that constitute the data, the interpretation, analysis and writing up” (p. 878). I was therefore alert to the possibility that issues which the participants discussed might evoke an emotional response in me.

During the interviews and forum I was indeed moved by some of the discussion topics and stories that participants shared but I did not find that they elicited in me an emotional response of such intensity that would indicate the issue was a “hot” one for me also. I was inspired and influenced by the courage the participants displayed in speaking

out in their staff meetings. In my personal life I found myself agreeing to participate in a radio discussion about the privatisation of education. Previously I would have refused the invitation because I would have thought that I didn't know enough about the topic and consider that I don't think well "on my feet" but when I thought about the acts of courage the participants were engaged in everyday in defence of their values, I accepted the invitation.

The only uncomfortable emotions I experienced during the forum period were connected with my concern about whether the participants would post or not. Sometimes I found myself getting a little anxious when there were longish gaps between the postings. It was necessary for me to remind myself that while the research forum was the main event in my life that was not so with the participants. They had fulltime jobs, families, and private lives to attend to. I think my concern also had to do with the lack of visual cues. I was unable to tell from their faces and postures whether they were still engaged in the discussion or whether they were getting tired or disinterested. In a face-to-face group I would be able to sense the energy and engagement level and would address that directly with the group members and ask them how they wanted to proceed.

It was not until I started working on the interpretation of the data I found myself encountering emotional issues, especially when I was writing about the valuing of emotions as a way of knowing. Unbidden memories came into my mind; times when I had stood at crossroads in my life and I had let myself be persuaded by another person's rational or logical argument because my arguments were based on emotion and that "didn't count." I also found myself moved by music as I write in the following email to a friend, a fellow PhDer.

I have remembered the other thing which had me in tears last week! It was the KCTS programme about Pete Seeger and the "Power of Song." Just hearing all those protest songs - "We will not be moved", "If I had a hammer" etc took me right back to the Aldermaston Easter marches and the CND – the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament - and the camaraderie and hope we used to feel slogging through the countryside and the suburbs of London - often on rainy days - the sense of belonging and being part of something that was so huge and so important - a sense that the government could not ignore us - numbers estimated at over 100,000 people - all crowding into Trafalgar Square.

I looked on YouTube at some film clips of those early marches and looked up the other songs - one which was written for the CND and named the CND anthem sung to one of the miners' union song tunes. I read interviews with people who continued to go on the marches whenever they were held – which was intermittently. This past spring one was held to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first march in 1958. The people who were interviewed also talked about the optimism from the early marches and said that it wasn't there in the later marches.

I found it all profoundly moving - happy to have been part of the movement, missing that sense of solidarity through music, and the optimism that such a great number of people surely must influence the government. I think it all connects to my sense of what I perceive happening in the world today and the influence of corporate capitalism and it again connected to that theme of positive/negative where people don't want to know about what they call the negative (and who can blame them!) and that "reconnecting" workshop I went to earlier in the year.

All grist for the mill so not a despairing despair but just feeling a weight (!) of sadness - existential angst? my age? Finding meaning and processing the interpretation of emotions in my writing and my life!

My participation in this research project afforded me the opportunity to reinterpret some of my own past emotional experiences in a similar way to the participants who told their “Troubling Tales.” It allowed me to come to a deeper understanding of the phenomena of emotions and the ways in which they are experienced as individual, social, and cultural both in theory and in practice. While I was engaged in the analysis and interpretation stages I heard the English author Michael Frayne say in a CBC interview that we write about other people in order to understand ourselves because we can’t see ourselves. He said that we need to know who we are through their responses. This perspective resonated with me.

Reflection on Power

In a research project which specifically concerns itself with power I believe it is more necessary than ever for the researcher to be aware of her own power and how she uses it. In this context I am referring to power that I would have had in this project as the researcher in relation to the participants. I wanted to be able to use my power with care and to keep a balance between letting the group follow their own direction in the discussion and encouraging them to respond to the focus questions. While the research clearly did not fall into the realm of participant action research because the participants were not equally involved in all the steps in the project, there was a sense in which it was collaborative. In their book “Community Research as Empowerment,” Ristock and Pennel (1996) assert that to engage in the process of research as empowerment “researcher and participants alike need to work actively to create a milieu in which they can attend to each other’s experiences, views, differences and uncertainties, and at the same time build a sense of mutual trust that will allow them to move forward together”

(p. 11). Ristock and Pennel speak of their participants as not simply responding to questions they were asked in interviews, they also “recounted, reflected on, and interpreted their own experiences” (p. 82). Similarly the participants in my research recounted, reflected on, and interpreted their own experiences.

Empowerment has not been a term with which I have previously been comfortable. It sounds paternalistic as though “I am going to do something for you and to you.” It separates the “researcher” from the “researched.” In her 1991 book “Getting Smart” Patti Lather says the following:

I use empowerment to mean analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognising systemic oppressive forces and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives. ... Empowerment is a process one undertakes for oneself; it is not something done “to” or “for” someone. (p.4)

I can subscribe to Lather’s interpretation of empowerment as it accords with my own values and beliefs.

I believe that the participants and I did engage in actively creating a milieu in which we could attend to each other’s experiences and build a sense of mutual trust (Ristock and Pennel, 1996). I also had the intention that I was not undertaking the research so I could empower other people but recognised I was doing it for myself with others to “change the conditions of our lives” (Lather, 1991).

Reflection on the Research

What was the purpose of my research? I set out intending to explore the emotional aspects of teachers’ relationships with their peers and what happened when they had the chance to discuss their experiences with each other in an on-line discussion group over a

period of twelve weeks. I also proposed inquiring into how the teachers' individual experiences of emotional interactions were connected with the schools' cultures. I wanted to explore how talking together about interactions would influence the ways in which the participants made sense of their emotional experiences. I was interested in the current, small, daily interactions rather than the more emotionally upsetting events for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to focus on how power is enacted subtly in everyday interactions, those interactions which are often "taken for granted" as being the normal state of affairs and which we do not think about or question and which are the ways in which culture becomes reproduced. Secondly, I considered that it was my ethical responsibility not to arouse strong emotions in the participants unnecessarily. I communicated my intention to focus on everyday happenings to the participants in the letter of consent, the group protocol, and the interviews.

I described in chapter 4, how the participants took the opportunity to recount distressing events which had occurred in the past and which were still painful to recollect. I realised that the forum represented a safe place for the telling of these episodes and that this fulfilled a need for the participants. It demonstrated clearly the value of the forum as a support and a community which provided something that was missing from their lives as teachers. I could identify with their need to have a forum in which to tell their stories. When I was engaged in my master's research I took a "Writing as Research" class in which we were expected to write autobiographically and share our writing with the class. I wrote about my experiences of being "pink-slipped" and I shared those stories with my fellow students who were a group of supportive, non-judgemental, listeners who identified and named the "structural violence" they observed in my stories. Telling my

own stories and listening to the generative feedback enabled me to reframe the events in a way which highlighted the social and structural components of the incidents.

Did I fulfil my purpose in the research? I recognise that this research accomplished so much more than yielding the data that speak to my three research questions. I met with and formed relationships with a group of teachers who have enriched my life. I learned from them about caring, courage, and dedication as well as honesty and allowing oneself to be vulnerable. I learned that the question of emotions and power in relationships within the workplace is far more complex than I had envisaged. I understand more deeply the effects of the discourse of individualism and the consequences of competition. I also observed acts of resistance to the individualization by Sophie and Malph as they created alliances within their staffs. They were not constrained by the dominant feeling rules. Sophie talked about her vulnerabilities with her colleagues and Malph built community by using opportunities creatively. The nature of emergent research is that it evolves; it cannot be predicted. I could have not anticipated that the participants would be so eloquent in their discussion nor that the forum would have provided the medium for them to address past hurts.

Reflection on Research Methodology

I think that the data gathering strategies worked well. I am happy that I interviewed the participants first because it did establish our relationships. It also gave both the participants and me the opportunity to establish that they would be comfortable discussing emotional issues. As I have previously mentioned many of the participants said they enjoyed their experience in the forum and that they found it personally very worthwhile.

The study was exploratory so I think the way in which I proceeded served that purpose well. However I recognise that there was a lot of rich data and I could have chosen to use them differently, for example by focusing on only a few participants and constructing narratives. On the other hand I felt that all the participants had contributed and I wanted to honour the time and commitment they had given. I also recognised the importance of polyphony. In other words I was not aiming for consensus or to find themes per se. I was interested in the variety of experiences and wanting to give voice to each person.

Contributions of the Research

This research highlights the role that emotions play in the daily lives of teachers, not just in classroom interactions with students, but in the staff room and other nooks and crannies in the school where teachers interact with each other. The silence surrounding the topic of emotions means they are usually not talked about openly despite the fact that they permeate all our interactions. This silence, together with the belief that emotions are private and personal, leads to isolation and private emotional meaning making. Many people only think about emotions when they are experiencing discomfort with them. At such times their concern is usually to lessen the discomfort they are feeling and to regulate their emotions rather than actively engaging with their feelings. Emotions are also a topic that many people know little about theoretically other than the information which is available through the discipline of psychology and through self-help and popular books. The popularity of the book *Emotional Intelligence* (1996) is due not only to its skilful publicity but also to the fact that we find emotions fascinating.

In this research I attempted to compensate for the lack of valuing emotions by providing a place for teachers to talk about their emotional experiences with their peers. The enthusiastic feedback from many of the participants in the group demonstrated that they valued the opportunity to discuss emotions with each other and to reflect on the significance and meaning of these interactions not only from a personal perspective but from also from a social perspective. The forum was structured in such a way that the participants were encouraged to notice everyday emotional interactions and to think about how emotions might be socially constructed by observing or sensing the feeling rules which allowed for some emotions to be expressed and discouraged the expression of other emotions. Other research has focused on these aspects of emotions in schools however this research created the practical opportunity for teachers to focus on emotions and discuss their experiences and findings with each other. In other words there was integrity between the method of gathering data and the purpose of the research. The forum provided an arena in which the participants could experience power, agency, and collectivity.

In writing up the research I made connections between the individually experienced emotions and the culture of the schools. I explored issues which have received little attention in the education literature including the emotional harassment of teachers by peers, specifically women peers, and internalised oppression. I also drew attention to the phenomenon of the “divided teacher” (Cheng & Couture, 2000) which addresses the experience of several of the participants who found themselves having to work in an institution which no longer reflected their values.

Implications of the Research

In this section I list a number of implications of this research which apply not only to teachers but to people in general if we are to learn from and about our emotions. I then look at the implications specifically with regard to teachers and teacher educators. I make some suggestions and propose ways in which these suggestions could be carried out.

General implications:

- The importance of paying attention to and valuing emotions.
- The importance of learning about theories other than the psychological perspectives of emotions.
- The importance of using emotions as information about our values, needs, and goals.
- Looking at the emotions in interactions to determine what they achieve socially and culturally.
- Becoming aware of how we censor our emotions and what that achieves.
- Questioning the use of the words “positive” and “negative” when they are applied to people, opinions, and emotions and examining the effect of their use.
- Becoming aware of the feeling rules in our work place groups and paying attention to what they achieve.
- Paying attention to what is achieved if sadness, anger, despair, and fear are not acknowledged.
- Creating habits of attention to emotions

- Critically appraising the ideas behind such books as “The Secret” (Byrne, 2006), “Emotional Intelligence” (Goleman, 1995), and “Appreciative Inquiry” (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003) and paying attention to what they do not say.

In addition to the foregoing, I think there are several implications for teachers and teacher educators arising out of this research. Firstly, there needs to be a recognition and validation of the place of emotions in a teacher’s life, and this needs to be more than lip-service. The ideas that emotions are opposed to and less than reason, that they are weak because they are associated with women, and that they are internal matters only need to be challenged and alternative approaches which explore the multiple perspectives of emotion from both a theoretical and a practical perspective need to be incorporated explicitly and implicitly into the teacher development curriculum.

How can this be achieved? Pre-service teachers need to be prepared for the emotional dynamics of teaching. This could be accomplished through many channels. A course could be offered which explores emotions from several perspectives, including philosophical, historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, phenomenological, and neuro-scientific. Attention could be paid to specific topics such as gender and emotions, emotional labour, emotional regulation, effects of repression, and social justice and emotions. In addition there could be practical components. Students could be asked to keep a journal in which they reflect on emotions they experience on a daily basis. There could also be group role-playing activities. Experienced teachers could also be invited to share their experiences and their stories. In this way students may be given a realistic picture of life in schools. They would also see that even experienced teachers

who are happy in their work still have to contend with certain issues. This type of course needs to be facilitated by instructors who are comfortable with their own emotions or who are willing to learn along with their students.

Other opportunities arise when pre-service students are on their practica. When I supervise student teachers I suggest they focus on their emotions from time to time. In their situation their emotions are usually experienced in connection with their students, parents of students, or sponsor teachers, however exploring how they are feeling and the significance of feeling is a good habit to cultivate. I also arrange for all the students I am supervising to meet as a group for tea or coffee after school on occasions. At these times they discuss common concerns and again I ask them about emotional experiences. The students have responded to these get-togethers with excitement and enthusiasm which I have interpreted as an indication of their relevance because during their practica students guard their time very jealously.

How can in-service teachers benefit from the implications of this research? A similar course to the one I suggested for pre-service teachers could be offered for graduate level teachers. It could be built on a similar theoretical foundation but there would be more flexibility with the practical aspects because the teachers would have more in-school experience to draw upon than pre-service teachers. They would also be more aware of the power dynamics and would be in a better position to observe how emotions were elicited in interactions with their colleagues and the power implications of those interactions.

A further implication and application of this research could be the establishment of discussion groups similar to the one in the research. This could be effected through

professional development initiatives or through the personal interest of a group of teachers. Three of the important aspects of the group in the research were anonymity, confidentiality, and the fact that it was voluntary. A similar project could be run by the professional development branch of a teachers' association. Teachers who were interested in initiating such a group could work out their own ground rules and safety needs concerning anonymity and confidentiality.

An important item in the curriculum in any course or professional development initiative would be the encouragement of awareness of the way in which feeling rules and language influence which emotions are thought of as appropriate and which are thought of as inappropriate in different contexts and the way in which these norms affect people's subjectivity. Teachers can be encouraged to notice when they are monitoring themselves and their expression of emotions and to reflect on the impact or effect of choosing not to express what they are feeling. They can then be encouraged to make links between their personal experiences and the culture of their school and become aware of the political dimension of emotions. From these experiences they can become aware of how social norms can be resisted and changed.

One of the reasons education about and raising awareness of emotions is important for a teacher is that everyday they are modelling for their students how to think about and work with emotions. Recently increased attention has been paid to youth aggression and bullying and many school districts have adopted "social responsibility" contracts which include teaching "emotional literacy." In order to be able to deal confidently with aspects of students' emotions teachers need to be knowledgeable and comfortable with their own.

In addition to specific attention paid to emotional education, emotions and emotional awareness can also be an integral part of all teacher development courses. Instructors can choose to pay attention to the emotional dynamics in the classroom especially when topics which elicit emotional reactions in the students are being discussed. Students can be asked to talk about what they are feeling and explore the meanings of those feelings; for example social justice issues are often debated hotly because of the passion they elicit.

Conclusion

This was a multi-layered research project and many of the layers remain under-explored. I examined only superficially the overlays of gender, power, and emotion. The roles played by specific emotions have still to be investigated. However it is my hope that I have demonstrated through describing the experiences of the participants and myself the significance of emotions to the individual person, the social group, the culture, and indeed, the world.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation for Local Teacher Association Newsletters

**Relationships of power:
Exploring teachers' emotions as experienced in interactions with their peers.**

Dear Colleagues,

I started teaching in SD #65 in 1967 and since then I have had various positions, both full and part time, including most recently, counsellor at Alexander Elementary School. I completed my MA in Counselling Psychology in 2000 and am now in my 5th year of a doctoral programme at UVic.

My interest is the emotional health of teachers and, from my own experience, I know how important this is. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. I appreciate that teachers are very busy people and that there are no material rewards for participating, however it is my hope that this research will make a valuable contribution to the emotional well being of teachers.

- 8 – 10 participants needed
- two individual interviews
- email-type discussion forum
- anonymity (participants' identities hidden)
- confidentiality respected

If you are interested in participating or would like further information please contact me by phone at 250-748-9964 or jvm@uvic.ca.

Yours truly,
Judith Martin

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Relationships of power: Exploring teachers' emotions as experienced in interactions with their peers.

My name is Judith Martin and I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Relationships of power: Exploring teachers' emotions as experienced in interactions with their peers*.

I am a PhD student in the Faculty of Education, Curriculum and Instruction section at the University of Victoria (UVic). If you have further questions you may contact me by telephone: 250-748-9964 or by email: jvm@uvic.ca.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Doctor of Philosophy. My research is under the supervision of Dr. Kathy Sanford and you may contact her at: 250-721-7762 or: ksanford@uvic.ca.

The purpose of this research is to explore the emotional aspects of teachers' relationships with their peers. As a participant you will be invited to discuss these aspects with a group of about eight other teachers through email, over a period of three months. In this way we will be able to look at how we, as teachers, experience, express, reflect on, and understand the emotional world in relation to our peers and workplace.

Research of this type is important because it presents a holistic view of teachers' work that acknowledges the significance of emotions and deepens our understanding of the individual, social, and organizational processes of working life in schools which involve the emotions. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a teacher and have expressed an interest in the project.

Throughout the research period you and the other members of the group will discover your shared experiences. You will be asked to participate in two interviews with me, one to be held at the beginning of the research and one at the end. The beginning interview will be a chance for us to meet face to face, for me to answer any questions you may have, to explain the procedure, and for us to talk a little about your thoughts and beliefs about emotions. The final interview will be an opportunity for us to debrief and for you to give me feedback on the process. These interviews will last between sixty to ninety minutes and will be audio taped. We will arrange the place and time to suit you. Where possible we may choose to meet at your home so that we can go over the technology for the on-line discussion.

The email discussion, which will be facilitated through the Mailman software on the UVic server, will be partly structured by specific topics I ask the group to consider and partly unstructured discussion arising from your own experiences and observations which you wish to share. You will be asked to participate in the email discussion at least once a week; this will involve reading and responding to what other people have written. You will be able to do this at a time that is convenient to you. I am anticipating that there may be times when you wish to contribute more frequently than once a week.

If you decide to participate you will be invited to share your stories of both positive and negative experiences with colleagues. You will never be forced to share specific experiences. If you do

find yourself feeling upset, I will assist you in finding the support you need. In our initial interview I will talk with you about strategies we can put in place to deal with the situation should it arise. These strategies will include:

- Reinforcing that you need to respect your own comfort level.
- Reminding you of your right to withdraw at any time if you wish.
- Using private email or the phone for personal contact
- Making sure I have the name and phone number of your EAP provider or other similar resource
- My original message on-line will include this information and be archived so that you can access it at any time.

I will use my professional judgment as a registered clinical counsellor (BCACC) throughout.

I believe this process will be interesting and thought provoking, and there are many benefits to participating in this research. These include: having the opportunity to discuss with colleagues your experiences and observations about the role of emotions in your school; becoming more familiar with alternative ways of looking at and understanding emotions; considering how provincial and global educational issues affect relationships in schools. This research will contribute to the much needed research on teachers and emotions. Society will benefit from having emotional experiences acknowledged as serving roles within groups as well as being seen as inner, private matters.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. During our initial interview I will remind you that your participation is voluntary and also that you may turn off the tape recorder at any time, decline to answer a question, or stop the interview completely. This is a group project and so the email data will consist of interactions. If you do withdraw from the study I will keep your data and at the completion of the discussion group I will contact you again to discuss what you wish to happen with your data. They will only be used with your permission.

The research period may last over a period of four months from the first interview to the exit interview. I would also like to be able to get your feedback on the written report. For this reason I will check in with you every four weeks to obtain your on-going consent. I will do this via private email. At the beginning of the final interview I will also ask you to initial this letter of consent to indicate your willingness to continue participating.

In terms of protecting your anonymity, I will be the only person who will know your identity. I will ask you to choose a pseudonym which we will use on all occasions, including in the email discussions and in the final written report. As manager of the list serve, I will pre-screen messages before they are sent to the group to check that there are no identifying details such as names of schools, or people, or other local references.

In terms of protecting your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data, as I mentioned above, we will use pseudonyms throughout the research process. I will keep the audio tapes in a locked file and the identities of the participants will be kept in a separate locked file in my home office. All electronic documents will be kept under password on my home computer. All electronic data from this study will be erased and paper copies shredded, two years after I defend my dissertation.

I will further respect your confidentiality by asking you to read the drafts of the final report so that you can ask me to delete any of your contributions or information that you do not feel comfortable with.

Although the discussion group is set up as a closed group and the participants and researcher will be the only people who will be contributing to the discussion, it is the nature of electronic technology that there is always the potential for the privacy of the site to be breached either through our individual computers or through the server. This is not usual; however, it is necessary for you to be aware of this. The confidentiality of our electronic interactions is enhanced by the use of a University of Victoria hosted and run programme. The nature of this research means that the participants as well as the researcher will have the data on their computers. In order to further ensure confidentiality I am asking all the participants to agree to erase the electronic files and any files they may have transferred to their desktop, after I have defended my dissertation. I am also asking you to respect the confidentiality of the group and agree to not forward messages to people outside the group.

I anticipate that the results of this study will be shared with others in various ways: in my dissertation, in articles presented at scholarly meetings or published in journals or in a book; and in professional development presentations to teachers and others in education. I will erase the electronic data, shred the paper copies including the consent forms, two years after I defend my dissertation.

In addition to being able to contact me and my supervisor, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Your signature below indicates that you are willing to participate in the concluding interview.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>

Appendix C: Introductory Interview

This interview will serve several purposes.

1. I will review the issues of confidentiality with you
2. I will review strategies for dealing with any emotional discomfort you feel during the research
3. I will ask you for some personal demographic information
4. I will ask you to tell me a little about your thoughts and beliefs about emotions in general and at school.
5. It will be an opportunity for you to ask me any questions you may have about the on-line discussion group procedure.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

1. In terms of protecting your anonymity, I will be the only person who will know your identity. I will ask you to choose a pseudonym which we will use on all occasions, including in the email discussions and in the final written report. As manager of the list serve, I will pre-screen each message before it is sent to the group to check that there are no identifying details such as name of school or other local references.
2. In terms of protecting your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data, as I mentioned above, we will use pseudonyms throughout the research process. I will keep the audio tapes in a locked file and the identities of the participants will be kept in a separate locked file in my home office. All electronic documents will be kept under password on my home computer. All electronic data from this study will be erased and paper copies will be shredded two years after I defend my dissertation.
3. I will further respect your confidentiality by asking you to read the draft of the final report so that you can ask me to delete any of your contributions or information that you do not feel comfortable with.
4. The nature of this research means that all the participants will have the data. In order to further ensure confidentiality I am asking all the participants to erase the electronic files and any files they may have transferred to their desktop, after I have defended my dissertation. I am also asking you to respect the confidentiality of the group by not forwarding messages to people outside the group.
5. Although the discussion group is set up as a closed group and the participants and researcher will be the only people who will be contributing to the discussion, it is the nature of electronic technology that there is always the potential for the privacy of the site to be breached either through our individual computers or through the server. This is not usual; however, it is necessary for you to be aware of this.

Strategies for Dealing with Emotional Discomfort

1. Reinforcing that you need to respect your own comfort level.
2. Reminding you of your right to withdraw at any time if you wish.
3. Using private email or the phone for personal contact
4. Making sure I have the name and phone number of your EAP provider or other similar resource
5. My original message on-line will include this information and be archived so that you can access it at any time.
6. I will use my professional judgment as a registered clinical counsellor (BCACC) throughout.
7. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation.
8. You may turn off the tape recorder and may decline to answer any questions at any time.
9. I will email you every four weeks to obtain your ongoing consent.

Personal Information

Name:	Pseudonym:
Mailing address:	
Phone:	E-mail:
Teaching assignment:	
Special characteristics of the community – socioeconomic/ethno-cultural/etc:	
Length of time in current position:	Length of time as a teacher:
Educational background:	

Question Path

The following is for my guidance only. I will ask the questions as seems appropriate in the conversation and according to the comfort level of the interviewee and myself.

1) What drew you to the research? Why did you decide to participate?

2) Thoughts and beliefs about emotions in general.

When you think about emotions what are your thoughts and feelings? Are you comfortable with your emotions? With other people's emotions? What do you believe are the functions of emotions? How do you deal with your emotions? How important and relevant do you think emotions are to your every day life? Where do your ideas about emotions come from?

3) Emotions at school.

What is your experience of being a teacher and emotions? With students/with administrators/with the system? How important and relevant do you think emotions are to your work as a teacher? How do you deal with emotional experiences at school?

4) At school with peers.

How comfortable do you feel expressing your emotions to peers? Why or why not is it a “good” thing to be able to express emotions to others? How important and relevant do you think emotions are in your relationships with your peers on staff? How do you think an exploration of the emotions might contribute to our understanding of peer relationships?

5) What topics do you want, expect, hope for, or suggest we include in our discussions?

6) Please comment of the context of teaching today:

7) Is there anything you would like to add?

On-line Discussion

Are there any questions you would like to ask me about how this will work?

Appendix D: Discussion Group Protocol

Welcome to our online “conversation.” I am very excited to be launching into this experience and I hope you are too. I want to review some of the details we will have covered in our face-to-face interviews and then lay out some guidelines for the on-line conversation. I would like to suggest that you keep all the introductory materials in a separate folder as they might be useful to refer to again.

- First of all I want to remind you of your rights as participants; that you can withdraw at any time without explanation and that you can decline to answer or participate in particular discussions if you do not wish to. It is also important to remember that it is up to you not to go beyond your comfort level.
- As I mentioned in the letter of consent, I will contact you via private email every four weeks to obtain your on-going consent.
- Also, as participants in this electronic mode, we all share the responsibility for confidentiality and we have all undertaken not to forward any part of our conversation to other people either during the period of the discussion or afterwards. We have also undertaken to trash the relevant files after the research is over.
- The success of the group discussion is based on the trust and rapport we build between us. Confidentiality is important to building trust; when you are posting a message please make sure you do not use names or events which could be distinguished and recognized by others in the group. I will also pre-screen the postings.
- Please be aware that, because we do not have visual cues to see someone’s expression when they are “speaking”, it is sometimes difficult to know if they are being humorous or serious, so it is important to express ourselves unambiguously. We can use upper case for emphasis.
- A word about participation; if you find that you are not able to post a contribution one week please let me know through my personal email or let the group know. In group discussions if someone suddenly becomes quiet it affects us all because we wonder what has happened to that person.
- If you find you are becoming uncomfortable or emotional and need to talk to me then please either email me privately or phone and we can sort out what you need to support you.
- To begin with I will suggest topics for discussion which may have arisen from our original interviews. I encourage you to also introduce topics that you would like to discuss, to find out other people’s opinions and experiences. In addition, from time to time, I will introduce other perspectives about emotions apart from the ones that are most common in our everyday dealings. These will open up ways to look at emotions and emotional experiences differently.

- For the discussions, it would be very helpful if you could try to make your contributions, things you say about yourself and your direct experience. In other words, I encourage you to talk about what you experience and what you feel in a particular situation. You might also describe what you believe others to have been feeling in the same situation. What I am trying to avoid is abstract and generalized comments, such as "When people do this, they feel that." In other words, talk about things that actually happened and feelings you actually had in those circumstances.
- As we deepen our understanding of emotions and emotional experiences, we will all have slightly different opinions and points of view. It is very important to maintain a non-judgmental attitude towards our own and other people's experiences and contributions. Differences of opinion are welcome; we are not aiming for consensus here!
- A word about the technology - it was important to me to find a discussion format which would be user-friendly. Even so there may be glitches. We will deal with these if and when they arise. If there are things that you don't understand about the way the list serve works please get in touch with me. If necessary I can come and work things through with you on your computer.

I want to allow us as much flexibility as possible in our discussion so that we can incorporate ideas as they arise. There will also probably be themes which arise from your introductory interviews which I would like to pursue. For this reason I have suggested a general framework for the discussion period.

Weeks 1 - 2

Welcome

General introduction of ourselves – as much as we want to say, maybe length of time we have been teaching, our teaching assignment, family, etc.

This will also be the time for getting used to the list serve and its features.

Weeks 3 - 4

Reflections and personal thoughts about role and function of emotions.

Topics arising from previous weeks and from personal interviews.

Weeks 5 – 8

Continuing and deepening discussion about personal experiences and personal theories of emotions and reframing experiences in light of other perspectives on emotions.

Weeks 9-12

Continuing discussion and reviewing past discussion. Drawing out themes.

If you have questions or concerns please contact me jvm@uvic.ca or 250-748-9964

Appendix E: Final Interview

This interview will be an opportunity to review the process of the discussion forum and your own experience and any changes you have noticed in the way you approach emotions. It will also give us the chance to debrief.

On-Line

- 1) What were the best aspects of doing this on-line?
- 2) What were the worst aspects?
- 3) Do you think this could have been carried out face-to-face? Would you have volunteered to participate?

Content

- 1) What was most useful to you?
- 2) What was least useful to you?
- 3) What would you have done differently if you had been organizing this?

Your own process

- 1) What are the overall most significant things for you from this experience?
- 2) How have your ideas about emotions changed?
- 3) How has the length of time contributed to your understanding?

Are there any other observations you want to make?

Appendix F: Summary of Topics and My Postings

WEEK	SUMMARY OF TOPIC AND MY POSTINGS
Week 1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Over the course of this week I hope you will all take the plunge and introduce yourselves to the rest of us - just share whatever you feel comfortable sharing - maybe think about what you would like to know about others and then share similar information about yourself just as you would in a face-to face group.</p> <p>We might want to share details like the length of time we have been teaching; if we have had other careers prior to teaching; the type of schools we have taught in/are now in; the subjects/age level we teach</p> <p>If you include what made you decide to respond to the call for participants and what you would like to get out of the project we will be able to establish some common ground.</p>
Week 2	<p>“Positive” and “negative”</p> <p>When I was thinking about this discussion I planned to be flexible - I wanted us to be able to follow where the conversation led and also touch on specific themes.</p> <p>One of those themes was the use of the words "positive" and "negative" - they came up in nearly all the interviews. I had originally thought I would introduce the theme a few weeks into our conversation - but, lo and behold, thanks to Harmonie and Richard, they are here and ready to be explored!</p> <p>So this week I wonder if you could comment on and reflect on what those words mean to you. This could be in the context of emotions, emotions within your group of teachers, or as applied to people - whatever arises for you in this context. I invite you also to be curious about where these words come from and what their effect is when we use them.</p> <p>These are not specific questions - they are more an invitation to think about the topic and share your musings with the group! (If you have difficulty coming to grips with this -it might be helpful for you to think of an occasion or person which you would term positive and another which you would term negative and explore these as concrete events.)</p> <p>Also, for those of you with time and interest, I would encourage you to pursue the other conversations you are engaged in.</p>

	<p>Boundaries</p> <p>One of the concerns I have heard expressed many times in the discussion is the ability to set boundaries and to feel ok about that even when we can see our colleagues apparently doing more than us. Do we feel guilty when we see people doing "more" than us? Do we feel judged? Do we judge ourselves? How can we set our own boundaries? Our "job description" is open ended so it is often up to us to decide where to set our boundaries.</p> <p>Attachment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite of the week's postings
Week 3	<p>"Positive" and "negative" continued</p> <p>The words "positive" and "negative" seem to have a powerful effect on us. What do we feel, for example, if we are told we are being "positive" or if we are told we are being "negative" or if we think of ourselves or someone else as "negative"? I wonder if we can do some sleuthing and tease out some of the "embedded" ideas - any takers?</p> <p>Complicity</p> <p>And now, here's an issue which many of you have touched upon - the issue of complicity. I have pulled out a few quotes from your postings which I think speak to that issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beatrice mentioned her friend who wrote that "by continuing to do our best and be positive we are complicit in the corruption of public education" <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of comments made by the group with respect to – and + • some quotes and references to Megan Boler, Jung, John Smyth, and Blase and Anderson • Composite of the week's postings
Week 4	<p>Pleasant interactions with peers</p> <p>For the coming week I would like us focus on interactions with our peers in general and to pick out a couple of interactions which involve pleasant emotional experiences which we can share with the group. These interactions do not have to be momentous. In particular I am interested in the who, what, where, when, how, and why details. This is purely a descriptive piece – no great analysis.</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to start paying attention to or becoming aware of emotional aspects <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite of the week's postings

Week 5	<p>Not so pleasant interactions with peers</p> <p>This week I would ask you to continue with your observation and reflection of everyday interactions and choose a couple which are not so pleasant – it might be an experience which leaves you feeling uncomfortable, or frustrated, or ticked off, or irritated – does not have to be a major incident.</p> <p>As you describe your interactions you might wonder about the significance they have for you. What do they “mean”?</p> <p>We often feel “emotional” about things which have value for us, whether it’s to do with our identity (e.g., as a teacher, etc) or goals we have for ourselves. So we may feel emotional when something we value or need (e.g., friendship, respect, etc) is threatened.</p> <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of points raised. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. positive and negative 2. Loss (e.g., teachers grieving for a “golden Age) 3. Conflict raised by Lynn 4. Individual differences in emotional intensity • Composite of the week’s postings
Week 6	<p>Pleasant and not-so-pleasant interactions cont.</p> <p>I suggest that this week we continue describing “unpleasant” interactions, and, as I mentioned last week, they don’t have to be major conflicts, just minor irritations, and frustrations etc with peers in the workplace setting. As you are considering them you might think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the content/subject of the interaction? • How do you feel in your body? • What is the effect of the interaction? Does it lead to an action? To another feeling? • What do you think the other person/people were feeling? <p><u>Attachments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threads from past week <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledging difficult feelings 2. Humour 3. Importance of language 4. Interactions with students ▪ Other perspectives of emotions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social construction 2. Feminist 3. Discursive • Composite of the week’s postings

Week 7	<p style="text-align: center;">TAKING STOCK – HALF WAY POINT</p> <p>Where we have been? For the last 6 weeks we have carried on a conversation centered on our emotional responses to interactions at work. We have also talked a little about language and the role it plays in creating reality.</p> <p>For the most part our perception of emotions has been based on psychological theories of emotions which view them as individual, private, and inner phenomena.</p> <p>For the last two or three weeks we have zeroed in on pleasant/unpleasant interactions. I deliberately chose those words (I know they sound a little laboured) because I wanted to stay away from the positive/negative language and I also wanted to draw attention to the physiological aspects of emotions – how we feel in our bodies.</p> <p>Where are we going? I would like us to change the focus and start looking at emotions through other lenses – using the social construction/feminist/discursive perspectives. These perspectives overlap somewhat – their common features are that they recognize that emotions serve a function within the group (for our purposes “the group” will be the staff at your school, and/or your department) and that they are concerned with power (i.e., they are political).</p> <p>This change of focus will require an attention to the “nuances” of everyday interactions. The everyday experience and effects of emotions are very subtle especially as we have often trained ourselves not to notice how we feel about certain things. Sometimes we do this because there is an attitude in the workplace that it is not “professional” to have emotions on the job; sometimes language has been used to dismiss what we feel as “petty” “childish” “silly” “immature” “negative” “whining” and so on, and we often internalize that language and use it to silence ourselves and to feel embarrassed or ashamed of how we are feeling.</p> <p>So why is this important? I hope that by focusing on the way in which emotions function in a group we can see if and how the status quo is maintained and hegemony perpetuated. Often the status quo is not regarded as “political” – it is merely accepted as the “natural” or “normal” way things are rather than being the expression or the manifestation of a particular set of values. People sometimes feel uncomfortable about challenging the status quo themselves and when they witness others challenging it. Once we get an idea of how emotions play into this dynamic, we have agency to make changes if we wish.</p> <p>We can also see how the current education policies are being taken up or not in our schools by our colleagues and ourselves and we can see how our interactions</p>
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	<p>are influenced by the current context. How do the increased stress from more work with less resources and the increased ethos of competition in schools generated by policies of market alignment, affect our relationships and interactions with each other?</p> <p>In some research which inquired into teachers' emotions, it was noted that the teachers who were interviewed were not very comfortable with conflict and tended to avoid it. They prized "getting along" with each other. It stands to reason that there is bound to be conflict within in schools – teachers have different philosophies of education, there are differences over pedagogies, differences over curriculum etc. How does the avoidance of conflict affect our relationships with our colleagues? What are the emotional components?</p> <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotions in the workplace including feeling rules and emotional labour • Composite of the week's postings
Week 8	<p>Daily interactions from a group perspective and staff meetings</p> <p>This week I would like to start looking at emotional experiences from the social perspective - which means looking at emotions from the perspective of what they accomplish (their effect or function) within the group (i.e., your staff)</p> <p>This entails a close and nuanced look at our daily interactions. What I suggest is that you pick one day and make a note of interactions you have with your colleagues during that time - including even the seemingly insignificant encounters, for example saying "good morning" to colleagues as you see them in the morning, or not saying "good morning".</p> <p>The following questions can be guidelines. Some might not apply and some might be difficult to answer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of day? • Who was involved? • What was it about? • How did I feel during the encounter? After the encounter? • What was accomplished on a personal level? • What was accomplished on a social level? • What is my past history of encounters with this person? • What do I feel/perceive are the power dynamics? (There may be nothing that is apparent here but it is worth pondering) • Any other reflections/comments.

	<p>I also need to mention a particular event in the context of the social focus on emotions - the staff meeting. I realize you will all have staff meetings at different times of the month so I will mention it now and hope that you will have one staff meeting in the next few weeks that you can observe and reflect on from a social perspective. It would be interesting to make a note of the feeling rules at your staff meeting.</p> <p>These are some of the questions which might be helpful in determining the feeling rules for the staff in general and/or for the staff meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What emotions is it OK to express? • What emotions is it not OK to express? • Can everybody express the same emotions or are different people allowed to express different emotions? • Are there certain groups of people who get to express certain emotions? • In what ways is it OK for people to express emotions? • What events is it OK to feel happy about? • What events is it OK to feel angry about? • Are there different levels of intensity of expression for different people? • Are there "appropriate" lengths of time to feel and express certain emotions? <p>Attachment: Composite of the week's postings.</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Daily interactions from a group perspective and staff meetings cont.</p> <p>As we launch into the last third of the discussion group I am aware that the next four weeks will probably go quite quickly. My primary focus will be to concentrate on the daily interactions and the staff meetings (or other meetings of colleagues if you wish to comment on them instead/also) and to tease out the various aspects of the feeling rules, and to explore what effect they have. For example, Bronwyn noted an attitude of "move on – get over it" – what is the effect of this? What happens as a result? What is achieved within the group?</p> <p>I then want to tie this back into the bigger picture that we discussed during the first few weeks and to add in the individual aspects that we explored briefly in the pleasant/unpleasant incidents so that we may be able to get a sense of the complexity and interrelatedness of individual, social, and organizational aspects of the emotional experience.</p> <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piece on emotions • Composite of the week's postings

Week 10	<p>Daily interactions from a group perspective and staff meetings cont.</p> <p>I have made a few observations and I am also attaching a short piece which addresses the organizational level of this project –I think it speaks to something which Lil raised when she was talking about the testing and said that she feels that when educators protest against the testing it is perceived that “we aren’t doing our jobs and don’t want to be measured so that our weaknesses can be exposed.”</p> <p>I invite your comments on these or other topics you may have been mulling over, together with any other daily interactions which you’ve not previously had time to observe or post. If this is something which keeps eluding you – for whatever reason – that information is just as valuable as the actual details of the interactions – because it may show how subtle and taken-for-granted our daily interactions are, so please feel free to post feedback.</p> <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite of the week’s postings • Global context of teaching
Week 11	<p>Closure</p> <p>We have two weeks left which I would like to use for closure. This week I invite your reflections on your participation especially with regard to what you have found useful/helpful from the group and also any changes you have found yourself making or intend to make as a result of your participation. Ben said a few weeks ago, teachers (some not all) love to talk and, while that is important, I think it is also important to anchor any new thoughts, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs, in action. This is part of the social change process.</p> <p>Attachment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite of the week’s postings
Week 12	<p>The week of goodbyes</p> <p>So what’s left? Well I guess this is the week of goodbyes and last minute thoughts. I will leave the discussion open until next Sunday and then put on a closing message and the composite of the week’s postings.</p> <p>I have summarized some of the factors that we have looked at and that I see from the literature as being involved in the emotional experience in schools. I have gathered them under the headings of personal, social and organizational and attached them to this message – however it is very rudimentary and I welcome additions, deletions, and comments.</p> <p>Attachments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composite of the week’s postings • Summary of issues raised

Appendix G: Topics Discussed

- Reasons for participating.
- Reaction to government policies; frustration esp. with failure to support students; effect of government policies on teacher relationships – lack of trust; competitiveness.
- Thoughts of giving up and moving to another country; exploring alternative careers.
- Enjoyment of teaching and students; emotions re students; students source of delight; intense interactions because of students at risk; talk with teachers and share stories re students' enthusiasm.
- Relationships with staff mostly good.
- Feeling overwhelmed, isolated, frustrated; relief at similarities; motivated by all asking the same questions; amazement and awe at tremendous job done by teachers; acknowledgement of difficult feelings; appreciate knowing not alone in feeling swamped and drowned in work; realization that teaching might not get easier down the road.
- Glad to have list because people understand; difficult to find people to talk to about emotions and school.
- Teaching is just a job; boundaries; going beyond what's called for to make it easier for ourselves; starting to say "No"; feel guilty and defensive about saying "No"; going in at weekends and after school.
- Golden Age of teaching.
- Health – menopausal.
- Want to shift focus from negative to positive; positive and negative; "The Secret" "Appreciative Inquiry"; phoney positives; feel inadequate in comparison with teacher who is really positive; feel a need to justify existence; compete with staff who run clubs etc; negative – government policies and staffroom whine; positives where you find them; emotions are not negative or positive.
- Felt shut down by Richard's "Good to have positive spin"; so much wrong in system; emotional disconnect; want to be positive but what's happening isn't positive; feel guilty when negative; hard to feel positive about profession and want out at the same time.
- Global issues in education; capitalism; competition; teachers uniting to stop govt. changes; struggle between social justice and exploitation; activism; union work; speaking

out; importance of someone bringing messages to the floor; colleagues feel uncomfortable; internalized oppression; language “accountability” is spin for “testing”; we can change – speak truth to power; new teachers don’t speak up - vulnerable.

- Alfie Kohn speaker re government policies; nagging day to day irritations outweigh bigger issues; don’t have time to look at bigger picture; complicity.
- Collegial conversations; importance of collegiality; whine session ended up positive; realizing political nature of problem in class; size of staff room; size of washrooms; no place to get together and talk; need for teachers to share emotions; detrimental to health of workers; staff meeting; no recess; lack of voice; teachers have little effect; pity no more social events; not so much district collegiality; the staff at the school don’t get together much, not even beer on a Friday; Book Club.
- Pattern of not investing because won’t be there long; feel I don’t belong.
- Why are teachers up at 3.00 am? Gives me time for things I want to do; would like to work .8 but have student loans and no house; me too - same story – single mom etc; looking at buying .1 leave next year but repercussions on pension.
- Teacher magazine article on stress of full time teaching; are full time teaching and good health compatible?
- Humour
- Probably leaving so say nothing – don’t rock the boat
- Remembering has witnessed emotional trauma and abuse re women; Emotional bullying
- Teacher identity; surprised at level of compliance.
- Over achievers; sense of self-esteem from being busy.
- Layoff talk in district affecting relationships in school; communicating with others re layoffs; importance of communication.
- Forgiveness; conflict; reluctance to acknowledge dark sides; painful experiences recounted; will miss forum and permission to reflect deeply; Gabor Maté, “When the Body Says ‘No’”; body-mind; to feel is to know; appreciation of sharing.
- Sharing hurtful incidents.

Appendix H: Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Years Taught	Elem. Middle Secondary	Subject/Area
Beatrice	35-40	9	S	English Special Ed
Ben	60 - 65	35	S	Sciences
Bronwyn	50 -55	14	M	Grade 6
Edgeee	50-55	8	E	Grade 7
Harmonie	35-40	9	S	French. Spanish Planning
Kernel	50-55	28	S	Industrial Arts
Lil	50-55	27	E	Library, French Literacy
Lynn	45 - 50	12	S	Special Ed
Malph	45-50	17	S	Visual Arts
Richard	45-50	5	S	Sciences
Rusty	55-60	32	E	Social Studies Library
Sophie	20-25	1	E	Grade 4/5 French Immersion

Appendix I: Frequency of Postings by Week by Participant

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Wk 11	Wk 12	<i>Total</i>
Bronwyn	1	1	2	0	3	0	2	1	1	0	2	1	14
Sophie	3	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	14
Lynn	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	13
Lil	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	10
Edgeee	3	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Ben	0	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	9
Beatrice	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	8
Malph	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	7
Harmonie	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Rusty	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kernel	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Richard	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	16	14	6	7	10	4	7	5	6	6	7	6	94

Appendix J: Interactions as Described by the Participants

	Pleasant interactions	Not-pleasant current interactions	Not-pleasant past interactions	Staff meetings
Week 4	Malph Sophie Lil			
Week 5	Beatrice Edgeee Sophie Bronwyn	Lil	Ben Lil	
Week 6			Malph	
Week 7		Lynn Lil	Bronwyn	
Week 8		Beatrice		Bronwyn Lynn Harmonie
Week 9			Malph	Malph Lil
Week 10		Lynn	Beatrice	
Week 11			Lil	Ben
Week 12		Lil		Beatrice
Interviews			Edgeee Harmonie	Edgeee

Appendix K: Number of Words per Posting by Week and Participant

	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8	Wk 9	Wk 10	Wk 11	Wk 12	Total
Bronwyn	700	957	722 1217		763 538 461		1283 328	427	501		1225 484	1242	10,848
Sophie	182 299 172	220		222 319	500	227		246	110	753 256 254		216	3976
Lynn	169 594	339	207		192		263 95	370	15	23 267	236	116	2886
Lil	165 404	684	969	557		1048	568		1138		1133	737	7403
Edgeee	396 113 63	643 24	581		907 238	388							3353
Ben		262 618		378 112	430		717 254				276 494		3541
Beatrice	662	1145			82 542			816		2119		652 135	6153
Malph		595		186 189		447			551 725		563		3256
Harmonie	137	61	662					247					1107
Rusty	183	697											880
Kernel		641 78											719
Richard	154 200												354
Total	4593	6964	4358	1963	4653	2110	3508	2106	3040	3672	4411	3098	44,476