

BUILDING WARMTH SCULPTURE
IN THE STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP:
GOETHEAN OBSERVATION AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE
IN AN ACTION RESEARCH INQUIRY

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
the California Institute of Integral Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Transformative Studies

California Institute of Integral Studies

San Francisco, CA

2013

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BUILDING WARMTH SCULPTURE IN THE STUDENT-TEACHER
RELATIONSHIP: GOETHEAN OBSERVATION AND CONTEMPLATIVE
PRACTICE IN AN ACTION RESEARCH INQUIRY

ABSTRACT

Through an action research approach, this dissertation focuses on the central role of interpersonal warmth in the teacher and student relationship. The heart of its inquiry is based on data gathered by a set of teachers working collaboratively as co-researchers in their own classrooms. These individuals inquired into the potential of the teacher and student relationship to become a vehicle for transformation in teacher and student effectiveness, fulfillment, and in academic and social success. They investigated the extent to which student and teacher can experience inner emancipation from the constraints of an increasingly cold system where success is too often based solely on performance metrics, with curriculum and human connection accordingly influenced.

The co-researchers integrated a set of contemplative exercises into their classroom and teaching practice for a period of twelve weeks as a way to build warmer pedagogical connections. The exercises were based on Goethe's three-step phenomenological plant observations as modified through the work of Jochen Boehemuhl and informed by the social artistry of Joseph Beuys, the contemplative inquiry of Arthur Zajonc, and the pedagogical indications of Rudolf Steiner. The research crystallizes a marriage of contemplative practices

with Goethean phenomenological observation. Detailed findings are informed by experiences of co-researchers' "new organs of perception" which allowed for better *seeing*, *hearing*, and *sensing* the needs of their students. A process model of warmth sculpture practice, grounded in the experience of the co-researchers, is offered as a scholarly contribution with a set of observational and contemplative exercises offered as the practice contribution.

The dissertation contributes four original elements to the literature and practice of teaching: (a) a theoretical framework for the practice of warmth sculpture that evolved in phases and that is grounded in data collected by co-researchers; (b) a model of warmth sculpture practice that unfolds in four steps; (c) findings from rich examples of the transformative possibilities that can emerge in the classroom from this practice and: (d) a first person action research account that uniquely situates the seminal impulse at the heart of this exploration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone –
we find it with another.
-Thomas Merton*

There is an extensive list of people who surrounded me with love and compassion during the completion of this project. They do not all know each other, but together they made life truly meaningful.

First, a small but powerful group of scholars supported my work and guided me through an enormously complex project to completion. I would especially like to thank my dissertation Chair Hilary Bradbury-Huang, Ph.D., who provided years of sound advice, detailed editing, and plenty of laughs. Her perspective as an action researcher and collaborator was invaluable to the preparation and execution of this work. I also am deeply grateful to both of my amazing committee members, Alfonso Montuori, Ph.D., and Arthur Zajonc Ph.D. They remained positive and supportive when I needed their feedback. Alfonso always showed respect for my questions and provided reassurance from the beginning of the project to the end. Working with Arthur again was a dream come true. His efforts to connect scientific observation, education, and contemplation are both fascinating and deeply inspiring and provided me with a foundation from which to launch my own research.

My work in this project was only possible in collaboration with the excellent teacher/co-researchers who agreed to implement ideas from this study into their classrooms for twelve weeks and who provided feedback on their experiences that created the core of this inquiry. My deep appreciation goes out

to each of them and to their 1,300 students who are very fortunate to have had such conscientious and caring teachers in their lives.

Love and gratitude for my own students is at the heart of this dissertation, especially for the Tamarack Waldorf School graduating classes of 2007 and 2015. You provided the daily inspiration I needed to work full time while engaging my whole heart in a study about how to manifest warmth and love in the classroom. In your presence, loving was easy. It has been a true privilege serving as your class teacher and learning from each of you. Through this work I have attempted to share the depths of what you have taught me by laying out the steps by which others might experience the kind of love we have shared throughout our years together.

Grateful thanks to my colleagues at the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute and Tamarack Waldorf School who allowed me to carry a lighter load in the last year's time while I completed my doctoral studies. Thanks especially to Michele Peterson who provided true friendship by lending an ear when I needed to vent, by ensuring that I rejoiced in my victories, and by keeping my coffee cup filled.

Much appreciation and love is due to my CIIS doctoral skype group. We began as colleagues but have become real friends. From Don Arispe, Lisa Kendall, Seth Miller, Maureen Dolan, Charles Silverstein, and Amel Jerary I received monthly injections of support, courage, patience, inspiration, and love, not to mention a great trip to New Mexico!

The real recipe for my success has been cooking at my house and in my family for many years. First, thanks to my parents, Elwyn and Peggy Kresin. I

have been forever blessed by their selfless generosity and their never-ending support in every way imaginable. I can only repay them by continuing that same undying love for my own five children.

Many thanks are owed to the five amazing young people who somehow emerged from our home, who tolerated turmoil with patience and grace, and who put up with lots of take out. Appreciation and love to Carmen, who will soon embark upon her own doctoral journey; Gregory, who is an expert at turning lemons into lemonade – and making an app for that; Timothy, whose warm heart breaks my own every time; Selena, who capably served as babysitter, chef, and listening ear *forever* while mom became a Ph.D.; and to our dear little Sophia Rose, the “pork chop”, “sirloin”, and bright light in all of our lives.

Finally, love and thanks to my handsome, funny, and talented husband John Price, who clearly didn’t know what he was in for when he married me almost a quarter-century ago. Thanks for the bacon, Starbucks, and Chinese Chop Salads that kept me alive while I wrote for fifteen-hour stretches, thanks for forcing me to have fun at the baseball games when I should have been grinding away on the dissertation, but most of all, thanks for being on my side when it really counts. That’s love.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE INQUIRY

Old Problems

For over fifty years, American educational researchers have been trying to diagnose and repair the public educational system. The landmark “Coleman Report,” one of the largest educational studies ever conducted with results from over 4,000 schools, (Coleman et al., 1966), concluded that socioeconomic status accounted for 90 percent of the variance in student achievement scores while the school environment, including the teacher, ostensibly impacted the equation with a factor of less than 10 percent. Other research affirmed Coleman’s work (Jencks et al., 1972; Richards, 2006), however, the report was also strongly criticized for having made serious methodological mistakes. These mistakes later attributed to subsequent errors in public policy that resulted in “white flight” (Cain & Watts, 1968, 1970; Coleman, 1975). In 1983, a government educational report titled, *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), called for sweeping reforms in public education. The current primacy of standardized tests was born and the American educational environment became a little bit colder.

The work of my dissertation, does not share the assumption that the success or failure of schools or teachers can be best judged by test scores (Eisner, 2005; Richards, 2006, pp. 1–3). Instead, while acknowledging that test scores may indeed capture one aspect of educational success, an over focus there obscures what I see as much more critical in importance, namely the relational quality between the student and the teacher.

A concern with relational quality may be perceived as a potential mine field of difficulty, possibly leading to litigation, given a climate of hypersensitivity due to accusations of sexual misconduct, harassment, and a host of predatory behavior by adults on children (Shoop, 2000; Sumsion, 2000). While such behaviors are troubling and do occur in schools, churches, homes and elsewhere, the current negatively charged environment has ironically instilled fear of a *false* accusation in well-meaning teachers preventing them from forming warmer, more human connections with their students (Mills, 2004; Orenstein, 2005). This is the case even if teachers believe that such a connection could improve student achievement, performance, and satisfaction.

What if the central measures of improvement were not solely or primarily a host of computer generated test scores? What if we could obliterate the fear of a false accusation of misconduct? In such a case, other areas worthy of attention could become noticeable. Rather, we might begin to ask new questions like, what is the role of warmer relationships between teachers and students in educational success? My study suggests that we can leave behind our conceptualization of potential threats and oppressing fear by simply engaging in practices that inspire a warm human connection in the classroom. The practices themselves allow teachers to appreciate the efficacy and simplicity with which this contribution to their work as teachers can be integrated into an already busy schedule.

New Questions

My main research question stems from an assumption whereby creating relational warmth and deep emotional regard through the development of a moral

and caring relationship between teacher and student in a pedagogical context, can give rise to an experience of *pedagogical love* in the classroom (Hatt, 2005). Discussions about love in relationship to classroom and pedagogical practice may be unusual, but they are not new. The relationship of love and knowledge has been the topic for thinkers from earliest historical times. In Plato's Symposium, Socrates enlightens a group discussion about his idea that love is a *spirit* existing between a human being and the beloved. Socrates expresses that this spirit of love is not itself wise or beautiful, but is the *desire* for wisdom and beauty. While such a desire can be expressed through human reproduction, it is also activated through ideological sharing or the reproduction of ideas (2008). We are left with his suggestions about love as the desire, or *eros*, that leads us to seek beauty and wisdom in the world. Plato explores varying forms and expressions of love, each involving a desire for some thing, making them all erotic, though not necessarily sexual.

The origins of Eros or love, come from Greek mythology. In some versions of the story, Eros is a being sometimes born of Chaos, as one of the first five elements, and in other versions he is the son of Aphrodite and Ares (Bolton, 2002). The prevailing modern interpretation of *eros* is one relating to erotic, sexual desire, and this is the one that prevents teachers from connecting what happens in their classrooms with anything having to do with eros. Given the climate of fear and false accusations of sexual misconduct, many teachers are reluctant to engage with students in an emotional way at all (Bradley, 2011). It is clear that the Greeks had a much more broad and complex understanding of the

character of *eros* than modern people. Greek tradition connected *eros* to the desire for an ideal of true beauty, whether in ideas, forms, or human beings (Moseley, 2010). If we are bold enough to consider this expanded picture of *eros*, and apply it to a modern pedagogical context, entirely new questions can begin to emerge.

bell hooks' Eros in Education

Many modern scholars who speak of love in the classroom try to characterize it as specifically as possible, no matter how impossible this task may be. Most choose to name their experience of classroom love according to one of the four Greek labels of *agape*, *philia*, *storge*, or *eros*. The label most often used in discussions of love and pedagogy is *eros* (Garrison, 1994; hooks, 2010; Hull, 2002; Osborne, 1996; Russon, 2000; Schwab & Klinckmann, 1954).

Eros is certainly the most favored term used by activist, writer, and radical loving teacher, bell hooks. She believes that by virtue of the fact that human beings are in bodies, the libido, as an embodiment of *eros* or desire, is also always present. In favoring *eros* as a condition of her teaching environment, she is not advocating sexuality in the classroom. As a college professor, hooks has been witness to relationships between professor and student or two students and explicitly considers both alliances inappropriate in a classroom context. Her main reasoning has less to do with any moral or legal implications, and more to do with the fact that she finds the nature of these relationships exclusionary, as they leave out the rest of the group and are therefore not conducive to building the classroom community. When hooks speaks of *eros*, however, her definition moves beyond

the surface assumptions. She describes how *eros* might manifest as a teacher being “turned on” in finding out that learning has lighted up for a student (hooks, 2010). She believes that touch and the embodiment of love can be positive elements in the learning environment, however taboo they may have become. This taboo is especially strong for male teaching colleagues who “Fret more that their touch will be misunderstood because so many of them have been socialized in patriarchy to see touch as always and only sexual” (2010, p. 158). She describes students asking her for hugs, or walking with her “arm-in-arm” after class to review an assignment, and notes these as moments of human communication that provided her, as a teacher, with the opportunity to express “confidence in [a student’s] ability to do what is needed” (2010, p. 156). The expression of human connection through touch leads hooks to one of the most important suggestions in her book *Critical Teaching*, which is that “Love in the classroom creates a foundation for learning that embraces and empowers everyone” (2010, p. 159). Her definition of love is a mixture of “care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust” (2010, p. 161). In her belief that love has everything to do with proper conditions for teaching and learning, hooks asserts that teachers who bring love to the classroom are not less objective but are in fact, “better able to respond to the unique concerns of individual students” and more capable of “integrating those concerns into the classroom community” (2010, p. 160). Regarding classroom boundaries around loving students, she explores the idea that most of us have been miss-educated where love is concerned, thinking that we will “fall” or go “crazy” or “lose

ourselves” in its presence and we will then be unable to conduct ourselves professionally (2010, p. 161). Admitting that a loving classroom environment is not static or predictable; hooks illuminates how the teacher must always be emotionally available to sense what is needed each time the classroom door is opened. There are times when a messy or emotional discussion can lead to deep and embedded learning, where simply covering the topic from a lesson plan goes nowhere. Even conflict may be a feature of the classroom where love reigns, according to hooks, but so too are such experiences as diversity, justice, harmony, leadership, and partnership (2010). She wisely states, “Education will change for the better in our nation when all teachers learn to love both outside and inside the classroom” (2010, p. 164).

Fromm’s Art of Loving

Love is not a simple matter, and some teachers worry that they will not have what it takes to embody relationship enhancing practices in the classroom. What about that student they do not particularly care for? What happens when that student needs a hug? The mid-century critical theorist Erich Fromm, posits a theory as well as a process for loving artfully. While he allows for various conditions that make love possible, for Fromm, love does not need to be divided. Love is still love – no matter the lover or the beloved. Fromm describes one aspect of love as the experience of having faith in another person so that they can have faith in their own abilities. He specifically relates this activity to a classroom context,

One of the most important of these conditions is that the significant person in a child's life have faith in these potentialities. The presence of this faith makes the difference between education and manipulation. Education is identical with helping the child realize his potentialities. (Fromm, 2000, p. 112)

In a related footnote, he reminds us that the Greek root for *education* is *educere*, meaning “to lead forth, or to bring out something, which is potentially present” (2000, p. 112). Fromm prefers to think of love as a verb rather than a noun. Love is an activity performed both outwardly as well as “an inner activity” that needs us to practice it in order to become proficient (2000, p. 115). Another of the main conditions for loving according to Fromm, is “being fully awake” so as not to be bored with or boring in life (2000, p. 116). Fromm's ideas about love do not allow the love of a neighbor to be different from the love of one's own family, to him all love stems from the same inner impulses. He reiterates that “Love is the only sane and satisfactory answer to the problem of human existence” (2000, p. 120).

Palmer's Courage To Love

Parker Palmer agrees with Fromm when he says, “The goal of a knowledge arising from love is the reunification and reconstruction of broken selves and worlds” (Palmer, 1993, p. 8). Palmer, famous for his *Courage to Teach* books and training courses, is a no stranger to love in the classroom. He is also an advocate and activist for deep educational reform. Palmer outlines four stages of development through which new world movements typically unfold and expresses his hope to shift the “models and methods of knowing” from one based

on exploitation and curiosity, which he considers to be immoral, to one that is whole and united with acts of loving (Palmer, 1993, 2007, 2008). For it is the world-view, the prevailing “models and methods,” that create the world’s places and ways of learning and so he asks, “How can the places where we learn to know become places where we also learn to love” (1993, p. 9)? Palmer is clear that the love called for within a teaching and learning environment is “not soft...sentimental...a fuzzy feeling of romance” but rather “tough love” and admits that “we flee from it because we fear its claims on our lives” (1993, p. 9). This love, the pedagogical kind, includes accountability, involvement, transformation, and responsibility. In other words, love is not easy but necessary to overcome the feelings of separation and alienation that prevail in our world. “Here, the act of knowing *is* an act of love, the act of entering and embracing the reality of the other, of allowing the other to enter and embrace our own” (1993, p. 8). This is the type of love that can transform the lives of both teachers and students from within the walls of a classroom.

Hatt’s Pedagogical Love

While the word “love” in conjunction with education may have unfortunate deviant sexual connotations, suggestions of sexual harassment, or smack of illicit affairs between professors and students, when used in connection with teachers and students in my research, it refers to the important experiences of warmth and love at school. Professor and researcher Blain Hatt declares that because “*pedagogy* is grounded in the relational and intentional responsibility of adult to child,” teachers who are working as they are meant to do, share a heart

connection with students (2005, p. 671). The key to understanding pedagogical love lies in its connection to *pathic knowledge*, like that embedded in the concepts of *sympathy*, and *empathy*. Pathic knowledge is etymologically based in the Greek for “affection, passion, or feeling for disease and suffering” and is epistemologically grounded in the “relational, situational, corporeal, temporal, and actional” (Hatt, 2005, p. 672; Van Manen & Li, 2002, p. 219). It is a deeper kind of knowing than intellectual understanding. It points us to consider our own sensing, feeling, and thinking life in connection with that of the *other*. Pathic knowledge is a connective experience after which one knows something new about the other. Hatt’s research on the subject asserts that pedagogical love cannot be present in an environment where “feeling for the Other is absent or marginalized” (2005). Within a framework of pedagogical love, the teacher must have a parental relational knowledge of every student in order to access the pathic understanding that will guide appropriate actions in the classroom. Hatt (2005, p. 686) echoes Van Manen (1991, p. 67), when he says that “Love as the condition of pedagogy and the pre-condition for the pedagogical relationship between the adult and the child...is absolutely essential to the child’s growth as a mature, responsible individual.”

Steps in a Process

Plato wants us to follow our feelings of eros or desire in pursuit of ideal knowledge and beauty, while hooks urges teachers to consider how eros as an embodiment of the desire for understanding and love of knowledge can manifest in a pedagogical context. Fromm focuses on the role played by a teacher’s faith

in the abilities of a student in the formation of a student's own self-image and in his or her academic success. In full agreement with this point, Palmer provides us with a new consideration, which is that to know *is* to love; they are synonymous. Hatt's study about the pathic knowledge of teachers in relationship with students provides plenty of examples showing how pedagogical love can manifest, but no matter the words we use to describe what happens or the "type" of love we are talking about, love is still love. In his book *The Biology of Love*, Humberto Maturana Romesin says,

Love is the domain of those relational behaviors through which the other arises as a legitimate other in coexistence with oneself. Thus, there are not different kinds of love; however, love as a domain of relational behaviors entails many relational dimensions, and there are many different configurations of relational behaviors in which love may take place (Maturana & Verden-Zoller, 2008, p. 223).

Each of these scholars believes that when a human being is truly interested in the other, for example, when a student is encircled by personal warmth from the teacher, then this student can begin a process of unfolding. One person's warmth permeates the other in the way that the watchful, and loving light of the sun penetrates a growing plant. Within this context of pedagogical love, students and teachers alike find satisfaction, meaning, and communion in the classroom. As shown, several scholars have discovered the important relational dimensions within pedagogical interactions, yet how can a teacher develop the capacities for openness, receptivity, and sensitivity needed to utilize the nuances and forces that make up this living process? How can teachers develop pedagogical love for and

deep interest in a student that enables a transformative element to arise in the teacher-student relationship? These are the questions that my research attempts to address.

Goethe

This study proposes an intervention working in collaboration with teachers to develop a potentially transformative way of engaging students. As a starting point, co-researchers and I used a model of observation and contemplation elaborated from the work of Goethe (Amrine, 1987; Bortoft, 1996; Goethe, 1988; Robbins, 2005; Steiner, 1988). Goethe's methods of phenomenological observation form the basis and necessary underpinning for this project. Goethe's techniques of phenomenological observation focus on seeing deeply into the natural world (Bortoft, 1996). Such depth allows one to engage not only with material objects but also to notice further into their unseen formative forces, which are observable when one holds an imaginative and contemplative dialogue with the apparent phenomena (Zajonc, 1982). This method of observation allows the phenomena and the object to remain connected as a whole so that the observer can perceive the necessary unity between the object's various layers and parts during the experience of observation. This unusually complete observational method provides unique insights into every aspect of the experience of the object and its phenomena, none of which would be possible through reductive or exclusively materialistic investigations (Bortoft, 1996; Holdrege, 1998; Seamon, 1998; Steiner, 2000). Such methods are essential when considering objects of nature, and in particular, other human beings.

Using Goethe's phenomenological method of observation for this project allowed teachers to maintain the wholeness of the human being, complete with all complexities to inform the experience of "the other" in a rich and vital way. The project is entitled: Building Warmth Sculpture in the Student-Teacher Relationship: Goethean Observation and Contemplative Practice in an Action Research Inquiry.

Practice in An Action Research Inquiry

I chose an action research orientation for the inquiry of this project, because, according to Reason and Bradbury, action research allows the inquirer to be responsive and collaborative; to engage in multiple ways of knowing; to focus on significant issues that affect them and their communities; and to engage in a living and emergent co-inquiry with others (2006, p. xxii). Each of these components was important to me as I began to formulate the steps of the project and this meant that action research was a natural fit. I used first, second, and third person approaches in the design and execution of the inquiry. I began by articulating my own first person questions and hypotheses, but quickly moved to a collaborative second person approach so that other teachers could test them. In the articulation of their findings from the study, co-researchers provided information that will prove useful as experiences are shared with others through the third person approach (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p. xxv-xxvi). While the generalizability of the findings from this study cannot be completely certain if the steps were to be attempted by others, the project did serve to train a set of teachers, some of who are now capable of bringing the exercises to others. In collaboration

with this group, steps of the process could be disseminated through networks of willing colleagues moving the work further into the world to those who may have an interest (Gustavsen, Reason, & Bradbury, 2001).

Over the course of 12 weeks, the discoveries of co-researchers working collaboratively in their own classrooms showed that a student responds to the teacher's delicate but attentive gaze in the same way that a plant responds to the sun's glowing rays. The healthy and personal attention of a teacher brought forth warm, positive responses in students. Through building the steps of a contemplative observational technique, teachers developed deep interest in their students and found themselves engaged in the practice of *pedagogical love*. According to co-researchers in this project, the steps of the practice articulated here helped them to provide a flourishing classroom environment in which all students and their teachers could thrive.

Unique Methods

During this study, teacher-participants or co-researchers, attempted to attune to specific student characteristics, noticing at first those that were material, i.e., perceivable by the senses, facts, and conditions. Staying with the empirical facts, teachers were asked to go further into the phenomena striving to gain access to the creative, non-objective, non-material essence of the student. Such an essence is marked by the "creative potency" that can arise between individuals who are building a warmth-connection with each other (Bortoft, 1996, p. 43; Goethe, 1988, p. 25; Hoffman, 1998; Steiner, 2000, pp. 67–69). If one is to perceive with sensitivity, then one's attention must also be schooled in perceiving

the aesthetic and social processes that take place between people (Bourriaud, 2002).

In order to begin building what Goethe (1988, p. 39) called “new organs of perception” with which to perceive the needs of students more completely, what VanManen and Li (2002) and Hatt (2005) might call *pathic knowledge*, co-researchers were provided with specific weekly exercises that helped them to contemplate and observe students in their own classrooms. In a private online environment, co-researchers were asked to document weekly impressions, experiences, and observational reports of student success as well as their own progress toward improving relationships with students during the period of the study.

First Person Statement

As a class teacher in a Rudolf Steiner Waldorf school, I have been granted access to a proving ground and laboratory where I have conducted my own educational research over the past seventeen years. Waldorf teachers are afforded a number of freedoms beyond those of a mainstream educator. I am fortunate to be able to draw upon the detailed child development and curriculum indications put forth by Waldorf’s founder, Rudolf Steiner (1996, 1997, 2004a). Most importantly, as a teacher who teaches the same class of students from first through eighth grade, I am in the unique position of becoming well acquainted with my students and their families over the course of several years.

While some Waldorf educators participated in this research project, specifically when they were new and untrained, or had reported certain relational

difficulties with their students, none of them were familiar with practicing the type of contemplative and observational techniques proposed in this study. Such techniques may be discussed but are rarely worked with for any length of time in Waldorf teacher training programs. Many teachers who have completed specialized training programs begin working in the classroom without a firm grasp or clear understanding of how to bring students into their meditative practice. While I have an understanding of how such things could be harmoniously integrated for Waldorf educators, however, I was particularly interested to know how those teaching outside of a Waldorf context could work with these questions. My intent was to discover whether such methods could successfully translate into the work of mainstream colleagues who are without the other typical Waldorf tools. I collected data on both the successes and the challenges that were encountered in this regard. In order to set the stage for this inquiry, I focused primarily upon a review of Goethe's phenomenological method of observing nature. I have extrapolated the method he used in studying the processes of plant growth and have applied its steps to observations of another human being. The project describes how to translate this phenomenological practice into the classroom context.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE AND SUPPORTING THEORY

Goethe's Artistic Science

Goethe is most often lauded for his extraordinary work as a poet and playwright. What many do not recognize is Goethe's equally extraordinary legacy in the sciences. His work in botany, zoology, geology, meteorology, and various realms of physics provides a comprehensive and transdisciplinary view into the sciences that few others have attempted (Cameron, 2005; Goethe, 1988; Hoffman, 1998; Holdrege, 1998; Riegner, 1998; Robbins, 2005; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Steiner, 1988, 2000; Zajonc, 1976). He did not simply apply the tools of one area for use in another (interdisciplinary), nor did he dabble in various fields one at a time (multidisciplinary), but Goethe's approach was truly transdisciplinary by definition. To look at his achievement in this regard, we must briefly consider the elements of a transdisciplinary mode of thinking as outlined in some of the literature in this growing field. The first requirement of such an approach is that it must be driven by the questions at hand, by the phenomena, rather than any particular disciplinary focus. A second element asks that knowledge arises out of a meta-understanding of conditions, basic assumptions, and all other circumstances that forms the framework in the act of knowing. A third measure of transdisciplinarity comes through its ability to sustain complexity, make connections, and to contextualize the emergent knowledge. The fourth requirement insists upon the direct involvement of the knower or researcher into the very process of knowing. Here, there is no pretense of "objectivity" as the personal bias, assumptions, and life circumstances of the

researcher are laid out as an aspect of the context through which he or she, as the knower, can know anything (Montuori, 2008; Nicolescu, 2008).

Goethe's contemporaries criticized his scientific work for crossing boundaries into the artistic (Hoffman, 1998, p. 129). If his scientific work is discussed at all in a modern context, the strictly disciplinary academy does its best to fragment Goethe's art from his science, taking what is needed to further its own argument or interests while ignoring the rest. Perhaps this is why so little is written about Goethe's experimental/observational methods, which are both scientific as well as artistic (Heitler, 1998, p. 61; Hoffman, 1998). It is the connection of art with science in his work that makes it so compelling.

Openness in a Four-Step Process

In Goethe's scientific studies on plants, he details a set of phenomenological observation techniques as they unfold in three stages, (a) empirical phenomenon, (b) scientific phenomenon, and (c) pure phenomenon (Goethe, 1988, pp. 24–25). Botanist and Goethean scientist Jochen Bockemuhl (1985, pp. 1–67) has expanded Goethe's experimental indications to include four stages related to the classical elements of earth, water, air, and fire (Hoffman, 1998, p. 130). It is this four step process that I describe for use in teacher research. Bockemuhl also includes in the initial step an element that he terms "the first impression ... inferred by Goethe" (Hoffman, 1998, p. 130), which environmental researcher and philosopher, Nigel Hoffman accurately encapsulates.

The aim is to make conscious the moment of first contact with a phenomenon—a moment when one's sensibilities are most alive and open.

Everyone has a first impression when experiencing something new, but this encounter is usually quickly forgotten as the thing becomes familiar and ordinary. Goethe's approach suggests that we can consciously carry this impression throughout the course of the research process and allow it to develop and become more clear. (Hoffman, 1998, p. 131)

If awareness of the first impression can be held throughout the research process, it will color the quality of observations and allow the phenomenon to speak for itself without clutter from preconception, categorizing, or theorizing (Goethe, 1988, pp. 11–17).

During the first stage of experimentation based on Goethe's method, an observer gathers "facts" from the physical/earthly world using all the senses in order to inform an exact description of observed phenomenon. Within that phenomenon, within those facts, according to Goethean scientists like Bortoft (1996), Zajonc (1976), and Holdredge (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998), lies everything needed to eventually arrive at the supporting theory that lives behind them. This information is available to any observer who looks closely (Goethe, 1988, pp. 24–25; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998, pp. 131–132). The point is not to be exhaustive during participation in active seeing, but to be exacting, which is not simply a matter of opening the eyes to receive impressions. To participate in this first step, one must reach out to the phenomenon in an act of *looking* that is capable of producing extraordinarily accurate descriptions (Bortoft, 1996, p. 41). In this first stage, the observer must be careful to withhold judgments and hypotheses about the phenomenon and to focus very consciously on sensory phenomena (i.e.; an object's color, sound, shape, size, taste, smell, etc.) An attempt must be made to see the thing as it is in itself, standing back from the object and recognizing but

holding back the needs, desires, and prejudices of the observer where the thing is concerned (Goethe, 1988, p. 11). In observing the external “facts” of the object, its separation from our own being becomes apparent as we embody an objective consciousness (Hoffman, 1998, p. 132). Fritz Heinemann, one of the few authors focused on Goethe’s experimental method (Hoffman, 1998, p. 130), describes and situates this first empirical step.

Goethe agrees with the Positivists in his demand that men shall confine themselves to the knowable and begin with as exact a description of the phenomena as possible, as he does also in his concept of truth, but he parts company with them in his desire to maintain the phenomena as they are, and not to resolve them into quantities or analyse [sic] them into their simplest elements ("simple ideas"), and notably in his refusal to give the central place to the concept of relation. (Heinemann, 1934, p. 71)

From this exercise, we have *perceived* the object, but we do not yet *know* it fully (Bockemuhl, 1985, p. 1). In the second stage of Goethe’s technique, we are asked to enter a realm he calls, *scientific phenomenon* (Goethe, 1988, p. 25) and to re-create an image of the object inside of our picturing consciousness. Goethe calls this activity, *exact sensorial imagination* (Bortoft, 1996, p. 42; Hoffman, 1998, p. 133). This new observational mode instructs observers to focus on the *relationships* between the empirical characteristics noted in stage one and on the time sequence in which they unfold (Hoffman, 1998, p. 133). When seeing a plant through such a technique for example, one comes to realize that the growth process *is* the relationship or connection between the contiguous plant organs we have been observing. The particulars dissolve inside the fluidity and flow of one movement that is the metamorphosis of the whole seen in our imagination. We cannot usually see the growth process itself with the organ of

our eyes. Likewise, the flower or fruit is not present during the first stages of growth and so is initially invisible to our view. In order to “view” the relationships between each successive phase of development, we must bring the previously detailed observations of phenomenon into our imagination to re-create the image there. From a process of imaginative thinking, the *concept* of the plant, including its growth processes and relational aspects, is brought forth from within us through inner activity (Bockemuhl, 1985, p. 1). During this second phase, our own inner world of thought has penetrated the outer world, perceived by the senses in the way that water can penetrate the earth (Bockemuhl, 1985, p. 3).

Bochemuhl’s Goethean model further includes, a third stage related to gesture, air, and inspiration (Bockemuhl, 1985, pp. 25–27; Hoffman, 1998, pp. 134–135). This phase moves deeper into the scientific phenomenon, distilling and intensifying the previous metamorphic movements as “formative gestures” or “formative life-principles.” Hoffman explains that while a movement is simply motion, a *gesture* contains an indication of intention. Whatever the *idea* or the *plan* behind the formative movements of an organism, we can now begin to “apprehend them through an airy cognition” (Hoffman, 1998, p. 134). This apprehension is a process that takes place entirely within us. Like air, the gesture of the plant is not seen with the eyes, but through that element (air/gesture) other truths are revealed.

In these first phases of Goethe’s method of experimentation, a mood of openness and uncertainty is brought to bear on the earthly and physical nature of a solid object observed through our sense perceptions. These individual

perceptions then give way to the fluid processes of growth and finally, the observer takes in (inspires) the metamorphic movements expressed in that growth, illuminating their meaning in the light of cognition. Goethean scientists contend that when following this procedure, human beings can see beyond what is perceived by our eyes (Bockemuhl, 1985; Heinemann, 1934; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Zajonc, 1976).

Finally, we reach the fourth stage where creative potency arises in an environment of fire or warmth and is observed there by intuition. This stage provides the most intimate and inner way of experiencing an organism. Goethe considers this stage a higher form of empiricism, one that is more *delicate* than that used in the first stage of observation. “There is a delicate empiricism which makes itself utterly identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory” (Goethe, 1988, p. 307). In this phase, the *pure phenomenon* or *urphänomen* of the organism can be intuited. Goethe’s *urphänomen* is not a generalization or an abstraction but is the archetypal essence of the observed (Bortoft, 1996, pp. 22–23). This archetype arises both in the physical and intuitive eye of the beholder as that which makes the observed what it is and that which causes it to operate in the way that it does. It forms the whole as well as that which lives within each component of the whole (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998, pp. 25–27). This whole is not an object or a constitutive totality made up of physically perceived parts, but is the *theory* or *potency* that lives behind the organism. It contains the creative capacity to form the physical object in all of its inner and outer aspects. Bortoft provides a clear picture of Goethe’s *urphänomen* in his description of the

holographic principle (Bortoft, 1996, p. 4). When a holograph is shattered, the entire image is contained within each individual piece. When looking at a fragment, we do not see only that portion of the holograph that has broken away from the whole, but the entirety of the image contained in each part (Bortoft, 1996, pp. 4–9). Similarly, the *urphänomen* reveals patterns and truths, about the entirety of the whole and contains a microcosmic window into the inner and outer structures of the observed.

Elemental Warmth

According to Bockemuhl, this fourth fire stage is related to air since it contains no substance, but it stands alone in its self-generative and active capacity (Hoffman, 1998, p. 135). The human observer can experience the warmth aspect of this fourth stage both outwardly and inwardly. Unlike the other three elemental connections, warmth can be seen outwardly only as fire. Inwardly, it distinguishes itself as the element least independent of human sensing, as warmth comes into being in relation to inner human experience. Earth, water, and air exist in varying degrees of separation from the human organism, but physical, environmental, and especially emotional warmth is experienced through intuitive perception when it “penetrates and energizes everything from within.” Without warmth, no activity is possible (Bockemuhl, 1985, p. 30). Outwardly, we experience warmth through heat, but inwardly we sense “the warmth of identification that one feels when he or she has made contact with another living being’s ‘inner impulse’” (Hoffman, 1998, p. 136).

Warmth Sculpture

Goethean scientists are not the only ones who have experimented with the processes of warmth that Goethe described. Goethe's work in plant observation inspired twentieth-century German social artist, Joseph Beuys, to recognize and express the elements and theory of a social process he called "warmth sculpture" (Kuoni, 1990, p. 11), which comes about, according to Beuys, "through the fact that each individual turns lovingly to the other, with warmth of heart" (2004, p. 108). Beuys considered warmth sculpture a precondition for transcendence of the individual and formation of community. This social warmth, he claimed, is "really exactly the same as the actual substance of love" (2004, p. 89). This intimate inner warmth, the warmth of heart and love shared between human beings, allows improved ability to work together toward future goals (Beuys & Harlan, 2004, p. 89). Creating warmth sculpture requires one to become attuned to the sculptural, aesthetic, and artistic principles at work within social process (Kuoni, 1990). Necessary for that creation is the development of Goethe's new perceptive organs (Beuys & Harlan, 2004, p. 18).

Subject/Object Considerations in Goethe's Method

Goethe's method of experimentation leads to an opening of the difficult and much studied concept of a non-dualistic mode of thought. Though considered by many for centuries in the West and for millennia in the East, the concept of non-duality is no easier to grasp today than it has ever been. Goethe's practice attempts to address these considerations through a juxtaposition of scientific observation of phenomenon with inner experiences. We learn here that what was

originally an object, clearly separate and outside of the observer, begins to take up residence on the inside of the observer's consciousness. As the observer moves more deeply into the specific phenomenon of the organism, he finds that both the outer physical object and its hidden inner workings arise very clearly inside his thoughts, feelings, and imaginative life. What was out—is now in; what was I—is now we, and the subject/object boundary is transcended. Goethe says, "The manifestation of a phenomenon is not detached from the observer—it is caught up and entangled in his individuality" (Goethe, 1988, p. 367). Through grounding in direct experience, Goethe's method seeks to unite the observer with the *pure phenomenon* of the observed leading to non-dual awareness (Heitler, 1998, p. 59). When the observer has merged with the observed, decisions that affect one, also affect the other. In part, this feature of Goethe's method is suited very well to the concerns of modern ecology. As we (observers) consider nature (observed) from a non-dual mode of thinking, our decisions emerge from the unity of our own creative and generative forces with those of nature, leading toward actions "enhancing rather than degrading" to her (Hoffman, 1998, p. 169). Focused on qualitative and holistic principles as opposed to the fragmentation of mechanistic and quantitative ones, Goethean observation provides a meta-view that allows the observer to consider things both seen and unseen in gaining an understanding of any organism's *wholeness*.

Contemplative Inquiry

While the majority of scientists who study and further the work of Goethe do so in the realm of the natural world, in addition to his own engagement with

these ideas in his scientific work, quantum physicist, Arthur Zajonc has also transitioned Goethe's four steps of observation into a practice of contemplative thought and mindfulness. Zajonc (2009, p. 192) lays out a step-by-step system of contemplative practice that leads from objective awareness, to inner image, to a sense of generative activity, and finally to the non-dual awareness in which no distinction is left between the observer and the observed. He calls these four stages (a) object, (b) image, (c) activity, and (d) agency (2009, p. 192). His purpose is to provide a path toward a more holistic knowledge of our selves and others. The approach is not meant to take us out of reality, though many of his exercises lead us away from sense impressions. The intention behind the exercises is to open a new way of perceiving and conceptualizing our environment, its situations, and the other living beings inhabiting it, so that we are able to move from outer appearance to inner process more fluidly. Cultivation of this ability provides practitioners with an expansive view of the observed phenomenon leading to deeper knowledge than is possible by engaging the typical quantifiable and limited context of a modern scientific view. When we know a person more deeply or see a situation in full context, we increase our capacity to effectively address the issues that arise.

Quoting Thomas Carlyle, Zajonc believes that "Love is ever the beginning of knowledge as fire is of light" (Zajonc, 2009, p. 187). He advocates an "epistemology of love rather than one of separation" (2009, p. 179), and relates that in the typical sciences, that which is observed is objectified and separated from the observer (Zajonc, 2009, p. 179). When we enter an observation through

an “epistemology of love,” according to Zajonc, the observer is able to move closer to the observed, to become intimate with its inner working, even to participate in the processes that actually create the object itself through an imaginative, and artistic intuitive activity (Zajonc, 2009, Chapter 7).

Noting that *respect* is the foundation of such a practice, Zajonc, after Goethe, suggests that to truly know something (or someone) one must first turn toward the observed in a mood of respect and love (Zajonc, 2009, p. 181). In Buber’s construction, we see that *I* and *Thou* merge, because “Love is responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*” (Buber, 1958, pp. 14–15). This intimate communion is no mystical process. Zajonc (2009) says,

We participate in the world of others all the time when we enter into their thoughts and feelings....We think the thought of the other in order to understand him or her. In a similar way, we must learn to think the thought that is active within each and every object to which we give our attention. (p. 182)

When we participate in the world of another, “the other flows through us” (Zajonc, 2009, p. 182).

Rudolf Steiner

Zajonc has been able to merge his professional scientific background with Goethean observational method to provide an accessible and practical framework for meditation. While Zajonc clearly reveals his interest in Goethe’s science through his many writings on the subject, it was not only Goethe that influenced him toward these aims (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Zajonc, 1976, 1982, 1998). In the introduction to his work on contemplative practice, Zajonc credits Rudolf

Steiner as his “prime example” and a guide in every step of his meditative practice (Zajonc, 2009, p. 16).

Perhaps no other scientist has been so immersed in or influenced by Goethe’s work as Austrian scientist and philosopher, Rudolf Steiner. Steiner penetrated the work of Goethe when he was asked, at age 21, to introduce and edit Goethe’s entire scientific works. For fourteen years Steiner examined the ideas he encountered through Goethe (Steiner, 2000, p. vii–xi). From these ideas emerged Steiner’s own worldview and his work in pedagogy, medicine, agriculture, cultural renewal, curative education, and the spiritual insights he gained from four stages of higher knowledge, obviously aligned with Goethe’s phenomenology, which he outlines for practical use by others (Steiner, 1994).

In 1919 Steiner opened a new school for the children of workers at the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart Germany. This first school was the precursor and model for the now hundreds of Waldorf schools that have sprung to life all over the world. Steiner’s indications on pedagogy and curriculum were and are still innovative and unique. It was not his ideas, however, that provided the teachers and pupils of that first school with their most profound educational experiences. It was Steiner himself. In particular, those around him were most affected by the way Steiner was able to behold each and every human being with whom he had contact. Frederich Rittelmeyer, a priest visiting the Stuttgart school described his experience of one such meeting.

Above, in the half-open door, Rudolf Steiner stood, having just said good-bye to another visitor, and watched most carefully as I slowly came up the stairs. I have never seen anyone as observant as he was. It was as if—quite immobile, given up selflessly—he let one create oneself again, as it

were, in a subtle element in his own soul, which he offered up for the purpose. It was not a matter of thinking about the other, more an inner re-creation in mind and spirit in which the whole growth and development of the other would be revealed. (as cited in Selg, 2008, p. 11)

This ability was not something that Steiner was unaware of, but one that he cultivated and expected the teachers in his school to develop for themselves in their work with the children. He spoke to the teachers in Holland in 1924 about the first task of teaching,

From the very beginning, one should work in such a way that teachers and educators know the human being in the deepest sense, so that out of the conviction that arises from observing human beings correctly, they approach children with love that is born from such thinking. (Steiner, 2004a, p. 35)

None more strongly or clearly than Steiner have declared that such skills are essential for a teacher's work. His many lectures on both education and Goethean science constitute the seminal influences in every part of my teaching practice as well as in this action research project. Steiner's own stages of higher knowledge, as the reader will note in Table 1, correspond to the work of Zajonc, Goethe, Beuys, and Boehmuhl, which together, in transdisciplinary style, form the heart of the literature used to support the four-step process discussed and implemented during the course of my research.

Through experimentation with such observations, teachers engaged in this research had the opportunity to improve their ability to *see* each of their students as a whole human being. Enabled by this warmth of recognition, students were drawn closer to their teachers. As the recursive process of an observation feedback loop continued, eventually the *Urphänomen* or archetype of what makes

each student a unique being was revealed. When a teacher cultivates in herself the ability to participate with students on an integrative level beyond the senses, using tools like thought, questioning, imagination, inspiration, and intuition, the teacher can act more fully in the best interest of the student in all available choices.

As the reader has seen, the steps of Goethe's phenomenological observation, as implemented by various scholars across disciplines, can be applied as a contemplative way of looking at students, helping teachers to develop inner organs for perceiving the archetypal essence of each student, while building an ecology of pedagogical love in the modern classroom. In the midst of an outwardly compartmentalized and materialistic educational culture with many specific empirical demands on both student and teacher, it is still possible for teachers to become inwardly emancipated enough to perceive the *whole* human being in each student. While outwardly performing contracted duties, through engagement with the Goethean practices of this study, teachers became more able to express inner freedom in authentic relationship to students. This authentic and artfully crafted aesthetic sense for the creativity and presence in interpersonal warmth provided teacher and student with the experience of meaningful human encounter. From the depth of such an encounter, personal and academic discovery, fulfillment, and success became more possible for both the students and their teachers who took up these practices.

Table 1
Corresponding Processes and Practices from the Seminal Goethean Literature
Created by Author

Stages of Goethe's Phenomenological Observation	Bochemuhl's Expansion of Goethe's steps adding elemental connections	Zajonc's Phases of Contemplative Inquiry	Beuys's Principles of Social Sculpture	Steiner's Stages of Higher Knowledge
STAGE 1 Empirical Phenomenon Appearances of form and the qualities of form	Stage 1			
	Perception without judgment (first impression) EARTH (SENSES) Empirical Phenomenon	Object	Shape	Physical Perception
STAGE 2 Scientific Phenomenon Essential transformation and generative movement between the appearances of various forms/qualities	Stage 2			
	Exact Sensorial Imagination WATER (TIME) Scientific Phenomenon I	Image	Metamorphosis	Imagination
	Stage 3			
	Intensification and distillation AIR (GESTURE WITH INTENTIONALITY) Scientific Phenomenon II	Activity	Gesture	Inspiration
STAGE 3 Pure Phenomenon (Urphänomen) The "typus," essence, or whole is seen where form/quality and transformation interpenetrate	Stage 4			
	The archetypal essence/theory FIRE/WARMTH (CREATIVE POTENCY) Pure Phenomenon (Urphänomen)	Agency	Social processes	Intuition

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Introduction

The primary vehicle by which my research question was addressed, called for me to provide teachers with a set of exercises designed to help them deepen their ability to observe through practicing specific observation techniques in the classroom. The purpose of this practice was to create more fruitful, meaningful, and effective relationships between the teachers and their students. Using an action research process, specifically the architecture of cooperative inquiry (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 2001; Reason, 1998) the research approached knowledge generation as a way of working *with* teachers rather than *on* them (Bradbury-Huang, 2010; Heron & Reason, 1986). Action research may be especially successful for designing interventions in complex social contexts because it insists upon the input of the practitioners themselves (Heron & Reason, 1986; Reason, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Torbert, 2001). Each teacher, therefore, helped to define the *success* of the overall project as well as of each of its specific elements.

The collaborative nature of action research provides a rich context of knowledge and understanding as practitioners communicate and explore findings from within and across their respective environments having built a community of research (Clift, Veal, & Johnson, 1990). This collaborative practitioner research is not a scientific or objective approach to inquiry and is sometimes criticized in terms of the validity of its findings. Such criticisms do not fully take into account the nature of practitioner collaborative inquiry, which seeks to

incorporate the researcher's intimate, first person knowledge of the subject into the research context as well as the addition of second and third person findings that serve to add depth and richness. The collaboration between all participants provides a new understanding that could not be reached by one objective, scientific researcher working in isolation *on* the subject (Genat, 2009; Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 2001; Reason, 1998) . Goethe himself reminds us that “The manifestation of a phenomenon is not detached from the observer—it is caught up and entangled in his individuality” (1988, p. 307). The individuality of each researcher was an important element of how each teacher's context was situated. Practitioners working in very different and diverse settings, far away from each other, had the challenge of building a community of research in an online forum though which it was proposed they would share their findings.

The research protocol, which was approved to proceed by the CIIS Human Research Review Committee in April of 2010, primarily consists of four-steps, including exercises in mindfulness and contemplative practice for use by teachers when not in the classroom, as well as observational techniques carried out by teachers during their time with students. The project was implemented in cooperation with a selection of twelve co-researchers.

Although I provided the initial steps and the structure for feedback, as the practitioners engaged in the process, each of their reflections upon classroom experiences, both before and after implementing the new measures, was of primary importance in data collection. By asking teachers to implement the basic outlined processes in their own classrooms, they were positioned to uncover

further methodological nuances, to discover degrees of ease or difficulty in translation, and to explore adjustments that increased efficacy and application in their own work with students. I sought their feedback on very practical aspects of the project such as clarity of directions, preparation of materials, and a range of practitioner experiences throughout the implementation process. Co-researcher assessment of student engagement before and after implementation also constitutes a key finding, particularly from the four core practitioners who worked consistently with the process throughout the twelve weeks. Obstacles to the generation of warmth and whole-regard were also noted, such as government directives, mandatory testing, curriculum mandates, or other factors, which held the potential to detract from the work at hand.

Because this method of research is built on encouraging the practice of reflexivity, where practitioners and researchers consider their own experiential knowledge as a valid way of knowing in a professional context, aspects of the project were adjusted or changed depending on the needs of practitioners, their students, and their experiences as we moved forward with the research. As described by Herr and Anderson (2005, Chapter 5) we were “designing the plane while flying it.”

Action Research as a Relational Model

Providing a fertile ground for the removal of subject/object boundaries, action research places practitioners skillfully at the center of the process as those who are conducting the research (Wadsworth, 1997). One of the hallmarks of action research concerns overcoming the artificial researcher/participant split

between myself as researcher, and those who helped posit and investigate questions (Reason, 1998). As we began to form a community of research, we enacted the very substance of the topic we planned to study by merging the interests of our mutual professional endeavors (Reason, 2001). In other words, I proposed that practitioners attempt to enter into a state of non-dual awareness with their students using observational and contemplative methods, while I also endeavored to work with these teachers through the same relational structure using reflexive praxis focused on practical outcomes for all involved (Reason, 2000; Reason & Bradbury, 2006, pp. 243–351).

This project is steeped in reflexivity allowing both myself and my co-researchers to draw upon our own situated professional experiences for guidance and next steps, which is one hallmark of an action research orientation (Burnaford, Fischer, & Hobson, 2001; Herr & Anderson, 2005; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). As I reflected on relationships with project practitioners, I asked them to use a reflexive method to study the subject of relational reflexivity in their own classroom with their students. My entire method employed a reflexive approach marked by feedback and adjustment. Teacher attitudes and practices, experiences of unseen qualities, a teacher's qualitative assessment of student success, along with a host of other experiences drawn from the participative nature of action research make up the pragmatic *truth* of this inquiry (Reason, 1998, p. 15). In bringing forth the human wholeness of students, teachers, and even researchers, action research provides a home for the full picture of relationships, social and emotional content, academic improvement, and personal experiences of success.

Much like Goethe's science, action research is inquiry driven, understands that assumptions and context matter, provides a container for sustaining complexity, and includes the knower and his or her related assumptions as critical to forming the inquiry, and so it is also a transdisciplinary experiential epistemology (Montuori, 2008, p. xi–xvii, in Nicolescu, Ed. 2008).

Theory and practice.

Action research has the advantage that practitioners actually have a stake in the outcome of the research because they *are* the researchers investigating questions relevant within the context of their own work environments (Reason, 2001). It is an approach that is commonly used in schools of education (Burnaford et al., 2001; Clift et al., 1990; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Hatch, 2002, p. 31). Action research in this context allows teachers to approach the study topics while continuing to go about their daily work with students in their classrooms, thus insights are informed by practice and vice versa. The goals of this project were of a practical nature. How can teachers help to articulate a practice of *pedagogical love* that will be easy to follow and to implement in any classroom where the teacher is motivated to do so? Co-researchers set about the task of defining the steps that worked in practice and articulating the theoretical understanding of the process itself.

First Person Research.

I reflected, as I designed and executed the project, upon my own first-person process and self-observations, the crystallization of which is contained in chapter 8 (Burnaford et al., 2001; Clift et al., 1990; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Hatch,

2002, p. 31). Here, I explore how this research came to be, my own biases and assumptions, and the life experiences that led me to implement a teaching practice based on warmth and love in the context of my own classroom. In reviewing the history and development of my own practice, I discovered new things to share with study practitioners as well as new ways of articulating my ideas on the subject of teacher-student relationships and the contemplative and observational methods I proposed. Kurt Lewin (1948) suggests that to create an inquiry, one would do well to begin by looking at the life space from which that inquiry has arisen. This space is one's own personal perspective and it is from this perspective that the questions are asked, the research design created, the data analyzed, and the outcomes articulated. Therefore, the study pays great attention to integrating its proposed intervention into the lives of teachers, using methods that are familiar to me from my own teaching experiences.

I also explored how my perspective is situated in relation to those of the co-researchers. As a teacher, I am an insider to the profession and yet, I have been uniquely prepared as a teacher who enjoys the freedoms afforded me by Waldorf Education. Waldorf teaching requires that teachers remain free to choose, within an array of Steiner's indications relative to child development, any lessons that appear to be relevant to one's own class of children (Steiner, 1997, p. vii–xiv). Since the same teacher is primarily responsible for most subjects and for the same class of children from first through eighth grade, only the parent could know a child more intimately. With this privilege, I have a certain bias toward plural ways of knowing that include artistic perceptions, spiritual insights, and the

inspiration of the moment. I also have a bias against mechanistic educative models and fixed ideas about “how children learn” since, through my experience, I have had the luxury to notice how every child is truly an individual and has his or her own unique way of experiencing the world. These biases place me as more of an outsider relative to the mainstream educational system, which is where I eventually hope to introduce much of this research.

Transition to Second Person Research

I attempted to navigate the complexity of my role as a researcher/co-researcher with my mainstream colleagues in a sensitive manner, never losing sight of the fact that I did not have all the answers, but that I had generated many questions from years of experience and practice. It was my wish to share these questions so that they could act as a catalyst for co-researchers to articulate their own questions. After the introductory interviews and the online orientation, I turned the process over to the co-researchers in order to learn from their experiences. I looked to each teacher’s ability to bring forth a warmth connection to students. I wanted to know if such a task was possible using the exercises from the study. I wondered if they would be able to achieve emancipation from government incursion, curriculum geared toward tests written by textbook companies, and from the restraints and the fears of legal repercussion that may have previously prevented them from feeling or expressing love for the students in their care.

Research Design and Execution

Through implementation of a series of exercises based on four stages of increasingly intense observation, co-researchers experimented with the qualities and practices of (a) respect, (b) gentleness, (c) intimacy, (d) participation, (e) vulnerability, (f) transformation, (g) organ formation, (h) illumination, and (i) insight (Zajonc, 2009, p. 187). Success with these exercises was possible only through each researcher's ability to remain vulnerable and open to ambiguity, to maintain a willingness to be transformed through repetitions of the exercises, and to heighten awareness and sensitivity to a growing capacity to fully perceive student characteristics and needs. The four-week rotation allowed researchers to revisit each stage three times for a period of one week each, during the course of 12 weeks, in order to deepen the practices and notice improved capacity and ability. While 12 weeks formed only an introduction to the processes of observation and mindfulness to be shared with teachers, mindfulness trainings in other contexts have shown high success rates and even dramatic results with programs ranging from 5 or 6 week courses in basic fundamentals for building one's own practice (Biegel & Brown, n.d.; Mindful Schools, 2012). Other successful programs ranging from 8-12 weeks took place in clinical settings (Galantino, Maguire, Baime, Szapary, & Farrar, 2005; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Singh et al., 2007). An overview of the weekly exercise schedule can be found in Appendix A.

Co-Researchers

The practitioner sample of co-researchers was drawn from those who were currently engaged in classroom teaching with students that ranged in level from first grade to university undergraduates and one graduate level professor also participated for a short time. This sample was divided into three age categories, (a) early grades teachers from first through fifth, (b) teachers of adolescents in grades sixth through twelfth, and (c) those teaching university students. Teachers from each of these three populations were chosen as a sampling of circumstances and with an eye toward indication for further in-depth study. Each group represents a set of teachers who have a unique place in the lives of students from their first experiences with school through the completion of a first college degree.

Teacher's working with younger students from first through fifth grades, have the opportunity to affect young student's attitudes about school and learning from a very early age (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Hamre & Pianta, 2005; Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Marchand & Skinner, 2007). While most studies concerning relationship and academic engagement have been conducted in grades three and up, some research suggests that it is in the primary grades where patterns of attachment are best formed (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). According to a 2007 study of 443 at-risk first graders, in three Texas school districts, "Social relatedness in the primary grades may establish patterns of school engagement and motivation that have long-term consequences for their academic motivation and achievement" (Hughes & Kwok, 2007, p. 39). If students are exposed to teachers who exhibit warmth and caring at this delicate and formative stage in their educational

experiences, they may come to expect and perhaps even demand such connections as they progress through the grades.

Teachers working with students in middle school and high school years, have the opportunity to connect with students just as they begin to take a deep interest in particular subjects. It is typically during these years that students make decisions about how to proceed in their educational future. For those who maintain a willingness to engage, these decisions lead to particular colleges, courses of study, and vocational choices. For students who do not manage to make a connection to a specific interest, high school is the time when they decide whether or not “education is *for* them.” During this crucial time, the system finally loses students who have become complacent or overwhelmed, feeling as though the system has been designed to prevent them from fully succeeding. A 2008 survey of over 400,000 American students in grades six through twelve, found that, according to students, teacher and student relationships were a key factor in student ability to succeed (Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, 2008). If these students form deep attachments to teachers who care for them as human beings, their decisions about learning will likely unfold in a decidedly positive direction (Bhanpuri & Reynolds, 2003; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006).

Teachers working with undergraduate populations have the advantage of meeting students who have already chosen a particular field of study to pursue. While such decisions show a positive impulse toward educational goals, many undergraduates begin to feel lost in an academic ocean of pressures and choices.

American colleges and universities struggle to help students maintain the balanced lives and enthusiasm for their subjects that will carry them through to graduation. Freeman, Anderman, and Jensen (2007) cite seven empirical studies all showing that the quality of student and teacher relationships decline after entry into the junior high school grades and deteriorate substantially through high school and college. Students at the university level may need strong and caring relationships with teachers and advisors more than ever. Research says that “Caring relationships with instructors have been shown to be related to intrinsic motivation, positive coping, relative autonomy, engagement in school, expectancies, values, effort, cognitive engagement, self-efficacy, persistence, and performance” (Jones, 2009, p. 279). Many students, living away from home for the first time in their young lives, experience a difficult emotional transition that can affect their ability to properly attend to their course work. Perhaps the caring teacher and student relationship in this phase of schooling can serve as needed encouragement for students to persevere and to complete their programs.

I studied how the proposed methods of this research worked for individuals from such contexts as public schools, private non-sectarian and religious schools, teachers working with “at risk” student populations, university settings, and online educational programs. I also wanted to gauge efficacy in helping new, struggling, or “burned-out” teachers and endeavored to find at least one co-researcher embedded in each of these circumstances as a sampling of contexts for possible future study.

The co-researcher's intrinsic motivation to improve became an important condition for participation. Each person who engaged fully in the project to the end found that they had begun to develop new, unseen organs of perception with which to notice and react to their students. Openness to personal and professional transformation, as well as perseverance was key to their success.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The teachers who participated with me in this study did so voluntarily, and had either been directly contacted or emerged through a snowball sampling approach (Ove & Snijders, 1994). I produced an introduction to the inquiry (Appendix B) that helped teachers to determine if their initial level of interest translated into the time and commitment needed for the study. A brief list of selection criteria (Appendix C) helped to determine potential co-researcher availability and ability during the period of the study, as well as such things as adequate computer and Internet capability. A list of recruitment steps in order can be found in Appendix D. See the confidentiality statements, participant's bill of rights, and consent forms in Appendices E, F, and G respectively. From this documentation, potential co-researchers made the final determination about their willingness to participate at the expected levels and those who planned to participate signed and submitted a consent form.

Research Procedures and Protocols

To begin the process with each individual, I gathered pre-study information through a semi-structured interview/conversation with each co-researcher by phone about their own struggles and questions related to student

interactions and ongoing work in the classroom (Appendix H). During this conversation, we reviewed the project aims and explored how they might overlap with each practitioner's professional goals. I sought teacher opinions about whether and how they believed the project might be helpful in their work with students. This review allowed me to establish a baseline read on readiness for uptake.

During an orientation to the online architecture, I answered co-researchers questions about participation guidelines, expectations, schedules, and project procedures. Once teachers had completed the orientation process, and had indicated a satisfactory comfort level with how they would proceed in the project, weekly communication occurred primarily through a private, password protected website or email. I created a template for this closed and confidential online space, which is called "The Warmth Sculpture Project" using an online server. This classroom space functioned as an online platform for teacher journaling and interactions. Maintenance of the basic site was free but a paid upgrade allowed access to more tools.

Each week of the project, co-researchers were expected to make at least two entries in the online environment. The first was within the context of the group discussion space for the week. The observation and contemplative exercise for that week were posted at the top of each week's space. Co-researchers were encouraged to engage in conversation with each other in order to bring out questions about the week's practice or to share reflections and questions about previous work. Each co-researcher was assigned a private journal space, visible

only to the co-researcher and to me, labeled with their screen name. Practitioners were asked to reflect about how the changes they made while interacting with students were shifting classroom dynamics. As they posed their own questions, as well as tested and discussed their own solutions in the online environment, it was planned that co-researchers would create a “critical reference group” exploring their own context (Wadsworth, 1997).

Beyond these two main spaces, a live chat feature indicated who was online at any given time and allowed teachers to connect with any community member in a real time conversation. There were also possibilities for sharing other resources and connecting through phone conference. An online ethics document and a code of conduct for the space were posted at the beginning of the process (Appendix I). Participation in the research required adherence to these policies for the duration of the project.

Upon completion of the study, co-researchers were asked to summarize their experiences through a brief phone interview or in an online survey (Appendix J). This measure captured examples of success and challenge that arose during the course of the study, co-researcher thoughts on the efficacy of the methods used, and ideas about the potential application of these techniques for the future of their work.

Delimitations and Limitations of This Inquiry

I did not gather data directly from the students in the classes of the research practitioners, although the teachers certainly engaged with their own students as they normally do. Teachers were instructed to use pseudonyms for

any students referenced and were asked never to use any identifying information about students during the project. I did not make inferences about students, teachers, or schools based on the race, ethnicity, age, or gender of anyone involved in this study and did not ask for this information. All co-researchers were engaged in teaching students for at least one period per week. All teachers and schools were located within the United States. Research took place during the second semester of the 2011-12 academic year. Where I chose to include Waldorf teachers in the sample group, it was because they were experiencing a specific relational difficulty with their students, were new trainees, or expressed a wish to learn something specific from this research.

Potential Risks and Benefits

The journal and discussion documents were kept online and then downloaded onto my personal password protected computer at completion of the study. I kept one hard copy of each document, for coding purposes, in a locked cabinet in my home, to which I had the only key. I also uploaded electronic copies to a secure cloud-based coding program to shorten coding time, improve search features, and to keep all data in one location. Once the dissertation was successfully defended, I deleted all online files and spaces. Within three months of the dissertation's full approval, I destroyed the lists. I asked that, if student descriptors were needed in journal entries, a pseudonym be assigned to each in order to protect the identities of students who were observed by their teachers. The only possible risk to students was that their teachers may have shared personal information about their academic performance and social interactions at

school, but their identity was never revealed or indicated to me or to others during the process. Complete anonymity of students was guaranteed using these procedures. All files were deleted after successful defense of the dissertation.

While one objective of the study was to increase teacher satisfaction with their work, there were no financial or physical benefits for the practitioners other than the research materials I provided. Those who engaged fully in the project were expected to develop a deeper capacity with which to perceive student qualities and needs, which may have enhanced their ability to respond more creatively or appropriately to students. Further statements of risks and benefits can be found in the consent form (Appendix G).

Data Analysis

I printed all co-researcher journals and organized them in two ways, first by person, and then by week or topic. While I had planned to code the hard copy documents, I decided to use a cloud based coding system. I coded for emergent themes that seemed to show specific benefits, improvements, and achievements but also found a set of themes related to difficulties or problems in the process, which I also captured. I explore the themes that arose during coding efforts in the findings section of my dissertation through a dual discussion of quality and efficacy of practical application of the research techniques presented to or invented by co-researchers.

Some exercises asked co-researchers to use a different way of expressing their observations than simply narrating or summarizing what they did and what happened as a result. Practitioners were asked to write in metaphor, to create an

artistic piece expressing a specific quality exhibited by a student, and to post portraits they had attempted to draw of students from memory.

Working With Quality in Action Research

Quality in this project is assured through the data gathered from co-researchers using five collection methods. The first was data collected from an opening introductory interview or survey with each participating teacher to determine their experience level, attitudes about teaching and students, narrate teaching experiences, and to discuss successful strategies that have helped to improve student engagement in the past. The second was gathered from the weekly online journaling activities of teachers during the 12 weeks of the project. The third was a weekly measure of efficacy and ease for each of the attempted exercises gathered on the main website in the form of a brief survey at the end of each week. Fourth, the summary comments from teachers in review of their experiences highlighted remaining questions and showed if and how they believed the study techniques might affect the future of their work with students. Finally, data was collected from my own reflections on working with the practitioners to guide them through the various steps in the process. All collected data was highly subjective and showed whether or not the sample teachers felt that the study's techniques could be helpful toward a future of improved student relationships.

Action researchers work with a set of "choice-points" which are used to help determine the quality of the work. These include but expand beyond conventional concern with issues of validity. Quality choice-points therefore also concern relational praxis with co-researchers and overall emancipatory

contributions (Bradbury-Huang, 2010; Reason & Bradbury, 2006). They comprise the following, which together, if accomplished, allow one to assess the quality of the action research:

1. Quality of relationship with practitioners - While I designed the research steps and exercises to conform to the Goethean process, I was also open and interested to learn how co-researchers might alter or adjust the steps to make them more useful. I assessed the quality of my research in its ability to explicitly develop praxis through relational participation between my co-researchers and their students. Practitioners were encouraged to pose their own questions about teacher-student relationships throughout the research phase and were free to suggest new ideas, share practices, and to adjust exercises to fit their needs for maximum practical application of the process. Each week in discussion rooms and journals, co-researchers were asked to write and discuss their challenges and successes with the steps of the inquiry. Based on this information, I suggested options or made changes in instructions or delivery methods to improve the experience of each teacher.
2. Quality of practical outcomes – In addition to the discussion and journal rooms, at the end of each week, a short, scaled questionnaire provided me with immediate feedback. From these sources, I received regularly timed updates on whether or not practitioners found the methods helpful in their work with students. I relied upon

the teachers to express their honest assessment of the practical aspects of the steps.

3. Quality of methods – First person methods include not only my own experiences and ideas but also those of the co-researchers. During orientation sessions practitioner’s ideas and suggestions around the process were invited and welcome.
4. Quality of overall contribution – Although this project was focused heavily on the qualitative experience of the relationship between student and teacher, some small quantitative measures were provided each week as well. The qualitative nature of the study allowed for more freedom and flexibility than the normal way of assessing student progress with metrics. This project informed teachers about what works and what elicits change as they passed through repetitions of exercise stages in a mood of reflexivity. The three-round structure provided time for practitioners to change their approach as they returned to meet the same goals with a new set of exercises.

Among the eight choice points articulated by Bradbury and Reason for assessing quality in action research, is the acceptance and encouragement of plural ways of knowing (2006, p. 347). While the project had to contain theoretical integrity, it necessarily had to embrace ways of knowing beyond material facts and hard empiricism. Because Goethean observation and contemplative practices focus on openness and intuitive insights, action research was a perfect orientation for this project.

The data drawn from the experiences of teachers in this project is certainly significant, because it addresses what lies at the heart of education, the relationship between a student and a teacher (Cho, 2005; Freire, 1993; Hatt, 2005; Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, 2008; Richards, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, n.d.; Van Manen, 1979, 1991). Several studies also show that students believe this relationship is primary among the factors that affect their ability to learn (Richards, 2006). This study served the function of providing a method of engaging the teacher in an active, systematic process of relationship building with students. While other studies mention qualities that make a “caring” teacher (Stronge, 2007), this one provides a specific path for the teacher to follow in order to develop those qualities. In doing so, the data leads to emergent practices that can facilitate the building of new structures of classroom praxis. These features of the study make it unique and important in both educational and action research literature.

Since action research is integrative in nature, it is important to look holistically at its processes in order to assess quality. It cannot be completely measured with metrics just as human beings cannot. It can be judged and evaluated by the lasting impressions left on teachers after having participated in the process. The summary review of the process submitted by the co-researchers, along with their comments in valuable weekly communications, served to both create data and simultaneously insure quality in the process.

Expected Outcomes

Data gathered in the course of this project was useful in determining what challenges future teachers may encounter with the proposed methods, especially if working alone where others in that school are not engaged in such techniques. The experiences drawn from this study will also help to hone and change the way I express and explain the steps of these methods to others going forward. It provided me with examples of emerging awareness and new developing perceptive organs, and gave an indication of the timeframe needed before teachers begin to notice these transformations. This feedback also helped to shed light on some of the inquiry sub-questions such as “Can this type of inquiry translate outside of a Waldorf School context?” “How long will it take for someone new to these practices to see results?” and “Can teachers from the sample group improve their relationship with students, facilitating student success and enjoyment, no matter what subject is taught, as long as the teacher is focused on the interactions and relational awareness with her students?” I placed particular emphasis on whether or not the emancipatory action of Goethean phenomenological observation as a contemplative practice brought about an experience of pedagogical love and the creation of warmth sculpture for co-researchers.

CHAPTER 4: SETTING THE CONTEXT

Hope: The Introductory Interviews

While fifteen people initially expressed enthusiasm for participating in the study, fourteen teachers signed consent forms and agreed to be interviewed over the phone. Of those fourteen, twelve actually took part in the preparatory phone conversations. These twelve were to become my co-researchers. The semi-structured interviews were designed to take around thirty minutes each. I used an initial set of five questions touching on the categories that could illuminate each researcher's situational circumstance and the degree to which each would be able to set up and carry out the research. These categories related to their professional goals, specific teaching situations, teacher's ideas about the concept of love in relation to education, previous experience with contemplative or mindfulness techniques, and clarification of questions they might have about any aspect of the project. I followed an unstructured interview process so that when teachers touched on subjects related to their practice, their teaching environment, or their colleagues that seemed relevant to the study, I could follow up appropriately.

Professional Goals and Warmth Sculpture

Our conversations began with a discussion of teacher's professional goals and how they felt each of these might be served by the focus of the research we would do together. Additionally, the topic of how teachers felt their work with students would benefit from this project was discussed. All teachers from grade one through the university level expressed their deep desire to connect with students more fully and to be present and alive in the classroom for their benefit.

One teacher suggested that his hope to “engage” more deeply with his students would further his own doctoral research on creating a child-centered creative classroom. While connection was a main theme in the conversations, nine of the twelve teachers discussed their wish to develop a stronger and more disciplined meditative, mindfulness, or contemplative practice relative to their teaching work and in relationship with students.

In addition to these two main interview themes of improved contemplative practice and relationship building, many of the teachers also named unique goals for themselves and those whose lives they touched as professionals. One teacher was focused on a set of students who did not need a lot of extra attention for either behavioral or learning difficulties, nor were they so overly capable demanding attention around their high level of skill; instead these students were those that she felt, “fall through the cracks.” These are the quiet children who do their work. Perhaps they are not the top students in the class, perhaps they need very little extra help, but this teacher felt that they did need something more from her. She said:

I really don’t know their name. And I see them, but unless I look at the seating chart, I mean, you know, sometimes I see them walking down the hall and I think they’re new students but they’ve actually been here for two years now, they’re our students, but they just fall through the cracks.

Another teacher had worked for several of the previous years with middle school aged children but at the time of the study had taken up a first grade class. She hoped that, along with an improvement in the classroom environment for her students, she would be able to create a “community of warmth” among the circle of adults who supported the class. Specifically, she hoped to engage parents in

this way. She also mentioned feeling “alone” in her teaching, in that she was the only adult with a group of children all day long. She longed for a connection to a community of other adults who were practicing in the same way as she hoped to do. She imagined being supportive to the online group, as well as being supported by such a community. Another teacher was looking forward to connecting with practitioners conducting this same type of educational research. She mentioned that while teachers might be coming from very different contexts in their schools, she hoped that each of the study co-researchers would be able to connect on several “core levels.” Two other people in the study spoke of their wish to become more self-reflective in both a personal sense and within classroom practices, as one of their goals for participation. One person expressed a wish to learn more about the principles of good action research in a classroom setting, which he hoped to continue using after we completed the project. Given such expectations from co-researchers, many possibilities for a vibrant online community arose.

Bringing Warmth to Students

The professional development goals identified by the teachers during the pre-study interview were most often intertwined with how practitioners imagined the study’s exercises might be helpful in their work with students. It was remarkable that some teachers were agreeing to take part in the research without a clear understanding of how we intended to proceed. When asked how she could envision the work of the project changing her teacher student dynamic, one teacher simply stated, “I don’t know. I have no idea what you have in mind,” yet

she also said, “I am totally open to what you throw at me.” More important than what teacher’s imagined my intentions as a researcher might be, was their own sense for the type of relationship and environment they wished to build with students. One teacher generalized from what she could imagine we would be doing and provided an answer about a goal that could improve her overall effectiveness. She knew that the bulk of her important work as a teacher was done before ever stepping into the classroom and she was looking for an effective way to accomplish it without being consumed by it.

During the interview most practitioners felt that they had a good idea about the purpose of the research, which was to work together in order to articulate and practice a method for creating warmth and pedagogical love in the classroom through careful observation and deep contemplation of students. Some of them restated their understanding of what I had told them previously with a high degree of accuracy. One fourth-grade teacher felt that the focus of the research fit with the way he was already attempting to work and so joining the study would be a good way for him to learn new techniques for observation and contemplation as professional development.

Each of the co-researchers had unique teaching situations and some called for special consideration in how to focus the exercises. One taught a university undergraduate course online. She said, “I am an adjunct and have consciously chosen not to be tenured because my religious, spiritual path is a priority to me. I put my whole self into teaching this one class.” Her statements brought my attention to how she might work with the exercises from a distance and I inserted

specific adjustments for those working in an online context into the exercises where necessary. Another unique circumstance arose for a public school music teacher who had so many students in her care each week that she could not remember their names over the course of several years. She wanted to change her way of interacting with the students but had only one 30-minute session with each group throughout a week in order to accomplish it. I suggested that since her schedule was the same each week, we could choose one or two of her classes to focus on, and if our techniques worked with them, then she could be free to continue this work with other groups as the year progressed. She felt this was a good option and we agreed to check in about this once the first exercises were given.

Another unique situation was the case of a university undergraduate professor who worked with pre-service teachers in training. She agreed in the initial interview, that if she found the exercises helpful, she would not only be able to share them with her students for use in their own classrooms, but also with her colleagues. She said, “This is a whole aspect of teacher development that I think this project may help me with. And what are the kinds of mentoring relationships and inner relationships that help these young people develop?” Thinking beyond what she herself needed as a teacher, she thought of her students, what types of relationships would best support them, and even more deeply; she spoke of her interest in helping students to develop a practice that supported their own inner life.

One of the Waldorf teachers in the study was teaching a lively class of 14 first-graders. When asked what she would specifically like to focus on as she began the research she confided about the struggles of her situation.

How to bring my ego presence more strongly before the children, more maturely...so that they can...rest into that and relax into it a little more. Because I tend to be a little bit sanguine and...I am doing a lot of last minute preparation. I do not reach out too far ahead in my prep and planning. I do have [first grade] boys who are very willing to speak out and tell me what I'm doing wrong, they don't have any hesitancy to show their displeasure in what I'm asking of them. So I'd like to work more with that.

It was the interview with a public high school teacher that struck at the heart of what I hoped might come of this research. Even the way he described the subjects he taught rang of his devotion to the individual student and to a certain element of freedom for which he was searching inside of a system that he felt did not usually allow for either.

I'm a language arts teacher and my specialty...[is] media studies, critical writing, critical thinking, critical analysis, and literature, looking at certain literature arranged around a certain theme and mine is about the individual in society. Those are my pet classes. I feel very, very constrained. I'm just trying to figure out how to do what I want to do inside this model. Its very restrictive and, and a ridiculous model actually. Its 47 minute periods, seven periods a day, generally speaking I'd describe the tone of my school [as having] that factory vibe about it. It really does. I've been tempted early in my career to bail and find something different. What has kept me there is my appreciation. I liked the kids and I felt a real desire to stick around and try to do something for the kids.

His thoughts on the system to which he was bound, revealed his many years of committed experimentation from within a model that did not work for teachers or students. His appreciation and sensitivity for students was already apparent in this very first conversation. He mused about the attempts the school and the district had sometimes made to improve the situation. He was quite

amused, but also unpleasantly surprised, when he was chosen to attend a highly touted workshop on teacher-student relationship building. As he participated in the workshop, he found that its purpose was not to share new or creative ways of being with students, but instead to teach things that any human being should already know.

They sent a few teachers, to a workshop called “capturing kids hearts” which I agree with, absolutely, but it was funny. First of all, they picked four teachers that get along with students the best. I mean that’s why we got picked...but you really should be sending the person who can’t relate to the kids at all. It really, it was like a workshop in common human decency...addressing people by name, and talking to them as human beings, and asking about their lives, and making that heart connection before you even try to talk to them about any kind of content. That’s what is going on at the school now. There’s some openness to, “We’ve got to do something” because everybody knows, I mean everybody across the country, everybody knows it’s a failing model. But what are we gonna do?

His question was really one that our joint research would attempt to answer. Could teachers in any circumstance, even a factory style educational model, such as the public school he described, practice the steps of an inner process that could be articulated for others to use, no matter their outward constraints? Could such a practice prove emancipatory in their work with students and serve to free both student and teacher from the bonds of such an environment? Through his questioning, he radiated a message of hope for his own work as well as for his participation in this project. He was also hopeful about the success of our work together as he considered that across the United States teachers in schools like his needed inspiration that could help them breathe life back into their work without abandoning their students. “We are in that real interesting period where we can recreate it. That’s why I’m excited by your work

and when I read that piece, I thought, ‘this is exactly what I want’. So I’m glad that it is so mutually beneficial.”

Contemplative Practices

The next section of the conversation related to co-researcher’s experience with contemplative and mindfulness practices before the project. There are many programs, methods, and styles of such practices, but did teachers consciously quiet their minds to consider the day’s activities with their students and if so, how? How did teachers know what to do next to help students succeed? How did the life, beliefs, and enthusiasm of the teacher fit into context with what students would be given? Could mindfulness in teaching be successfully brought to a practitioner who had never engaged in inner work of that nature? Was some sort of inner or spiritual practice a pre-requisite for success in the type of exercises I would be presenting? To learn more about the practices of co-researchers, I asked each teacher to recount their previous experience with anything they might consider “contemplative” or “mindful.” Answers to this question could help me gauge whether or not and to what degree the co-researchers were open to making the contemplative leap with me.

I asked teachers to consider the concept “mindful” and what it really meant for each one of them, but in this section of my conversation with a fourth grade teacher, he wished to clarify my definition. He asked me if I would include “reflection” as a mindfulness practice. In trying to learn how he would define mindfulness for himself, I asked if he would consider them to be in the same category, which he did. I remained open to hear about a range of activities that

these teachers considered mindful or contemplative. For some, physical activity provided the needed mindset, while others preferred sitting in a quiet room. Most required at least some measure of solitude as they moved into a contemplative mode. After defining “reflection” as his brand of mindful, this fourth grade teacher. “It’s a continual reflection, a continual ebb and flow in the process. The only way to really go about teaching to the fullest extent is to be meditative, reflective, to contemplate the relationships with the students.”

Teachers that were trained in the mainstream system often mentioned their understanding of “reflection” on their teaching practice as a mindfulness technique designed to help them improve their work in the classroom. When I shared with one Waldorf teacher my vision for the work of the project, even she referred to an understanding of how the “mainstream” might describe this sort of practice as “reflection on and in action.” The public school music educator recalled how her teacher training courses introduced her to the practice of reflection, and how she experienced it as contemplative, but included that since she had become a working professional, the realities of her work requirements made it difficult to maintain this practice in the same way she had once learned. She told me in a confessional way that the only reason she reflected on individual students at all was out of her frustration with not knowing how to handle specific behavior issues.

A university professor, who taught a cohort of graduate students in an online course, shared another approach to reflective practice. She reserved deeper meditative and spiritual work for herself and her family but also provided her

online students with opportunities for reflection. She explained her two-pronged approach to meditative life partially for self and family and partially for the students in her classes.

I pray and meditate at home a few times a week, at home, and with my children before food, bedtime, and upon waking up. I do a lot of Contemplative walking. I do a lot of journaling and have for many years. As an educator, I teach Introduction to action research and provide mindfulness and reflectiveness activities. I do a lot of reflective writing. They are working with Auto-ethnography right now, to get to know themselves first. We do a lot of exercises with imagination. Last week they worked on a mandala drawing.

Some teachers had a very clear and consistent meditative practice. One high school teacher described how he has combined a mixture of many paths that converged for him into a unique spiritual and contemplative blend that included 15 years of sitting Zen practice, yoga, Vipassana, and the completion of a Master's degree in Conscious Evolution.

He was not alone in his practice of what he called "just sitting." One university professor saw the connection between her newly emergent practice and a calmer emotional life.

I went to a meditation workshop last summer because I felt as if it could help me. I hadn't meditated before that. After the workshop I started incorporating informal sessions daily. It has dropped off, although if I think about it, I'll just sit for 10 minutes. I don't do any lengthy meditation, but I have seen its benefits...what I do at home is just go to my office [and] turn everything off. I don't use any music, or guided meditation. I just do a breath meditation for 10 minutes, just very simple. In a very short period of time it seems to be helpful.

While some practiced in short 10-minute daily sessions, others spent a more significant amount of time in meditation. The adjunct professor teaching online, took her practice very seriously and showed commitment to a practice on a

level beyond that of the other practitioners. While her approach also seemed to be an amalgam of many paths, her devotion and the time she spent in contemplation necessarily required a step away from society in order to accomplish her spiritual work.

I've been a serious disciplined meditator in the Soto Zen Buddhist order and continued to practice for 10 years. Also I've practiced Vipassana traditions a bit, and the Tibetan tradition a little. I also follow what can be referred to as religious mysticism, meaning you *follow*...let go of the self, constantly dropping the self, there are ways to do mindfulness practice all day long even when you are asleep....My meditation discipline is between 4:00 and 6:30 in the morning. My husband and I also host regular meditation retreats here at our house. Two times per month we spend one whole day of silent retreat and listen to a dharma talk that I obtain from a master online.

Another group of teachers who are typically expected to practice a consistent and committed daily meditation, are Waldorf teachers. Most of those who took part in this study described practicing something Steiner termed the *ruckshau*, the German word for a practice of “looking backward” over the day's events before going to sleep each night. They also talked about holding the student in the mind's eye at the end of the day, another traditional Waldorf technique. A few of the Waldorf teachers had a broad understanding of mindfulness and related experiences from both Anthroposophical as well as other traditional paths. One was a Zen Buddhist and felt that both paths informed her work in the classroom. One teacher revealed that along with methods common for most Waldorf educators, she considered artistic practice in speech and drama or what Steiner called “musical speech” to be part of her work on a spiritual path. She felt that this practice helped her tap into the “realm of sensitivity for the

rhythmic element for breathing” and that because of her personal practice, she was better able to work with children.

Waldorf schools seem to expect that their teachers are working meditatively as they consider students and plan lessons, but such expectations are difficult for schools to articulate and as well as for teachers to carry out. A commonly held tenet of Anthroposophy, the world-view related to human evolution held by Waldorf’s founder, Rudolf Steiner, is that each human being must come to the spiritual life and indeed to all life’s tasks out of free will (Steiner, 1995). While this basic notion of human freedom lives behind all of Steiner’s work, such allowances are also difficult for schools and teachers to negotiate or to legislate. How does a school know or even require that teachers are working in the way prescribed by Steiner? How does a teacher “prove” it? What if a teacher is not following the steps Steiner lays out for working meditatively with students? There are all sorts of considerations unique to Waldorf Education, where contemplation is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Because of these expectations and the openness to contemplative practice that is necessarily a part of the Waldorf educators work, my assumptions during the study included that they might also be the most articulate and consistent about their methods for or experiences with contemplation, however, Waldorf methods do not come without their challenges. Two of the Waldorf teachers in our study described specific difficulties with consistency in their contemplative practice. One said,

“I don’t do it every day, I haven’t ever done it every day. I haven’t done anything steadily every day....I feel like that’s why I wanted to say yes to this because I haven’t really been able to refine myself enough to be steady and consistent and this seemed like an invitation to do that.”

Another described her good intentions but frustration with finding time to follow through. After further prompting, this teacher went on to describe her path of becoming a certified yoga instructor. She had been able to pass all the course work, but in the end was unable to apply for final certification because she had to admit, “I could not in truth say that I have a daily meditation practice.” Another reason for her participation in the study is revealed in the second part of her answer when she hoped that the study would help her make daily contemplation part of her “habit life.”

A former Waldorf class teacher, now a university professor, talked about some of her challenging experiences with various Anthroposophical meditative practices including Steiner’s six exercises for training thinking, working with the angel of a student, and the attempted practice of a series of esoteric lessons given by Rudolf Steiner to a select group of anthroposophists before his death. These lessons are still transferred through an oral tradition by a “reader” and one must join the Anthroposophical Society and its School of Spiritual Science in order to be eligible to hear the readings. This teacher laughed as she joked, “God, I really felt like I was over my head with those!”

Three teachers spoke of childhood exposure to meditative or spiritual ideas as central to their ability to carry such work into their current day

classrooms. One discussed the beginning of her inclination in this area as she told me “I learned about the Buddha’s teachings at age16.” She cited these teachings as having played an important role in shaping her current daily practice. Another revealed, “I was raised in Unity [Church]. So the whole idea of meditation or meditative practice was just something I grew up with.” A third teacher, one engaged in her pre-service training, also described exposure to a way of thinking and practicing in her childhood that she felt made it possible for her to easily enter into the mindset of a contemplative teacher as an adult. “The strongest connection I have to my contemplative life...I was just lucky enough to have been given this foundation when I was a child.”

A review of our discussions on this topic revealed that most of the teachers had participated in some form of contemplative or mindfulness practice at some level. A few had spent several years developing and constructing a practice through a combination of experiences that spoke to them. Certain teachers were able to articulate the wish to correct specific difficulties in this area as the reason they wanted to participate in the study. Such responses helped to determine that there would be openness to contemplative methods during the project along with a high degree of willingness and ability to practice the exercises I had planned.

Pedagogical Love

The art of teaching.

Given the potential connotations of the word *love* in connection to teaching or education detailed in earlier chapters, I asked co-researchers to

describe their own thoughts and feelings about love in conjunction with teaching. This question had three components. In the first, I introduced them to and asked for their understanding of Blaine Hatt's (2005) concept of *pedagogical love* as explored in Chapter Two of this document. Each teacher considered and answered with careful attention to explain slight nuances as they constructed meaning. The ideas they put forward were varied and complex. For many of the teachers the term carried huge significance. Some considered love of the subject being taught as a necessary component of *pedagogical love*, but most considered that it meant a loving relationship to the children in their classes. Those loving relationships extended, for some, to a love of "who students can one day become...as well as that love of the very process of learning and teaching" and "finding something in [the teacher] that can relate to the student." One high school teacher thought that the term *pedagogical love* sounded like his own self-created mission statement for teaching, as he described his wish to create a warm and caring environment within his classroom, "Creating that relationship with your student is really sacred."

Two teachers connected artistic methods with forming deeper and more loving relationships with their students. One of them felt that *pedagogical love* was the cure for many of the ills living at the heart of mainstream education. For him, pedagogical love meant seeing each child as an individual and creating a learning environment that allowed for many learning styles, interests, and levels of life experience. His unique approach to the problem relied on the arts.

We really need to have more of an arts based approach, where, as with how artists work, from my experience, most do not set up a certain

standardization and go from there. There [are] feelings and emotions; and humanity comes in there in order to figure that out.

The second teacher spoke of her ability to work artistically in her subject.

“You know, I teach music so it’s all about emotional feeling. You can show a lot of love to a student...by the way you teach a song and by the way you talk about music.”

Waldorf teachers, who carry the understanding that teaching itself is an art and that love is an integral part of their work in the classroom, illuminated the concept in various ways. One Waldorf teacher said, “...pedagogical love has to do with love of transformation.” While Waldorf teachers speak of authentically loving their students, they also had a sense for the objectivity and disciplined control that still must remain in the relationship in order to best be of service to a student’s needs. They characterized the relationship as one having “a lot of warmth” but as also a sense of objectivity peppered “with sufficient sympathy, attention, positivity.” To them this more objective view helped them to see challenges as well as success all made possible by observing their students through a lens of love.

Three of the university level teachers each put it succinctly. One saw *pedagogical love* as a place of “flow...where things align...synchronicity.” Another distinguished it from *affection* and *eros* “...like a guiding and mentoring love to students. Not mother or romantic love, loving students through some growth or learning process.” A third, a teacher who described herself as having a serious spiritual practice, found it easy to characterize as *agape* “...an extension

of the love that we can feel from the creator, knowing God. It is something quite simple. It has to come from the heart and not the head.”

Among the practitioners there was no consensus about the type of love but there was certainly a sense that love was appropriate and even necessary in the classroom. One professor provided a remarkable example of what she considered her own practice of pedagogical love embedded in a contemplative activity she employed to help her form better and deeper relationships with her undergraduate students. In her answer she revealed the cultivation of a deeply self-reflective method of teaching and an ability to recognize her own responsibility in forming the pedagogical relationship. In that reflection, she articulated a few of the steps she had taken to open her heart to the young adults in her class.

When you talk about pedagogical love I think about something that I started with my students informally when I started teaching, which was over 15 years ago, and that was something that I picked up from yoga. It was just silently sitting like maybe watching a film and I'd be in the back of the room I would silently say 'thank you' or "Namaste" to each of the students without their ever knowing it. As a reminder to me that we're all human and we're all in this together. Especially when I have a difficult time with a student, sort of sitting back and just seeing the silhouette of that student would remind me "I'm not here to create problems I'm here to facilitate their learning." ...I need to recognize the spirit in each one of these students...I think my teaching would be easier and their learning would be easier if I could do it with an open heart.

Negative connotations.

In the second component of our discussion about love in the classroom, I asked each teacher if they could imagine any negative connotations when they heard the term “pedagogical love.” I explained that I had found an abundance of literature on inappropriate sexual conduct between teachers and students in mainstream educational literature and asked them if they had considered this

when I mentioned love in a pedagogical context. Most responses were brief since teachers could think of no negative connotations at all. One teacher's jovial response characterized them all, "No I totally depend on it! I mean it's why I do what I do. If I didn't have love for the children, I wouldn't be able to put up with all that I put up with!"

None of the teachers in this study admitted thinking of sexuality in the classroom, but a few teachers did illuminate a shadow side to the idea of loving one's students. Four of them mentioned a lack of authenticity or "...a superficial association of what true love really is" suggesting, "There has to be a real humbleness involved in the whole process." Two of the co-researchers said that doubts about their own ability to carry out pedagogical love in the classroom was the most negative aspect of the idea that arose for them. One said, "I don't know about negative connotation, just a question of 'Am I capable?' Do I understand the boundaries of that kind of love?" Another worried that she could not come to the idea out of freedom if it was a stated expectation for her work with university graduate students. "What if I *don't* love the student? We still want to be authentic but also show compassion. If we don't have it in us, what do we do? I almost feel that I am forced to love someone."

One university professor had a unique perspective on what could be considered "negative" about pedagogical love which echoed the words of Parker Palmer when he described the "messy" business of loving (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 38).

Well, in the words of a very famous man that you know...“Teaching is violent” – Brad¹ said that at one of the shaking sessions we had in Portland. I think it is just like any other kind of love, that when you...really want to help someone learn something it may be disruptive or disturbing. I also think that if it’s done in the right context, and if it’s done with love, that should mitigate some of the disruption or disturbance. You know, tough love. It can be tough love sometimes.

An elementary music teacher living a dual life, with associations in both the public and Waldorf school realms, wanted to learn more about the idea and methods used in Waldorf education so that she could apply them in her own context. While she felt that taking part in a recent Waldorf training had been helpful overall, it also now posed a dilemma for her with regard to her own public school classroom. Now that she was awake to how it *could* be, she was not able to forget about the possible relationships she might be able to build with students. Ironically this element of being awake to possibilities is part of what Palmer and others believe is one important criteria for bringing love to pedagogy (O’Reiley, 1998; Palmer, 1993; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010).

I have a two-sided world in my head because the mainstream world is so rigid and the part of me that does all the assessments and is like, “Oh, we don't need love, we just need to teach the students what we need to teach them.” But then there’s that little Waldorf part of me that sought out that kind of a program that says, “Hey wait a minute! We need to be connecting with the students because they are going to learn more that way!”

It was obvious to the co-researchers that expressing love inside the public school in any physical way, as bell hooks advocates in her writing about touch, was unacceptable (2010). One said, “There’s no hugs in a public school...you

¹ Bradford Keeney was a professor in my doctoral program and is the author of *Aesthetics of Change* (Keeney, 1983) and many other books.

give encouraging words” and another, “There is an apprehension about touching actually.” Others understood that in the public school system, there was no requirement or expectation of teachers around deepening relationships with students so that when something in that vein occurred it was due to the personality and inclinations of individual teachers, almost in direct opposition to the school’s cultural environment. One Waldorf teacher was grateful to be working in an environment that supported and expected warm interactions between teachers and students, but she spoke of a public school teacher friend of hers who she felt exemplified what pedagogical love really meant.

I’m really lucky to be in a Waldorf classroom because, it’s okay to love. I have a friend, a good friend, who is a teacher in a Detroit public high school. And I would say that she loved her students too. I mean she *loves* her students. Meaning that she is truly and vibrantly alive and honest with them. So, to me [pedagogical love is] the underlying gesture of a teacher who really feels like being a teacher is a great thing.

Parent and student expectations.

The third component of our discussion on “pedagogical love” related to expectations others might have of a teacher’s loving relationship to students. A majority of the teachers worked with children in the elementary grades, and I was interested to hear what they thought parents expected of them relative to “loving” the children in their care. As I posed this question to teachers of older or adult students, we explored what parents or even students themselves might expect in this regard.

All of the Waldorf teachers in the study expressed that parent’s definitely “expected” them to love the children as the class teacher who stays with the same group of students over all eight years of their elementary education. One of them

went so far as to say “I think that they expect that more than anything.” A few described the nature of the teacher’s love for the growing child. There was clarity among them that it was not the love of a parent. One made characterized a parent’s love, “I think it can be messier. It can tolerate more messiness.” While they agreed that teachers could not love students in the same way parents did, there was some sense among Waldorf teachers of being like a member of the child’s family and they felt that parents expected them to interact with their children in that way. One said,

Parents are often drawn to our school because they perceive a warmth and they...often describe it as something like family. They expect me to meet their child with warmth but still with sufficient boundary, where the child can thrive and be recognized.

Another related,

They expect me to love their children more in the vein like a “fond aunt.” They expect a kind of love and warmth that parents in other situations don’t. I think they do recognize that there is that long term relationship, and there is a kind of, not a parental love, but it still is a type of love that, you have to have to carry through 8 years.

According to one Waldorf teacher, parent expectation “...varies according to the parent” but she felt that all parents shared one common desire for the teacher’s relationship with their children. “They would like their children to be well cared for, they would like their children to feel warmth, and community around them.” She continued by describing a typical interaction that she might have with one of her first graders but also generalized about children of that same age no matter the type of school they attended.

It’s not uncommon for children to say in front of their parents, “I love you” to me. And I respond, “I love you too.” It’s not what we are used to in a school setting but I feel like most first graders probably love their teacher.

Not all teachers were necessarily comfortable with the word “love” in connection to their students or in considering what parents expected of them. A fourth grade teacher in a private, non-Waldorf, school wanted to change that word to *caring*, which he felt suited his interactions better. “I think, for me, *care* would be more of an apt description. In our school, I think the expectation is very high.... Many of our parents say the students don’t click in the public school setting...so they come to us.”

In the public school context, teachers had a very different expression for what their student’s parents expected of them in this regard. In my conversation with the public school music teacher, she revealed multiple frustrations with what she perceived as parent’s lack of understanding about the purpose of her subject and the work she was doing with their children. She also cited how a recent reduction in her schedule has influenced her work with the students, showing that in her case, quantity of time really mattered.

The other day I was thinking, “how do they view me as a teacher?” I know these state standards, I have to be in line with everything I have to do, and I’m concerned that I’m not teaching this and that, but is anybody really caring on the outside? I think they just pretty much feel that my job is to sing with them and share some time with them and we’re good. I think they expect that I respect their students, I don’t think a lot of mainstream parents have a lot of concern, I mean maybe they do, it just doesn’t seem like when I talk to them that they expect me to have that loving connection with them. Sometimes it gets kind of frustrating because I don’t think other people see the value in that small connection that can be made...I guess I’m not motivated sometimes to make the connection because, I’m like, “oh well, nobody really cares.” And this year has been a little bit rougher than last year because I saw the students two times a week last year. I got to know them so much better. And this year, I can see the connection with my first grade students because I’ve had them two times a week for a couple of years and now with the kindergarten, I just don’t have that same connection.

The other public school teacher in the study worked at the opposite end of the spectrum with high school students in their last two years of secondary schooling. He rarely saw the parents of his students unless there was some sort of behavioral problem. He characterized the dilemma “Part of that whole factory mentality is that sometimes I’m not even sure if parents know who I am.” Rather than discussing parents in general, he only felt comfortable speaking about the parents with whom he had contact after noticing a student needed extra support. He felt that he had been able to build positive relationships with these parents because they were thankful and a bit surprised that a teacher cared enough to reach out to discuss what their child seemed to need. He had a philosophy of treating each child individually and in doing so, he could create better partnerships with parents who greatly valued his input and support. This teacher, himself a parent, said that he conducted himself in the way he hoped his own children’s teachers would do. “It’s like a co-parenting aspect I mean you are really involved in the kid’s understanding of the world. That’s how I think of my job.”

The university professors in the study had very little, if any, contact with parents of their students, so it took some imagination to think about what parents might expect. One of them typically meets with the parents of honors students in the fall orientation of the first year, but not again until the students’ graduation four years later. She felt that those parents expected “their children, to continue to be exposed to challenging and engaging and growth creating experiences inside and out of the classroom.” She also mentioned a sub-set of parents whose

children were the first in their family to attend college. In these cases, she sensed the pressure of “very high expectations on the part of parents who were not able to go to college. They see this as a doorway for their children, to higher worlds on many levels.” As we continued, I asked her what she thought the students, themselves, expected of her. Did they expect *love*? She felt that if the student’s background involved experiences “where community is valued” then naturally a teacher becomes part of that extended community. She also noted that other students who very unemotionally “see faculty merely as facilitators.” While in a third case, she felt that some “students see me as a barrier...I’m a hindrance to them.” Revealing some of the many hidden complexities in the student teacher relationship to young adult students she admitted, “I never see it like that; I never see them without the relationship.”

The other university instructors had no contact with the parents of their students and so we discussed what they thought students expected from them around the question of pedagogical love. It was clearly a new consideration for most. They were able to describe, in varying degrees of detail, how students differed in their expectations of teachers at the college level. One professor realized that she would like to look a bit closer at this question in her future work with students. She described the varying levels of connection that exist between herself and her students naturally, some more friendly, others distant. She mentioned one technique she uses to invite a warm connection to her classes. “I try to share a lot with the students and you can imagine, I’m always telling jokes

and doing crazy things, and I'm always telling things about my crazy life. I'm sure I drive some of them crazy!"

The teacher who taught online in a community college setting spoke about the welcoming environment she tries to create in her course. She especially felt that since her course was online, it was even more important to be responsive and warm in interactions with her students. From responses her students gave on the end of semester surveys, she felt she had been successful in reaching that goal. She also mentioned her awareness of the possibility that a student's family support was lacking, in which case, she would be called to a deeper level of attention as an instructor.

One professor speculated about the varying expectations of her graduate students. "Some of them do really appreciate it. Some are suspicious about it and they find a way to condescend to us." She added some thoughts about how they reacted to the care and concern she exhibited toward them. Her words betrayed a relationship that was, at times, contentious, and her stress level around it was apparent. "Some feel we might abuse it or they abuse it by not submitting papers on time, or expecting an automatic A. These students are much more cynical than kids - they are adults." She was clearly in need stress relief but was later to be our first "drop-out."

Concerns and Questions

At the end of our introductory conversations, I gave each person an opportunity to ask questions or to make comments about the project. Many asked clarifying questions about the technology or the time requirements. A few

expressed concern that they might somehow not be able to carry out the requirements of the study. Most of these concerns related to time, but one teacher expressed self-doubt about her capability to engage as an elementary school teacher with those teaching at the university level. Given the fact that English was not her first language, she was also concerned about being understood. Most teachers expressed eagerness to begin and positive impressions about the focus of the study. Those teachers who wanted me to help them log into the website were all favorably impressed with what they saw there. Each of them had words of encouragement, excitement, and positive intentions as we concluded our conversations.

Conclusions: Readiness to Begin Mindful Observation

The co-researchers represented a wide variety of teaching contexts and could speak to the interview questions from multiple perspectives. Most of them wanted to participate in the project to learn or improve mindfulness practices in classroom settings. Almost all of them had experience with some type of mindful, contemplative, or reflective practice in the past. Many said that they were hoping to build warmer and closer relationships to students as part of their reason for taking part in this project.

Overall, the majority of the teachers had positive, favorable reactions to the concept of pedagogical love. Teachers of elementary aged students agreed that parents expected some level of care or even love from them as teachers. High school and college level instructors had little contact with parents, but those that did, thought most parents were grateful for a teacher's attempt to create

relationship with students. In the university setting, professors had generally never considered what their students expected in this regard. At least one wanted to make a study of this question for the future.

While no one thought about inappropriate sexual contact between teachers and students when considering *love* in relationship to education, some did express concerns about inauthentic notions of love or misusing the word in a sentimentalized way. Two teachers mentioned their own self-doubt about whether or not they would be able to *love* their students.

After reviewing the log in procedures with each teacher, each one expressed that they were competent with computers and technology and expected no problems with navigation of the website, email communications, or posting entries in our online space. All co-researchers spoke of their excitement to get started and closed our conversations with words of encouragement for continuation of the research.

CHAPTER 5: BUILDING WARMTH IN FOUR STEPS

Introduction

While the impetus for this project originated from thinking about my own practice, in order to carry it out and to answer the questions I was posing, which included queries about if and how others would be able to implement the process I had outlined, I needed a participatory co-researcher relationship with other teaching professionals. The co-participatory phase of this research was conducted over twelve weeks from February 6th through the week of April 23rd, 2012. The twelve weeks were divided into a series of three rounds, each lasting for four weeks. Individual weeks corresponded to one of the four stages of Goethean practice as outlined on Table 1 of this document. Practitioners focused on one of the four stages for a week at a time before transitioning to the next stage in the following week, but always with an awareness of what had come before.

During each of the first eight weeks, co-researchers were provided with one contemplative exercise and one observational exercise (Appendix A). They were asked to carry out the exercises in connection to their own teaching and student work and to report their questions and findings in online discussion and posting areas. They also had the option of recording experiences about matters they did not wish to bring before the whole group, by posting entries in their private journal space.

During the last four weeks of the project, in recognition of the fact that the type of observation we were doing was actually a contemplative practice, the two types of exercises merged into a single contemplative observation.

Additionally, to gain further practical experience, to come to greater understanding of the process as a whole, and to experience how the steps eventually unfold quite quickly, perhaps even in a few minutes, practitioners worked through all four steps every week during the last round.

Screen Names

In an effort to protect the identities of the teachers, schools, and students, I decided to provide screen name for each of the co-researchers for use when logging into the website. Long before I recruited the co-researchers, I created their screen names. To connect the names to Goethe's scientific work, I generated a list of nouns related to nature or the elements, like *rose, moon, bird, fire, stream* etc. Along with each noun, was a descriptor of some kind, an adjective, adverb, or in a few cases, a verb. Some of the names began to sound "right" together – even though no particular meaning was implied on my part. I simply went with what sounded good or what felt "correct." This element was done mostly in the spirit of fun, but with practical considerations in mind because we needed a way to refer to each other online. Additionally, passwords and log in procedures were simplified by combining screen names and numbers. As each co-researcher signed their consent forms I randomly assigned a name. The result was a set of evocative names that piqued the interest of the co-researchers and even gave some of them an additional connection to the project. For example, *Brave Earth* said of his name, "My randomly-generated name here is Brave Earth, and I kinda like it. Feels like something to live up to." Then he went on to share his given name with us and to describe his feelings about it. In her private journal,

Air Song shared with me about her screen name, “Air Song is an apt name for me. I have a sanguine nature and love to sing. In my teaching I feel this airy quality is somewhat of a hindrance, and I am needing to build a more solid container for my working with the children.” She referred to the aptness of this choice a few more times like when she had forgotten where to find something online or some procedure needed clarification. She would say, “See what I mean about the name?” In order to join the crowd, I gave myself a screen name as well, *Wave Heart*. This is a name that came to me in a meditation during my doctoral studies a few years before the project’s beginning. I always felt that it encapsulated the way I wanted my work to manifest, in a *wave* of love straight from the *heart*. There were several other comments or acknowledgements about the fitting qualities of these screen names as the weeks went by. I also found something in each of the names that seemed to fit that particular researcher. Already in these beginning stages, I was working to build warmth sculpture with the practitioners. I recognized the unique qualities in each person. These qualities “appeared” quite clearly to me over the phone or through Internet communication, yet I had never met most of the people face to face.

Introductory Posts

Our work together began with three days of introductory postings during which researchers could become acquainted with one another and explore the website that would be home to the project over the next twelve weeks. During our introductory phone interviews, teachers were shown how to log into the website. For the first three days of the project, a set of orientation exercises were

posted to facilitate elements of the online community building process, but also with the practical purpose of helping practitioners to learn site navigation. Their opening tasks included posting an introduction for others to read and creating their private online journal. The initial attempts at community building began in these introductory posts. Teachers reached out to each other with statements like “I’m glad to be joining you all here as a part of this project”; “I feel privileged to be a part of the process with other people”; “I look forward to working with you all”; “I look forward to reading everyone's posts, and to taking this journey together. Bon Voyage!” One co-researcher posted a response directly addressing one of the other participants.

Smiling Stream,

I love your stated goal of bringing a more mindful heart into your classroom. I want to borrow your phrasing and bring a more mindful heart into my whole life.
Wishing us both the best!

-Moon Rose

Moon Rose was to continue reaching out to others in the online environment by directly addressing them throughout the study. On rare occasions, she received a direct reply but often her attempts seemed to hang in the space without response other than those I posted to encourage further participation.

In these first few days, co-researchers shared beliefs, values, and practices about their teaching, technological know-how, and an overview of their previous contemplative experiences. In these introductions, some co-researchers even revealed more about themselves than they had done during our phone conversations. Several teachers illuminated their goals for the project so that co-

researchers would begin to have an understanding of their individual intentions. Most hoped to discover how using a contemplative method of observation could improve their teaching. One public school colleague said, “I...hold a deep wish to bring a new light of teaching with love and spirituality to public education, especially in my public-assessment based-literacy focused school.”

Another co-researcher expressed gratefulness for “...a chance to refocus and realign my maturing energies.” Another described a need for reducing stress in her professional life. “I need to gain a better sense of inner quiet and I want to see if I can integrate my personal and professional life so that teaching is not such a stressful experience.” Our public high school teacher, Brave Earth, was enthusiastic about the study for multiple reasons. His own teaching and contemplative practice were important to him, as were the students he taught, but he was also hopeful about what he viewed as an opportunity to participate in a movement toward broad, world-wide change through joining with like-minded practitioners toward future evolutionary development.

The description of this study is electrifying. Our host, our colleague, Wave Heart, is really onto something here, and I want to be a part of it, both for personal reasons--I expect to gain greater insight into my students, myself and my practices, and into the nature of learning--and for . . .planetary reasons; I want in on the Big Shift! I feel called to spend the rest of my years eldering. The approach we're exploring here promises to blend my life passions.

Brave Earth had also spoken of “eldering” in our introductory phone conversation. He described the sacred nature of creating relationship with the students as a position of eldering, where the teacher is “trying to help a person

negotiate reality.” He brought this concept to the group in his very first posting, which seemed to lend even more weight to the importance he placed on it.

One of the university professors shared goals and the deep level of commitment to the study that she carried not only for herself, but also for the students in her courses.

One of my personal objectives is for students to come to know themselves better and more deeply. My intention in participating in this research is for the benefit of my students and myself in the following ways:
To better connect with my students and their needs in the classroom. To be more compassionate and focused on teaching/learning with them. To be more compassionate with myself and know that I am a good, effective teacher. To create an environment in which a student is better able to learn and I am better able to teach. To increase my own mental and emotional focus and ability. I would like to metaphorically manifest this line from Rumi in my teaching: “Love is a fire and I am wood.”

I responded to every single introductory post with a warm welcome and a comment or two on the content of their entry. In doing so, I hoped to encourage others to engage in the conversation. Sometimes I posed questions or simply shared something from my own practice or teaching life. I also wanted to fully engage with the community of researchers as a co-learner and to expose myself by mentioning my challenges as well as successes instead of hiding behind the role of a sole architect who had the luxury to sit back and watch. I wanted everyone to feel invested in building the structure of this work together. In that process, I reiterated the thoughts of one teacher who suggested that even as teachers we all have much to learn from each other and from our students. This was our beginning.

Object, Image, Activity, and Agency

Within the schema of the Goethean process, already outlined, co-researchers and I highlighted one stage of that practice in each week of a four week round. A general outline for the weeks looks like this:

- Week 1. Focused on the *Object* stage
- Week 2. Focused on the *Image* stage
- Week 3. Focused on the *Activity* stage
- Week 4. Focused on the *Agency* stage.

The first exercises were designed to introduce the various stages in the beginning rounds. As our capacity to enter into the stages increased, teachers were gradually able to deepen and expand the possibility for each stage to yield more accurate and insightful information. Therefore, round one consisted of four introductory weeks where practitioners spent time integrating the various exercises into their practice. In rounds two and three, teachers were able to move more deeply and more autonomously into the processes as a result of their earlier experiences, conversations, and questions. In a review of the reports generated by practitioners during each of the three rounds, several themes and patterns emerged within the group and organized themselves around the general outline listed above.

Object

The gift of a fresh impression.

The first week's observational task was to bring co-researcher's awareness to how they perceive students upon their first meeting. Most agreed that as teachers, they wanted to know as much about their students as possible so they began immediately to form judgments based on a first impression. From these judgments, teachers usually try to formulate plans and interventions for student

needs. In our first week, I asked teachers to experiment with holding back the usual judgments. This exercise was designed to allow a fresh first impression to live so that observed student-related phenomena could “speak.” Some teachers were meeting students for the first time, which helped to facilitate the “fresh impression” but most were working with students they had known for varying lengths of time. Would it be possible for teachers to hold back already formed judgments about students they knew? And if they could do so, what else might come forth?

As a classroom teacher myself, and as one of the co-researchers, I also posted observations about one of my own students with whom I was having some difficult interactions. We discussed the value in “letting the student be,” not trying to disturb the picture or laying something over the student at first, like a story or emotional reaction. One of the co-researchers agreed that this was somewhat difficult and in fact, that he was hoping to work with a couple of students in particular but he felt that he had already projected an entire story onto them, so he picked two others. He said that he did feel the value in not trying to meddle or become too involved in “fixing” the students in this first view. In exploring our inner responses to “holding back” we imagined this action to be a *gift* to the student; allowing them go about their tasks undisturbed while the warmth of the teacher’s delicate, unobtrusive, gaze, empowered the students to reveal more of themselves. Throughout the project, the theme of this gift of a fresh impression arose again and again, particularly when working with the *Object* stage of each round.

Practitioners realized that a fresh impression called for discernment but not judgment, which can be difficult to differentiate, so I provided a brief example, a judgment would sound like this: “She has beautiful hair.” This statement is full of value and is actually quite vague. From it, we really have no impression at all of what this hair looks like. What one person might think is “beautiful” another person might consider “ugly,” so how can we be more exacting in our descriptions? A discerning description sounds more like this “She has sandy-blond hair down to her waist that flows in loose ringlets around her shoulders. The sun’s light glints here and there weaving a reflection through her shining golden highlights.” Now we have a much better idea of what this hair looks like. We can begin to see it in our mind’s eye and we do not have to jump to conclusions about it. We just notice it. After an example or two like this, most of the teachers were able to stick with the empirical phenomena and to describe what they observed, however, one of the teachers, an online instructor, was having some difficulty with this task. She felt at a disadvantage given that the observations she posted came only from seeing small pictures of her students as well as from the words they wrote in her online classroom. She had chosen two students on which to focus. Her comments were sprinkled with conclusions. She was “interpreting” rather than remaining at the observation stage, another important distinction for consideration. Her posts read:

First Observation: Older, confident, male student. Articulate, witty, a bit arrogant. Technical or science background; feels a bit clever at first due to

this background but also reveals is open to new ideas and ways of expressing self.

Second Observation: Woman, married (photo shows her with husband), thoughtful, articulate but not in an arrogant way. Medical background-- shows in her posts. Very focused.

As I looked at her statements, I grouped them into two sets of descriptors, discernments, and judgments.

Discernments (the facts/data): older; male student; technical or science background; woman; married; medical background-shows in her posts.

Judgments (the interpretations/conclusions): confident; articulate; witty; a bit arrogant; feels a bit clever at first due to this background; thoughtful; articulate; but not in an arrogant way; open to new ideas and ways of expressing himself; very focused.

Insights and questions occurred to me in relation to this online instructor's judgments about her students. Conclusions drawn about another person can stand in our way of allowing actual phenomena to live and to speak. One considered advantage to summing up another person quickly is the efficiency it affords, providing the ability to check that task off of the inner list; thoughts about how you now know who that person *is* might be satisfying. The disadvantage to such quick interpretation is often a lack of accuracy and the premature closure of one's ability to take in or accept new information about the other. A main focus of this study was placed on the inner process of withholding judgment in order to avoid that premature closure. When we conclude that a student is "arrogant" or

“thoughtful” such interpretations block what really might be present.

Additionally, we cannot observe “arrogant” but instead, we observe interactions, characteristics, words, actions, and sets of circumstances that lead us to form a judgment that someone *is* something like arrogant or thoughtful. If we consider that everyone can behave in an arrogant or a thoughtful way, depending on circumstances or how they might be feeling at a given time, we begin to see that “arrogant” may not be what a person *is*, and that getting stuck in that view could prevent us from learning the truth.

First, though, we must recognize our tendency to make the leap to judgment; and then we can explore how to operate differently. To make this recognition, we must observe our own thinking, we must think about our thinking. If we can understand how important it is for us, as teachers, to step back in observation rather than to meet our students with too much judgment, we leave room for a new possibility to arise between us. The other person can experience our quick and efficient summation of them through the typical judgmental first impression as a violation, regardless of our intention. Forming judgments is a habit developed over many years of practicing it. Transforming our approach to students will take awareness, willingness, and practice as well. With these few prompts, examples, and a bit of discussion, most teachers seemed able not only to hold back their conclusions, but also to recognize that they had already drawn conclusions about some students and this led to consideration of strategies for how to transform this practice. This was their first step toward a fresher view.

As a result of conducting these observations, teachers reported feeling “more aligned” with students and “less attached” to their previous assumptions about them. Co-researchers who engaged in the practice also achieved an increasing degree of mindfulness during interactions with their students.

I believe that I was more open to interacting with the students in a less judgmental way and I reacted in a more spontaneous and genuine manner. In fact, in Wednesday's class following the student presentations I sort of blurted out that I was in the final stages of ending my marriage (I related that I'd been stressed out and had forgotten to share a "Stress Pass" that allows students to turn in an assignment late without penalty). Two female students, whom I never would have expected to respond, asked if they could hug me, and I let them. I was very touched.

While most said that they had been somewhat consistent in practicing this exercise, a few wanted, and claimed to need, more consistency.

In the week's contemplative exercise teachers chose three specific students that, through previous judgments, they had labeled as “easy,” “puzzling” and “difficult.” The underlying task here was to recognize how we create superficial relationships based on quick judgments and to break this habit while beginning a process of transformation with the 3 students. The next step involved bringing an image of each student before the mind's eye, as we withheld the typical judgments, and to “wish them well” using a specific set of positive intentions I provided (see Appendix A, Week 1). Teachers were asked to report on how they experienced each of the students during this exercise, whether or not the students responded differently during the week, and whether or not teachers found themselves interacting differently with these students as a result of performing the exercise.

Fifty percent of the co-researchers posted reflections on the contemplative practice for the week. Each of them reported either a shift in relationship, a personal realization, or both. Positive results, noted throughout the entire project, began already with this first week's shift in thinking.

The first attempt at this seemed amazing, I thought, and not sure if I could trust my perceptions...was I projecting a sort of response to my efforts onto the students I thought of? Then I decided I don't care! If it seems helpful then I will simply continue it. It was as if the children I focused on looked at me differently the next day...as if there were some invisible connection that had sprouted up overnight. Well, maybe it's not that it was so sudden, but more that I was more attentive to it. Nevertheless, I took this and ran with it and now am trying to give this to three children each night. I will keep watching and wondering about what is building between us through this work. It's a wonderful imagination.

Co-researchers posted about each of the three students to document the process, how it worked, teacher reaction, and student response to teachers having performed this unseen meditation for them.

I brought a mindfulness to every interaction, and, yes, I did experience them differently...my interactions were more deliberate. For instance, with "Puzzling" I used body language to communicate...I brought a chair up next to her and gestured for her to turn her chair towards me. Nothing magical happened, but it was nice to sit face to face, to have that openness.

The D [difficult] student showed a delightful side to himself last week when we were listening to student presentations and he offered up something about Star Wars in connection with our discussion about leadership. It cracked me up, although I didn't overtly respond. It was a nice sort of surprise to hear him respond in that way.

Peace Path, a university professor, told the story of her "difficult" student who was often late to class and who was unengaged in the material once she arrived. After entering into the contemplative exercise with this student, Peace Path reported that while the student was still late, her engagement seemed to have

dramatically improved, which was very surprising to this professor. In fact, she described it as “surreal.” She related a new energy in the conversation she had with the student after class saying, “It was as if something had moved between us. I was dumbfounded!”

The co-researchers made a number of realizations as a result of this practice including some about the recognition of the depth of their own previous judgments of a student. As they regarded and entered into a different relationship with the other, they also began to see themselves anew. Many expressed how “simple” it was to perform the exercises and how quickly they could notice a shift through attunement to the situation and to the student or as one teacher put it, “How little attention it takes to pay attention.” Many noted that their own inward “movement” was a key component in this shift. “I attempt to see the child anew apart from my associations. The difference in my sincerity is immediately noticeable when I send the child my wishes. I was not expecting that quick turnaround. It seems so simple.”

One university professor expressed the intention of performing the exercises on behalf of her easy, puzzling, and difficult colleagues as well as her future students. Teachers were also asked to share what their own greatest surprise had been in working with and observing students in a new way during this week. One said, “Overall, there was a more harmonious and cooperative mood to my class” and another, “ That it sort of erupted all at once. Almost as if the flood gates had been opened.” One high school teacher, prompted by his newly growing awareness from participation in the study, created a writing

assignment for students with the purpose of learning more about them. He reported his results.

I was surprised to learn of some terrible circumstances. I was surprised to find that the majority of my students come from broken homes rife with addiction issues. In one class, there were three students--not related, coming from different homes--who lost their homes to fires in the past two years! What a reality check.

After only one week of practicing two simple exercises that could be performed anywhere at any time, teachers began to see a shift in their classroom energy and in their relationships to individual students. The simple act of doing less, holding back judgment, and closely observing the phenomena presented by students, classes, and self, provided teachers with tools that they considered easy to utilize and surprisingly transformative in both a personal and professional context.

Embracing uncertainty.

In the fifth week of the study, we returned to begin the process for a second time with round two of the four steps. The observational exercise for the fifth week called for a deeper and more exacting fresh impression. This week, practitioners were given the task to study the hands of their students. Each teacher was to notice the “facts” about as many hands as possible. They were still meant to carefully withhold judgment, and to prevent themselves from extrapolating further. When we notice a gesture, we do not always connect it to a larger whole. When we notice a feature or quality of one of our students we may think it “characteristic” or “uncharacteristic.” Within the fresh impression, we cannot always instantly know what we are looking at or how it is connected, and

this fact requires us to come to grips with our own ability to contain uncertainty. Our focus in this week was to reach out to the phenomena in active looking, but not to immediately conclude until what arose before us could not be denied. Two responding teachers had become “experts” to some degree before the project’s commencement, on the subject of their student’s hands. The first co-researcher to describe her observations began her posting with a statement that struck at the heart of what we discovered from this exercise. “Hands sometimes are like little microcosms of the whole person.” This co-researcher played a dual role in the study, as an aspiring classroom teacher who was engaged in working with elementary aged students one day per week as part of her training program, but also as a massage therapist and teacher of massage to adult practitioners during other days of the week. As a result of her experience and profession, she knew a lot about hands. She reported being rarely surprised about the relationship between hands and the rest of a person’s physicality during regular and close observation of her adult massage students.

The fingernails, the shape of the fingers, the color and...thickness of the skin on the palms, all of these things seem to "look" just like the face of the student to whom they belong. The gestures and movements of the hands seem to articulate the language that also choreographs the larger body in space...I notice that in general my observations of the whole person are reinforced by what I notice in the hands.

Unknown to this teacher, she perfectly described Bortoft’s holographic principle alive within her own work (Bortoft, 1996). She was able to recognize not only the student’s hands and their relationship to the remaining physicality of that person, but also her own ability and understanding of what and how she perceived, in a detailed reflective self-observation. In her willingness to notice

just the hands and then just their relationship to the rest of a particular student's physicality, this teacher was holding back her own desire to know more or as Palmer (1993) might say, her immoral passion of "curiosity." She was living with ambiguity in the same way that ingredients of a delicious stew are brought together one by one, each having its part in creation and service of the whole, but none betraying a final outcome until all have been in the boiling pot together, influencing each other, taking on the flavor of the other, for some time. Everyone knows that tasting the stew prematurely would be a disappointment.

Another teacher told us that he begins the first class of each new semester with a handshake between him and each of his students! Through the last several weeks, he had been engaged in an observation of one particular student and so continued in that direction; now focused on this student's hands. He described the handshake of the student in great detail and in the midst of his writing made the realization that he had been holding a space of ambiguity for several weeks with regard to this student, "I'm wondering now if on some subconscious level, this very first impression is what led me to focus all of these observations on him." As his study of the student's hands continued, he described other impressions, such as that the student was left-handed, and that his handwriting was "excellent." In a moment of thinking about his own thinking, he recognized "excellent" as a judgment but decided to include it because he was surprised by the information and felt it was significant. Later in the week he made another new discovery, "One day, I spied some writing on one of his hands, someone's name with hearts drawn around it." If we pay attention, we learn many things.

Because I wanted practitioners to focus on the specific weekly tasks as stand alone activities, I refrained from presenting the whole scheme of how the exercises might work in concert until this fifth week. With the focus on living with and working inside of uncertainty, I also wanted teachers to act from a fresh perspective, moving through the exercises one at a time while training their ability to proceed in ambiguity. This week, while revisiting the first step of the process, I provided them with a name for each of the steps and indicated how they might work together for the first time. Many of the practitioners expressed appreciation for my presenting a picture of the whole and felt that because of this newly provided overview the exercises and methods began to make sense in a new way as a single unit in sequence. They also said that they were glad for the opportunity to move through exercises in the first four weeks without a road map. They recognized that in not knowing exactly where they were going, they had probably gotten there faster.

Allowing oneself to embrace and to be comfortable with ambiguity is part of the transformational process. Parker Palmer refers quite often to experiences of “pedagogical messiness” or confusion and complexity with regard to an education that he calls “integrative” (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. 39). He says, “Doing integrative education well depends on our ability to hold paradox: we must open free space for the unpredictable” (2010, p. 39). He goes a step further when he says that we can

...touch love and allow it to touch us...by living faithfully within the paradoxes and tensions themselves, refusing to resolve them by collapsing into one pole or another, but allowing them to pull us open into that transcendent love in which all opposites find reconciliation. (2010)

Often, teachers feel they must have all the answers about how to proceed before they begin work with students, particularly when making reports to parents or during assessment situations. They have a difficult time recognizing the creative tension that can arise when they do not have all the answers right away. When this is the case, there is little room for authentic relationship to develop between human beings because arbitrary decisions have already been made and sometimes they can be rigidly adhered to and produce poor results. One of the most important works on the subject of creativity puts it this way, “Sometimes incubation lasts for years; sometimes it takes a few hours. Sometimes the creative ideas includes one deep insight and innumerable small ones” (1993, p. 111). There is a need to recognize this process in those who care for our children, especially if they are expected to be creative individuals who are teaching from a creative impulse. Once in a while, it just takes a bit of silence in which the creative voice can be heard.

This week’s contemplative exercise involved a four-part guided audio meditation posted for co-researchers to use as they concentrated on the sound of a bell (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 81). This exercise was chosen to provide practitioners with a space and a technique for coming to inner quiet so that truths about outer phenomena, like the bell, could be attended to.

Guided mindfulness meditation is something that not everyone can appreciate, but even those who had a difficult time with the form of the meditation made some discoveries from attempting to engage in it. Most of those who practiced with the audio found it helpful in some way. Teachers generally

focused on how they were experiencing various parts of the meditation. One co-researcher found value in concentrating on the difference in manifestation between the actual bell sound and the memory of the bell sound. Recognition of this step in thinking was the first indication from teachers toward a growing awareness of non-dual reality.

One professor had taken up an independent study about the affects of meditation on the brain and during one of her class periods thought to bring a short 3-minute meditation to her undergraduate students. She too began to explore the relationship of inner and outer experience.

I'm very encouraged by the openings that have been created. Although I feel rather self-centered in saying this, I think much of this process has helped me to clear away things (mental, emotional, etc.) that impede my ability to connect with the students. I feel as if this process is helping me more than it is them, but I suppose that is part of the interplay of inner and outer phenomena.

Another teacher discovered, and specifically described, how working with the bell sound meditation had helped her to be more comfortable with ambiguity and was transforming the way she interacted with other people in general, not just with her students. She was moving the observation process to a new level and beginning to extrapolate the meditative work for use in her observation of students. Through this connection, she was able to bring students into her inner life in a new way, becoming more attuned to their qualities.

Similarly I am beginning to feel that my present attention on those around me can be like the sound of the bell, and that I can later recreate an afterimage of the person that carries with it some of the reverberating qualities of that person's presence that I may not have been able to tune into during the moment's other activities.

She went on to explain how the instructions for the closing of this particular meditation were influencing her own personal spiritual practice. “That reminder that I'm not just working with myself because I'm doing something by myself is a sweet and nourishing bit of gratitude for my own effort and for the opportunity to practice.” This idea of working within a collective during a meditative session is one that had deep import and relevance for this project. This theme continued to grow and develop within the group as they made several discoveries about how working with the self also affected the community and that working with the community deeply affected the self.

Transformative communion.

In week nine, co-researchers investigated another new aspect of the *Object* stage of the observational process. In the previous eight weeks practitioners worked with a contemplative practice to aid in the training and development of new organs of perception, beyond the five easily recognizable senses. After providing examples of how such exercises could work, it now seemed important to help the group move more deeply into the observational process and how that might unfold in time as they prepared to work with it on their own after our work together had ended. At this point, I presented practitioners with the idea that the observational exercise was, in fact, also a contemplative practice. Considering student observation as “contemplative” or “mindfulness” practice helped us to integrate the kind of focus achieved in solitary meditation during time spent observing a student within the classroom setting. Our work was becoming more simplified but at the same time, it deepened.

It was now also beginning to dawn on the teachers that to separate the four steps of this process, as we had been doing, was a somewhat artificial construct; helpful, perhaps, in the beginning weeks as an instructional method, but not really how the process works as a whole. Because all of the steps can actually happen in quick succession, even within a few minutes, all four steps of the process would now be practiced as a unit for each of the remaining four weeks. We would continue, however, to place special emphasis on deepening our work with a single aspect of one of the stages each week.

This week's focus was the cultivation of a fresh first impression in every meeting with every student in the class. Our exercise included directions for withholding our "preconceptions, prejudices, suppositions, and desires" to allow students "space to be recreated anew each time they are in our presence." Teachers chose one student and took note of the freshness of their encounters with that person through the week. To do this, they needed to move into the second step of recreating the student in their mind's eye while at home in the evening. Moving to the third step, they would pay attention to student characteristics and how each of these not only informed the whole, but also contained a microcosm of the whole, like the pieces of a hologram. Finally, in the fourth step, co-researchers could arrive at something of that student's "essence" which they might represent artistically in a non-objective form.

Teachers posted about putting all the steps of the practice together as a contemplative picture of one student during the ninth week. In earlier weeks focused on the *Object* phase, a teacher noted recognition of taking up a seemingly

solitary meditative practice as a communal gesture, one in which the self of the practitioner, through that person's will forces, sits down to contemplate; yet the act of doing so increases the possibility of opening to community. This week, a teacher who imagined the process from a community perspective to begin with, realized that in reaching out to students, he was actually bestowing the fresh impression upon himself. He found more compassion for himself and reported an inner emancipation from his own rigid judgments as a result of holding *the other* with the delicate gaze of an interested observer.

When I first began this practice, I had in mind that I was doing something for the students, as if I were extending some courtesy to these individuals, allowing them to be seen anew. What I discovered, however, was that I was at least as much a beneficiary, if not more so! Each day, I was of a new mind, and I was granted access to a freshness myself. I was released from ideas I had held of my students, and I really began to understand the scripture: "Judge not, lest you be judged." I recognized that as much as I engage in judgment (preconceived ideas, no matter how "valid" based on experience), I am judged (by my own inner critic) OR, as much as I expect the same from a student day after day, I am inhabiting set thought forms that prevent me from observing the world anew.

Teachers seemed more engaged in reading and responding to each other's postings at this point. They discussed some technical difficulties together giving one another advice on how to navigate the site more effectively. They commented on similarities between their own experiences and those of their co-researchers. Noticing how the practices were opening *new ways of seeing*, Big Love said, "So much of what I am experiencing has more to do with how I am open to my students than how they act. But, maybe it's the same thing from a new perspective?" She felt better able to enter into the perspective of a particular student "rather than interacting with him from my usual framework." She

described a difficulty the student had been having in class as he worked with teammates on a leadership project and recounted how she had coached him through a successful revision of his team's assignment. Once all the assignments were completed in her course, she took an unusual step.

Based in no small part on the struggles of this student and his team in working through their assignments, I decided to give them a "day off." Their "assignment" for the [next] class period was to do something that would nurture them in whatever way they felt would be most helpful. Although a response was not required, I received the following note from this student:

"I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciate having the time off tomorrow. I only have Leadership on Wednesdays, so this means a complete day off for me. I have been getting increasingly overwhelmed with deadlines. I think this day off is going to make a big difference for me. Thank you very much!"

After describing one of her students in some detail, Moon Rose also provided specific feedback on how her contemplative observation of that child had transformed the way she was able to see the student's perspective, as well as interactions between teacher and student.

Because I had been noticing them all afresh, I could really see the images they had of themselves in the future... This particular child told me she would like to be a scientist who researches things in outer space, and as a part time job she would like to be a chef. Both of these images were so clear to me, and as I carried them into my contemplation of her later, I could see in a sort of planetary model this deep interest. I could really appreciate the number of directions her life might take. I really loved opening up to this student who before now I experienced appreciatively, but maybe from a sort of false distance. I wasn't really able to love the way she saw the world before, and it limited the way I could see her.

Practitioners were beginning to integrate the work of the previous eight weeks. Teachers reported new access to deeper and more meaningful responsiveness in relationship to their students as well as to others in their lives. Brave Earth spoke of his growing ability and willingness to be more "available" to

students both with his time as well as his emotions. This public high school teacher began to explore in more depth the concept of *love* in relationship to how he responded to and felt about his students.

This whole project is having a cumulative effect: I've always been a people person, and I've always loved my career, but I'm feeling even more . . . loving (?) towards my students. I used a question mark, because the perfect word eludes me. Maybe “*philia*”--friendship love, a sense of companionship. “We're in this together.” Anyway, it was nice to engage in this particular exercise at this point in the project. I'm reinvigorated.

He was also thrilled with the results of his students' apparent response to the process he had undertaken. While he was not certain that student behavior and academic successes were exclusively linked to his participation in the project, he felt it important enough to mention the possibility that the exercises helped him improve his already positive relationship to students. “It feels magical, actually. It's difficult to argue from the negative, but I'll mention that I've had no discipline issues at all. None. I will [also] mention that class averages are up across the board.”

Another teacher noticed an increased effectiveness in how she was able to articulate the assignments for her students during this week, and like Brave Earth, she noticed the students' response to her own transforming presence. “The students responded positively to my suggestions and guidance. I felt as if they were truly ‘hearing’ me.”

As we began this last round of practice, teachers showed awareness of a transformation in their own perspective, and in that transformation they were allowed fresh access to the students they saw each day. From the removal of the teachers' preconceived judgments about them, students seemed to be responding

with “smiles...in the hallway between classes” and a new level of “commitment to assignments...despite the challenges of group work.” The change in perspective brought forth a new dimension in the work where *self* and *other* began to merge. Warmth was building.

Image

The enfolded whole.

In the second step of round one, practitioners were given the task of imagining one of their students “back in time” to their early childhood, then as a toddler, and even as an infant. From that imagination, they were to “see them into the future” imagining how the student progressed from infant to where they are today and then on into their elder years. Teachers can place a great deal of importance on what is being done in the moment and in so doing miss a larger picture of the whole. We rarely imagine our students beyond the current moment—either past or present. One teacher spoke to this dilemma from own her experience.

There are times when the only thing I can see is the stubborn student sitting before me or, likewise, a stubborn me refusing to open to something that's beyond my comfort zone. The idea of this growth and circularity is a reminder that there IS ebb and flow and...the opportunity for someone to grow and flower.

As teachers began their work with metamorphosis, the exercises helped them to recognize the importance of the whole, to develop flexibility in thinking, and to work *with* time instead of against it. Co-researchers reported a range of experiences while engaged in this practice but none so vividly as Big Love’s post late in the week. She chose to imagine her “difficult” student from the week

before. She was late in working with the exercise because of a bad car accident she had had earlier in the week that totaled her vehicle. Needing to rent a car, she had the occasion of riding to the rental car agency with a young man who picked her up as a service provided by the company.

On Wednesday afternoon, I realized that I'd had a "vision" of my student, in the future and in the flesh. The young man who picked me up in the rental car was about ten years older than my student but reminded me of "A" as he might be at 28 or so. The young man could have been "A's" older brother, even wearing a similar sweater, shirt, and slacks that "A" wears to class.

In retrospect I could literally see and engage with "A" as his future self. As we drove to the rental agency we chatted about his love of golf, his fiancée whom he is trying to convince to take up the sport, and the pleasure he derives from taking golf vacations with his buddies. He is, in short, a confident and successful young man with a good job, a loving partner, and good friends.

This comparison didn't occur to me until after I was able to relax a little, and I realized that not only do I hope for such a future for "A," but also that it is possible, that it is already enfolded in the universe for him. Interestingly, I don't feel that this is wishful or positive thinking, but rather that I have had the experience of "time travel" and that this is part of what "A" will experience. (I'll have to ask him if he's ever thought about taking up golf.)

While this event might seem unusual, particularly the "time travel" aspect of the experience, it reminded me of a very similar instance with a student early in my own teaching career. As a co-learner in this process, I shared the experience with Big Love. I was working on a short-term dramatic production with a group of students and one boy, in particular, made it his job to disrupt and derail the rehearsals. In thinking about how to handle him each day, I began to notice various qualities about him. One day it occurred to me that he was exactly like my son, who was a young child at the time. When I saw him, I felt as if I were looking at my own son's future. I immediately felt my heart open to this boy and

imagined myself surrounding his cold personality with warmth. I know that he sensed this opening in me, because he literally changed overnight from the most difficult student to the most helpful and funniest student in the group. His work on the project was completed in an excellent fashion and his parents and teachers all commented to me about the transformation they witnessed through the time he took part in the production. I had almost forgotten the event until prompted by Big Love's story. These imaginative flashes shifted the course of events for both of our students. As teachers, both Big Love and I recognized the transformational shift made possible by such insights.

Big Love was not the only teacher to choose the "difficult" student from the previous week. After recounting the details of his imaginative journey through the life of his "difficult" student, Brave Earth also commented on the palpable sense of reality present in this imaginative exercise. "I'm pleased to say I really enjoyed the exercise, and pleased to report that it brought even more compassion because it seemed so real, less a product of speculation and more of observation." A third teacher worked with images for one of her first graders who she sends out of the classroom fairly often due to his impulsivity. She imagined him as a younger child experiencing a "loose upbringing" and began to understand his difficulty with self-control. As she described the future she imagined for him, she saw his current impulsivity transformed to "...focused creativity, and free expression of a deep, artistic nature." She was grateful for the help this exercise provided to her in building a different relationship with the boy. "This picturing helped me in numerous moments when he was unable to be in

class. I kept thinking of him in a transformed, higher way of being, and understanding the lack of discipline through the backward glance.” From an initial consideration of this exercise, one might think that to try it means engaging in pure fantasy, however, the practitioners who worked with it found it to be less a fantasy and more an observation of real possibilities through the lens of imagination. As Coleridge’s distinction between fancy and imagination, both primary and secondary, points out, when we engage in fancy it necessarily exists in the realm of memory and pure association but without regard to the structure of time or space. Further, he describes that when employing the tool of true imagination, we create something new (Coleridge, 1983). Bohm elaborates further on the subject of imagination when he suggests that when we consider something, in this case a student, we hold within us an “enfolded whole” that must be unpacked and laid out before us so that we have access to further information (Coleridge, 1983). It soon became clear that the co-researchers were engaged in that exact unfolding process and that as a result, flashes of insight were on the rise.

In a parallel imaginative process to the student observation, our contemplative exercise began with a seed and proceeded to the imagination of its unfolding growth process, as it became a blossom-producing, seed-bearing plant. What elements would the plant need? What conditions would it require for growth? Once the picture of a full plant was created, teachers were asked to imagine it back, step-by-step in reverse order, until it was a seed once again.

Two teachers explained how they had made it their own by changing various elements of the sequence, either on purpose or because they had not remembered it “correctly.” Through the exercise, one of these teachers recognized that two of his students needed him to create conditions and elements that he was not equipped or trained to do. He then understood that in order to teach them, he needed to listen more closely to what their true needs were. The second teacher who made modifications in the exercise, found a new part of himself in the activity. “What was most powerful to me, though, was the tenderness it brought out in me, especially as I gently spoke to this plant in my palm. It was love. There was an exchange of energy. Breath-->spirit-->inspiration. This one's a real keeper, and I plan to stick with it.” Another teacher who often mentioned her concern that she would not be up to the task of providing all that her students required, realized through this exercise that as a teacher, she was not solely responsible for everything students needed in order to grow. She even recognized that they could receive help from the world itself. “I'm not responsible for all of the plant's development. In that climate I have to provide the water, but the sun is free, and constant.”

This image of the seed held a great deal of power and potential for co-researchers and it spoke to them in many ways. One teacher realized that each child was like an apple seed that held “...a universe of apple trees within itself.” She used this image to help her hone and craft lessons that were worthy of passing on to the grandchildren of the students in her class. In her image of the growth of

the seed, she saw children, yet to be born, who could potentially benefit from the essential lessons their grandparents learned from her in their first grade year.

Co-researchers looked upon this practice as generally very helpful. One teacher shared her greatest surprise from the week.

My greatest surprise was that I did not put this into practice before, something so helpful and beautiful as seeing them into the future. It offers me a chance to dream for them, and then seeing my dreams for them, dream bigger or better or with more finely tuned wishes. There is such beauty in the exercise. I also really enjoyed the image of one seed superimposed upon its root seed. Timelessness and time, superimposed.

Several teachers reported a new sense of harmony, lightness, or levity in their classes even while emotional and personal difficulties for both students and teachers seemed to pervade almost every one of the classroom environments as a general rule. Gradually these energies transformed to an increase in the overall sense of calm and in their student's abilities to solve previous conflicts. Teachers were also beginning to notice their student's deeper sense of engagement in classwork. Each week co-researchers were asked about improvements they might make in the protocol. Brave Earth spoke to the request in week three.

I'm really enjoying myself. I've not felt this to be a chore. I've had no negative or skeptical feelings about any of the assignments; in fact, I was eager to receive new ideas last Sunday night, and I'm eager for week 3's activities. I find the exercises very creative, fun, and productive.

Watery metamorphosis.

One important aspect of the second step in this process is the relationship between the elements or facts that we have observed in the first step. As we imagine a process of metamorphosis, the inner light of our imagination delicately

penetrates the outer reality of our observations in the way that water seeps into the soil. With this imagination we began the work of our sixth week.

Our observations called for accuracy because we were going to draw an image of the student from what we observed. Only two teachers were willing to post their renderings (Appendix K). One of them chose a student because “I realized she’d been successfully hiding from me.” This teacher chose to draw her from memory later in that week. Another teacher posted about her process of engagement with the drawing but did not share the finished product online. On the day that she was looking around her classroom to imagine how she might draw each one, she noticed a boy who she described as previously “...rigid, angular...stiff and shy...” but on this occasion, he was “very animated” so he became the choice. Teachers realized that to observe someone’s features with the intention of drawing them was a new way of looking, different even than the close observation of the first steps in our process. One teacher described this new process, “I feel as if there is an unfolding, a reaching out of the tendrils to my students.” She had experienced “active looking.” She later said her biggest surprise for the week was how “life like” her drawing became, even though she considered herself to be unequipped to draw realistic images. While the option was given to draw anything about the student that teachers might have noticed, including hands, face, feet, whole person or any other particular element from observation, all chose to draw the face with a focus on the student’s eyes.

The contemplative practice that accompanied the drawing required the co-researchers to contemplate the relationship between water and plant. By choosing

the image of a particular plant, either real or imaginary, they were to visualize it in detail and then imagine it to be in need of water. Then, by some method, they were to bring water to this imaginary plant. The co-researchers were then to consider what needed elements the water brings to the plant and how the water works its way from the outer structure to feed the inner life of the plant.

One of the teachers who posted in the contemplative exercise space recounted a recent dream she remembered featuring water. From the plant meditation, this teacher realized that the process of drawing her student after careful observation was like “seeping into a student’s psyche.” Another teacher was focused on the plants “interdependent parts” as he wove an entire story during the plant and water meditation. A third teacher made two important discoveries for herself in working with this exercise. One was that some plants have the ability or willingness to reach out, or send out roots that can receive the water more readily than other plants. She also imagined herself sending “love and light” along with the water to the plants that most seemed to need something from her. Analogous to the relationship between student and teacher, the plant and the water must be open to one another in order to be nourished by the other through a growth process.

Brave Earth, our public high school teacher found life sustaining qualities in this week’s exercise to counteract what he had earlier described as the “broken system” of public education.

The images remained with me all week, bringing a more organic quality to my life and work. There are a number of similar metaphors I carry in my head, but this exercise (and the one last week) is in my heart, and it manifests on the heart level. It's been good medicine; factory-style

education has a systems feel, too, but a cold, hard mechanical feel. That green plant energy around my heart chakra has served me well!

Not only the students, but also the teachers caught in such a system need lively and authentic engagement in order to thrive and flourish. Teachers who were consistently engaging with the exercises posted about continued student success in their classrooms. “The trend of increased engagement and overall good feelings continues and grows.” “Students are very engaged. I have not had to prompt or ‘coerce’ students into offering answers or responses. In fact it has been the opposite. We have gotten into so many interesting and thoughtful discussions that we seem to run out of class time.” As a successful closing to the week’s work, one teacher added, “For the first time in a long time I am REALLY excited to get to school and get in the classroom.”

Imaginative thinking.

During the last round, we continued to put all four steps together as we practiced our growing skills of observation and contemplation as a single exercise. During many weeks of the project, co-researchers focused on students with whom they were having difficulty or who needed a great deal of extra support. This is a natural tendency for classroom teachers. We have a need to work the problem and the student who shows the most outward need for our attentions often becomes the focus of our inner work. This week, in order to break away from a typical pattern of giving attention to the most troubled or troubling student, we chose the most engaged, amazing, talented, well-behaved student in the class to receive our energies. These students, so self-sufficient, sometimes go unseen because we can fall into a pattern of counting on them or taking their abilities for

granted. They do not need the extra help, so they do not get it. Week ten of our project was dedicated to the excellent students in every class.

One teacher began to think about which student she would choose for the exercise and three of them initially came to mind. She had assigned a group project, and as she looked around the room to see who had grouped themselves together, she was surprised to see all three of her choices appearing in the same group. She began to work with them as a group, and described their work energy as “buzzy, like bees.” She imagined them as a perfectly maintained and well-oiled human machine, but not with mechanistic tendencies.

I asked co-researchers whether or not they felt their accuracy growing as they created inner pictures of students from week to week. They agreed that the repetitions each week and even the idea that they could slow down life’s pace to concentrate on just one student seemed to help develop their capacity to hold these inner pictures. One of the teachers who had practiced diligently and posted each week noticed that the degree to which she completed inner pictures of students made a significant difference in how effective she could be in working with them. She also noted that the “imaginative” pictures could sometimes provide more accuracy than was possible while in a person’s presence because there was time to carefully consider various elements and aspects that in typical hurried face-to-face encounters are difficult to fully perceive.

By this tenth week, the students of co-researchers had improved their ability to work together toward academic success. One teacher’s greatest surprise

about her students for the week was, “That they are all so dedicated. I have not seen a class so invested in their work since...I can't recall.”

Activity

Disruption.

The third phase of our work with students moved deeper into distilling and intensifying the previous metamorphic movements and we began to think of them as “formative gestures” or “formative life-principles.” While a movement is simply motion, a *gesture* contains an indication of intention. Whatever the *idea* or the *plan* behind the formative movements of an organism, we would attempt to apprehend them through inner cognition. This apprehension is a process that takes place entirely within us. These gestures are not seen with the physical eyes but instead, with the organs of our newly developing inner vision. Through these new organs, hidden truths are revealed.

Each teacher chose a student to consider and adjusted their inner gaze to see more deeply into the "formative gestures" or the creation impulses alive within the student. By starting with the previous week's work, when they imagined the student back through the growth process and into childhood, this week practitioners would attempt to see more deeply to discover what specific conditions were at work in the major phases of development for the student.

The week's postings were social and interactive. Teachers commented on the posts of others, asked questions of each other, and entered into conversation with me as well. One co-researcher was feeling rushed in her work as the teaching term ended and she checked in to let us know that she had not been able

to complete the exercises. Her reflections at this point in the project, however, were significant, in that in a time when she was normally “a basket case” she had been able to maintain calm in wrapping up course work, especially with some of the difficult students she had described in earlier weeks. In summary she said, “I’m amazed and thankful that I was able to reach a level of thoughtful detachment and strongly believe that these exercises have led me to better student/teacher interactions.”

The students who worked with the exercises described how it might feel to experience the world from “inside” a particular student they had observed. Moon Rose considered aspects of her student’s “withdrawal from external stimuli” as he asked to be removed from class, declined help with his assignments, and disengaged in class work sessions. Through her experience with the exercise an insight occurred to her about how this outer withdrawal might be “related to [his] learning to regulate this powerful internal stimuli.” She imagined the student as a grown man that “even while sitting still will exude a powerful presence of one who has learned across the span of time to channel and direct his own energies.”

Brave Earth posted reflections about a female student with a speech impediment that also had relationship to the gesture of “withdrawing.” He astutely characterized her emotional state through a sense of awkwardness at being so much taller than other classmates. He saw this inner experience manifest outwardly in the stooped over, folded in gesture of her posture. She was also, according to him, conventionally beautiful, which he thought must also have caused her to receive even more unwanted attention. The contrast in qualities and

gestures were striking. Moon Rose commented that his description reminded her of something she had seen in the botanical gardens, “a really beautiful fern known as ‘the sensitive plant’ that folds in on itself when touched.” She provided us with a video link so that we could view the plant in motion.

To accompany observations of these formative properties in the gesture of students, teachers were provided with a connected contemplative practice. A visual image, Parmigianino’s Conversion of St. Paul, was posted for teachers to contemplate. They were asked to view the painting using the methods they had been practicing to observe students. Their goal was to open themselves to a sense of the "activity" springing forth from the image and to attempt to identify it just as they were striving to do for their student this week.

One of the teachers became consumed by the title and subject matter of the painting and was unable to sense the activity behind the image because he had a difficult time shutting off his intellectual assessment of all its aspects. Some of the teachers focused on a visual after image of the work and relied heavily on a visual impression rather than on a sense of the underlying activity behind the work. Others felt able to identify an essential activity that may have brought rise to the painting, a sense of spinning, uplifting, falling up, growing, stretching, and survival. A few teachers went into some depth as they attempted to identify these qualities and they were able to weave a bit of narrative and story into the image. One teacher who saw a sense of “disruption” in the painting noted that “The disruption is what will help him to get back on course, will help him ‘see.’” She also saw “Containment, some entity, cosmic unseen being that is holding Saul”

along with the "...anticipation of something better to come." Another teacher who worked with a narrative content said that the painting showed that "What has been changed, while still terrifying, seems peaceful" and noticed that "The activity here is luminous and immediate...asking a change of us." Smiling Stream said, "The conversion is going to take his life and that is of-course true, for as one surrenders to a higher knowledge there is a need to survive the experience but also a transition to something unknown before."

Through participating in this project, the co-researchers were actually each engaged in a process similar to what they had described seeing in the selected image. I recognized them to be a group of human beings earnestly seeking to make a real difference in the lives of others. While their work was clearly of a deep inner nature, it could also manifest in this outward, uplifting and disturbing way in the world, as they began to transform the relationship to their students. I also recognized a theme mentioned by Big Love in our introductory interview. When discussing potential negative connotations of *pedagogical love* her response referenced a philosophy of transformation suggesting that in order to help someone learn, one must put up with some measure of disruption or disturbance.

Teachers reported more effective work in their respective classrooms than usual this week and some of the evidence they provided for that improvement included statements like "Someone I thought would be difficult to reach actually sought me out the other day; he was looking to make a connection, looking to show me that he could be taken seriously." And "In four out of five classes, the

students strike me as more engaged and receptive. The one class that seems sluggish meets right after lunch, so I might be "battling" biology there!" One teacher made the realization that "gesture" is not just about physical movements. One university professor was most surprised by the fact that through working with these exercises she was able to "get out of my own way." Another university professor who had posted sporadically about her experience with the exercises was startled this week by a sudden flash of insight about one of her adult students.

I had a moment in class where a student came up to me and all of a sudden I felt --and could almost see-- the student as a little girl. It startled me how this sort of "afterimage" arose so quickly and I felt vulnerable and open -- and I saw the student as such too. Made me wonder about the potency of these exercises -- but also I felt like distancing myself from them.

Transformation really can be "disturbing" as pronounced by more than one co-researcher. Teaching really can be "violent" as mentioned in the introductory interviews, and authentic love really can be frightening as Palmer reminds us (Bohm, 1976). In her response to the week's image, Air Song posted an evocative verse from Rainer Maria Rilke's *First Elegy* that characterized the nature of a teacher's work as they walk the inner path of transformation.

"Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the Angels' hierarchies? And even if one of them pressed me suddenly against his heart, I would be consumed in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, which we still are just able to endure and we are so awed because it serenely disdains to annihilate us. Every angel is terrifying."

Non-objective rendering.

The observation for the seventh week helped co-researchers at first to intensify, and later to distill their impressions of some of a student's energetic qualities as they worked again through the *Activity* stage. The qualities were then

to be expressed using descriptive adjectives. Once the distillation process had taken place as a result of this deeper level of observation, co-researchers posted their simple words with a few sentences of explanation and then we moved on to the second part of the week's work. Teachers worked with the words they had decided upon in the meditative process for the week. With their space prepared for artistic work, each teacher considered the adjectives distilled from the observation of the student, but not the student. In considering these words, teachers allowed a sense for shape, movement, form, color, depth, space, and feeling to arise before their mind's eye. With this beginning, they created non-objective artistic images to express these qualities.

Moon Rose chose the word "DETERMINED" to describe her student of the week. She felt he was focused in thought as well as action and went on to describe further that he gave her the sense of "an archer hitting a target." For this word, she created the image in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Co-researcher's drawing of "Determined."

Brave Earth chose the words “STRONG” and “SOFT.” He described the student as “...slow moving in a way that reminds me of a wall of water or a wide mighty river, and, like water, he exudes a softness, too.” To accompany these words, he posted the image in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Co-researcher’s drawing of “Strong and Soft.”

A third teacher posted only the words “AWKWARD” and “FRANK” without an image, but did elaborate, adding,

Contemplating the words I associate with this student I recalled the many stories I've heard of Mullah Nasrudin. There is wisdom in foolishness. This student is very funny, although not intentionally, rather because she calls it as she sees it. She calls my attention to other possible truths because what she says is so un-self-consciously spoken.

Through entering into a process of distilling an essence and the production of a non-objective artwork this week, teachers were able to move further from the physical life of the student and closer to something generative. The example pictures produced by the two teachers showed a deep awareness of quality but

also quality in motion, and gesture with intentionality. That teachers in this stage of the project felt able to attempt the exercises of this week, was affirming in both their understanding of the steps as well as their engagement with students on a new and deeper level. By this point in the project, transformation was well underway within each of the co-researchers. One teacher said,

I am better able to see things in a student that I was not able to see before. Also, as I observe the student with another faculty member, what is now obvious to me is lost on the other faculty member.

Another confirming comment revealed that the teachers in the study were beginning to recognize and break old habits. “When I am engaged with education (not just the habits and rituals of schooling) so are my students.” Teachers in general reported deepening sensitivity and an increased ability to “see” beyond what was in front of their physical eyes. From the new organs developing through engagement with the exercises, teachers believed themselves to be more responsive to student needs. One teacher described the overall effect the exercises were having on his work in the classroom.

This school year has felt transitional in general, and exercises like those we've been doing have contributed to a real transformation in my style. This week's contemplative exercise, in particular, shifted my way of “seeing.” It's been more like perceiving an energy field, with different shapes and colors.

The tapestry.

Co-researchers continued to practice all of the four steps together during week eleven of the project when the focus was once again on the *Activity* phase of the process. Like all weeks of the last round, the contemplative and observational exercises were blended for a more realistic taste of how this technique could work

in a teacher's own context after the project was complete. The special focus in the eleventh week was to choose a new student; one who follows directions, does their work, but recedes quietly into the background. These are the students mentioned by Dream Force in her initial interview as those she wished to engage with more deeply, those students who "fall through the cracks." After observing the student, teachers were asked to activate intuitive perceptions, as we had done in weeks seven and three, in order to identify an essential characteristic of this student.

Co-researchers responded to this exercise in various ways. One made the realization through the week's work that teachers "...need to figure out ways to focus in the life of the classroom without getting too caught up in the culture of traditional schooling and what has, in my opinion, become the misrepresentation of 'academic rigor'." In the university classroom, one teacher was drawn to choose an entire class of students rather than an individual. She was surprised in multiple instances by the way the group was weaving themselves together as a cohesive tapestry, even to the point of committing to a project that required them to stay in contact over the summer.

The question of finding or identifying an archetype is a big leap. One teacher composed a poem about the student in her focus. While she was easily able to distill an essence and recognize in each part a picture of the whole, she found difficulty with the concept *archetype* and her own understanding of it. She discussed a fear that by recognizing an archetype she might be "trapping" a student as well as herself inside of a 'too rigid' picture. My response to this

returned us to the first week and every first week of our exercises when we sought to perceive that fresh impression. If we strive to meet each person “for the first time” every time we meet them, our relationship can be alive and in motion, not stuck or trapped, as this teacher feared. Her question about archetypes was key and through it I recognized the importance of connecting the concept of *creative potency* to this idea of the archetype. The archetypal essence, as Goethe means it, is not an objective *thing*. Rather, it is an energy or process, always in motion but also reliable. It is the potency from which each of us develops the *self*, and becomes who we are meant to become.

In Journal postings from the week, another co-researcher expressed the value the project and its exercises were having on her overall teaching practice. She posted an image of a tapestry she had visited at the Cloisters in New York City and literally had a physical sensation of something unseen “weaving” between her students and outward beyond the classroom to create a “tapestry.”

I have a sense of this particular class as a tapestry in progress. The physical sensation of weaving, the threads that I sense emanating from the students towards each other and out into the world, and the image of a single beautiful object being created by many hands with many beautiful threads - each of which adds its own luster to the work - all offer up a feeling of "divine activity." I feel as if I'm watching it being woven. And grateful for the experience.

The beauty of this practice is that it has woven itself in and around all of my students whether or not I am consciously focusing on them. It has created a feeling - much like the serene blue background of this tapestry - of peace and tranquility. Again, I have noticed that maybe I am the one who is changing.

Once again in noticing the other, she recognized herself living in and among them, as an inseparable part of the artwork being created. Perhaps she herself *was* the “serene blue background...of peace and tranquility” providing a

platform from which her students could participate with her to build a sculpture of warmth that began in the classroom but moved out into the world. The potential for students to touch others with such warmth had become a palpable reality in this professor's classroom. What seemed also striking in this example was the fact that even in classes where the professor had not consciously focused her exercises on any of the students, she believed the process to still be at work.

Agency

Essence.

The last week of each round focused on the *Agency* phase of the process. In the first round of exercises, we observed patterns and truths about a student in his or her entirety, as a whole being. During these observations we looked deeply to find how various qualities or forms contain a microcosmic window into the inner and outer structures of the observed. As we looked for the *being(ness)* of the other, our task was not to generalize or build an abstraction, but to notice that which was living at once in the whole as well as in each and every one of the parts, themselves reflecting the whole. Co-researchers considered what made a person uniquely that person. When observing that which is "characteristic" of a person, they noticed essential qualities of the characteristic also permeating a student's entire *being(ness)*.

Teachers who posted their observations this week made important discoveries about the *being(ness)* of the students they observed. Moon Rose briefly detailed the observations she had recorded for her student. He was small and inquisitive, and seemed easily relatable. She noted that he "holds his head at

an angle of dignity” and that this gesture held great importance when considering his *being(ness)* “As if this child benefits from some deep belief in his own worth, and is able to engage himself in the world with trust and curiosity because of it.”

Brave Earth was able to characterize the *being(ness)* of his student as having to do with “belonging.” He had observed this student and posted reflections about him before, but things were changing. Brave Earth could see that as the student became more comfortable in the group, he became more helpful and engaged in the work. “I see in him that social aspect of our human experience, our need for belonging, our need to be valued for what we can bring to the community.”

In these two examples, teachers were describing the unique features and qualities of their chosen student as a human being, as a human essence. Though not explicitly stated, the characteristics described for each student were in contrast to characteristics of other students or other people. In allowing the elements that had arisen from detailed observations to merge into a unified whole, the being of this particular student could observably arise before both the inner and outer gaze of the teacher. Co-researchers could describe outward characteristics, and could as easily have described a set of qualities that were uncharacteristic, as well as a set of inner qualities that were not observable with physical eyes. Both the inner and the outer observations reported by the teachers unified to build a vision that contained not only all of the parts but also the whole from which they came and that they were creating; they were inseparable. This essence was simple and

elegant, but also complex and chaotic all at once. In recognizing this essence, teachers entered into the world, life, and being of their student.

The contemplative exercise to accompany this observation asked practitioners to shift their inward perspective. The image of a stone and a plant were provided. Co-researchers imagined the experience of what it would be like to be inside of the stone, then inside of the plant. Finally, in comparing the two experiences, they could more readily discern and articulate the essential difference between the two. Teachers responded to the contemplative work with detailed postings of their experiences inside both the stone and the plant. The third component of this exercise, when the experiences of stone and plant would be compared was fascinating.

The individual imaginative journeys of different practitioners produced strikingly similar experiences, such as that plant “has more fluid energy” and that its energy “was active.” Inside the plant, co-researchers claimed to be “more alert” and to experience “movement, transformation, and relationship.” While the stone experience “was passive/receptive” and carried a long-range sense of time. The relationship to time was noted for both plant and stone, with the plant’s being “more immediate.” Cultivating the ability to understand distinctions through our experiences with nature trains us to become more attuned to distinctions in other human beings, who also spring from the natural world. This exercise was seen as a valuable example for sensing the archetype of the other. While imagining the experience of a rock or a plant might be easier than finding our way into the

essence of another human being, such a practice begins to reveal methods and steps for accomplishing just that.

Intuitive perception.

Working with the *Agency* phase in the second round, our observational exercise proceeded directly from the experiences of working with the plant and stone from week four. This week, however, co-researchers were to imagine how it would be to experience the world from inside the perspective of two different students.

Brave Earth shared observations, like those from the plant and stone imagination, about two young men in his class. They were absolutely opposite, like the plant and stone had been. He easily described how the world was experienced from inside the view of both boys. The first, he mentioned, was diagnosed ADD/ADHD and through this exercise the teacher found his apparent distractedness to actually be more like “intensely present” and cited the student’s talent for sports as evidence to support his new understanding. The second student he observed was described as a “gentle giant” who was “the size of an NFL lineman” yet he had no real interest in sports. Because of his size, the slow moving pace, and his “firm-but not tough-exterior” the teacher imagined that he had been treated as much older than he actually was for many years. In a moment of discovery, Brave Earth realized that this student was still only a boy and must be thinking, “I want to be cuddled too.”

Moon Rose, also chose two students but with a lesser degree of contrast between them than the pair previously described. The female student, for whom

“...life was a game...” was experienced as “mischievous” and “ever playful.” With “...trust in the goodness and order of things around her...” her discernment seemed to come “...through action and play, and because of her trust in the world she can attend to her own pleasure.” The male child from her observation had a “dramatic posture” and was easily disturbed and upset by others even when no ill intent was present. His reactions to these perceived slights might easily involve the teacher or just some form of vigilante justice. “He seems to be learning about the world largely through friction and discomfort.” In imagining how intense it would be to experience the world from this boy’s perspective, the teacher said, “There is a sense of separateness in this way of being--as if the world exists only outside the self--and the self exists in contrast to the world.”

This week’s observations were vehicles for discovery for each teacher. While looking deeply into the experience of each student rather than seeing the student in an external and removed way, teachers were more able to uncover a new level of knowledge about students who needed different things from the world, and perhaps in turn, from them as teachers.

The accompanying contemplative work was focused on discerning essence and essential differences in the spruce and the apple tree. Without looking up anything about either tree, co-researchers were asked to consider everything they knew about both trees and to begin to understand something about the essential difference in *being(ness)* of each tree. Teachers found the exercise helpful in entering into an archetype and articulating for themselves its qualities and capacities. Returning to the natural world was nourishing according to the co-

researchers and because contrast and comparison was easy to see and name in this realm, they could learn how to do it with clear examples. The exercise helped to strengthen ideas about the concepts of *potential* and *potency*. From this week's exercise, we realized in an archetypal example, that an apple seed cannot grow to become a spruce tree, but it contains the *potentiality* to become an infinite number of apple trees. The concept of *potentiality* is important when considering other human beings because in order to see it we must leave something of our observations and something of ourselves open for its possibilities. When we take a rigid view of the other, our vision of their potential and potentiality is blocked.

In summary of the week's work, Brave Earth made a profound realization. "Each of us is on the archetypal voyage, and we are all players in each other's stories. It's so beautiful and alive, it's almost overwhelming." In his reflection, he also mentioned that a side benefit he was reaping from the project work was not only finding himself more in tune with his students, but with his family members as well. His assessment of student engagement and learning were that they had improved dramatically over previous semesters. "Extra credit assignments continue to pour in. (This is truly 'extra' credit, not replacement credit.) To me, this is a pretty reliable measure of student engagement. All I can ask for is engaged students."

Moon Rose summarized that everything she had articulated about the trees or the children, the stones and the plants felt like knowledge she had within her already, (Bohm's (1976) enfolded whole again) and that the process we worked through helped her to put voice to those things and to make them accessible in a

way they otherwise would not have been. Both of these practitioners mentioned working with the Tarot in their journal posts this week. I thought it significant that the journals were accessible to no one but me, and that teachers did not know about the other person's entry. One teacher mentioned that his classroom is not only a "landscape" as we practice the exercises with the natural world, but that it is also a "Tarot deck" when we practice intuiting the archetypes in our students. The other teacher, in her connection to a specific Tarot deck, mentioned her favorite story about a garden from the accompanying text.

Each one of us is made in a certain form that is perfect for bringing forth what we are--and none of us can be like the other. The beginning exercise with the spruce and the apple tree really connected me to the archetypal essence exercise through this metaphor.

The synchronicity and flow between the diligent work of these two teachers, worlds apart, one on the east coast another in the Great Lakes region, connected only by this project; was significant for me as a researcher this week. I remembered back to the introductory interviews when Peace Path had mentioned "flow" and "synchronicity" in her description of how she viewed *pedagogical love*. "We are building it right here," I thought. "We are in the flow and synchronicity of our common goal to improve the educational experience of the students in our care." We were building and sculpting with warmth.

Elemental warmth.

The final week of our project focused on the elements of warmth, creative potency, and the sculptural nature of the work in which we had been engaged. The observation and contemplation for the twelfth week would center on an entire class rather than on one individual student. Co-researchers were asked to imagine the class itself as a "being" with collective thoughts, desires, needs, and habits.

Finally, in sensing the substance of warmth that moved back and forth between students and teacher, the co-researchers were asked to consider how they could best utilize their sculptural, aesthetic, and artistic sensibilities in service of a conscious artistic communion with others. With active awareness, co-researchers were led to tune into the depth of their own intuition in order to discern appropriate, creative, authentic responses to classes and students.

Only one teacher posted reflections during the last week of the project. His contribution to the week was to connect the week's work to a project he had undertaken with his teaching partner in a previous school year where they had looked at and considered the class as a whole, as one entity with collective desires, thoughts, and needs. The idea of doing this was familiar to him and was something he had already been engaged in practicing. He ended the week with an overall assessment of how the work was manifesting in his own classroom. "Perhaps nowhere has the warmth taken on a more concrete form than on the creative endeavors to which it invariably leads."

Collection of Findings

Simplicity

In summarizing findings across all twelve weeks, I note a few main themes that continued to surface and grow throughout the duration of the project. The first was the constant surprise of the co-researchers at the simplicity, elegance, and efficacy of the practices. Sometimes described as "magic," teachers claimed to be "dumbfounded," and disbelieving at the results they were seeing after the smallest and simplest shifts in their focus. Developing an understanding that a

slight shift in attention and intention could make such a big difference for their students was an undeniable and unforgettable realization for the teachers.

Self and Other Inside and Out

During this study, teachers began with ideas about changes and improvements that they hoped to enact within the context of their classroom and between themselves and their students. With stated goals in mind, co-researchers executed a series of simple exercises to train their own inner capacities of perception. What resulted was a transformation and expansion of their perceptive abilities. With new perceptive awareness, teachers were able to observe their students in a more exacting way. As they did so, they brought the student inside of their conscious awareness, merging, in a certain sense, with that student.

Teachers noted much improved relationships with students, measurably improved student engagement, and a consequently higher level of measurable achievement. They were most surprised to notice that the biggest transformation was their own. Most thought it had to do with the inner shifts they had each made. Slight inward movement had produced major outward changes, not only in their classroom environments, but also in their general ability to be sensitive to others no matter who they were with, whether colleague, client, or family member. It was not only the inward flexibility that they began to notice, but also their ability to commune with students and others on a much deeper, more meaningful level than they had previously done. This growing ability helped them to become more aware of their own inner life and to develop better tools of self-observation as well.

What was outside served to sculpt the inner life of the teacher, and what was happening inside of the teacher, worked artistically upon students. Students seem to have noticed the shifts and responded in a positive way. Perhaps their recognition of these subtleties was not conscious, but as teachers began to see students with a more nuanced view, the students became more outwardly academically and socially engaged. One could argue that teachers simply noticed the engagement more carefully, but in either case, the circumstances became more satisfying for both the teacher and the student.

Imagination

While imagination is sometimes pushed aside or disregarded as something unreal, another theme that developed during this project was the sense that our inner life of imagination has the ability to accurately observe. Teachers who imagined their students or visualized them began to realize that this type of observation was just as accurate and truthful and perhaps more so, than a close in person observation. It was not a product of fantasy. Co-researchers repeatedly stated that this way of viewing phenomena provided them with new insights and sometimes even more detailed or deeper information than they were able to glean when in the presence of the person themselves. Such experiences were case studies in the power, potential, and value of the human being's imaginative faculty.

Effectiveness

Every teacher who participated in the exercises, even if just for one or two weeks or sporadically throughout the project, said that they had gained some

benefit from the work and were pleased and surprised at their achievements. Teachers also reported integration of the practices into their own routine work with students. One teacher said in the ninth week that he no longer had to think about it; that he was seeing archetypes in everyone and everything because the technique had become second nature for him. The work seemed to have a great impact on each one of the teachers that participated, even if they had not done so consistently or in depth. Reports from so many provided evidence that the techniques were indeed transferrable, relatable, and practical, for anyone who was willing to engage themselves in the process. Practitioners repeatedly expressed that the process itself was beneficial, effective, and transformative.

The Power of Twelve

I initially imagined the teacher-researchers as a community and gave them the possibility of interacting as such in the online environment, even if handicapped by certain project design decisions. Once I began to email our weekly content to them, I also realized that I was, in a certain way, sabotaging one aspect of the project in order to strengthen another. I could see immediately that I had reduced the need for practitioners to look at the website and that this was going to exact its toll on the interactions that were now possible between the co-researchers. If I was lucky, I would receive direct emails containing weekly reflections and I would still be able to carry on my relationship with the co-researchers, but their potential reliance on one another and their ability to offer support had been circumvented. No one was going to have time to send me their work and *then* open the website to see what might be going on there.

I was painfully aware of what this shift in procedure would mean but I was not really focused at that time on the unseen community that “magically” appeared during the data analysis phase of the project. As I reviewed the responses to the first two questions, I recognized that there had been a large number of students who directly benefitted from their teacher’s involvement in this project during the spring of 2012.

While there were twelve teachers who initially began the research only four continued posting consistently throughout the duration, depositing ideas and information into the website for each of the four weeks. Yet, as I soon began to note, every teacher who took up even one of the practices could be capable of bringing about transformation in their classroom, and students would be affected by any shift that their teacher might be able to realize.

In dialogue with teachers during our initial phone interviews, the subject of class size and student population was typically discussed. While deeply engaged in my data analysis, a sudden urge to add up those numbers occurred to me, revealing a remarkable fact. In total, the number of students of various ages and levels that were considered and observed more deeply than usual by their teachers during the course of this project was approximately 1,301 (Table 2). While I had not formally included students in the research, had not collected data from students, I had certainly managed to affect them. In fact, by working with their teachers, I may have managed to improve classroom relationships for over thirteen hundred students of various ages across the United States. This was a significant accomplishment of our research.

Table 2
Co-researchers Context and Student Population Data, Created by Author

Co-researcher Screen Name	Number and level of students	Type of Course	Amount of Time with students
Big Love	128 students Undergraduate level	Intro to Leadership Studies, a required course	Completed 2 half terms while participating in this study
Dream Force	800 students K—2 nd grade	Elementary music	30 minutes 1 x/week
Light Dove	17 students 1 st graders	All subjects Waldorf School	All day 5 days/week
Flame Bird	26 students 4 th graders	All subjects Private School	All day 5 days/week
Brave Earth	120 students junior/senior year high school level	Critical writing, media studies, and literature analysis based on the individual's place in society	Same schedule and number of students each day
Peace Path	24 students Undergraduate, pre-service teachers in training	Basic reading skills, a required course,	3 hours/week in classroom, 3 hours/week in field placement
Moon Rose	72 elementary students During the project conducted field work in 3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th grade classrooms 21 adult massage therapy students	Graduate pre-service teacher in training Massage therapy teacher	1 x week for 4 weeks in each of the 3 classrooms Weekly
Wild Shore	15 students 1 st graders	All subjects Waldorf School	All day 5 days/week
Air Song	14 students 1 st graders	All subjects Waldorf School	All day 5 days/week
Blue Dancer	18 students 3 rd /4 th graders	All subjects Waldorf School	All day 5 days/week
Smiling Stream	30 students Undergraduate level	Humanities through the arts	Online
Calm Canyon	16 students Graduate level	A cohort of adult learners together in their program and all courses for 22 months	7-8 hours per week Online
Total Affected Students	1301		

CHAPTER 6: CO-RESEARCHERS AND THEIR FINDINGS

The twelve weeks of the project and the impact of the four stages of increasingly deeper observation on the teachers as a group have been detailed in chapter five. Another important aspect of this project was its intention to be carried out by a community of co-researchers, not as a solitary exploration in my own classroom. As previously mentioned, four stalwart practitioners diligently worked with the exercises and reported back their findings throughout all twelve weeks of the process. These four practitioners worked together to breathe life into the exercises as they implemented them each week in classrooms filled with students.

As a teacher who places special value upon the relationships I try to build with my students, I applied the same philosophy to my work with the co-researchers who were gracious enough to field test every aspect of this project. Each of these individual researchers has a unique story and a rich context in which they practiced their craft. At the close of our research together, these teachers responded to questions in a follow-up survey where answers to scaled questions as well as narrative ones were sought. During the period of time that I was analyzing data and organizing findings and conclusions, which was about seven months after the co-researchers had completed the data collection phase, I contacted them again to inquire about their own findings and conclusions from having taken part in the study. Chapter six highlights each of these four individuals and their own reported summary findings and concluding statements at the close of our common research.

Brave Earth: Emancipation in the Belly of the Beast

Brave Earth is a public high school teacher who works with about 120 students every week. He was very candid in the opening interview where he described the factory-like vibe of his systems-centered public school. He confessed that early in his teaching career he considered leaving to look for another job, but that his genuine affection for the students he encountered kept him there because he wanted to do something good for them.

He was enthusiastic from the very beginning, long before the project ever began. He contacted me through a friend about a year before the study took place, wanting to be included. I gave him the minimal info I had at the time and asked if he would mind waiting possibly up to a year for me to organize and finish recruiting. His response was positive. We exchanged email addresses. When I contacted Brave Earth at the time I was ready to begin, he was still eager to take part. Brave Earth hardly missed a week of participation or even one posting throughout the project. He had only good and positive results to report and wanted to share with his colleagues about how important this work had been for him. Brave Earth stood out as a teacher who was passionate about improving classroom practice and was recognized as such both in our project as well as in his own public high school. Based on his reports, he was successful in effecting personal as well as professional change during the project. His perseverance and willingness to be consistent with the exercises each week afforded him many opportunities to experiment and adjust various practices to suit his situation.

At the close of the project, Brave Earth felt that he had been able to “tune in” to all of the students in his classes as a result of what he learned from the study. He said that the focus on specific exercises helped him to develop a stronger presence with his students. He described the mindfulness techniques presented in the research as “delightful,” noting that some practices in other programs have felt like homework and not “enticing.” In contrast to those, he said that he “looked forward to” and “enjoyed” these exercises. He also added “And they work!!”

By week nine Brave Earth was feeling a deep sense of transformation in action as a result of practicing warmth sculpture and reported a deeper understanding of the concept of pedagogical love. He was surprised about the many shifts he noticed not only in himself, but also in the people around him. He began to see that what he was doing inwardly had “real effects” on others. After the completion of the project, Brave Earth said that he had continued to use the plant and stone meditation several times with various students but that all of the techniques were becoming part of his regular teaching repertoire. He planned to review the entire program in the summer as he prepared for a new year of teaching. Brave Earth began to see more than just his student’s outward appearance through the new organs that he had developed, and he felt that his relationships with family and friends were also improved because of it.

When asked about other general feedback to improve the experience for teachers in the future, he thought that the creation of peer groups that could meet in person would be a natural development. While he described the online

component as “the most engaging” he had ever taken part in, he felt it might be difficult to do alone and online for some people. He suggested that the support of a face-to-face peer group could be helpful in maintaining and clarifying the practice, as well as providing a sounding board and place for asking questions. He felt that overall the project was “simple...creative...beautiful.”

Brave Earth, was one of the project’s most prolific responders but apologized to me at the end of the study for having “fallen behind.” By the record of responses that I kept, he missed very few posts. Brave Earth took our project very seriously. When he did not post an entry, I have a record of at least two or three emails in place of it. This practitioner had clearly distinguished himself both in our work together and in his own school community as a teacher who was interested in his students. As a result of his interest, the students were interested in him and the subjects that he taught.

He believed that all of his colleagues could benefit from the program and he had a list of six that he thought would love it. His suggestion was that only a certain kind of person would probably be open to it. If I could extrapolate from the kind of person Brave Earth had proven himself to be, a person with an authentic interest in students and their wellbeing would do very well with this type of process.

As I was writing up my own findings for the project, I contacted him to learn what he would like to share after several months had passed since our work together. He responded with two important findings. The first was an in depth discussion of his newly formed ideas around the concept of *pedagogical love*. He

stated that while he often previously used the word “love” to describe how he felt about his teaching, his job, and his children, that his participation in the project allowed him “to access deeper levels of love for students.” He expressed that through the project he “was able to integrate my Soul Mission—‘I Create Sacred Space’--into my profession. What once seemed somehow separate from my work life became the basis for it.” He stated that he felt “After 12 years, I am coming into the archetype; I am a *Teacher*.”

Brave Earth’s second finding began with the practice of awareness and cultivating attention, but also led him back to a consideration of love. When he talked about “attention” or the ability “to attend” he connected it with being present and meeting or serving the needs of another. He went further considering the word “tend,” meaning care, and the concept of the “tender,” the one who cares. When used as an adjective, he points out, tender means sensitive. “Tender-hearted, tenderness, compassion, love. I am reminded of Jack Kornfield's words ‘Compassion is a function of awareness. You cannot attain greater awareness without necessarily attaining greater compassion....’” In thinking about his work with students, he saw himself as a gardener “witnessing the miracle of what Gebser termed ‘the ever-present origin,’” which, I thought perhaps might have relationship to Goethe’s archetypal essence. He had vivid recall of the exercises we practiced together and described an experience of stretching

...the (artificial) boundaries of my own consciousness and felt my way into what seemed the morphic fields of my students. I recall both subtle and powerful feelings at play. And, most importantly, I recall the palpable warmth created in my relationships with those students on whom I focused.

He recalled a particular student and said of him, “I think (know) that on some deep level "M" felt the love, and it was just so miraculous and beautiful to see him go from sort of (affectedly) cold and detached to friendly and engaged.” According to Brave Earth, his experiences in the project were important in his work for many reasons. Perhaps the most significant finding and result of the research for Brave Earth had been in the connection he had been able to realize in marrying his life mission to his job. In doing so, he found a way to consecrate as “sacred,” the relational space and the work between him and his students.

Big Love: Opening to Possibilities

Big Love is a university instructor who teaches a required leadership studies course to undergraduate students. She is also a doctoral candidate deeply engaged in her own research on the role of humor in the classroom. Over the course of our work on the project, she ended one term and began another. Due to the timing of the term break, about 128 students benefitted from her developing observational skills during the course of this project.

In her introductory interview she made a point of noting how she feared that, for many of her students, she was seen as an obstacle to be overcome. In the beginning weeks of the project she mentioned on multiple occasions that students did not take her course by choice, something that lived strongly in her thoughts as we embarked upon this journey. She wanted her students to learn but felt frustrated and unable at times when they were uninterested and lacked enthusiasm for the material she presented. Her level of participation in the project was steady and strong and her enthusiasm for the positive changes that were occurring in her

classroom was clear. She was one of the teachers who reported having uncharacteristically engaged and harmoniously peaceful student groups during the project period.

At the completion of the project, Big Love felt that her participation had helped her to create a “more learning friendly environment” in her classroom. She appreciated having gained a tool that helped her to see students with what she termed “beginner’s mind” every time she encountered them. She was glad not to be “accumulating baggage or projecting my own biases on them.” The exercises helped Big Love become more “focused, centered, and calm” particularly in situations where she was frustrated or had developed a habit of being short with students. She felt that her new understanding and experience of pedagogical love had helped her to become more “firm and loving at the same time” and that she was now able to be “more available” to student’s needs as well as her own.

Big Love believed that her colleagues could absolutely benefit from practicing the techniques she learned in the study. She planned to incorporate them into her own teaching practice on a regular basis. From putting them to use, she saw students in a deeper way, even in classes where she had not been focused during the research. She described this as a process of “spilling over” and also felt that it had affected her relationships with students she had not seen for several terms because a number of them quite suddenly sought her out for advice. She was surprised by this event since they were not students she normally would have expected to do so.

Big Love offered the same advice as Brave Earth, which was that the program could benefit from adding an in-person component. She felt that practitioners might need a face-to-face colleague to compare notes with. She suggested that an in-person retreat setting to begin the program might help practitioners develop a connection with each other before the start of the research.

Big Love felt that having been part of this study was a “lovely, enlightening, and heart-opening experience” and she thanked me for allowing her to participate. Some months later I received an email communication from her that read in part, “A quick note about your research itself-- I think being a part of your study has completely changed my teaching ‘aura’ - if you will. Rapport with my students continues to grow and deepen, and I meet regularly with three other faculty for brief meditation in which we focus on being open and present with our students. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for the research you are doing. I am available to talk with you any time you wish.” Big Love had actually created the in-person group she had suggested might be helpful for ongoing support.

During the analysis and synthesis phase of the project, I contacted Big Love again to inquire about any other findings or conclusions she might offer from ongoing experiences in her classroom. Her general finding was that the experience of meditation proved to be of great value in her work with students. She felt that having worked through the process helped her in becoming “more open and accessible” to students and that made her a “better teacher” who is more willing to be vulnerable with her classes. At this time she was still working with

three other colleague once per week in a group that meditates on their students, she said, “This has proven to be a source of strength for all of us in terms of being receptive to the needs of our students, and a lovely respite in an otherwise hectic schedule.” After reviewing her research as a result of my email prompt, she also decided to set aside a portion of her weekly office hours for meditation on her students, in an attempt to improve the consistency of her practice.

Relative to the specific exercises she implemented, one continued to hold special value in her teaching.

One, in particular, that demonstrated to me the effectiveness of meditating with students in mind was the one in which we were to imagine the student growing younger and then growing older. It gave me an amazing perspective on my student and I was able to make a better connection with him. I have continued to do that meditation with students that I have a difficult time understanding; it helps me push beyond current issues and allows me to envision the student as more accessible and engaged.

She spoke of the project as a whole in retrospect and provided guidance for how she could imagine the work moving forward. “My hope for this contemplative practice, and your research in general, is that administrators allow for more of this to occur - instead of more committee work, etc. allowing time and space for meditation.” She ended her correspondence with a the closing, “I am so thankful to have been a part of this study, Nancy. I can't wait to see your work in print.” One year after the research had begun, I spoke with her again and she made a special point of telling me how her teaching continued to grow as a direct result of the work she did in this project.

Flame Bird: Creativity in the Classroom

Along with his teaching partner, Flame Bird teaches fourth grade in a private school to a class of 26 students. He tried to interest his partner in the research before our initial phone conversation but with many other pressing duties, his partner was unable to find the time to devote to the project. Flame Bird is also a doctoral student planning an action research inquiry about creative and child-centered classrooms using his own classroom as the focus of his dissertation.

Flame Bird was an enthusiastic and passionate teacher. He shared several ideas and veins of inquiry during our work together. Even in our introductory phone conversation, he openly shared about various projects and techniques he was using to interest his students in learning.

The relationship between him and his teaching partner was often mentioned during our work. The two work together in the same classroom to build curriculum and work with students in what seems a mutually supportive arrangement. They consult and communicate about the students on a daily basis. His eagerness around that partnership reminded me of the comments of another co-researcher who said that working in her classroom all day with first graders was such an isolating experience. The model in Flame Bird's school could have eliminated one of that teacher's main reported difficulties. He spoke often of his teaching partner in our opening conversation. Adult teaching partners certainly require close alignment in nearly every aspect of their philosophy and practice to be successful. The two seemed to be in agreement with their ideas for innovation

and creativity but sometimes felt isolated from other colleagues who were less enthusiastic about change.

By the end of the inquiry, Flame Bird was surprised to learn that through his practice of the exercises, he and his teaching partner, while still aligned, were showing marked differences in how they saw students in the classroom. In fact, he reported that while he and his partner were looking at the same child, the same situation, the same circumstance, they were seeing different things or seeing things in different ways. Flame Bird felt that, as a result of his consistent practice of project exercises, he could now “see” beyond what was in front of him to an unseen reality that his partner just could not access.

Flame Bird reported that he met the goal he had set for the project of engaging more closely with his students and that he now had a greater awareness of their social and emotional needs. He felt that it was difficult for him to engage in the techniques once his day began, still, he thought they caused him to become “...more mindful of the need to pause throughout the day to see my students in a different way.” He believed that his understanding of pedagogical love had developed further over the course of the research and that its development had planted a seed for the future. Because he had regularly attended to the exercises during the project, they had become a habit for him and by the completion of the project he considered them “...part of my pedagogical approach.”

Flame Bird spoke to me in the introductory interview about disappointment with some of his colleagues who were unwilling to innovate and work creatively to find new methods of meeting children’s needs. When he was

later asked if he thought his colleagues might benefit from trying the exercises in this program, his response echoed the disappointment he shared in our earlier discussion. He felt that of course they would benefit, but only if they were open to trying. This comment seemed to align with Brave Earth's idea when he suggested that only a certain type of person with a specific interest in working more closely with students would be able to freely engage in this type of program.

Flame Bird sent me an email around the tenth week of the study. He offered a number of ideas for improving the online components of the project and making it easier for teachers to respond in a timely way. This type of communication was always invited and welcome from co-researchers, and I did my best to heed the advice given whenever I received it. He revealed at that time that he originally misunderstood the amount of time required of co-researchers each week, thinking it would be 5-10 minutes per week, rather than the stated 5-10 minutes per day. Of course, he found that it took longer than he had realized, perhaps it even took longer than I had predicted given some of the technological issues he encountered. Some of these were problems with the website, such as a response space being "closed" when he tried to post, or a particular week not appearing on the screen when he logged in to review the exercises. These were small fixes, that after working with the site for a period of time, I was able to completely resolve them. I was grateful for his input but was concerned that his experience might have been frustrating. He also suggested that if exercises were posted on Friday afternoon rather than on Sunday evening, the busy teacher would be better able to spend time over the weekend looking at what would be

expected for the week. This pointed to a mistake I made in neglecting to consider the needs of the other teachers. As a classroom teacher myself, I too, needed the weekend to work with the new content and get it loaded onto the site. In thinking from my own perspective rather than from that of my co-researchers I inadvertently created an obstacle for them to overcome. By week ten, there was little time to remedy that problem, but I did post as early in the weekend as possible for the last two weeks.

Due in part to the suggestions of Flame Bird earlier in the project, I began to offer the opportunity for co-researchers to receive and submit exercises by email. While I thought this was a good suggestion for improving participation, and while others commented about how much easier it would now be to respond, no one but Flame Bird ever took advantage of this method.

Overall, Flame Bird felt that participating in the project was “an enlightening experience.” When I contacted him several months later to inquire about his digested impressions and personal findings from his own implementation of the exercises. His response related another nuance of the theme of *time* that I have explored in chapter eight.

I guess the main theme I took away from the study was the importance of the element of time, however, not in the way we usually think about time in relation to schooling, but time in a human sense; not time that is in service to predetermined schedules, but time that allows and enables human interaction; warmth, if you will. To enact this idea, an educator must be prepared to counter decades of time being framed by the class bell rather than time (its use and conception) being determined by the needs of the students. Education must focus on human interactions rather than overarching standardizations.

Flame Bird expressed his discovery that the kind of education he was interested in providing to his students would need time to develop a relationship with the students and time to devote for the student's own explorations in learning. His mistrust of the typical standardized assessment model to provide appropriate, meaningful, and lasting education was clearly stated. The answer for Flame Bird resided in the relationship between his students and their teacher and this relationship needed time for nurturing and warmth to develop.

Moon Rose: Massaging Education

Moon Rose is a pre-service Waldorf teacher, which means she is in the last stages of her training prior to conducting her student teaching assignments. During this project she was engaged in the fieldwork phase of her training program. She spent one day a week for twelve weeks, working with classes from third to fifth grade for four weeks each. This schedule correlated nicely to our project, as she spent round one of the four exercises with grade 5, round two with grade 3, and round three with grade 4. She was diligent in her practice and in posting reflections and results for the study. She posed several honest questions about her own ability to understand or carry out specific exercises but she was always able to let go and allow herself to try.

Moon Rose provided a unique perspective to the research because along with her Waldorf work, Moon Rose is also a massage therapist and an instructor of adults at a massage therapy school. She was able to apply many of the techniques we practiced in the project to students in both environments. She was already practiced at observing her adult students, particularly their physicality as

she provided feedback on their massage techniques. I found her observations mature and detailed. She expressed a great deal of self-awareness about aspects of her teaching that she hoped to overcome in order to work more effectively with children. She took her research in the project seriously, posting diligently in her journal over all twelve weeks, in addition to posts on all of the exercises and survey questions. As a result of her dedication and openness to new ideas, she made many self-discoveries over the course of the twelve weeks.

Her other unique contribution to the study came as a result of the fact that she was also simultaneously engaged in taking a contemplative practice course I was teaching online. She commented about how taking the course as well as engaging in the action research was such an informative process and provided her with a clear picture of how to practically implement all that she was learning from both endeavors. During the contemplative course, Moon Rose was part of a flourishing online community of Waldorf educators who worked together in support of their collective goals. Part of the contemplative course requirement was to provide substantive comment on the postings of at least two other students during each week. Moon Rose seemed to go far beyond the requirement in both environments. She was an active presence online in the course and she brought that same intention and type of energy to the Warmth Sculpture Project. One or two others attempted to engage with her and at times they were able to create a bit of flow and communion, but her noticeable community organizing efforts largely stood alone.

Her excellent post-project feedback informed me about the experience of a Waldorf teacher in training and how valuable the exercises could be for them. In her training program, Moon Rose felt that she had not received this same sort of concrete step-by-step instruction about connecting to individual students or student groups. This study fulfilled that professional goal for her. She felt that the techniques in the study were “simple and effective” at showing her how to enter into relationship with any student she might encounter. She reported that each set of exercises “built naturally upon previous weeks.” She preferred the format of the first eight weeks to that of the last four. In those last weeks, she missed being able to post about her own capacity building questions and self-observations in addition to the student centered practice. To complicate matters, she misunderstood the last four week’s online structure and thought that she had to open and read the emails in order to find the weekly assignments, which caused her to almost double the time she spent engaged with the technology.

As a result of her participation in the project, Moon Rose felt that her understanding of pedagogical love had developed and transformed. Before the study, she felt “vague” about what she should be calling *love* in relationship to students. From her research during this study, she was able to recognize it “just like any other warm emotional regard for another human being, but it is informed by the intention of helping the student to develop, through the learning process, toward the potentials that they reveal to you.”

Moon Rose intends to incorporate what she learned in this study into her teaching approach, but also said that she will likely use the “process of object,

image, activity, agency whenever I need deeper insight into a situation regardless of whether or not it's related to teaching." She felt that her "primary take away" with regard to teaching was the first step in the process, of observing with new eyes and cultivating a fresh first impression in every meeting. She reiterated the value of having taken the online contemplative course in addition to having participated in this research study at the same time. Moon Rose felt that from participating in both, that she had received an "integral piece of the puzzle" with regard to her Waldorf teacher training. She felt strongly that some form of these techniques should be included as a part of that program.

Moon Rose, who seemed to have no initial problems navigating the website, was a co-researcher who did not really appreciate the email options for receiving exercises or submitting posts. As she mentioned this, I recalled that she was the teacher who made so many attempts at social connection in the online environment. She wanted the format for connection, not the solitary comfort or ease of technology. She also had some suggestions for making the program more immediately accessible or comprehensible to people in many contexts by using some familiar words as a title such as, "Warmth Sculpture: what can be learned through contemplative student observation and through developing care and concern within the pedagogical relationship." She visited a web page where I had posted some additional writings and noted there a question I asked, "How can teachers and children build authentic relationships guided by pedagogical love?" She said that this question was an accessible and informative statement and made clear the purpose of the study. She closed her communication by saying, "I am

grateful to you for sharing your direct insights into how to make teaching an extension of a contemplative and love guided life,” providing another possible title.

The four co-researchers highlighted in this chapter embodied the practice of pedagogical love during the period of our study. They enacted this practice diligently in their classrooms but also began to recognize how the practice “spills over” into involvement with others, like family, friends, and co-workers. Flame Bird recognized the fact that *time* was a primary factor needed to bring forth such action. The tools they were able to develop during the project helped each of them to carry on their warmth experiments and love investigations after the formal twelve-week research period. Big Love and Brave Earth both expressed the desire to have face-to-face collegueship as they worked through exercises like the ones from this project. Big Love created just that with three other university colleagues. At his student’s request, Brave Earth began hosting after school conversations with kids in his public high school because they wanted to gather with him to discuss the world. Moon Rose found through her research, a way to bring contemplation and love to her newly forming teaching practice as well as to her work with adults in the massage school. The many ideas for improvement and future application of the research suggested by these teachers opened my own thinking about the possible implications of the work we had done together.

CHAPTER 7: THE AMAZING “DROP OUTS”

Introduction - Attrition Issues

As the project began, some co-researchers were able to find their way around the online environment easily, while others seemed to be caught in a stream of technological frustration causing the tasks to become more time-consuming than necessary. I provided hours of support to specific co-researchers trying to help them negotiate the online terrain. For some teachers, this initial time spent working through site logistics was helpful and we were able to overcome the challenges, but other teachers never seemed to find a way to feel comfortable in this medium.

To solve some of the difficulties with technology, already in the second week, exercises were emailed to co-researchers as attachments, in addition to being posted online. By receiving the exercises all in one document, teachers could quickly and easily see all the exercises and questions for the week, but it also meant that they did not have to log in to the website to access this information. The email receipt of exercises would be helpful to them in that it could save time, and that was a primary concern for everyone; but it began to take a toll right away on the interactions between and among the practitioners. While teachers generally responded positively to this requested change, their responses did not increase as a result of it.

In trying to simplify and increase the number of responses to the weekly efficacy survey, a set of weekly measures of improvement with Likert scale (Appendix L) and narrative response possibilities, I ensured that it could be

accessed in two different ways. The website itself had a survey function that included some helpful analytics to accompany the results. This was the primary survey collection method as we gauged weekly usefulness as well as efficacy of the exercises. The second collection method was a live link typed onto the email attachment that redirected researchers to an identical version of the survey on another site that hosted only the survey as opposed to any other project posting spaces. This way, after engaging in the practices for the week, a practitioner could open the attachment, click on that link, and it would automatically open their browser and take them to the survey page where they could participate in the brief survey. No teachers took advantage of that link over the course of the study, but a few used the survey function on the website each week.

When the data collection phase of the project was complete, I realized that due to attrition among the co-researchers, I needed to assess the number, level, and volume of responses I actually had collected for each week. I organized a visual representation of postings and journal entries through the creation of a Project Participation Tracking Chart (Appendix M, Table L1). Within boxes for each of the twelve weeks, five possible ways co-researchers could participate in the project were indicated; (a) observation post, (b) contemplative exercise post, (c) journal entry, (d) survey response, and (e) email. For each co-researcher, an “X” or a number, when there were multiple interactions in one category, noted their participation for that week. This chart revealed a clear picture of who had dropped out and in what timeframe this had occurred for each person. In reviewing the chart, I could see that of the twelve teachers who completed the

initial phone interviews, only four of them consistently posted their findings throughout the twelve weeks.

I formulated many theories about why people fell away. There were only two dropouts with clearly stated reasons for not carrying through with the project. I assumed that the biggest problems were related to both technology and of course, time. One of the codes that emerged in the analysis process revealed the many technological questions asked by teachers who had difficulty posting, entering the site, or locating needed online resources. Based on all of these questions, it seemed to me that teachers found the site cumbersome. I knew that to avoid the site, some of them asked for emailed copies of the exercises and that this led to circumvention of the project's community aspect. By the end of the project it seemed clear that active teachers wanted to follow through with their posting, deposit the info online, and get out quickly. There was not a clear sense of closing or ending but rather a "fizzle" or slow fade out. Along with many other assumptions I made from the seeming lack of energy at the project's end, was that they were finished with the ideas of the Warmth Sculpture Project and did not expect further communication from me on the subject.

Once project data had been reviewed, I listened again through the initial phone interviews. I could hear how enthusiastic each person had been at the project's outset. To determine if something in the project's design discouraged teachers from achieving the goals articulated in those conversations, I decided to contact the dropouts again. I accepted failure in the area of retention but wanted to learn more about how I could improve this aspect of a possible future program.

I contacted each dropout by email and asked to set up a phone conversation. All but one responded to my communication. Each one expressed warm greetings and eagerness to connect again. In discussing the circumstances that lead to their dropping out of the project, along with a few suggestions for making the project easier for teachers to access, I learned about some unexpected ways that the research had helped teachers in their classrooms. The content of these follow up conversations has been valuable in discovering how the techniques used in this study worked for teaching practitioners over the twelve week process.

While working with the practitioners as I expected them to be working with their students, I realized that each of the individuals taking part in this research brought something unique and different to our group. My greatest struggle in the writing process was leaving out so many of their interesting responses and unique stories. In the following section, I honor the co-researchers who took part in the project on any level and I include a brief sketch of the characteristics and contributions of each unique practitioner, along with a summary of those enlightening post-project conversations.

Waldorf Women

Having added Waldorf teachers to the co-researcher group, I formulated a group of new sub-questions related specifically to Waldorf educators in order to better inform my understanding of their training needs in my role as Director of a Waldorf training program. Four co-researchers who identified themselves as teachers in a Waldorf School agreed to take part in the project. In turn, each of

them eventually dropped away. I devised a set of five questions to use as prompts in a conversation with these teachers. I was primarily interested in their reasons for dropping out of the project, and to know whether there was something I could have done to help them continue. I also wanted to know whether they had been able to implement any of the practices from the research in an ongoing way and whether or not the overall project had any effect on the way they thought about or worked with their students.

So Long Air Song

Air Song was filled with humor from our very first phone encounter. She loved her screen name because she said it described both her sanguine nature and her deep love of singing. She was teaching a lively first grade of 14 that included many energetic boys. She was expected by her colleagues and by the parents of her students to carry the children in a meditative way, but like many new Waldorf teachers, she was struggling to find out what that really meant. She was looking for a method to create a practice of building relationships. Air Song participated in the project during the first three weeks and posted insightful reflections as she began working with the exercises. In week four she sent me an email explaining how much easier it would now be to access weekly exercises through email. After that, though I continued sending her the exercises on email, I did not hear from Air Song again until I contacted her for the post-study interview.

Air Song attributed her dropping out to a combination of several factors. One was her “hard time being really organized.” She described other aspects of her personal and professional life that suffered from this trait. The second was

that she had trouble with the website and found it “cumbersome.” She noted that it was easier for her to print out the exercises each week and have hard copies in front of her. In her difficulty with the website, she felt she had gotten “behind” and “under the wave” rather than “riding it,” which was discouraging for her. She was clear that such things tend to be a theme in her life, including what she described as an issue with “discipline of inner work.” In addition to the organizational and self-discipline that she mentioned, her life had taken an unexpected twist during the project period when she became involved in a relationship, which took a lot of time and energy. She agreed that if we had set up the project to be done over email that it could have seemed more “doable” because the website pages would not print in a useable form. Once we did begin the emailing of exercises, she already felt “out of it” and did not endeavor to pick up again. We discussed possible formats for people who were working at a distance and how community and conversation could take place with the other teachers if we only used an email delivery. She had the idea of sending exercised by email but hosting a website that had only one discussion space, in a chat or blog form, where people could log in and discuss that week’s topic. She mentioned the difficulty she was having with consistency in her own Waldorf teacher meditative work. Since she was a beginning practitioner, she indicated a sense of overwhelm at the depth of some of the exercises stating, “Yea, that was definitely further than I’ve taken things before.” She emphasized that she thought the exercises could be “really important and really valuable” and that “people could really benefit and I could really benefit too, from staying more focused,”

but that her lack of discipline got in the way of implementing the exercises during all twelve weeks. Because of this difficulty, she had been unable to integrate the exercises into her own practice. She then confided that, “I obviously need it.” She felt much more ready this year to stay focused and stated that she would actually like to try it again, assuming a simplified structure, if there should ever be the opportunity.

Bye Bye Blue Dancer

Blue Dancer was a Waldorf teacher of some experience who was engaged in teaching a combined 3rd/4th grade of 18 students. She was serious about her practice and particularly concerned about how the confidentiality of her students and families would be maintained when she described children or situations, if teachers from her area were involved in the study. We discussed in depth before the initial phone interview exactly how this would be solved by use of screen names for teachers and pseudonyms for students. She felt satisfied with the protocol, signed her consent forms, and scheduled a phone call. In our conversation, Blue Dancer indicated that she had a difficult time conceptualizing how the project would proceed including the types of exercises we would be doing. She seemed guarded and kept her answers short. At the end of our conversation, when asked about any further concerns, two new facts emerged. At this point in the interview, she was somehow under the impression that practitioners would share their reflections on the exercises during group conference calls. Her initial concerns of confidentiality related to her distinctive

accent, and her assumption that area teachers would immediately identify her from it.

She also confided that, due to her long history as a teacher of grade school students, and in addition she was not a native English speaker, she worried about being able to understand or participate at an appropriate level in conversation with “university professors” on our subject matter. I found Blue Dancer to be articulate and knowledgeable. In addition, she was clear about how her practices and methods worked for her but seemed very open to self-improvement. I reassured her that there would, in a certain way, be “several different languages” but as we worked together to build online community through discussion of concepts and descriptions of our work, that we would be able to develop a common language. I looked forward to what this experienced teacher could bring to all of us.

Blue Dancer posted an introduction in her profile on the website. She told us that she viewed the project as an opportunity to create a regular schedule of contemplative practice and to learn a new set of contemplative exercises for use in the classroom. A few more technological problems in the first week resulted in my receiving 4 emails from her. She never did post reflections on the website.

I sent three emails to follow up with her after the project had ended. They all went unanswered. Ironically, the weekend that I was preparing my first draft of this document for submission, I was supposed to participate in a conference that would have taken me to the small school where Blue Dancer teaches. If not for the necessary research write up, I would have undoubtedly met Blue Dancer, giving me the chance to discuss the research project with her face-to-face.

Light Dove Flies Away

Light Dove was new to teaching as well as new to the Waldorf classroom. During the time of the study, she had a class of 17 first graders. She initially contacted me to find out whether participating in the study might help sustain her in this difficult work. She was open to various contemplative methods and practiced yoga regularly. She had an interest in Steiner, but had not studied his work in depth. She confided in one of her emails that she found

Steiner, for the most part, well, just too darned Germanic! While fascinating to read and discuss his cosmology when I had no obligations other than taking a Waldorf course, I have no energy at present to deal with the complexities of his esoteric world view.

She was a perfect candidate for this research as a teacher with contemplative experience, but with no steady method of applying the experience through practical application in the classroom.

Light Dove began wonderfully able to navigate the website, find and set up her journal, and post observations in the first week. By the second week she fell silent and though I continued to send her the email exercises and prompted her to “jump in anywhere” she did not continue submitting her reflections. She shared her difficulties with me when we spoke during our follow-up conversation. She was new to Waldorf but also new to teaching. Her lesson planning was largely done on the weekends since she was so dreadfully tired at night. She described the drained feeling well known to Waldorf teachers who have worked with a class of children younger than the age of nine. Light Dove had simply been bone tired during too much of her first grade year in order to take on any additional responsibilities. Additionally, she was still in the midst of her training

and had to travel several weeks during the school year to take classes for certification. She was clear that there was nothing I could have done to help her continue in the project other than teaching her class for a few periods a week so that she could have a nap. Peppered into the story of how personally and professionally difficult her year had been, she repeatedly referred to the research, “I’m confident that it would have been hugely valuable” and “It could have quite possibly made my life easier.”

She clearly had an interest in the research and even though she claimed not to have really taken up the exercises formally, I found that she was certainly working with the principles contained in the findings. She wanted me to know that she had no doubt that “mental or spiritual shift can make a real change.” While it was not directly related to the research in this project, she shared a story with me about a one of her students who had been pigeonholed by class parents as a troublemaker. Other children did not treat the boy well as a result of it. One evening last year she held a parent meeting where four parents shared an introduction to their child for the other parents. The boy’s father was eloquent in his descriptions and many in the room were visibly moved. The next day on the playground, Light Dove witnessed her children interacting with the boy in a completely different way than they had previously done. She believes that this was as a result of a shifting dynamic in the parents.

Light Dove was interested in accessing all the files that contained the project exercises again and wanted to begin looking at them to bring ideas about child study to her faculty. In her first year at the school, she had been able to

institute a brief child study at the beginning of each weekly meeting where there had been none before. Light Dove believed that her school could really benefit from a workshop or training in the techniques used in the study and felt that I would have a “traveling gig” when I was done with the writing. The most helpful thing I did for her during the research phase was to send exercises on email. She needed them coming to her rather than her having to initiate the process of looking on a website each week. While Light Dove did not post after the first week of the project, she said that she did keep reading the exercises sent to her on email and loved them. She felt that she was more able this year to digest some of the practices and perhaps could begin using them now.

Wild Shore No More

Wild Shore was teaching a “boisterous,” “boy-heavy” class of 15 first graders during the period of this study. She began with a strong start, posting in the orientation, week one, and several posts in week two. Skipping week three and four, she posted again in week five but had no online presence after that time. Wild Shore had been teaching for several years but was looking for a way to build a more supportive classroom community. Her experience in older grades seemed to have been a pleasant one but she felt that teaching in the first grade required something entirely different from her as the teacher.

In our follow-up conversation, she reflected on the process. “The project was amazing, brilliant, and beautiful.” She regretted not having recognized how difficult it would be to integrate “one more thing” into her life. Like many Waldorf first grade teachers, she suffered the draining quality of working with

little ones and just “couldn’t wake up,” which was uncharacteristic of her typical morning routine. She found it difficult to form the new habit of including these exercises in her regular schedule. She felt she had gotten off to a “bad start” by missing the phone calls. This was a second teacher who thought that group phone calls were a part of the weekly discussion component. As it turned out, both of those teachers taught in the same school. I am uncertain whether or not they discussed the project with each other, but they were the only two co-researchers with this idea. Wild Shore felt that the website was “well designed, beautifully done with the visuals, and the way things were set up.” She did not feel the website had any part in her problems of participation. Her helpful suggestions included planting the seeds of the project with teachers in the summer, maybe a workshop or training at that time and then some active follow up during the school year to help them periodically. Wild Shore said that even though she never posted after the first few weeks, she continued to read the weekly emails and to work with the exercises. In the new school year she was still thinking about them and was actively working with the concept of creating warmth in the classroom “as a dimensional entity.” She continues to study and research this concept in her work with students. She said that she would “love to try again” and added, “It’s a great gift that you’ve put together there.”

Wild Shore said that her involvement in this project definitely changed the way she thinks about and works with her students. She referenced Steiner’s meditation practices as something she knows about and has worked with but felt the exercises in this project were “so up to date” in contrast to Steiner’s model.

She liked the observational methods, the emphasis on the quality of attention and intention, and found these ideas to be a “powerful force” in her work. She felt that her school should take up the practices as a group and said that if I wrote a book or conducted courses or a workshop she believed that her faculty would be enthusiastic about taking up these techniques as a study in the coming year. She planned to bring this to them as an idea for the future.

The University Professors and the Public School Teacher

Four university professors also joined me for this journey of discovery. Two of them were online instructors who dropped out in the first few weeks of the project. One continued with the project throughout the entire twelve weeks, and the fourth professor, a former Waldorf educator, participated through week five.

Peace Path Pulls the Plug

Peace Path’s university program for teachers in training gives them instructional strategies toward their state’s reading curriculum. She meets with students for 3 hours in the classroom each week and then during a second meeting during the week works with them on site at an elementary school, where they practice their knowledge with the children. Peace Path is a thoughtful and conscientious educator. Having previously been a Waldorf teacher, she has had experience with contemplative education. Her demeanor is deep and soulful and one can readily imagine her patient and calm manner in the classroom—another well-chosen screen name. Peace Path insisted upon participating in this study. I initially told her that I thought she was already well practiced at her own brand of

contemplative education and that she would find this study elementary. She continued to insist and I finally let her join.

She posted her introduction, along with responses to the first, third, and fourth week exercises. Months later, she gave me her fifth week's journal entry that she had forgotten to send. She liked the email method better than finding her way on the website but she never actually emailed me any responses. I had the opportunity to sit down with her in person for the follow up conversation where she revealed new facts about her participation in the project and her practice of the exercises.

In general, Peace Path found the pace of the exercises too fast. As a self-characterized "phlegmatic" she wanted to move much more slowly than one set of exercises per week. She suggested a rhythm of 2-4 weeks working on one step. This brought forth the idea that every person has their own natural rhythms with which they are comfortable proceeding. I recognized the artificial construct of the one exercise per week model I was putting forward, but this was because I see the steps in the process unfolding much more quickly, perhaps even within a few minutes or even seconds. It had never occurred to me that *more* time might be needed. Because Peace Path could not "keep up" she began to feel bad and finally dropped out. She also found it difficult to put intimate details about her inner life on a screen and was hesitant about the technology aspect of the project. She felt "shy" and "exposed."

While she did not keep up with the exercises after she stopped participating, she did prefer the email format to the website. She also returned to

thinking about the exercises as new groups of students have arrived in her classroom last year and this year. She has been thinking about “revisiting” the exercises and perhaps applying them in her new group. She particularly loved Zajonc’s bell meditation provided for teachers in one of the weeks, and also bought his contemplative practice book, which she keeps on her nightstand. The biggest revelation for Peace Path was the change in the way she now thought about and worked with her adult university students. Through her weeks of research in the project she began to realize that she could “carry adult students the same way” as she previously carried her young elementary aged Waldorf students. She thought that the magnitude of this revelation and responsibility to these students as “human souls” involved in “karmic meetings” had also scared her off from continuing in the project.

She normally takes pictures of her students so that she can remember them when grading papers. As a result of her research in the project, she said that she was now starting to pay closer attention to “gesture.” She felt that to improve the project and her participation in something like it that there would have to be an in-person group of colleagues working together. She said,

If we had something like this on my college campus, I know I wouldn’t be alone, you should do that, a professional development program. If you came in and we spend six to eight hours with you, there are fellowships for teachers to participate in things like that.

She closed the conversation by reiterating her overall assessment of her experience of the project, “It helped; it helped. It opened things up for me. (But it didn’t help my will).” And then we laughed and laughed.

The connections I made with teaching colleagues working in the public school systems were very important to the project because of the difficult environment that teachers and students find themselves in within that model of education. One of those teachers was a lower elementary school music teacher who worked with an incredible 800 students every week.

Dream Force Changes Course

Along with her undergraduate music education degree and her teaching licensure, Dream Force had completed the Waldorf training program and a Master of Arts in Education with a Waldorf emphasis. Her purpose in seeking out the Waldorf program was not to change schools or to become a Waldorf teacher, but to grow and develop as an educator so that she could connect with her students in a deeper way. She wanted to participate in the project because she really cared about her students and hoped to be the best teacher she could be. Dream Force posted an insightful introduction during the orientation phase of the project where she characterized herself as someone who wanted to “bring a new light of teaching with love and spirituality to public education.” She described part of her own meditative practice as the time when she is “engaged in music.”

Dream Force never posted any of her observations or set up her online journal. At the close of the project I contacted her to schedule a follow up conversation and she responded enthusiastically by email. I emailed several more times to connect by phone but we never did. She mentioned in an email that her reasons for disengaging from the research should not be taken as a negative reflection on the project. She stated that it was her own “personal life...that got in

the way.” She added that, “the practices that the project implemented in my teaching have made a large difference in my outlook on my students.” She felt the work of the project was “immensely important” and inspirational for those in the teaching profession.

The Online Teachers

I had high hopes for how the exercises presented in this project could assist online educators to build warmth even through a technological interface. I received emails from two online teachers hoping to become participants in the research. When interviewed, both mentioned wishing to be more mindful in the unique online environment. They discussed the difficulty with establishing such a practice when they had never seen or met their students. Since I had never seen or met either of them, I began to work with them in the way that I imagined they could work with their own students. I created mental pictures and began to formulate a number of impressions about each of them. Led by the weekly exercises, I focused on wishing them well and imagining them in a flourishing environment where they were able to become closer to students as I tried to help them navigate the steps of the project. I discussed my method with one of these teachers having difficulty imagining how to begin the exercises from the very first week. I gave her several examples of what I thought she could implement with her own students.

Eventually, both of these teachers said they were unable to engage fully in the online environment of the project. Both contacted me early on to express regret that they had to discontinue their involvement in the study. They were the

only two “drop outs” to contact me with a formal withdrawal. I had extensive communications with each one and tried to work through every objection or issue over which I had control.

While both Calm Canyon and Smiling Stream emailed me numerous times, one of them even as far into the project as the 11th week, between them a total of only 5 postings appeared on the website. They each reported that since they were teachers of 100% online asynchronous courses, the exercises seemed more difficult. Nevertheless, there were 5 postings to consider along with a dozen or so emails to inform the data collection of the project.

The Sweet Dream of Smiling Stream

Smiling Stream contacted me after seeing my online post requesting interested participants to contact me. She seemed enthusiastic during our phone interview, during which I realized that I had met Smiling Stream once before but could barely recall her. Her voice is distinctive but her names (both first and last) had changed. She emailed me numerous times providing information about her life and pursuits, and perhaps she was there reading the posts of others, but she posted very few times. One email I received from her reported her intention of "pulling out" of the project – sometime during week 3, but then, in that same email, she reconsidered and stated that she expected us to still be communicating so that I would not be short any co-researchers. It appeared that she did not really *want* to quit, but also, something was holding her back from full participation. I continued to send the emailed exercises to Smiling Stream throughout the 12 weeks but she did not post on the site after week three. I received another email

in week 11 suggesting that she would shortly be taking up the practices again, but as far as I know, she never did. She provided many reasons why participation was not possible - even while mentioning that a desire to participate still remained.

I contacted Smiling Stream for a follow up conversation about six months after the project had finished. She agreed to answer my five questions by email. She left the project because she did not feel it applied to online teaching. She felt that a project geared specifically and exclusively for the online environment might be an avenue for follow up research. She felt the website was “extremely busy” and that there were too many expectations of teachers each week. She was not able to use any of the practices in an ongoing manner nor did her involvement in the project change the way she thought about or worked with her students. She could see the focus of the project as useful especially for teachers “without a disciplined and serious spiritual practice,” where she felt the study would carry the most potential.

The Curious Case of Calm Canyon

The first online teacher to join the study taught courses conducted asynchronously over 7-8 hours per week to graduate students. I made the assumption for both online instructors that the least of their problems would be navigation through the website as they would likely be comfortable in an online format. From the beginning, Calm Canyon was extremely confused by the website and had no idea how, where, or what to post. She seemed to have trouble finding the box for her password, which no other co-researcher ever reported to

me. Given her immediate technological difficulties, she wanted to withdraw from the study right away because she did not have time to find her way around the site.

In her initial interview, she had been so clear about her interest in mindfulness, action research, and engaging her adult graduate students in some of the project's practices.

Calm Canyon had a seemingly frantic tone right from the start. She seemed to have difficulty understanding the web site and the pages and details that I walked her through during the phone interview. She clearly had a lot of other things on her mind. The difficult communication could have been related to the fact that English was not her first language, yet I was alert to a stressful tone or upset of some kind.

I saw immediately in the 3-day period I allowed for website orientation, that Calm Canyon had not been able to find or follow the directions posted in the resources section, nor had she been able to post her introduction to the group in the designated area. I went onto the site and provided everyone with a link to what she had written in her profile, so that they would be able to respond and relate to her. At the end of the first week I received an email from her. Instead of posting her response to the first week's exercises, she wrote,

Dear Nancy,
I'm sorry but this project takes much more time and energy than I thought and understood it would, and I don't see the time I have to fully commit.
I apologize,
Calm Canyon

Over the next several days I emailed back and forth with her to suggest adjustments that could make participation easier given the difficulties she was

having. Once inside the site, she then had difficulty in finding her journal for posting reflections. I decided that since I was particularly interested in how these exercises would work for her as an online teacher, her value to the study was high, so I offered her the option of communicating back and forth with me through email and then she could avoid the site altogether. I knew that this would mean she was out of the group discussions and that she would not be able to engage or reflect with the other teachers based on what they might be sharing. Nevertheless, both she and I were willing to customize the project to allow for as much data gathering and information generation as possible from her unique perspective.

In order to capture her thoughts on the weekly efficacy survey, I created survey collector and provided her with a link that would take her directly to the questions. Working out all of these special logistics with her took us well into week three of the project. She emailed back and forth with me several times but had still not responded to any but the first contemplative exercise where we chose three of our students and consciously wished them well. Her response, the one and only post she made during the project's duration, detailed her difficulties in engaging in the practice.

While I can quite easily imagine in my head who are the “easy,” “puzzling” and “difficult” find it impossible to imagine them and send them “vibes” of any kind given the fact that they are all on-line students and I barely have an image of them from a small picture I asked them to send few months ago.

Since the other active teachers were responding positively to the exercises and were posting rich reflections on their experiences, I was not sure how to proceed with Calm Canyon. I responded to her with some follow up questions

and mentioned the idea of “seeing” with an organ other than one’s eyes, which I would be an essential concept for co-researchers to grasp at some point in the project. I never received a response to those comments but a new series of emails began. The final email was very apologetic. The growing list of impediments was far beyond anything either of us could control. She described experiencing marital difficulties, a babysitting issue, a personal health issue, and finally for her, the last straw, the loss of her job.

After working on your assignment this morning, I went to a department meeting only to find out that our long-time suspicion comes true, none of us is going to have our job next year (I’m one year away from tenure), as the university closes the programs and many others.

If it wasn’t to more personal concerns I’m having I will actually accept it as a blessing in disguise as I felt that it is time for me to move on and start something new (I’m entering my 40’s BD and I’m deep into biography work process these past few months...), but given the rest of the circumstances, losing my job and having two kids and no family in the U.S., is a stressor.

While everything she described seemed close to catastrophic, her next statements seemed key as I considered the future of education. Her university’s treatment of her had affected Calm Canyon’s attitude toward and willingness to engage with her students. She stated “I can’t seem to find the good will and good energy to put into more mindful teaching in addition to everything I already give my students.” Was this, in part, why I had so much trouble in the recruitment phase of the project? I remembered my teacher trainer friend who emailed me about his colleagues who were overworked, underpaid, and hard pressed to implement all the new programs required by their district. I recalled his statement about the huge problem of apathy among the teachers he represented in union negotiations.

Teachers must face many difficult circumstances in order to arrive at work each day with an enthusiastic and positive outlook. A number of the teachers that my colleagues had tried to recruit, who felt overburdened by the system, were unwilling to go further even if it could mean something important for students. I found myself concerned anew about the teachers, but even more intensely worried about the students who were stuck, by virtue of circumstance, trying to navigate at best, an unfriendly system. For the student, more was at stake than their time considerations or a paycheck that did not seem quite adequate; for students, their entire future hung in the balance of a political war between their teachers and a cold bureaucracy. How could a young person succeed, find joy in learning, or experience warmth from another human being inside of such a rigid and industrialized political structure?

As I reviewed the exchanges between Calm Canyon and I, my perspective shifted slightly. When it was all happening, I was feeling pressured to keep Calm Canyon in the project and to do just about anything to make it work for her to participate. I was trying to push her a little, just slightly, enough to help her see that her unique situation as an online teacher attempting to engage in mindfulness practice was an opportunity to pioneer a new way of working with distance students. I believe strongly in a distance model, and that it can be an enriching and rewarding experience for both teacher and student, however; I also now see that Calm Canyon, based on her perfect storm of troubles, was not in the right place to begin this research from the very beginning. This left the study with no

online teaching representatives so that element of the research would have to be conducted at another time.

CHAPTER 8: FIRST PERSON ACTION RESEARCH

Introduction

This study was conceived in response to my own experiences as a pedagogical artist. I was interested to know whether other teachers would find merit in or could strengthen their work through use of the techniques and methods I have developed over the past twenty years in the classroom. While it is true that the origin of this project emerged from the conscious connection of my own inner and outer experiences, I needed the help of others in order to answer my questions. I also needed the input of these teachers in order to eventually create a simple, accessible, and useable program to share with others in the future. My own views and beliefs about the transformative power of the student teacher relationship as well as my personal investment and immersion in contemplative and mindfulness practices played an important role in shaping this inquiry. These same ideas both allowed me to see from a unique perspective as well as blinded me from other views. As a teacher, it was natural for me to take up the role of a research facilitator where I was teaching techniques to the co-researchers. Investing the co-researchers with full creative power in the project was more difficult.

Throughout the research process my role gradually transformed from that of the “researcher” who organized and prepared the steps of the project, to “facilitator” who worked with the co-researchers to convene conversations and initiate the website, and finally to a “collaborator.” As a collaborator, I found that I was no longer driving the project but instead was participating with the other co-researchers as we generated knowledge through our practice. These three roles

drew me to experience increasingly deeper levels of understanding until finally, as a collaborator, I came to rely upon the co-researchers to provide the feedback necessary to suggest the next steps.

This chapter documents my successes and challenges as an emerging researcher and underscores the recognition that every decision and action executed in constructing this project was grounded in my own biography, training, experiences, hopes, expectations, and suppositions.

The Life of an Emergent Researcher

I grew up as an only child. Without siblings, my imagination and the creative impulse were my best friends. Once in a while a flesh and blood child, a neighbor or cousin, would enter my world, but usually I was there on my own, longing for another person to share my discoveries. I note that this longing to share manifested for me in my study as the decision to engage in collaboration with other teachers through action research.

While school was never hard for me, I found my niche in the theatre early on and gravitated toward it as much as I could. From my first starring role in grade four, to writing my own little books and plays in the fifth grade. By high school, I was an accomplished dramatist, poet, and trained singer. Supported by my parents, I was filled with artistic impulses. As I review this study, I see how I have been drawn to the innovative work of Goethe, Steiner, and Beuys who each articulate the element of artistry embedded within their inquiries.

I recognize that to some, the ideas posited in this research are bold and forthright. I have never had the reputation of being subtle or demure. All the way

from my small town backyard to my turbulent adolescence and into early adulthood and college, I emerged still thinking that I could do anything if I had a positive outlook and a strong work ethic. It was the firm grounding in love and confidence provided to me by my parents that I believe allowed me to cultivate an inner sense of harmony and a solid emotional core from which to live my life boldly, raise my own five children, and to become the teacher I am today.

At 18, because I really thought I could do anything, I auditioned for a prestigious acting school in Chicago and was one of the select students accepted out of a huge national audition pool. In another bold move, I moved to Chicago and finally felt I was “home.” In the city I met “my people,” those who were curious about the world and who were not afraid to explore it with me. I was thrilled to find collaborators in the theatre. My best work was done in shows that included an ensemble cast.

From those experiences, I built close relationships and created my family away from home. We tried everything together, including Zen Buddhism. An evening visit to the Zen temple revealed that it was not for us, but it did leave me more curious than ever about meditation – the part of that evening that I had found helpful. This was my first excursion into a spiritual pursuit that was different from my mother’s church, and it put me on the path that eventually lead to my doctoral project.

Many of my theatre friends went on to careers in movies and television, but I always loved the connection with people I felt when I was on stage in a live performance. I liked the risk of it. I liked coming to it fresh each night, as if I

had never lived it before. While it was a little bit terrifying, it was also exhilarating. Most of all, I loved the immediacy of the audience reaction and the energy that I could feel feeding and informing my performance. While I could not see the audience with my physical eyes, nor could I “see” the energy they brought, I could feel and sense it. When the audience was with me, we both knew it. When we were not in sync—it was palpable and I knew that I had to shift myself inwardly in order to get them back. I could thrive in an environment like that. I think that this was my first experience with what I would now call warmth sculpture. I did not have those words back then, but I believe the feeling and the necessary skills are the same.

After graduation, I joined a local theatre ensemble and began directing writing, and acting professionally. At that same time I went deeper into an exploration of various types of meditation and spiritual practice. One day, after a meditation I became inspired to create a performance art piece around spiritual searching. When I mentioned it to other actors, they either loved or hated the idea. It was a very polarizing proposition. To me it felt like I was birthing a directive from the spiritual world rather than having an idea of my own. I was driven to go forward. Eventually a group of actors coalesced around the project. After a year of research conducted in many varied spiritual traditions, we opened the multi-media show that featured improvisation, film, audience interaction, music, dance, scripted vignettes, and poetry. This show had emerged from collective investigations into our own spiritual nature and was my first experience with contemplative practice as a method of research. I was deeply influenced by this

experience, which changed the way I viewed my own life, my interaction with others, and my purpose on the Earth. I continued to practice Hatha Yoga and still maintain a sitting meditation practice that I began at that time. I went on to work in many other theatre companies and projects, including productions of my own original work. Those that best satisfied me were always ensemble pieces that built on the theme of collaboration and community.

As my children were nearing school age, I found a new calling. Through my son, I discovered Waldorf Education and became obsessed with it, which is something I have never really gotten over. In the Waldorf classroom, teaching itself is viewed as an art form. Every lesson in every subject is imbued with various forms of visual art, music, speech artistry, and movement art. In this educational tradition, teachers are expected to contemplate each child every evening and to meditate on the events of the day in an end of day review. Children are viewed as growing spiritual beings on a continuum of development. Curriculum is presented in accord with a student's developmental phase each year. It seemed to me that everything I had practiced and trained for, everything that had been important in my life came together as I walked through the door of that first Waldorf School. I knew that this was the type of education I wanted for my children and I knew that I was born to be a Waldorf teacher where action, artistry, and the contemplative life merged. I enrolled my children immediately and began work at the school.

In June, board members of a newly forming Waldorf School asked me to join them as their founding administrator. Another birthing process began. While

such schools typically come into being over several years, building one class at a time, this school combusted into existence over the course of 3 months with two full kindergartens of eighteen students each, a combined grade one-two, and a combined grade three-four. I served as the administrator and singing/movement teacher for the school's first three years. I also wrote plays for other class teachers and worked with students on various dramatic productions.

My husband and I began the three-year teacher-training program to become Waldorf teachers. Once I had completed it, I took my first class of students from first through eighth grade. While teaching in the seventh grade year of that cycle, I started a Master's degree program at the Barfield School of Sunbridge College where I met Arthur Zajonc, who played a central role in helping me to deepen my meditative work and bring it more actively into my daily life. He also introduced me to *contemplative inquiry*, a way of researching based on Goethean and Anthroposophic principles, the same principles that lie at the heart of Waldorf Education. My Master's thesis from the Barfield School, which I self-published during the writing of this dissertation, centered on the social art of Joseph Beuys, and on interviews I conducted with prominent social artists from around the world. I researched the early inspirations that led each of them to a life of service. At the end of that process, I was left with a new question.

From my investigations into the social art, I recognize the need for teachers to see their students with new eyes. Perhaps, through cultivation of an inner sacred space, practice of deep awareness, and maintenance of openness in the face of ambiguity, teachers could learn to carry students inwardly, in a contemplative way, building warmth between teacher and pupil. Aesthetic processes of genuine interest and love could then transform social relationships; creating warmth sculpture in the classroom through an alchemical meeting. As Joseph Beuys (2004) reminds us,

through alchemy, resurrection becomes possible. (Kresin-Price, 2012, p. 121)

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Before that time, I never expected to continue into a doctoral program. With a completed the Master's degree, there was no financial motivation to further my education, other than a negative one, as I receive no further salary consideration in my school for an advanced degree. I was simply led to this project out of the living question that arose from my previous research. I wanted to find out if other teachers could become better at seeing their students with “new eyes” and using their aesthetic sensibility to consciously and artistically build warmth as a sculptural creation between themselves and their students. It reminded me of the immediacy I used to feel in the theatre, which was informed by love of my craft, but also by a connection to the energy of the audience. There was an artistic element in how I dealt with the inner shift required to work with

students. I wondered if I could share this technique with other teachers and if they would have the same positive outcomes as I did.

During my doctoral process, I took a new cycle of children in the first grade and have been with them for the past six years. I also began to teach adults for the first time and have become the Director of Teacher Development for the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, a Waldorf teacher training and development program. Aspiring Waldorf teachers come from all over the country to take part in our courses. One of the most important things I try to impress on adult students is that to become a Waldorf teacher means taking up a life of research. Not only do we research the indications of Rudolf Steiner about how to immerse ourselves in this method of teaching, or research our subject matter in depth as we travel through the grades with our students each year, but also we must research our students each night. We are required to research ourselves in relationship to all of these elements as well. Who are we? Who will we become? Who can we help to birth and what can we bring forth?

The research process that I have attempted to crystalize in this document is a picture of myself in relationship to the life I have created with my family, the students I have taught, the teachers and co-researchers that I have come to know, and the person I am still becoming as a result of their work in my life. This project has been research into the nature of relationship and collaboration on many levels. It not only documents an outward process of methods and procedures, but it also reveals the reality of my inner shifting and

artistic response to the energy that lives between my *self* and those with whom I am connected.

Expectations

My vivid imaginative life, developed in childhood, has served me well all of my life. I had no problems conceptualizing this project or dreaming up how it would proceed. I had nothing but dreams of success, where massive groups of teachers were clamoring to sign up in order to help me craft these techniques for use in their classrooms. I had high hopes for the project but thought it would be much easier to find co-researchers than it actually was. The recruiting and retention dilemmas were the most difficult part of the entire project. I did not count on so many people saying that they were “too busy” to participate nor did I count on those who had agreed to join the group falling away during the course of the twelve weeks. At times I felt that I would never find enough people to carry out the project. I have attempted to detail the many unexpected recruiting and retention nuances in the following sections.

Reflections on Recruiting

When students graduate from our Waldorf School and return some time later to visit about how their high school experience is going, I am always struck by the common themes that emerge from what they tell me. They say that while certain aspects of their program, curriculum, or social life are going well, they still feel like they are “just a number.” Many of them report how surprised they are at the realization that the school is run in “militarily” fashion. They feel like they are the only students who notice this because most others have come from

elementary schools with a similar structure. Most of all, they miss having a deep and supportive relationship with a teacher and have even said, “No one there loves me.” When parents bring their children to our school and ask the inevitable questions about how students do when transferring to mainstream high schools, besides the fact that they generally do very well academically, artistically, and socially; I recount their main complaint that they do not “feel loved” in the typical high school environment.

As a result of these student reports, I have, for many years, wanted to make some difference inside the mainstream educational machine. Largely due to this context, the study was initially meant to include only teachers from the public school system or from university undergrad programs who had no previous experience with Waldorf Education. Throughout the recruiting process I was in contact with twenty or thirty people who themselves had contact with many dozens of other mainstream teachers. Some of my contacts were principals, superintendents, teacher trainers, or simply well respected professionals who felt they could recommend the study to many interested colleagues. Over the course of about a year’s time, while I completed the human subjects review proposal process, I pursued each of these avenues.

Time and the Ticking Clock

I sent the recruitment materials (Appendices N and O), to my initial contacts and they promised to distribute them to the many teachers with whom they worked. Some provided no feedback at all and became dead ends, others sent brief replies mentioning several interested people who had been given my

email address, but I never heard from any of those potential co-researchers. One of my teacher trainer contacts provided the following comments about the recruitment issue after distributing the materials I provided:

I'm sorry to say that I have no one who has expressed an interest in your research study. The objection is that they don't feel they have time. I had a few who seemed interested, are tied up with pursuing their Ed leadership degrees or doctoral degrees. The others ... well, apathy is a huge problem in this school district (thus my woes as a union rep). I even asked if they would be interested if it paid, and still nobody bit.

A big part of the problem is that our school district has rolled out a lot of initiatives this year which are demanding a lot more time and energy of our teachers than they are accustomed to having to put out. They are already feeling overworked. And, like I said, the ones who would be good candidates are pursuing things already.

And honestly, I think it may be a bit over some heads.

I appreciated this honest communication. Its message was one that I would continue to call to mind throughout the duration of the project. The *time* theme was going to become an extremely important concern and a major consideration for teachers as we progressed through the twelve weeks of the study. I needed to find a way to attract others to this research and part of that attraction would be to show teachers how the bulk of the practices they would engage in during the project would be done in their own classroom, saving time and effort while also deepening relationships and improving their success with students.

It was clear from the very first personal contact that teachers were busy; each with full lives and hectic schedules that would barely allow for “one more thing” added to the mix. One practitioner expressed concern about time constraints in her introductory phone interview. When asked if she had any concerns or questions about the project, she said, “Not really, its just (Beuys & Harlan, 2004)the only concern is, oh my gosh, there aren’t enough hours in the

day. Am I really gonna have the will to stick this through and do it?” Another had attempted to engage his co-teaching partner in the research, but cited his lack of time as he declined.

I was humbled each time I recognized that in order to participate in this study, each person would be making some kind of sacrifice of time with family, planning time for class work, a bit more time for sleep, or cutting time short from another very important aspect of their lives. While participants did not express that taking part in the study was an outright hardship, by the final assembly of co-researchers, I began to “read between the lines.” Given the circumstances described by each person about their personal and professional lives and how difficult it had been to schedule 30 minutes for a brief phone interview, the truth of their time limitations was obvious. During her initial interview, one teacher mentioned that she was at her son’s basketball game as we were speaking about her work with students. While she was there, she devoted nineteen minutes of his game to talking with me about teaching. Another teacher, after scheduling a phone appointment for late in the day, emailed me one Saturday to say that I should call “immediately” if I wanted to conduct the interview that day, because her schedule had changed at the last minute and she would need to leave the house before our appointed time. Another of the co-researchers signed all her consent forms, set up the call, gave me her cell number, but never answered the phone when I called repeatedly. I thought maybe I had gotten the time mixed up across time zones, but none of my subsequent emails were ever returned as my

continued messages and emails went unanswered, and we never had any further contact. Clearly, she had run out of time.

Of course, during the period of this project, I had my own time restrictions to negotiate. I was engaged in full-time teaching of my 27 fifth grade students in a Waldorf school. I also held multiple important leadership positions in the administrative life of the school during that period. Additionally, in my role as Director of Teacher Development for the local Waldorf training center, I developed and taught our first online course in contemplative practice during the same twelve-week period that I conducted this research project.

Because of the importance of *time* for everyone, I wanted to keep each week's exercises short and simple. I spent some extra effort predicting the amount of time each element of the project would take on a weekly basis. I tried to estimate the amount of time it might take to log in, read the exercises, make a brief posting, make a few journal notes, and then answer the survey questions at the end of the week. I timed myself doing the various tasks, adding several minutes to my estimate, assuming time for navigation between the different components and allowing for each co-researcher's initial lack of familiarity with the website. I could only "guesstimate," given the fact that there are so many variables for each person, such as how tech savvy they might be, how quickly they type, and how much time it takes for them to settle down and come to quiet in order to engage in the contemplative practices. I made what I thought were reasonable guesses for each suggested activity, but I could never really know how accurate I was until we got underway.

Recruiting Public School Teachers

I have been interested in conducting research in the public school environment since the time I was formulating questions for my Master's work. I recall a conversation I had with a professor in that program who was working as a consultant in public high schools to set up small "academy" style programs within larger "failing" public schools. In the smaller environment of the academy, students get to know their teachers and are allowed a voice in creating what works for them. My professor was explaining the heart of her work to me when she said that the most difficult part of her work was "convincing teachers that it is all right to love their students." I was enormously influenced by that conversation, and together with what I already knew about my own students' high school experiences I have consistently meditated on how I might come to a better understanding of student-teacher connection in public schools and whether there was something I could do to improve the situation.

During the course of my work on this project I connected with another researcher, who was conducting a study in public schools in the eastern United States. I came upon her study when looking for publications and people who were interested in contemplative education. I was hoping that such people might lead me to a group of teachers who would like to participate in my research. It was through this search that I found the Garrison Institute and Dr. Patricia Jennings.

On the Institute's website was a video presentation made by Dr. Jennings and Arthur Zajonc, who was one of my committee members, on the subject of

Montessori and Waldorf education and the contemplative model (Kresin-Price, 2012). Dr. Jennings, a former Montessori teacher, was at that time, a researcher at Pennsylvania State University and a Senior Fellow at the Garrison Institute. The Garrison Institute is an organization that, according to its mission statement, “applies the transformative power of contemplation to today’s pressing social and environmental concerns, helping build a more compassionate, resilient future” (Kresin-Price, 2012). I found a section of their sit devoted to contemplative education, now called *Contemplative Teaching and Learning*, and noticed that they would be hosting a contemplative education retreat for invited practitioners. I decided to call to see if I could get myself on the invitation list and eventually spoke with Dr. Jennings. It was in this phone call that I heard both some good and bad news about recruiting for a project like mine.

Dr. Jennings was very interested in my research and revealed to me that she had been working on an initiative to bring contemplative methods to teachers at schools in rural and suburban central Pennsylvania. In fact, in 2009, Penn State had received a grant of over \$900,000 from the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for Educational Sciences to pilot this study over two years in conjunction with the Garrison Institute who received a separate sub-award of almost \$300,000 (Garrison Institute, 2009). Dr. Jennings described her methods to me and confided that the most difficult part of her project had been recruiting teachers. She mentioned that her teachers were being paid and they were still rather unwilling to commit to the study. Since that time, the institute has received

another grant of \$3.5 million to carry out this work in New York City public schools (Garrison Institute, 2012).

While delighted that I was not working alone in the world toward bringing a contemplative approach to the classroom, I was discouraged that even in a huge study funded by the government, teachers were just as reluctant to take part in the research; payment for their time seemed to make no difference. Dr. Jennings told me that her work was taking longer than expected to complete due to the difficulty she had in finding teachers to participate (Garrison Institute, n.d.). She was kind enough to email me a book chapter she had written, a journal article currently in press, and another journal article she had co-authored containing preliminary results of her project. She gave me encouragement and said that she would be interested in my results when this study was completed.

Waldorf World

Like the goal of Dr. Jennings' project, my goal was to involve mostly public school teachers in this study. One of the sub-questions in my research design was related to how my proposed methods of student/teacher relationship development translated into contexts where inner work was not typically expected as part of the teacher's task. Because of this focus, I initially rejected the idea of including Waldorf teachers in the study. It was already expected that Waldorf teachers were working in a contemplative way with their students and I felt that to include them might be "stacking the deck" in my favor somehow, possibly jeopardizing the validity of any finding because the teachers were already working in the way I was proposing. As a result of the initial low enrollment in

the study, I began to accept teachers working in Waldorf schools with the additional requirement that this group would be new, untrained, struggling with student relationships in some way, or feeling the need for renewal; and I knew that there would be plenty of Waldorf teachers in one of those situations.

According to Betty Staley, Program Director of the Waldorf High School Teacher Training Program at Rudolf Steiner College in Sacramento, California, during a Waldorf Teacher Education Network Colloquium that I attended in 2010, there are about 70 trained Waldorf teachers graduating in North America each year to fill 300 positions. This shortage of Waldorf teachers has, for many years, meant that community members are placed into local Waldorf classrooms without the benefit of training. Additionally, Staley expressed that of the approximately 2,000 active Waldorf teachers in North America, about 1/3 of them have completed a partial training and another 1/3 have no training at all. This puts those teachers at a distinct disadvantage as they lack the understanding of how working with children in this context is necessarily different from other educational institutions. Every Waldorf teacher has the need to stay current, to continue building their practice, and innovating to bring life to the classroom. As it turned out, Waldorf teachers needed to be included in this twelve-week project just as much as anyone else.

The inclusion of Waldorf teachers opened an unexpected avenue of considerations for me. Based on my involvement in several Waldorf training programs around the country, I believed that very little step-by-step contemplative method instruction was brought to the trainees, but that instead the programs

relied most heavily on curriculum content and child development components to prepare teachers for the Waldorf classroom. Four current Waldorf teachers and one former Waldorf teacher turned university professor, joined the project and confirmed my belief. Eventually they suggested that I implement these practices and package them for Waldorf schools as well as Waldorf teacher training programs. They each expressed that while it was expected of them to work contemplatively, they were often at a loss about the exact steps to follow in going about this. One teacher, new to the Waldorf classroom and still in training, expressed her confusion about what it was she was really supposed to be doing as we spoke on the phone,

Well, I do teach in a Waldorf school. It's my first year teaching. And many people, of course, talk about the importance of, taking the children with you into your sleep'. Which sort of implies a meditation beforehand, and waiting for some kind of insight to come to you as you are in the process and all that. I just want that piece to be strengthened to compliment the other things that I have more training in.

Another Waldorf teacher spoke of needing to increase her ability to focus on inner work.

I think the work is really valuable Nancy and I really appreciate you doing it because I obviously need it and I just haven't been astute enough to be able to integrate it. I think it's really important and really valuable and I think people could really benefit and I could really benefit too, from staying more focused a bit.

For me, struggling Waldorf colleagues would serve as an interesting exploration about what was missing in their preparation and training. As the program director of one of the 15 Waldorf training institutes in the United States, I was extremely interested in hearing feedback on this topic, though it had not been in my original set of sub-questions. I was also intrigued to see whether or

not I could provide effective enough instructions to practitioners online so that they would be able to take up such a practice and make it their own from a distance. Based on this new set of considerations, I decided to accept a limited number of Waldorf teachers, who met the additional criteria. Suddenly, when I opened the study and my mind to a wider group of teachers, my co-researcher list began to grow and about two weeks before the project's start date several teachers, both Waldorf and non-Waldorf, contacted me to express their interest in participation.

Challenges of Building Online Community

In building the Warmth Sculpture Project, one important component for me was the possibility of co-researchers being able to connect with each other so that they could share resources, questions, and reflections. I imagined that through this sharing, co-researchers would be able to learn a great deal and might well innovate together, using the exercises I provided as a jumping off point. I set up the website in a way that I felt provided for these exchanges to occur. The main space featured a discussion area for posts related to their observational and contemplative exercise for the week.

It was important for me to conduct my own classroom practice with students, as I became a collaborator alongside co-researchers in practicing and reporting about the described techniques. The structure of the project called for each co-researcher to contribute to the roots of theory creation. It was my job to maintain dual focus both on the community as well as on each individual researcher. This shifting focus allowed me to perceive the process and the

emerging data from various perspectives; that of a researcher, who had designed the study; of a facilitator who was seizing opportunities for reflection; and of a collaborator working as a teacher myself. While I engaged in such shifts, co-researchers shifted their own viewpoint from focusing on individual students, and then back to the entire class as a whole. This “point and periphery” approach is actually a meditation suggested by Rudolf Steiner (Jennings, 2012) and a style of group facilitation that I inadvertently brought to the project out of my work as a Waldorf teacher, where it has become second nature to me. This technique allowed me to bring balance in considering the needs of individuals as well as needs of the group as I adjusted my perspective to include everyone or just one. Given my focus on each individual researcher, it was sometimes difficult for me to generalize. Each person’s story and viewpoint was interesting and unique, yet a few core aspects of our research results became evident.

Warmth and anonymity: Strange companions.

Through their screen names the twelve co-researchers would remain anonymous to other teachers in the online environment, so that the privacy of their schools and students would be easily protected. In order to be consistent in this practice, it was necessary to divorce personal email accounts from the website since many email addresses simply consisted of a person’s first and last name @ a particular server. Because personal emails were not attached to the site’s interface, I sent a friendly and encouraging email to “undisclosed recipients” each Sunday evening reminding them to check into the project for the new week’s exercises. In time, I also began sending an attachment to these emails containing

the exercises. In reflection on the project goal of building an online community between practitioners, I believe that the practice of separating contact information from other co-researchers, as well as that of leaving names and identities out of the project framework, served as a barrier between co-researchers that made it more difficult for them to connect with each other. In focusing so intently on the protection of students in these teacher's classrooms as well as the names of their schools, I neglected to consider how difficult it might be to build a meaningful relationship with an unseen, unnamed, unidentified person over the Internet. It seems preposterous to me now that I overlooked this somewhat crucial element in the development stage of the process. It was my own biased experience that blinded me to what I was creating in that regard.

As someone who has completed both an enriching and very personal Master's degree as well as a doctoral degree at a distance, I am certainly a proponent of distance learning and online programs. Because of my own excellent experiences with deep and meaningful content in these programs, I was inspired to create an online contemplative practice course for the Waldorf teacher trainees that I oversee. I instituted this course as an experiment, against the better advice of some of my Waldorf training colleagues, who could not imagine how it might be done successfully or in a way that was capable of bringing about transformation in the trainees, something we view as critical in self-reflective courses related to contemplative practice. As it turned out, the course was a huge success both financially for the institute as well as in the transformative process for our students. Students in the course were not only able to work self-

reflectively but also able to create a flourishing online community in a website that was arranged almost identically to my dissertation site. This parallel process of running two online projects was also instructive for me, both in looking at the community aspect of my research as well as exploring and explaining contemplative methods with teachers from a distance.

As I created the Waldorf training course, I remembered the advice of many successful online teachers and programs that it would be essential to begin online course work in a face-to-face environment. With this advice in mind, I began the training course with a two-day in-person intensive workshop. Additionally, of course, the names and contact information for all students was readily available to the others in order to facilitate deeper personal engagement. All of these pieces were missing from the Warmth Sculpture Project, in the name of protection of institutional and student privacy.

I consider now how I might have negotiated this situation differently. While it likely would not have been possible for practitioners to travel for an in-person meeting to begin the project, I may have been able to set up a group video conference or at least a conference phone call or live online “meeting” event to initiate our work. Perhaps we could have conducted live phone meetings every week as a synchronous piece of the project. Additionally, teachers could have been instructed to post profile photos so that we could more easily picture those with whom we were communicating. I would be curious to know how the human subjects review board would have reacted to the inclusion of practitioner names and personal contact information with written teacher consent. Perhaps there

would have been no issue at all, however, with the tools available on the Internet, I could so readily imagine that knowing a certain fifth grade teacher's name would lead to an online search engine; at first perhaps, to harmlessly learn more about a particular school. Then it might, accidentally, lead to a student's identity; perhaps names of fifth graders with other identifying information about them would be written in a school newsletter posted online. It is not a very big leap from there to the larger issues of privacy and protection. Given my personal knowledge and use of the World Wide Web and the privacy issues it poses, such a scenario was easy for me to imagine. In fact, using almost that exact technique, I relocated a "lost co-researcher" to follow up after data collection was complete.

One of the co-researchers who fell away from the project after the first week had changed email addresses and subsequent emails to her bounced back. Though she had not told me the name of her school, I knew that it was a particular type of institution. From the mailing address on her consent form I knew her city and state. It was easy to find the school's website where she was listed as a faculty member. I sent an email through the school asking them to give her the message that I was seeking to connect with her and left my email and phone number. Two days later, she contacted me and we were able to have a follow up conversation. I know that almost anything at all can be found on the Internet, if a person is intent enough on finding it. While I could easily extrapolate all sorts of student privacy invasions given any sort of personal revelation by teachers, it never even occurred to me until after the fact that they might use their actual

names, see images of each other, or link their personal email with the study's website.

While it was true that the adult teacher trainees taking the contemplative practice course for credit towards their Waldorf certification were intrinsically motivated to see the thirteen weeks through to completion, it was still undeniable that the community aspect in that space flourished! In their course reviews, students indicated that one of the most satisfying parts of taking the course was the interface with others and sharing important experiences with other practicing teachers. One of the students in that course was also a co-researcher in the Warmth Sculpture Project. I noted how she made several attempts to engage the project's community aspects by responding to the postings of others and asking questions of co-researchers, but the soil just did not seem fertile enough. As I realized this, I began to send my own weekly emails to everyone. Additionally, I wrote weekly responses online to every single posting made by each teacher and I believe co-researchers experienced me as a lively, engaged, and warm online presence. Each week of non-response, I contacted people directly to find out what I could do to help them become more fully engaged. Some gave me feedback and I made adjustments as a result, but most often, I simply provided encouragement. At the beginning of each 4-week round, I made the point that if they had fallen "behind" there was no need to worry because a new series was beginning and they should feel free to pick up with the current week as we revisited the stages for a second or third time. Different techniques worked for different people based on a number of varying factors. One teacher preferred to send responses to me via

email. Through email, I was able to have good conversations with the co-researchers. While I developed a warm relationship with each of the teachers, building connection between co-researchers was more difficult. It was a two-way street that could not be traveled by only one person commenting on the ideas of another. There needed to be back and forth but some of the practitioners just were not engaging on that level.

Building Relationships.

Through the challenges just mentioned, I was still hopeful that teachers would connect with each other as co-practitioners striving toward similar goals. During the first three days after the phone interviews, teachers had access to the website and were asked to participate in an orientation process with the intention of acclimating each person to the functions and tools of the website. They were also asked to introduce themselves and shared some of the reasons that they were interested in participating in the Warmth Sculpture Project. This introduction was the first step in our process of online community building.

During our warm and casual phone conversations, each co-researcher expressed excitement and intrigue to begin the process with me. They were full of enthusiasm as these two teachers express, “I’m totally open to what you throw at me”; “So I’m really looking forward to this, Nancy, it seems very clearly spelled out. I’m really looking forward to this I can just really see this as like a warm spot for me.” One co-researcher spoke in detail during his initial interview describing what things he particularly appreciated about the project and the way I had set it up. While he had an interest in how the technology would work to

connect people across long distances, he also had an interest in action research and was hoping to gain some helpful experience that might be used in his own upcoming doctoral degree process. He was very intrigued with the idea of connecting on the website with teachers outside of his own school and to share together about innovative classroom practices.

Now that's what I like about this, being able to get out of our own classrooms, our own schools. Of course within our environment, my teaching partner and I, we feel very much like we are on an island. And in many respects we are, because we are really trying to push and grow and even though we are considered, in some ways, a progressive independent school, the reality is that many of the faculty members are entrenched within their traditional comfort zones.

His doctoral research was directly tied to connecting more deeply with students and he was excited to explore this topic with me and with other teachers prior to beginning his own project. He was troubled by what he described as colleagues at his own school being "resistant" to changes, even those that only asked them for a shift in consciousness. He was looking forward to finding other teachers who wanted to explore in the same way as he did.

Through these initial conversations, I felt that the practitioners and I began to know something more about each other. As I listened to the recordings in one phase of the transcription process, my goal was to "hear through the words" in the way that one can see through a window to what exists on the other side. I engaged the practice of deep listening and without jumping to conclusions or extrapolating beyond what was reasonable, I attempted to develop my own sense for each one of the practitioners so that I would better be able to help them engage and hone the exercises to fit their circumstances as the weeks unfolded.

Humor: Breaker of ice, bringer of warmth.

As I listened to the conversations, I was careful not only to transcribe the words that were spoken, but also the long pauses; vocalizations such as “um,” “hmmm,” “mmm hmmm”; and laughter. I realized that there was actually a lot of laughter in every conversation; there was not one without a sprinkling of humor. We had a good time in this project. It was important to me that our website was designed to be aesthetically pleasing and that titles for our work sessions wittily suited the content. While we were all very busy, as noted, I could also see the tendency to avoid a too serious tone. We could still add in little stories about a funny incident, a humorous poem, or even just a little comment to lighten the mood. With each gesture toward humor, we got to know each other a little better and a cool connection became warmer. Humor is one of the main components of the Waldorf teacher’s work, according to Rudolf Steiner, who says, “The fact is that no art can be mastered without humor, especially the art of dealing with human beings” (Steiner, 2004b, p. 78). It seemed a natural phenomenon in the project to laugh and have a good time where appropriate.

Self Observations

Introduction

Necessity created many learning opportunities for me as a researcher during all phases of this project. First of all, I had to learn how to write in far from ideal circumstances. I found out that I write best uninterrupted for days on end with no sounds other than those of nature in my environment. I did all that I could to create times like this for myself. My home office, where I did most of

the work, provides such a space, however, there were very few times that I could find contiguous days for writing. I had to develop the ability to allow elements of the project to “cook” while I lived my life. Sometimes several days could go by without more than two or three good hours for writing and I still had to train myself to hold coherent thoughts and through lines until the next session. I had to learn to write in short blocks of time on one theme at a time as I created the initial draft. I had to learn how to write in the pitch black with only the light of my computer illuminating the dark of my daughter’s hospital room during yet another hospitalization for pneumonia. With one eye on her blood oxygen level, and one eye on my computer screen, I sat awake night after night keeping an eye on everything that mattered to me.

While I continued to make progress, I often found myself wondering how anyone ever focuses on anything deeply enough to write a dissertation. How does anyone ever create change in this world? “Just keep going” was the only answer I knew how to give myself.

It is true that I became disheartened several times during the research process. When time would run short, I had to let the research linger longer than I was comfortable with, or let it go completely. It was very hard for me to live my life, continue my career, and do this work. When I look back at the time I spent on the computer in those months, I note that while I was completely engaged with my teaching and project work, my own family life was suffering. It seems that almost every personal crisis one could think of occurred during this project in a clear attempt to stop me from my work. Yet, I knew that I had a purpose and I

framed it like this: If we remain on the Earth, life moves forward. The many obstacles that I encounter provide me with an even greater resolve to finish. I realize that there is not going to be a *perfect* time or environment for me to begin. I am not going to win the lottery or be given a paid leave from work to write a dissertation. I can do anything if I really want it.

I needed the help and support of those in my immediate surroundings and I basically got what I needed. Besides my own willingness and ability to work late into the night, the recipe for my completion and success, as always, was contingent upon the faithfulness of other people. It required equal parts understanding colleagues, three forgiving and easy-going 20-something children, one extremely capable teenager—also an amateur chef, a patient little girl, and a very tolerant husband.

Inner Work of the Researcher

Having been so concerned with time and the due dates and deadlines of the completed project, I was eager to dive into the writing. Because I was working full time during this process, my full writing days fell mostly on weekends unless I could manage a day off from teaching. There would be the occasional half-day, but largely I wrote for stretches of twelve or more hours sitting in one place. I began to dread the process of forcing myself to stare at the computer for that length of time, while neglecting the needs of my family, just to spin my wheels, which is how I often felt in the beginning of the writing process.

I managed to organize an outline of what I thought might go where and had written about 35 pages of text when I recognized that I was cheating myself

out of an opportunity. I remembered back to the pleasant process of writing my Master's thesis. Every writing session began with a short meditation focused on something I was working on during that period. Answers seemed to flow through me without effort in that process. So, one Sunday morning I went to my office, sat in front of the computer, but did not open it. I found a posture that was supportive of my meditative practice and began in a new way.

I always begin my contemplative sessions by sounding the “*AUM*,” at first inwardly and then vocalizing it, all while imagining an historical continuum on which I (and my dissertation) am only a blip in time. I imagined that the “*ah*” came to me from a far distant past, an ancient time, perhaps before there were human beings on the earth, perhaps before there was an earth. It metamorphosed into the “*oo*” of the current time, by which I mean the time of “recorded history” through the very day that I sat at my desk to tune in, and beyond, into the not too distant future. Finally, the “*mm*” took me to a time beyond imaginable future generations. This future line has no memory of me, but perhaps something of what I contribute to the world supports the “*mm*” to go forward. This continuum of time always helps me to see everything in what I believe to be proper perspective. It reminds me that whatever I hold as so important in this current moment, it will quickly pass away and become part of the past that others may sense but of which they will likely have no memory or awareness.

This step, for me, amounts to what Arthur Zajonc calls “the portal of humility” (Zajonc, 2009, p. 24). The next step involves me “laying down” my physical form in a valley that exists between this world and the world of spirit.

As I do this, something of me rises up in a “ghostly” form, to a small temple in the opposite side of the valley. There, I enter the temple, which has only one central space where a bright fire is burning on an altar. I place my ghostly form into that fire and what is left of “me,” the essential me, rises as smoke through the roof of the temple, and mingles with the ethers.

This is my “set up” every time. At this point, I begin a four-step process of focusing attention on my question or the focus of that session’s meditation. Once I have worked through a brief review of my focus, I “open out” my attention and let go of that focus, simply waiting in the silence. Sometimes, I receive an echo back; sometimes I hear nothing. During this session I did receive an echo and upon that new thought, I refocused my attention. This process repeats four times. During this session, I received an echo in each of the four steps. In the final step, the stage of pure thought, I attempted to refocus on the “essential being” of my dissertation project. What was it that lived in the heart of this work? Then I began to sense that it was the process that caused the project to live. It was the four-steps of *object*, *image*, *activity*, and *agency* furnishing conscious awareness to teachers about what and how they could proceed to build warmth sculpture between their students and themselves. They were the authors of this experience, but the steps I provided to them opened their awareness to the fact that it could be done.

I realized that these steps were seminal, essential, and central to the work, each one building upon the other. I knew that I also had to follow the same steps in looking at the *being* of the project. I needed to review all the materials and

processes of my own analytic work in light of these four stages. I recognized these stages as a method for analyzing and synthesizing my data and indeed, as a method for completing the project.

I created a chart that listed the stages and nuances of the method, and the process of analyzing and synthesizing that lay before me. I indicated what parts of the process fit into each stage. As I filled out the chart with what seemed to fit, I stumbled upon the surprising realization that I had already been doing the steps without being consciously aware of this meta-organizational method! Everything I had done to date was in order and in line with the four stages used to instruct teachers in the Warmth Sculpture Project (Table 3). It seemed that through working with the teachers, focusing so intently on the process and how it worked, that I had integrated it into my own work without realizing it. Becoming consciously aware of this meta-view helped me tremendously as I moved the work forward. It became a touchstone when I felt lost, a guiding principle when I needed to make a decision, and a vessel into which I could pour my work.

That particular meditation began a chain of events that took me through to the end of the dissertation in a much less painful way than I had begun. Thinking that I could cut corners, leave out my own inner work, and just get to the writing, actually prolonged my agony and the time it took for me to come to completion. Stopping myself, sitting quietly for what must have been just a few minutes, to look deeply and *listen through* the empirical, allowed me to commune with creative energetic forces that I had previously been negating. From that time

forward, each work session began with a focused meditation on the task before me.

Table 3
 Research Analysis Informed by a 4-Step Goethean Process, Created by Author

Characterized by	Elements of and tasks for my work with the data
<p>Stage 1: OBJECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First impressions • Perception without judgment • Earth • The senses • Empirical observation • Form, shape, • Physical perception • Appearance of forms/qualities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing pages of data, downloading from website 2. Loading documents into the coding software, etc. 3. Transcribing interviews 4. Laying out charts of co-researcher progress through the project, creating participation chart, charting introductions to weekly exercises 5. Forming impressions about the “shape” of the project
<p>Stage 2: IMAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exact sensorial imagination • Metamorphosis • Water • Time • Imagination • Generative movement between forms/qualities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dealing with time: my schedule, timeframe from CIIS, schedule of committee members, recognition of <i>time</i> as a theme for co-researchers 2. Organizing follow up with drop outs 3. Coding and letting the data speak 4. Imagining and trying theme arrangements 5. Hearing through data 6. Analysis
<p>Stage 3: ACTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification and distillation • Activity • Air • Gesture with intentionality • Inspiration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beginning synthesis 2. Story telling 3. New arrangements 4. Recognition of patterns and how they fit into theme 5. Surprises! 6. Recognition of my 4-step process 7. The writing process
<p>Stage 4: AGENCY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The archetypal essence • Creative potency • Fire • Warmth • Intuition • Social processes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noting where form, quality, and transformation intersect to indicate the future of the project 2. Various uses of the 4-step process 3. Creating context for others 4. Completion of the book

Conclusion

As the conduit through which this project was birthed, I had the responsibility to manage its many aspects in a balanced yet creative way. So often, creativity can devolve into the chaos of the moment when not held inside of a certain structure. It was my job to live with and artfully navigate certain realities in light of the design I had created. I also had the task of maintaining flexibility where planning and actuality stood at odds. I learned many things about myself, about creativity, about collaboration and about the value of the proposal I put forth to the co-researchers of this project. While co-researchers and their students were at the center of the project, I was its humble champion acting as shepherd to keep the flock moving along the path.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS: SOWING THE SEEDS OF THEORY FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

Our study set out to learn how teachers could develop pedagogical love for and deep interest in a student that enables a transformative element to arise in the teacher-student relationship. Using the outlined process of training exercises and the practice of student observation different from what they had previously done, teachers who conducted research in their classrooms through the framework of this project, reported positive effectiveness as well as improved personal, professional, class, and student achievement. By the end of the study, teachers felt closer to their students and felt more open and vulnerable when relating to them. Teachers reported improvement in student academic engagement and achievement, as well as student social interaction. Teachers who consistently reported their experience and weekly findings, agreed that their classrooms were uncharacteristically harmonious during the time period of the study with very few, if any, social problems. This harmonious mood “spilled over” even to those students and classes that were not the main focus of the teacher’s exercises.

Theoretical Grounding

The study also asked teacher-researchers to help in articulating a practice and a theory of warmth sculpture that would be easy to follow and implement in any classroom where the teacher was motivated to do so. Throughout the twelve weeks of the project, co-researchers implemented changes in the way they viewed and interacted with students. Each week, teachers posted rich nuanced

descriptions as they worked through the articulation process. Eventually, a theory began to emerge from their practice, findings, and summary comments relative to their classroom experiences.

Practitioners reported on the process as it took place beginning with how they had set it in motion. This process unfolded in just a few moments but appeared to manifest in seven phases before returning to the second phase, beginning the process again.

1. The first phase was the intention of teachers to observe their students in a way that was different than usual.

2. In order to do this, they had to realize an inner shift in attention and recognize initial awareness of the observed.

3. This inner shifting was necessary in order to accommodate holding the image or essence of this *other* within themselves. They had to make inner room or inner space for the other.

4. As a result, their students showed signs of recognition, mostly unconsciously, that something new was now present.

5. In that recognition, the students responded;

6. As if from an inner shift of their own.

7. Practitioners then noted student responses and recursively they were able to shift yet again, moving back to step 2, setting in motion the process of praxis between student and teacher. This became the process theory of Warmth sculpture in the student-teacher relationship (Figure 3).

Teacher-researchers said that their own inner shift seemed to have created a related shift within their students, as well as others they interacted with, producing a noticeable and sometimes measurable outer phenomenological response. Further recursion of inner shift/outer response occurred as the process continued. Teachers believed that practicing the process of observation itself was building deeper levels of sensitivity for observing. One person said, “I feel like everything up to now has deepened my sensitivity, and the more sensitive I’ve been the more responsive I have been.” Practitioners described these occurrences as something “building between” student and teacher and described an “opening” as if sacred space was being created.

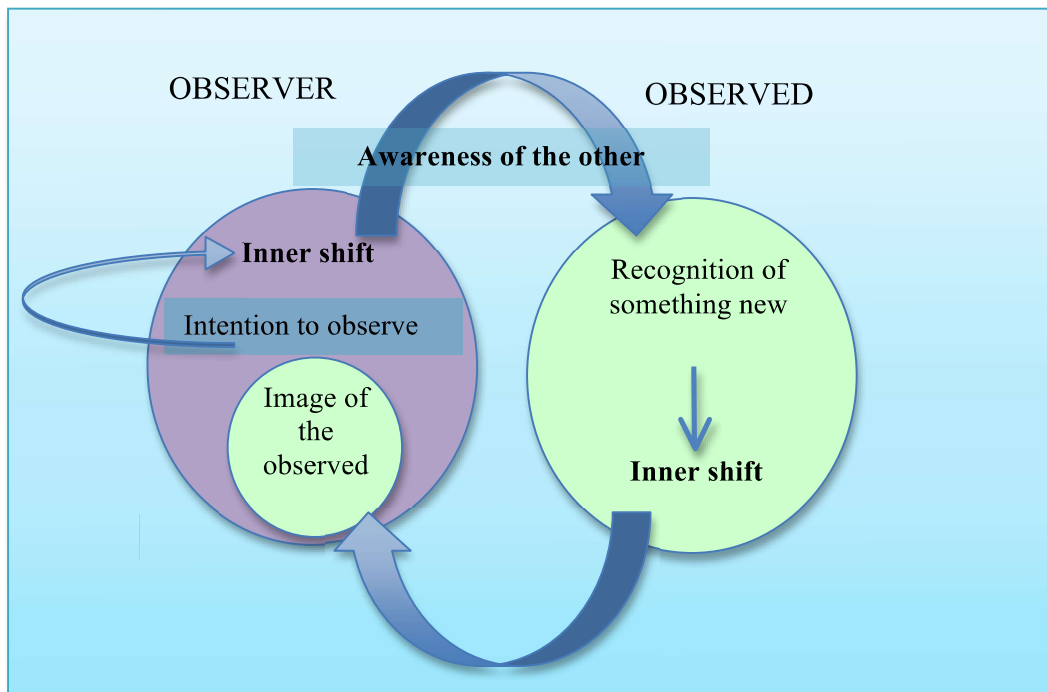


Figure 3. Warmth Sculpture phase theory. Author’s image.

This description is akin to the artistic process of vessel building, for example in clay. When a potter places a chaotic formless lump of clay on the wheel and begins to focus his attention on specific areas of the clay, he can then decide how and where to lovingly guide the clay into the shape he desires. Pushing too hard will destroy it, not grasping it firmly enough will cause very little change. When he is trying to create a vessel he must pay special attention to preparing an appropriate opening or a space into which a substance can later be placed when the vessel is complete.

The vessel building process between individuals or groups of people, as reported by co-researchers, is quite similar. First, one person must hold an intention to reach out to the other through observation. Next, there must be artistic or aesthetic attention paid to the observed, using what Goethe called “delicate empiricism” (1988, p. 207). Too little attention will be ineffective at changing the conditions. Too much or the wrong kind of attention, like too much pressure, can create brokenness and disaster. Co-researchers recognized that the quality of attention was of utmost importance. When teachers spent time considering and closely observing their students, a response and an inner recognition of this shift resulted in a similar inner shifting in the observed and eventually an outer phenomenological response. Through successive recursions of this cycle, practitioners reported feelings of deep regard, warmth, and one said, with some surprise, that he was “feeling even more...*loving* toward students.”

The opening or space that develops through this building energy can then be filled

with the warmth of attention and shaped aesthetically, as an artist would intentionally shape a lump of clay into a vessel.

Our study has shown that these inner and outer shifts are possible through the process noted above. The intentions and inner shifts that teachers were able to realize created new levels of awareness and keener observational abilities for use in their practice. Practitioners developed new organs of perception in themselves and in turn were able to know more about and become closer to others. Teachers reported that this improved relational element seemed to be connected to increased student academic achievement, enjoyment of their subjects, and more complete social engagement. Important aspects of this theory include

- The inner/outer paradigm and how an inner shift appeared to affect outer reality
- The power of imaginative activity to affect physical reality
- The simplicity, elegance, and ease of performing these exercises
- An artistic/aesthetic vessel building process that arose between teachers and their students

Sub questions emerged throughout the study about how teachers could improve relationships with their students and facilitate student success and enjoyment by focusing on interactions and deepening relational awareness with them. Since this was clearly possible, other questions led us to explore such things as the role of warmer relationships in both student and teacher educational success, translating this relational model outside of Waldorf Education, and understanding the duration of practice needed for “results” to become apparent to teachers.

It was clear that practitioners were easily able to create warmer relationships through the techniques they applied. They were also reporting

improved grades, engaged students who asked to come in after class for discussions, other students who were asking to take on extra credit work, and one teacher's university students created a joint project that would necessitate their staying in touch over the summer to complete it. One teacher characterized the mood in his classroom as being filled with "laughter, lots of laughter."

The teachers who took up this work, were, for the most part, not Waldorf trained teachers, even if some of them were beginning their work in Waldorf schools. One important common thread between all the practitioners was their openness to the field of meditation and contemplative practice. The varying levels of experience in this realm did not seem to matter. What was most important was the suspension of judgment and a willingness to engage and be consistent with the practice. It seems that just like working out at the gym to develop one's muscles, developing new organs of perception also requires practice and diligence. Many of the teachers discussed their surprise at the level of intensity that the exercises took on for them, as well as the fact that the intensity began as early as the first week. Teachers reported experiencing positive effects and results already after the very first set of exercises were completed.

Future Indications

As I connected follow up conversations with a review of data from the research, I noted that several teachers, and also others that I spoke with about the project, felt that there were many future directions for further research. With a few minor improvements in the design of a similar project the application of these

techniques could be important to various fields. I briefly explore these ideas below.

Online Instructors

The application of the research findings for online instructors is still left untested, but preliminary comments by the two online instructors who began with us in this study, and who both had experience with contemplative or meditative practice, indicated that the proposed techniques are too difficult for online teachers to carry out without ever having met their students. In using it myself in a hybrid online format, I have found it useful and effective. Clearly further research, designed exclusively for those working in online forums, is one avenue for future testing.

Exercise Adjustment and Improvement

Several excellent suggestions came from co-researchers throughout the course of the project. If the project were to be mounted again, I would work on simplifying the online environment to make it easier for practitioners to see exactly what they need all on one screen, click into an area to post reflections or questions, and get out. While some enjoyed the graphic nature of the website design, others felt it was too busy and needed cleaning up. Beauty is important, but functionality is essential. I considered a suggestion from one teacher that mentioned using a format as simple as an online journal or blog space where all text can be in one location.

The relational aspects of the project, might best be served in face-to-face meetings with all the researchers before moving into an electronic format. Most

ideal, would be working with a group of teachers who are in one school and who already have a relationship, or at least teachers who are able to participate in a face-to-face workshop or meeting to begin the practice. To continue building the community, if we move to an online maintenance phase, regular conference or video calls with the entire group or with small discussion groups of five teachers each could prove helpful in encouraging practitioners to rely on each other and to share best practices and experiences.

Waldorf Training Program Addition

Moon Rose, a Waldorf teacher in training, indicated the importance she felt these techniques would play in a training program like the one she was completing. She felt that taking part in this research had been an “integral piece of the puzzle” for her as she endeavored to understand the process of relationship building with students. As the Director of Teacher Development for a Waldorf teacher-training institute, one of my first priorities will be to develop a course for teachers focused on the four-step process researched in this study. I am also considering the timing of this course, where it should fall in the three year sequence and whether elements of the work should be integrated into other courses, particularly the field work and practicum portions of the training program.

Therapeutic and Workplace Applications

As a massage therapist and instructor at a massage therapy school, Moon Rose also provided a natural experiment, quite by accident, within the context of this study. Her diligence in implementing the practices both in her work with children as well as her adult massage students also transferred to one of her

colleagues with whom she was having a particular difficulty. She was successfully able to use the Object, Image, Activity, Agency process to work through those problems with her colleague and due to a new and deeper understanding she had gained, she was able to resolve those issues and be more productive in that relationship. She also indicated that she liked the four steps of the process so well, that she would likely be using it whenever she wished to move out of any static position in various life circumstances. Considering that the process could be helpful in the work place, with family or friends, or perhaps in a therapeutic environment is another avenue for follow up.

Shelters, Volunteers, and Crisis Teams

Big Love suggested yet another future application that I had never considered. She had previously been a volunteer at a shelter for battered women. In her weekly work there, she began to notice a rigid attitude creeping into the counselors at the facility who began to see the female victims there in a negative light.

I was thinking that they should be part of any training in which people have to work with clients—and especially in the public sphere. I'm thinking specifically of the battered women's shelter where I used to volunteer. I had to quit because of the demands of my doctoral studies, but the counselors there made it easy for me to stop going. I felt as if they (not all but most of them) saw the women they were helping as "lost causes." They often spoke of these women in terms of sort of "repeat offenders" even though they were the ones who needed counseling.

Administrative Openness, Education, and Research Method

Big Love was also clear that one of her important hopes for the future of education would be that administrators find their way to allow teachers more time for contemplative practices, taking the place of some of the required committee

work. In my own experience of using the four-step technique to analyze and synthesize the data of this project, I realized that a contemplative approach to administrative tasks helps to make the final task clearer and cleaner. Such an application also pointed to the use of the process in research, as this is my second time allowing it to guide my work with data and the writing process in a large qualitative study. After having used it the first time in my Master's research, I was lost without it during the dissertation process. Once I brought it back in and worked only inside of this contemplative model, my work flowed in a much easier and coherent fashion.

Medical Training Programs

During the months of research and writing, I often had occasion to discuss my work with interested friends or supporters. One such person, a former Social Worker and wife of a doctor practicing integral medicine with low-income families was interested to hear more. She made a strong suggestion that using this technique in the medical profession, particularly with medical students as they begin to develop "bedside manner," could be a very important development in the training of doctors.

Public School Emancipation

Each one of these suggestions came from one of the co-researchers or from another interested person who supports the work. Each holds its own questions and implications to do with logistics, timing, and method of delivery, along with the issue of how to gain entrée to each of the fields indicated. Of course, as stated earlier in the document, my own main concern continues to be

the teachers and students caught in the net of the politicized American public school system. In my view, teachers there need an emancipatory practice that will help them navigate in blind seas. Brave Earth told us, that the public model is factory-like and that everyone across the country knows it, but no one quite understands how to fix it. Perhaps warmth sculpture could bring a bit of hope and shine at least a little light for those within that system to find their way through.

CHAPTER 10: WRAPPED UP IN WARMTH SCULPTURE

Wrap Up

While I initiated the Warmth Sculpture Project, its main focus was relational, and it begged to be carried out in a relational way. I designed a study that would lend itself to many relational interactions in theory, though they were sometimes difficult to realize in practice, particularly those between the co-researchers in an online distant environment. Relational aspects of the project were simultaneously enacted in three contexts, (a) within my own classroom of students, who inadvertently played an important role in my situational circumstance as an experienced class teacher; (b) within the community of researchers with whom I collaborated; and (c) within the classrooms of the project's co-researchers, between teachers and students.

Efficacy

Three key findings were generated as a result of this project. The first was the efficacy of the practices. Teachers, who faithfully participated in the observational and contemplative exercises met or exceeded the goals they set for themselves at the beginning of the project. In reflection on the project, one teacher commented, "This study helped me to tune into what individual students really need." Another said, "The practices that the project implemented in my teaching have made a large difference in my outlook on my students." Some teachers found that students who had previously been disengaged became open and active in classroom discussions. They reported that students, who had never made eye contact with them before, sought them out to discuss some aspect of

their class. Co-researchers linked changes like improved behavior, better grades, and more positive student attitudes to their practice of the suggested exercises each week. In the first week, something new had already manifested in the classroom of one teacher, “It felt as if we had entered a different stream together. Overall, there was a more harmonious and cooperative mood to my class.” At the end of the project, one practitioner said, “The exercises in this program were delightful; I looked forward to them and enjoyed them. And they work!!”

Simplicity

The second key finding was the surprise of co-researchers and myself regarding the simplicity, ease, and speed of creating this effective practice. Most teachers reported notable changes already within the first week of the project. These changes continued to grow and develop as the weeks unfolded. After only the first week of practice, co-researchers pointed out their greatest surprises of the week. One teacher realized that positive intentions were much less burdensome for a teacher to carry on a daily basis than the assumption of a problem. She said, “It was far easier to transform my inner state with the well wishes than by approaching it from the angle of a dilemma within a relationship needing a resolution.” Another commented on the speed of the results with her so-called “difficult” student. Her greatest surprise was, “How quickly my difficult student responded.” And she later said, “I was surprised that the aforementioned student even spoke to me, and that he did so in a friendly way.” One teacher realized a shift for the entire class and for herself, also in the first week. Her greatest surprises included, “That it affected me, and by extension my whole class. I

seemed to have ‘gotten out of my own way.’” One co-researcher noted that the biggest surprise of all was, “How little attention it takes to pay attention.” Each of these reports from co-researchers points to an easily translatable process that takes little effort to implement. Such exercises are easily shared with colleagues who are short on time and who seek to see an immediate difference in their classroom relationships.

Integration

Third of the key findings was that, due to the efficacy and simplicity of the exercises, teachers came to rely upon them and began to integrate them into their teaching practice. On several occasions teachers responded with notes about continued use of a particular exercise. Several months after the project research had ended, a follow up interview revealed continuation of and expansion upon the exercises presented during the research period, as well as the urge to share them with other colleagues so that they could also benefit from the practices. Even teachers whose online participation tapered off or stopped completely noted in follow up interviews that they continued using the practices and found them extremely valuable. At the project’s end, practitioners related their favorite exercises and the ones they returned to over and over. Several said that they had managed to make the observations and contemplations part of their daily practice.

These improvements were realized across the board in elementary classrooms, high school, and university settings. Teachers worked in private and public schools. Some were free to be at ease with such concepts as loving their students and even said that parents expected them to relate to children in this way,

while others did not want to outwardly characterize their relationships with students as involving “love,” they did agree that something like it was newly informing their interactions with students.

By implementing a practice of quiet contemplation, deep observation, in a mood of respectful and warm attention toward students, positive change resulted for every teacher engaged in the research. No computers or tests were necessary to either assess or bring about this transformation, only the intuitive and warm attention of the teachers, who took note of various phenomenological aspects of their students and tried to suspend their usual judgments to avoid stereotypes in their efforts to truly *see, hear, and sense* each student as a whole human being.

This intervention was free of financial cost and without corporate ties, but it did require focus, concentration, and some time spent in reflection from each co-researcher. No fear of false accusations plagued the teachers, even though they were most certainly becoming warmer and more intimate with their students. No outward change in curriculum took place. No drastic or empirically recognizable difference was present in form or structure of the classroom effort. Observers to the classroom before and after the intervention would not have noted a vast difference in the empirically observable facts of the teacher’s delivery of the lessons; yet everything changed for the teachers involved in this research and for the students in their care.

Transformative Practice

Co-researchers reported definite changes in their relationships, especially to those students with whom they were directly working during the exercises.

Beyond this benefit, however, teachers also reported a “seeping” effect that took place in which, even with classes for whom they had not been consciously performing the exercises, they began to see students differently and students responded in kind. Many reported that the techniques also seemed to seep outside of the classroom to influence the personal lives of the co-researchers. Several teachers stated that they automatically used the techniques with everyone they met. One exercise that was particularly long lasting, lead co-researchers to imagine a student backward and forward in time from early childhood and infancy to old age. Participants reported the surprising fact that they were beginning to imagine the infancy and old age life arc of people they were standing behind in a grocery line, or someone they noticed at church. In utilizing the practice of the exercises outside of the classroom context, these teachers also reported improved relationships with family and friends.

Practical Theory

The co-researchers of the study who were consistent in their practice were also successful in implementing positive change in their classrooms and in quickly achieving a high level of improvement in student engagement, academic achievement, and social interactions. Most importantly, teachers felt warmer toward and closer to their students as a result of their research in this project. Pedagogical love flourished within the warmth built between teacher and student. Teachers believed that their students were responding positively on the outside to the slight inward shifts being made by the teacher.

In studying teacher reports on this process, the steps to formulate a theory grounded in the emerging data began to take shape. The theory enacted within the framework of this project proposes that the intentions and inner shifts of teachers through engagement in this research, created new levels of awareness and keener observational abilities for use in their teaching practice, while allowing them to develop new organs of perception. Through these new organs, teachers were able to know more about students and to become closer to them. Teachers were able to deepen their understanding of students through the exacting practice of Goethean observation. Using an aesthetic sensibility to discern facts about the observed, and to know when and how to proceed, teachers appeared to engage in an artistic vessel building process that arose between them and their students. The result was warmer relationships, improved academic focus and achievement, and a higher level of teacher satisfaction. One teacher said that while he loved teaching already, after beginning work with the exercises, he could not wait to get into the classroom.

Take Away

As the work of co-researchers in this project have shown, relational transformation is possible in the classroom when teachers develop pedagogical love for their students. Experiences of love and authentic warmth are important for students at school and students respond to such experiences with positive change in behavior, attitude, engagement, and academic improvement. Such changes are possible not only for the grade school student, but also in middle and high school levels as well as the university. If the entire educational system,

including teacher training institutes, became aware of the transformative possibilities available to teachers and students at work building a loving pedagogical bond, classrooms all over the country could become places where knowledge and love are not mutually exclusive, but dependent upon each other. Even if such practices are never implemented at a systemic level, still, something transformative is possible through practitioner sharing and collaboration.

This study proposes a new type of educational reform. This reform does not suggest a change in curriculum nor does it require expensive corporate sponsorship for implementation. No legislation must be enacted to bring it about. The primary tools of this intervention are attention, contemplation, and collaboration. While we cannot know exactly how this process will work for every teacher in every school, as networks of teachers begin to discover and share how a shift in their own viewpoint and an awareness of their previous bias can create success in the classroom, a quiet revolution will be possible. This revolution can infiltrate every single school and every classroom where a teacher is willing to engage in its practice. As educational reformers, politicians, and administrators look outward to find solutions for the increasing difficulties in America's troubled educational system, teachers practicing in their classrooms and collaborating in their schools, will be able to look inward for true emancipation. In doing so, they can find freedom from the bonds of a cold, harsh system where human warmth is shunned for fear of retribution. The possibilities in this research are radical and yet the method is gentle; the implications are broad but the techniques are simple. The potential effectiveness of these practices is

transformational, requiring only the willingness to create an inner shift in order to see an outer response. This process, rather than eliminating, encourages and facilitates human warmth in educational settings. For as we become closer to other human beings, we know more about them and in turn learn how best to help them achieve their goals. The relationship between love and knowledge is not dichotomous, but symbiotic (1998, Chapter lecture 10). For, as Goethe tells us, “One comes to know nothing beyond what one loves. And the deeper and more complete the knowledge, the stronger, more powerful and living must be one’s love and fervor” (Zajonc, 2006). As shown by the co-researchers of this project, the warm and delicate gaze of a teacher can be transformational in the classroom and is capable of creating a social vessel, which holds the loving pedagogical relationship between teachers and their students. When simple and effective practices, that are easy for busy teachers to integrate into a daily routine, are implemented and shared through networks of practitioner researchers, the quiet inner transformation of warmth sculpture in the classroom can become an emancipatory revolution!

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**APPENDIX A: CONTEMPLATIVE AND OBSERVATIONAL
EXERCISES AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Provided to co-researchers over the course of the 12-week study period

Week One: The First Impression

Observation Exercise 1

Introduction.

When we are familiar with someone or something, we often take its many complexities and characteristics for granted. This week, we will work to refresh our ability to notice anew even if we see someone every day. One scientist describes this act of seeing anew in the following way:

The aim is to make conscious the moment of first contact with a phenomenon—a moment when one’s sensibilities are most alive and open. Everyone has a first impression when experiencing something new, but this encounter is usually quickly forgotten as the thing becomes familiar and ordinary. Goethe’s approach suggests that we can consciously carry this impression throughout the course of the research process and allow it to develop and become more clear (Hoffman, 1998, p. 131).

See the assignment below to begin your own work back to the essential in your students.

Observation exercise.

If you have a new student in your class or if you are new to your whole class, this will be easy. The rest of us must think back to our first meeting with our students. Choose one or two students on which to focus for this week's inquiry. Take a few minutes to jot down your first impressions of each student here in the comment box beneath this introduction. REMEMBER TO USE SOME CODE NAME OR PSEUDONYM AND NOT THE STUDENT'S REAL NAME

Give yourself 3-5 minutes per student and try to capture the essence of what you noticed in that first meeting. It will be best to jot down a few notes when you are present in the room with that person. For those of your teaching online, describe whatever characteristics occurred to you in initial class sessions. For those of you whose class has not begun yet, recall former students for this exercise.

Try to avoid making judgments or drawing conclusions, but instead employ the use of *discernment*. (This is tricky but here is an example: JUDGMENT-"She has beautiful hair"; DISCERNMENT-"She has long, silky, sandy-blond hair that falls in loose ringlets around her shoulders." See the difference? Exact descriptions without value provide a clearer and more accurate picture.)

Only record the easily observable characteristics that are as free from judgment as possible. This description might include such things as hair color, eye color, facial features, height, gender, the sound of that person's voice, what they were wearing, their frequency of attendance or engagement, time of engagement, and other things you notice. If you teach totally online, perhaps you have seen a picture of the person that can inform this description. Provide as many details as you can but in a very short amount of time. In other words, describe in as much detail as possible the "cover of the book," but do not judge it!

Contemplative Exercise 1

Introduction.

As teachers, we sometimes make quick judgments about students as soon as we begin our work with them. We begin trying to "figure them out" right away. Often, once we have come to some initial conclusions, we think of a student in that same light each time we consider them, their work, or their capacity for growth.

Unless we bring to consciousness that we are actually doing this, we will continue to have superficial relationships. By considering some of the types of relationships we create in the classroom, we can begin to change the way we relate and allow room for transformation. **THREE SIMPLE THINGS:**

5. Maybe we really like a student and find them very easy to get along with.
6. Maybe we find it hard to get to know a student, they are quiet or do not reveal much about themselves, and then we do not feel we know them at all.
7. And then there are the "difficult" students. These are the ones that get to you, frustrate you, and always seem to be stirring up trouble in some way.

Contemplative exercise.

Take some time to consider an example student in your class. Find a student that fits each one of these 3 categories above. Visualize them one at a time. First, the "easy" student, then the "puzzling" student, then the "difficult" student. Say aloud and send towards each student in turn the following thoughts:

I wish you peace.

May you experience true joy.

May you flourish in your life.

Repeat these phrases as many times as needed for each student as you visualize them in turn. Answer the following questions in your posting. How did you experience this practice inwardly with each of the 3 students? Were there notable differences between each experience? Did you notice anything different about the way any of the students responded to you after you had done this? Did you interact with any of the students differently in the classroom after you had done this private work?

Journal Topic 1.

Post reflections in your online journal space about this week's inner work and your experience of it.

Week Two: Exact Sensorial Imagination

Observation Exercise 2

Introduction.

This week, your observations will help you to re-create an image of a student inside of your picturing consciousness. Goethe calls this activity, *exact sensorial imagination*. This second observational mode asks you to focus on the *relationships* between the empirical characteristics noted in stage one and on the time sequence in which they unfold.

When seeing a plant through such a technique for example, one comes to realize that the growth process is the relationship or connection between the contiguous plant organs we have been observing. The particulars dissolve inside the fluidity and flow of one movement that is the metamorphosis of the whole seen in our imagination.

We cannot usually see the growth process itself with the organ of our eyes. Likewise, the flower or fruit is not present during the first stages of growth and so is initially invisible to our view.

In order to “view” the relationships between each successive phase of development, we must bring the previously detailed observations of phenomenon into our imagination to re-create the image there. From a process of imaginative thinking, the *concept* of the plant, including its growth processes and relational aspects, is brought forth from within us through our own inner activity. During this second phase, our own inner world of thought has penetrated the outer world; that which is perceived by the senses in the way that water can penetrate the earth.

Click the assignment post section below for specific instructions. If you can post by Wednesday of the week, we will be able to have more conversation as a collective.

Observation exercise.

This week's work asks that you recreate the outer vision of the students within your picturing consciousness. Stay with one of the students from last week's observations. Go deeper with the phenomena.

Now, begin to imagine a process of *metamorphosis* taking place. Imagine the student back in time. Imagine how this person got to the current phase of development. What came before? Imagine the student as a much younger version of him or herself, as a young child, as a baby. Then, imagine them forward in time again, to where you see them today. Continuing on, imagine them into the future as far as you can. What will that sly smile turn into at middle age? How will the hair change? How will the voice be different? How will the spark in the eye manifest as an older person?

All of these exercises can be done even if you have never actually seen the student (if you teach online), by simply imagining what they *might* look like or how you imagine them to look based on your impressions of working with them. If, in your imagination of the person, you find parts are missing, place something there. If you do not know how tall they are, you get to decide. You have this power, and many others, as the creator of the imagination. Simply the intention you carry in performing the exercise as well as the detail with which you can achieve it, holds transformative elements for your relationship to the student.

Contemplative Exercise 2

Introduction.

The purpose of this week's contemplation is to assist you in strengthening your inner organs of perception. The exercise this week is analogous to the work you are doing with students during the observation exercise.

This exercise can be done over and over again. It can be done while you are waiting for a bus, driving in traffic, or sitting in the doctor's office. It will

help you to develop new organs for perceiving deeper qualities and needs in your students.

Contemplative exercise.

Here are the steps:

- Imagine that you are holding a seed in your hand. You should decide what type of seed it is, and be as specific as you are able.
- Imagine planting it.
- Think about all the elements that it needs in order to begin to grow into a healthy plant.
- Provide these elements in your imagination.
- See the plant sprouting, growing, and finally flourishing.
- Imagine the plant moving backwards from the flourishing seed-bearing blossom gradually back to the seed itself.
- The seed is again in your hand.

Post reflections about how this worked for you and any revelations you may have related to your students as a result of working with this image.

Journal Topic 2

Along with anything else you are noticing, focus at least one journal entry from the week on your own internal reactions to participating in the observation and contemplative exercises of this project so far. Here are some questions to consider for this week's journal:

- Do you find yourself resistant or hesitant to engage?
- What are the biggest obstacles for you in terms of full engagement?

- Do you find yourself judging the exercise before attempting it?
- Do you feel you have given it a fair chance to work for you?
- What is some of your inner monologue as you attempt the exercises?
- Have you been eagerly engaged in the practices or has it been a "chore" for you?
- What has been your biggest success in terms of the exercises?

Week Three: Formative Gestures

Observation Exercise 3

Introduction.

The third phase of our work with students moves deeper into distilling and intensifying the previous metamorphic movements as we consider them as “formative gestures” or “formative life-principles.” While a movement is simply motion, a *gesture* contains an indication of intention. Whatever the *idea* or the *plan* behind the formative movements of an organism, we can now begin to apprehend them through inner cognition. This apprehension is a process that takes place entirely within us. These gestures are not seen with the physical eyes, but with the organs of our newly developing inner vision. Through these new organs, hidden truths are revealed.

Observation exercise.

Consider a student and then adjust your inner gaze to see more deeply into the "formative gestures" or the creation impulses that are alive within this being you see before your mind's eye. Considering last week's work, when you imagined the student back through their growth and into childhood, now see more

deeply - *what were the specific conditions at work in every major phase of development?*

EXAMPLE: If you see a student who appears physically large and imposing but who walks with shuffling steps, who never lifts the foot but instead slides it along, who pulls hands inside of shirt sleeves so that fingers disappear, who hardly ever speaks; one might begin to see these gestures as having a relationship. The heaviness in the step may begin to relate to the missing hands - one might see *withdrawing*.

Now consider the whole student in light of this *withdrawing* gesture. Moving back in time, imagine what conditions may have caused the urge for withdrawing. Was it always this way? What other formative gestures were at work in various phases of growth? At what phase can you imagine the various gestures first developing?

You can try this once or several times with the same person, considering a different gesture each time. You can try this with various students, one time each. How you carry it out is up to you. Please indicate in your discussion post how you chose to go forward.

Remember to **just notice**. We are not trying to "fix" anyone. This is often our first impulse as helpers, doers, or teachers. Sometimes a student can consider "fixing" as a form of intrusion or a violent gesture. Let's assume that we do not need any answers, or an intervention, but just a better picture for ourselves. It is our need that we wish to fulfill, not that of the student. We need to see a wider and deeper view in order to bring our best selves into relationship with the *other*.

Contemplative Exercise 3

Introduction.

Meditation can be done in many ways. This week, I am providing a visual meditative exercise through an image that promises to evoke a sense of *activity* as we carefully consider its subject matter.

Contemplative exercise: Activity meditation.

Consider the image below (The Conversion of St. Paul – Parmigianino) in careful detail. It is rich with layers of significance for us and is alive with activity. First look at the image as a whole. Then, begin to note the use of color, intensity, polarity, movement, composition, drama, and anything else that seems important to you. As you do this, become aware of how these parts work together to serve the whole.

Since we are aware that there was intentionality in every part of the formation of this work, in letting go of the image itself, something deeper can penetrate us. After a careful look at the image, look away from it and let it all go.

Open yourself and your attention to allow an "afterimage" of this work to arise in you. We are not looking for another image or the original image itself, but rather now *we open ourselves to a sense of "activity" springing forth from the image*. What "activity" presents itself to you as a result of your considerations?

Journal Topic 3

In your online journal this week, describe the difficulties and successes you had in coming to an understanding of the "activity" that lies behind outer and inner phenomena.

Week Four: Distilling the "Holographic Principle" in the Other

Observation Exercise 4

Introduction.

Scientist Henri Bortoft describes the phenomenon behind the holographic principle: When a holograph is shattered, the entire image is contained within each individual piece. When looking at a fragment, we do not see only that portion of the holograph that has broken away from the whole, but the entirety of the image contained in each part. Similarly, as we carefully observe other individuals, our observations reveal patterns and truths about the entirety of the whole and contain a microcosmic window into the inner and outer structures of the observed.

Observation exercise.

This week, we move deeper into the phenomenological characteristics of our student(s) to find something of the "essence" of this person. As we look for the "*being(ness)*" of the other, we strive not to generalize or build an abstraction, but to notice that which is living at once in the whole as well as in each and every one of the parts, themselves reflecting also the whole.

What makes this person uniquely himself? When observing that which is "characteristic" of this person, how do we also notice an essential quality of that

gesture also permeating his or her entire "*being(ness)*"? Record and discuss your impressions in the space below.

Contemplative Exercise 4

Introduction.

As Goethe reminds us, one can only come to know that which one loves. This week we strive for at-oneness with the other. In doing so, we must maintain respect and gentleness in order to achieve a level of vulnerability in ourselves as teachers that creates intimacy between I and THOU. To help develop this capacity in ourselves, we perform a simple but important contemplative exercise using the image of a stone and a plant.

Contemplative exercise.

- 1) First, imagine a particular stone. Notice all of the outer characteristics about it, including temperature, weight, size, shape, texture, etc. Now, imagine yourself moving closer to this stone until you are inside of it. Note the qualities that arise for you. Let go of the outer characteristics now and simply allow yourself to "be" inside of this structure.
- 2) Second, imagine a plant. This can be any plant with which you are familiar. The more specific the better. Take notice of all its outer characteristics. Once this is clearly established, allow yourself to move into the plant. "Be" there and pay open attention to your experience there. What qualities arise for you?
- 3) Third, compare and describe the two experiences. How was it different for you to experience stone(ness) and plant(ness)? Describe the qualities of

stone(ness) and plant(ness) - what are the differences and the similarities you noted?

Journal Topic 4

This week's journal entry should focus on any difficulties or questions you have had in understanding or carrying out the instructions over the past four weeks. What has been your biggest obstacle in engaging fully in the exercises? What do you think could be helpful to know for others who take part in this program in the future?

Week Five: Embracing Uncertainty

Observation Exercise 5

Introduction.

A New Way Forward: As you may remember from my conversations with each of you, we have been working on a 4-step process. We will go through each step in succession 3 times during our 12 weeks of work together. We have completed the first "round" and are now back to the first step, which we began in our initial week of the project.

There are various names for the 4 steps and I thought that by providing you with some of the names I use for each step, it might help bring more clarity and provide a sort of mapped overview as we move through the next two "rounds." As indicated in the outline below I use several names for each of the 4 steps.

1) The first step can be called "object," "shape," "physical perception," "empirical phenomenon," or "earth." Note how we looked at a student based on outer characteristics, things that were easily observable with the senses. We tried to look without making judgments, allowing the student to be free. We tried to perceive and to do nothing more.

2) The second step can be called "image," "metamorphosis," "imagination," "scientific phenomenon," or "water." Here we conjured images of the student focusing on the relationship between the empirical characteristics that we had observed previously and in particular the process of development in both past and future. I think of these relationships as being in flow.

3) The third step can be called "activity," "gesture," "inspiration," "scientific phenomenon 2," or "air." In this section, we try to intensify our experience of the characteristics and then in that process of deepening, we begin to distill, out of these characteristics, an essential activity.

Here it helps me to add an "ing" to the end of what I have distilled. For example, "withdrawING," or even to make a verb out of a noun like "treeING," this quality or activity of "treeING" - what a tree does - we all know what this distillation is, we all know the activities involved in "treeING." As we become inspired, we breathe in knowledge of that which we observe as we draw closer to our subjects.

4) The fourth step can be called "agency," "social processes," "intuition," "pure phenomenon," or "fire/warmth." This is where we focus on the inner

essence of the student. Here we seek to know what makes Billy- Billy and not Jimmy - or to find his BillyNESS. This section is concerned with encountering the BEING in the subject.

We have been gradually moving there by beginning with the phenomena, the characteristics, and as we go deeper into them, we intensify, distill, and finally seek out the ESSENTIAL BEING of the subject (plant or person or anything else). Goethe calls this the "Urphänomen."

Knowing this final step to be a true communion with the subject of our observations, boundaries between subject/object begin to disappear, and we create "warmth sculpture" as we rely on our intuition to motivate us to action.

I have been providing a few carefully chosen contemplative exercises to help train and develop these capacities in each of us.

Observation exercise.

To participate in this first step, one must reach out to the phenomenon in an act of *looking* that is capable of producing extraordinarily accurate descriptions. Be careful to withhold judgments and hypotheses about the phenomenon and to focus very consciously on sensory phenomena. Standing back from the student and holding back the needs, desires, and prejudices of the observer is necessary. Do not extrapolate. In observing the external "facts" of the object, its separation from our own being becomes apparent as we embody an objective consciousness.

This week we will focus on only the hands of our students. Describe them, notice in great detail. Sketch them if you can. Feel them if you can. Try to notice the size, temperature, movement, sense of weight, and anything else you can see in them. If you teach online, ask your students to send you a picture of their hands, both palm and the back of the hand, so that you can see what they use to communicate with you. Post below about your observations.

Contemplative Exercise 5

Introduction.

The contemplative exercises for this second round of 4 weeks will each be designed to touch on all 4 steps of our process within one exercise. This week's work involves a 4-part bell sound meditation given by quantum physicist, contemplative practitioner, and author, Arthur Zajonc. Click below to allow Arthur to take you through the exercise. Practice this as many times as you feel is appropriate this week and near the end of the week, post below about your reflections on the experience.



Contemplative exercise.

(double click the speaker above to listen to the exercise)

Journal Topic 5

Has the information naming the 4 parts of our process helped you to grasp the whole in a new and more complete way this week?

Week Six: A Web of Relationships

Introduction

In order to “view” the relationships between each successive phase of development, we must bring the previously detailed observations of phenomenon from previous weeks, into our imagination to re-create the image there. From a process of imaginative thinking, the concept of this person, including growth processes and relational aspects, is brought forth from within us through inner activity. During this second phase, our own inner world of thought has penetrated the outer world, perceived by the senses in the way that water can penetrate the earth.

Observation Exercise 6

Introduction.

Think of your powers of observation this week as being like *water* as it seeps into the soil to penetrate the outer forms of earth and plant organization.

Observation exercise.

This week's observation takes place away from the physical presence of the student. This week, we will draw rough sketches of the student. You may choose to draw hands, face, feet, the whole person, or any part of this student that you have observed. You can create one or many drawings. Your drawing skill is not the focus of this exercise, but your accuracy in observing. Even if you cannot make the drawing really resemble the person, the goal is that you focused intently on the student and attempted this exercise. If you have computer savvy, you may scan or photograph your drawing work and upload it for colleagues to view. If

you would like to keep this drawing private, you can upload it into your blog/journal, and it will be shared only with me.

Contemplative Exercise 6

Introduction.

Contemplate the interactions between water and plant.

Contemplative exercise.

Choose a specific plant. This may be one that you have and care for or an imaginary one. See its outer shape, pay attention to its leafing pattern, color, size, shape, and other important external attributes. Next, imagine that the soil in which the plant grows is dry and in need of moisture. Provide that moisture to the plant. This can be someone coming along with a watering can, a nearby stream or body of water sending an underground source to the plant's area, or a nice drenching rain. Imagine various elements that the water carries to the plant that are essential for its growth. How do these elements work their way from the outer structure of the plant to its inner life? Imagine the plant flourishing due to this interaction.

Journal Exercise 6

Focus this week's entry on the importance of penetrating the outer form of students/teachers/education to access inner process. Remember, to access your journal space, hover over the "collaboration" tab at the top of the frame, and click "blogs" from the drop down menu. Once there, click "visit your class blog" at the top of that section and you will be taken to your private journal for posting.

Week Seven: Non-Objective Rendering

Observation Exercise 7

Introduction.

Creating warmth sculpture requires one to become attuned to the sculptural, aesthetic, and artistic principles at work within social process. What was originally objective, clearly separate and outside of the observer, now begins to take up residence on the inside of the observer's consciousness.

Observation exercise.

Bring a student into your mind's eye. This student has many outer characteristics that you have been noticing. Review some of those now. Review the student's quality of movement - is it choppy, fluid, or determined? Review the personal energy they exude. Review the way they speak. Using a few adjectives, how would you describe the quality, which seems to inspire this person's way of being? These should be based strongly on your observations of outer phenomena, not your judgments, but your observations of actual movements, spoken interactions, and the way you have experienced the energetic presence of this student.

Work only with one or two of these adjectives and let go of the outer characteristics. Write down the words you choose. Are they exactly what you mean? If not, adjust them. Now you have a few simple words that describe some energetic qualities of the person you have observed. Take these words into the contemplative exercise for the week.

Contemplative Exercise 7

Introduction.

As the observer moves more deeply into the specific phenomenon of the organism, he finds that both the outer physical object and its hidden inner workings arise very clearly inside his thoughts, feelings, and imaginative life.

Contemplative exercise.

First, prepare yourself and your space with your favorite art materials - pen, paper, pencil, paints, colored leads, crayons, clay, whatever you like.

Begin with the few words you have decided upon as a result of your observations of a particular student in observation #7. Consider only the words you have chosen. Go deeply into these words. Repeat them inwardly to yourself. Allow color, shape, form, movement, depth, space, feeling, and emotion to arise before your mind's eye. When you have immersed yourself in this experience for a time, use your art materials to express some of what you have visualized. These images should be non-objective - they are not of specific people or objects but show only qualities. Allow your creative inspiration to lead you. Do not judge what you are doing. Let yourself go with these qualities and do not impose too much thinking or cognition on your results. If you are able, photograph and post the images you create. If you are not able, try to describe what they look like in words.

Journal Topic 7

Describe your experience with this week's process of artistic engagement inspired by the qualities of your student.

Remember, to access your journal space, be sure that you are logged into the “warmth sculpture project” class space, hover over the "collaboration" tab at the top of the frame, and click "blogs" from the drop down menu. Once there, click "visit your class blog" at the top of that section and you will be taken to your private journal for posting.

Week Eight: Experiencing Intuitive Perception

Observation Exercise 8

Introduction.

Outwardly, we experience warmth through heat, but inwardly we sense “the warmth of identification that one feels when he or she has made contact with another living being’s ‘inner impulse’. You will recall the exercise from a few weeks ago that directed us to sense the difference between the inner nature of “plant” and “stone.” You attempted to enter into each of these natural elements and describe the qualities you perceived from that perspective.

Observation exercise.

This week’s exercise asks that you imagine the difference between the inner nature of two people. Such investigation requires several pre-requisites, such as respect, gentleness, and humility on the part of the observer.

- Choose two students with some contrasting qualities

- In the same way you imagined yourself “inside” of a stone, imagine how it might be to experience the world from within student A.
- Next, do the same with student B.
- Sense what archetypal or essential qualities make student A him or herself and what makes student B so clearly different and distinct in him or herself.

Describe these differences. What new information did you gain about your students from this exercise?

Contemplative Exercise 8

Introduction.

As the observer moves more deeply into the specific phenomenon of the organism, he finds that both the outer physical object and its hidden inner workings arise very clearly inside his thoughts, feelings, and imaginative life.

Contemplative exercise.

Looking again at the world of nature, consider a blue spruce tree and an apple tree. You know that there are many aspects that make each tree distinct, recognizable as itself and not the other, and different from any other sort of tree. You do not have to know very much about trees to realize this truth. Think of all the differences you can. Many are apparent by just looking or remembering trees you have seen. Consider the characteristics that you can observe outwardly, but also imagine others that reside on the inside of the tree. What do you imagine about the sap, when and why the leaves do or do not fall from the tree, the gesture of the each of the leaf forms as related to the gesture of the entire tree, and

consider the fruit of each tree. How long do you think it takes a blue spruce to grow to maturity? What about an apple? Describe each tree's relationship to the earth, to water, to the air. What is the relationship of each tree to the element of warmth? Do not look anything up. Just contemplate these questions and then post your thoughts about each tree.

Journal Topic 8

Describe your understanding of the 4th step of uncovering the “archetypal essence” of the observed that we have practiced this week.

Remember, to access your journal space, be sure that you are logged into the “warmth sculpture project” class space, hover over the "collaboration" tab at the top of the frame, and click "blogs" from the drop down menu. Once there, click "visit your class blog" at the top of that section and you will be taken to your private journal for posting.

Week Nine: Standing Back and Withholding Desires

Introduction

We are entering the last four weeks, or the last “round” of our 4-step process. You will note that for the remaining weeks, we are changing our format in two ways. First, our contemplative exercise has now become our observation exercise. If you have practiced the exercises of the past weeks, you are already becoming attuned to the differences in the steps and also the differences you have experienced in relating to your students.

To separate out each step of the process we are working on has been somewhat artificial because in practical use, each step often leads directly to the

next and merges into it before we realize that it has happened. For that reason, we will allow all 4 steps to unfold naturally, each week for the next 4 weeks, choosing one student on which to focus each week.

The adjustment in the process may also give you a sense for how you will be able to use these exercises in your own classrooms on a regular basis without much effort on your part, and without taking much time. Still, you will likely achieve a great benefit when it comes to how much more you can sense in your students and how your pedagogical relationships deepen.

Contemplative Observation Exercise 9

OBJECT: As you greet your students this week, keep alive a "fresh" and open mind and heart that is easy to bring forward when you first meet someone. This "freshness of first meeting" is your goal now for EVERY meeting. Withhold your preconceptions, prejudices, suppositions, and desires as related to your students. Allow them space to be recreated anew each time they are in your presence. Choose one of your students and take special note of this "freshness" in that person.

IMAGE: After class, or at home in the evening, imagine your student. Recreate in your mind's eye what he looked like, what he said, what he wore, how he moved, and anything else that seems important. Do not try to extrapolate. Just recall the image.

ACTIVITY: As you observe the student in class, and later as you contemplate him, notice how various characteristics (voice, walk, facial features, gestures, attitude, manner of dress, hand shape, the things chosen for discussion, pencil

grip, likes and dislikes, etc.) seem to not only have relationship as parts in creating the whole but also actually hold the entire picture of the whole in just that section; like in the holograph we studied in previous weeks.

AGENCY: In considering this student as a whole individual, who has many complex parts, that all seem to lead you back to the whole, try to identify an "essential" or "archetype" for this particular student, without which, this student could not be himself. Write this in a word, draw it in a picture, or describe it with a written description, create a poem or short verse about it, or express it in whatever way you find fits your need.

Describe and relate how this process worked for you.

Journal Topic 9

Reflect on this week's shifting process. How did it work to have all the steps working at once?

Use the survey collector on the website, or copy this link to your browser to access the survey monkey collector for this week.

Week Ten: Imaginative Thinking

Introduction

The second week of our last round continues our practice of putting all the steps together. This week we focus on your most excellent students, the timing that works best for you in each step, and the development of your ability to form accurate imaginative pictures of your students. As we continue in the last 3 weeks of our work together, continue to put all the steps together each week and

combine observation of your student as a contemplative practice. Please share anything you may have added to the process that might be helpful for others who are learning the techniques.

Choose a new student this week for the focus of your exercise. Allow yourself to focus this week on the "easy to teach" "excellent" student who is seen as capable and trouble-free. As teachers, we often focus intensely on those students who bring us puzzling questions about how to best help in their learning process, while those who seem to be self-sufficient could also benefit from our loving and attentive gaze in the classroom setting. Use this opportunity to attune yourself to one of your most amazing, talented, and well-behaved students. Share anything you may discover that you did not know before.

Contemplative Observation Exercise 10

As a reminder, here are the steps in order. You may find that you can now more quickly move through each of the steps. Allow this to happen. Comment on the timing that seems to work best for you. How long do you prefer to stay with step one, for example.

OBJECT: As you greet your students this week, keep alive a "fresh" and open mind and heart that is easy to bring forward when you first meet someone. This "freshness of first meeting" is your goal now for EVERY meeting. Withhold your preconceptions, prejudices, suppositions, and desires as related to your students. Allow them space to be recreated anew each time they are in your presence. Choose one of your students and take special note of this "freshness" in that person.

IMAGE: After class, or at home in the evening, imagine your student. Recreate in your mind's eye what he looked like, what he said, what he wore, how he moved, and anything else that seems important. Do not try to extrapolate. Just recall the image.

ACTIVITY: As you observe the student in class, and later as you contemplate him, notice how various characteristics (voice, walk, facial features, gestures, attitude, manner of dress, hand shape, the things chosen for discussion, pencil grip, likes and dislikes, etc.) seem to not only have relationship as parts in creating the whole but also actually hold the entire picture of the whole in just that section; like in the holograph we studied in previous weeks.

AGENCY: In considering this student as a whole individual, who has many complex parts, that all seem to lead you back to the whole, try to identify an "essential" or "archetype" for this particular student, without which, this student could not be himself. Write this in a word, draw it in a picture, or describe it with a written description, create a poem or short verse about it, or express it in whatever way you find fits your need.

Describe and relate how this process worked for you.

Journal Topic 10

This week's journal entry will focus on your growing ability to recreate an imaginative picture of the student in your mind's eye. Is your accuracy growing? How are your powers of observation developing?

Use the survey collector on the website, or copy this link to your browser to access the survey monkey collector for this week.

Week Eleven: Activity

Introduction

While moving forward with all 4 steps this week, we will also stop to focus on an essential characteristic that stands out as indicative of your student's way of being. This week, choose that student who does their work but quietly recedes into the background. In combining observation of your student as a contemplative practice this week select a brand new student for the focus of your exercise.

Allow yourself to focus this week on that student who may show average or even above average performance, but who seems to want to recede into the background. This student may not put himself out to participate in classroom discussions, voice strong opinions, or ask questions.

As you move through the steps, attempt to focus on and discover one essential characteristic that could reveal the "archetypal essence" of this student. What discoveries and new realizations open up for you with this student as a result of identifying this characteristic?

Contemplative Observational Exercise 11

Again, the steps in order are as follows:

OBJECT: As you greet your students this week, keep alive a "fresh" and open mind and heart that is easy to bring forward when you first meet someone. This "freshness of first meeting" is your goal now for EVERY meeting. Withhold your preconceptions, prejudices, suppositions, and desires as related to your students. Allow them space to be recreated anew each time they are in your

presence. Choose one of your students and take special note of this "freshness" in that person.

IMAGE: After class, or at home in the evening, imagine your student. Recreate in your mind's eye what he looked like, what he said, what he wore, how he moved, and anything else that seems important. Do not try to extrapolate. Just recall the image.

ACTIVITY: As you observe the student in class, and later as you contemplate him, notice how various characteristics (voice, walk, facial features, gestures, attitude, manner of dress, hand shape, the things chosen for discussion, pencil grip, likes and dislikes, etc.) seem to not only have relationship as parts in creating the whole but also actually hold the entire picture of the whole in just that section; like in the holograph we studied in previous weeks.

AGENCY: In considering this student as a whole individual, who has many complex parts, that all seem to lead you back to the whole, try to identify an "essential" or "archetype" for this particular student, without which, this student could not be himself. Write this in a word, draw it in a picture, or describe it with a written description, create a poem or short verse about it, or express it in whatever way you find fits your need.

Journal Entry 11

This week's journal entry should address the power of experiencing the "archetypal essence" of the other. What has opened up for you as a result of this focus? What has been revealed about your practice and about an observational/contemplative practice in the classroom?

Use the survey collector on the website, or copy this link to your browser to access the survey monkey

Week Twelve: Sensing the Whole

Introduction

The final week of our project focuses on the elements of warmth, creative potency, and the sculptural nature of the work we have been engaged in. This week's exercise should not be focused on one individual student, but on your class as a whole. Imagine the entire class as a "being" with collective desires, thoughts, feelings, skills, and capacities.

Sense the warmth that moves back and forth between you and your students. Note your own response to this sense of warmth. How do you make practical use of these delicate empirical phenomena? How does your awareness of such living forces help you to shape and mold the warmth substance that exists in a sensitive and artistic manner? Notice how you can consciously begin to work with awareness and purpose in this new realm.

When you are tuned into these nuances, you are able to accurately intuit and become more capable of appropriate and creative responses in the moment. If you have examples of your developing ability to sense and sculpt with these forces, describe them for us.

Contemplative Observational Exercise 12

Again, the steps in order are as follows:

OBJECT: As you greet your students this week, keep alive a "fresh" and open mind and heart that is easy to bring forward when you first meet someone. This "freshness of first meeting" is your goal now for EVERY meeting. Withhold your preconceptions, prejudices, suppositions, and desires as related to your students. Allow them space to be recreated anew each time they are in your presence. Choose one of your students and take special note of this "freshness" in that person.

IMAGE: After class, or at home in the evening, imagine your student. Recreate in your mind's eye what he looked like, what he said, what he wore, how he moved, and anything else that seems important. Do not try to extrapolate. Just recall the image.

ACTIVITY: As you observe the student in class, and later as you contemplate him, notice how various characteristics (voice, walk, facial features, gestures, attitude, manner of dress, hand shape, the things chosen for discussion, pencil grip, likes and dislikes, etc.) seem to not only have relationship as parts in creating the whole but also actually hold the entire picture of the whole in just that section; like in the holograph we studied in previous weeks.

AGENCY: In considering this student as a whole individual, who has many complex parts, that all seem to lead you back to the whole, try to identify an "essential" or "archetype" for this particular student, without which, this student could not be himself. Write this in a word, draw it in a picture, or describe it with

a written description, create a poem or short verse about it, or express it in whatever way you find fits your need.

Journal Topic 12

Describe the element of warmth that has been created between you and your student(s) and how it serves to activate the creative potency in your student(s) and within the relationships you are building with them.

Use the survey collector on the website, or copy this link to your browser to access the survey monkey

APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTION TO THE INQUIRY

Bringing Forth Warmth Sculpture in the Teacher-Student Relationship:

A Reflexive Action Research Inquiry

Nancy Kresin-Price, a doctoral student at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, is conducting a participative action research study on teacher/student relationship as a potential transformative agent in the areas of teacher and student discovery, fulfillment, and success and is in the process of assembling a team of co-researcher/teachers interested in personal and professional transformative experience. The work of this core group will provide detailed findings over the course of twelve weeks as participants endeavor to exemplify and embody transformational warmth in the real world classroom between teacher and student.

Proceeding from a four-step process of contemplative and observational exercises, those engaged in the study will explore their own capacity to carefully contemplate students in order to better see, hear, and sense their needs. The heart of this inquiry will address the central importance of warmth in the student-teacher relationship as a source of transformation for both participants. I hypothesize that if teachers are able to view students in their human wholeness, complete with their archetypal selves intact, then a true, artistic, and compassionate connection can be made between students and teachers. From the depth of this encounter, personal and academic discovery, fulfillment, and success become more possible.

Twentieth century German artist Joseph Beuys articulated the principles of an art form in which every human being is empowered to look upon his or her own life as a work of art. Beuys called this art form “social sculpture,” which arises when “moral substance” generated between human beings allows us to form community. Elaborating this concept further, Beuys believed that when people become closer to each other, they are better able to work together for the future. He refers to this process as “warmth sculpture,” which comes about “through the fact that each individual turns lovingly to the other, with warmth of heart.” Beuys considered warmth sculpture a precondition for transcendence of the individual and formation of community. As an artist, Beuys was also inspired by Goethe’s work in the sciences, especially by his system of observation that led to the recognition of a personal and social warmth element. This social warmth, he claimed, is “really exactly the same as the actual substance of love”

During this research study, teachers will attempt to attune to specific student characteristics on an increasingly deeper level. In doing so, they will begin an inner process of building “new organs of perception” with which to perceive more completely. Through an acquired aesthetic sensibility, itself created by the very performance it intends to study, participants will create transformational classroom experiences fueled by recursion and reflexivity. Each co-researcher will document impressions, experiences, and observational reports of student improvement and success during the period of the study, particularly those springing from the social-emotional realm. The study offers each co-

researcher/teacher an introduction to a unique set of tools for use in focusing on important daily questions while engaged in their own classroom practice.

Teachers will be provided with specific weekly contemplative and observational exercises as they work with their own students and will be free to adjust and hone the exercises to fit their circumstances in any way that seems most beneficial. Each week, co-researchers will log into an online environment, where together, we will create a community of inquiry. Here, each co-researcher will be asked to describe how he used the given exercises for that week, what he may have changed, how he organized the steps etc. Each will then be asked to journal about perceptions, to describe impressions of the effectiveness of the exercises, and to discuss any problems or difficulties that arose in the process of inquiry that week. The online portion of the study will take as little as 15 minutes per week, however, there is no outside limit to how much time can be spent in the discussion groups if teachers begin to find the conversations supportive in their teaching practice.

Participation as a co-researcher in this **12-week** project is entirely voluntary. By agreeing to participate, co-researchers can expect to spend approximately **1 hour and 45 minutes per week** engaged in the various components of the program along with **one half hour introductory** and **one half hour summary** survey/interview session for **a total of 22 hours** spent on this research over the entire **12 weeks**. Each participant will be expected to take part in private online discussions with other researchers and to record weekly reflections about participation in **5-10 minutes per day** of contemplative

exercises and about observations of self and students in an online journal. Journal entries will only be accessible to individual co-researchers and Nancy Kresin-Price as the principle researcher. Among other inquiries, teachers may be asked to provide information about struggles and questions related to student interactions and ongoing work in their classroom. Each teacher will be asked to complete a weekly rating scale about the efficacy of that week's exercises and may be contacted for a follow up interview to clarify or elaborate upon study responses. Teachers are free to refuse to answer any question(s) or to end participation in the study at any time. Teachers may end an orientation or research session or participation in contemplative and observational exercises at any time if they feel uncomfortable.

Participants will be given an opportunity to refine an understanding of the topic discussed and to talk with the principle researcher and other participants in the online environment about mutual experiences of the process including questions about the project or its affects on self or on students. No prior preparation is required for any part of this study. While participating in this study will not benefit a teacher personally in any material way, it may provide the opportunity to reflect on experiences with and observations of students and to acquire mindfulness or contemplative techniques that could be meaningful and that could contribute to individual knowledge in this field of research.

Written or oral communications within the context of this research will be included in research notes, but the principle researcher will always keep teacher names confidential and separate from the notes, which will be kept in a locked file

cabinet. During participation in the online environment, each team member will be assigned a screen name that will insure identification security. The master code list of names and screen names will be kept in a locked file cabinet, to which only the principle researcher will have access. Teachers will be asked not to use names or other identifying information for students in the context of discussions or journal reflections. The information given may be used in research presentations, in the research papers, and in the dissertation, where no names or any identifying information will be indicated.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. Would you like to explore a simple new method of improving the teacher-student relationship?
2. Do you believe that the teacher-student relationship lies at the heart of a student's educational success?
3. Are you currently engaged in weekly teaching of a class of students in grade 1-12, or university undergraduate students?
4. Are you willing to spend from 5-10 minutes 4-7 times per week practicing contemplative inquiry outside of your classroom?
5. Do you have or can you set up an email address for ease of correspondence?
6. Are you willing to openly share feedback and reflections about possible changes, obstacles, or discoveries relative to engagement in these daily practices for at least 15 minutes per week?
7. Are you willing to spend 15 minutes per week to post reflections online for a period of time (6-12 weeks)?
8. Are you available for two, 30-minute phone or online conversation/interview sessions prior to and subsequent to completing the project?
9. Do you have consistent weekly access to a computer and the Internet?
10. Do you feel comfortable with an online environment/learning community?
11. Do you feel comfortable posting personal reflections and dialoguing with 12-15 other participants in a closed online forum?

12. Do you have openness to practicing mindfulness techniques?
13. Do you feel that there are a number of improvements to be made in the academic and personal lives of students in your care through a deeper relationship with their teacher?
14. Are you able to articulate questions you may have about student-teacher relationships?
15. Are you open to personal and professional transformative experience?
16. Would you like to participate in this research?

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT STEPS

Recruitment Steps In Order:

- Send informational flyer to potential participants
- Send informational letter about participation in the project to those who express interest
- Qualify potential teacher-researchers
- Select and notify teachers who will participate in the research
- Send Participant Packet containing:

- Welcome and introductory letter
- Informed consent and confidentiality statements
- An orientation to the online environment
- Private screen name and password assignment

- Receive signed consent forms from participants
 - Schedule and conduct orientation session and initial phone interview
-

APPENDIX E: CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Your privacy with respect to the information you disclose during participation in this study will be protected within the limits of the law. However, there are circumstances where a researcher is required by law to reveal information, usually for the protection of a patient, research participant, or others. A report to the police department or to the appropriate protective agency is required in the following cases:

1. If, in the judgment of the researcher, a research participant becomes dangerous to himself or herself or others (or their property), and revealing the information is necessary to prevent the danger;
2. If there is suspected child abuse, in other words if a child under 16 has been a victim of a crime or neglect;
3. If there is suspected elder abuse, in other words, if a woman or man age 60 or older has been victim of a crime or neglect.

If a report is required, the researcher will discuss its contents and possible consequences with the patient or research participant.

APPENDIX F: BILL OF RIGHTS FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

As a research participant in this project, you have the right to

- Be treated with dignity and respect;
- Be given a clear description of the purpose of the study and what is expected of you as a participant;
- Be told of any benefits or risks to you that can be expected from participating in the study;
- Know the researchers training and experience;
- Ask any questions you may have about the study;
- Decide to participate or not without any pressure from the researcher or his or her assistants;
- Have your privacy protected within the limits of the law;
- Refuse to answer any research question, refuse to participate in any part of the study, or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative effects to you;
- Be given a description of the overall results of the study upon request.
- Discuss any concerns or file a complaint about the study with the Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

APPENDIX G: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

The Warmth Sculpture Project

Nancy Kresin-Price, a doctoral student at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco, California, is conducting an action research study on teacher/student relationship as a vehicle for transformation. The study will explore a teacher's capacity to carefully contemplate students using a four-step observational process to deepen a teacher's capacity to perceive more completely. It will also document teacher impressions of student improvement and success during the period of the study. Data will be gathered from the experiences and observational reports of co-researcher/teachers, offering each the opportunity to be introduced to a unique set of professional development tools for use in focusing on important daily questions while engaged in their own classroom practice.

Your participation as a co-researcher in this **12-week** project is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can expect to spend approximately **1 hour and 45 minutes per week** engaged in the various components of the program along with **one half hour introductory** and **one half hour summary** survey/interview session for a **total of 22 hours** spent on this research over the entire 12 weeks. During this time, you will take part in private online asynchronous discussions with other researchers and will record your weekly reflections in an online journal. In the journal, you will record personal impressions about your experience with a set of contemplative exercises (on which you should expect to spend **5-10 minutes daily**), as well as observations of yourself and your students in the context of your own classroom. These observations will be based on questions and prompts to be posed to you by the researcher. Your journal entries will only be accessible by you and Nancy Kresin-Price. You will be asked to participate in a phone interview prior to beginning the research and will be asked for

responses to follow up questions after completion of the research, to clarify or elaborate upon your experiences during the project. You are free to refuse to answer any question(s) or to end your participation in the study at any time. You may end an orientation or research session or your participation in contemplative and observational exercises at any time if you feel uncomfortable. While participating in this study will not benefit you personally in any material way, it may give you the opportunity to reflect on experiences with and observations of students in your classes and to acquire mindfulness or contemplative techniques that could be meaningful to you, and that could contribute to your knowledge in this field of research.

This research process, the contemplative exercises, the student observation sessions, the weekly journal and discussions, or the summary of the study may touch sensitive areas for you; some discomfort may arise from discussing a situation that might be, or may have been, personally challenging. Nancy Kresin-Price will be available before, during, and after the process to talk about your concerns, and to facilitate a referral to a psychotherapist should such a need arise. She can be contacted directly through email at [*email address withheld for privacy*]. The study involves the collection and possible inclusion of information from the following sources:

- I. Your written documents that include an online personal reflection journal. You should expect to spend at least **10 minutes per week** on this journal but you may use as much time as needed in order that the journal is most instructive and helpful to you in your practice.
- II. Weekly online discussion groups relative to a selection of weekly contemplative and observational exercises performed both in and outside of your own classroom. You should expect to spend at least **10 minutes per week** in discussion with other project participants but you may use as much time as you need to engage on a level that is most productive for you.
- III. Completion of a weekly rating scale that documents your experience of the effectiveness of this program. This scale will be completed through an online

survey instrument, which will be emailed to you at the end of each week. You can expect to spend **10-15 minutes per week** on this task.

- IV. A personal conversation or interview with the researcher prior to beginning the research regarding your own work with students and what you hope to find through your participation in this project. This introductory conversation is expected to last for **one session of 20-45 minutes** depending on your questions and needs as you orient yourself to the materials and procedures of the project.
- V. Your summary comments at the conclusion of this study regarding your thoughts about the effectiveness of the techniques you applied or invented during participation. The initial summary comments will be submitted online through an online survey instrument. You can expect to spend **one session of 15-30 minutes** engaged in answering these few questions depending on how thorough and comprehensive you wish to make your responses. You may also request a brief (**10 minute**) phone conversation if you wish, to make comments to or ask questions directly of the researcher.
- VI. Your private email or phone communications with the researcher regarding questions you may have about the project or its affects on you or on your students. Such communications can be expected to use **minimal time if needed** at all.

The things you say or write, within the context of this research, will be included in research notes, but the researcher will always keep your name confidential and separate from the notes, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. During your participation in the online environment, you will be assigned a screen name that will keep your identity secure. The master list of names and screen names will be kept in a locked file cabinet to which only Nancy Kresin-Price will have access. You will be asked not to use names or other identifying information for your students in your discussions or journals. The information you give may be used in research presentations, in research papers, and in the dissertation, where no names or any identifying information will be used. What is said in the online environment will not be revealed to any school officials,

students, or parents of your students at any time. Your confidentiality will always be protected within the limits of the law. (See Appendix E for the Confidentiality Statement).

All information you contribute will be held in strict confidence. Upon completion of the project, the online data will be printed out and the virtual data will be disposed of in a secure manner. The printout of online journals and discussion sessions will be kept in a locked file cabinet to which only Nancy Kresin-Price has access. Your name, your city, your school name, or other identifying information will not be included in the research reports. Your request to omit from the report particular details that you specify to the researcher will be honored. Nancy Kresin-Price will also elicit from you other measures that you deem appropriate to further safeguard your confidentiality and the confidentiality of your students and school.

If possible, the research results will be shared with you as a validity and reliability check on Nancy Kresin-Price's analysis of the data.

If you have concerns or questions regarding your rights as a co-researcher/participant in this research, or if you feel that you have been placed at risk, you may report them --anonymously, if you wish – to the Chair, Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA, 94103.

I, _____, consent to participate in the teacher-student relationship action research study conducted by Nancy Kresin-Price of the California Institute of Integral Studies.

I certify that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning the project procedures and other matters, and that I have been advised that I am free to

withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I read and understood the Confidentiality Statement and the Bill of Rights for Research Participants.

I hereby give my written consent to participate in this project with the understanding that such consent does not waive any of my legal rights; nor does it release the researcher or any employee or agent thereof from liability for negligence.

Signature

Date

If you would like to receive a written summary of the results of the study, please provide an address where it can be sent to you.

Street

City

State

Zip

APPENDIX H: PRE-STUDY SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS

1. Describe your professional goals that you feel most closely align with the focus of this research. (This opening will help to gauge the participant's understanding of the research and can provide an opportunity for me to give clarification.)
2. Describe how you envision that this research might be helpful to you in the context of your work with students. (This is a follow up question after some initial discussion prompted by the first question that will allow us to measure how well the expectations were met at the end of the project.)
3. Describe any experience you have with contemplative practice. (Such things as length of time, methods, experiences either positive or negative, attitudes, or level of openness might be discussed here.)
4. What is your understanding and experience of the concept of “pedagogical love” as a warm emotional regard and moral caring relationship between teacher and student in a pedagogical context? (i.e.; Do you love your students? Are you apprehensive about connecting “love” to your work with students due to connotations of inappropriate sexual conduct? What do you think parent expectations are of you relative to “loving” their children?)
5. What concerns or questions do you have about this study? (This is designed to provide an opening to discuss any concerns, clarifications, or unexpected issues related to participation in the study.)

APPENDIX I: ONLINE CODE OF CONDUCT

Online conduct should be guided by common sense and respect for other users (whether or not registered with the Service) and for the employees and representatives of the Network Owner and the Technology Licensor, as well as respect for the laws, statutes and regulations that would apply to one's conduct in the real (i.e., offline) world. Inappropriate behavior or illegal activities identified on and/or in connection with the Service will not be tolerated. Please be advised that we will terminate the Account(s) of anyone who engages in inappropriate behavior or illegal activity on and/or in connection with the Service, and we and the Technology Licensor shall be free to cooperate with law enforcement officials with respect to any illegal activities or actionable conduct.

**APPENDIX J: POST-STUDY SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
QUESTIONS**

1. Which of your professional goals was met through participation in this study? (In reference to the first pre-study question, participants will be given an opportunity to reflect upon whether the study helped them to meet any professional goals.)
2. In what ways was your participation in this study helpful in your work with students? (In this question, the participants will note how participation may have improved their work with students.)
3. Describe your overall experience with the mindfulness techniques you practiced during this project. (This will help to assess the depth, difficulty, and efficacy of the participant's contemplative practice.)
4. Did your understanding and/or experience of the concept of "pedagogical love," as a warm emotional regard and moral caring relationship between teacher and student in the classroom, change or transform as a result of your participation in this research?
5. How do you intend to use what you learned during this study in the future? (This will allow me to know whether the participant intends to use any of these techniques, including action research, in their future practice.)

**APPENDIX K: CO-RESEARCHERS DRAWINGS OF STUDENTS AFTER
OBSERVATION**



Figure K1. Student Drawing by Brave Earth



Figure K2. Student Drawing by Moon Rose

APPENDIX L: WEEKLY FIVE POINT LIKERT SCALE

The following scale, and the supporting open-ended questions to solicit observational and experiential evidence in the three main areas of focus, will be administered at the end of each week to measure ease and effectiveness of each exercise in the 12-week series.

Section A: Contemplative exercises

A1.) This week's stated goal in the contemplative practice you engaged in was *(INSERT STATED GOAL FROM THE WEEK)*. In measuring your progress toward the stated goals of this week's contemplative exercise, how would you characterize your achievement and level of consistency?

1 = Did not achieve the goal

2 = Don't know whether or not the goal was achieved

3 = Achieved but with little consistency

4 = Achieved with some consistency

5 = Achieved with high level of consistency

A2.) What evidence did you observe during your contemplative practice to support the answer you provided in A1?

A3.) What was your greatest surprise about the contemplative practice this week?

Section B: Teacher work with students

B1.) Regardless of whether or not you achieved the goals of this week's contemplative exercise and regardless of the level of consistency you were able to bring to its practice, in comparison to a typical week, did you feel your work with students this week was:

1 = Much Less Effective

2 = Somewhat Less Effective

3 = No Different

4 = Somewhat More Effective

5 = Much More Effective

B2.) What evidence did you observe during your work with students to support the answer you provided in B1?

B3.) What was your greatest surprise about your work with students this week?

Section C: Observation of students

C1.) Regardless of your own practice of this week's exercise, would you say that your student's overall classroom performance (which may include academic, social/emotional, or behavioral aspects) was:

1 = Greatly Diminished

2 = Somewhat Diminished

3 = No Different

4 = Somewhat Improved

5 = Greatly Improved

C2.) What evidence did you observe in your students to support the answer you provided in C1?

C3.) What was your greatest surprise while observing your students this week?

APPENDIX M: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT TRACKING CHART

TABLE M1: RESEARCH PARTICIPATION TRACKING
 Researcher Participation Tracking Chart Created by Author

Legend:

X in any box = Element Completed;
 Numbers in any box = multiple entries

O = Observation Exercise
 C = Contemplative Exercise
 J = Journal Entry
 S = Weekly Survey
 E = Email Communication

#	Participants	Completed phone interview	Intro Post Feb 4-6	Participation Week 1					Participation Week 2				
				O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E
1	BIG LOVE	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	2	X	3
2	DREAM FORCE	X	X										
3	BRAVE EARTH	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
4	PEACE PATH	X	X	X	X	X							
5	FLAME BIRD	X	X	X		X			X				
6	WILD SHORE	X		X					X	X	X	X	
7	LIGHT DOVE	X		X	X		2						
8	BLUE DANCER	X	X				4						X
9	AIR SONG	X	X	X	X	4	X		X				
10	CALM CANYON	X	X		X			X					3
11	SMILING STREAM	X	X	X		X							X
12	MOON ROSE	X	2	X	X	2	X		X	X	X	X	

#	Participation Week 3					Participation Week 4					Participation Week 5					Participation Week 6					Participation Week 7					
	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	
1	X	X		X				X			X	X				X	X		X		X					
2																										
3	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	3	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X		X		
4		X		X			X																			
5		X		X						X		X													X	
6											X			2												
7																										
8																										
9		X			2					X																
10					2																					
11	X				2					X																

12	X	X	4	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
#	Participation Week 8					Participation Week 9					Participation Week 10					Participation Week 11					Participation Week 12				
	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E	O	C	J	S	E
1						X			X		X			X					X						3
2																									
3	X	X		X		X			X				X					2							3
4																									
5											X				2	X					X				
6																									
7																									
8																									
9																									
10																									
11																									1
12	X	X		X		X							X		2			X							3

#	Participants	Completed Post Study Survey	Post study conversation or email interview
1	BIG LOVE	X	X
2	DREAM FORCE		X
3	BRAVE EARTH	X	X
4	PEACE PATH		X
5	FLAME BIRD	X	X
6	WILD SHORE		X
7	LIGHT DOVE		X
8	BLUE DANCER		
9	AIR SONG		X
10	CALM CANYON		
11	SMILING STREAM		X
12	MOON ROSE	X	X

13	SPARK EYE	Completed consent form. Emailed me after hearing about the study and wanted to get started right away. Scheduled initial interview but did not answer the phone or return the calls after my leaving several messages.
14	FIRE FATHER	Did not complete consent form. Expressed a great deal of initial interest, approached me to be part of the study. Teaches 100% online. Once the time for the study was set, this person became unreachable and never returned email or phone messages until after the project was totally completed.
15	SPRING MOUNTAIN	Completed consent form. This person contacted me to be included in the study after reading about it online. Once the interviews were scheduled, this person did not return emails or contact me to set up the phone call.