

DISSERTATION

A BRICOLAGE OF NARRATIVES ABOUT TEACHING COLLEGE IN PRISON:
INTERPRETING THROUGH A PERFORMANCE TEXT

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

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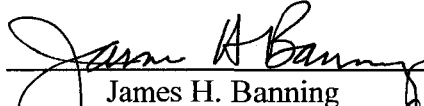
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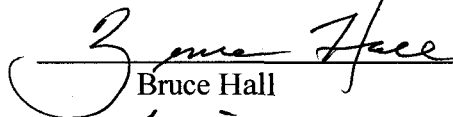
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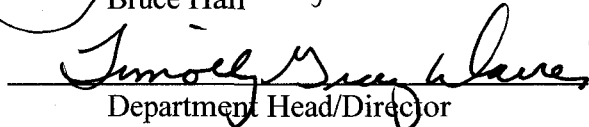
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A BRICOLAGE OF NARRATIVES ABOUT TEACHING COLLEGE IN PRISON: INTERPRETING THROUGH A PERFORMANCE TEXT

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore and understand how a selected group of educators made meaning of their experiences teaching college courses in prison. This phenomenon was framed by the tension between two contrasting conceptualizations of education: education as a means of social control and education as the practice of freedom. The data were in-depth stories collected from a small number of participants through unstructured interviews. As I identified narrative structures from my interview transcripts for analysis, three transcendent themes emerged that I used to create a coherent composite story, or *bricolage*, about these lived experiences. Using a feminist lens, I examined how these educators worked in a borderland, negotiated power relations within this environment, and made personal transformations. To convey an impression of these real-life experiences, I presented the data in a performance text leaving intact large segments of my participants' interview dialogue. The prison offered a rich discursive environment for this study since its hierarchical power structure that focuses on social control contrasts with the democratic classroom that the participants attempted to create. Within the stormy, dangerous, and frustrating prison setting, these educators encountered unique situations for which they were often unprepared and were caught between competing conceptualizations of education.

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I DWELL IN POSSIBILITY

#657

I dwell in Possibility--
A fairer House than Prose--
More numerous of Windows--
Superior--for Doors--

Of Chambers as the Cedars--
Impregnable of Eye--
And for an Everlasting Roof
The Gambrels of the Sky--

Of Visitors--the fairest--
For Occupation--This--
The spreading wide my narrow Hands
To gather Paradise--

~Emily Dickinson

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INTRODUCTION

Approach to the Inquiry

This is a study of crossing boundaries and dwelling in possibility. It is a narrative study based on unstructured interviews with the five study participants who taught college in prison. It is a feminist inquiry into the lived experiences of working in borderlands, negotiating power relations, and making personal transformations. It is a collective story; that is, an impression of the world that this particular subgroup of educators inhabits not a generalization about those experiences. And it evolves from personal knowledge of environments where counter-narratives are marginalized.

As I engaged in the process of my narrative inquiry, I found that the body of narrative research has grown rapidly and hectically since the late 1960s. The definition and use of the term “narrative” vary across disciplines (Riessman & Quinney, 2005) and the narrative field has multiple methodologies in different stages of development (Chase, 2005; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Since narrative inquiry focuses on how participants experience their lived world, it shares a subjective point of view with phenomenology and ethnography (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003a). At first, considering this wide range of possible approaches to narrative study left me overwhelmed and confused. However, I found certain practical approaches within the narrative writings of feminist researchers such as Bloom, Chase, Richardson, and Riessman. Although I relied on the guidance of these researchers for this study, I also considered a variety of strategies to conduct the interviews, manage the data, and analyze and interpret the narratives.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) categorized the form of qualitative research that I carried out as *bricolage* and identified the researcher as a *bricoleur*. The French word, *bricoleur*, and the feminine form, *bricoleuse*, is a person “*qui gagne sa vie en faisant de petits travaux, des besognes variées*” (Legrain & Garnier, 2001, p. 154); that is, a *bricoleur(se)* makes a living by piecing together a variety of odds jobs [translation mine]. Weinstein and Weinstein (1991) portrayed a *bricolage* as an emergent construction that the *bricoleur(se)* creates using a variety of techniques for interpretation and connecting the qualitative data. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggested that the *bricoleur(se)* researcher does more than borrow techniques from various methods of qualitative research. After letting go of the standard tools of traditional positivist research, the qualitative researcher as *bricoleur(se)* invents new tools or pieces together existing techniques in innovative ways to tell the stories about the worlds she or he has studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Lincoln & Denzin, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Furthermore, the personal struggles and life events of the *bricoleur(se)* researcher influence the study design and illuminate the interpretation of the research. The *bricoleur(se)* understands that her or his research is an interactive process that is shaped by the personal history of the researcher and the stories of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

My work as *bricoleuse* researcher is evident on multiple levels in each stage of my study as indicated in my personal biography, the eclectic combination of feminisms that guided me, the broad social and political context in which I situate my inquiry, the mixture of strategies for analysis and interpretation that I employed, and the collective story that I assembled. The metaphor of *bricolage* suggests an approach to research using

a toolbox of methods to find the most practical for the task at hand. Early in this dissertation, I offer my “autobiographical *bricolage* [emphasis mine]” (Edwards & Miller, 2000, p. 126) to explain how my personal history influenced my choice of research topic, led me to the conceptual framework of the study, and fostered my feminist perspectives. Then I acknowledge that while multiple feminisms exist, I do not limit myself within the multiple strands and I borrow perspectives and approaches from a variety of feminist researchers. I situate my examination of the experiences of teaching college in prison within the tensions between opposing conceptualizations of education: education as a means for social control and education as the practice of freedom. My understanding of education in certain social and political contexts is drawn from a wide range of political, philosophical, and sociological sources.

My personal history, gender, race, and social class influenced my understanding of the data that I collected and the stories that I presented. In addition, my feminist perspectives influenced my interpretation of these stories of teaching college in prison. Although this narrative inquiry was a “voyage of discovery to an unknown place” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 261), I was guided by my beliefs and feelings about how to study and understand the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), which lie within a feminist interpretive paradigm. Broadly, a feminist paradigm reflects an ontology in which the “real world makes a material difference in terms of race, class, and gender” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 35). Furthermore, I embraced a participatory epistemology in which the researcher and the participant co-create understandings and practical knowing is valued (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Using an interpretative and open-ended perspective, I evaluated empirical materials and theoretical arguments using criteria from gender and racial

communities such as caring, accountability, reflexivity, emotion, and praxis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Fonow & Cook, 1991). I considered power relations and resistance to the dominant discourse in terms of their capacity to empower and transform (Christians, 2003).

While I based my initial inquiry on a review of certain conceptual fields and ways of understanding the experience of teaching college in prison, I did not know what I would discover about the meanings that the participants might make and what meanings we would co-construct during the research process. In attempting to “capture the lived experience of people in terms of their own meaning-making” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 260), I followed an inductive process in pursuing interesting and interpretable content rather than adhering to prescribed procedures. I began with a problem to be explored with open-ended research questions. As I collected data and identified narrative segments for analysis, I found new areas of inquiry and adjusted my suppositions. I continued to read literature of related works and incorporated new understandings. As a result, my inquiry was iterative and somewhat chaotic and I constantly needed to review and revise my strategies and understandings (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003; Rogers, 2003).

In collecting the data from interviews with my five participants, I adapted unstructured interviewing techniques described by several qualitative researchers, such as Fontana and Frey (2003), Gubrium and Holstein (2003b), and Holstein and Gubrium (2003). As these authors suggested, the unstructured interviews may have enabled me to capture a greater breadth of data than would be available through more structured interviews. After the interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings of the dialogues with

my participants to produce a detailed written record that included silences, false starts, emphases, overlapping speech and nonlexical expressions.

Next I began the process of data management by reading and rereading these detailed transcriptions from each participant's interviews looking for certain narrative structures that seemed to be discrete units with clear beginnings and endings (Riessman, 1993). I used a *bricolage* of techniques that I pieced together from certain qualitative researchers to locate three types of narrative structures: core narratives, poetic structures, and vignettes. First, I applied a technique that Riessman (1993) adapted from Labov (1982; Labov & Waletzky, 1967) to reduce segments of the detailed transcriptions to core narratives. A core narrative follows a temporal ordering of action that occurred in the past and includes common elements such as an abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Second, I modified Riessman's (1993) use of poetic structure, which is a linguistic technique that she adapted from Gee (1991) to identify a narrative segment by looking at how the story is said. Here I used changes in pitch and pauses to group lines together into poetic units, or stanzas, that were framed by enduring conditions. Third, I located segments of the transcripts that characterized the lives of the participants in the prison classroom. These brief portrayals capture important meanings and represent vignettes (Ely, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Van Maanen, 1990).

Within the transcriptions of the two interviews with each of my five participants, I found a significant number of core narratives, poetic structures, and vignettes. In these large segments of interview transcripts, my participants described their teaching background and how they decided to teach in prison, their fears and concerns, their impressions of the prison environment, their personal views of incarceration, their

opinion about the value of education for prisoners, and their selves in relation to their inmate students. These six types of descriptions became organizing categories for my comparison of the stories across the sample. As I continued to examine these descriptions that were embedded in the three types of narrative structures, I discovered that enduring conditions of the prison framed the participants' experiences. Examples of enduring conditions include feelings of isolation, actions of complicity with and countering of the dominant discourse, and alignment with the Other. Furthermore, I found that these enduring conditions seemed to form three clusters, from which three transcendent themes emerged about teaching college in prison: (a) working in the borderlands, (b) resisting and adapting to power relations and the dominant discourse, and (c) making personal transformations. My interpretation of the data across the sample yielded a collective story. As Richardson (1990) noted, certain collective stories are about people who are not collectively organized but who have similar experiences through belonging to the same social category.

Finally, I presented the data in a visual collage, or performance text, to enable a deeper understanding of the meaning my participants made of their experiences. Although the report of my findings is text-based, I heard the participants create images through their storytelling. I turned segments of my interview transcripts into a one act play in which the three scenes represent the three transcendent themes. As a *bricoleuse* drawing on various interpretative practices, I pieced together a "set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 5). This collective story is not a meta-narrative (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003a) but rather a collage of real-life experiences.

Therefore, the *bricolage* that I created to convey what I heard is a set of interconnected images presented in a performance text. I used drama as a method of inquiry; that is, a way of finding about my topic (Conquergood, 1998; Denzin, 2003; Richardson, 2003), and as a means to communicate my findings. Within the script, I play the part of interpreter and offer alternative understandings of the images. I intended the drama to be a reconstruction of the “sense” (Richardson, 2003, p. 516) of the multiple perspectives of my participants of the events and emotions that they experienced teaching college in prison. Although the text of the play becomes readable words on a page, it is designed for the reader or audience to see and hear through the dynamics of human interactions, including the nonverbal dimensions. A performance format puts events that took place in the past into a setting in the present that is active and mobile (Conquergood, 1998). In a performance text, the readers or the audiences listen to and see these stories because “dialogue replaces description and narration” (McCall, 2003, p. 123).

Throughout my research, I was aware of the tension between a formalist inquiry that begins in theory and a narrative inquiry that begins with the lived and told experiences of the participants. Like many narrative researchers, I had “no hypotheses – only questions or interesting people to explore” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 260). I tried to balance openness to phenomena that emerged with a conceptual framework that I used to understand the narratives. In choosing a narrative approach, I felt that meaning making would evolve from how the participants told their stories as well as from what the participants described about their experiences. In framing my study, I considered the tension between education as social control and education as the practice of freedom. In this way, I connected the literature reviewed and with the experiences of the participants

to create a “kind of conversation between theory and life or, at least, between theory and the stories of life contained in the inquiry” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 41).

Organization of the Dissertation

In the remaining chapters of this dissertation, I describe and explain the conceptual framework, inquiry strategies, identification and management of the narrative data, methods of analysis and interpretation, and possible significance of my research. I define key terms to orient the reader within the context of the discussion. Since I continued my review of the literature during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes, I also integrate or compare relevant literature with my findings throughout the dissertation.

In Chapter 1, *Embarking on a Personal Journey*, I first explain how my research has impacted me. Although my inquiry is designed to present the voices of my participants, my voice is heard in all aspects of this study, from research design through interpretation. I believe that I have something to say about my research data and I have a responsibility to speak with the participants in a way that acknowledges our shared or dissimilar social locations (Bloom, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Even though I was uncomfortable and empathized with Ramphela (1995) who noted, “one is always ambivalent about telling one’s story” (p. xi), I felt I should explain myself early on.

In Chapter 2, *Setting the Stage for the Inquiry*, I situate the experience that interests me within the tension between two contrasting conceptualizations of education: education as a means of social control and education as the practice of freedom. These two conceptual fields help to organize the phenomenon of interest; that is, teaching college in prison, around the role that education plays in society. Using this tension as a

framework, I consider how education is understood and practiced in certain social and political contexts as illustrated by four oppositional relationships; specifically, cultural capital and border knowledge, monoculturalism and multiculturalism, social order and individual liberty, and marketization and state intervention.

Then in Chapter 3, Exploring the Experience of Interest, I explain why I focused my research on the lived experiences of a specific subgroup of educators, those who teach college courses in prison, and what research questions guided my inquiry. Although examining the experience of teaching college in prison reflects a personal interest, I believe that my study may have significance for larger social and psychosocial issues. Here I briefly explore several of these issues, which include alternative approaches to social policy research, *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/2000) and construction of professional identity, and feminist interpretative processes in narrative research.

To frame the approach and clarify the bias that I brought to data collection, analysis, and interpretation, I began Chapter 4, Locating Myself Within Multiple Feminisms, with a more detailed explanation of my feminist perspectives. I also discuss how these perspectives affected my research. I conclude this chapter by noting that I have incorporated Fonow and Cook's (1991) four central practices of feminist research into the study design and the data identification, management, analysis, and interpretation. The four practices are reflexivity, activist orientation, affective component of research, and concern with everyday life situations. I note how these four practices are evidenced in my understanding of privilege knowledge and claims of truth, subjectivity and multiple identities, and relationships between the participant and the researcher.

The methods discussion begins in Chapter 5, Designing the Study, where I describe my research paradigm, which is a narrative inquiry. This paradigm enabled me to understand my participants and their subjective experiences of teaching college in prison. I explain how I located the five participants, set up and conducted the interviews, and captured the data in two in-depth life story interviews that lasted between 60 and 90 minutes with each participant. I also describe how I facilitated the telling through active interviewing in an unstructured interview format, which encouraged the participants to tell about important and pivotal moments in their teaching of college in prison. Next, I note how the interpretation process began in transcribing and retranscribing the interview data. In addressing the dilemmas for the narrative researcher, I considered how to validate this narrative analysis by making claims for its trustworthiness (Reissman, 1993). Finally, I describe several limitations and ethical issues that I encountered in doing a narrative inquiry.

Chapter 6, Constructing Narrative Texts, is a continuation of the methods discussion. First, I provide some background information for each participant and I comment on the rapport that I established during the interviews, which may have influenced the production of the narratives. This biographical and contextual information creates a group demographic and helps the reader understand the participants as characters in the play presented later in Chapter 8.

Second, I explain the strategies I used to identify and manage the narrative material. I transcribed the audio record of the ten interviews beginning with a rough transcription to get the entire conversation on paper. After carefully reading and rereading of the transcripts of the whole dialogue, I selected large segments of the text for

unpacking or “retranscribing” (Reissman, 1993, p. 58). The process of retranscribing I used seems to parallel the research activity that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) called composing field texts. In other words, composing field texts followed transcribing and prepared the data for reconstruction into research texts. In searching for core narratives, poetic structures, and vignettes, I shaped the interview data into large segments of narrative texts. Finally, I compared these field texts across the sample to create research texts. Within these texts, I searched for “patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes that shape the field texts into research texts” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 133).

In Chapter 7, *Capturing the Experience*, I explain how I analyzed the reshaped data, that is, the field texts in the form of core narratives, poetic structures, and vignettes, into a collective story and how I created a drama using these data. Then I describe how I constructed the script for the play using large segments from each of the participants’ interview data that I identified using the data management techniques described in Chapter 6. I also explain how my examination of patterns and tensions in the narrative structures led to the identification of three transcendent themes: working in borderlands, negotiating power relations, and making personal transformations. By clustering intact segments from the participants’ interview data around the three emerging themes, I created three scenes in the one act play presented in Chapter 8. In setting the stage for the drama, I borrowed some presentation techniques from readers theatre and adapted certain dramatic conventions that Thornton Wilder (1938/2003) used in his play, *Our Town*. These techniques include the absence of scenery, limited props, and the use of the stage manager in a role similar to an omnipresent Greek chorus.

My goal for Chapter 8, *Dwelling in Possibility*, was to create a dialogical performance that brought together the different voices of my participants so that they could have a conversation with one another (Conquergood, 1985). I chose to present the data in the format of a play, which can be said as well as read, to connect the reader or audience with others and provide deeper understanding of the stories that the participants told me about teaching college in prison. The transcendent themes that shaped the script of the play emerged in the interviews when the participants commented on issues of individual meaning and social significance. I selected large segments of interview dialogue that I identified through analyzing the narrative structures. Then I wove these dialogues into a single performance to highlight what I found notable and reportable and to create “an impressionist tale of the field” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 102).

In Chapter 9, *Crossing Boundaries*, I considered how institutions, such as prisons, provide a fertile social context for narrative practice by creating unique discursive environments. Second, I suggested that the environment of the prison offered opportunities for my participants to make personal transformations and construct new identities.

In Chapter 10, *Closing and Reflecting*, I suggested ways in which voices of my participants might have significance for academicians, policy makers, or practitioners in higher education. First, I briefly looked at public attitudes, politics, and policies that shape higher education in prison. Second, I discussed the importance of the prison industry to the national economy. Although the connections between the participants’ stories and these issues may seem distant, I discovered meaningful influences in the structure and content of their narratives.

Finally, I summarized my study and reflect on what I learned from my participants. Through hearing and trying to understand how the participants worked in borderlands, negotiated power relations, and made personal transformations, I gained new insights into education as the practice of freedom. Through the discourse of everyday situations, each participant demonstrated how her or his classroom remains “a location of possibility” (hooks, 1994, p. 207).

Appendix A includes a literature review for the reader who is interested in a historical overview of political and social influences on correctional education. The publications reviewed in the appendix provided an essential source of my understanding about the experience of teaching college in prison that I describe in the beginning of my study. Placing this experience of interest within the political and social context broadened my interpretative perspective and enhanced my feminist approach to the inquiry. The remaining appendices contain forms and communications I used to recruit and work with the participants for this research.

CHAPTER 1: EMBARKING ON A PERSONAL JOURNEY

A Personal Transformation

Narrative research is a discovery that the researcher and the participant co-construct, so I begin this chapter with a story about how my inquiry has impacted me. During the period that I listened to the personal narratives of educators who teach college in prison, I was shaping my next career as an adult educator. The passion and dedication of these participants greatly reinvigorated my commitment to teaching and helped me forge a more direct route for my journey back to the college classroom. I now see that as I was studying how the participants constructed who they were and explained how they wanted to be known, I was also reassembling my identity as a teacher. This attention to identity and transformation, as evidenced in the participants' stories of teaching experience, is central to narrative inquiry (Riessman & Quinney, 2005).

My overarching research goal was to understand the lived experiences of these participants in the context of the recurrent debate about opposing conceptualizations of the role that education plays as the means of social control or as the practice of freedom. As a college student in the early 1960s, I had felt a tension between the horizons that my liberal arts education opened for me and the confining roles that society expected me to play as a well-behaved worker or compliant spouse. In the workplace after college, I frequently encountered this tension when my questioning of authority conflicted with institutional and corporate demands for obedience.

Gradually, through these personal experiences, I began to understand how education might be the practice of freedom or the means of social control. I recognized how the role of education as resistance to an arbitrary cultural standard contrasts with its role as reproduction of the knowledge of the dominant culture. My interest in this tension emerged from my belief that higher education promotes critical thinking skills, which in turn empower learners with diverse viewpoints to question and challenge the existing cultural norms.

A concern central to my inquiry was how specific adult educators make sense of their teaching of critical thinking and questioning when their teaching is situated within the culture of control in prison. As I worked with my data, I began to find connections between what I was trying to understand and my own experience. I used this expanded self-knowledge to integrate my passions with my intellectual exploration and this enabled me to continue my development as a passionate knower (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997). Then I used writing as a method of discovery and analysis as a way of knowing and understanding. Through the writing up of this study, I discovered new aspects of the topic and my relationship to it. The interconnections between my inquiry and me confirmed that in narrative inquiry the “product can not be separated from the producer” (Richardson, 2003, p. 511). In the following section, I provide a brief summary of the experiences that influenced my choice of topic and shaped my approach to analysis and interpretation of data.

Formation of a Feminist

Since narrative inquiry integrates knowledge of the world and subjectivity, the personal stance of the narrative researcher inevitably synthesizes social and self

consciousness (Daiute & Fine, 2003). The orientation of self in the research project is evidenced by the researcher's continual reflection about her role during the research and write-up of the final product (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003). Here I offer my "autobiographical *bricolage* [italics mine]" (Edwards & Miller, 2000, p. 126) to underline my use of self in this narrative inquiry, which links reflexivity and my identity construction. I describe myself variously as a manager, an adult educator, a feminist, an ex-hippie, a community and human rights activist, a returned Peace Corps volunteer, and a white American woman. I have pursued many projects and I enjoy finding insights from one field that I can apply to another. I recognize that I have a lifelong pattern of operating on the boundaries where different subcultures meet and I construct my multiple identities in these margins.

Throughout my life, I have had various interests that led to adventures in many unrelated directions. My restlessness is fed by travel across boundaries, literally and metaphorically. Frequently, I ventured into unknown situations because of my tendency to resist the static character and hierarchical power structure of formal organizations. Some of my most cherished memories of youth include playing football with the neighborhood boys, climbing the highest trees, and collecting spiders and beetles. In fact, I remember purposefully doing things that were out of character for a "girl." The courage to be different was reinforced by growing up in many different environments. I faced new situations every two years because my father's corporate career took our family to different regions of the United States, from my roots in the Midwest to the northeast, south, and west. My parents believed in my abilities and encouraged me to meet these new challenges on my own, which nurtured my sense of self-reliance.

In our first move, I entered grade school in Alabama several years before *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The environment of tolerance that my parents fostered at home enabled me to assimilate important core values about caring and empathy when these were not always evident in my community. By observing my parents' actions, I also learned integrity, respect, and fairness. For instance, I still marvel that during the volatile racial tensions of my childhood in the 1950s and 1960s, I never heard my parents use language or express opinions that denigrated persons of any class or ethnicity. Wherever we lived, my parents frequently declined associations with colleagues who did not respect diversity and different cultural perspectives.

Despite my supportive family, growing up was not easy and society's expectations of a traditional woman often shook my confidence. I escaped the protective setting of a small mid-Western liberal arts college to spend my junior year in France. Soon after completing my undergraduate studies, I left the homogeneity of the Midwest and headed for the multicultural surroundings of New York City. During this exhilarating period of the 70s and early 80s, women started to demand that their contributions be recognized and organizations began to listen. By 1977, I had assisted in forming a women's group in the workplace and frequently acted as the spokesperson in meetings with management. An epiphany came with the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982. Then I realized that if I cared about my future and that of my women and minority colleagues, I must become truly engaged and work for change and social justice.

This activist stance for social justice propelled me to join the Peace Corps in the late 80s because I wanted to assist people who had fewer opportunities and to gain more cross-cultural experience. Furthermore, I felt that I did not adapt well to the traditional

workplace where the routine of a stable environment limited my learning. From 1988 to 1994, I worked in Botswana and Bulgaria and adapted to life in these different cultures because I am comfortable with ambiguity, flexible in my approach to new situations, and eager to explore.

During this extended period living overseas, I observed and acquired different cultural perspectives, developed a broader worldview, and cultivated my appreciation for diversity. The Africans with whom I lived taught me to demonstrate generosity by giving with both hands and helped me understand that Western constructs of time are less important than the needs of people. In Botswana, I learned that one can schedule a meeting for 1:00 pm on a certain day but nothing takes place until enough people are present, which might occur days later. My experiences in these cultural and historical settings have enabled me “to hear the other in the other’s own terms” (Clinchy, 2003, p. 38). Furthermore, my lived experiences have prepared me to “bear enormous anxiety and ambiguity and persevere” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 272), which are advantageous traits for a narrative researcher.

Like Richardson (1991), I am attracted to postmodernism as a way of looking at and living in a world where counter narratives are rising up to challenge the dominant discourses. One appeal of postmodernism is its benefits for “marginalized people who have been locally and historically denied access to power” (Richardson, pp. 173-174). In addition, postmodern narratives serve as social critiques that describe the changes that will make society more equitable and how those changes may affect the individual and society. In turning my beliefs into action, I have supported people in underrepresented

populations by participating in activist organizations, working for equality of women and ethnic and racial minorities, and marching for peace, justice, and jobs.

My ideas fit well with narrative inquiry where “subjectivity is multiple, conflicted, complex, fragmented, and in constant flux” (Bloom, 1998, p. 2). In some ways, I resemble the fox that Berlin (1949/2000) described in an essay on Tolstoy’s view of history. Berlin’s analogy came from the fragmented texts of the Greek poet Archilochus, which said “the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing” (p. 436). In his essay, Berlin differentiated between writers and thinkers who relate everything to a single vision and those who pursue many ends, often unrelated or contradictory. He categorized the former as hedgehogs and the latter as foxes.

This dissertation includes a range of issues that I weave into my discussion on the role that education plays in society. The research I conducted for this dissertation falls in line with a life that has followed the path of Berlin’s fox. Such a person is interested in knowing many things and a narrative inquiry examining the life stories of correctional educators provides a great opportunity to continue on this path. I am very interested in the life stories of individuals who work in the controlled environments of total institutions and with populations stigmatized by the media. I am also interested in the possible insights that may be gained about the tension between education as a means of social control and education as the practice of freedom. I joined with my participants in examining this tension from a personal standpoint enriched by many life experiences and a seasoned feminist perspective. I realize such an approach fails to conform to a traditional research approach for the people and subjects I wish to understand. However,

choosing an alternative and less conventional path has always provided me with many enriching experiences.

These experiences serve as an introduction to my study by revealing challenges that I originally encountered in my personal and professional life that have led to an attraction to the research topic (Wolcott, 2001). Now I turn to an examination of the phenomenon that interests me: the problems and tensions between contrasting conceptualizations of education as a means of social control or the practice of freedom. First, I explore the underpinnings of these contrasting conceptualizations that position education as the supplier of human capital and the protector of dominant values or the provider of social and democratic policies such as multicultural education and increased educational opportunities (Apple, 1995). Then I describe several ways that certain educators and policy makers have tried to understand the role of education in social, cultural, and economic contexts and what they seemed to have discovered. Later, in Chapter 3, I explain why I set my study of the experiences of educators who teach college in prison within the tension between these opposing conceptualizations of the role that education plays in society.

CHAPTER 2: SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE INQUIRY

Problems and Tensions Around Certain Conceptualizations of Education

Not long ago, I read that a national higher education commission was considering an expansion of standardized testing into universities and colleges in the United States (Arenson, 2006). The premise of this proposal was that standardized testing would help students learn a specific body of knowledge and would enable national comparisons on the quality of students' performances. I am concerned that this trend toward uniform curricular standards and accountability in higher education may represent a viewpoint that uses education to reinforce domination of the majority culture and to act as social control. If education were used to instill only the values, traditions, and beliefs of the dominant Western culture, students would not be exposed to the diversity and wide range of worldviews that reflect our multicultural democracy. My concern coincides with the position of Bourdieu and Passeron (1970/2000) who wrote that education is "the inculcation of a cultural arbitrary, carried on within a relation of pedagogic communication which can produce its own, specifically symbolic effect only because the arbitrariness of the content inculcated is never seen in its full truth" (p. 11).

In contrast to education that establishes an arbitrary cultural norm, I believe that higher education should be an agent of social change that promotes equality and creates democratic schools. Democratic schools incorporate the diverse viewpoints and values of a wide range of cultural and ethnic groups, promote open communication, focus on the common good, and provide students with freedom for critical reflection (Gore, 2002).

This emancipatory vision of education challenges the traditional and current primary function of public schooling, which is “to reproduce a class society” (Bigelow, 1990, p. 437). Paulo Freire, the educator and activist who proposed a dialogical education, is an important influence for those who oppose the traditional role of public education and write about and work for social change (Tisdell, 2002).

Drawing mainly from the theories of Bourdieu and Freire, I contrast the conceptualization of education as means of social control and reproduction of the dominant culture and education as the practice of freedom and resistance to the dominant culture. These divergent views of the role of education create problems and tensions that may be understood from a different perspective by my study, which examines how higher education takes place in the prison environment controlled by the state and dominant culture. These oppositional views of the role of education in society constitute a part of the conceptual framework for my inquiry. The comparison of the power of the school to promote the cultural capital of advantaged students with the resistance of marginalized students with their border knowledge is presented in Table 1.

America’s public school educators and policy makers have debated the merits of these contrasting views of education as they attempt to develop multicultural curricula within a structure of standards and accountability (Hess, 2004). When higher educational programs and pedagogical practices reproduce the knowledge valued by Western civilizations, they inevitably silence the perspectives of culturally diverse peoples (hooks, 1994; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). This canonization of knowledge occurs when dominant culture values are used to select the specific “works, ideas, ways of knowing, and forms of knowledge” (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). In opposition to the canonization of

knowledge, another movement, initiated in the 1980s, promotes a multicultural curriculum and pedagogy that included new knowledge reflecting “a diverse array of cultures” (Hess, 2004, p. 97). A multicultural approach to education, particularly adult education, encourages critical thinking that challenges the existing frame of reference (Duguid, 2006) and promotes learning about ways to act constructively (Shor, 1992).

Table 1

Tensions between Opposing Views of the Role of Education in Society

Education as Social Control	Education as the Practice of Freedom
Educational institutions reflect the culture in which they operate (Rhoads, 1999).	Educational institutions shape the culture in which they operate (Rhoads, 1999).
Education is a method to homogenize the society through assimilation of diverse cultures (Rhoads, 1999).	Education is a system for retaining and highlighting the cultural heritage of different groups (Rhoads, 1999).
Educational institutions maintain a commitment to a shared culture (Hess, 2004) as defined by the canon; i.e., monoculturalism.	Educational institutions respect cultural differences (Rhoads, 1999; Rhoads & Valadez, 1996) and border knowledge is valued; i.e., multiculturalism.
Educators are authoritarian and students are docile and accept knowledge imparted without questioning (Rhoads, 1999).	Educators facilitate learning where students bring expertise and knowledge to the classroom (Rhoads, 1999).
Educational institutions focus on standards and accountability (Rhoads, 1999).	Educational institutions promote more flexible multicultural curricula (Rhoads, 1999).
Education is viewed as a means of social control (Milofsky, 1986).	Education is viewed as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1970/2003; hooks, 1994).
Education is the means to reproduce the dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1986).	Educators teach students to transgress and resist the dominant culture (hooks, 1994).

Certain educators have criticized this type of dichotomous thinking as uncompromising. As an example of the argument against conceptualizing using these opposite positions, Bowers (2005) noted that the everyday reality of people does not fall into such uniformed categories as Freire's "critical reflections" and its opposite, "the banking approach to education" (p. 31). For Bowers, this binary structure is problematic because it allows the minority view to be essentialized by the dominant position. However, my experience and training have led me to develop reservations about Bowers' contention, and I have chosen to juxtapose contrasting conceptualizations in the next sections to highlight the tension between these contradictions. Furthermore, this analysis of opposites is consistent with Lévi-Strauss' proposition that oppositional relationships form the basic structure for all ideas and concepts in a culture (Klages, 1997). As Bloom (1998) suggested, a subject position is constructed in the context of its opposite. In other words, when education as the practice of freedom is presented as that which education as a means of social control is not, the dominant culture is forced to reconsider its privileged position.

Education as a Means for Social Control

In sociological theories, institutions use social control as an instrument of system maintenance, or stated in other words, "to maintain boundaries, to gain consensus about its mission or goals, and to achieve cohesion and solidarity among members" (Milofsky, 1986, p. 176). In particular, Bourdieu (1994) examined the power of the state, especially as exercised through the school system to produce and impose categories of thought to be applied to all aspects of people's social world. This system of inculcating, called *habitus* by Bourdieu, ensured that the recipients of the education internalized the principles of "a

cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/2000. p. 31) after the training has ceased.

Through this conformity to a specified body of knowledge, the state imposes a “national common sense” (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 13) and requires its “subjects” to submit to state order. In creating this order, the state does not use force and the subjects do not give their conscious consent. Accordingly, it is a social order that operates through symbols and language. Submission to the dominant social order is achieved through the state’s molding of the beliefs and values of these subjects. Therefore, the state and its subjects concur with the objectives of the social world, a relationship that Bourdieu (1994) referred to “doxic submission which attaches us to the established order with all the ties of the unconscious” (p. 14). This ordered social world enables the dominant few to govern the many and impose their domination because the dominant and the dominated have agreed upon the order (Bourdieu, 1994).

The system of education in the ordered society tends “to reproduce the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among these groups or classes, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the social structure” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/2000, p. 11). Schools produce class homogeneity and transmit the accepted culture, or a common body of knowledge through a process of cultural programming. As “programmed” individuals, students are the specific product of the educational system and exhibit a homogenous approach to perceiving, thinking, and acting. Within this educational system, individuals may believe they have freedom of expression. However, they are constrained by a “common set of previously assimilated master patterns from which ... an infinite number

of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated” (Bourdieu, 1967, p. 342).

Furthermore, Bourdieu (1967) asserted that educational institutions develop strategies to differentiate those who receive the education from those who do not. Therefore, members of the most favored social and economic classes receive education that widens the cultural differentiation between them and the members of the working and poor classes. For Bourdieu (1986) the distribution of capital between the classes explained the unequal scholastic achievement among children from different social classes. Thus, for example, students from more culturally privileged environments believe they have more control over their circumstances. These more advantaged students reach higher levels of achievement than students from lower classes who tend to believe that external forces such as luck, fate, and other people circumscribe their behavior (Banks, 1988).

When the school selects the “classic” works of literature for incorporation in the curriculum, it systematically transmits and reproduces the canon and the common culture. When conservative philosophies shape the content of material in the classroom, schooling reinforces the ideologies of domination (hooks, 2003). In fact, as Bourdieu (1967) asserted, canons that govern schoolwork might also extend to the world outside of school where their pervasive and persuasive influence is felt through newspaper articles, public lectures, summary reports, and works of scholarship.

Education as the Practice of Freedom

Although my conceptual framework is partially based on Bourdieu’s explanation of how education tends to distribute cultural capital in ways that reproduce the social

structure, I also believe adult education may be a source of resistance to the dominant culture. For instance, Freire (1970/2003) viewed education as the practice of freedom so that the dialogue between the teacher and the student generates opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. The naïve thinker tries to accommodate the social order by becoming “well-behaved,” thereby seeing the world as static. In contrast, the critical thinker embraces diversity and a continually changing reality. Liberating education in a democratic classroom enables people to “develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* [italics original] they find themselves” (Freire, 1970/2003, p. 83).

Freire (1970/2003) used the phrase “‘banking’ concept of education” (p. 72) to illustrate how traditional education has become an act of depositing where the teacher deposits information into the students as depositories. In the banking concept, students are considered to be adaptable and manageable. The more deposits they store, the more they adapt to the world and the less they engage in critical thinking to transform the world. For Freire, dialogue requires critical thinking and results in the “dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom” (p. 93). One example of a liberating education was Bigelow’s (1990) implementation of Freire’s dialogical education for students at a high school in the American northeast. Bigelow created a democratic classroom in which students were encouraged to critique the larger society through sharing their lives. This example shows how teachers can guide students to locate their experiences in a social context, question the social factors that limit their opportunities, and overcome these barriers to realize their dreams.

Paulo Freire's insistence on education as the practice of freedom influenced hooks (1994) to develop strategies for liberatory education or "engaged pedagogy" in which every student is "an active participant, not a passive consumer" (p. 14). Echoing Freire, hooks wrote that liberatory education places a person within a social and political context and enables her or him to think critically about self and identity in those circumstances. Progressive professors use engaged pedagogy "to make their teaching practices a site of resistance" (hooks, p. 21) to the dominant discourses. Liberatory education enables the educator to teach without reinforcing the existing systems of domination and provides students with a means to assume responsibility for their choices (hooks, 1994).

Since "knowledge gets legitimized through a political process" (Rhoads, 1999, p. 104), people who exist on the margins of society often attempt to resist control and create their own representations through appropriating language and discourse. For example, as a young student, hooks (1994) was engaged in the struggle for racial desegregation and felt that her resistance did not have a political language to articulate that process. She described how control of the discourse could become a strategy for resisting the dominant white norms and values:

When I need to say words that do more than simply mirror or address the dominant reality, I speak black vernacular. There in that location, we make English do what we want it to do. We take the oppressor's language and turn it against itself. We make our words a counter-hegemonic speech, liberating ourselves in language. (p. 175)

Education in Certain Social and Political Contexts

Developing a more complex picture of the purposes of education in society was a critical activity at this stage on my research when I was clarifying my stance on key conceptual issues (Shank, 2002). Moving from the framework of the tension between

contrasting conceptualizations of education, I now turn to the “larger social context in which the current politics of education operates” (Apple, 1995, p. viii). Here I consider several ways that education establishes a cultural arbitrary or promotes cultural diversity. Again, I highlight oppositional categories: (a) cultural capital and border knowledge, (b) monoculturalism and multiculturalism, (c) social order and individual liberty, and (d) marketization and state intervention.

Cultural Capital and Border Knowledge

Culture “conveys the values, beliefs, norms, and attitudes understood by a group of people” (Rhoads, 1999, p. 105). The canon is the traditional knowledge in Western cultures that white European men produce, which discounts the knowledge of members of marginalized groups in society such as women and minorities. This hierarchy of knowledge enables the canon to silence the knowledge of the culturally diverse groups (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). Furthermore, members of the dominant class suppress the knowledge of marginalized groups because they fear differences and feel safer with people of their same group (hooks, 1994).

In higher education, the canon accords privilege to dominant culture students who then see “themselves or their culture predominantly represented in the institutional environment and the curriculum” (Harbour, Middleton, Lewis, & Anderson, 2003, p. 831). Majority students who possess the knowledge of the canon, or cultural capital, will succeed by exchanging their cultural capital for academic and economic returns in society (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996). However, marginalized students from lower-income and minority families have rich and elaborate cultures with unique languages and communication styles, behavioral styles, and values. Since higher education favors the

cultural capital of majority students, the “wrong” cultural capital of marginalized students becomes border knowledge that “is not exchangeable as mainstream knowledge or canonized knowledge” (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996, p. 14).

Monoculturalism and Multiculturalism

A society or organization subscribes to monoculturalism when it overtly or covertly proposes that a singular culture prevail or ought to prevail (Rhoads, 1999). When monoculturalism occurs in education, the process of assimilation erases cultural differences by socializing diverse students to accept the mainstream values of the dominant culture. Through assimilation, students from diverse populations are “explicitly and implicitly pressured to accept the host culture and subordinate their own cultural identity” (Harbour et al., 2003, p. 832) in order to succeed in the dominant culture.

In contrast, an education based on multicultural and democratic perspectives diversifies and transforms the organizational culture by embracing cultural differences (Rhoads & Valadez, 1996, p. 86). As Freire (1970/2003) noted, culture is continually deconstructed and reconstructed by the oppressed and the oppressor engaged in interaction. As a result, the worldviews of the leaders and of the people contradict and transform each other. The cultural synthesis is based on the differences between these worldviews and resolves these contradictions and enriches the leaders and the people without denying the differences between the two views (Freire, 1970/2003).

Social Order and Individual Liberty

Since my research study focused on conceptualizations of higher education within the current political context, I also provide an overview of the pendulum swing in American politics between the establishing social order, including ensuring the needs of

society, and protecting individual liberty. In our late capitalist society, the market is a major influence in political decision-making about order and liberty. This is also the case when the society makes decisions about education and correctionalism. In this section, I have relied heavily on Garland's (2001) account of social change and social order in the late twentieth century.

In the 1960s, the private sector's increased production of wealth and employment generated tax revenues to fund a massive new public sector (Garland, 2001). This new public sector created provided social services, such as health care, child support, education, housing, and income support for the unemployed. During this period, even an influential conservative thinker, Supreme Court Chief Justice Burger, wrote legal opinions that strengthened the constitutional separation of powers of the three branches of American government and supported women's rights, which are traditionally liberal positions. For example, Chief Justice Burger (1967) noted, the political structure in the United States is based on "the idea of striking a fair balance between the needs of society and the rights of the individual. In short, we tried to establish order while protecting liberty" (p. 429). In the years after the Second World War, social democracy was funded by the New Deal initiatives and promoted social services such as education, health care, and housing. Ironically, a major influence on these progressive economic and social policies was the dynamic interplay of capitalist production and market exchange in which consumerism and middle-class affluence spread and accelerated.

Furthermore, the prosperity and optimism of the decades of the 1960s led to progressive cultural changes, including securing for civil rights and increased egalitarianism. Throughout this period of cultural transformation, marginalized groups

including blacks, women, gays, prisoners, and the mentally ill found their civil rights affirmed and extended (Garland, 2001). Members of these disadvantaged groups struggled to shift the balance of power so that any individual would have the full benefits of citizenship and be treated fairly regardless of those in power. This demand for democracy and egalitarianism created a more pluralistic society that began to challenge the power of the traditional dominant culture. In the workplace and in the schools, the “moral absolutes and unquestionable prohibitions lost their force and credibility” ...[and] the rigid and long-standing social hierarchies on which they relied began to be dismantled” (Garland, 2001, p. 88).

Just as these changes were becoming incorporated into the political and social structure, the oil crisis of the early 1970s triggered an economic recession that threatened the funding base of the new public sector. During this period, some public sector institutions appeared inefficient and unprofitable since they were slow to increase productivity or decrease wages and more efficient private sector industries developed in the service and high technology sectors. The labor market also became more stratified because growing income inequalities separated the top tier of highly educated specialized workers from the bottom tiers of low-paid, part-time workers. Many in the working population faced a downturn in their economic welfare and they began to reduce their support of the publicly funded social programs for the lowest socioeconomic classes. Furthermore, the largely white, working middle class grew anxious and fearful about increasing crime, worsening race relations, growing welfare rolls, and the decline of “traditional values” (Garland, 2001, p. 96).

When the middle classes added this anxiety about social issues with concerns about high taxes, inflation, and declining economic performance; they started voting for “New Right” politicians. By the 1980s, the conservative politicians who articulated this popular discontent with social welfare programs were in office and blamed “the shiftless poor for victimizing ‘decent’ society ... [and] the liberal elites for licensing a permissive culture and the anti-social behaviour it encouraged” (Garland, 2001, p. 97). These politicians attacked the progressive social arrangements from prior decades and developed political and economic viewpoints that appealed to the middle class. Garland (2001) summarized the contradictions for the working middle class:

Convinced of the need to re-impose order, but unwilling to restrict consumer choice or give up personal freedoms; determined to enhance their own security, but unwilling to pay more taxes or finance the security of others; appalled by unregulated egoism and anti-social attitudes but committed to a market system which reproduces that very culture, the anxious middle classes today seek resolution for their ambivalence in zealously controlling the poor and excluding the marginal. (p. 195)

The middle classes looked to the private sector and the market to reestablish the economic prosperity that the interventionist state and its public sector had not maintained. During this period, neo-liberalism reflected the reassertion of market disciplines and neo-conservatism signaled the reassertion of moral discipline (Garland, 2001). Since the neo-liberal position of dominance of the market system and the neo-conservative stance of return to traditional moral values made ideological sense to the middle classes, this contradictory combination of political, social, and economic positions gained popular support. In the late twentieth-century, the mixture of free market principles and conservative governing policies helped shift support away from the public sector and its

social programs toward the private sector and its consumer-oriented strategies (Garland, 2001).

Marketization and State Intervention

The role that market forces and state intervention should play in higher education is a central issue for many theorists, policymakers, and practitioners. For example, the Futures Project recently completed a four-year study on the impact of market forces on the American system of higher education. The findings indicated that today's university community has underestimated the significance and the rate of the transformation of higher education toward the market and away from a regulated public sector (Newman & Couturier, 2004). The neo-liberalism position states that because the market is less subject to political interference and grounded in the rational choice of individuals, "the market will inexorably lead to better schools ... said to be natural and neutral and governed by effort and merit" (Apple, 2004, p. 18).

Although the pressures of market competition could improve performance and efficiency of higher education, these forces do not inevitably promote the public good. For example, the market tends to favor those with financial resources, ignores those who lack adequate means, and distributes resources without regard to the larger public good (Newman & Couturier, 2004). In several relevant publications, Apple (1981, 2004) and Middleton (2000) described how higher education is affected by the odd combination of neo-liberalism and its emphasis on the freedom of the market and neo-conservatism and its emphasis on the return to traditional values and control of what is learned. These authors provided an account that demonstrates higher education is reproducing a cultural arbitrary and marginalizing the cultures of diverse populations.

Though the lens of applied pedagogy in order to challenge the free market's ability to serve the public purpose, Apple (2004) examined the current politics of educational reform. Relying on social science research, he described how the neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism had negative impacts on education in key European industrialized nations. He concluded, "markets systematically privilege higher socioeconomic status families through their knowledge and material resources" (p. 26). Apple also posited that the return to traditionalism devalues more critical models of teaching and learning and reintroduces class and race stratification within the school by emphasizing the dominant discourses. Furthermore, he found that members of the professionally oriented new middle class are committed to the ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement, and management. As a result, mechanisms to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of these strategies for education have been implemented, which represent the "disciplining" of culture to conform to national standards, curriculum, and testing (Apple, 2004).

Apple's (1981) position has been consistent over the years and he has found that schools produce, control, and enable accumulation of legitimate knowledge and values of those in power. Through its control of knowledge, the school has the power to reproduce "a stratified social order that remains strikingly unequal by class, gender, and race ... [and maintains] existing relations of domination and exploitation" (Apple, p. 28). Apple maintained that in opposition to the institutionalized power of schools, students are not just passive receivers of knowledge who will willingly fit into an unequal society. Instead, he noted, schools also teach students to be critical and challenge the dominant ideologies. Nevertheless, in this struggle over ideological hegemony, schools must win

over the students to maintain control and this preserves knowledge and produces institutions and acculturated people who work in them. For Apple, schools reproduce cultural power as well as economic power and this gives certain groups in society the ability “to transform culture into a commodity, to accumulate it, to make of it what Bourdieu has called ‘cultural capital’” (p. 32).

Similarly, Middleton (2000) found that few theories exist to explain the relationship between two conditions affecting higher education; increasing state intervention and increasing marketization. This lack of satisfactory theoretical explanation of market models confuses the debate about whether higher education is being “nationalised” or “marketised.” Middleton identified three viewpoints that attempt to explain these forces in modern higher education: (a) Marketization and state intervention are incompatible strategies for educational reform, (b) state intervention may contribute to the success of a higher educational market economy and thus subordinate the state to the market, and (c) market relations are mobilized in the cause of centralized educational policy objectives. Each of these viewpoints has implications for how reform efforts in higher education may unfold.

First, if marketization and state intervention are incompatible approaches in higher education, the “state’s interest is confined to containing the undesirable consequences of unfettered market activity” (Middleton, 2000, p. 548). Second, if state intervention is needed for a successful market, the state manages the market to foster a spirit of competition among universities to make higher education more efficient or responsive to the needs of the consumers. In both these cases, the basic concept of the market remains constant as a mechanism to meet diverse consumer needs and the

institutions present the market as providing educational diversity. The third viewpoint questions this premise and presents the idea of the state steering the market at a distance, or using “remote control [to retain] strategic command over policy under conditions of radical decentralization” (Middleton, p. 548). This remote control implies subordination of the market to a central policy and is critical for a supply-side economy to function.

The preceding discussions indicate that social, cultural, political, and market forces may impact higher education in general and prison higher education in specific. In the next chapter, I describe the lived experience that I explored and state the research questions that guided my narrative inquiry. Then I identify three areas of potential significance for the study and review certain relevant literature.

Early in my research, I realized that I had no idea what my final project was likely to be. Furthermore, I had not found a detailed rulebook that spelled out the procedures that I should use for a narrative inquiry. I believe that working within this ambiguity tended to blur the distinctions between data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Throughout the research process, I was aware of my interest in how my participants understood themselves and their position within the *habitus* of the prison institution and in the larger society. Like Ochberg (2003), as I listened to my participants or reread their transcripts, I asked myself how I might use this to explore my research questions. I believe that my interpretation was being shaped from the beginning of my work.

CHAPTER 3: EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF INTEREST

My inquiry was situated in the tension between education as social control and education as the practice of freedom. As I mentioned, I examined the lived experience stories told by educators who shared a common and pivotal life event (Chase, 2005, Reissman, 1993), which was teaching college courses in a prison setting. I wanted to understand why my participants do what they do and how they make meaning of their experiences in specific social constructions, times, and places (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I believed this experience had meaning that generated and informed their behavior (Polkinghorne, 1988).

As I approached data collection, I reflected on my previous collaborations with correctional officials and a local community college to develop opportunities for inmates to take college courses funded by the federal Youth Offender Act. Furthermore, I considered my own experiences with education as a means of social control and education as the practice of freedom. By allowing my personal understanding in the interpretation of these stories, I used connected and passionate knowing through which I hoped to gain access to other people's knowledge. The connected passionate knower includes the self and values the personal experience over authoritative pronouncements (Belenky et al., 1986/1997).

Research Questions

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested that narrative inquiry implies a continual reformulation of an inquiry. At the outset, I did not have clear definable

problem and I did not have an expectation of solutions. My inquiry was open-ended and situated in the conceptual framework and not “one that can be answered, but ... one that calls for exploration” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 265). I did not expect to find solutions and I continued to reformulate my inquiry during the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). However, I used two central questions to guide my inquiry: (a) how do educators who teach college in prison understand and experience their work as teachers of higher learning skills and (b) how do these experiences illuminate the influence of the educators’ character and motivation and mediate the prison environment in the teaching and learning process?

Significance of the Study

Many postsecondary and secondary educators are committed to a teaching practice that explicitly deals with issues of race, gender, class, national origin, and sexual orientation to increase cross-border understanding. These educators work to equalize the opportunities for the dominant and oppressed groups (Tisdell, 2002). They demonstrate courage in their daily lives by refusing to allow social and political pressures to prevent them from offering an education based on “an ethic of caring, community, social justice, and critical literacy” (Apple, 1995, p. xxii). What is missing from the literature is attention to the subgroup of educators who teach college in prison. Some insight may result from exploring what drives these educators to work in an environment controlled by the dominant group and why they may be motivated to foster critical dialogue that could lead to social action.

In light of the limited amount of literature that deals with higher education in prison and with those people who teach college in prison, the purpose of my study was to

explore how prison educators experience themselves working in a correctional environment. This study may have implications for how these adult educators can contribute to the control of incarcerated persons through teaching the state and dominant culture. It may also have implications for how these adult educators “can challenge systems of power, privilege, oppression, and colonialization” (Tisdell, 2002, p. 62).

My strong interest in the role education plays in society and the motivations of teachers led me to study the narratives of educators who teach college in prison. Although this is a personal interest of mine, I believe that there is a relationship between this interest and larger social and psychosocial issues (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The articulation of the stories of my participants and my interpretation of their stories may illuminate this relationship. These issues include alternative approaches to conducting social policy research, *habitus* and its impact on construction of professional identity, and contributions of feminist interpretative processes to narrative research.

Alternative Approaches to Social Policy Research

The more traditional and dominant approaches to studying education and social policy use conceptual lenses entrenched in a positivist construction of knowledge (Heck, 2004). These lenses lead many researchers to assume that individuals behave rationally in pursuit of clearly defined goals of an organization. Therefore, researchers using these more accepted approaches in policy study view the process of knowledge generation as separate from the subjects who provide the information about the phenomenon being studied. Positivist researchers generally hold an objective notion of scientific truth and apply rational arguments to confirm existing theories. This research often relies on hypothesis testing, quantitative analysis, and generalization of results and frequently

grows out of assumptions of power relations in an accepted hierarchical social order (Heck, 2004).

Criticism of this dominant way of thinking about organizations suggested to me that generalizations are suspect because alternative explanations and interpretations are equally plausible. I wanted to consider how more contemporary approaches might be used in my research. Newer approaches include critical, feminist, and postmodern and poststructural perspectives. Postmodern and poststructural researchers examine “constructions of reality as situated in specific times and places, with particular power structures and accepted discourses” (Heck, 2004, p. 162). Heck noted that when Michel Foucault examined power and knowledge he found that discourses are embedded in history and politics so that no single objective truth emerges. In addition, Heck referred to Jacques Derrida’s argument that meanings of particular ideas rely on the language used to discuss them, which allows for different and competing interpretations. Set in historical and cultural traditions, language has meaning through discourse among social actors and power structures are built by accepted discursive practices.

From the postmodern and poststructural viewpoints, I learned that the biases of the researcher and her relationship with the participants impact the research (Heck, 2004). Similarly, the feminist perspective considers the personal dimension of policy study and critiques “knowledge gained from mainstream policy analysis” (Heck, 2004, p. 168). Although a wide range of feminist analyses exists, they generally focus on interventions to transform organizations and dismantle institutionalized power that marginalizes or silences women. A central assumption underlying the critical perspective is that social policies reinforce dominant social values, which institutionalize social inequities.

Dominant groups protect their power by controlling existing social arrangements that secure their position and marginalize minority groups (Heck, 2004).

My approach to this study relies upon elements of these newer perspectives. I hope to contribute to social policy research by articulating the relationship between my personal interests and the larger social concerns that the participants told about (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This study may also offer a different perspective on the tension between education as social control and education as the practice of freedom. Within the language of the stories I heard, I uncovered manifestations of the teaching and learning process that are unique to correctional facilities. Accordingly, I considered ways in which participants name or describe their work and the underlying relationships between these names and power in prison. This is an appropriate focus of attention because:

What things are called almost always reflects relations of power. People in power call things what they want to, and others have to adjust to that, perhaps using other words of their own in private but accepting what they cannot escape. (Becker, 2003, p. 661)

Furthermore, the dialectic process of narrative analysis serves to connect people and social movements, political events, and macro-level phenomenon (Riessman, 2003). Exploring the phenomenon through the perspective of my participants may facilitate better understanding of the impact of the external and internal factors on the policy and practice of higher education in prison. Davidson (1995) suggested that studies of schooling in prison reflect not only the personal growth of the educators but a potential for specific social transformation. For example, my participants often found that social, political, and economic conditions impacted their work in terms of quality and quantity of

the prison higher education programs. These conditions might also have affected how they saw and understood themselves.

Habitus and Construction of Professional Identity

In my opinion, an examination of how prison educators construct their identity should also include the unique environment in which they work. The prison system inculcates its principles so that the recipients, including prison educators, internalize the desired categories of thought. In this sense, prisons are institutions that facilitate the transmission of *habitus*, that is, “the product of internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1997/2000, p. 31). In a prison where inmate control is a top priority, educators are frequently part of the security team and are often required to perform duties beyond those conducted in college setting. Prison officials request their teachers to report changes in inmates’ behavior and appearance, to inventory property and tools, and to search for potential weapons and contraband items (Williams, 1989). These stressful situations and tensions between security and education affect the morale and motivation of prison educators (Wright, 2004). Although much of the literature I considered regarding correctional education focused on the change in inmate behavior from criminal activities to positive participation in society, I found two helpful articles that looked at what motivated correctional educators and how they shaped their professional identity.

In a theoretical work, Gehring and Wright (2003) claimed that many correctional educators experience an environment that seems hostile toward education and learning. The authors attempted to clarify the correctional educator’s personal rationale for being engaged in the field through a five level model. In this model, the overarching question

for a correctional educator to ask is: “Who am I and why am I here?” (Gehring & Wright, p. 6). Five subordinate questions identified five levels of social maturity in thinking about education change in correctional institutions. At Level 1, the correctional educator asks how she or he would personally benefit from the work. At this level, the teacher sees correctional education change as chaotic and may be motivated by religious zeal as in the early history of correctional education. At Level 2, the teacher asks how the institution will benefit. At this level, the teacher looks at the education process as a member of the correctional staff and expects education to produce no change beyond inmate order.

At Level 3, the correctional teacher asks how society, as she or he understands it, will benefit. Here the teacher perceives the tension between conforming to the prison’s expectations of order and society’s expectations of rehabilitation. At Level 4, the teacher considers benefits for both students and teachers and asks what she or he can take away that will be useful for both. At Level 5, the highest level, the instructor anticipates that correctional education will make a difference for the individual inmate and for society. The question that the correctional educator asks is “what can we do together – inside and outside the institution – to improve the world?” (Gehring & Wright, 2003, p. 7).

In a qualitative study, Tewksbury (1993) noted that the research literature on the value of advanced educational programs in prison focused mainly on outcomes (e.g., reduced recidivism and changes in inmate behavior) and ignored the inputs (e.g., the teachers). He interviewed and observed 40 prison-based college faculty members employed at Wilmington (Ohio) College. Tewksbury’s sample approximated the faculty population from which the participants were drawn: 60% were male, 92% were white, and 87% were part-time, with an average of 4.25 years of experience in correctional

education. The analysis revealed five distinct, yet overlapping, dominate motivations for teaching in a postsecondary correctional education program: alternative career paths, academic idealism, institutional objectives, educational expansion, and social reform. Tewksbury categorized the first three motivations as egocentric because they focused primarily on individual goals and concerns and 55% of the participants reported these motivations. The remaining 45% of the participants reported the last two motivations that Tewksbury considered as altruistic.

These two studies described how correctional educators assume various identities that might change along a continuum of options depending on their values and motivations for teaching in prison. On another level, I see my study as an exploration of the feminist interpretive process and the influence of subjectivity in feminist scholarship (Bloom, 1998).

Contributions of Feminist Interpretative Processes to Narrative Research

My desire to explore how my participants construct their multiple identities led me to consider how feminist interpretative process contributes to narrative research. For example, feminist researchers study social interactions and pivotal experiences, as expressed through language and discourse, which produce the multiple subject positions that their research participants occupy (Bloom, 1998; Naples 2003). In contrast to masculinist notions that individuals have a particular immobile identity, postmodern feminism asserts that human identity is complex, ambiguous, and fragmented (Bloom, 1998, 2002); that is, nonunitary and subjective. The production of multiple identities corresponds to the nonunitary subjectivity of feminist poststructural and postmodern theory.

Feminist research has helped to legitimize the autobiographical voice associated with reflexive writing (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). Reflexivity means the tendency “to reflect upon, examine critically, and explore analytically the nature of the research process” (Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 2). Reflexivity in feminist scholarship is a source of insight into the assumptions about gender relations underlying the conduct of the inquiry. As Fonow and Cook (1991) pointed out, the notion of reflexivity is also found in the work of scholars such as Friere. Friere (1970/2003) described how experiencing the contradictions of life can lead to creative insights about oppression and can result in political activism. Reflexivity in narratives can illuminate the links between what people experience in their daily lives and the broad-based social issues such as the social construction of inequality (Naples, 2003).

Although my inquiry did not address gender relations specifically, I started with a story about myself and explained my personal connection to my inquiry. I also used personal knowledge to help me understand the research process (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). While my story is about how educators who teach college in prison make meaning of their experiences, it is also about my intellectual and personal transformation as I reflected on the research process. I followed an approach similar to Bloom’s (1998) who studied personal narratives as a means to understand women’s gendered experiences and self-representations. Bloom’s investigation furthered her understanding of feminist methodology and nonunitary subjectivity and became an intellectual and personal journey.

Like Bloom, my ideas about methodology changed as I circled through the reading, data interpretation, and writing process. Bloom referred to Van Maanen’s

confessional tales where the researcher struggles “to piece together something reasonably coherent out of displays of initial disorder, doubt, and difficulty” (Van Maanen, 1988, p. 75). In casting myself as the interpreter of the narratives, I became more aware of how subjectivity is constantly being reconstituted through language and discourse.

The narrative environment seemed to offer a constructive platform to examine the stories of my participants in the context of the tension between education as social control and education as the practice of freedom. During this examination, I considered how the participants presented their multiple identities through language and discourse. In the next chapter, I locate myself within certain feminist perspectives and I describe more fully the feminist influence on my inquiry.

CHAPTER 4: LOCATING MYSELF WITHIN MULTIPLE FEMINISMS

Feminist Perspectives

The growing complexity of feminist qualitative research reflects multiple feminisms including postmodern, deconstructive, poststructural, and standpoint theory. These feminisms utilize “different theoretical and pragmatic orientations and reflect national contexts among which feminist agendas differ widely” (Olesen, 2003, p. 333). A feminist perspective includes a range of theories from which a researcher criticizes the dominant or privileged truth and envisions the possibilities of change (Weedon, 1997). These diverse feminist perspectives lead feminist researchers to identify, analyze, and present data in many different ways (Naples, 2003).

While I do not limit myself to a specific strand within these multiple feminisms, I acknowledge that my overall feminist perspective and my criteria for interpretation greatly influenced the outcome of this study (Riessman, 1993, 2003). In order to clarify my point of view and its impact on my study, I now offer some highlights in the recent development of feminist perspectives. Then I locate myself by describing the context in which I conducted the inquiry, analyzed and presented the data, and suggested applications for the findings. Since I used a feminist lens for this inquiry, I faced the dilemma of positioning myself as a feminist researcher since my inquiry includes stories from women and men. Although my research participants are not exclusively women, I examined their personal narratives and developed an interpretation using central practices

of feminist research: reflexivity, activist orientation, attention to caring and emotion, and concern with everyday life (Fonow & Cook, 1991).

Feminism and personal narratives have been linked since the civil rights and women's rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. These perspectives helped to renew an interest in the life history method of qualitative research (Chase, 2005). Early in the 20th century, sociologists and anthropologists collected life histories as a way of presenting views of culture and daily life from the perspective of various members of the groups under study. These researchers frequently presented men's lives and activities as the norm from which women's lives and activities derived. The second wave of the women's movement in the 1980s and early 1990s further revitalized the study of personal narratives by considering women's stories as primary documents. Feminist researchers challenged the social science assumptions that men used to define society, culture, and history (Chase, 2005).

For example, Gilligan (1982/1993) began writing *In a Different Voice* in the early 1970s when historical events in the United States were calling into question the authority of the dominant knowledge. The demonstrations against the Vietnam War, the National Guard shooting of students at Kent State University, and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* were some of the catalysts that brought alternative voices to the forefront. Gilligan argued that women's struggle to maintain their voices begins in adolescence and their voices are an inevitable challenge to a patriarchal order. For Gilligan, having a voice means being heard. Twenty years later, in her preface to a reissued version of her revolutionary book, Gilligan wrote that she still has frequently

contentious discussions about “about women’s voices, about difference, about the foundations of knowledge or what is currently called ‘the canon’” (p. xi).

Similarly, Belenky et al. (1986/1997) used data from extensive interviews with ordinary women living ordinary lives to demonstrate “how women’s self-concepts and ways of knowing are intertwined” (p. 3). In their interpretation of the data, they considered questions about the nature of truth and reality and the origins of knowledge. Reflecting in a preface to the tenth anniversary edition of their book, *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, Belenky et al. told the stories of how their personal concerns became an increasingly public discourse. They also described how they co-created theories of knowledge with their participants and how they individually were transformed by the process of their research.

Most feminist scholars struggle with “problems of the relationship between experience and theory, access to knowledge and the patriarchal structure and content of knowledge” (Weedon, 1997, p. 7). The preceding examples of early feminist research show how the feminist theoretical perspectives that emerged in the mid 1980s are situated in the recent philosophical stance called postmodern or poststructural (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Merriam, 2002; Naples, 2003; Richardson, 2003). From this stance, the researcher questions the construction of reality, challenges established values and claims to truth, and directly engages in the context of the inquiry. When the feminist researcher unmask the privileged knowledge, she permits alternative representations of the research material. Furthermore, the feminist researcher views women as central players whose subjective meanings assigned to the events and conditions in their lives present new understandings of historical, cultural, and social processes (Chase, 2005). Feminists also

reflect on the researcher's role in determining whose questions get answered and how power influences the research relationship between the participant and the researcher.

Feminist Influence on the Inquiry

These feminist perspectives influenced my research process and presentation and interpretation of the data. In an analysis of a collection of articles on feminist scholarship, Fonow and Cook (1991) identified four interrelated threads that reflect a feminist influence on research techniques and practices: reflexivity, an action orientation, attention to the affective components of the research, and use of the situation at hand. These four feminist practices shaped my inquiry as I confronted interpretative issues around privileged knowledge and claims of truth, subjective meaning making and multiple identities, and the relationship between the participant and the researcher.

Privileged Knowledge and Claims of Truth

In Chapter Two, I described my concern about a trend in higher education toward establishing standardized testing in higher education. This standardized testing may reflect the values and beliefs of Western canon and ignore the border knowledge of diverse learners. The conceptual framework of my inquiry contrasts education as a means of social control to reproduce the dominant culture and education as the practice of freedom to resist assimilation of the dominant norms and values. Although I emphasized the value of the latter viewpoint, my approach to inquiry and analysis took into account that the knowledge of the participants could influence the research process. By considering the participant "as actor capable of resisting pressures to conform" (Fonow & Cook, p. 8), I incorporated certain aspects of action orientation in my interpretation of how the participants internalized or found ways to resist the dominant culture.

Subjectivity and Multiple Identities

In addressing questions of subjectivity, I demonstrated how the participants are continually changing their concept of self and construct multiple identities through their daily relationships with others and experiences within the dominant structure. These multiple identities are located “in language, produced in everyday ... cultural experiences, and expressed in writing and speaking” (Bloom, 2002, p. 291). This focus on the world of everyday life illustrates the feminist tendency to use situations at hand as central to the investigation. Furthermore, the transformations that I experienced in my sense of professional identity came about through my exploration of the participants’ accounts of human behavior.

Relationship between Participant and Researcher

An emphasis on reflection leads to “a better understanding of political and social contexts of the production of knowledge” (Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 5) and a focus on action. During the research process, I continually reflected on my privileged role as researcher and worked to foreground the participants’ viewpoints. In attending to the affective dimension of research, I recognize that emotions have meaning and can stimulate new insights. I also incorporated the ethic of caring, which reflects how women view the world and resolve moral dilemmas (Fonow & Cook, 1991; Wright, 2004) and I strove to protect the welfare of the participants.

In the following chapter, I describe the study design, which includes Fonow and Cook’s (1991) four central practices of feminist research: (a) my reaction to doing the research; that is, reflexivity, (b) a consideration of ethical issues raised by an activist orientation, (c) attention to the affective components of the research act such as caring

and emotion, and (d) concern with everyday life or the situation at hand. The categories are not separable but indicate some degree of cohesiveness in the approach to the design (Fonow & Cook, 1991). Furthermore, I incorporated these four practices into my approaches to data identification (Chapter 6), analysis (Chapter 7), and interpretation (Chapters 8 and 9). This next chapter also contains a description of how I collected the data, facilitated the storytelling, and resolved several dilemmas that I faced as a feminist narrative researcher.

CHAPTER 5: DESIGNING THE STUDY

Personal Narratives as Data

As Holstein and Gubrium (2003) noted, “interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives” (p. 67). The data that I collected were stories about lived experiences of teaching college in prison that my participants provided during in-depth interviews. I examined the content, context, and structure of their stories following broad guidelines from certain narrative researchers. In my structural analysis, I considered various ways the participants told their stories, including the development of the plot and different linguistic aspects of the narrative (Lieblich et al., 1998). The participants often described a three-dimensional space by going back in time, returning to the present, and discussing the future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In addition, the participants referred to the social and political construction of their environment. A further dimension involved the multiple ways the participants positioned themselves in relation to one another to indicate their identities as social beings, to the audience or listener to indicate their identities as actors, and to themselves to indicate the construction of self-identities (Bamberg, 1997).

During this phase of the research and throughout the study, I utilized Fonow and Cook’s (1991) four practices of feminist research. First, the practice of attention to the affective components of research is evidenced by my commitment to the welfare of my participants. For example, I asked each participant to select the location for our interview to ensure that she or he would feel comfortable. During the interviews, I attempted to

demonstrate my capacity for empathy by sharing my experiences that related to our discussion topic. On several occasions, the participants and I acknowledged the therapeutic value of participating in the research process. Second, this reflection and critical examination of the nature of the research process also reveals the role of reflexivity in my study. Reflexivity is a process of self-awareness and, in the second interview, several of my participants mentioned that telling their stories and then reading the transcription of the first interview provided them new insights into their experiences. Furthermore, my sense of identity as a feminist researcher developed through my continual investigation of my reaction to doing the research.

Third, an example of how I reflected the action orientation feature of feminist research is found in my discussion of my study's potential significance for social policy. In setting the stage for the inquiry, I noted my emancipatory vision of higher education as an agent of social change to create democratic classrooms. I also highlighted my participants' concerns about political and social policies that impacted their effectiveness as teachers of college in prison. Finally, I practiced the feminist approach of using the situation at hand by my concern with the everyday world of my participants. My prior involvement with prison educators and prison education programming led me to recognize the research potential in these surroundings. I now turn to the study design.

Data Collection

Participants

Since I used the active interview (see interview protocol below), my initial designation of a group of participants was "tentative, provisional, and sometimes even spontaneous" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 74). These potential participants were

educators who are teaching or who had taught college courses in a Western state's correctional facilities on a part-time basis contracted through local higher education institutions. Many college-level correctional education programs received funding from the federal Incarcerated Youthful Offender Grants (IYO) that Congress approved in 2002 (Baust, McWilliams, Murray, & Schmidt, 2006). The grants stipulate that subsidized students must be offenders who are 25 years old and younger and are within five years of release from prison. Older inmates may enroll in the college programs by paying the college tuition. All inmate students must pass the General Education Development (GED) tests or have a high school diploma to participate in these college courses, which are generally core general education courses. Typically, the states receive the federal funding and the state department of corrections contracts with a local college or university to provide the curriculum and instructors for these college-level correctional education programs. (See Appendix A for a chronology of funding for prison education.)

After receiving approval to conduct human subjects research from Colorado State University's Human Review Committee, I contacted a gatekeeper who agreed to help me get in touch with potential participants. The gatekeeper is an associate professor of sociology in a four-year institution and has conducted research and published reports on prisons and prison history. He has taught and administered college-level prison education programs since 1976. He founded two on-site undergraduate programs in 1988 and 2004 to provide college courses in correctional facilities in a Western state.

The gatekeeper believed that participating in this study would not compromise the ability of these educators (who are part-time contract employees hired through local higher education institutions) to continue working as adjunct instructors in the state's

correctional facilities. He further suggested that his colleague, an administrator for college prison programs who had more current contact information for postsecondary educators across the state, send the form letter in an email to a list of potential participants. (The form letter that the alternative gatekeeper used to invite participation in this research is presented in Appendix B.) After receiving the invitation letter in an email from the alternative gatekeeper, six educators responded, indicating that they had taught college in the state's prisons. By email, I confirmed that she or he would be willing to participate in my research study. During fall 2006, I conducted two interviews with each of the five participants. Since the sixth potential participant relocated to another state, I did not include this person in my study.

After the initial interview of between 60 and 90 minutes, I continued with all five participants because they were interpretively active subjects and capable of narrative production. In total, I conducted two interviews with each of the five participants to ensure that I could present the richness and diversity of their experiences teaching college in a prison setting. These ten in-depth and intensive interviews yielded significant results that were detailed and multilayered.

Interview Site

I asked the participants to select interview sites that were most convenient for them and in which they would feel at ease. The participants selected a classroom in the local community college, a public restaurant, an office in a nearby high school, and a private home. In the initial face-to-face contact with the participants, I repeated that I was a graduate student working on a dissertation using narrative inquiry. I confirmed that they were willing to participate in a 60 to 90-minute private interactional interview about their

experiences teaching college in prison. Before proceeding with the interview, each participant completed and signed the form for informed consent (see Appendix C). In addition, I conducted a brief survey concerning the participants' background at the beginning of each first interview (see Appendix D). Then I explained that I anticipated facilitating a second and possible third interview in which participants would discuss and clarify their transcripts from prior interviews. The participants each agreed to a second interview at the same location after I sent them the transcript of their first interview.

Facilitation of the Telling

Active Interviewing

Interviews are a form of conversation. They are active interactions in which interview roles are less clear and sometimes are even exchanged between researcher and participant who both situate their stories in the context of history, society, biography, and institutional influences (Fontana, 2003). In the broadest sense of interviewing actively, I tried to solicit responses by "indicating –even suggesting – narrative positions, resources, orientations, and precedents" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 75) as in a conversation. The participants narrated their stories of lived experiences, which I considered as a way of meaning making in collaboration with me as the interviewer. I conversed with the participants in order to bring alternate considerations into play and suggest linkages between diverse aspects of the participants' experiences.

Unstructured Interview Format

In order to keep the interviews unstructured and free flowing, I prepared open-ended questions that I thought would encourage narrative telling. (A list of the questions is presented in Appendix E.) These questions served as a guideline for my listening

(Josselson & Lieblich, 2003). During the interview, I used a small digital voice recorder that I hoped would be unobtrusive. Each participant was interested in this developing digital technology and this discussion was part of the “small talk” that I intended as a connection between each participant and me. Furthermore, I felt that participants were eager to tell their stories of teaching in a prison setting and that they were comfortable talking with me about my methodology. After I introduced myself to the participant and briefly explained the purpose of the interview, I launched the inquiry “with the briefest of requests” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 39): How did you become a correctional educator?

Each participant seemed at ease with the private, unstructured interview format although I shared with her or him the list of potential interview questions before I began the recording of the interview. When I completed recording the interviews, I downloaded the audio files to my computer. Then I opened and played the interviews using Windows Media Player. The Media Player allowed me to listen to a fragment of the data, pause the recording, and type the fragment or phrase into the transcription.

Transcription as Analysis

In narrative inquiry, “analysis cannot be easily distinguished from transcription” (Riessman, 1993, p. 60). In my transcription of each interview, I tried to get subtle features of the discourse down on paper because I thought they might have meaning related to how the participant told her or his story. Therefore, I included various features of the spoken word, such as utterances such as crying, laughing, non-lexical expressions and false starts, and repeated words. In order to include these features in my initial transcription, I developed a notation syntax based on Poland’s (2003) method of ensuring

transcription quality. (See Appendix F for the notation syntax used for the transcriptions.) During a second review of the recording, I read the interview transcript on the computer screen while the audio recording was running. In this way, I tried to correct any discrepancies between what I had originally transcribed and what was actually said during the interview.

Since the recordings of the interviews did not capture certain aspects of interpersonal interaction and nonverbal communication, my notation syntax had two components. In the first component, emotional context, certain symbols represent the nonverbal communication for the emotional context of intonation of voice, pauses, sighs, and laughter. Here I tried to represent the pacing of the speech and the length of the silences although I may not have reflected the variations in volume, pitch, and quality of voice. The second component, audible interjections, reflects a notational syntax for interjections that I heard indicating receipt of information or affirmation of the information. This notation system enabled me to ensure that the transcripts were “verbatim facsimiles of what was said in interviews” (Poland, 2003, p. 267).

After scheduling a second interview with each participant, I sent her or him an electronic copy of the transcription of the first interview. I included this notation syntax to help the participant decipher the transcript. (See Appendix F for the information that I sent to the participants regarding the notation syntax for the first transcription.) I also included some notes on quality, process, and format of transcription. In my correspondence with each participant, I noted that the transcript of our conversation in the interviews looked very different than conventional prose. The inclusion of notations for these audible interjections made much of our conversations seem disjointed, hesitant, and

even incoherent on the printed page (Poland, 2003). I concluded this correspondence by thanking the participant for continuing to be part of this research study.

Although I attempted to ensure that the interview transcript was a verbatim account of the recorded interview, I faced several challenges to transcription quality. First, people often talk in run-on sentences and staccato phrases that do not translate well from the oral tradition to the written text. In addition, I may have placed punctuation marks in the text and omitted or misunderstood words so that the meaning of the text has changed from the original intent of the participant's oral presentation. I also tried to indicate when the participant was quoting others by including quotation marks to differentiate from when she or he was paraphrasing. Lastly, I had difficulty understanding some words or passages because of background sounds that occasionally interfered with the quality of the audio recording.

In these transcriptions, I used the first initial of the pseudonym that participant had chosen to indicate when she or he was speaking. The letter "I" stood for "Interviewer" and indicated when I was speaking. In preparing the transcripts, I did not disguise the names of people or locations mentioned during the interviews. However, as noted in the signed informed consent form, I have not identified my participants in any written materials about this study. In all written materials except the original transcriptions, I have kept each participant's name and other identifying information private by using pseudonyms. In addition, I have used pseudonyms for any named persons and fictional names of any locations described or discussed in the interviews.

After the transcription, I used Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestion to "pause and ponder" (p. 51). Adapting the authors' suggested format, I developed a summary

sheet for each contact that presented the main concepts, themes, issues, and questions (see Figure 1). This summary sheet represented a way to organize and retain the basic information and capture my first impressions and reflections. Here surprising themes emerged regarding the motivation of the participants to become college instructors in prison. The path that the participants took to prison education reflected their worldviews and the meaning they made of their role in influencing prisoners through education.

Summary of Contact

<i>Contact date:</i>	Date
<i>Contact type:</i>	In-Person Interview
<i>Site for Interview:</i>	Location

Central inquiry: How do postsecondary correctional educators make meaning of their lived experiences teaching college in prison?

1. *Main issues or themes*
2. *Information received (or not received) based on central inquiry*
3. *Other salient, illuminating, or interesting concepts that emerged*
4. *Considerations for future contacts*

Figure 1. Format used for summarizing the initial interview with each participant

At this stage of the analysis process, I looked for evidence of how a focus emerged, how the participants and I interacted, and how features of the discourse reflected or refuted my conceptual framework (Riessman, 1993). I worked carefully to avoid reading the narratives only for content or as evidence for a prior theory. I examined the structure of the narrative by asking “why does an informant develop her tale *this* way in conversation with *this* [italics original] listener?” (Riessman, p. 61) and how do the

“participants in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives” (Riessman, p. 2).

Dilemmas for Narrative Inquiry

Validation

My presentation and interpretation of these personal narratives was meant to convey an impression (and not be an exact record) of each participant’s experience although I transcribed as accurately as possible what I recorded. As Gergen and Gergen (2003) noted, knowledge or “truth” is situated within particular communities at particular times. First, my participants may have excluded or altered experiences that were troubling or complex. Second, their telling of the stories was located in social discourses and power relations that do not remain constant over time (Riessman, 1993) that I may not be fully aware of. Although my readings of the data were influenced by my feminist perspective, I attempted to balance data and interpretation by presenting significant segments from the interviews combined with my understanding of the meanings. Through the process of identifying and managing the data (see Chapter 6), I chose certain segments of the narratives for further examination. Then I searched for emerging patterns and tensions that I used to analyze the narratives (see Chapter 7). Next, I presented an account in the format of a performance text using three themes that emerged from the data analysis (see Chapter 8). In Chapter 9, I offered my interpretation of how the discursive environment of the prison offered opportunities for my participants to construct multiple identities.

The process used to establish validity in the experimental or scientific model relies on realist assumptions and generally does apply to narrative studies (Riessman,

1993). In narrative analysis, validation is the process used to make claims for the trustworthiness of the interpretation. However, some qualitative researchers are uneasy about “the drift from conventional scientific standards” (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, p. 584). Gergen and Gergen (2003) viewed the debate about validity using the metaphor of “generative tension” (p. 585) and suggested several ways of reframing validity. First, the concept of situated knowledge might serve to reconcile the constructionist and the realist positions on validity where situated truth is understood within a particular community at a particular time. Second, the question of validity might be considered in terms of how alternative methods for data presentation, such as drama or multimedia, function within the culture under investigation. For example, alternative forms of data presentation may “enhance audience interest or engagement” (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, p. 588).

When Gergen and Gergen (2003) addressed the crisis of validity in qualitative research, they noted four emerging methodological innovations that are used to replace the positivist “effort to discover and record the truth” (p. 578). In addition, Riessman (1993) proposed four ways of approaching validation in narrative work. Although I acknowledge that none of these techniques fully resolves the dilemma of validity in qualitative research, I adapted three techniques offered by Gergen and Gergen (2003) and four techniques proposed by Riessman (1993).

Gergen and Gergen (2003) described one approach to validity as the emphasis that qualitative researchers put on reflexivity. Using reflexivity, researchers may tell the truth about the making of the account but does not fully address the issue of the truth of the account itself. Using reflexivity, researchers demonstrate their personal biases and the cultural or political contexts of the interpretation. After I looked at my personal history

and how it impacted my research (see Chapter 1), I felt better prepared to tell the stories of the people I studied as socially, culturally, and personally situated. I also understood that my participants constructed their stories in conjunction with me as the researcher.

In addition, I used the second means that Gergen and Gergen discussed for recognizing the problems of validation; that is, multiple voicing. I included the various views of my participants and offered alternative interpretations or perspectives. Still, this approach does not address the concerns about how the researcher represents individual participants who have multiple perspectives and includes or excludes voices in her role as ultimate author of the work. Finally, I used performance as a means of representing the research (Gergen & Gergen, 2003). The performance text that I created (see Chapter 8) provides the reader or audience with possibilities for in-depth engagement with the issues and with the freedom to interpret as they wish. Next I turn to the four techniques that Riessman (1993) proposed to address the issue of validity, which she also considered as unresolved in narrative analysis.

Riessman (1993) proposed four ways of approaching validation in narrative work, which I have applied in my narrative study: persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic use. First, I developed an interpretation of the data that is persuasive because it is reasonable and convincing and I offered alternative interpretations. Since the meanings of the narratives depend on literary presentations and reader response (Riessman, 1993), I developed a literary device to invite the reader into the world of my participants who are part-time instructors teaching college in prison. Specifically, I created a performance text using the interview dialogue as the script for my participants. My interpretation is evident in the selection of the data segments, the arrangement of the

dialogue in a plot, and in alternative interpretations that I offered as a character in the play.

Second, I applied the criterion of correspondence to my research by taking the transcripts of the first interview back to the participants for their comments on the accuracy of my transcription. Using these member checks, I discovered what each participant thought of my transcription or our interview and I secured her or his consent to use a particular text (Riessman, 1993). However, my participants made limited comments on the transcript from the first interviews and merely verified quotations. These perfunctory readings were consistent with what certain narrative researchers have experienced in conducting member checks (Bloom, 1998; Riessman, 1993).

Furthermore, I did not provide the participants with my initial interpretation of their stories since they might not have agreed with my theorizing across a number of narratives and they might have changed their understanding of the meanings of the experiences as their consciousness changed (Riessman, 1993). Within the study, I have attempted to distinguish my views from those of the participants and I take responsibility for the interpretation (Bloom, 1998; Riessman, 1993).

Third, I used the criterion of coherence to demonstrate that the interpretation was not informal theorizing (Riessman, 1993). As an example of coherence, I observed that the participants developed their narratives around a set of common themes (e.g., working in borderlands, negotiating power relations, and making personal transformations), which they frequently thrashed out within the interviews. Coherence in the narratives was also reflected when the participants used similar contrasts and juxtaposed events to make their points. For instance, the participants frequently told stories about their experiences

teaching in classrooms in universities and contrasted these with experiences teaching college in a prison setting. Finally, I applied the fourth criterion of pragmatic use to show how my research might “become the basis for others’ work” (Reissman, 1993, p. 68). In Chapter 9, I consider two areas of research and practice that might be influenced by the alternative understandings of education that my study illuminates: social policy and higher education in prison and rationale and economics of the crime control industry.

The narratives of my participants reflected social discourses and power relations that did not remain constant over time (Reissman, 1993) and each participant recounted the same type of event differently. These changing conditions meant that alternative interpretations might be plausible. Reissman (1993) suggested that a technique for validation is to enable the reader to enter into the meaning making process by providing large portions of the original text and presented alternative interpretations so that the reader can draw their own conclusions. I have included large segments of the narratives in the next chapter dealing with my strategies for identifying and unpacking the data. In addition, I have provided extensive portions of text that I developed into a performance text (see Chapter 8). I limited my editing to eliminating the pauses, repetitions and non-lexical expressions. My intention is for these narratives to “invite contemplation and, like experience itself, remain open to interpretation” (Van Maanen, 1990, p. 284).

Limitations

Limitations of narrative research include ambiguity about the phenomenon, the time required to study subtleties, and the fluidity of meaning making. First, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) found that in narrative studies, it is not easy to say what the phenomenon is about. Narratives are stories and the storytelling is a collaborative practice in which

tellers and listeners “interact in particular cultural milieus and historical contexts, which are essential to interpretation” (Riessman, 1993, p. 333). In the stories that my participants told, their identities changed and blurred as they changed perspectives. After doing the interviews, the experience that I was studying seemed to shift in personal and social dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My final interpretation of the data in Chapter 9 includes a focus on my participants’ personal construction of identity, their reaction to the power relations in educational landscape where they work, and their personal transformations. My overall aim was “to create interpreted description of the rich and multilayered meanings of historical and personal events” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 259).

A second limitation for my inquiry was the extensive amount of time required to analyze the myriad details and to pay attention to many subtleties such as “nuances of speech, organization of a response, local contexts of production, social discourses that shape what is said, and what cannot be spoken” (Riessman, 1993, p. 69). Since the structure of language is integral to the study of narrative meaning, I looked closely at the context of linguistic statements to retain information that I might have missed if I treated these statements in isolation (Polkinghorne, 1988). In addition, my analysis of the narrative structure and linguistic data did not produce certain conclusions. The narratives contained complex patterns that moved in many directions through social construction, time, and place and I often encountered ambiguities in making sense of the data.

The making of narrative meanings is inherently limited because meanings are “continuously being reconstituted as the rudimentary perceptions of consciousness change” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 7). Since the activity of meaning making is fluid and

changing, having participants who were able to communicate and be self-reflective provided insights for my interpretation. My ability to encourage the participants to articulate rich and dense stories that resided within them and participate actively in the interviews shaped the meanings I sought to co-create with them. Furthermore, the participants had direct access only to their realm of meaning and needed to approach that realm through self-reflection, which may not have happened if I was unable to create an interview environment in which they could escape from the concerns of their daily activities.

Ethical Cautions

As a narrative researcher, I faced the challenge of relating theory to phenomena and trying to “straddle the line between a necessary openness to phenomena that are as-yet-unknown and theoretical sophistication that ... [illuminates the] understandings of the narrative that will emerge” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 263). As a feminist researcher, I attempt to address the negotiation of the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant and my responsibilities to those I study (Naples, 2003). Furthermore, the action orientation of my feminist stance could have created ethical dilemmas.

In representing myself to the participants, I explained the focus of my inquiry, the rationale for the narrative inquiry approach, and my researcher stance. Since the interviews may have appeared to be like intimate conversation, I was very careful not to betray the trust of my participants. I tried to avoid understanding the participants based on a unitary identity for which I may have a bias. I attempted to present my participants with their multiple identities so that all their voices would be heard.

Since my research involved the personal and professional aspects of the lives of the participants, I used pseudonyms and disguised locations in interviews and in the analysis of the narratives. I considered what participation in this study was “likely to mean in the life of the participant” (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003, p. 267). Some participants were currently teaching courses through postsecondary institutions so I did not want their positions to be jeopardized and I did not want my intervention to disrupt certain satisfying relationships (Fonow & Cook, 1991).

The participants may have altered their narratives in the retelling or left out details that may be “controversial or overly revealing” (Heck, 2004, p. 228) and I was careful in processing their accounts. In addition, I was mindful that my research findings might be interpreted differently than I intend. Therefore during the interviews and transcriptions, my responsibility was to listen and to present the participants’ positions as I heard them (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). My concern with how this study might impact my participants also reflects the feminist acknowledgement of the affective dimension of research (Fonow & Cook, 1991).

As a feminist researcher, I am interested in how my participants experienced themselves as resisting, subverting, or complying with the dominant hierarchical system. These in-depth life story interviews were the data for my narrative inquiry. The participants made meaning through the narrating of their stories. Through my approach to active interviewing, I co-created these stories and I made meaning through the interpretation of the stories. In the next chapter, I introduce the participants and I explain the strategies I used to identify and unpack the interview data for retranscription and how this process provided opportunities for further analysis of the narratives.

CHAPTER 6: CONSTRUCTING NARRATIVE TEXTS

Introduction to the Participants

The experience my participants had in common was that they were each contracted as part-time instructors by local higher education institutions to teach in prison education programs that offered college courses to eligible inmate students. Each participant offered differing perspectives of her or his role as a prison educator and exercised individual strategies for resolving the tension the prison administration's focus on inmate control and the teacher's desire to create a classroom with open dialogue and discussion among the inmate students. The "outsider within" (Collins, 1991, p. 35) status of these prison educators, who were not part of the prison hierarchical system, offered a special vantage point for viewing these contrasting conceptualizations of education. To foreground the participants' viewpoints in subsequent chapters, I provide extensive interview data that allows the participants to speak for themselves. My voice is heard through the selection of data and is evidence of our shared interest (Bloom, 1998).

Each participant selected a pseudonym at the beginning of our first interview: Kathryn, Seldom, Gandalf, Jack, and Ulysses. They were distinctive in their motivation, education, length of time teaching college in prison, and prior work experience. However, they shared a passion for teaching and had mainly positive experiences teaching college in prison. (See Table 2 for a summary of the background information of the participants.)

Later in this chapter, I describe how I identified and managed the data to distinguish three forms of narrative structures: core narratives, poetic structures, and

vignettes. Then in Chapter 7, I explain how my data represented a collective story and might be presented as a drama and how three transcendent themes emerged from my analysis of the narratives structures. As a preview, these transcendent themes are working in borderlands, negotiating power relations, and making personal transformations. My participants were educators from outside who entered the prison system to teach college courses. They acted against or complied with the limitations and prohibitions of the hegemonically constructed prison system. They became more tolerant and empathized with their inmate students who they agreed were generally eager to learn and appreciative of the opportunity to attend college courses. In the play that I create in Chapter 8, I used large intact segments of the participants' narrative structures to present these themes.

Table 2

Summary of Participants' Attributes from a Brief Survey of Background Information

Attribute	Description
Gender	Two females; three males
Higher Education Degree	Three masters degrees; two doctorate degrees
Graduate Discipline	English, Math, Chemistry, Counseling, Pastoral Ministry
Higher Education Teaching Experience	Two with community college teaching experience; two with community college and four-year university teaching experience; one with no previous higher education teaching experience.
Length of Time as College Instructor in Adult Prison	From three semesters to 13 years
Other Work Experience	Primary school teacher, K-12 school principal, middle school teacher, high school teacher, librarian, entrepreneur, science laboratory director, counselor, religious order member

Now I turn to brief biographical information for each of the five participants and tell stories of my work with them. I reflect on problematic situations that arose such as an unsuitable interview site that led to a stilted conversation and I attempt to analyze how that awkwardness might have been mitigated. In addition, I consider how the participants continually contributed to my rethinking of the interpretations and presentations of the interview data. This section illuminates how the dynamics of the rapport that the participant and I created shaped the structure and content of the narratives. My feminist perspective is reflected in the attention to the relationship between my participants and me, the exploration of subjectivity and multiple identities, and the focus on ways of reacting to the dominant culture.

Kathryn

Kathryn [a pseudonym] invited me to her home for our interviews. I remember being surprised that she selected such a personal location because of her initial uncertainty about participating in the research study. When Kathryn received the invitation from the gatekeeper, she wrote to me indicating that she was very busy with teaching this semester and asked if her participation would require a substantial amount of time and travel. I responded immediately with assurance that I would conduct the interviews at a location and time that were convenient for her to limit any commitment to the project. Within a few days, Kathryn and I met and agreed to have lunch after the interview at one of her favorite local restaurants. This was the beginning of a delightfully unguarded and warm association.

Driving up to Kathryn's house, I thought about how much her neighborhood reminded me of the one in which I had spent my elementary school years. The tree-lined

streets in geometric patterns had small lots with modest homes and well trimmed lawns. When I parked in front of the address, I noticed that the front door was open. This welcoming gesture and Kathryn's friendly greeting put me immediately at ease despite my anxieties about being a novice researcher. As Kathryn fixed tea, we chatted in the kitchen about the exceptional weather and lovely fall colors. I commented about an interesting curio and Kathryn told me this history of how she had acquired it at a recent yard sale. Then I described my background before coming to the dissertation journey because I remembered Bloom's (1998) experience with a participant who was uncomfortable doing all the talking. I wanted to contribute to the dialogue by telling some of my own stories in the beginning of our conversations.

We took our tea into the dining room and sat at the end of a long table on which Kathryn had laid out grapes and nuts. The midmorning light streamed in through a large window so the room was bright and airy. Kathryn admitted that she loved to entertain and often had a dozen people sitting around this table to share a meal. In the living room that adjoined the dining area, I noticed some figurines from Africa or South America and a decorative tabletop fountain with a soothing waterfall sound. We began to discuss the process for the interviews and the purpose of my research. I felt that Kathryn was interested in my topic and approach to the study and I anticipated developing a rapport that would encourage the co-creation of meaning and yield a subjectivity that was "produced both collectively and relationally" (Bloom, 1998, p. 5).

Kathryn provided some background information in response to my brief survey. She had two masters degrees, one in counseling and one in pastoral studies. In the mid-West, she taught at elementary and junior high schools, had a professional counseling

practice, and worked in church ministry. After relocating to this western state, she taught philosophy, ethics, and English composition at a local university. During the interview, Kathryn was animated and enthusiastic about her work teaching college in prison, which she had started several years ago. When I asked her what her family and friends thought about her work behind bars, she replied, “They thought it was great. Whatever I wanted to do is good. I’m pretty independent so I don’t even know that I even told everybody. I mean, it was a teaching position and I just was going to do it.” As she talked, I felt that Kathryn and I shared some social and political perspectives. We were both independent, enjoyed adventure, and wanted to help others less fortunate.

Kathryn’s background in counseling and social work seemed to influence her view of prison education. She considered learning as a transformational experience for the inmate student. This perspective contrasted with that of several other participants who viewed themselves as a tool that the inmate students could use or discard and who did not view their teaching as a means of motivating inmate students to change behaviors. During the second interview, Kathryn mentioned that sharing these experiences with me helped her resolve or rethink some dilemmas she faces teaching in prison. I told her narratives interviews offered both the researcher and the researched opportunities for gaining new insights. On the wall, a framed quote from Emily Dickinson, “I dwell in Possibility” struck me as a sign of Kathryn’s hope that education and reflection might improve conditions for individuals and for society.

Seldom

Seldom [a pseudonym] and I met in a science classroom of a community college where he taught evening courses. The room was comfortable but impersonal and we sat

on tall stools across from each other at an elevated table. Seldom's work experience was primarily in education with over 30 years of teaching youth and adults. He had a Masters degree in the teaching of English. We had an easy conversation filled with Seldom's engaging stories about inmate students and their college experiences. During the first interview, Seldom seemed guided by the potential interview questions that I showed him and even asked me at the end if I had heard what I wanted to hear.

Seldom had 13 years of experience teaching adults in a prison setting and this long association with the unique setting may have influenced his recounting of only a few frustrations and doubts regarding his work. He had a thorough knowledge of the correctional system and the role of education within that setting. In my notes taken after the interview, I expressed concern that my questions had elicited responses that were more descriptions of the setting than reflections on his feelings or emotions. Based on Seldom's responses in the first interview, I developed some probes around emerging themes that I thought might spark deeper reflection. In the second interview, Seldom said he was comfortable with the rapport that we had established and his only concern was whether he was taking the conversation in the direction that I wanted. He also mentioned reading the transcription from our first interview made him aware of how much of the talking he had done. I explained that I had tried to encourage the conversation without adding my opinions. Seldom said he understood this approach since he had training as a hostage negotiator and learned how to use maintaining language to keep a perpetrator talking. Being this open about my approach to interviewing relieved me of some anxiety I had felt about being disingenuous. I wanted an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

The prime motivator for Seldom to teach in a prison setting seemed to be the pleasure he felt when his instructional skills sparked interest in his inmate students. He also stressed that education reduced recidivism saying that “if people could see what goes on in prison education, I think that they’ll see that people who to go to school in prison come back [to prison] at such a lower rate that you save money.” Seldom had begun teaching college in prison before 1994 when the inmate students were eligible for Pell Grants to fund their tuition. He set his stories in the political and social context when he explained why the public had pressured the legislators to deny prisoners access to tax supported higher education. (See Appendix A for an historical overview of political influences on correctional education.) In Seldom’s opinion, paying for education for prisoners was less expensive than keeping them incarcerated without teaching them ways to manage their lives outside of prison. Seldom told me about his successes with inmate students who get out and get jobs. He said “education makes all the difference ... and that, I think, is what keeps me coming back” [to teaching in prison].

When I asked Seldom how his family reacted to his job teaching in prison, he said that they were concerned for his safety until he assured them that this job was probably less dangerous than teaching in the high schools. When he told his family that inside the prison systems he saw a place where he “could do some good, they were all for it.” In our interviews, he described mainly positive experiences, which he attributed to a trust that develops between the prison teacher and the inmate students. Seldom said that the inmates respect education and therefore they respect the provider of the education who took the time to come in and teach them something. Seldom felt that his teaching not only helped change the lives of some inmate students but also changed him. Seldom learned

more about different races, ethnicities, and cultures and the experience and he said that the experience “expanded my attitude and my feelings about what the rest of the world is really like.”

Gandalf

Gandalf [a pseudonym] suggested that we meet at a restaurant in a commercial complex on the outskirts of the town where she lived. She chose a time just after the lunch hour for a quieter environment after the noontime crowd had left. I arrived early and the music emanating from the speakers was muted and conversations from a few other tables were muffled. When Gandalf came to the table, I got up to greet her. Our table was large, creating a physical distance between Gandalf and me. Furthermore, she seemed distracted and her responses were abrupt, leading me to wonder how I would keep our conversation going. At the beginning of the interview, I reviewed the open-ended questions that I prepared to launch the dialogue. I was always encouraged when one of my questions solicited a response or triggered a memory or reflection. Many pauses punctuated her short, pithy responses. I tried not to jump into those silences and waited until I thought Gandalf was ready to move on to another topic.

Gandalf has a doctorate and majored in math education. When I asked about what rewards she got from teaching college in prison, Gandalf commented that the inmate students always thanked her for coming “inside” and that they were eager to learn. Gandalf seemed able to distance herself from her students outside of the three hours that she spent with them each week, although she stated she would have come early or stay late to tutor them if the prison system had been more flexible. She said that teaching in prison had not changed her life: she was still a teacher but the inmate students were more

appreciative of her than were her students on the outside. She did not seem to be motivated by making changes in the lives of the inmates. However, she did mention that when legislation was proposed in 1994 that eliminated the Pell grant eligibility for prisoners, she wrote to many representative and senators in protest. Only one elected official replied and explained she voted for the bill because of an attachment that was more important than public funding for prisoner college education.

My notes from the first interview reflected my puzzling about why Gandalf agreed to the interview since she did not seem comfortable talking about her experiences. I was concerned that my awkwardness might have impeded the narrative production. However, in rereading the interview transcripts, I realized that Gandalf was reflective, choosing her words carefully. I also noted some barriers to establishing rapport such as Gandalf's objection to certain wording in the informed consent form that "schooling in prison is stormy, dangerous, and frustrating." Gandalf said that teaching in prison was not stormy and dangerous for her rather it was the most rewarding of all her teaching experiences. We agreed that I would note on her informed consent form that she disagreed with my characterization of the prison setting for teachers. Her only frustrations were with the prison processes that impeded her teaching and the students' learning, such as not allowing inmates to have calculators outside the classroom. After transcribing the dialogues, I realized that her narratives yielded some valuable perspectives that I had not noticed during our interviews.

Jack

Jack [a pseudonym] was comfortable meeting me in a small office at the local community college. He has a doctorate in chemistry and had taught college courses in

prison for less than four years. Prior to this experience, he had taught chemistry in a major university. Before becoming a college teacher, Jack had over 22 years of work experience in his discipline in the private sector as an engineer, director of a research laboratory, and consultant and entrepreneur. Jack's joy of teaching and desire to share his area of expertise were evident from the beginning of our conversation.

Late in his career, Jack and his family moved to an area where a state correctional facility was located. Jack had not planned to teach college in a prison setting but when he learned that the correctional facility had postsecondary programs, he investigated further. After making many contacts, he reached the program coordinator who offered him a chance to teach college courses in prison. Jack said that teaching in this setting was "a little chaotic but it was interesting" and that he had a lot of "atta boys" at the end indicating that his inmate students enjoyed his course. Jack said that the experience was most satisfying because of this encouragement from his students.

At the beginning of our meetings, Jack and I talked about my methodology and the process of unstructured interviews. Some of our dialogue took place before I turned on the recorder. I felt that this informal talk help Jack feel more relaxed when I started to record his comments. However, after I turned off the recorder at the end of the second interview, Jack and I had an interesting conversation about motivation and persistence in teaching. He mentioned that a famous mathematician from the early part of the 1900s said that there are just two rules of teaching. The first is to sell your subject and the second is to sell yourself. We then talked about selling as a metaphor for teaching and I regretted that I had not recorded this interesting conversation.

Ulysses

Ulysses [a pseudonym] selected his office for our interviews and we met at the end of his workday when the other employees had left so that we would not be interrupted. He was very open and friendly and glad to participate in my research study. Ulysses had worked in educational services in an adult prison for 15 years but had not taught college courses until recently. He had two masters degrees, one in library science and one in English. When I asked if teaching in prison had a transformational effect on him, he replied that he did not think so and that he had not changed in any significant way. In response to a question about cognitive development in inmate students taking college courses, Ulysses commented that he did not connect ordered levels of thinking with any activities of the students outside the classroom.

Ulysses often spoke about the isolation of the part-time college instructor who teaches college in prison. He noted that he did not have an opportunity to interact with other postsecondary prison educators. He also said that he did not talk about his prison teaching with friends and family because it was hard to explain something with which they had little first hand or theoretical knowledge.

With Ulysses, I offered more information about my background and my interests, which seemed to encourage him to tell more stories. For example, he had a copy of the New York Times Book Review at the top of a pile of papers on his desk. I said I read this publication each week so he knew that we shared an interest in literature. His office was filled with books and he mentioned that he facilitates a group from the community [on the outside] that meets twice a month to talk about literature.

After this brief introduction to my participants, I now turn to the details of data identification and management. Although a wide array of approaches to working with personal narratives can be found in the literature, I selected several strategies to identify and manage the narrative data that seemed effective when I applied them to my study. My overall approach was holistic so I first examined each participant's story in its entirety. When I looked at sections of the participants' narrative text, I considered them in context of the other parts of the narratives (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Strategies for Identifying and Managing the Data

The two in-depth interviews that I conducted with each of these participants resulted in over ten hours of audio recording, which I transcribed. When identifying and managing the data, I responded to Riessman and Quinney's (2005) challenge to narrative researchers to find ways of approaching texts that offer a "counterweight to reductionism" (p. 398) found in the positivist sciences. In the following sections, I explain my holistic approach of selecting interview data of sufficient length to allow independent evaluation of my argument or to enable impartial interrogation of my findings.

In order to identify sections of the transcription for closer examination, I looked for a working definition of "narrative" that would help me separate the narratives from other forms of discourse that might appear in the transcriptions, such as arguments and question and answer exchanges (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). For some purposes, "narrative" is an inclusive category and "story" is restricted to texts that have characters, events, complications, and consequences (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Other researchers consider storytelling as a broader field than narrative because through tall tales, myths,

and lies, storytellers recount events that they may not have experienced (Labov, 1997). Alternatively, narratives are considered as synonymous with stories, as oral or written versions of personal experience that people use in social situations to convince the listener that something actually happened (Riessman, 1997). Riessman (2003) made a further distinction by using the term “personal narratives” to describe discrete stories restricted to answers to single questions. However in this text, I do not make these distinctions and frequently interchanged the terms narrative, story, and personal narrative.

Sometimes the decision was clear about which segments of the interviews represented narratives. The participant signaled when a story began and when it ended by using entrance and exit talk (Jefferson, 1979). A particular story may have been triggered by something that preceded it or something in the conversation may have reminded the participant of a story, which did not seem to relate topically with the talk in progress. Frequently, when completing the story, the participant searched for a response or confirmation from me. Other narrative segments were not so clearly bounded and I selected those segments based on my theoretical interests (Riessman, 2003).

Storytelling typically involves an extended account, which is longer than exchanges in most interactive conversation. When I first met with each participant, the question that I asked was “how did you become a correctional educator?” To encourage the telling, I acted as an ideal audience; that is, I was “attentive, interested, and responsive” (Labov, 1997, p. 397). In the personal narratives related during the interviews, the participants told about events they had witnessed or experienced. Although they responded to a question that I posed, the participants offered monologues that were fragmented and showed a degree of decontextualization (Labov, 1997).

If I had reduced these narratives to fragments that were out of context, I might have missed crucial interpretive understandings (Riessman, 1997). Therefore, I tried to retain the context as I reviewed the transcribed versions of the interviews and listened to the original audio recording several times before selecting large portions for further examination. These transcriptions included subtle features of the discourse, such as breath intakes, interactions and overlapping talk with the interviewer, non-lexical sounds (mhm, uh-huh), verbal emphases, pauses, and word repetitions (Riessman, 1993). I identified the narrative segments that I planned to examine in more detail by looking for three types of narrative structures: core narratives, poetic structures, and vignettes. When I identified a segment from the interview data that appeared to be one of these three narrative structures, I bracketed it off for retranscription. Examples of my retranscriptions for the three types of narrative structures are displayed at the end of this chapter.

First, I considered the stories that followed the temporal ordering of the action; that is, a sequence based on linear time and shaped around characters, setting, and plots. Here I located certain narratives that had structural features such as orientation, complicating action, evaluation, and resolution (Labov, 1982; Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997) and reduced the transcription to a core narrative (Riessman, 1993). Second, I looked at narratives that did not have plots yet seemed like narrativizations and I modified Riessman's (1993) technique (adapted from Gee) of creating poetic structures to find meaning. Finally, I identified vignettes that I thought represented and encapsulated important messages.

Core Narratives

As one strategy for data identification and management, I selected key aspects of large segment of transcript and identified the core narrative (Riessman, 1993). Following Riessman's approach, I adapted Labov and Waletzky's (1967/1997) definition of narrative as a description of past events with a sequence of clauses in a temporal order. Each clause has a specific social function that matches the temporal sequence of reported events (Chase, 2005). I used the sociolinguistic features that Labov and Waletzky developed for oral narratives (see Table 3). This framework enabled me to see how these simple narratives were organized before beginning the analysis (Riessman, 1993).

Table 3

Explanation of Labov and Waletzky's Elements of Narrative

Element	Meaning
Abstract	Indicates what follows
Orientation	Orients the listener in respect to person, place, time, and behavioral situation (Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997)
Complicating action	Describes action that is carried over and "terminated by a result" (Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997, p. 28)
Evaluation	Illuminates the meaning of the complicating action
Resolution	Reflects how the action was resolved
Coda	Has "the effect of standing at the present moment of time and pointing to the end of the narrative, identifying it as a remote point in the past" (Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997, p. 36)

At the beginning of the first interview, I asked each participant an open-ended question about how she or he came to teaching college in prison. Turning to my selection

of Gandalf's account of becoming a college teacher in prison, Table 4 (see end of this chapter) displays two representations of the first 26 lines. The left side of the table shows the original transcription, which I have parsed into clauses and numbered the lines (Reissman, 1993). In this version, I have excluded all my utterances as interviewer but I have maintained the participant's false starts, break-offs, and expressive sounds and silences or pauses. Short pauses are indicated by (p), longer pauses by (P). On the right side of the table is my reduction to a core narrative, which includes Labov and Waletzky's (1967/1997) structural elements and provides a skeleton plot. I identified parts of the narrative by their function; that is, to orient, carry the action, or resolve the action. To maintain focus on the core narrative, I excluded pauses, repeated words, and non-lexical expressions. A long string of events may actually consist of several complicating actions (Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997) and I have identified two complicating actions in this narrative segment.

Gandalf opened her narrative with "that's where I started" and oriented the listener by noting that she was already teaching at a community college. The first complicating action happened when the college asked if she would like to teach in prison. Although she had no way of knowing what kind of experience this would be, Gandalf decided to "give it a try." The unknown was resolved when Gandalf had the experience for one semester and then asked to teach in prison again "any place, any time." Gandalf pointed to the end of this complicating action and resolution and referred to present feelings by stating that teaching in prison for her was "just such a positive experience."

A second complicating action occurred when Gandalf had a difficult experience teaching in a women's correctional facility. However, this conflict was resolved when she

went into another women's facility and encountered a group of women who were "fun to work with." Gandalf pointed to the end of this story segment by noting that she had "more positive experiences teaching in the prisons" than in any of her other teaching positions. Her use of "positive experience" in lines 8 and 23 linked the two complicating actions and resolution or evaluation of the story. As an aside, I note here that none of the participants had planned to become a prison teacher and their paths to this experience were often spontaneous. Like Gandalf, two of the other participants had no experience with the prison system and did not know what the teaching in this setting would be like. However, like Gandalf, they were willing to give it a try.

Similarly, each participant told a story about an incident that was fearful but did not deter her or him from continuing to teach in prison. I used the core narrative technique to identify a segment of Ulysses' transcription that explained his encounter with a dangerous student. In Table 5 (at the end of the chapter), I identified the beginning of the story or abstract when Ulysses said, "Well, I'll tell you a story that happened back then." In the orientating himself in relation to persons, place, and behavioral situation, Ulysses described the facility in which he was teaching and a particular inmate student. The complicating action occurred when the inmate student confronted Ulysses in front of the class and then "doubled his fist and ... put his fist through the blackboard." In evaluating the situation, Ulysses said that "he didn't try to hit me but he was trying to intimidate me." The resolution came when Ulysses called for a correctional officer who took the inmate student away. I identified the coda as the end of the story when Ulysses noted that he "continued to teach the class ... and did the next semester."

Poetic Structures

For Labov and Waletzky (1967/1997), stories have clear beginnings and endings, often used simple past tense verbs, and follow a linear sequence. On the other hand, I found long stretches of talk that were not linear. These segments appeared to be narrativizations because they constructed and interpreted the past, the participant designed them, and they attempted to persuade (Riessman, 1997). These rather long monologues differed from a linear structure because they were organized topically and sometimes shifted between the past, present, and future. Riessman (1993) called these narrative segments “poetic structures” (p. 43) and developed a model for understanding this type of narrative structure informed in part by the work of Gee on the poetic features of language. These non-linear narrative segments are framed by a description of an enduring condition that surrounds the story. They also link the beginning and the conclusion and create tension and feelings of strain that the participant describes in the story. Participants often narrativize particular experiences where there has been “a breach between ideal and real, self and society” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3). Here the tension of the discourse reflects the events as they actually happened and as they might have been possible; that is, the real and the wished for. The narrative often suggests lack of resolution of this tension.

Using a technique similar to Riessman’s (1993), I adapted parts of Gee’s (1991) linguistic approach to narrative analysis by grouping idea units into lines that I numbered. An idea unit contains a single piece of new information, which I identified by listening to the audio recording and noting “a slight bump up or down in the base pitch level of the first word of the new idea unit in relation to the base pitch level of the preceding idea

unit” (Gee, p. 22). When I used the pauses and inflections exactly from the transcribed narrative as line breaks, the segments retained the flavor and cadences of the participants (Ely, 2007) and resembled free verse. Gee also stated that lines can be grouped across a narrative into larger units about a single topic that he called “stanzas.” However, for the purpose of identifying poetic structures, I grouped the lines together into larger units that I called “parts” related to topics that the participant introduced or alluded to in the framing of the narrative segment.

To illustrate poetic structure, I now examine Gandalf’s story about the frustrations of teaching in a prison system (see Table 6 at the end of this chapter). This presentation of the text excludes interactions between the participant and the interviewer and disfluencies of false starts, pauses, and non-lexical expressions that appeared in the original transcription. Gandalf framed the narrative with a description of some frustrations of the prison systems she deals with but which are not resolved. These frustrations were the enduring conditions for which there is no resolution. She was experiencing a breach between the ideal teaching experience with a supportive system and the events she was encountering within a system that seemed to impose barriers for the teachers trying to do their job. This break between what is actually happening and what is wished for created a tension in the story. Figure 2 represents a schematic of the tension framed by the enduring conditions that I adapted from one that Riessman (1993) used to illustrate this discourse structure.

In the beginning frame (see Table 6 at the end of this chapter), Gandalf gave one example of “some of the frustrations” and in the ending frame, she concluded with “it’s a real pain.” Within the enduring condition of frustration with the prison system, Gandalf

discussed dealing with the prison rules and security practices that made teaching more difficult. She also mentioned the dreams that the inmates had about their life after incarceration, the pleasure of working with the inmate students, and the satisfactions she had when they demonstrated appreciation of her work to facilitate their learning.

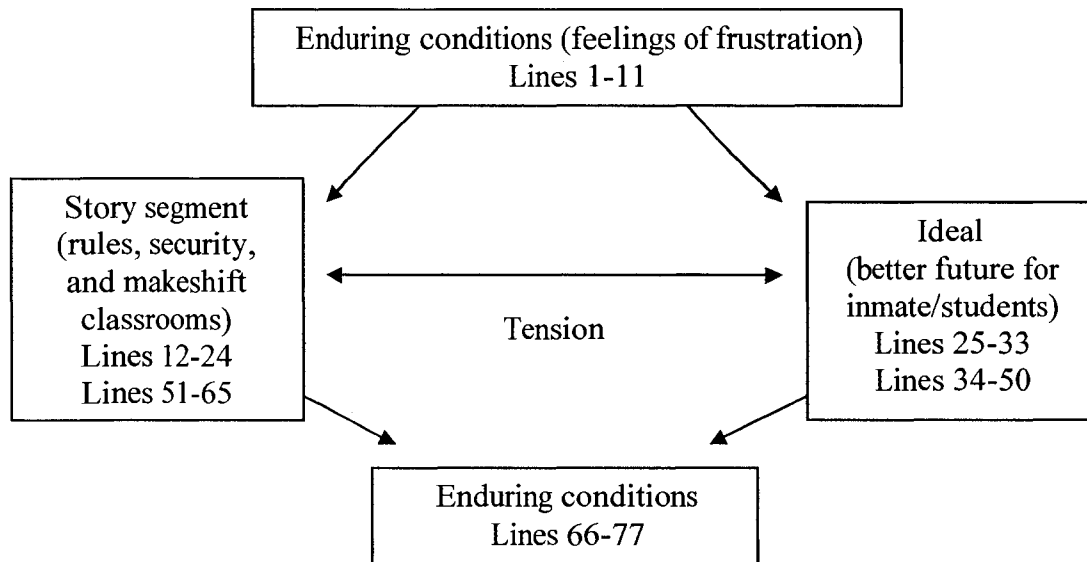


Figure 2. Schematic of the essential tension in Gandalf's story about the experience of teaching in a prison setting (adapted from Riessman, 1993)

In another example of a narrative segment that I identified as a poetic structure, Ulysses talked about how he dealt with the regulations of the correctional system that limited his ability to create an optimal teaching environment. The attributes of the system that do not foster education frame the narrative in Table 7 (at the end of this chapter). In Part 1, Ulysses described what actually happens in the prison setting, which is teaching in a large open room like a cafeteria. Then in Part 2, he explained how he tried to “create a class space” by moving the desks together to represent an ideal classroom. Ulysses returned to the frame of the rules in the middle of this narrative segment where he said that the system did not take into account that the inmate students would need breaks

during the class period. Then he indicated that he tried not to focus on what should happen and he treated the rules of the system as a “rut in the road or a pothole or something and [I] just go on from there.” In the final frame, Ulysses returned to the “constant struggle” that he had in adjusting to the regulations and demands of the correctional facility that limited his ability to provide what he considered to be a real college classroom.

Vignettes

Other segments of texts stood out because they seemed representative or typical of other events in the teaching lives of the participants. I decided to pull out these rich “pockets” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 81) of meaningful data to illustrate key phenomena in the form of vignettes. In these segments, the participants told stories through these vignettes, which are intact narratives that allow portraits of the participants to emerge (Van Maanen, 1990). For example, I found two vignettes in the transcription of Gandalf’s interviews that demonstrate her resistance to the hegemony of the dominant prison discourse (see Table 8 at the end of the chapter). In the first vignette, Gandalf resisted the rules of the prison system that require that an inmate be treated impersonally and be referred to only as “Inmate” without his or her proper name. Instead, Gandalf called her inmate students by their first names. In the second vignette, Gandalf found a way around the prison regulation to take away an inmate/student’s schoolbooks and study materials when he was punished by solitary confinement. In this case, Gandalf asked for the confiscated calculator from the correctional officials and then returned it to her student. The italics in the vignette are mine and indicate Gandalf’s expression of

resistance, which is “an important slice of what has been learned” (Ely, 2007, p. 585) in these vignettes.

A third vignette (see Table 9 at the end of the chapter) illustrates Kathryn’s resistance the marginalizing of the inmate-students. Here she connected with the Other as a human being and looked for the goodness in the person. Kathryn’s motivation for teaching in prison is also embedded in the text as an effort to help the inmate students change through an understanding of their crime and an acceptance of personal responsibility. In a contrasting view of self in relation to the Other, Ulysses described how he maintained a distance from his inmate students (see the vignette in Table 10 at the end of the chapter). He felt that successful teachers in the prison system would be able to deal “with people at a psychological distance.”

Seldom and Jack also described how they saw themselves in relationship to their inmate students. I selected a vignette from Seldom’s interview data that illustrates his wariness toward the inmate students (see Table 11 at the end of the chapter). He felt that the inmates exhibited a different side of their personality as students in the classroom. In the vignette in Table 12 (at the end of the chapter), Jack told of the empathy he felt toward his inmate students because he imagined how easily a young person could slip into bad behavior.

These tables at the end of the chapter are examples of the three types of narratives structures that I identified throughout the participants’ interview transcripts. The stories told in these narrative segments exemplify how these five postsecondary correctional educators learned to balance their ambiguous feelings toward their inmate students by not getting too close to them. At the same time, these educators attempted to demonstrate

interest in and concern for their inmate students. The educators resisted the Othering process and began to construct their inmate students as subjects rather than objects. For example, the vignette in Table 9 (at the end of the chapter) illustrates how Kathryn found the humanity in the individuals who were both inmates who had committed crimes and students who perhaps wanted to prepare for a different life after prison.

In these texts, the participants often illustrated the clash of their personal values and philosophies of freedom, responsibility, and choice with the prison's system of authority and control. The order of the institution with its necessary rules and norms created a generally frustrating working environment for these prison educators and this frustration was offset by the eagerness of most of their inmate students to learn. Furthermore, the fluid relational dynamic of the prison environment intensified each participant's awareness of self in relationship to multiple Others: the inmates, the prison authorities, and colleagues in higher education.

Comparison Across the Sample

As an illustration of how I considered the data across the sample, I compared the core narratives of how Gandalf and Kathryn became college teachers in a prison setting (see Table 13 at the end of the chapter). Both educators had been teaching in a college or university and had not considered teaching college in a correctional facility (see orientation). In both narratives, officials of their respective institutions approached them about the opportunity to teach college in prison (see the first complicating action). Without knowing anything about what it would be like to teach college in this unique setting, both educators unhesitatingly said yes: "Sure, I'll give it a try" (Gandalf, line 5) and "Well, OK, whatever" (Kathryn, line 23). My participants experienced similar

events, which they described in their stories about becoming prison educators, dealing with prison regulations, relating to their inmate students and the prison authorities, facing their own fears, and adapting to the physical environment of the prison.

The tables at the end of this chapter are examples of how I identified and managed large segments of narrative from the transcripts of each participant's interview data. Next I consider a strategy for comparing the segments of the participants' texts to highlight certain similarities in content, context, and structure and create a collective story. This collective story then becomes the basis for my presentation of the data through a performance text.

Table 4

Core Narrative: Gandalf's Story about Becoming a College Teacher in Prison

Gandalf's Transcribed Version Unpacked		Gandalf's Core Narrative	
01 G:	Eh. That's where I started.		<i>Abstract</i>
02	Inside [a correctional facility]	01 G:	That's where I started
03	And I was teaching for [a community college]	02	Inside [a correctional facility]
	then		
04	And they asked me if I'd like to go behind the		<i>Orientation</i>
	walls	03	And I was teaching for [a community college]
05	And I said, sure, I'll give it a try		then
06	And after that semester, I went back (p) to the		<i>Complicating action</i>
	director		And they asked me if I'd like to go behind the
07	and I said send me in (p) any place, any time.	04	walls
08	It was just such a positive experience		And I said, sure, I'll give it a try
09 (P)	So, (p) I've been in the federal prison and -	05	
10	I've been all over		<i>Evaluation/Resolution</i>
	(P)		And after that semester, I went back to the
11 I:	And you've taught both men and women?	06	director
12 G:	Yeh. (p) I can't say		and I said send me in any place, any time
13	that going into the women's correctional facility	07	
	(P) is (p) fun		<i>Coda</i>
14	Those women are tough		It was just such a positive experience
15	They're tough	08	
			<i>Orientation 2</i>
16 (P)	And they really don't have the background		So I've been in the federal prison and -
	for the college algebra course	09	I've been all over
17	Then I - after that	10	

Gandalf's Transcribed Version Unpacked		Gandalf's Core Narrative	
18	they sent me to [another correctional facility]	11	I: And you've taught both men and women?
19	which is also women		
20	and I had the nicest group of women there		
21	They were fun to work with [clear throat]	12	G: <i>Complicating action 2</i>
22	but, ah, I don't know	13	Yeh, I can't say
23	I've had more positive experiences teaching in		that going into the women's correctional facility
	the prisons -	14	is fun
24	Than I ever had at the high school [laughing]	15	Those women are tough
25	or even at the community college when I taught	16	They're tough
	there		And they really don't have the background for the
26	These inmates, they're so eager --		college algebra course
			<i>Evaluation/Resolution 2</i>
		17	Then I - after that
		18	they sent me to [another correctional facility],
		19	which is also women
		20	and I had the nicest group of women there
		21	They were fun to work with
			<i>Coda 2</i>
		22	but I don't know
		23	I've had more positive experiences teaching in
			the prisons -
		24	Than I ever had at the high school
		25	or even at the community college when I taught
			there
		26	These inmates, they're so eager --

Table 5

Core Narrative: Ulysses' Story about a Dangerous Encounter with an Inmate Student

Ulysses' Transcribed Version Unpacked		Ulysses Core Narrative
1	U: Well, I'll tell you a story that happened back then.	<i>Abstract</i> Well, I'll tell you a story that happened back then.
2	And this was at an institution that is no longer in existence called [name of facility],	<i>Orientation</i> And this was at an institution that is no longer in existence called [name of facility], which was over here east of the city. And it was what they called a closed facility prison,
3	which was over here east of the city.	
4	And it was what they called a closed facility prison,	
5	which meant that it was kinda' between medium and maximum.	
6	And it was an odd place to have college classes.	And it was an odd place to have college classes. Because it didn't look at inmates that were close to getting out –
7	Because it didn't look at inmates that were close to getting out –	
8	Who would be able to continue their education.	
9	I think that they just legitimately see that	
10	as something to get the inmates involved in.	Who would be able to continue their education. I think that they just legitimately see that as something to get the inmates involved in. But anyway, I had a student who should never have been in a college class.
11	But anyway, I had a student who should never have been in a college class.	
12	And you run into these now and then.	
13	For some reason or another, he had a GED.	
14	And, so, he was probably thirty.	And you run into these now and then. For some reason or another, he had a GED. And, so, he was probably thirty. But his education, his functional level of education was very low. But here he was in the class and, he was very, attentive and very involved.
15	But his education, his functional level of education was very low.	
16	But here he was in the class	
17	and, he was very, attentive and very involved.	

Ulysses' Transcribed Version Unpacked		Ulysses Core Narrative
18	He sat right up front and was always interrupting and asking questions.	<i>Complicating action</i>
19	but his questions were frequently inappropriate	But here he was in the class
20	because he couldn't understand what was, going on.	and, he was very, attentive and very involved. He sat right up front and was always interrupting and asking questions.
21	And finally, I just told him directly	but his questions were frequently inappropriate
22	this happened over a period of lessons,	because he couldn't understand what was,
23	that he had to stop asking questions	going on.
24	while I was in front of the class	And finally, I just told him directly
25	and if he wanted special help,	this happened over a period of lessons,
26	I would talk to him after class.	that he had to stop asking questions
27	Anyway, this was OK for a while.	while I was in front of the class
28	But one day he came up after class,	and if he wanted special help,
29	and he told me that I was teaching the class wrong	I would talk to him after class.
30	because, he wasn't getting what he needed.	Anyway, this was OK for a while.
31	And, I told him that I was sorry,	But one day he came up after class,
32	but I would teach the class the way I thought I had to.	and he he told me that I was teaching the class wrong
33	And then I turned to another student	because, he wasn't getting what he needed.
34	when I did he doubled his fist	And, I told him that I was sorry,
35	and he put his fist through the blackboard,	but I would teach the class the way I thought I had to.
36	which was right here by my head.	And then I turned to another student
37	And then he just stood back for a minute like that.	when I did he doubled his fist
38	He didn't try to hit me	and he put his fist through the blackboard,
39	but he was trying to intimidate me.	which was right here by my head.
		And then he just stood back for a minute like that.

Ulysses' Transcribed Version Unpacked	Ulysses Core Narrative
<p>40 and that was obvious right away to me what he was trying to do. 41 And I said I'm sorry you can't do that here. 42 And I called for the officer who was outside the building, down the walkway. 43 The officer came in 44 and took him away 45 and took him to segregation. 46 But that was one of the things about that program. 47 And one of the things that I've always been aware of was 48 that often times we get inmates into class who shouldn't be there, you know, for various reasons. 49 They're not psychologically prepared 50 or they're not educationally prepared. 51 They're not really ready to be students 52 and they can be disruptive. 53 So that the sort of thing that can happen. 54 But I continued to teach the class, 55 and I finished that semester 56 and did the next semester.</p>	<p><i>Evaluation</i> 38 He didn't try to hit me 39 but he was trying to intimidate me. 40 and that was obvious right away to me what he was trying to do.</p> <p><i>Resolution</i> 41 And I said I'm sorry you can't do that here. 42 And I called for the officer who was outside the building, down the walkway. 43 The officer came in 44 and took him away 45 and took him to segregation.</p> <p><i>Coda</i> 46 But that was one of the things about that program. 47 And one of the things that I've always been aware of was 48 that often times we get inmates into class who shouldn't be there, you know, for various reasons. 49 They're not psychologically prepared 50 or they're not educationally prepared. 51 They're not really ready to be students 52 and they can be disruptive. 53 So that the sort of thing that can happen. 54 But I continued to teach the class, 55 and I finished that semester 56 and did the next semester.</p>

Table 6

Poetic Structure: Gandalf's Story about the Tensions of Teaching in a Prison System

Frame (frustrations of the system)

- 01 And I was in [a correctional facility]
- 02 If a student had a medical release he had to go now
- 03 You know, he couldn't say I have a college class"
- 04 he had to go now
- 05 And so sometimes he would miss all two and a half hours and
- 06 it was supposed to start at one
- 07 Sometimes they wouldn't come until 1:30 or quarter till two
- 08 They weren't released
- 09 And they would get upset because of that
- 10 Because we missed a half an hour, 45 minutes of class time
- 11 Those are some of the frustrations

Part 1: Rules (narrative)

- 12 You know, you have to deal with [a College]
- 13 And then when you walk through the prison door, you're under
- [state correctional] rules
- 14 You know, with [a College] it doesn't make any difference
- 15 You know, you're here now
- 16 you work under their rules
- 17 But those are some of the frustrations
- 18 It's the time
- 19 and then in some prisons, you know, something's said over the
- loud speaker
- 20 they just all pack up their stuff and slam their books shut and
- pick up and they say "we've gotta go now"
- 21 And so, they go
- 22 And so there I am, no class
- 23 It's things like this, that's frustrating
- 24 It's dealing with the system

Part 2: Inmate/students (narrative)

- 25 But not with the inmates
- 26 Not with the inmates
- 27 But sometimes they're not up to speed as far as the college
- algebra class is concerned but
- 28 we just do what we can
- 29 And what I do is I try to get them as good a background as they
- can possibly have to go on to the next level

30 And some of them are lookin' at becoming lawyers and
accountants
31 and you know like that
32 They have plans when they get out
33 They'll do just about anything to go back to what they were

Part 3: Rewards of prison teaching (narrative)

34 On the last day of class when they say "I really learned a lot"
35 And some of my evaluations
36 The last one I got "You know, I like math now."
37 And the very last one says "Dr. Gandalf [a pseudonym] rocks."
38 And there are times when they will write some comments
39 that they've heard from me like "there's just not enough class
time"
40 you know, I don't have any office hours
41 And at the prison when I go in when I'm allotted and I go out
when it's time
42 But these guys will seek each other out and they'll work in
groups
43 And there was one young man this last term who just caught on
to everything immediately
44 And he would hold study sessions with the other inmates when
they could
45 You know, they don't let them group
46 But everyone went to him for help
47 They went to one of the teachers there for help
48 They would go just about anywhere to get help
49 'Cause they really wanna succeed
50 I think "Dr. Gandalf [a pseudonym] rocks" was one of the best

Part 4: Security (narrative)

51 The security happens at the gate.
52 And once I'm inside of my classroom there's no more
53 There's not a guard in there with me
54 Sometimes they put me in a room with a camera
55 I've been in the visitors' room with a board about like this and
every time we had to put the board back in storage
56 And as soon as the officer would unlock the room the inmates
would go in and bring the board out for me
57 You know, they'd take it back
58 Most of the time I'm in a classroom
59 The classroom at [a correctional facility] is that you'd go in and
then you'd go through the doors and then go down the stairs and
walk around the building and go in the building back here and go

down the stairs
60 The classroom's right down there in the basement
61 And I've been there at night and I have never ever felt afraid
62 Never
63 My inmates can sense this.
64 There's no fear
65 There's just no fear

Frame (return to frustration)

66 I like going into minimum securities because I don't have to deal
with the doors
67 the doors that close
68 The trap
69 I was in high security once at the federal prison
70 and I went through one, two, three, four
71 And one more
72 Yeah it's one, two, three,
73 Four and then I was into the federal prison
74 I was always escorted
75 But [state] most of the times I'm not
76 I was this last time at [a correctional facility]
77 It's a real pain.

Table 7

Poetic Structure: Ulysses' Story of Dealing with the Rules of the Correctional System

Frame (rules of system that don't foster education)

- 01 The situation is the administration won't let us back in the facility to teach in a
02 classroom.
03 We have to teach it in the visiting room.

Part 1: What actually happens (inappropriate classroom)

- 04 The visiting room is like a big cafeteria, you know.
05 The tables are little square tables
06 and there's chairs around them
07 and they're over this [laughing] huge floor.

Part 2: What should happen (ideal classroom)

- 08 So the first thing I do is I try to create a class space.
09 I have them put their desks –
10 When they come in, I have them put their desks in a semicircle or something
11 so that we're pretty much focused, physically focused as well as psychologically
12 focused on something new, something different.
12 And so, the first thing is to take just a few moments to create this classroom.

Frame (rules of the system)

- 13 And, ah, try not to get distracted by the little things that come up
14 It's a two-hour class
15 there's no opportunity for a bathroom break.
16 And they don't realize this until halfway through.
17 So what are we going to do?
18 It's just one of those things
19 Somebody should have thought it but they didn't.
20 And things like that are always bound to happen.
21 Or the count is late.

Part 2, contd.: What should happen (imagined)

- 22 But you try not to let these things matter too much.
23 Just treat that like like rut in the road or a pothole or something
24 and just go on from there.
25 But there's things like that that happen
26 And you try to get over that

27 and whenever the class is I try to get as much participation as I can.

Frame (rules of the system)

28 But I suppose that one of the hard things about teaching in a prison is that you
29 have to start at exactly now and finish at exactly at the end of the period.

30 And some things just are well designed to conform to that exact period of time.

31 And that's a constant struggle that I have, is to make all that time worthwhile.

Table 8

Two Vignettes Capturing Gandalf's Moments of Resistance to the Hegemony

- 1 Inmates have told me that I treat them like human – human beings. I was [told] in a training session that all inmates have the same name: Inmate. So it's Inmate whatever, Inmate whatever. I call them by their first names. [And they call me "Dr. Gandalf."] It eventually just gets shortened to "Doc." Doesn't seem to take 'em very long to get there either.
 - 2 When they sent somebody to the hole at the state, they go in and they take all of their stuff. They take their books, their calculators. They take all of it. And then lots of times, it's not going to get back. It's not gonna get back. There's one man that's in charge of all this stuff. At [a correctional facility], this one woman had to go to him for him to go into this inmate's stuff and get my calculator. *And I gave it back to the inmate* [italics added]. But that's how we had to go through the process. Yeah, it's interesting.
-

Table 9

Vignette Illustrating Kathryn's Resistance to the Othering Process

I think that [teaching in prison] has helped me really see that the actions of criminal activity that they've been engaged in is like if you draw a pie, which represents the person, that's a slice. And there's this great, great piece of goodness. And not just goodness, but goodwill. Really wanting, wanting something better. I mean when they say things like "Do you know I never dreamed I'd go to college. I am the first in my whole family to ever go to college and my family is so proud of me." And here he's sitting behind bars going to college but -- You know, just the joy that they felt. Because many of them got into trouble when they were young, started running with gangs, eventually they either started skipping school or dropped out altogether and really never anticipated that they would even get a high school diploma. And I think being there and finding out how smart they are, how really able -- how they are able to think. And they are taking care of themselves physically because it's just high demand. What I find in them is the good part of them, the part that's really genuine starts to grow. And when they can finally come to terms with what they did that was wrong and, and really change about that, they can leave there quite whole. And I think that that was something that I didn't know before, you know. I had never been with people who were in prison whether young or older. I didn't know how hungry they really were to be good.

Table 10

Vignette Illustrating Ulysses' View of Self in Relation to the Inmate Students

People are so different. My wife when she makes friends or when she finds someone she can connect with, it's so important to her to feel that the connection she makes is one of empathy, sympathy. And I, when I connect with somebody that doesn't mean a thing to me. I don't really have any close friends. I don't have anybody – And I never have in my whole life. You know, I've never had a confidant that I could trust completely. Or maybe once or twice in my life I have, you know, but that doesn't mean much to me and what I'm really looking for is a productive relationship. You know. Something that's connected with my work or interests, something like that. And that's what I like. And it gives me some distance. You know. And privacy. That's more important to me than having a close personal friend. So maybe that's why I get along well in the prison environment. It feels safe and feel like I'm at home there, you know. Able to connect with inmates without feeling like I'm getting in too deep or knowing where the boundaries are which is a trouble to some people. But I've never had that problem. Maybe if there's a profile for somebody who gets along well in teaching [in prison], maybe one consideration is do they have a lot of self knowledge and are they comfortable with who they are and keeping a distance, dealing with people at a psychological distance.

Table 11

Vignette Illustrating Seldom's View of the Relationship with Inmate Students

And I think it is important that we, we realize that we are working in a dangerous situation with dangerous people who – there's a reason they're locked up. And I think we fool ourselves sometimes when we tend to think "well, they're really nice guys underneath." Yes, they are but there's that other part. That dichotomy in every personality. Because we're bringing out a different aspect of personality when we teach. Especially when we give them the feeling that we're treating them just like we would treat students [on the outside]. And we do but we always have to step back a little bit and say "OK, I may trust my students [outside], I can never trust you." So there's always a wall.... It's almost like – when we think back to our teaching in the classrooms when we see somebody who is a perfect angel in the classroom and then you see them outside in different environment, it's a whole different thing entirely. I had a classmate in college, for example, who was a very quiet, unassuming girl. Ah, she was also on weekends a stripper, downtown Chicago. I never would have known that. I never would have seen or realized that in the classroom. But it was a whole different personality that really comes out.

Table 12

Vignette Illustrating Jack's Empathy with Inmate Students

I believe kinda [like] narrow escapes. I've got three boys. Two of them, I've taken down to the police department on account of things I didn't like. They were teenagers. Got their attention. And just dumb stuff. Fourteen/fifteen year old stuff. Yeah. Could of, not too much of a push, could have gotten this far with them. Could have been in there. Yeah, bad companions. Narrow escapes, yeah. And yeah, that's very real. I see this could have been -- In fact one of my boys dropped out of high school. Quit. And within a year, he'd taken the GED exam. He went on to earn a bachelors of science in chemical engineering. Was good to stick with him. Didn't give up, you know. [These kids in prison], their mothers didn't give up on them. Everybody gives up on 'em. But their mothers are the last.

Table 13

Comparison of Core Narratives: Gandalf and Kathryn's Stories about Becoming a College Teacher in Prison

Gandalf's Core Narrative		Kathryn's Core Narrative	
<i>Abstract</i>		<i>Abstract</i>	
01 G:	That's where I started	01 K:	Well, you know working in a prison setting has
02	Inside ...	02	always
		03	that I just admired in other people
		04	but I thought that it would probably be something
			that I would never do
<i>Orientation</i>		<i>Orientation</i>	
03	And I was teaching for [a community college] then	05	But I was teaching at the university out here in [a city]
<i>Complicating action</i>		<i>Complicating action</i>	
04	And they asked me if I'd like to go behind the walls	06	and I only taught one semester
05	And I said, sure, I'll give it a try	07	and they didn't need me in that department the next semester
		08	As, I was teaching as an adjunct
		09	And so I went –
		10	I contacted the English department
		11	I thought well I know how to read and write pretty well
		12	I'm pretty good at that kind of thing
		13	So I'll just check and see if there's anything
		14	that would be possible to teach at the university

Gandalf's Core Narrative	Kathryn's Core Narrative
<p>06 <i>Evaluation/Resolution</i> 07 And after that semester, I went back to the director and I said send me in any place, any time</p> <p>08 <i>Coda</i> It was just such a positive experience</p> <p>09 <i>Orientation 2</i> So I've been in the federal prison and - I've been all over</p> <p>10 I: And you've taught both men and women?</p> <p>11 <i>Complicating action 2</i> G: Yeh. I can't say</p>	<p>15 And the answer back was we really don't have an opening here but they really need someone at [a correctional facility identified by initials] I was new to [a city] I had no idea what those initials stood for And I said well, I, I might be interested I said "What's [initials of facility]?" And so they said it was a youth correctional facility And I thought, "well, OK, whatever"</p> <p>24 <i>Evaluation/Resolution</i> So I taught there that semester, and just really got hooked Just go hooked</p> <p>27 <i>Coda</i> Not on teaching courses but got hooked on working with those young people.</p>

Gandalf's Core Narrative		Kathryn's Core Narrative	
13	that going into the women's correctional facility is fun		
14	Those women are tough		
15	They're tough		
16	And they really don't have the background for the college algebra course		
<i>Evaluation/Resolution 2</i>			<i>Evaluation/Resolution 2</i>
17	Then I - after that	29	That was probably the most compelling thing for me
18	they sent me to [another correctional facility]	30	You know because in English
19	which is also women	31	where you write so many compositions
20	and I had the nicest group of women there	32	and did a major research paper
21	They were fun to work with	34	you learn a great deal about them individually
22	but I don't know.	35	And I heard many of their stories via paper
		36	and just came to recognize
		37	that they were very much worth the time and effort
		38	to help them when they got out
		39	to be more productive and happy
<i>Coda 2</i>			<i>Coda 2</i>
23	I've had more positive experiences teaching in the prisons -	40	so that's how
24	Than I ever had at the high school	41	It was kinda by accident in a way
25	or even at the community college when I taught there	42	but I don't believe in those
		43	so I don't suppose it was
26	These inmates, they're so eager -	44	So that's how I got started

CHAPTER 7: CAPTURING THE EXPERIENCE

A Collective Story: Data as Drama

After examining the narrative structures of the participants' stories as described in the previous chapter, I realized that I did not know "very much about the relation of stories to the worlds in which they circulate" (Gubrium, 2005, p. 525). As I analyzed the narrative structures that participants used to recount their stories, I noticed different dimensions the dominant discourses. In order to set their stories in an institutional and social context, I next considered how the narrative environment mediated descriptions of the same event. These same stories may have different meanings in a different social context and alternative voices can challenge or affirm the stories about social conditions. The communicative space matters because it gave voice to narratives that counter the privileged voice of the institution.

My participants seemed to construct their narratives in order to give shape to disorderly and ambiguous experiences of teaching college in prison. When I compared the narrative structures across the sample, I found patterns that illuminated the common and different ways the participants made meaning of their experiences. These experiences centered on moments of individual transformation and on crises in which the conditions they faced as teachers and the available support were at odds. I also looked at how the participants positioned themselves in relation to the other people in their narratives, such as the correctional personnel and the inmates. These narratives became interactive activities in which the participants located themselves in relation to others and produced

“one another (and themselves) situationally as ‘social beings’” (Bamberg, 1997, p. 336). The participants frequently told their stories in a three-dimensional space by going back in time, returning to the present, and discussing the future. Through their narratives, the identities of the participants changed as their perspectives changed and I identified texts that included these multiple points of view (Josselson, 1995) and reflected dialogue among multiple aspects of the respondent.

My concern was how to capture and communicate the “full, rounded uniqueness” (Jenkins & O’Toole, 1978, p. 542) of these individuals and not oversimplify their experience. Furthermore, I wanted to accurately portray the three dimensional space they inhabited without distorting it (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). I had originally intended to write up the data as prose but after the first interviews with the participants, I thought I might weave their stories into a text that could be performed. Like Richardson (1993), I thought a drama would bring shape to the collective experience of the storytellers. During the second interview, I asked the participants what they would consider as the acts in their experience of teaching in prison and they willingly offered variations on the plots and themes of their lived experiences. By presenting their interview data in a play, I tried to give dimension to the characters and substance to the particular place in which they worked.

In choosing to interpret the data through a performance text, I was influenced by several researchers. As an ethnographer, Conquergood (1985) used performance as “a way of knowing and deeply sensing the other” (p. 4). As a sociologist, Goffman (1956/1997b) saw the individual as a performer who fabricates impressions to present herself or himself to others and as a character in this presentation. As a postmodern

feminist, Richardson (1993) wrote field notes as a drama, which led her to reconsider the debate about which text is privileged: oral or written. My understanding of how the presentation of the data may also be a strategy for interpretation coincides Richardson's (1993, 2003) assertion that writing is a method of inquiry. Like Richardson, I found writing was a way to discover, analyze, and understanding the experience under study. For me, presenting the data as a play was a strategy to enable deeper understanding of the meaning that my participants made of their experiences teaching college in prison. As I wrote, I learned more about this experience and my goal is for the format of the play to offer the readers or audiences a better understanding of how my participants constructed themselves and others within the environment of the prison.

The postmodern debates about "oral" and "written" texts foregrounds the process of writing data as drama (Richardson, 1993, Conquergood, 1985, 1998). Richardson (1993) questioned the privilege of the written text over the spoken one. She wrote a short drama about an audience's reaction to her reading of a poem that she created from interview data to capture the lived experience of an unwed mother. Richardson displayed her findings about the participant as a poem and resituated "ideas of validity and reliability from 'knowing' to 'telling'" (p. 704). She used the format of a poem to create a physical and emotional response in the reader and/or listener. Through the drama, Richardson brought the audience into the current debate as she blurred the distinctions between oral and written texts and pointed out that the "original" work was spoken.

Similarly, I chose the format of a play to present the data. In creating a performance text, I attempted to connect the readers or the audiences with the action and promote knowing by eliciting an emotional not just an intellectual response to the Other

whose life differs from ours. Now I turn to how I attempted to capture the participants' experiences through a *bricolage*, or performance text, which is a "pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 5). Using a performance text, I hope to capture the reality of the participants' experiences.

The way I arrange and display the data will influence how the reader understands the research data (Eisner, 1997; Gergen & Gergen, 2003; Riessman, 1993). I chose to present the data in an alternative form, a performance text, which is not limited by traditional strategies of "prepositional discourse and number" (Eisner, 1997, p. 5). Performance text is a type of oral or written narrative that focuses on the meaning held by those people who live through certain cultural change, social processes, and historical events. As Gergen and Gergen (2003) suggested, by using performance as a mode of data research and presentation, the researcher "avoids the mystifying claims of truth and simultaneously expands the range of communities in which the work can stimulate dialogue" (p. 583). As an aside, Gergen and Gergen (2003) also noted the criticism among some qualitative researchers of various types of experimental writing, including drama, as an abandonment of conventional scientific standards. This criticism frequently centers on the debate about validity and, in Chapter 5, I included a brief discussion of how knowledge situated within communities and alternative representations of these lived experiences may lessen the tension between constructionist and realist positions.

Presenting elements of my participants' stories through a performance text may enable the reader and audience to interact with the reality of teaching college in prison and perhaps more easily understand this experience. I wrote a play in order to retain the

spoken quality of what the participants said during our interviews. For inclusion in the performance text, I chose large and intact segments of data that I identified and retranscribed from the participants' interviews. The participants are the speakers in the play and I used their words. My editing is limited to creating transitions between speakers and eliminating pauses, repeated words, and non-lexical expressions.

The play that I present in Chapter 8 is a collective story the "remembered facts" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 8) that the participants recounted and their retelling was influenced by their understanding, emotions, and situation. The *bricolage*, or collage of stories, that I created is presented in a performance text to facilitate an understanding of these experiences by the readers or audiences. Since the experience of teaching college in prison is real, I endeavored to evoke a sense of the reality as experienced by my participants. The visual collage of the play is interpretative because I decided what to include and how to compose the scenes. I hoped to engender "a sense of empathy for the lives" (Eisner, 1997, p. 8) of my participants so that the reader will know them. I have shared what I learned from my research regarding the common features of this unique teaching experience and my goal was to enlarge the understanding of this phenomenon (Eisner, 1997).

Writing text for performance has built-in contradictions because "plays are written not to be read but performed onstage before an audience" (McLaughlin, 1997, p. 140). The script must be read before it becomes alive on stage and the challenge is to present a manuscript that suggests performance. A play brings the action into a "perpetual present time" (Wilder, 1941/1998, p. 271) by presenting what takes place. This contrasts with a novel or epic poem in which someone talks about what took place. As Wilder

noted, novels are written in the past tense and on stage action is always in the present. Wilder also wrote that “the theatre offers to imaginative narration its highest possibilities” (p. 272). Keeping in mind these contradictions of writing a script to be heard, I now describe how I created the dialogue for the play.

The Script and its Transcendent Themes

The process that I used to construct the script was similar to the process of qualitative data analysis (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). The data were large and intact segments of the transcribed interviews with the participants. During the early stages of data analysis, I spent a considerable amount of time reading and rereading the data and listening again to the audio recordings. I was looking for concepts that would be coherent as a whole and allow me to link the interviews from different participants and to adequately represent individual points of view.

Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) critiqued the use of performance for the purpose of qualitative data display. Although the authors were referring specifically to readers theatre, I felt that their critique also applies to the play that I have created. A major benefit of using the dramatic structure of a play is the opportunity to present a “relatively unmediated rendering” (p. 415) of the data that I wanted to present. With the exception of the stage manager’s introduction and occasional comments and limited editing of the participants’ dialogue to smooth transitions, I composed the script entirely from quotations extracted from the interview data. In other words, the participants speak for themselves and I did not attempt to reduce their data.

Furthermore, I used the writing of a play as an alternative strategy to engage the readers or audiences in the experiences of my participants. The way I presented the

interview data as dialogue in the play is also intended to illuminate my interpretation of the data and provide the audiences with significant enough data so that they can make independent interpretations. Using the data identification and management techniques described in Chapter 6, I extracted large segments of text from my interviews with the participants that represented certain narrative structures: core narratives, poetic structures, and vignettes. When I selected and examined the data based on these structures, I looked for general concepts that stood out. As I compared these narratives across the sample, I combined and rearranged the concepts until six organizing categories emerged that seemed manageable. For example, each participant provided background information with details about how she or he decided to teach in prison, expressed fears or frustrations with the ambiguity of the task, described the physical and emotional environment of the prison, offered their opinions of incarceration, discussed their views of teaching in prison, and presented themselves in relation to their inmate students.

Next I put all the narrative segments into piles related to these six organizing categories. As I worked with the data in this manner, I found references in each of the organizing categories to enduring conditions of working as a part-time instructor teaching college courses in prison. The enduring conditions reflected marginalization and isolation, complicity and countering of the prison hierarchical power structure, and tolerance and alignment with the Other. Looking more closely at these enduring conditions, I found that clusters of these conditions pointed to three emergent themes: working in borderlands, negotiating power relations, and making personal transformations. For example, the transcendent theme about working in borderlands emerged from a grouping or cluster of enduring conditions that included marginalization,

isolation, the Othering process, and the insider and outsider dichotomy. (See Figure 3 at the end of the chapter for a depiction of how the six organizing categories emerged from my structural analysis and led to identification of 12 enduring conditions, which then clustered around three transcendent themes.)

These themes illuminated “more overarching, more holistic qualities” (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995, p. 410) of the narratives and they helped me decide what excerpts I should include in the play. Furthermore, these enduring conditions overlapped as when the participants chose not to participate in the system’s Othering process (insider and outsider dichotomy) and instead they resisted to the dominant discourse (resistance and acceptance dichotomy) and aligned themselves with the Other (empathy). In Figure 3, the dotted lines around the clusters of enduring conditions indicate the somewhat porous boundaries among these three groupings.

After I sorted the narratives and selected the excerpts that were most representative of the themes, I had the foundation for the script of one act play in three scenes. My goal for the play is to create an impression of the participants’ experience using significant excerpts of their dialogue. Next, I identified three essential elements of a dramatic plot: (a) the setup or the rising action in which complication creates a conflict for the participant, (b) the struggle or the climax that is moment of greatest emotional tension and marked a turning point or epiphany, and (c) the solution or the resolution where tensions lessen and the conflicts and complications are resolved (Bedford/St Martin’s, n.d., McLaughlin, 1997). The three emerging themes seemed to correspond to these three elements of the dramatic plot.

Specifically, these overarching themes represented the essential elements of a plot and I created a scene around each theme. Going inside the prison and deciding to work in a borderland is the rising action in scene one. Negotiating power relations and resolving the tension between resisting and complying with to the dominant culture is the conflict in scene two. In scene three, tensions lessen as the characters find resolution and make personal transformations through reflecting on their experiences. This plot was a series of events that were arranged in a loose causal order and unfold over time to explain not just what things happened but why things happened (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

By comparing these plot lines across five first person accounts, I examined the causal sequence of events to locate the turning points. The turning points “signal a break between ideal and real, the cultural script and the counternarrative” (Riessman, 1993, p. 30). I searched for similarities and differences among the stories and identified the unexpected plot twist that differentiates these narratives from conventional stories of teaching in higher education institutions. Frequently, I juxtaposed excerpts that expressed contrasting ideas about the same topic to emphasize that each participant told stories that reflected different ways of making meaning of their experiences. An example of a plot twist is the unexpected opportunity to teach in a prison setting since none of the participants planned to do this. That each participant chose to accept this opportunity reminded me of the decision that the traveler in Robert Frost’s poem made about which road to follow. The traveler knew “how way leads on to way” and how taking the road less traveled by “made all the difference” (Frost, 1916/1962, p. 188).

As I mentioned earlier, the procedures that I followed for constructing the plot are similar to procedures employed to construct qualitative reports that are more “rule

governed” (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995, p. 411). Although I used techniques from presentation theater that may have fewer conventions to follow, this arrangement as a plot seemed to make sense and felt right aesthetically (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). I tried to balance my desire to create a play that worked dramatically with the norms of qualitative research.

However, an adverse consequence of presenting relatively unmediated data is that the audience or reader may lack important information about context (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). One strategy I used to overcome this barrier was becoming a character in the script, the stage manager, whose asides helped to contextualize the data. In the next section, I use a second strategy for enhancing the audience’s or reader’s understanding of the context of the play. Here I provide a brief discussion of the three themes that emerged from my data analysis: working in borderlands, negotiating power relations and the dominant discourse, and making personal transformations. In this discussion, I point to examples from my participants’ interview data and I refer to certain literature that considers these same themes.

Working in Borderlands

The participants’ narratives of teaching college in prison reflected feelings of isolation, dislocation, and dissonance. My participants were distanced from other groups on the inside including full-time correctional teaching staff, inmates, and correctional officers. On the outside, even their friends, family, and colleagues were unable to relate to this experience of going inside the prison walls. When my participants went into the prison for the first time, they experienced the shock of facing surroundings very different from those to which they were accustomed. One of their first experiences was entering

the main part of the prison through the security gates. As Seldom described in scene one of the play in Chapter 8, “When that [iron gate] slams shut, you realize that you’re enclosed. That’s why they call it the trap.” Another example from Seldom’s interview data presented in Chapter 6 illustrates how he explained working in the prison environment to his family members who were worried about his safety. When Seldom said to them that “there wasn’t anything more to be concerned about inside the prison system and that I saw a place where I could do some good, then they were all for it. They said OK.”

Using the participants’ data in the first scene of the play in the next chapter, I presented monologues in which the participants as outsiders tried to understand the dynamics of the prison system. For example, Gandalf described her frustrations conducting a class when she was interrupted by a message on the prison loud speaker that she did not understand. However, her students immediately packed up their books and said, “We’ve gotta go now.” This is consistent with research by Weiss and Fine (2004) who found outsiders are disadvantaged because they misunderstand the “tightly woven fabrics of organizational life” (p. 111) in prison. In an attempt to make meaning, outsiders try to break the prison culture down into discrete elements. On the other hand, insiders, such as inmates and correctional officials, understand how the discrete features of the prison community are deeply connected. These insiders also understand the dynamics of the dominant discourse of power and the counter narrative of vulnerability and resistance (Weiss & Fine, 2004).

Negotiating Power Relations

Within the prison, the role of teachers is to provide a place where inmate/students can gather and talk among themselves (Linebaugh, 1995). The classroom becomes a space like the laundry room, the kitchen, or the yard where the inmates have private discussions before returning to their cells. However, the educators with whom I spoke were part-time instructors hired by higher education institution outside the prison system and therefore had limited resources to create an atmosphere of learning. Still I believe that they tried to provide an environment free of fear or danger so that their inmate students could feel safe and focus on studying. They seemed to create a space of trust and respect. In scene two of the play in the next chapter, the participants discuss the importance of respect and civility in the prison system. Kathryn and Gandalf talked about the respect that they demonstrated for their inmate students. Ulysses mentioned how the prison staff do everything they can to minimize conflict “because there’s so much potential for conflict with the inmates so among the staff, there are a lot of rituals to observe, and follow, of politeness and carrying on with civility.”

Another aspect of power relations within the prison culture is exemplified when my participants adjusted to their new surroundings and created a type of hybrid pedagogy to meet the unique and practical education needs of their inmate students. They learn to develop new methods for teaching that worked in prisons within the power structure. In scene two of the play in Chapter 8, Jack offered an example of adapting to and resisting the prison environment. He was teaching chemistry and wanted to demonstrate a certain characteristic of the topic they were learning. He brought some harmless props into the prison without explaining to the correctional officers that he was going to use them in an

experiment to show how to make fire. He said, “They [corrections officers] had no idea. I knew they wouldn’t go for that, so I just did it. Sub rosa.”

In some ways, my participants felt empowered in their prison classrooms to structure curricula that met the needs of their inmate students and fit with their personal values. In another example, Kathryn used her courses to help the students begin to take personal responsibility for violating the legal rights of other members of society. Though a dialogic and democratic classroom that promoted transformative learning, she helped students understand society and see that their personal failures were not due to bad luck or not knowing the right people. Kathryn described one of her inmate students who benefited from her ethics course and for the first time in his life he asked “the question if something was right or wrong” instead of asking “how do I get what I want.”

When I considered the metaphor of the colonizer and the colonized (Hartsock, 1998), I saw a different dimension of my participant’s resistance to or acceptance of the dominant discourse of power. My participants were sympathetic with the powerless (the inmate students) yet felt the need to defend those in power. Hartsock examined Memmi’s distinction between the colonizer who accepts and the colonizer who refuses. The colonizer who refuses exists in “a painful ambiguity” (Hartsock, p. 215) by living within the culture of the colonizer and being powerless to act against it. (Memmi was born in Tunisia in 1921 when Tunisia was a colony of the French and was a Jew in a predominately Muslim majority. He wrote a non-fiction book, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, after the decolonization of North Africa in 1956.)

Making Personal Transformations

The prison culture created a discursive environment in which my participants learned to cope with and make sense of their new experiences with power, authority, and identity. This new understanding also helped them make personal transformations. They brought in their knowledge from outside and combined it with new knowledge. For example, when I asked Gandalf if she thought teaching in the prison had changed her life, she replied “I’m more tolerant, maybe. I never had really thought about inmates much.” Kathryn and Seldom also mentioned that the experience of teaching in prison helped them develop a broader understanding of human nature. Seldom said, “Instead of narrowing [my] focus, it actually expanded it.” Similarly, Kathryn said, “I didn’t know how hungry they [inmate students] really were to be good” and “I have a lot more insight and compassion for their struggle.”

The physical proximity of my participants with their inmate students may have encouraged them to feel more closely aligned with the inmates than with the prison officials. This alignment could have been exacerbated since the organizations outside the prison, such as a community college, paid the teachers. Although my participants were not activists in prison reform, several of them described their inmate students as multi-dimensional human beings with rights and not only as inmates defined in terms of their deficiencies. For example, Kathryn explained how she began to recognize the many dimensions of her students while teaching college in a facility for male youth offenders. She said, “What I find in them is the good part [and] the part that’s really genuine starts to grow.” I believe that as she constructed these young men as subjects rather than objects, she was resisting the Othering process

It is also possible to realize in the narratives of my participants how the “personal becomes political.” By sharing their subjective experiences, they were also addressing social and political issues. The absence of organized social protest does not imply that they were not concerned about social problems that need to be addressed. Gandalf wrote to legislators in the early 1990s to express her concern that the inmates were no longer eligible for Pell Grants. Seldom discussed how prison education reduced recidivism, which reduced the cost of housing in prison and was an economic benefit for society. The concerns of my participants reflected their feelings and understanding about their everyday lives and their complaints about situations that impeded their work. Their complaints expressed in our interviews are similar to the female blues singers that Davis (1998) described who created performance spaces for black women to express their feelings and understandings about aspects of everyday life. In a similar way, I felt my participants used these interviews as a space to talk about their personal feelings regarding teaching college in prison and their narratives became a vehicle for expressing their politics.

The Stage

Now that I had a script for the play, I set the stage. Borrowing some presentational techniques from readers theatre, I created a set where the scenery limited, props are used sparingly, and any acting is highly stylized (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). I combined these elements with others that I adapted from Thornton Wilder’s play, *Our Town*. In Wilder’s (1938/2003) play, there is no scenery or props except for tables, chairs, and ladders. Actors interact with imaginary characters and manipulate nonexistent props so that the audience is encouraged to use imagination in the

actions and setting. I also adapted Wilder's use of a "stage manager" as a narrator who introduced the play and its setting, interrupted the play from time to time to comment on the action or a character's background, and sometimes stepped into the scene to talk with the characters. The stage manager acted somewhat like an omnipresent Greek chorus.

Readers theatre and plays with omnipresent choruses or soliloquies and asides to the audience are examples of presentation theatre (Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995). In the presentation tradition, what is suggested invites the audience to create meaning. In contrast, representation theatre makes meaning more explicit through what is literally shown. As an example of presentation theatre, the discourse in the play is open to various interpretations and invites contemplation (Eisner, 1997; Van Maanen, 1988).

In commenting on a book by Douglas Harper, *Working Knowledge*, Van Maanen (1988) observed three ways that written text operates as a form of analysis. (I have also used the written text of the play as a form of interpretation.) I have incorporated these three techniques into the creation of the script for the play. First, I have made the reader aware of my stance and position toward the material that I present. Second, I have given voice to the participants by including large segments of their narratives rather than "discombobulated quotations scattered throughout" (p. 283). Last, I have offered "few, if any, detachable conclusions" (p. 283) or formulaic meanings because the participants' stories might be remembered longer than formulas would be.

The three main themes of the stories of teaching college behind bars; that is, working in borderlands, negotiating power relations, and making personal transformations, seemed to correspond to the three elements of a plot: a rising action, a climax, and a resolution. In play, I present the data as an "emplotment in a cross-case

strategy by performance” (J. H. Banning, personal correspondence, April 13, 2007). The format of a play in one act and three scenes allowed me to include large segments of the transcribed text of my interviews as the script or dialogue of the play. Then I inserted my own voice, which is heard as the narrator or stage manager, of the performance. In this role, I became the storyteller who presents a “unifying idea stronger than its mere collection of happenings” (Wilder, 1941/1998, p. 264). As the interpreter on stage, I suggest ways the findings are enabled and constrained by cultural, social, and institutional circumstances (Chase, 2005).

Drawing on the data from the participants’ interviews and analyzing transcendent themes, I have created a performance text that I hope illuminates experiences that are unique to teaching college in prison. I have assembled segments of the narratives into a composite narrative, or *bricolage*. As a performance text, this *bricolage* simultaneously creates and enacts moral meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Through a play to be performed as action in the present, the audience might better visualize the ways in which the participants experienced and made meaning of their work in the borderlands, how they addressed the power relations of the prison, and how they made personal transformations. My hope is that the participants’ stories will offer a different perspective through which to understand the tension between education as social control and education as the practice of freedom. This dialogic text depends on an active audience that also interprets and makes meaning as the performance unfolds. By hearing this performance, the audience may understand how schools in the controlled environment of prison can become “sites of opposition” (Davidson, 1995, p. 10) and engage in critical pedagogy (Duguid, 2006).

The play that I present in the next chapter is based on the recorded transcriptions of the interviews that the participants and I had. Since I am not doing a formal linguistic analysis, I have not included all speech utterances such as pauses and nonverbal utterances. My considerations include the order of the experienced events, the personal motivations, and the major themes (Lieblich et al. 1998).

Several symbols and changes in font style appear in the text of the play to indicate my limited editing as follows:

1. Brackets [-] signify the addition of a word or phrase that I added to clarify the participants' intact transcript text.
2. Italics within brackets [-] signify the addition of a transition passage that I added to smooth the shift between participants' dialogues.
3. Three periods - ... - signify a phrase, sentence, several sentences, or sections that I deleted from the participants' intact transcript text.

Furthermore, in formatting the play, I adapted conventions for published plays (McLaughlin, 1997). My goal was to present the text of the play in a format that would encourage the reader to see and hear it as it might unfold on a stage. Additional symbols and changes in font styles appear in the text of the play to indicate stage directions and character names as follows:

1. Italics signify stage directions.
2. Capital letters indicate character names.
3. Italics within parenthesis (-) and after a character's name indicate stage directions.

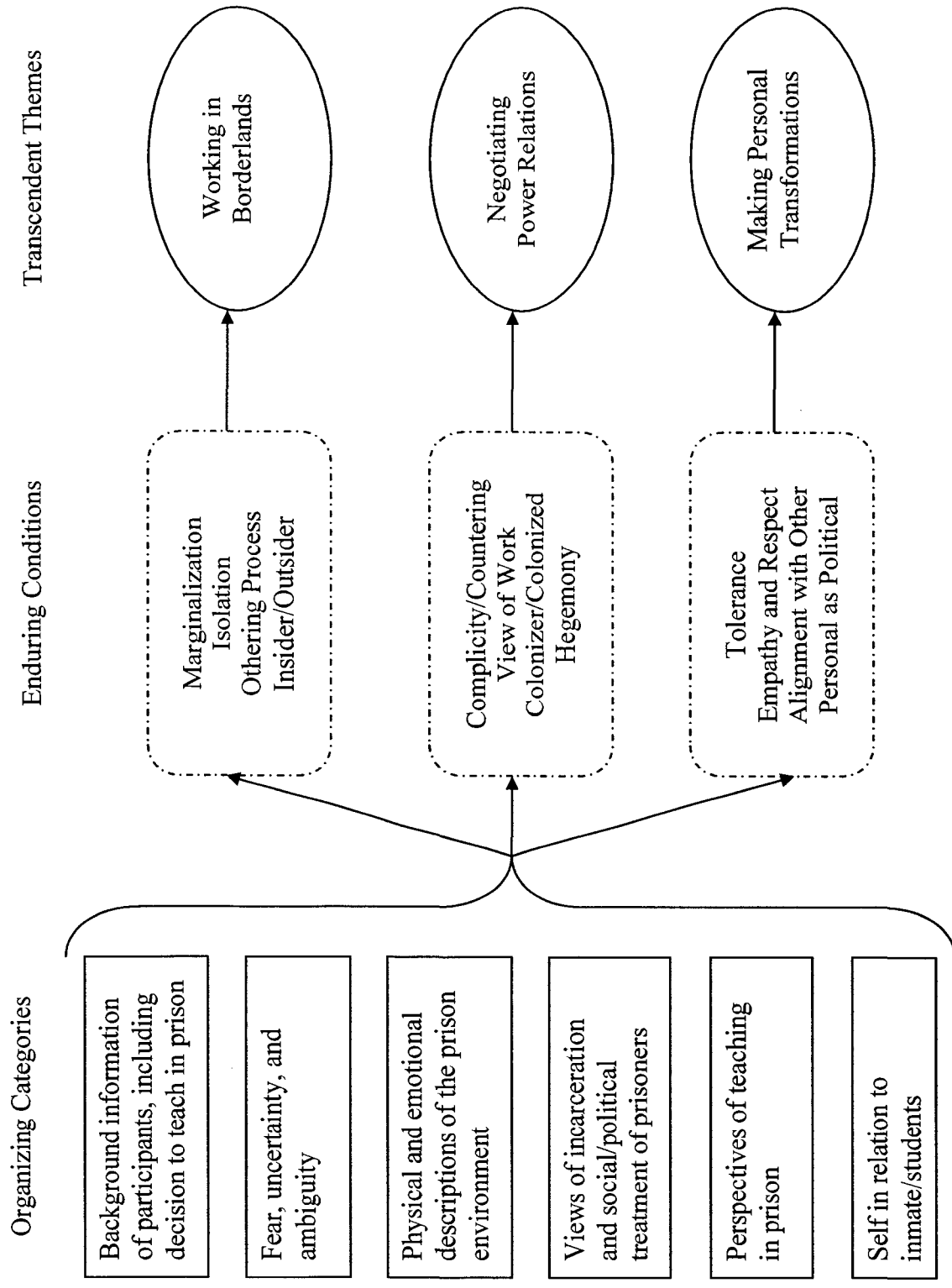


Figure 3. An organization into categories revealing the enduring conditions from which the overarching themes emerged.

CHAPTER 8: DWELLING IN POSSIBILITY

A One Act Play in Three Scenes about Teaching College Behind Bars

CHARACTERS (in the order of their appearance)

STAGE MANAGER, A commentator

KATHRYN, A possibilist

SELDOM, An optimist

GANDALF, A realist

JACK, A utilitarian

ULYSESS, A pragmatist

The entire play takes place inside a medium security prison

Scene One

No curtain.

No scenery.

The audience, arriving, sees an empty stage in half-light.

Presently the STAGE MANAGER, wearing a uniform of a dark blue shirt and black pants, enters and begins placing five small square tables in a row across the stage, each with a metal chair.

As the house lights go down, she ascends a ladder downstage left and watches the late arrivals in the audience.

When the auditorium is in complete darkness, she speaks.

STAGE MANAGER: This play is called “Dwelling in Possibility.” In this play, you will see Kathryn, Seldom, Gandalf, Jack, and Ulysses who teach college in prison. They have never met. Theirs is a solitary task yet fulfilling. Most of us would never attempt this kind of work. The action, such as it is, was, or might have been, takes place in a medium security prison. The time is late afternoon of a spring day.

As the lights come on, an iron gate slams shut. The STAGE MANAGER remains motionless. Seconds later, a second iron gate clangs. Now the STAGE MANAGER speaks.

That sound. Iron gates clanging shut behind you. That was my first impression of going inside a prison. Those doors seem to weigh tons apiece, locking you in, isolating you. Yet you know you are being watched.

Well, I'd better show you how this prison lies. Up here --

Toward the right.

is where the administrative offices are and after that a long hallway with a polished concrete floor and then the trap, the space between the two iron gates.

Toward the back wall

Over there is another long hall leading to the cells. Or, going in the opposite direction, you'll find a cavern like room where inmates may meet their visitors.

She climbs down and approaches the tables and chairs.

This is where some college classes are held for the inmate students. Usually there's an old-fashioned blackboard in the front and a telephone on the wall at the other end. There are no windows and the place has an antiseptic and impersonal feel.

She returns to the ladder and looks at the audience for a minute.

It's eerily quiet, isn't it?

The noise of the iron gate slamming shut is heard again, twice.

There's Kathryn, coming to prepare for her evening course. My goodness, she's carrying a vase of lilacs. Don't they smell lovely?

KATHRYN (*Putting the vase on the table in the center and taking a seat*): But one story is just still precious to me. It was one of my first times teaching [here] and I was teaching Intro to Philosophy. And I was teaching them John Locke's difference between what he called an idea of sensation and an idea of reflection. Idea of sensation is when you immediately feel something that's hot. And the idea of reflection is when you think back and try to remember what it felt like when it was hot. Now I could have just told them that. But it was spring and it was beautiful. And my lilac bush in the back was loaded with lilacs. And so I went out and I cut lilacs for everyone of the students.... And I called the prison first and I said "Can I bring flowers?" And they said "Yes, you can bring flowers as long as you bring them in something plastic, not in something glass." So I put them in a plastic vase and I took them and I hid them under my podium.... [After the students came to class,] I said "I'm going to ask each one of you to close your eyes and I'm going to come around and I'm going to put something in your hand. And what I want you to do is to see how much you can learn about that thing without looking at it." ...

Their heads went down; their hands went up. I didn't tell them to put their heads down. I just asked them to close their eyes. And so I went around and I put a lilac in every one of their hands. And they were experimenting and, of course, they smelled heavenly and one boy even tasted a little bit of the flowers to see what that was like. Anyway, we got all finished and they opened their eyes.... And one of the boys said, "Well, you know, I already knew what color it was." I said "You did? How'd you know?" And he said "We had these same flowers at home." One of the other boys said "I think we might have too but it's been so long since I've seen my home, I don't remember." I mean, just such sadness.... Well, they had [the lilacs] on their desks the whole time. When they left, they said "Can we take the flowers?" I said "Well, yes." I had no idea they'd want them. They all go marching out --- I mean I was so touched. Then at the end of the course in their evaluations, several of them said that what they appreciated most was me bringing a flower for them. And I bet some of them still have that pressed in a book someplace.

STAGE MANAGER: I want to tell you something about Kathryn's students. They're inmates, as you may have imagined, and they are taking college courses. All the characters in this play have stories to tell about their experiences teaching college behind bars. In this scene, they'll talk to you and they won't meet each other until the next scene. I will interrupt from time to time with some possible interpretations. They can't hear me unless I take on another role and enter into the dialogue.

Again, the noise of the iron gate slamming shut is heard twice.

There's Ulysses, Seldom, Gandalf, and Jack. They've also come early to prepare for their evening courses. Each teaches college courses at a different correctional facility.

They come along from the right and take a seat. When they speak, it's to the audience.

SELDOM: When that slams shut, you realize that you're enclosed. That's why they call it the trap. And that's the first time you hear the bars and the doors swing shut behind you and it's a rather jarring sound, especially the first time you hear it. And the trap, to describe it is, you walk into the prison and from the administration part in the front to the actual prison in the back, there are two gates that have to be opened and shut consecutively for you to go through them. I think I got the job because they watched me the first time hearing that clanging and I just kinda stood there. I didn't jump or get jittery.

GANDALF: I was in a high security facility once and I went through one, two, three, four and one more [gates slamming behind me]. Yeah. It's one, two, three, four, and then I was inside. [Then] I was always escorted. [At another facility after the gates], You'd go in and then you'd go through the doors and then go down the stairs and walk around the building and go into the building back here and go down the stairs. The classroom's right down there in the basement. And I've been there at night and

I have never, ever felt afraid. Never. My inmates can sense this. There's no fear. There's just no fear.

JACK: And all the bars and the waits and the delays that just become part of the, I don't want to say hassle, but of the standard grade frustrations, that you have to deal with.... And I just kinda slug it out for a while. I think late in the semester, I figured "You know, this is doable, this is fun. Just teaching in a little bit different setting."

SELDOM: Ah, again, it might even be an antagonistic situation in the beginning where the corrections officer says "Well, OK, another chocolate heart's coming in and going to try to be a do-gooder." And then he realizes later that this has been doing him some good. And I know, for example, most of the students are very well behaved because they want [the college courses], not just in class, but in general. And corrections [administration] likes to see that because they're seeing that this has a very calming effect.

KATHRYN: Ah, I've taught there enough that I do feel secure. Their security on the inmates is very, very tight there. No one is out of their buildings except at what they call "movement." And then they all move together and they go with staff and guards. And then everyone is in a building. Everything shuts down and it's like nobody lives here. That's what it feels like when you're there because there's nobody around.

GANDALF: They know when I go in and they know when I come out. You have to sign in, you know, what time you go in and when they have a count, if I'm in there, I'm part of the count because my name is on the visitors' book. But after you go in, [I wonder] how they remember you. I can go through the gate maybe twice and they know who I am and what I'm doing. And they just open the gate and then I walk in and then they close it.

STAGE MANAGER: Interesting. The power of this hierarchical observation, as Foucault (1977) explained, enables the modern prison to regulate the conduct of its inhabitants by "the calculation of openings, of filled and empty spaces, passages and transparencies" (p. 172).

KATHRYN: If I were just to go back over my own experience, I would call it "eager uncertainty." Because the uncertainty is partly ... about people thinking it's courageous to go into a prison. I don't think I ever thought about it as being courageous at all. It's more about being foolish. Because there is a certain foolhardiness that is involved especially in the sort of situation that I was teaching in first because I was totally unprotected. I was with this group of eighteen boys, any one of which could have cracked me in two if they really wanted to. And being far away from the door, being far away from the phone, no one else around. I mean, if you look at it just objectively, that could be seen as sort of foolhardy to do it.

SELDOM: I mean, it's an absolutely artificial environment and you have to understand it. Nobody is there, you know, of their own volition, for example. The one thing that I see that is universally true and the one thing that unifies them, is not race. It's not ethnicity. It's not whether they're urban or rural. It's that they're all poor. Poverty is the one unifying factor in prison. If you're rich, you get an attorney and you don't go to prison. I mean, maybe there's the few that have to be given as sacrifices. But for the most, these are guys who couldn't afford an attorney and got brought to prison. Where rich people are just as guilty and either get no time or little time. Or maybe get entirely, you know, off because they got a good lawyer. And you look at some of our famous people who spend a lot of money to stay out of prison and were successful.

JACK: But I think one thing that is kinda universal – part of the background. It's like, reminded me of so much of back in the army in basic training. Everybody hates the army. After a while, you know, we just said "OK. Let's stick it out. We'll make it." Yeah. Hadn't felt that kind of group feeling for forty years, whatever it was. Well, the discipline of basic training, you know, up early, work hard, everybody tired. That's what [the prison environment] reminded me of.

STAGE MANAGER: Now perhaps you see another dimension of the Othering process. I think the metaphor of prison teacher as stranger will help you understand the experience of teaching on the inside (Wright, 2006a). These strangers experience a relational tension from other groups, such as teachers on the outside, prisoners, guards, and community members. By going inside, it's as if they are traveling to a foreign land and returning to tell about it.

KATHRYN: I think that there aren't that many people who would want to [teach college in prison]. They see it as us and them. They're the bad people. We're the good people. They said that until one day in an ethics class [at the university], I just said "Now in your little private black book that nobody else ever sees, would you have to say that you have done some things for which you could be sitting in jail for?" And I just heard this little ripple of laughter through the class from the guys. And I didn't say any more. It's like, you know, they were caught; they were caught. But we cannot divide ourselves into us and them. We're all us and them. And maybe some things that they have done, in reality are less bad than what some other things people have done but you don't go to jail for. You know, you can wreck a home by committing adultery but you don't go to jail for it generally. But somebody that steals your car, they go to jail. You can't judge it that way.... Yes, and I tell stories to my students [on the outside]. You know, they're quite flabbergasted sometimes when they find out that's a prisoner whom I was talking about.

STAGE MANAGER: This empathy is complex. Recognizing oneself in the Other may offer new ways of understanding of how being complicit and countering intersect (Bamberg, 2004). I wonder if Kathryn is better able to understand the Other, the prisoner, since she is also the Other as a prison educator.

ULYSSES: *[My advice is]* don't fall into the habit of thinking of them as anything other than your students. There's a tendency to think of you as one of them, you know. And I think that's very dangerous. Especially in a prison, remember who you are and why you're there and who they are. And maintain a professional point of view and demeanor, and that puts everybody at ease. If you empathize too much with them that means trouble for you and them both. But get ready to have fun, you know. Because they're in a situation now that they want to protect. They want to do well. They want you to come back. They want you to know who they are and they want to feel safe in the group. Because they're not with their cellmates, their little cabal. They're in with all different inmates from all over the prison. And they don't know and trust some of them and they're afraid of some of them. So they want to feel safe in your class. And it's important for that reason, too, to be clear about your rules and your expectations.

SELDOM: I believe that everyone in prison puts on a game face, I think, that would be a good way to say it. Staff puts on and takes off a game face. I think inmates have to put on a game face for their own protection and I think basically for their own personality, whatever they choose it to be.... And trust is difficulty to achieve and maintain in prison partly because staff is not encouraged to trust inmates nor are inmates encouraged to trust staff. You don't trust someone who has the ability to make your life miserable or shorten it... I think teaching staff who get too involved with inmates are setting themselves up for manipulation and maybe some day they'll do something that's against the rules that will cost them their job, or security or their lives. Who knows. And it's always, I think, important to realize that "OK, I'm here to help you, but there are limits. There are rules. And you and I both know them and we're not going to go beyond that."

GANDALF: *[You know, we're here now and we work under their rules.]* Those are some of the frustrations. It's the time [when] something's said over the loud speaker, they just all pack up their stuff and slam their books shut and pick up and they say "we've gotta go now." And so, they go. And so there I am, no class. It's things like this, that's frustrating. It's dealing with the system but not with the inmates. Not with the inmates. But sometimes they're not up to speed as far as the [course content] is concerned but we just do what we can. And what I do is I try to get them as good a background as they can possibly have to go on to the next level. And some of them are looking at becoming lawyers and accountants and, you know, like that. They have plans when they get out.

STAGE MANAGER: I can provide a brief history and some political perspective before we move on. Although education has been a component of the U.S. criminal justice systems from the beginning, college programs were only introduced in the mid-twentieth century. In the 60s and 70s, the programs expanded through federal Pell grant funding and prison education focused on rehabilitation and reintegration. Then in 1994, President Clinton signed the omnibus crime bill, which eliminated inmates' eligibility for financial assistance through the Pell Grants for college programs. Since then funding has been applied to incapacitation or removing the

offenders from the street instead of rehabilitation (LoBuglio, 2001). This political philosophy of “tough on crime” reflects that the people generally do not want their tax dollars going to support college programs for inmates. However, the issue may not be economic but may stem from theoretical beliefs of politicians and correctional educators about the purpose of educational programs for inmates (Messmer, 2003). Yes, prison education takes place in a highly charged political context (Wright, 2001).

KATHRYN: And, you know, there are many, many people who don't think those young people deserve to go to college, not unless they pay for it themselves. And they're angry about taxes being used for their education. And I know that from teaching ethics and philosophy in other conditions. But what I say to them is that “whether we educate them or not, they're going to be our neighbors. So would you rather have a neighbor who hasn't gotten a start on, ah, a possibility for a whole new life, much better than before. Or would you rather have someone who comes out, has been bored to death there, has only gotten angrier and now they're your neighbors?” You know, one out of every 32 adults in this country are incarcerated or on parole. So you're inevitably going to get some neighbors who have been in jail. Well, my next-door neighbor, I know.... If they're older than 25, they cannot take any course without paying for it. If it were up to them to have to pay for it, where would they get the money? I mean, for working, they get 60 cents a day. That's not going to get them any tuition.

STAGE MANAGER: That's the end of the first scene. Nothing much has happened yet. As Jack said, it's just teaching in a little bit different setting.

Lights dim. There's scuffling of tables and chairs.

Scene Two

As the lights come up, the tables are arranged in a semicircle, creating a physical and psychological space for dialogue. The five characters are seated. The vase of lilacs is on the floor in the center of the semicircle. The STAGE MANAGER is in her accustomed place watching the audience.

STAGE MANAGER: One day has gone by and all that can happen in twenty-four hours. In this scene, I've arranged for the characters to meet so that they can help Kathryn cope with an incident that took place in her evening class after we saw her last.

KATHRYN: *[Well, I'll tell you what happened last night. It was the only time I was worried at all.]* I still think I have reason to be worried although everyone inside denies it. Well, I had given an unfavorable report on one of the students and corrected him on not giving his effort to his work. I did not know what his reaction was. But when I came back to class the next time, one of the teachers who had been there for many years stopped me. He said “I want to warn you that so and so said that he is going to” I don't remember what he said but it sounded a little bit

threatening. ... I never had to do this before.... You know, if a student did something, I would just talk to him like I would talk to a student in any other classroom [on the outside], find out what was going on.... But I was not aware that the educational report would affect their standing in their working up to get more privileges. So when I gave a bad report for this one student, he got knocked down. That's why he was angry. But I didn't know any of this. So I went to class and I had all the tables in a circle. We were a small class and we often did that for philosophy so we could really debate with each other.... And I was sitting on this side and the young man came in and sat directly across from me and everyone filled in around. And I felt uneasy but I thought "Well, he's on the other side. I don't know what he has in mind, if anything." And we had no more than just, I mean, I don't know if we had actually started the class and two guards came in and took him away just like that.... I was so startled when the guards came in and I said "When will you be bringing him back?" And they said something like "We'll see, ma'am."

STAGE MANAGER: And she never saw him again.

KATHRYN: That had never happened in a class, ever. And has never happened since. So my sense was that [the student] had been talking and he was going to do something.... So I went to talk to that teacher who had warned me because I knew he really had his finger on the pulse of all these young guys. And I asked him, and I've asked him more than once, and he said "Oh, no, I don't think he would have done anything. No, no." ... I never did learn. I mean, the authorities don't tell me. It's like "You're just nosey. This is our business." So I don't ask them questions. [But] I'm more interested in that than I was. At first I was just teaching. But as I see more and more pieces not doing well together.... You know, I would like to know where it all comes from and how they do it.

STAGE MANAGER: As you know, these educators never met. I thought it would be illuminating if they could share their stories with each other to enhance the meaning they make from their lived experience. It might have proceeded like this.

GANDALF: [*Yes, Kathryn, we all have to go through the process.*] When they send somebody to the hole [to segregation], they go in and they take all of their school stuff. They take their books, their calculators. They take all of it. And then lots of times, it's not going to get back. It's not going to get back to the inmate student. Where I teach, there's one man who's in charge of all this stuff. This one woman had to go to him and ask him to go into this inmate's stuff and get my calculator. And I gave it back to the inmate. But that's how we had to go through the process. Yeah, it's interesting.

SELDOM: [*Maybe we don't see it but,*] you know, there are a lot of interesting things going on in prisons. I have believed in the potential of the prison system being what's it's called: "a correctional system." And I think when people look at [state corrections departments and don't see any correction, they have a right to ask "Then what's my money going to?"

STAGE MANAGER: Considering what Seldom just said, I wonder about the implications of Foucault's concern that prison is a whole series of power relations which alter people, "correct" them. Prison is more than detention but it is a place where people are made into subjects. Although this play is not about the prisoners, the prison setting provides opportunity to explore the complex power relations that are illuminated by the stories of these educators.

KATHRYN: *[Yes, Seldom, correct, rehabilitate, reintegrate – all noble goals for us as educators, still there's the another side.]* There are some times that you don't know you're not supposed to do [something. For instance], one of the young men that I had for two classes was working in the library. And I had the next class and they needed to do a research paper. And I didn't know what philosophical resources were in their little library. And so I asked him if he would compile a good bibliography. Well, within an hour, he had this wonderful bibliography, all just neat as a pin. So I wrote him a little thank you note and I took it over to give it to the head librarian because I didn't think he would be there that day. But he was there so I handed it to him. And he almost cried and he read it and he said "You know, this is the only and the first and only thank you note that I have ever received since I've been here for four and a half years." Well when you think about it you wouldn't expect him to get a thank you note but it does say something about how hungry he was for that recognition. But later I found out that you're never to give a note to a prisoner. You know. It didn't occur to me. But it helped me to understand a very basic innocence. You know, I think that basically we are all innocent. And that no matter what we've done, we're basically innocent. And I do see that in them, very much so. And if they could find – and I see this happening to them – when they can find that their life can be really happy and that they can get what they need out of life without hurting other people to get it. It's a great relief for some of them.

JACK: *[I understand about not knowing what to do, Kathryn, but sometimes you do something you know you shouldn't do. And I didn't get caught on this one.]* When I was teaching chemistry, I managed to bring in a few props. And of course, these were always subject to scrutiny. But it worked out OK. I have crystal models. And I have an experiment I do with methyl alcohol. And, just a little pop bottle, plastic pop bottle, 16 ounce. And I put a little alcohol vapor in there and then dump it out, dry, and then spark it off and look for several things. Ah, appeals to three of the five senses. There's no taste and there's no smell but there's everything else.... So we talk about all this.... They [the corrections staff] had no idea I was making fire. They had no idea. I knew they wouldn't go for that, so I just did it. Sub rosa.

STAGE MANAGER: Before I heard these stories, I imagined that the voices of those teaching in prison might present a different perspective education as the practice of freedom. I thought that emphasizing critical thinking and moral and intellectual reasoning might challenge the established order of a correctional facility. I imagined that the educators' desire to move students beyond the prison walls would

collide with the prison administrators need to maintain control of inmates within the walls. However, I did not find sites of opposition and conflicts with carceral authority. I found small acts of kindness that I interpreted as subtle resistance to the dehumanizing that takes place in total institution. This “mischievous co-mingling of counter and dominant discourses” (Torre et al., 2001, p. 154) was unexpected.

GANDALF: *[Jack and Kathryn, I think that you showed your students that you really cared about them and their learning.]* And I had been told by the inmates that the fact that I treat them like human beings, it makes a big difference in how they respond to me. I was told in a [corrections department] training session that all inmates have the same name: Inmate. So it’s Inmate whatever, Inmate whatever. I call them by their first names. Then they – and they call me “Dr. Gandalf.” It eventually just gets shortened to “Doc.” Doesn’t seem to take them very long to get there either.

STAGE MANAGER: Yes, I agree with Goffman (1958/1997a) here that the loss of one’s name “can be a great curtailment of the self” (p. 57).

JACK: One young man over here. He was an exceptional – He’s in for life, he told me. But he wants to go into business. He was my top student in every class I taught. And he would come up to me “Hey, Teach. What’s --?” and ask me something about a business he was planning. And I’d say “Yeah, do this.” You know. “Get a loan from small business administration.” And, I think that giving unwanted advice is probably not a good idea. But when they ask, I’m happy to respond.

ULYSSES: *[That’s not what I would do. I could never get as personal as you and Gandalf do, Jack.]* I usually tell [the students] to call me Mr. [with my last name] and they always do. In the class, that’s how they do it.... I’ve been reading this book about --getting ready for my class the next time -- it sounds really far a field but in China back about twenty eight hundred, three thousand years ago, Confucius was having an influence on how the Chinese thought about themselves. And he emphasized the importance of ritual in their relationships in their society. And I got to thinking “why would that be so important?” And then I’m walking out the prison and the guard says to me, “Have a nice evening” You know it’s an exaggerated politeness between the guard in the control room and anybody who’s outside. His first approach is to be very polite and very politely interested. Now I begin to realize that in this big glass enclosure and all these things he has to do inside this big glass enclosure, he can’t always be as responsive or as personal as he could be but it’s important to go through that ritual of politeness. And it’s important for me to respond to that in kind because if I get irritated at having to wait five minutes for the door to open, it’s not his fault. And there’s nothing he can do. He has protocols to follow. So it occurred to me that this was one of the rituals of prison among the staff when they’re at their post. And I began to realize that this is something that I hadn’t really taken note of but when I thought about it, it’s a very ordinary thing. They’re frequently very polite to other staff members and they don’t want conflict among themselves, other staff members. They do everything they can to keep that

down. You know, because there's so much potential for conflict with the inmates, so among the staff there are a lot of rituals to observe, and follow, of politeness and carrying on with civility.

STAGE MANAGER: This reminds me of a quote from Samuel Johnson (1750): "When once the forms of civility are violated, there remains little hope of return to kindness or decency" (p. 4). Now I could see maintaining civility in the classroom as a subtle form of resistance to the dominant discourse of those in power who frequently act without civility toward the inmates. Or might it be one of the power relations that Foucault was concerned about that serve to alter people, to "correct" them?

KATHRYN: *[You know, I agree with Ulysses. Respect in the classroom is so important.]* When I came back this year to teach, it wasn't that they were being disrespectful; they were being more like really thoughtless. You know, they were sitting three at a table and they would sit there and talk while I was talking, you know. So the second class, we had a little heart to heart at the beginning. Because I thought "Let's not let this go on because then it'll just be a yelling match." And so I just talked to them.... And I said "It's just, you know, that mutual respect. I respect you and you respect me." I said "One of the ways you do that is when I'm talking, you're not talking to each other." And I said "When one of the other students is talking, like when I've asked them a question, then all of you need to be listening." It isn't like 'oh, this is time for us to talk.'" So I was right up front and we talked about respect, you know. Well since that time, when they enter, I'm always at the door. I open the door for them 'cause it's locked from the outside. And I shake hands with them and I greet them. And they come in and I insist that they call me Ms. with my last name and not just "Ms." That's their thing. They call me "Ms." I don't like it at all.

ULYSSES: *[And actually, Kathryn, that politeness,]* it's something that you don't see between staff and inmates. But the higher up that you get in the staff, the more likely they are to treat the inmates with politeness and civility. A lot of the guards, because they have tough situations and they don't have much education by and large, those rituals that they observe among themselves, they don't carry over to the inmates. And, it kind of poisons the atmosphere sometimes. I think if there were more politeness between the staff in addressing the inmates, the inmates would respond better. Because I notice sometimes when an officer comes into the visiting room when I'm having class, that inmates frequently bristle and, you know, this means trouble to them and something's going to happen. And the guards often are very short with them and very, what's the word; well, just short with them. And don't show any inclination to be respectful. They don't necessarily curse at them but they just show that, ah, there's not going to be any civil exchange.

An announcement is made over the intercom, something that only those on the inside understand.

STAGE MANAGER: *(briskly enters as a correctional officer):* You'll have to go now. We need this room and you have to leave immediately.

Lights dim. Audience again hears scuffling of tables and chairs.

Scene Three

As the lights come up, there's wooden bench just right of center on which Kathryn and Gandalf are sitting. They've been moved to the visitor's room. Kathryn is holding the vase of lilacs. Just left of center, Ulysses, Jack, and Seldom are standing. And the STAGE MANAGER is in her usual place on the ladder.

STAGE MANAGER: So what does this all mean? Maybe it's useful to learn how it started, this teaching behind bars. Let's go back to the beginning to find out what draws educators to this contradictory and often frustrating setting.

KATHRYN: Well, you know, working in a prison setting has always [been] just something that I admired in other people but I thought that it would probably be something that I would never do.

GANDALF: *[Yes, Kathryn, I'd also be interested in how you and the others found your way inside.]* I was teaching for a local community college and they asked me if I'd like to go behind the walls. And I said "Sure, I'll give it a try." And after that semester, I went back to the director and I said "Send me in any place, any time." It was just such a positive experience.... I've had more positive experiences teaching in the prisons than I ever had at the high school or even at the university. These inmates, they're so eager. And most of them are really, really bright. And they understand the importance of an education. And, they really, really work hard.

SELDOM: *[Well, like Gandalf, I was already in higher education.]* I started teaching with a community college about thirteen and a half years ago almost now. I really didn't know a lot about prison before that. And [teaching college in prison] gave me an opportunity to come back in the evenings and use my degree and credentials. So it was, it was a good change.... And sometimes, I'll go home from class just so energized that I can't go to bed. You know, I've got to sit and talk it over at home before I can quit.... It has been very good, very exciting. When you have a group that is hungry and, a seriously captive audience, they're good. And they really perform for you. They want to do well. I think if nothing else, I could do just this and be satisfied.

KATHRYN: *[I started much like both of you did.]* I was teaching at the university out here and I only taught one semester and they didn't need me in that department the next semester. I was teaching as an adjunct. I thought, I know how to read and write pretty well. So I'll check and see if there's anything that would be possible to teach [for the English department]. And the answer back was we don't have an opening here but they really need someone at the youth correctional facility. I had no idea what that was. And I thought, "Well, ah, OK, whatever." So I taught there that semester, and, ah, just really got hooked. Just go hooked. Not on teaching courses but got hooked on working with those young people.

ULYSSES: *[Well, for me it was different because]* somebody [from a university] just got in touch with me. And, at that time, they had a program for prisoners.... They had an opening for a class [in my field] and I've doing that for about a year, a couple of semesters running.... You know, I like that about teaching there [in prison] because they [the inmate students] don't have lots of distractions. I mean, they come to class and that might be the one time during the week when they see somebody who is not an officer or somebody who works there and is telling them what to do. And, so, as teachers, we don't have to compete with very much. And we have really a captive audience, in more than one sense.

JACK: *[I may have been more purposeful than any of you.]* When I first moved here, I thought "Well, that would be nice to try to teach math in the prison." And [this university] advertised for a teacher.... And I thought, "I don't know anything about them." I just called up blind and got a hold of the vice president some how and she said "You should talk to the [prison program director]. And so I talked to him and went over to his house and he said "sure, you want to teach algebra?" And I said, "Oh, yeah, I could teach algebra pretty easily." ... And that was interesting.

STAGE MANAGER: But I'm interested in knowing how these teachers in the borderlands have learned from their experiences. How have they changed? They have experienced the tension between knowing their students as human beings who need love, acceptance, and hope and feel remorse and realizing that their students must be kept at a social distance (Wright, 2006a). They operate in a total institution as Goffman (1958/1997a) described: a social arrangement like a prison that regulates all aspects of individuals' lives under one roof and according to one rational plan. These educators are caught between identifying with the prison organization and opposing it. I see stories of professional dilemmas, perhaps intensified by the total institution.

KATHRYN: *[Those are good questions, Jack.]* I think you have to have a certain combination of traits in yourself to be able to do it because if you're too empathetic and sympathetic for the inmates, that's not good. Because it takes you over. Because you can't to see it, you know. And on the other [hand], if they're only students to you and you're there to make some money, I don't think that's good for the students. I think it belittles them eventually. And so for me, it is truly a calling. Teaching in general is a calling but this is a particular calling. And, I don't feel sorry for them. I think they're very lucky that they're there and not some place else. And I think they're very lucky that they got caught in time to save them from self-destruction. You know, they're clean and sober, maybe some of them for the first time since they were quite young. They not mixed up in – they're not terrified for their lives everyday... I think teaching in prison has helped me really see the good part of them. It's like if you draw a pie, which represents the person, and this criminal activity, that's a slice. And there's the great piece of goodwill. Really wanting something better. I mean when they say things like "Do you know I never dreamed I'd go to college. I am the first in my family to ever go to college and my family is so proud of me." And here he's sitting behind bars going to college but –

GANDALF: *[I look at this a little differently than you do, Kathryn.]* I haven't any idea [if taking college classes makes a difference for them.] I just go in to do my job and go out. And I never see that group [of students] again.

SELDOM: *[Yes, both of you have found your balance. For me,]* I think it is important to realize that we are working in a dangerous situation with dangerous people who – there's a reason they're locked up. And I think we fool ourselves sometimes when we tend to think "Well, they're really nice guys underneath." Yes, they are but there's that other part. That dichotomy in every personality. Because we're bringing out a different aspect of personality when we teach. Especially when we give them the feeling that we're treating them just like we would treat students on the outside. And we do, but we always have to step back a little bit and say "OK, I may trust my students out here, I can never trust you." So there's always a wall.

STAGE MANAGER: As these narratives unfold, I see the struggle to shape a professional identity in this borderland behind bars. Do you think these educators identify with their own field or with the security concerns at their correctional facility? Do their advanced degrees set them apart from correctional officers?

JACK: *[None of you seemed to have connected with these inmates through a personal experience, as I have.]* ... Narrow escapes. I've got three boys. Two of them, I've taken down to the police department on account of things I didn't like. There were teenagers. Got their attention. And just dumb stuff. Fourteen, fifteen year old stuff. Could have, not too much of a push, could have gotten this far with them. Could have been in there. Yeah, bad companions. Narrow escapes, yeah.

KATHRYN: *[Yes, Jack.]* Some of them didn't have many moorings to begin with and certainly didn't gain them as they went through their lives. And so that was a new insight for me. I have a great deal of hope for them and respect for their struggle because when you're young, you can slide into things. It is so innocent.

STAGE MANAGER: And I'm interested in their personal transformations. Perhaps these educators are feeling the tension between their memories of the past and their anticipations of the future (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). How do they understand their own behavior and the behavior of their inmate students? Are they empathic because they are close enough to see the humanity of their students?

KATHRYN: So I think seeing them as real people and with a great deal of hope for their potential was what really struck me ... and their concern for me. You know, I started loosing my voice last night and they got very concerned. So I found that I am probably like their grandma. I would imagine. I don't know who I am to them, who I represent to them, if I represent somebody.... And so, basically, I think I just feel cared about by them. I mean, they're not thoughtless students. Some of them are. Some of them are pretty young and silly, you know. But many of them are very, very concerned about how you are. And that's interesting to me.

ULYSSES: [*Unlike you, Kathryn,*] when I connect with somebody that doesn't mean a think to me.... What I'm really looking for is a productive relationship. You know, something that's connected with my work or interests. And that's what I like.... So maybe that's why I get along well in the prison environment. It feels safe and I feel like I'm at home there ... able to connect with inmates without feeling like I'm getting in too deep or not knowing where the boundaries are, which is a trouble for some people. But I've never had that problem.

STAGE MANAGER: Yes, although these educators share a common life experience, they have different ways of making meaning. I've tried to respect the individuality of their stories while noting transcendent themes – or the lack of them. I've tried not to simplify, categorize, slice and dice these experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2003).

SELDOM: [*You've not yet answered one of Jack's questions: How has this experience changed you?*] It has changed me in many ways. And I almost hate to even admit this but I lived in a relatively narrow culture in a conservative town even though I was out there in the community.... Well, when I came here, I realized the world was a lot bigger than [that town]. And I opened up a little bit. I, for example, became a lot less homophobic.... Here in prison, I had a larger mix. Maybe I was teaching all males but I was teaching a wider range of ages, ethnic, cultural backgrounds. I was teaching people from all over the country. And I think that had expanded my attitude and my feelings about what the rest of world is really like. And so instead of narrowing the focus, it actually expanded it.

KATHRYN: I think teaching in prison has helped me really see that the actions of criminal activity that they've been engaged in is like if you draw a pie, which represents the person, that's a slice. And there's this great, great piece of goodness. And not just goodness, good will. Really wanting something better. I mean when they say things like "Do you know I never dreamed I'd go to college. I'm the first in my whole family to ever go to college and my family is so proud of me." And here he's sitting behind bars going to college but --

STAGE MANAGER: Kathryn continues to see possibility, reminding me of a comment about people who believe in making the world a better place: "That may be naïve, but idealism is a form of resistance" (Dargis, 2006, para 10).

ULYSSES: [*Well, I look at this differently, Kathryn. I think I'm more of a utilitarian.*] [My experience has] made me a better teacher, a better reader of literature, you know. But I don't think it's changed me in any important ways, I guess. What I bring to it is I continue to hone my skills, and I get some new insights every time I teach a piece of literature, I get new insights into it. Not necessarily because they provide them but just in the process of teaching it, you see it a little bit differently. And you see it in different context and I really like that. I like literature and it's a wonderful opportunity to pursue that.

GANDALF: Yes, I'm more tolerant, maybe. I never had really thought about inmates much one way or the other. But I have come to believe that they are put in prison as punishment, not for punishment.

KATHRYN: *[Right.]* You cannot let your heart be broken there because, you know, that doesn't help them. You have to see them as people who have really gotten into bad trouble and have victimized other people. And they need to change their lives. If you see them only as victims, I think it could be problematic. They know right away whether you're somebody who's going to commiserate with them. You know. It's not that I think everybody's been treated justly that gets in there. I don't think that. I think that some people have been used as examples. You know. I think some of them have been probably sentenced with a, with a certain prejudice or racism involved. I think that's probably true. You know. But if that's, if that's the way I see the whole thing, I need to be outside of it working for change. But probably not on the inside working with them.

STAGE MANAGER (*Looking at her watch*): Well, it's time for Kathryn, Gandalf, Jack, Ulysses, and Seldom to return to their separated and unconnected lives, perhaps buoyed by knowing they are not alone in their work as teachers of college in prison.

Now you have visited a place that you might not have gone to before and you have learned about challenges that others have confronted. Throughout this play, I tried to show, not just tell, you about the lived experiences of these educators.

What will you take away that you learned from these outsiders within?

The house lights gradually brighten. As the audience leaves the theater, the iron gates clang twice.

CHAPTER 9: CROSSING BOUNDARIES

The title of this chapter comes from Mamphela Ramphele's book, *Across Boundaries*. Dr. Ramphele's autobiography described her personal journey of transformation as she transgressed the social and political boundaries of apartheid South Africa. She also told about colleagues in the struggle for liberation who balanced countering with complicity and ironically stabilized the society in transition to a democracy. In a similar way, the participants in my study crossed boundaries to teach college courses in prison and they learned to balance their personal values with the rules of the prison system. Furthermore, the discursive environment of the prison setting allowed my participants to construct, reconstruct, and present multiple identities.

My purpose for this chapter is to consider the influence of the discursive environment and relationships on issues of identity. Many narrative inquiry studies show how social and political settings and conversations in relationships with others influence identity construction (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). Before describing how my participants shaped their identities in relationships with others, I look first at how the environment of the prison offered opportunities for transformation that made construction of these new identities possible.

Discursive Environments

Discursive environments afford distinct settings in which to interpret and present everyday life (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003b). Tellable stories often surface in these environments because the closed cultures prescribe unique patterns of social interactions and language. For example, the closed environment of a prison provides inmates,

families, and staff with a shared experience and a common language. This is consistent with Gubrium and Holstein's (2003b) description of "parallel sensibilities ... [and] a shared format for voicing participants' selves, thoughts, and feelings" (p. 43) that discursive environments enable.

Goffman (1958/1997a) used the environments of total institutions to illustrate ways individuals develop understandings of who they are. Goffman's examples of total institutions include mental institutions, prisons, and military agencies that regulate all spheres of the individuals' lives under one roof and according to one rational plan. Total institutions provide those who are confined with choices about how they articulate their lives and themselves. The environment of a total institution also enables others, such as staff members, to develop multiple identities in relation to those confined. In fact, hierarchical power relationships in these formal organizations may alter the way their inhabitants view themselves and structure or reconfigure their personal identities (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003b).

The position of the prison educator as stranger or adventurer who is crossing boundaries and entering into the discursive environment of a prison also offers alternative ways of meaning making through narratives (Wright, 2006b). The prison educator takes advantage of public order and control to participate safely in another culture and to reflect on its meaning. The multiple roles that prison system expects educators to play are a source of conflict and ambiguity (Wright, 2005). However, the participants in my study seemed to understand that both the dominant culture and the resistance to it are viable organizing principles (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991).

My participants told stories of moving between being complicit with and countering the dominant narrative. They found ways to comply with and counter the dominant prison culture of control as they created a classroom environment in which their inmate students could feel safe. Bamberg (2004) described these counter narratives as often more interesting because countering implies a concern with power and hegemony. Most teachers in prison college programs are “familiar with critical discourses ... [and] find themselves in unexpected discussions with prisoners and unexpected conflicts with carceral authority” (Davidson, 1995, p. xv). Davidson (1995) noted that these educators could contribute significantly to critical studies on education by making space for such critical discourse and creating “sites of opposition” (p. 10). Told within the controlled environment of a prison, the stories of participants in my study offered a different perspective on education as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1970/2003; hooks, 1994) and countering the dominant culture.

In this way, the cultural diversity in prison might contribute to an understanding of border knowledge and afford new perspectives on liberating education. For example, Weiss and Fine (2004) explored the experience of teaching incarcerated women to become critical thinkers. The researchers described how college programs transformed these women by encouraging them to examine their past, understand the impact of their crimes, begin to create a sense of responsibility for their past, and plan for their future. In this space for critical inquiry, the researchers and the incarcerated women create a team of women scholars engaged in a dialogue that educated them all. The core elements of higher education, “such as self-reflection and critical inquiry, spur[ed] the production of

critical subjectivities, transformed and connected selves, and in turn transformed communities” (Weiss & Fine, p. 108).

The research inquiry of Weiss and Fine (2004) paralleled that of other researchers who examined the discursive environment afforded by a prison setting. For example, Vacca (2004) described the impact of the “values and attitudes of persons in authority positions” (p. 300) on the success of prison programs. These officials included instructors in the prison education programs who offered inmates with strategies for achieving success after being released. For an ethnographic study, Tracy (2003) spent almost one year observing correctional officers at a county jail and a state women’s prison. She felt that correctional officers were misunderstood and often portrayed as hardened, cynical, and stressed out. Her intent was to understand how the officers faced the emotional challenges of everyday work experiences of guarding and caring for “society’s deviants” (Tracy, 2003, p. 159). She found puzzling emotional stances among the correction officers she studied that could only be understood within the norms and contradictions of the correctional setting. Similarly, my participants exhibited unexpected emotional positions that they described in our interviews.

Multiple Identities

In reaction to the controlled environment of the prison, my participants negotiated multiple subject positions, which were consistent with their personal values. In other words, social interactions and pivotal experiences, as expressed through language and discourse, produced the multiple subject positions that the participants occupied. Furthermore, these fragmentary and nonunitary qualities of subjectivity were ambiguous, messy, changing, and multiple. My observations of the multiple identities that my

participants constructed depending on the occasion, audience, and reason for telling the story are consistent with those of Bloom (1998), Mishler (2004), and Naples (2003) in their narrative research.

The format of a performance text in Chapter 8 afforded a means for me to show how my participants' stories transmitted individual identities and cultural meanings (Lieblich et al., 1998). Within the contradictory and frequently frustrating context of the prison, my participants found opportunities to reconstruct their identities or chose to reject these opportunities. These opportunities were found in my participants' relationships with others, in their reflective and critical conversations about difficult social issues, and within the dynamics of power relations in the prison setting. For example, Kathryn saw her inmate students as individuals with the potential to change their lives. Early in our first interview, Kathryn said that she learned a lot about her students through the major research papers that they wrote for one of her courses. She came to believe that "they were very much worth the time and effort to help them when they got out to be more productive and happy." Kathryn saw "great goodwill" in her students, which outweighed the prior criminal activity resulting in their prison sentence. Their criminal behavior was a small piece of their makeup and "all the rest of it is potential." Kathryn believed that her inmate students could become "excellent people" and education would provide them with insights into their behavior, enable them to think critically about their lives, and make changes.

Because many of them got into trouble when they were young, started running with gangs, eventually they either started skipping school or dropped out altogether and really never anticipated that they would even get a high school diploma. And I think being there and finding out how smart they are, how they are able to think. And they are taking care of themselves physically because it's just high demand. What I find in them is the good part of them, the part that's

really genuine starts to grow. And when they can finally come to terms with what they did that was wrong and, and really change about that, they can leave there quite whole. And I think that that was something that I didn't know before. I had never been with people who were in prison whether young or older. I didn't know how hungry they really were to be good.

Kathryn also saw herself changing through her empathy for her inmate students. She gained new insights about the inmates as individuals that contrasted with the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses of the prison system, which depersonalizes the inmates and eliminated their social backgrounds (Christie, 2000). For example, Kathryn seemed to know and understand something about the dreams and defeats of her inmate students.

It's very interesting because I taught ethics one semester and the next semester I was teaching and I was walking across the campus and one of the young men that I had had in the class before was lined up and I don't think he's really supposed to be talking to me but he called out "Miss Kathryn, Miss Kathryn." He said "I need that ethics class again. I'm beginning to slip backwards." And I couldn't respond to him. I just nodded. I just thought, he really cares, you know.

And I remember [another] young man. I have an ethics book and in the middle of the book, the author proposes five principles of behavior that he has taken for himself to guide his life. And, [the student] said, "You know, I wrote those out and they're right on the wall by my bed." He said "I read them all the time." And some of them would say, "You know, in my whole life, I have never asked the question, is this right or wrong. I've never even asked it. It was always, what do I want to do. You know, what do I want? How do I get what I want? That's all I cared. I never even asked the question if something was right or wrong."

Now that isn't true of all of them. Some of them grew up in homes that were very stable and good. But some of them, you know, didn't have many moorings to begin with and certainly didn't gain them as they went through their life. And, and so that was a new insight for me. I have a great deal of hope for them and respect for their struggle because I think that when you're young, you can slide into things. It is so innocent.

Although Kathryn had compassion for the struggles of her students, she balanced her empathy with a realization of their criminal background. She called her attitude a "healthy suspicion" since she did not have an unconditional warmth toward the students.

She saw them as people who got into bad trouble by victimizing other people and she believed that they needed to and could change their lives. However, Kathryn understood how hard it would be for the inmate students to make the necessary changes especially if they returned to the environment where they had committed their crimes. She saw the dichotomy in each person capable of good and bad actions.

And the gang is such a compelling group of people to belong to. There's so much pride about being a gang member and so much respect. They feel like they're respected. People are afraid but they think they're respected. And they are willing to suffer a lot for the rest of the gang. I mean they'll take punishment for them. They'll go to prison for them. One of the ways they advance in the gang is if they will take the rap. Staff will tell me, you know, the one who gets sent "up the hill" is not necessarily the one who did the deed. But it's the one who is taking the rap for whoever really did it. Even though they have tried to take away every visible sign of who belongs to what gang -- because they didn't know each other when they came in -- they still find out, of course. And they still communicate in subtle ways with each other. And so, I think they have a great deal to overcome because there's pressure inside. There's pressure outside. And they can be afraid to go home afterward because they are afraid of the gang waiting for them that are already sending them messages somehow that we expect you to get back in. And they have enough experience to know that if you don't, they will hurt your family. And it's terrifying for them. So the struggle to stay on the right path when they get out is enormous. It's enormous. And so I have a lot more insight and compassion for their struggle. And at the same time, however, I'm harder.

Kathryn's emotions, her sense of self, and her ways of understanding her relationships in this controlled environment resulted in the production of the multiple identities that emerged through our interviews. Framing Kathryn's roles as teacher, mother, and mentor were her experiences with human nature.

Seldom's prior experiences working in a prison setting and in the public school system helped shape his multiple identities. Seldom understood himself as part of the correctional staff on the inside and as a teacher on the outside looking in. In an early segment from our first interview, Seldom described his role in maintaining security as a teacher in prison by comparing it to similar experiences with securing a public school.

I think just the past twenty years in teaching in a normal school, public school, for example, security has become more and more not only evident, it became something where there're metal detectors in high schools. They have security guards there. In a lot of ways, especially the large schools in the urban areas have the similar type of security situation as we do in a prison. And, you know, I hate to compare the school and a prison that way, but as far as security goes, it's a paramount responsibility. You have to maintain the, the safety and the security of the students and the teachers. And I think we see the same thing at the prison. And so it may have bothered me a little bit at first to be working inside a prison. But I'd say overall, there's always a heightened awareness of where you are and, if you're not aware of what's going on, you probably shouldn't be working there. You know. You shouldn't even be going in the gate. But being aware of it I think helps keep you safe.

Furthermore, Seldom saw his relationship with his students from a different perspective because of his familiarity with the correctional system. His identities as teacher and as security officer were evident in his classroom.

And I think it was easier for my students to understand that ... this is not somebody who is going to be gullible. This is somebody who already knows how the system works. And so you might as well not try anything. And I don't know if they have done anything with any other teachers or not, as far as involving them or asking them to do things that are inappropriate. I don't think that happens. But, at the same time, it's never happened to me because we both knew from the beginning that "OK, I understand the situation and so do you. So let's go to work."

Although Seldom was less willing than Kathryn to let his emotions produce one of his multiple identities, he talked about how the unique setting of prison enabled his personal transformations and foster the construction of an identity of a political and social "liberal."

I think correctional educators overall, they have a unique experience. And I think if correctional educators get together and talk, they're going to find that they have that in common. And something that the rest of the world really doesn't know that much about. And it has changed me in many ways. And I almost -- I hate to even admit this but I lived in a relatively narrow culture even though I was out there in the community.... When I came here [to work inside the prison], I realized the world was a lot bigger than [my home town]. You know, it's like, "homosexuals are bad and they're all going to die." But, that was obviously a narrow view that was uncalculated with a relatively conservative group of people. Here I had a

larger mix. Maybe I was teaching all males but I was teaching a wider range of ages, ethnic, cultural backgrounds. I was teaching people from all other the country. And I think that had expanded my attitude and my feelings about what the rest of world is really like. And so instead of narrowing the focus, it actually expanded it.

By explaining his experiences teaching college courses in prison to his family, Seldom presented his identities as spouse and father. He did not become a teacher in prison without the support of his family.

This is a huge career change. It was still teaching but it was a much different system entirely.... I think there were some hesitations. I had a wife. I had kids. And they didn't want to see me into a dangerous situation. But I think they learned, as I do, that although prison is a dangerous situation, in a lot of ways so is junior high. Look at Columbine. Here at prison, nobody's going to come in with a gun and shoot you. So, you know, [in] a lot of ways, I came to understand that you are just as safe teaching in a prison as you are at a [local community college], for example. There's more outside access so more things can go wrong. But, there [in prison] you need to have a heightened awareness of security. And that's part of your training. You know, you realize that from the beginning. Once my family realized that there wasn't anything more to be concerned about inside the prison system and that I saw a place where I could do some good, then they were all for it. They said OK. I used to come home and tell stories all the time. And they went "Oh, oh, wow!" And then after awhile, there weren't really any new stories. And they got used to it.

The fluid and fragmented identities that Seldom presented in our interviews reflected his relationship to other people and the situation. At times, he was a guard in relation to the inmates and, in other situations, he was a teacher for his inmate students. Seldom and I had a conversation as colleagues interested how education produces personal transformations. His identity as social activist also emerged in his desire for progressive political and social policies. Finally, he talked frequently about his relationship to his family.

Like Seldom, Gandalf seemed less influenced by emotions in the construction of her identities. Gandalf enjoyed working with her inmate students and felt appreciated

when the inmates thanked her for “coming in” and told her they appreciated what she was doing. In a rare display of emotion, Gandalf said “I don’t know. It’s hard to really put it into words, the experience.” In describing her role as a teacher, she did not emphasize helping inmates change their lives. Following the correctional systems rules, she shared nothing of herself with the inmate students and apparently knew nothing about them as individuals. She had a detached relationship with her students and talked dispassionately about her experiences of being in a classroom with inmates.

I just feel like I provide a service. You know, what they do with it, it’s up to them. I have had lifers in class. They’re not going to get out but they still want to learn. So I’ve had several lifers. I usually don’t know what they’re in there for unless they share with me. I usually don’t - I just don’t care. I know that I’ve had a bank robber and an armored car robber. A lot of them for drugs. Yeah, most of them were for drugs. And someone for assault, vehicular homicide.

On the other hand, Gandalf treated the inmates in her classes with respect and considered them first as students. She was pleased that the inmate students responded to her considerate treatment of them.

I was [teaching] college algebra and I was ready to take up the books and I noticed this one guy went out. He had this under [gesture that shows how the book was tucked under his shirt], you know, he was gone before I could get an officer. And when I went back in there next, he was in my next class. And I walked over to him and I said “I know that you have that algebra book. I haven’t turned you in. I would like my book back.” He brought it back next class. So. And I had been told by the inmates that the fact that I treat them like human beings, it makes a big difference in how they respond to me.

Another of Gandalf’s identities that emerged from the interviews was that of an activist as evidenced by her reactions when political and social policy impacted her work. She was teaching in prison when the eligibility of inmates for Pell Grants to fund college courses was eliminated. She wrote to state senators and representatives to protest this

legislation. She also seemed to continue her interest in the politics of funding college for inmates.

They [the inmates] still had [Pell Grants] then. I wrote all the senators and all congressmen from [my state]. I got a reply from one. What it was is? That this guy attached this to another bill, which was too important for them not to let it go. But there's been some talk about maybe the Pell Grants coming back. I think that'd be great. We can do more with [inmate students] then.

In my field notes from the interviews, I noted an emotional detachment that Gandalf displayed in relation to her inmates students ("I haven't any idea [about the impact of my teaching]. I just go in to do my job and go out. And I will never see that group again."), to her teaching colleagues ("I don't have a clue who they are"), and to the prison officials ("I have very little contact with them"). In a succinct statement, Gandalf encapsulated her work: "I go in when I'm allotted and I go out when it's time." Still, Gandalf stated that the experiences of teaching in prison had changed her and she said "I'm more tolerant, maybe. I never had really thought about inmates before." Even maintaining an emotional distance, Gandalf felt her work made a difference. Near the end of the first interview, she said "I think that I have changed some lives." The identities that Gandalf seemed to construct during our conversations were that of teacher and stranger.

Similar to Seldom, Jack had a family so his identities as father and spouse emerged from his interviews. Jack said he was grateful that his wife and children supported his decision to teach in prison. Jack had been a professor at a university before he taught college courses in prison. In his role as teacher, he described his pleasure in sharing his passion for his area of expertise and in seeing the eagerness of his inmate students to learn. The unique environment of the prison may have heightened these sensations.

Let's see, the most gratifying thing with these, I say it again, these African American kids, who really came through, really seemed to be interested in the math. Saw it as a tool. Pretty excited. Quizzed me pretty carefully. One big tall Black kid, fearsome, said "You mean that 27 minus 27 to the negative five thirds is ... 216?" I said "Yeah, that's right." And he smiled. That's pretty good. I mean, it just was fun to work with them. I think overall, that's been one of the most satisfying things. See these minority kids [who] maybe [do] not have much of a break. But they sign up for the class, a few at their own expense, not many, but a few. And, to see the light go on, you know, in their eyes. That's been fun. I've enjoyed that. I think that's pretty good work.

Like Gandalf, Jack generally maintained a detachment from individual inmate students. However, he described a situation where he developed a personal interest and assumed the role of mentor for one of his students.

I kinda made it a policy not to inquire about the background. "Why are you here?" I wouldn't do that. "What are you in for?" I wouldn't do that. But, particularly when I had the same students in more than one class, they would open up a little bit to me. One young man ... was an exceptional -- He's in for life for murder, he told me. But he wants to go into business. He liked the Algebra. He was a top student in statistics. He was my top student in every class I taught. I think he's just straight As. And [I] got to know him pretty well. And he would come up to me "Hey, Teach. What's...?" and ask me something about a business he was planning. And I'd say "Yeah, do this." You know. "Get a loan from small business administration." And I think that giving unwanted advice is probably not a good idea. But when they ask, I'm happy to respond.

In addition, Jack was a scientific researcher and told many stories of his work in laboratories of major corporations. This identity emerged in a story that he told about how he taught science curriculum in prison without relevant equipment and materials.

In fact, one man told me that he knows from his prison window, he could see the sunset and the mountains. And that's really an advantage. And he noticed that, let's see, this would be in the winter. He noticed that it was advancing to the south a little bit. A little bit every week. He measured it. And in a month it worked out real well. I told him maybe tomorrow was the ... autumnal equinox.... Where we live now, I measured it with the sexton, when I was laying out our house. And the road in front of us is two degrees north of east.... And so I walked ... down our road and saw the sun as four solar diameters north of the road. And, of course, a solar diameter is half a degree. So four times that is two degrees. It always worked out. Well, of course it does. It has to. For an old guy, it's just kinda fun for me to do that. And I talked about that with them. And I thought this young

man noticed, telling me that the sun advanced to the south regularly. And he had measured it. I taught them to use a knuckle protractor. Extend your hand like that. Between this knuckle and this knuckle, that's ... eight degrees. ... But you can measure eight degrees and a shorter person has a shorter arm and, presumably, a scaled back set of knuckles. And the Big Dipper, the base of the Big Dipper, is just about two of those, fifteen degrees. So, eight plus eight is sixteen and can't be quite that sharp. And we didn't do any sky watching. I wanted to get out and look at the sky. But they said, no, security concerns were too high. I thought that was a little restrictive in an astronomy class. How can I teach astronomy and not look at the sky?

Through the interview dialogue, Jack's identities as teacher, mentor, scientist, family member, and educational colleague emerged. He was motivated by meaningful work and his rewards were imparting knowledge and knowing that he may have helped someone less fortunate. During our interviews, Jack did not mention any personal transformation that might have resulted from his experiences teaching in prison.

During the interviews, Ulysses indicated that teaching in prison was just another way for him to engage in the literature that was his passion. He was clearly motivated by his joy in presenting and discussing literature and the prison setting was just another environment in which he could do what he loved doing. Ulysses saw his role as teacher limited to providing students with new insights into the human condition. However, he was not concerned how they might use this new learning in the future.

Well, that's probably a legitimate concern [about how the inmates might use the course work in the future]. But it isn't that I address really. I try to pick things that I think -- the things that I teach, the materials that I teach, I select because I think that they get sort of a foundation in what they want to learn or what they need to learn. And not necessarily in how they'll use that when they get out but in how they build an educated life.

Although Ulysses seemed emotionally detached from his students, he saw himself in the role of representative of the world outside prison. He expressed some empathy and understanding of the tremendous isolation of incarceration.

I guess there are more often than not, more good students or many, or you get good experiences, or good educational experiences with these student. It's much more common than you think I will be. Because they're yours, you know, and they think of you as theirs. And you're their contact with the outside world. Not that you're a go-between or anything. But you live out there. And some of them never get a visit from anybody. Ever. You know. And their family's cut them off and they have no contacts with the outside world at all. So anybody who comes in the prison is of interest to them. And if it's somebody who, in a teaching situation, meets them and shows them an ordinary amount of respect, there's give and take, back and forth. You know, that's as good as gold for most of them. And they really appreciate that experience. And you can get a lot of work and a lot of commitment from students like that. Just for that reason alone.

Ulysses also understood the security needs of the prison and described his identity as a member of the correctional administration. When he established and enforced rules for his classroom, the controlled environment of the prison influenced him.

You know, one of the things that's different about, or whether it's different or not, one of the things that I do when I start a class, I lay out very clearly for them what the rules are about their participation and their behaviors in class. And I think that they like that. Not because each one feels he needs to know that but it's important to each of them that there are rules because they value these rules a lot in prison where if the administration doesn't provide a framework then somebody else will. It will be other inmates who would do that and they don't want that at all. They want to be safe. And so in class when I start out, I tell them what the rules are, what behaviors are expected, what's expected of them as students as well as what's expected in just the ordinary give and take of class. And I try to be specific about it. I'm not dogmatic. But there are rules and they like to know that in the beginning. That's my experience. They like to know that and [it] puts us all at ease about what's going to happen next. They not wondering, "does this guy realize that he's in prison? Does this guy realize that there are students in this class who maybe are here for other reasons than just to get an education?" And by being specific and up front about these rules, everyone is put at ease.

In this section of the interview, Ulysses also highlighted his identity as a student, which connected him to his inmate students. In describing how he set the classroom rules, he mentioned his life as a student to emphasize how important rules and expectations are.

And that's the way I start out. I know from my own life as a student that I tend to procrastinate and not do things that I don't have to do. And in a literature class, particularly the way that I teach it, everybody has to have read the material or else it doesn't work.

The multiple identities that emerged from my interview with Ulysses include teacher, student, messenger, and rule enforcer. Unlike several of the other participants, Ulysses' subject positions seemed more impacted by the prison environment than by the external political or cultural contexts.

Language, social interactions, and pivotal experiences afford opportunities for people to occupy multiple subject positions (Bloom, 1998; Weedon, 1997). My participants constructed multiple identities with the institutional and social context and these identities were constantly shifting within a wide range of discursive environments. This observation is consistent with feminist poststructural theory as described by Bloom and Weedon, which insists that subjectivity is the continuous process of identity production and transformation derived from each person's experiences in the world. This world is ambiguous and messy and filled with opportunities for crossing boundaries and constructing and reconstructing identities.

CHAPTER 10: CLOSING AND REFLECTING

Throughout this narrative study, I attempted to put my participants first by presenting their experiences. My goal for this study was to understand how my participants made meaning of their experiences teaching college courses in prison. I set my exploration within the organization of a prison whose narrow purpose of social control highlights the connections between the hierarchical power structures and educational theory and practice (Wright, 2004). Furthermore, I hoped to contribute to the critical debate about the contrasting conceptualizations of education as social control or the practice of freedom by considering issues that are illuminated by a study of narratives set in a prison environment.

I began this dissertation asserting that my feminist position and biography influenced my choice of research topic, my methodological approach, and my interpretation of the data. I also noted that engaging in this research coincided with and occasioned a pivotal experience in my career. In this chapter, I consider how the participants' stories offered strategies for me to connect my research with an action orientation. Taking an activist stance aligns me with certain feminist researchers, such as Mies (1991) and Naples (2003), who see change in the status quo as possible and whose scholarly work frequently has the political goal of changing society.

In their stories, the participants also told of the impact of the political climate and social policy on various conceptualizations of education and public support for their work. I have identified two areas where an understanding of the experiences of my

participants may offer opportunities for action: social policy and higher education in prison and the rationale and economics of the crime control industry. Understanding the experiences of my participants may provide insight into how social policies affect those who implement higher education in prison and those who receive the benefits or disadvantages of this education. These policies also reflect current thinking about the rational and economics of the crime control industry.

Social Policy and Higher Education in Prison

Critical theorists see the hierarchical arrangements in education as a “direct reflection of macro social and cultural arrangements and historical conditions [that] can produce differentials in decision-making power, control of resources and resulting equity” (Heck, 2004, p. 165). Through this lens, critical theorists assume that education is a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction of the dominant culture and educational policies reinforce dominant social values by institutionalizing societal inequities.

Messemer (2003) applied the critical theory approach to planning of correctional educational programs. His approach suggests that the personal interests of the individual stakeholders are involved in the planning process. Messemer posited that stakeholders use their political power, race, gender, religion, and socioeconomic class influence when planning educational programs. The literature on the politics of prisoners and prisons is expansive and I will highlight only the concern about (a) the criminalization of poverty and incarceration of these underrepresented populations and (b) the restricted funding for prison education that limits the curriculum options for incarcerated learners and prevents them from significantly improving their lives.

The public's changing attitude toward funding higher education in prison may mirror their attitude toward prison programming and their notions of crime and criminals. Sylvestre (n.d.) noted that society's view of punishment discredits the idea of rehabilitation and associates crime with poverty, which criminalizes large segments of the population. Torre and Fine (2005) stated "prisoners may, at the present historical moment, be the only group of U.S. citizens systematically barred from public support for access to higher education" (p. 570). Furthermore, this political climate of strict incarceration and retributive punishment and away from rehabilitation (Baust et al., 2006) is reflected in the policies for funding postsecondary correctional programs. Shifting public support for funding postsecondary correctional programs parallels the change in attitudes about funding higher education in general.

After World War II and until the early 1970s, the public supported equality in education, including an expansion of prison programming. In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education described expenditures for education as "both investments in and insurance for the democratic future of a free people" (President's Commission 1947, Vol. V, Preface). The Commission called for public education through the fourteenth year of schooling to be made available, tuition free, to all Americans able and willing to receive it. Twenty years later, Congress passed the Higher Education Act of 1965, which reaffirmed the principle of equality of educational opportunity. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973) noted that higher education helps to "build strength in individuals to confront ... the more powerful social structures of modern society" (p. 15). During this period, prisoners had access to federal

funding for education and the number of higher education prison programs grew (Gehring, 1997; Silva, 1994; Tewksbury, Erickson, & Taylor, 2000).

In the thirty years since the Carnegie Commission's 1973 report, the general public has rejected the underlying rationale for the public funding of higher education in the United States (St. John & Parsons, 2004). The public became less supportive of the argument that higher education promotes economic development and social equity and was reluctant to have public tax dollars subsidize these activities. Concurrently, by the 1980s and early 1990s, public was reluctant to fund public projects in general and criticized tax supported grants that paid for prisoners to take college courses (McCollum, 1994). During the 1990s, the emphasis was on putting people in prison without considering what would happen to them when they inevitably came out (Boulard, 2002).

Linebaugh (1995) offered an example of how external conditions and social policy impacted the experience of a prison educator. During the growth period for prison education programs of the 1970s, Linebaugh taught in prisons in four eastern and midwestern states. During this time, the prison population grew, the number of prison education programs increased, and two contrasting public and political views of incarceration emerged. In the beginning of the decade, social activists protested the war in Vietnam and struggled for civil rights and activist inmates were able to change conditions in prison. By the end of the decade, the 1980 election brought in new political leadership and the prisoner movement ended. Linebaugh's experiences teaching in prison mirrored or contrasted with the external conditions. Two prisons reflected conditions of tension with strikes by guards or riots by prisoners. In the other two prisons, Linebaugh

used teaching methods that the institution approved, which were “less threatening to guards’ self-interest, and individual officers could be actively cooperative” (p. 66).

This continued growth of the prison population has resulted in an increased demand for educational programming. However, the quality of the programs has suffered because of decreased funding (Lawrence, Mears, Dubin, & Travis, 2002). For example, conservative policies eliminating Pell Grants to prisoners and reducing the number of college prison programs limit the access of inmates to higher educational opportunities. Furthermore in a market economy, prisoners can provide an inexpensive labor supply. In more than 30 states, it is legal for state prisoners to work for private industry (Christie, 2000). In the next section, I consider the economic impact of prison industry programs, which are options for adult inmates and contrast with the traditional postsecondary academic and vocational programs.

Rationale and Economics of the Crime Control Industry

Postsecondary prison education includes courses leading to associate degrees and, in some states, bachelor degrees and higher. Since Pell Grants are no longer available to inmate students, most inmates must pay their own tuition for postsecondary courses (Lawrence et al., 2002). Pell Grants are federal financial awards given to college students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs. (See Appendix A for a historical overview of the impact of Pell Grant funding on postsecondary correctional education.) Vocational training is prevalent in prison education programming and is second in number of inmates to the literacy and high school preparation programs (Lawrence et al, 2002; LoBuglio, 2001; McCollum, 1994). In many states, vocational programming in prison is considered as postsecondary education since the inmates must first complete a certain

level of education, usually a high school diploma or its equivalent. A few states link their vocational training programs to specific market demands for trained employees while others train for more general trade skills (Lawrence et al., 2002).

While vocational training helps inmates develop skills for employment upon release, prison industry programs focus primarily on keeping inmates occupied and providing a means for the prison system to be self-sufficient. Prison industry programs have traditionally been a part of the state correctional systems because they reduce prisoner idleness and lower operating costs (Lawrence et al., 2002). Prison industries include a wide range of work activities, such as manufacturing license plates, making road signs, building furniture, designing and printing publications, and farming.

Lawrence et al. (2002) noted that the number of inmates in prison industry programs is relatively small. However, Christie's (2000) study of crime control in the Western type societies showed how important the prison industry is to the national economy. Christie described how market conditions influence crime control by connecting the growth of the prison population in these societies to the unequal distribution of wealth and to the unequal distribution of access to paid work. He posited that both situations create unrest leading to crime. He suggested that the crime control industry benefits by providing "profit and work while at the same time producing control of those who otherwise might have disturbed the social process" (Christie, p. 13). Howe (1994) also connected the status of the economy and the growing prison population to prevailing punishment philosophies. In Western countries, "labour market contractions have been matched by a documented increase in incarcerated populations which have

stretched prison capacities to breaking point” (Howe, p. 215). As hooks (1994) noted, capitalism requires a mass surplus of underclass labor to operate successfully.

These two areas of relevance reflect the range of fields affected by issues around higher education in prison. The prison environment is impacted by the political climate and social policy and it also provides an opportunity for economic development and exploitation. (In Appendix A, I looked at the history of higher education in prison, which shows that prison programming mirrored the political environment of the period.) I believe my narrative inquiry into the life experiences of correctional educators may not only inform me about the meaning of their lives and stories but may perhaps contribute to a greater understanding of the prison setting that is framed by the two topics discussed above.

In closing, I reflect on what I learned from my participants. My participants’ experiences were situated in an environment designed to control the prison population where the top priority of the prison administrators is “maintaining control of the prison environment to maximize the safety of guards and prisoners” (Lawrence et al., 2002, p. 7). My participants learned ways to comply with or resist this dominant discourse. For example, they treated the inmates in their classrooms as students and offered education as path for personal transformation. This approach is supported by Jones and d’Errico (1994) who described prison education a “tool for human renewal by promoting awareness and self-esteem” (p. 8). Wright (2004) suggested that this potentially transformative education contrasts with prison management’s desire to control the inmates. Furthermore, my participants felt that prison education is the right thing to do

and this view clashes with the general public's belief that inmates are lawbreakers that do not deserve the benefit of education, particularly at taxpayers' expense.

Although prison administrators focus on control of inmates, the penal code in most states expresses the goal of rehabilitation of the prisoners so that they may become productive members of society (Taylor, 1994). The frequent argument for educational programs in prisons is that the programs can contribute to a range of positive outcomes, such as reducing recidivism and increasing employability of released prisoners (Lawrence et al., 2002; Taylor, 1994). Most prison administrators also acknowledge that prisoners enrolled in college courses commit fewer infractions of prison rules, which saves time and money for the prison system (Baust et al., 2006). However, rapid growth of the prison population and constraints on prison budgets are barriers to implementing and operating educational programs in correctional settings (Lawrence et al., 2002).

Furthermore, limited research exists about what attracts faculty to prison higher education, what retains them, and what happens to them over the course of their teaching experiences (Campbell, 1994). Not much of a network exists among prison educators and many programs operate autonomously and are transitory (Lawrence, 1994). An association for correctional educators exists but not all prison educators are members. In Chapter 3, I reviewed two studies that attempted to clarify the personal rationale for being engaged in the field of prison education. My participants offered various reasons for their decision to teach college in prison, which were consistent with the study by Gehring and Wright (2003). For example, Ulysses noted that he personally benefited from the work since he became a better teacher. Seldom mentioned how the correctional institution benefited because the inmates who were enrolled in college courses were

better behaved, saving the time and money for the prison system. Gandalf and Jack seemed to understand that education would lead to society's expectations for rehabilitation. Finally, Kathryn demonstrated her concern for making changes in the individual inmate and for society. Furthermore, as Tewksbury (1994) noted, some of the motivations are egocentric because they focused primarily on individual goals and concerns. For example, Ulysses seemed to be motivated by academic idealism and used his experience teaching in prison to achieve his goal of becoming a better teacher. Similarly, Seldom mentioned the importance of education in reaching institutional objectives, such as reduced recidivism. On the other hand, Kathryn's motivation may have been more altruistic when she considered how education might foster individual transformations in her inmate students.

Although I presented my participants' stories, I also clarified my relationship to my study. My personal biography connects me to the research topic, conceptual framework, feminist stance, and narrative methods. I started my study with a concern for the tension between education as means for social control and education as the practice of freedom. I thought the significance of my exploration of the experiences of educators who taught college in prison might offer a different dimension of this tension. Furthermore, through the reflective process of this research, I progressed in my journey and growth as a college educator.

In setting the stage for my inquiry in Chapter 2, I wove disparate themes into a broad consideration of the roles that education and educators play in society. I considered briefly how the American political system attempts to balance social order and individual liberty as background for considering the tension between the contrasting roles of

education as social control or the practice of freedom. I also looked more closely at the New Right alliance between neoliberal and neoconservative ideals. This alliance has resulted in a trend toward a return to traditional values and regulatory control of knowledge and a reliance on the market to foster choice and competition that privileges higher socioeconomic status families.

After situating the phenomenon that I was exploring, that is, the experience of teaching college in prison, within this conceptual framework, I described what I considered to be the significance of my study. In Chapter 3, I reviewed certain ways that social policy studies have expanded to include qualitative research. I then looked at the impact of *habitus* on identity construction, which is relevant to my study of teaching in the controlled environment of a prison. I also noted how feminist interpretative processes have contributed to narrative research. Since my beliefs and feelings about how to study and understand the world lie within a feminist interpretive paradigm, I located myself in Chapter 4 and described the feminist influences on my study.

The design of the study that I presented in Chapter 5 reflects feminist and narrative methods that use personal stories as data collected through on active interviewing using an unstructured interview format. In Chapter 6, I introduced the participants and described the rapport that we developed through the interview process that may have impacted their story telling. Then described how I implemented an eclectic array of strategies, or *bricolage*, to identify and manage the data from the interviews with my participants.

My examination of the data using these various strategies revealed elements of a drama that I described in Chapter 7. Within these data, I found a set for the play (working

in the borderlands), a tension for the story line (negotiating power relations) and an outcome or resolution (making personal transformations). I presented the play in Chapter 8 using dialogue from the interview transcriptions with limited editing for aesthetic reasons.

In Chapter 9, I offered excerpts from the interview data that illustrated how my participants constructed multiple subject positions in relationship to others and in the social, political, and cultural context of their situation. Not only were they educators who teach in prison, they were mentors, activists, family members, scientists, and students. They were motivated by experiencing the pleasure of teaching, improving instructional skills, attempting to change society, or helping individual inmates improve their lives. Since the prison environment provided a unique setting to examine the personal and professional identity of these educators, I began this chapter by highlighting the value of using discursive environments in narrative research.

Chapter 10 infers that what the participants said about working in the borderlands, dealing with hierarchical power relations, and making personal transformations might be connected with two areas of academic and policy research. I presented various ways that public policies and public opinion reflect and impact higher education in general and higher education in prison specifically. Finally, I narrowed the discussion to an examination of how the prison industry, which may be considered as form of prison education, provides economic benefits to the public.

This study reflects my interest in the debate about the role of education in society. I empathize with the viewpoint that many conservative transformations in the American public opinion of past several decades have “consistently devalued alternatives and

increased the power of dominant models” (Apple, 2004, p. 25) despite the growing multicultural aspects of our society. The participants, through their stories, helped me expand my understanding of the complexities of this issue. I explored how certain educators who teach college in prison made meaning by working in the borderlands, countering and being complicity with the dominant discourse, and experiencing personal transformations. I also discovered links between my participants’ experiences and broader political and social debates.

My overarching concern is that if higher education reproduces the dominant culture’s value, the voices of underrepresented populations will be silenced. Education as a social institution designed for social and cultural reproduction of the dominant culture and educational policies reinforces dominant social values by institutionalizing societal inequities (Heck, 2004). However, I believe strongly that “the classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility” (hooks, 1994, p. 207). Furthermore, I gained insight of into education as the practice of freedom by examining the lived experiences of educators who teach college in prison.

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APPENDIX A

Historical Overview of Political Influences on Correctional Education

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF POLITICAL INFLUENCES ON CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

For those readers interested in the history of correctional education in the United States, I include this overview. In the body of the dissertation, I noted the impact of politics and public opinion on correctional education. Here I present these influences in chronological order and conclude with a discussion about the current debate over the role of prison higher education.

Throughout the history of prison higher education a tension existed between the importance of security that ensures the captivity of society's deviants and the value of treatment that seeks to promote changes in the behavior of individuals (Silva, 1994). Public support for correctional programming has vacillated between these two opposing approaches of reform or punishment. Silva (1994) argued that changes in public opinion about the meanings of incarceration and the notions of the criminal affect the approaches to prison education. This overview of postsecondary correctional education is based on Silva's (1994) insights into the historical relationship between social and political values and the public's support of prison programming. The parallels between the status of prison education, the level of federal and state funding, and the attitudes of society are also summarized in Table 14.

Some type of education has existed in American prisons throughout their 200-year history. The first prison keepers were Quakers in post-Revolutionary Philadelphia who believed that restorative rather than punitive programs were more effective in returning offenders to society. More recently, the legislation to alleviate the conditions of

prisoners in the 1960s and 1970s was replaced in the early 1990s by “the increase in prison construction, mandatory sentencing, the move to exclude inmates from entitlement education programs” (Silva, 1994, p. 19). Currently, the prison system in the United States is “our country’s principal government program for the poor” (Edwards, 1993, p. 316). State prison inmates are disadvantaged students the majority of whom, at the time of their arrest, were jobless or holding only part-time jobs, did not have a high school degree or equivalent, and earned less than \$10,000 annually.

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By 1798, the Walnut Street Jail, which was the first true American prison, had a school for learning the principles of reading, writing, and arithmetic and a library of 110 books. In the early 1800s, two different approaches to prison policy emerged: the Pennsylvania System and the Auburn System. The Quakers established the Pennsylvania System in which prisoners were kept in total isolation, treated humanely, and provided with rudimentary moral education. The Auburn System in New York State established mass production industries where the prisoners worked together during the day in monotonous routine tasks. In this system, prisoners paid for their incarceration and were treated with severity. Proponents of the Auburn System held that “educational efforts in prisons were unwise because they took time away from the inmates’ labor” (Silva, p. 20). In addition, those who favored the Auburn System reflected popular sentiment that kindness had failed with prisoners and should be replaced with terror.

By the last half of the nineteenth century, a more complex notion of the criminal had emerged. Zebulon Brockway, who was the first warden of the Elmira Reformatory in New York, implemented a penal philosophy in which “society bore at least some of the

burden for the miscreant's behavior (Silva, 1994, p. 21). Brockway argued that criminals were products of their environment and economic status and should be allowed an opportunity for regeneration. Brockway's penal philosophy started the Reformatory era, which included job specific education and the first postsecondary education programs.

According to Silva (1994), the industrialized society of the early twentieth century saw the need for universal secondary education while prisons recognized the utility of vocational education. Accordingly, the prisons implemented correspondence courses in vocational and remedial academic areas. In 1923, Columbia University offered college-level correspondence courses to inmates at Sing Sing Prison. The program director pointed out that the academic courses were valuable in giving inmates an incentive to improve their lives. During this period, some universities also offered college courses at the prison. However, the Great Depression reduced interest in prison education and the citizens reverted to the Auburn System of prison policy and "questioned the educability of most prisoners" (Silva, p. 25).

After World War II: 1950s to 1966

Little changed in prison higher education until the conclusion of World War II (Silva, 1994). After the war, the benefits of the G.I. Bill brought thousands of veterans to university campuses. This influx of older students forced universities to examine adult education as "a new and distinct phenomenon" (Silva, p. 25). The expansion of access to the college degree included higher education for incarcerated learners. In 1953, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale implemented the first degree program in an Illinois State prison funded by state aid and university grants. However, during this period funding was a persistent problem and growth of prison education programs was slow.

Ten years after the first college program in prison was established, “only a dozen postsecondary college programs were operating on a regular basis in the nation’s state and federal prisons” (Silva, p. 26).

Newgate Prison Higher Education Project: 1966

In 1965, Congress passed Title IV of the Higher Education Act, which was the “single most important event in the development of higher education for prisoners (and other low income students, for that matter)” (Silva, 1994, p. 26). A major part of Title IV was the need-based Basic Education Opportunity Grants, which later were named “Pell Grants” in honor of Rhode Island Senator Claiborne Pell who sponsored the bill. Since inmate-students usually qualified for the Pell Grant program because of their minimum income, prison college programs entered a stage of rapid expansion.

In 1967 and 1968, the Office of Economic Opportunity funded five college programs in selected prisons in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Kentucky, New Mexico and Colorado. This initiative was named “Project Newgate,” after a seventeenth-century British jail. The initial concept was to establish “as nearly as possible, a campus experience within the prison walls” (Silva, 1994, p. 26). Inmates were relieved of their other job assignments and sometimes were provided with special living quarters and library facilities. In addition, the project had a post release component, which encouraged and financially supported inmates who began their degree program in prison and continued on the campus of the cooperating colleges. In 1972 a final study reported on three primary measures of success: lessened recidivism, achievement of stability, and realization of life goals (Silva, 1994). All of these measures were difficult to quantify because the measurements were inconsistent. For example, the measure of “lessened

recidivism” has “no equivalent in measuring the success of college graduates who are not ex-offenders” (Silva, 1994, p. 27). Despite the lack of measurable goals, Project Newgate was generally considered successful.

Growth Years: 1970s and 1980s

With the implementation of the Pell Grants in 1965, the prison college programs expanded rapidly and the approach was similar of Brockway’s philosophy in the late 10th century that prisoners could be rehabilitated (Silva, 1994, p. 27). This was the beginning of the medical model in prison treatment programs where inmates would go through group and individual therapy and education for reintegration into the community. The medical model coincided with major civil rights movements and increased awareness of equal opportunity. In this period, prisons were renamed “correctional institutions” and inmates became “residents” (Silva, p. 27). From 1968 to 1982, the number of prison college programs grew from approximately 15 to 350 programs in the majority of states.

Difficult Years: Early 1990s

With the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 1992, states had to assure that the Pell Grants were used to supplement rather than supplant state funding. From 1982 through 1994, conservative politicians in Washington, D.C. introduced bills annually to curtail Pell Grants for confined learners. Finally, the Violent Crime Control Act of 1994 eliminated all state and federal inmates’ eligibility for Pell entitlement grants effective in the 1995-1996 academic year. Before this legislation, 92% of correctional systems offered some form of post-secondary education and this percentage was reduced to 63% by 1995 (Tewksbury et al., 2000). In addition, the elimination of Pell Grants for inmate education resulted in a decrease of enrollment in postsecondary correction

education programs from 38,000 to 21,000 and significantly decreased curriculum diversity.

Post-Pell Grant: 1995 to Present

More recent studies found that the number of college programs to inmates has not decreased as much as many researchers and educators had predicted and college programs still exist for inmates after the elimination of their eligibility for Pell Grants (Messemer, 2003). Messemer compiled data from a brief survey completed by 45 of the 50 state directors of correctional education indicated that 25 states (55.6%) still offered in-house college programs to inmates. In addition, five other states allowed inmates to participate in college programs through correspondence courses. After the elimination of Pell Grants for inmates, many states sought alternative funding sources for their postsecondary correctional education programs. Among the 25 states that offered in-house college programs, 40% used state funds for these programs. Messemer's study found that Federal grant money is still available to support college prison programs and 17 states (68%) used Perkins Act or Youth Offender Act funds to pay for college tuition for the inmates. Other sources of funding for college prison programs included private corporations, non-profit foundations, and local colleges and universities.

Messemer (2003) also theorized that values and beliefs of stakeholders of the prison programs impact the program planning process. The political power of these stakeholders can be used to influence the "needs, purposes, direction, and whose interested will be served" (Messemer, 2003, p. 38) when planning prison programs. For example, the voters in Oregon in 1994 voted for a ballot measure amending the state constitution to require inmates to work or be in workforce development activities for 40

hours a week. This action resulted in rejuvenating correctional education and treatment programs. In the same year, President Clinton signed the omnibus crime bill that eliminated the eligibility of inmates to secure federal financial assistance from Pell Grants for college programs.

These examples of the political power of stakeholders underscore the “logic of offering [correctional education programs] remains captive to the ever-changing and unpredictable forces of politics” (LoBuglio, 2001, para. 3). Current politics and public opinion in the United States are influencing public higher education. Most educators accept that the process of learning involves changes in behavior (McCollum, 1994). This preconception is based on the belief that knowledge brings empowerment, increased self-esteem, and improved ability to plan and conduct a successful life. Correctional educators frequently see their role as contributing to the effectiveness of the prison education program by fostering the psychosocial development of inmate-students and increasing their opportunity to acquire academic and social skills. These educators then expect the education programs to reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Tewksbury, 1993). In an article on evaluating prison higher education, Campbell (1994) recommended that prison educators not evaluate success or failure of their programs based solely on recidivism measurements. Since it is difficult to measure how successful corrective technologies are in achieving the broad social reform goals, reduced recidivism remains the most prevalent argument for prison higher education. In considering the impact of prison education, I now turn to the personal transformation and growth of the individual inmate that may be evidenced by reduced recidivism and changes in behavior.

Since the late 1980s, correctional educators have attempted to “assert a more humane, democratic, and developmental paradigm” (Gehring & Wright, 2003, p. 5) in the field of prison reform and correctional education. Prison programming that has elements of “‘best practices’ are often characteristic of college programs in particular” (Batiuk, Lahm, McKeever, Wilcox, & Wilcox, 2005, p. 61). These best practices include programs that are cognitively oriented, geared to learning styles and abilities of the offenders, and led by individual who are role models. Other researchers suggest that “critical contextual thinking that leads to moral development is necessary” (Batiuk et al., p. 61) to impact inmates’ behavior. Proponents of correctional education credit these programs with reducing recidivism and fostering positive changes in behavior of inmates.

Reduced Recidivism

Although prison populations are growing, funding for programs is declining. This trend is significant because “educational and vocational training can contribute to a range of positive outcomes, including increased employment and reduced recidivism” (Lawrence et al., 2002, p. 3) and rehabilitation is one of the major goals of the correctional process (Tewksbury et al., 2000). Most of the research that attempts to measure rehabilitative impact of education on inmates centers on recidivism (Batiuk et al., 2005; Chappell, 2004; Erisman & Contardo, 2005; Lawrence et al., 2002; Tewksbury et al., 2000). The results of this research may increase interest in and justify funding for post-secondary correctional education.

A recent quantitative study by Batiuk et al. (2005) attempted to separate the impact of college programs and non-college programs on recidivism to show that college programming is correlated to reduced recidivism. This study suggested current policy that

does not provide funding for postsecondary correctional education is misguided and recommended that policymakers support college programming for inmates. Batiuk et al. gathered data from 972 Ohio inmates who were paroled or released between 1989 and 1992 and who had completed a correctional education program while incarcerated. These programs included GED, high school, vocational, and college. The researchers examined the effect of college and other educational programs on the recidivism rate while controlling for possible extraneous influences. The methodology disentangled the various prison education programs, such as literacy, high school equivalency, vocational, and academic college programs, to investigate their respective effects on recidivism. This study concluded that inmates who completed college programs had significantly lower rates of recidivism net of the effects of other types of correctional programs.

Chappell (2004) examined this same relationship between post-secondary correctional education and recidivism through a meta-analysis of ten years of existing quantitative studies between 1990 and 1999. Chappell selected 15 correlational and quasi-experimental studies using two criteria: The study included post-secondary education defined as any type of education beyond high school, or its equivalency and the study measured recidivism rates where recidivism was defined as a tendency to relapse into criminal behavior. Recidivism was measured by rates of re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration. The overall meta-analysis “showed a positive correlation between participation in post-secondary correctional education and the reduction of recidivism” (Chappell, p. 162).

Changes in Behavior

Most educators assume “that the process of learning involves, among other things, changes in behavior... The acquisition of knowledge brings with it empowerment, increased self-esteem and improved ability to navigate successfully through life’s many options” (McCollum, 1994. p. 51). Higher education introduces the incarcerated learner to skills for critical thinking, which may transform the learner and lead to improved behavior, increased coping strategies, and more positive attitudes. The increased levels of self-esteem and improved social skills represent “psychological and emotional changes, which in turn contribute indirectly to behavioral changes” (Tewksbury, 1993, p. 118). In addition, correctional administrators view educational programming as a management tool because participation in college courses is an incentive for good behavior and these positive changes in behavior result in reduced disciplinary problems (Tewksbury et al., 2000).

Opponents of postsecondary correctional education dismiss much of this research because of its inconsistent methodology. Opponents further argue that the offenders that seek college level programs are those who already have a higher likelihood of successful reintegration into society. These students “may have higher levels of motivation, self-discipline, and so on, making them less likely to recidivate even without a college degree” (Batiuk et al., 2005, p. 69). Despite the methodological concerns of studies on recidivism, proponents of prison education programs point to research that demonstrates that postsecondary correctional education programming “reduces recidivism through a fundamental change in the cognitive processes of the inmate-student” (Tewksbury et al., p. 45).

Table 14

Critical Events in the Evolution of Prison College Programs

Date	Status of Prison College Programs	Level of Federal and State Support	Attitudes of Society
1920s & 1930s	In the late 1920s, inmates were enrolled in university extension courses, "primarily from their land-grant colleges and state education agencies" (Silva, 1994, p. 24).	This was the first articulation between prisons and colleges.	During the Great Depression, there were only modest advances in development of prison education programs.
1945	College programs initiated in prisons, also referred to as post-secondary correctional education (PSCE).	Veteran's education benefits extended to prisoners enrolled in college courses. In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education called for public education through the fourteenth year of school for all Americans able and willing to receive it.	During World War II, "little attention was paid to prison education" (Silva, 1994, p. 25) but after war, public funding for higher education increased significantly.
1950s	Southern Illinois University introduced college-level courses into the Illinois correctional system in 1953. In 1958 the oldest continuing post-secondary education programs began in Maryland. The San Quentin prison college became a model for Project Newgate.	However, the lack of funding in the 1950s limited the development of prison college programs.	Project Newgate helped "convince correctional and college administrators of the feasibility of postsecondary correctional education" (Littlefield & Wolford, 1982, p. 14).

Date	Status of Prison College Programs	Level of Federal and State Support	Attitudes of Society
Early 1960s	Some prison college programs were expanded, based on the availability of tuition assistance to veterans of World War II.	G.I. Bill provided tuition assistance to veterans of World War II and nothing in the bill denied veterans education benefits to imprisoned ex-service personnel.	The G.I. Bill provided tuition assistance to incarcerated learners “despite begrudging attitudes toward prison college programs” (McCollum, 1994, p. 56).
1960s	<p>Upward Bound prison programs, to prepare non-college-bound disadvantaged young people for college, established in various state and federal prisons.</p> <p>In 1965, there were only 12 adult correctional facilities in the U.S. with postsecondary programs.</p> <p>In 1967 and 1968, the Office of Economic Opportunity funded five college prison programs as Newgate projects to establish “as nearly as possible, a campus experience within prison walls” (Silva, 1994, p. 26).</p>	<p>A federal agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), funded Upward Bound prison programs. Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) provided college tuition assistance to low-income students.</p> <p>The OEO provided funding to establish demonstration postsecondary correctional units under the Project Newgate program. Project Newgate supplied seed money to establish model programs.</p> <p>Funds for prison college programs were available from government and private agencies, including the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the Ford Foundation, and the Lilly Foundation “to experiment with prison rehabilitation” (Silva, 1994, p. 27).</p>	<p>The BEOGs were part of the United States’ War on Poverty.</p> <p>The late 1960s was “a time like no other in the history of the prison” (Sliva, 1994, p. 27) in which programs focused on rehabilitation and reintegration. This approach coincided with the first major civil rights movements and heightened equal opportunity consciousness.</p>

Date	Status of Prison College Programs	Level of Federal and State Support	Attitudes of Society
1970s	The BEOG voucher approach to funding made “incarcerated students an untapped and now financially supported market for postsecondary institutions” (Littlefield & Wolford, 1982, p. 14). In 1973, a national survey found 218 correctional facilities had some form of postsecondary education.	The BEOG grants were later called Pell Grants in honor of Senator Claiborne Pell (D, Rhode Island), primary sponsor of the legislation.	This is the largest and most rapid population growth period in the history of U.S. correctional institutions (Gehring, 1997).
1980s & early 1990s	Increasing number of occupational training programs lead to an associate degree offered by community colleges increased postsecondary options available to incarcerated learners. By 1982, 350 prison college education programs were operating.	Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 established regulations that denied federal benefits to anyone convicted of any state or federal offense that involved possession of a controlled substance, which was interpreted to deny a Pell grant to any prisoner convicted of drug possession. Amendments to the Pell grant legislation are offered almost annually to exclude all prisoners from any college tuition assistance entitlement.	Public opinion “remains critical of tax supported grants to pay for prison college programs” (McCollum, 1994, p. 57). The “college” label of these occupational training prison programs offends some critics despite encouraging recidivism data.
1990	The initial mandatory literacy requirement for incarcerated learners was raised to high school diploma or the general equivalency diploma (GED).	US Congress gave legislative sanction through enactment of Crime Control Act of 1990.	A confluence of political ideals and public opinions resulted in the “decline of the rehabilitative ideal and the rise of penal populism” (Page, 2004, p. 358).

Date	Status of Prison College Programs	Level of Federal and State Support	Attitudes of Society
1992	In-house college programs were offered to inmates in 39 of the 50 states (Messemer, 2003).	Congress enacted legislation to deny Pell Grants to prisoners facing the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole.	A growing emphasis is placed on putting people in prison ... [and] not thinking about what happens on that day when they inevitably come out (Boulard, 2002).
1994	Of the 350 college programs in the U.S., between ten and 20 remained.	Congress passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, which barred inmates from receiving Pell Grants to help pay for college.	The prison population was booming in the 1990s and the number of people getting out of prison continued to rise.
1998	Certain states looked for alternative sources of funding for college programs	Congress extended the restrictions of the Violent Crime Control Act by adding a question (number 28) to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form asking if the applicant had ever been convicted of possessing or selling illegal drugs.	Continuation of the ideological shifts of the 90s which led to the reintroduction of methods of strict incarceration and retributive punishment and away from rehabilitation (Baust et al., 2006)
Early 2000s	Postsecondary correctional education begins to rebound as 25 of the 50 states offer in-house college programs (Messemer, 2003).	PSCE relies on "private foundations, community colleges, and the ability of prisons to finance their own educations" (Page, 2004, p. 375). Congress establishes the Youthful Offenders Grant program to finance PSCE for inmates under 26 years old and within five years of release.	PSCE is winning new support and more sophisticated studies show correlations between PSCE participant and reduction in recidivism (Page, 2004).

Date	Status of Prison College Programs	Level of Federal and State Support	Attitudes of Society
2002	Youthful offenders became eligible for federal funding for college.	Congress provided the Incarcerated Youthful Offender Grants (IYO), which aimed to help state prison systems fund PSCE for youthful offenders ages 25 and younger who are within five years of release from prison. The funding is limited (Baust et al., 2006)	The Department of Education maintains strict target percentages for graduations of students enrolled in programs financed by the grants, which restricted the scope.
2005	Only 5% of all inmates in the U.S. are enrolled in a PSCE program (Baust et al., 2006)	<p>Introduction in the House and Senate of Second Chance Act of 2005 aimed at erasing question 28 from the FAFSA form. If the applicant answers affirmatively to the question (see 1998), financial aid may be withheld for one or two years, or even indefinitely (Baust et al., 2006).</p> <p>Certain national legislators increased their support of IYO grants (also known as Specter grants) and recommend relaxation of the age qualifications to age 29 or 35.</p>	<p>Politicians and the public continued concern about using taxpayer dollars for PSCE. However, the public perception of such programs may be shifting because more Americans want the criminal justice system to emphasize rehabilitation, particularly through education or vocational training (Baust et al., 2006).</p>
2007		The Second Chance Act of 2007 (federal prison re-entry legislation) reintroduced in the House and Senate.	

APPENDIX B

Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Research Project

August 2006

Dear Correctional Educator:

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a dissertation research study at Colorado State University's School of Education. The purpose of this study is to gather and examine stories from postsecondary correctional educators about what it means to be a college teacher in prison.

If you agree, you will be a participant in 2 to 3 one-on-one interviews that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes each. You will be asked to tell stories about your experiences teaching college in prison. All interviews will be conducted in private locations. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

You will receive the transcript of the first interview in advance of the second interview. During the second and possible third interview, you will be asked to clarify information you have provided in the initial interview.

The record of this study will be kept private and all transcripts will be maintained in a locked file. Recordings will be stored in a password protected digital file on the researcher's personal computer. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings, which will be erased at the end of three years.

Your pseudonym, rather than your name, will appear on all transcripts and study write-ups. Any type of report that is published will not include information that will make it possible to identify a participant.

Your participation in this research is voluntary and there are no known risks or benefits from participating. If you decide to become a participant, please contact the Co-Principal Investigator Susanna Spaulding by telephone, letter, or email at 11495 County Road 251 Salida, Colorado 81201; 719-539-6016 (home) or 719-395-8419 (work); Email: sspaulding@coloradomtn.edu.

Sincerely,

Clifford P. Harbour, J.D., Ed.D.
Principal Investigator
Associate Professor
School of Education
Colorado State University

Susanna B. Spaulding
Co-Principal Investigator
Graduate Student
School of Education
Colorado State University

Tel: 970-491-5425
E-mail: cliff.harbour@colostate.edu

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Project

**INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY**

TITLE OF STUDY:

Storytelling by Postsecondary Correctional Educators: A Narrative Inquiry

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Clifford P. Harbour, J.D., Ed.D., Associate Professor, School of Education, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, 80523 Tel: 970-491-5425 E-Mail: cliff.harbour@colostate.edu

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Susanna B. Spaulding, 11495 County Road #251, Salida, CO 81201, Tel: 719-539-6016; 719-395-8419; E-Mail: sspaulding@coloradomtn.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being invited to participate in interviews for this study because you are teaching postsecondary academic courses in an adult prison. There are many studies, books, and articles on prison education that deal with the teaching environment and the benefits for the inmate students. However, very little is written about how postsecondary correctional educators make meaning from their lived experiences, which is of interest to the investigators.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

This research is being done for a dissertation that the Co-Principal Investigator will complete at the School of Education at Colorado State University.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to gather and examine stories through in-depth face-to-face interviews from postsecondary correctional educators about what it means to be a college teacher in prison.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

All interviews will be conducted in locations and at times that are convenient to you and the Co-Principal Investigator. The study includes 2 to 3 interviews each lasting 60 to 90 minutes, which will be conducted from July 2006 through December 2007.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to complete a brief survey concerning background information. In addition, you will participate in 2 to 3, in depth, private, one-on-one interviews that will each last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. You will be asked to tell stories from your experiences teaching college in prison. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed. You will receive the transcript of the first interview in advance of the second interview. During the second and third interview, you will be asked to clarify information from the initial interview.

ARE THERE ANY REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

No participant meeting the parameters of the study will be involuntarily excluded.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the investigators have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

Schooling in prison is stormy, dangerous, and frustrating. Reflecting on these conditions may be difficult and traumatic and you may experience negative emotions. It is not anticipated that participation in this study will affect your current or future relations with your teaching institution.

WILL I BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no known benefits to participating in this study, but we hope others may learn about the lived experiences of postsecondary correctional educators.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHAT WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with participation in this research.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials.

We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will assign you a pseudonym to conceal your identity. We will also use pseudonyms for any named persons in the interviews and will use fictional names of any locations described or discussed in the interviews.

All records will be maintained in a locked file. During the project, recordings of interviews will be stored in a password protected digital file on the Co-principal Investigator's personal computer. Only the researchers will have access to these recordings, which will be erased at the end of three years.

CAN MY PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

The Investigators may choose to limit your participation in the research to one of the possible three interviews.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any compensation for taking part in this study.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH?

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of taking part in this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury. Questions about subjects' rights may be directed to Janell Meldrem at (970) 491-1655.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the Co-Principal Investigator at 719-539-6016. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Meldrem, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Date

Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX D

Brief Survey Concerning Participant's Background Information

Dissertation Research Study
School of Education at Colorado State University

Brief Survey Concerning Participant's Background Information

1. Pseudonym Requested for Study: _____

2. Gender: F M

3. Length of Time as College Instructor in an Adult Prison: _____

4. Academic Subjects Taught in an Adult Prison:

5. Graduate Degree Obtained: _____

6. Discipline Major: _____

7. Type of Work Experience (e.g., social worker, business owner, manager, administrator, teacher):

Date of First Interview: _____

APPENDIX E

Initial Interview Questions

Potential Interview Questions

1. Everyone has a life story. I wonder if you can tell me a bit about your life teaching in prison.
2. How did you become a correctional educator?
3. As you look back over your experiences as a teacher in prison, what are some of the milestones that stand out?
4. If you were to write the story of your experiences of teaching in prison, what would the chapters be about (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995)?
5. How would you describe the unique culture of teaching in a “total institution”?
[Erving Goffman used the phrase “total institutions” in his 1961 book on mental institutions. Total institutions are “places where people, called inmates by Goffman, live, work, eat, sleep, and carry on their social activities” (de Vries, n.d., para. 2).]
6. We were talking about what it is like to teach in a “total institution.” How do you reflect and incorporate your prison teaching experiences into to your life story. [“Our accounts are reflexive, even autobiographical, when we explore practices in which we have been personally involved” (Davidson, p. xv).]
7. Schooling in prison is stormy. How do you make sense of your practices?
8. Can new literacy skills help keep someone from criminal activity?
9. I’m interested in how “critical reflection as a method ... allows one to be explicit about the actual conditions in which schooling in prisons takes place” (Davidson, p. xv). Can you tell me more the conditions of teaching college in prison?

APPENDIX F

Notation Syntax for Transcription

Description of Notation Syntax That Accompanies Transcription of First Interview Sent to Participant

Note from the interviewer on quality, process, and format of transcription

Again, I appreciate your willingness to continue participating in this research study about the lived experiences of educators who teach college in prison. Here is the transcript of our first interview for you to read before we have a second interview. Please remember that these verbal interactions “follow a logic that is different from that for written prose, and therefore tend to look remarkably disjointed, inarticulate, and even incoherent when committed to the printed page” (Poland, 2003, p. 271).

Shortly after our first interview, I transcribed the audio recording into a textual form. During a second review of the recording, I read the interview transcript on the computer screen while the audio recording was running. In this way, I tried to correct any discrepancies between what I had originally transcribed and what was actually said during the interview.

Although I attempted to ensure that the interview transcript is a verbatim account of the recorded interview, I faced several challenges to transcription quality. First, “people often talk in run-on sentences” (Poland, p. 270) that do not translate well from the oral tradition to the written text. In addition, I may have placed punctuation marks in the text and omitted or misunderstood words so that the meaning of the text has changed from the original intent of your oral presentation. I also tried to indicate when you were quoting others by including quotation marks to differentiate from when you were paraphrasing. Lastly, I had difficulty understanding some words or passages because of background sounds that occasionally interfered with the quality of the audio recording.

Since “many aspects of interpersonal interaction and nonverbal communication are not captured in audiotape records” (Poland, p. 273), I developed a notation syntax for the transcription. In the first table below, certain symbols represent the nonverbal communication for the emotional context of intonation of voice, pauses, sighs, and laughter. Here I tried to represent the pacing of the speech and the length of the silences although I may not have reflected the variations in volume, pitch, and quality of voice. The second table reflects a notational syntax for verbal interjections that indicate receipt of information or affirmation of the information.

In the transcription, I used the first initial of the pseudonym that you chose to indicate when you were speaking. The letter “I” stands for “Interviewer” and indicates when I was speaking. I did not disguise the names of people or locations mentioned during the interview. However, as noted in the signed informed consent form, you will not be identified in any written materials about this study. I will keep your name and other identifying information private by using your pseudonym, pseudonyms for any named persons and fictional names of any locations described or discussed in the interviews.

Notation Syntax for Transcription

A. Emotional Context

Audio Event	Syntax
1. Pauses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use series of dots (...) for short pauses • Use [pause] for pauses over two seconds. • Use [long pause] for pauses of four or more seconds
2. Laughing, coughing, sighing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate in brackets, for example [coughs], [clearing throat] • Use [laughing] to denote one person and [laughter] to denote several people laughing
3. Interruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a hyphen (-) at the point where speech is broken off or the interruption occurs
4. Overlapping speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a hyphen when one speaker interjects into the speech of another, include the speech of the other with brackets, [overlapping], then return to where original speaker was interrupted
5. Garbled speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate words that are not clear with brackets and question mark, for example, Then Gina [came? went?] home. • Use xxx to denote passages that cannot be deciphered at all
6. Emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use capital letters to denote strong emphasis
7. Colloquial expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use verbal short cuts if indicated by participant's speech, for example "em" for "them," "gonna" for "going to," and "wanna" for "want to."

B. Audible Interjections

Syntax	Meaning
"Hmm" or "Mmm"	Thinking about it
"Uh-huh" or "Uh-Hmm"	Expressing empathy or understanding
"Oh"	Acknowledging the unexpected or interesting
"Ah"	Pausing [to reflect?]
"Uh" or "Er"	Hesitating

Note. Adapted from "Transcription quality," by B. D. Poland, 2003, in J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.