

**MAKING A VIDEO: UNDERSTANDING THE SELF THAT TEACHES**

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## Dedication

With love and gratitude. My journey would not have begun without your support,  
Declan, Logan, Connor and Derek.

## Abstract

As a teacher and researcher I have discovered that reflecting critically on my practice has helped me in my desire to live well with others. This project demonstrates and explores the self that teaches with preservice teachers, the influence of images, related educational issues and responses to issues which impact why one teaches as one does. I have used action research to create a project consisting of three parts: a teaching video, a pamphlet supporting the video, and my writing. The video documents the classroom experiences of preservice teachers and their use of techniques in coming to understand the self that teaches. The pamphlet provides an outline, questions for discussion and additional resources. It is recommended as a supporting guide when teaching with the video. My writing is a phenomenological exploration of my journey through the process of creating and producing this project in relation to my practice as an educator.

## Acknowledgement

I am deeply appreciative of those who participated and held the belief that I was capable of doing this video. To each of the preservice teachers; Leslie, Angela, Lynette, Curtis, Al and Breanna for their patience and gratitude, to George for filming and editing advice, to family and friends over the years and to Cynthia and Erika who pushed me to write, re-write, move beyond as they held faith in my abilities and remained patient with me in the process. This has been an amazing journey and yet it feels like the journey has just begun.

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## Making a Video: Understanding the Self that Teaches

I must write, I must write at all cost. For writing is more than living,  
it is being conscious of living.

Ann Morrow Lindbergh

These words from Ann Morrow Lindbergh speak strongly to me about my desire to live consciously. The journey of writing, producing and sharing this video is rooted in the desire to live in awareness that I may live well with others. During the history of my teaching practice, I have struggled with issues which reach beyond traditional techniques and methodologies. I grew restless with answers which were prepackaged and claimed to solve all. My questions became significant enough problems for me that I desired more knowledge and so I sought my Master of Education. As I found more information, paradoxically, the information demonstrated that I required more than information to reach beyond, question, reconsider ideas. It was more significant to grow conscious of living and stay in the struggles I sought to resolve than to find solutions. As I write, I am needing these words to explore my awakenings and share the shift which has started, but which has no end.

As a teacher, I have always seen myself as strong technically, having consistent management skills, well informed and updated about changing practices and curriculums, flexible and skilled at transferring theory into practice, passionate about passing skills and knowledge onto students, perceptive of skills and behaviors the students hold and well respected as an educator. Yet, through all of this, I have known there had to be more to educating a child, more to dealing with individuals as I witnessed the successes and failures I helped to create for students. Out of these thoughts grew the sense of the impact that “self” had on my teaching. The depth to which I have needed to uproot my understanding and attend to my own self knowledge has been difficult and necessary while opening me to a process which has powerfully influenced my understanding and

responding. My professional growth parallels my personal. It is held back, contorted, clarified, altered as the self changes. From this experience, the vision of the need for this video project grew and the awareness of the difficulties yet to come have grown for me.

Critical reflectiveness has been one tool which has helped me grow more aware of the unrest, the questions, the uncertainty with my use of information and the needs of people. It has been through writing, researching, reading, dialoguing that I have worked with my personal self to understand my professional self. And so my writing includes both memory and new insights. The process of understanding the self that teaches is so significant that I was compelled in this project to produce a teaching tool which will support an alternate approach to understanding teaching and enhance preservice teacher development. The video intends to assist in creating moments to pause, reconsider, ponder what is presented and what the viewer brings to education while considering teaching.

I believe the video has been successful in introducing the ideas of seeking to understand the self that teaches, in embracing differences among those who teach, as well as those who are taught, of growing aware of issues impacting teaching and knowledge beyond educational theories and strategies which provides opportunities to live well in learning/teaching communities. I desired to bring awareness of the need for wholeness in teaching and the classroom environments. This video opens an opportunity for the journey of beginning educators to embrace more than theories, to bring and invite questions, to remain with struggles, and to look for enrichment from all areas of life to provide balance.

My reflective writing touches on thoughts and struggles I grew aware of while doing this research. I have used subtitled entries to organize my thoughts from different time periods while attending to the act of collecting footage and producing the video.

Memory work has been juxtaposed, woven between the thoughts, sometimes offering insight, other times allowing questions to be voiced. The memory work will appear in another font (Stone Sans Os). My work is relevant to this time and place, my memories are not of reality, but as I lived then and see now, and even as each day moves me beyond, so do my words.

## Climbing Into the Director's Chair: Creating a Storyboard

*The first portion of this writing is devoted to setting the context, providing an account of the making of the video and giving an overview of what developed between the writing and producing of the video.*

The project is comprised of three elements which work together. The first is a video, the second a video information pamphlet and the third a written exploration of the process from a phenomenological perspective.

The video is a study of six preservice teachers in their first professional semester at the University of Lethbridge. The video is representative of their practicum placement over five weeks during the 2000 fall semester. It presents segments of each preservice teacher as they begin to examine and explain why they are interested in teaching. It is an account of what the preservice teachers see as influences in their lives which have brought them into teacher education. It follows with portions of the preservice teacher teaching during their practicum. The subject areas being taught by each preservice teacher varies, including Mathematics, English, Science, Band, Physical Education, and Health. The video footages are partial segments of the practicum experience, not covering any one lesson in its entirety. Included are some of the statements and comments made during conversations about the practicum experience or issues impacting teaching. During these clips, additional comments by a teacher associate are included as well as silent clips depicting communication between teacher associates and the preservice teachers. Interwoven in the video are clips from two researchers who provide background knowledge connecting the video segments of the preservice teachers and insights into understanding the self that teaches. The video has little narration. There is an opening introduction and an introductory or conclusive statement during changing segments throughout the video. The narration is done by myself, and I am identified as the director

and producer of the video in the credits.

The video clips were collected under my direction by a professional camera person, George Gallant. He provided the camera equipment, including microphones, lights, extension cords and camera. I provided transportation from Lethbridge to Vauxhall each week, a traveling distance of about 180 km round trip. This required scheduling as filming was required to begin at 8:30 am. The same number of video tapeings were made of each preservice teacher's practicum experience and an interview of each topic of discussion was provided for each individual. The conversations included taping of various individuals during several conversations as well as a final conversation once the practicum had concluded. None of the editing began until the practicum and supervision of the preservice teachers had concluded to protect the interests of the preservice teachers.

The initial editing required the design of a storyboard which became the frame for both the pamphlet and the video. The storyboard included a section for each segment in the video, a description and the source of tape from which the segment would come from. It was divided into the opening, part one, two, three, four, and the closure.

Part one focused on the images the preservice teacher spoke of as influencing their decision to enter teaching. Part two provided footage of each preservice teacher's teaching practice and conversations about this practice experience. Part three focused on the preservice teachers writing and reflecting on teaching, both their own and the general notions they brought to teaching. Part four focused on issues the preservice teacher had grown aware of in teaching. The final segment was the closure and the focus of further possibilities in coming to know the self that teaches. Each segment centered around one question and these became the guide for the video segments. In addition the pamphlet was developed around the organization of these questions. It focused on images, practicum

experiences, writing, reflecting and issues in teaching.

The video is 30 minutes in duration. One of the purposes of this project was to produce a teaching video to be used at the university level for preservice teacher education. The segments were then divided and allotted specific lengths of time. The opening 1 minute, the closing 30 seconds, and the other segments 9 minutes each including both the preservice teachers and the researcher's insights. There were 11 hours of footage collected.

Once I divided all the segments and the initial editing of footage was done, I wrote the opening, narration and closing comments. The introduction statements alone took 37 camera takes. Problems were encountered with interference from the wind, construction noises and narration errors. The other narration clips and concluding comments took 10 camera takes as these used voice only. All other footage was taken only once as it covered live experiences.

The initial stage of editing required that I view all of the footage and sort out all the possible pieces of footage to be used. Using a chart divided into five sections, tape numbers and description, time of beginning statement, beginning words of the statement, end statement and time of the statement, the initial editing task was done. This reduced the initial time from 11 hours to about 180 minutes, not including any opening or concluding segments. From here I went over each segment again, piecing it and clipping it to include only the words I deemed necessary to convey the message.

The footage pieces were then built on a computer time line. There were four layers to build. The video footage clips were placed first. Then the still photos were selected and the choice of how these segments would merge into each other was designed. The voice over segments were created and finally the background music was chosen and toned to each segment. The print for the opening and closing were separate frames designed for the

video.

As the video is intended as a teaching tool for preservice teacher education, I choose to support it with a guide in pamphlet format. The pamphlet provides questions for discussion, a summary of the video and a further reading list. There is also a brief description of myself as the producer of the video, researcher and educator. I produced this pamphlet with guided computer assistance. It was professionally duplicated for the color images.

The third portion of the project is the phenomenological writing which follows. It is a multi-layered description of the experience of making the video and doing research. I am a novice at both. The writing is juxtaposed with memory work and experiences during the producing of the video. It is organized into chapters related to the process of making the video. The chapters which follow discuss the planning, filming, editing and closure of the project. There is a section provided for further reading which is more extensive than that found in the pamphlet.

One final observation which is relevant for the planning relates to choosing the camera person. I had sought the assistance of a professional camera person due to the limited opportunity in which I had to film these preservice teachers. I did not have the expertise nor the time to learn all the skills. I was reluctant to use the help of a university student because I would not have a second opportunity to film. The uniqueness of this opportunity to film was built around the fact that I had an established relationship of trust with these preservice teachers as their supervisor and sessional teacher. When presenting my project proposal, I argued that the relationship established was a significant contributing factor in minimizing intrusions in the classrooms settings and providing an opportunity for authentic representation with the preservice teachers. It became evident that the ease of my relationship did help to relax the preservice teachers

while being filmed. In addition the relationships which formed between myself and the camera person, and between the preservice teachers and the camera person, also grew important. The camera person's ease and experience established trust with the preservice teachers while being filmed, and they helped me in directing the filming. His mannerism was quiet and welcoming. There was acceptance of his behavior and interactions. He reassured the preservice teachers and helped them through their fears of being in front of the camera with laughter and appreciation for their efforts. He welcomed my direction and did not argue with what I chose. He never hesitated to collect more footage and was flexible about committing to the two and a half hour drive each week from Lethbridge to Vauxhall. He and I discussed issues in education, our personal histories and reflections about the process each day on the drive. He respected my choices, listened attentively and questioned or asked about choices in a manner that was not intimidating. He became an important person for sounding out ideas as we shared the experience, through differing lenses. I had not accounted for these factors. In the months of editing that would follow, his patience and reassurance helped provide me with the self confidence needed to make choices. His presence and knowledge were an unexpected gift that I had not planned for but had been open to receive and notice. Being beside the camera, sharing the responsibility with his skill and my ideas was a welcomed collaborative expression.

I truly believe this is my production as he respected my need to direct the final outcome of the video, yet I am grateful for his belief in me and his supporting expertise.

## Beyond the Lenses

Writing, like life itself, is a voyage of discovery.

Henry Miller

*This selection of writing deals with moving back through the process of creating the idea for the video and the justification for the use of this medium. It is the place where ideas come to life or fade away, forgotten or lost.*

I look at the collection of videos on my shelf as I add this one. Each of the others, which number very few, are of movies or T.V. clips I found informative. This is the only video written and produced by me. I may never watch it again as it was designed as a teaching tool for preservice teachers and now I am returning to teach in an elementary classroom. I doubt I will be the one to share it again. So the journey of the video takes on a new life of its own. It feels strange to walk out of the room and leave this video on the shelf. It has been in my conscience for the past eleven months. I have the same feeling at the end of each year when the students say “good-bye” and neither they, nor I, understand the full extent of our presence together but grow aware of the inevitable separation.

Eleven months ago while I was sitting listening to a presentation on technology and multimedia, thoughts had slipped into my mind about the course which I was teaching to preservice teachers. I had only been able to locate video representation of teachers in practice who were either American or well into their practice. As I had viewed these clips and found that even with my 20 years experience in teaching, I could not imagine these scenarios in my classroom. An example from the videos had been of a teacher demonstrating how he had been able to build a mini U. S. A. space center in three connecting classrooms with the support of NASA. The students had spent ten days in these three rooms, simulating a space trip to the moon and back. Observation rooms had

allowed parents to visit over the ten days and watch their children. It sounded amazing and well beyond my abilities in the classrooms where I have taught. This was only one of the proudly presented teaching practices. In the United States during the 1970's , these would have been inspirational videos to watch. Now the videos border on intimidating to comical. The present Canadian educational system does not have any opportunities or intentions to work within these images of teaching. In addition, there are many other opportunities for teaching skills and theories in preservice education. Courses are devoted to learning language, child development, classroom management, and so on, all of which are very important. However, the information will be processed by each individual as they see the need and understand the significance. The self that teaches will be the filter all theories pass through. Understanding self is of the utmost significance in coming to know the filters one uses. I wanted to provide an opportunity for preservice teachers to begin to understand how as teachers we process information, experiences, and ideas.

I also hoped that the students would do the same processing for themselves. A similar form of processing ideas goes on by others; parents, colleagues, administration, support councilors, advisors, and classroom assistants. All of this profoundly affects teaching and learning.

I hold the belief that culture, which is woven into language, our tool for communication, is very important in the processing of ideas and in understanding communication with others. Combining cultural representation was significant for me in understanding choices made in teaching, teacher practices, school communities, curriculums, and their presence in each individual's life in this time and place. I believe that it is through critical reflectiveness that I have come to understand my practice, the impact of culture, language used and understood, and why I make the choices I do. For others to come to know these, I as the teacher of preservice education, needed more than

reading materials to represent these processes.

Visual representation, I believe, allows me to reach beyond myself and combine the opinions, practices, struggles and questions of other practitioners and to demonstrate how individuals each bring ideas, attitudes, perceptions and personal presence to teaching. I intended to provide an authentic medium in which to represent others' voices, as the individuals were speaking directly to the audience and I was facilitating this through the captions on the camera. The video was not scripted for this reason of authentic sharing and representing. The audio was the individuals' own voices and provided an exploration of their actions and a way to hear their thoughts. Combining the visual with audio seemed to be as close of a teaching experience as I could provide. It allowed the whole class of preservice teachers to share teaching experiences, provide a common place of reflection while representing writing, conversation and dialoging as tools in critical reflection of the preservice teachers. As each individual would be experiencing, reflecting and informing his/her practice over a period of time rather than in an individual incident, I required a tool that could collect and preserve the experiences. The camera could do this. I wanted to represent the growing tensions and struggles which occur over time in a practicum for preservice teachers. I was convinced of the authenticity of experience which this medium could provide. This would later prove to be a fallacy. The level of responsibility required for editing and the ethical demands of representing another individual became the great challenge of this project. I will address these issues further as I write about the editing process. In addition I had not anticipated the degree to which I would become involved in critical reflectiveness of my own practice as I guided and participated with the preservice teachers. As voiced and experienced by the preservice teachers, I too felt like I was under a microscope and my very thoughts were being pulled apart as I wrote and conversed with others.

## Filters on the Lenses

### Filter #1: Choosing a Lens

*This section focuses on the personal dilemmas and issues surrounding the proposal, planning process, connection to reading, writing, assignments and into the initial stages of filming. The awareness of significant relationships and the actual presence in the classroom setting both startled and alerted me to the growing significance and responsibility on my part for this project. Awareness of the deepening layers evolved.*

The notion that we teach who we are, “the self that teaches” which P. J. Parker (1998) explores, continually surfaced and surprised me as I spent time trying to attend to the “I” in the teacher that I am. I am trying to listen, stop and notice the moments of my reactions, the subtle “ouch,” “ah,” “wait,” that I have grown accustomed to ignoring or covering.

***Why have I chosen “ignoring or covering”? These are well chosen in that they are accurate words. Why have I grown accustomed to “ignoring or covering”? This surprises me as I have spent much time and energy over the years reading authors and participating in activities which focus on listening to one’s authentic self, and yet these words remain fitting. This is because I have a long history of not listening to my self but in looking to others, seeking their approval. It may be a product of being a younger sister but this too appears connected to my mother. My mom was always a busy individual. Domestic house duties did not seem to suit her well, nor did the responsibilities of having a family. I now have sought her family history, spoken to great aunts, now long dead, to understand more of my mother’s history. And now I understand more, but the pain from childhood of being in the way, an inconvenience, is still close to the surface. As a child I recall listening to the story my mother then told and still***

*tells, of how as the third child, I was to be a boy so that she would not have to have more children or that my sisters rejected having a blue eyed sister, they wanted to return me for a boy. It is with great pain and guilt that I heard these words. Somehow I thought I did it wrong right from the start. I always wanted to slink away, change my eyes, be more of who they wanted. Maybe this was the first lie I learned to tell myself; that I was responsible for this mistake. So I listened closely to others to try to meet what they wanted and not make more mistakes. I "ignored or covered" my own voice. This pattern was well practiced as the fourth child was a boy less than two years later. My mother could now joyfully stop having babies and get on with her life. Tina was hired to take care of me so mother could focus on the baby and attend to herself . She rode horses many days, resented being tied to home on other days and spent holidays away with my dad. Even my sisters felt left out, only we never shared this, just lived in loneliness, desiring acceptance. This too was not voiced until recently, and it remains an edgy, dangerous topic to share.*

Writing has proven a painful, often arduous process that I am at times reluctant to enter into. Even in writing, I will try to dodge these moments as I rationalize that this is not of interest to others. But intellectually, I understand what other writers have convincingly demonstrated about the need to know the self in order to affect the present. And so I exercise more patience within myself and stay with these experiences. This then brings me back to the beginning, right back to the phase of experiencing the creation of the idea to do a video and to the self doubt which almost made this project remain a thought only.

Ideas seem to come to me quickly. It seems to be a process which occurs after I have had many experiences, gathered information and then the vision or idea comes

together. This is what happened during the presentation provided by the multimedia personnel. The two years of gathering thoughts, furthering my teaching experiences and preparing for the final stage of my Master program, slipped into place in a few minutes. I had the vision of a video, much of the plan as to how it would be used, how it would appear and what I needed to do to accomplish the task, all within moments. I have never explained this process or even thought much about it. It is an important part of me. And it is always followed by doubt. This self doubt can stop the ideas from happening. I have felt the all too familiar doubt build inside me almost the moment the ideas were conceived. My doubt is that I won't be able to convince others that I am capable of doing the task. This begins a self retreating pattern and I start to plan all the details through in my mind. I overplan at this stage, convincing myself so thoroughly that if others then doubt me, I am left devastated. This is not a helpful process for collaboration. I bring ideas to conclusion before I seek to understand the perspective of others. It is a damaging process both for myself and others as choices are made in isolation and without communication.

I have experienced several reactions towards me and my ideas because of this pattern of planning. Sometimes others are offended that I did not include them and they respond as though insulted, believing I was selfish in not including them or see me as trying to be authoritative. This has left me baffled and hurt as I retrace my motives and think how difficult it was to plan everything. Thinking and rethinking all the details. Knowing how many times my mind felt exhausted by the process of doing it all by myself. I am left confused, resentful and withdraw from the process. Sharing with others becomes very threatening. I put myself back into finding more information, other authorities to back up my ideas, which results in being even more threatening.

***So why do I feel the need to do all the planning by myself? Why do I not use the thoughts of others to broaden my understanding, carry some of the***

*problem solving or seek advice when I don't understand? I recall feelings of fear that I had as a child in disappointing others, especially my parents. I interpreted their arguments with my older sisters as not loving them, or of my sisters as hurting my parents, who I loved and wanted to please. I recall making mental notes not to repeat a behavior that was seen as incorrect. I vividly remember hearing my oldest sister being yelled at for having a messy room. This my dad stated was causing too much work for my mom. I hated my mom getting upset because that meant my dad would be told and he would be angry for having to deal with my mom's continual distress. My mom to this day has a low tolerance over just about everything from how a tomato is cut, a sore throat, to seeing dust balls. After reading Jane Austen's work, the phrase "mother is having one of her spells" sticks in my mind and makes me cringe when I see one start. Yet I feel the pain of knowing what it is like to not be heard, and I think she just wants to be heard, only my ears hear too much of the same to be helpful now.*

*Having heard yelling about my sister's bedroom, I had darted nervously to my room to recheck each item to ensure it was neat and in place. My room was never checked, my parents assumed it was neat. I grew to be the child my parents could assume would do it "right." This assumption was not freeing for me though. It became another burden I thought about and still seem to carry. I am not sure how to share what is unknown to me. It makes having questions very dangerous, so I tend to ask only those which I think I might have figured out. So are they really questions?*

*Asking questions has never seemed a safe idea. I have of late been interested in my discomfort and apparent shyness when it comes to questioning. I am fine discussing ideas I am familiar with or have read about but go blank in asking questions if I do not understand. At times when listening I freeze, feeling*

*very inadequate or plain “stupid” if I think I do not understand. This word “stupid” is a hard word for me to write. I have hidden it deeply and consider it worse than swearing. My own children do not use it and I speak to it every time I hear it in the classroom but again it seems too real to not use. Recently as I listened to my mom explain something, I questioned her. She said “You’d have to be totally daft to not know that.” Then again her reply comes “Are you stupid? Of course not.” Finally after forty some years I reply that; “No mother, I am not stupid. I just don’t understand.” She is struck silent by my reply and then changes the topic. I have not yet told others this, so their implications hurt me greatly but I do see that it is not so much their intent as my way of responding. So I think that this is moving towards awareness, and I now know that I am not “stupid.”*

*I also see possibility in the way I process ideas as I observe how my father makes choices. He has always been noted for clear, solid decision making. As a child, I remember the amazing surprise decisions made by my dad who arrived home with a new car, or new living room lights, a horse, the sale of our cabin and then our home. There was never any talk about ideas brewing, just a decision which was not questioned, at least not until years later. It was not until I was an adult that I heard family friends jokingly talk of the two year process it took my dad to choose a car, or the planned retirement that started in his twenties, or the resentment that my mom felt about never having a say in things. As a teen I learned from observing my sisters that if they asked to do things which had too many unclear details they were not allowed to do them. I planned every detail I could think of first and then asked. I did many things my sisters never even considered to ask about. To this day, I am the only one who will approach my dad with ideas and I do so with a degree of certainty that he*

*will support the idea. I recall a few months ago standing in a Calgary shopping mall with my sisters, debating whether to call and ask my dad to contribute to a gift for my mom's 70th birthday or just to forget the idea. I was convinced that if we described the colors, confirmed mom's wishes, told him the price and advantage of buying it in Alberta with no provincial sales tax, he would like the idea. My sisters' reactions ranged from mild concern to complete doubt and fear of disapproval or annoyance. We plotted out the strategy of the phone call and how not to arouse suspicion from my mom, used the pay phone, and then after, enjoyed retelling the mall scene. But why was it such an issue for my sisters and me, as adults, to call our parents? To ask questions? How different each of us, as sisters, approached the decision? Maybe they too feel stupid asking?*

*I am a thorough planner but ask few questions. I present an idea and take immediate action, completing the project or activity fairly efficiently and quickly. Or that is how it appears to other. They do not see nor are a part of the planning process. The result is that others come to see this process as efficient and they hold high expectations, which I have come to feel the need to fulfill. The desire for approval from others appears again and the method of planning on my own continues to be reinforced. Oma says with laughter and pride that "If you want it done, ask Ashelyn but never ask until you're ready, cause it will be done tomorrow." This is the image and expectation I hold of myself, only many things have changed over the years. There has been my marriage, three children, a full time teaching career, graduate studies, community commitments, friends - and the list keeps growing but my pattern of responding has not changed.*

Each of these memories feed my responses in planning, even for this video project. Much of my self was wound into the fabric of the process. It was with great

doubt that I sounded my idea out with others. I flinched at their doubt. I was almost stopped when I appeared unable to do it due to my lack of knowledge in critical reflectiveness as a research topic. It took a great deal of “self talk” to move forward.

At one point I was locked in self doubt, doubt that I was reflective enough, doubt that I had sufficiently negative life experiences that are often the reason others are driven to become critically reflective about their lives. I have not had experiences like death of people loved, terminal illness, divorce or destructive addictions. Doubt that I could read fast enough to study all the writers and researchers of critical reflectiveness. Doubt that my work could represent anything more than a naive effort. I lack three skills I have come to view as essential to teachers and researchers and I am very self conscious about not possessing them. The skills are reading with speed, spelling and remembering names. How I have come to view them as essential I am unsure. I seemed to think all intelligence is connected to these three ideas. I do not have them, nor do I have the time to acquire them. So how did I move beyond these feelings of self doubt?

*I recall being passed over or cut short from reading orally because I was slow. Reading quickly was clearly valued. My nervousness of reading things in front of others has not gone away. My initial choice in university of going into biology and being in a lab with plants still seems inviting. Oh I like people, and love to be with friends, but crowds, strangers or classmates make me nervous. I always hated having to read a paragraph to myself in a group setting because everyone would be finished before me and I had to pretend to know the ending, or so I thought. I never dared to ask them to wait. As a teacher I have heard spelling discussed in staff rooms. Teachers are heard making statements about students who are having difficulties and conclude with “and he/she can’t even spell!” This seems to support my hopeless desire to not have to admit I cannot*

*spell words easily from memory. However even recognizing that spelling has a great deal to do with memorizing, not intelligence, is new for me. I read and attend many inservices on spelling or the brain. This information helps to keep my panic in perspective but I still clutch my stomach muscles if I have to spell on the spot without a dictionary or word processor. Then there is remembering names. Researchers often have minds that are able to recite names dating back to the beginning of time. Yes I can come to understand the ideas, but as to who specifically said what, I have to check. I lived in dread through the whole "Trivial Pursuit" frenzy. Couples would ask us over to visit and then spring on the board game of Trivial Pursuit. I can't do any category. I read, but authors are hard to pin point, actors and actresses are even worse but musical groups - forget it.*

*So if I can't master these three significant skills, how can I possibly be able to inform anyone of anything? Then I stop my rising panic by recalling things I can do. Talk myself through seeing what I have done to improve or cope, and hope no one will notice. In my practice I do not plan activities which single children out and I try to avoid time pressures. I teach lots of ways to support spelling such as patterns, letter combinations and family associations.*

*I encourage writing for expression and remind students that now books are published without a lot of editing. Over and over I teach these ideas and reassure others and myself that to not have these skills is not an intelligence test, they are not a test of our worth. But suddenly I am standing in the moss green kitchen in the house where I grew up, and my mind is racing to remember which way to cut the tomato for the salad as my mother says you will ruin the taste but I have never noticed because I hate tomatoes any way they are cut. My mother notices how people cut things like tomatoes as she says that shows what kind of a family they come from and I can't help but hear distaste in her voice. So I need*

*to cut this tomato right, I need to spell, to read, to recall names of famous people, authors and movie stars. And I think no wonder living can take a lot out of you as I bite into a tomato as though it were an apple, making sure I am home alone.*

Under all these doubts, I had chosen to listen to the inner voice that kept telling of times I have been a reflective practitioner or person. The times when I needed to look at my practice rather than lay blame on students for not learning. Even before I knew there was a term for the process, I drew on the insight of needing to change my own practice. Yes, I am present in growing awareness that I know little and the lines are blurred in my images. It is like C. Leggo described in conversation about writing his poems, that through the writing of his poems, he shows himself as knowing little, and that is a lot to know (Leggo, personal communication, July 2000). Through my efforts I am showing I don't know everything and I can't, but that is in itself a "lot to know" and accept. Producing the video continually brought up the unknown, unanticipated; yet I am staying with this experience long enough and being brave enough to write about it, to share it in public.

Each question opens to another, and I am now less able to rest with accepting ideas, planning details, doing things alone as the questions change the process, open possibilities. The more time I spent on the project, the more details in the editing process that I attended to, the more the whole notion of critical reflectiveness drew me deeper into awareness of my limitations, the more I felt encouraged to not know it all, not have all the solutions. Many issues I once held as resolved became open for new interpretations.

The first question I asked the preservice teachers was what their image of a teacher was and what had been the influences in their lives for coming to teaching. As I listened to the responses I was struck with how many of their influences were rooted in family and personal experiences. This question initially brought two responses from each

individual. As to the image, typical words were used such as caring, patient, kind, interesting, enthusiastic to describe what they thought was the image of a teacher. Yet when they spoke of the influences, their personal stories were more in-depth and seldom contained these adjectives. These differences between responses are the very reason I believe it is important that we come to know the self that teaches, rather than rely on images produced by others. Influences which have developed as outcomes in our experiences shape our behavior without necessarily connecting to an image held outside ourselves. For example, when a student described influences from her brother and the need to recognize different learning styles and needs, once in the classroom voiced how difficult it was to address all these different needs. And in fact in many subject areas, she decided that there was no need to make special adjustments for these students but rather just let them do what they want and not to push them. Her choices were connected to her experiences rather than the image she spoke of.

The preservice teachers were also amazed at how different each of their stories were. In conversations, we discussed what impact this had on teacher practices and on areas like staff development, team teaching, school budgeting, collegial support and school communities. Suddenly these individual preservice teachers' lives became very important. Their experiences brought more than memories to their practice. They provided insight.

*The questions I posed to the preservice teachers had prompted me to search back to find experiences which have influenced my choices. I think of my first classroom experiences as a student and I am surprised that unlike many of the stories I have heard from others in education, my stories are not framed by successful school experiences. In fact I can hardly recall an experience which leaves me feeling good or excited. I remember my Grade One teacher's name and getting the strap in front of the class. This punishment seemed to come out*

*of nowhere to me. The teacher was raising her voice and directing me to come to the front of the class. She briefly told the students that “tardiness was not tolerated.” I was strapped with a short strip of leather, that looked like a cut off brown belt. I recall nothing more that was said except that I cried myself to sleep for what seems endless nights to follow. I do not ever remember being late for school. I don’t recall being warned to hurry up or my parents saying anything to me beforehand. I had not been aware there was even a tool as a strap used at school. I was very shy and had probably spoken but a few words. I remained as silent as possible for the remainder of the year except to read orally when called upon. I recall wetting my clothes several times and hiding it because I would not ask to go to the washroom. As a practicing teacher I have open use of the bathroom allowing children to leave as they need to and as many times as they need to.*

*From this past experience as a child, I do not agree with holding only the children accountable for lateness or making them feel liked they are not welcome when arriving late. In my observations, most children particularly during the elementary years, are functioning as part of a family unit. They are seldom in control of whether they are late getting to school. I have seen school practices where the parents were notified, a family alarm provided, a wake up call from the school to the home and feel all of these ideas seem to benefit the child more. Also a warm welcome and a buddy system help late students get adjusted upon their arrival. I was struck by an experience I had as I supervised preservice teachers during their practicum. As I did not have to be attending to a classroom, I was in the halls and noticed that in most schools there was a collection of children who arrive late. These students could be seen chatting together across the empty school yard long after the school doors have closed.*

*They visited in the boot rooms with smiles and quiet laughter before heading to the Office for their late slips. Upon arriving in the Office their chatter would stop, heads generally dropped as they entered to announce their late arrival and take their colored slips to the classroom teachers. These same children often stopped to use the bathroom or get a drink before once again dropping their heads and slipping into the classrooms, softly closing doors behind them. I recall a student I had several years ago who always arrived late with her four other siblings. I would often notice that they took time to give each other a hug before coming into the classroom. As I arrived one morning in the hallway with them, they hesitated, fearing I would move them along. Instead I said how great I thought it was that her older sisters' showed they cared so much for her by bringing her safely to the classroom and sending her in with a warm hug that promised they would return. The older sisters seemed to stand up a little taller as they smiled and from then on always stayed long enough to wave to me as they dropped her off. I never spoke to the mother, though she apologized for their lateness one day. I asked if I could do anything to help. She then related her story of finally finding an apartment with her seven children across the street from another school, only to be told they would only take three out of the seven children. So now they had to walk over a mile from their house to our school. She owned no car and pushed a baby stroller, even in the winter. I assured her I would look into it as I believed our District policy would not allow this. Assistance was given immediately. I know it can feel awful to be the late one to school. My experiences have shaped my practice and not all have come from rich, renewing experiences. In fact for me, more have come from pain but all must be examined thoughtfully.*

*My aunt was another influencing figure, though more from a fantasized*

*vision than an experienced one. She was my Dad's only sister. She was well educated, being one of the first women in education, in Regina, to receive her Master of Education from Columbia University in New York. She became the Superintendent of the Regina Public School Board. At 42 she married a Principal, whom I quickly came to adore. The W. H. Ford School was named after him. They had lived in an older home in Regina where everything was white and gold and sparkled. This fascinated me as I grew up in a home with five children, four siblings and one cousin. Nothing was white and my mother hated gold. Everything had to be more practical. Staying at their home made me feel like a princess and I adored my aunt and uncle. We did not visit often but when we did only two children would stay with them while the others went with my parents to Grandmother's house. I often was chosen to stay. Much later as my grandmother aged, my aunt and uncle moved in to care for her. I always saw them as generous with their friendship and thoughtful towards us as children. They sent us gifts on our birthdays and at Christmas. They were the only relatives who remembered us and gifts were always on time. My aunt had a sharp sense of humor but it was so playfully managed by my uncle, I enjoyed it immensely. My uncle once filled a entire refrigerator with small red boxes of raisins just for me. My mother has always said that I am so much like my aunt, but my mother disliked my aunt and spoke of this often. I remain unsure how to take her compliment. These are the only two teachers I admired, and it was not through their teaching but through their love as an aunt and uncle.*

#### Filter #2: Beside the Camera

*The following section explores the experience of shifting from classroom teacher to producer of a video in classrooms. The classrooms were those of the preservice teachers practicum and I was there to video their experiences.*

It was very awkward entering into the classrooms without being in the place of the classroom teacher. I thought I was not to have a voice in order to provide as few interruptions as possible in the process. As a researcher, I was aware that any change alters the circumstances. I felt that to provide an authentic experience of teaching for the preservice teachers, I needed to create as few changes as possible. It was a bit like trying to please everyone, but it felt valid and necessary as I was aware that I depended upon everyone's support for this project. I required the school administration's approval. They were justly concerned about the preservice teacher and the effect of video taping on classrooms and the school. We were greeted the first day with a list of concerns and rules the administrator told us to follow. I had to convince the cooperating teachers that the preservice teachers' time and efforts would be focused on their teaching and not this project. I was continually aware of our presence and the need to be seen as unobtrusive as possible. I always asked about alternative locations for interviews and sought the approval of whoever was in care of that area during that time. At the slightest hint of concern, I made adjustments.

*I pondered about how the same personal trait that has caused me such confusion in trying to please others as a child, provides me with perception and awareness of others' needs as I attend to these. This trait of awareness has often been reported as one of my strengths during evaluations from administration. I am keenly aware of student needs. However I do not transfer this trait to adults well. Maybe I presume adults have supports of their own, while children may not. This distinction between children and adults surprises me but I can identify it as a clear pattern in my behavior. I wonder if this is due to the fact that I have never seen my mother in a state of need, as really needing anything that she could not do for herself. As a child I resented feeling that I had to continually do*

*things my mother was capable of doing herself. As an adult I still feel the same way about her having others do things she is capable of doing. I do not really believe her requests to be authentic needs and so do not respond. I know there is some type of need to have her behave this way, but I am closed to hearing it.*

*I remember being in the hospital with my first son. He was born seven weeks early by emergency Cesarean. I had hemorrhaged a great deal and was quite weak following the birth. Our first month together as mother and son were spent in the hospital. The first week was touch and go as to whether either of us would live. My mother responded by phoning from her cabin to say she just couldn't manage seeing the baby unless we were sure he would live and be healthy. My dad and one sister came each day. I still find it difficult to run to her service as she whines about a headache. I tend to disregard adults' pains not because I am dispassionate as many believe, but because I don't believe it. This is ironic as I know that as an adult my pain remains very real. I want to learn to respond to everyone as their needs arise rather than to evaluate if they have an authentic need or not. I want to open myself to adults as I have to the needs of children. This is a great personal challenge I remain unsure if I am capable of meeting.*

Standing at the side of the classroom, knowing that my intentions were to not interfere, I was suddenly aware of the enormous responsibility that producing this video was going to be. As I sat at a distance in time to write, I was embarrassed that I had not understood that it was actually only my voice, figuratively, that anyone would hear through the video. I had provided the camera man with a schedule, thought about the footage being collected, was already editing out pieces in my mind and therefore controlling the voices of everyone else. To complicate the situation I also came to realize that though I was accountable for the outcome of the video, I had to work through

everyone else. I was suddenly feeling very vulnerable as I needed the participation of others for all this to work. I was required to work not only through the camera, but through the person I selected to operate the camera. Another personality was filtering the video pieces, even before the editing began. Now it was not just the preservice teachers' experience, nor mine, nor the camera person's, but a collection, layers of experiences. I felt truly Canadian. It was as though I was dressing for winter in an unimaginable number of clothing layers, all varied in texture, weight and purpose as I might head out to shovel snow, or start a car in -30 C. There is a comical sense of never really experiencing winter from under the layers which separate me from the cold. Here I was beside the camera, on the outer limits of the classroom, beyond the control of the lens, after the interests of the university, the district superintendent, school principal, community parents, classroom teachers, preservice teachers, classroom students, camera operator and then finally me! Did the vested interests of others restrict or enhance the experience? How could I control all the plans? Was it necessary to control all the plans? Suddenly I moved to see myself as the director rather than the envisioned facilitator.

Being in control, while not realizing the responsibility of control, was very frightening. While I wanted to share the video process with others, as the producer I was to exercise control of the opportunities during this process. The definition and application of the word control holds negative notions for me as being manipulative. The word brings me a feeling of distress and I want to distance myself from people and events which manipulate. Yet the other side of the word control speaks to management in the interest of others. It can provide collaboration so everyone's interests are accounted for. I have been admired by peers and administrators for my skill of "taking control." It is an asset others feel allows them to depend on me for doing. In teaching if I am to be accountable for something, then I take control. It works well for some areas but leaves gaps of despair

in other areas. Despair in that control is often misleading and closed to opportunity. It is burdensome to always feel I have to take control or it will not get accomplished. In schools, administrators value this acceptance of control and responsibility over programs, but others can resent it. Often control is only appreciated if no one else wants to do it. Control has many issues and it is a skill that holds value at times but I remember as dangerous to use.

*I remember being 10 years old and having to take control as I arrived home after school to find my Grandmother on the floor in her bedroom. She had had a stroke. None of the left side of her body would work. She had wet her pajamas so it must have occurred early in the day and it was after school. She was cold and could not speak to me. My older sister who was seventeen arrived home shortly afterward. She responded with tears and complete fear. Her mind shut down and so I had taken control. I talked my sister through the help I needed. My grandmother was walked to the bathroom where I washed her and re clothed her. We returned her to her bedroom where I had my sister sit with her while I changed her bedding, warmly tucked her in and then made her soup which I fed carefully to her. I then called the doctor and insisted he make a house call as we could not risk getting her cold again and did not think my sister should drive. He came. By chance what I had done was very helpful and I continued to work with her everyday to help her recover. My parents had been away and when they returned I continued to help Grandmother to recover. Taking control is not always bad. I am just not good at waiting to see if control is what is needed. I am still uncertain when to demonstrate control. I am also uncomfortable not taking control when I know I am capable of it. It feels like I am being false or misleading about my abilities. As though I am trying to get out of work or my part of the contribution. Learning and practicing in more*

*collaborative ways with others is beginning to help me but it is still difficult.*

This new role of standing to the side, seeing opportunities for alternatives and not acting upon them was like an out of body experience for me. Being able to plan and be held accountable for this project, required the control of all the details. In fact as the producer this was my responsibility and yet I knew from several past experiences that myself and others resent situations where we feel we are being controlled by someone else. It was not until this point of writing that I realized that I was attending to what needed to be controlled for the project such as schedules, equipment etc., but I was not controlling the people. I was in fact respecting their choices and trying to accommodate their needs also. But as I stood there in each classroom, I felt disassociated from my physical presence. I did not feel physically present because I was doing nothing that was familiar to me in the classroom. I was neither the teacher nor a mentor to the preservice teachers nor a student. I was a foreign object. Even the camera held more presence and purpose than I did. The camera became the focus of attention. A relationship between the camera person and the people being filmed or the camera itself and those being filmed, became more significant. People talked to the camera as if it would reply. I recall people apologizing, greeting, saying good-bye to the camera, not the operator or myself. The students in the class greeted the camera, the preservice teachers spoke of the camera's ever presence even in their dreams but not of us, behind and beside the camera. This surprising relationship I believe was due to the early and constant presence of the camera during the practicum. The preservice teachers, staff, parents and students were introduced to us and the camera after the first day and filming began immediately. Both myself and the experienced camera person were surprised by the lack of behavior which would have been intrusive in the filming, intrusive as in distracting to the student learning which needed to continue in order for us to be allowed to film. The type of behavior which

concerned me was such things as students jumping up in the way of the lens, hiding behind books or hands or performing for the camera and creating an interference in the classroom routines. Instead the captions which demonstrate students responding directly to the camera were kept as part of the final footage because they were authentic means of interaction between those being filmed and the camera. These few clips illustrate the students' ease with the camera.

The other factor which may have influenced their comfort is that the filming took place in a small community and almost everyone was involved. Every parent, student, teacher and the administration had to give prior approval and they were introduced to the purpose for filming from the beginning. My invitation to show the video was later eagerly accepted and I did return on the final day of the school year to share the video as asked. The teacher associates were supportive of the project and shared appreciation for the video. They too believed it was a valid representation of teaching and what preservice teachers are required to think about before entering the profession. It also brought up issues in education they wrestle with as well as the teacher associates' admiration for the preservice teachers.

### Filter #3: Challenges in Editing

*The extensive time commitments, motion sickness and the editing challenges of the video are the focus of this section.*

Editing the video was to become one of the most difficult tasks I have undertaken. The length of time it took to edit, motion sickness which challenged my physical presence day after day, and the editing dilemmas associated with choosing how to represent others were unforeseen challenges I was faced with.

The months of editing started in my bedroom in front of an 8 inch T.V. with my cat purring at my feet. This sounds like a comforting process but I actually dreaded the

idea, day in and day out, as I get bouts of motion sickness very easily. The stopping, rewinding, fast forwarding, reading of times, writing the beginning words and ending words of each phrase, left me utterly motion sick. I would need to stop the process every 30 to 40 minutes, to walk around, seek fresh air (even in -30 C), eat soda crackers, rub my tummy and lay still for a few minutes before returning to the process. This made the eleven hours of tape stretch into endless hours. It took great sessions of self talk to convince myself to return to the process and I was often trying to bribe myself, offering myself rewards of walks, hot tubs or a mystery book, if I did a few hours of editing first.

There was, however, also great joy in being with these preservice teachers and their teacher associates, as I watched them each day. I often burst into laughter as their faces froze on the scene, quietly contorted in their expression, as I paused the tape or rewound in fast motion. This was coupled with a strange sense of guilt that I was manipulating their images. There are times that I have seen clips over and over which still elicit laughter or concern in me. I responded involuntarily with smiles and felt deep pleasure over their genuine interaction and desire to be present while making a difference. I was nourished by these human responses of desire to live well within community. I had not anticipated these emotions and physical responses which continued over the months, sometimes leaving me exhausted. I found myself going over and over a clip, trying hard to capture what I thought was the essence of each individual's thoughts. I always felt guilty about reducing their presence as I cut sections out. Final cuts became even harder as the eleven hours were reduced to thirty minutes. I grew to love the lines smiles created around eyes and the fullness of expression shown when there was passion in their ideas. Eyes really spoke to me, sparkled and danced on the screen. My admiration for human nature and my appreciation for these individuals and their willingness to share moved me deeply. I am still amazed and transformed by this experience.

Editing my memories has been even more challenging as I asked myself questions like why this memory? Why did I remember this event in my life? Remembering has taken me to places I had not thought of for years. I am growing aware that the significance in my memories is not that others will read them to feel my pain or feel more justified in their experiences. Nor do I feel the need to have my memories validated by others as a way to validate my responses. Rather my memories demonstrate to me how I see myself attached to my past, history, culture, family, language and experiences. Each part provides a filter which I see through. I make sense of my presence through these filters. To come to understand this has helped me grow more attentive to others and their lived experiences. I see no malice by others or myself, just an honest attempt to be present as I believe I need to be.

During editing there were many times, as I clipped sections and cut off words, I wanted to have the individual there to ask “Is it all right?” “Does your meaning still come through?” Yet I knew that I needed to make these choices as the researcher and producer of the video. This was such a shift for me to have this need and to slow down and desire the input from others. Maybe it is still connected to trying to please others, but it felt more like a genuine desire to hear about others’ needs in how they were being represented. I wanted to listen more closely to others. It was essential to hear what the preservice teachers and others were trying to say in their clips. I moved from the need to formulate a response while still listening to the other person talking, to really listening. If I felt I missed something I could rewind it, never pressured to move on, never embarrassed by how many times I repeatedly listened to understand. There was great freedom in listening and not replying to the video footage. There was space for my responses with no concern that my response was not appropriate.

Over the months, I came to realize how anxious I am when speaking to others,

replying, providing conversation. I have always felt the need for privacy, to retreat once I have been in conversation with others. It was not until I could sit alone for hours, enjoying listening and actually finding comfort, that I started to attend to the tension I hold in the presence of others. This tension is not always there but more often than not. As I had moved into new environments over the past few years, the state of unpredictability has created great tension for me. I have found it exhaustive. Why do I remain so anxious around others? The notion of pleasing and control surfaces again.

*I have a vivid memory of running excitedly to the back door, through our moss green kitchen to greet my dad after his ten day hunting trip. He was already standing in the back entrance, beard grown bristly, big hunting boots, blood stained old coat and red hunting cap. He also had a red and white bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken which initially I had not noticed. I exclaimed "Oh Dad!" upon seeing him. He replied in a rough annoyed voice "This is not for you." Startled and confused, I searched for what was not for me and saw the bucket of chicken. I still recall the pain that shot through me as I could not believe that he thought I was there for the chicken. I stopped in my footsteps, took the chicken and placed it on the table and removed myself to the safety of my bedroom, never again to greet my parents at the door, always allowing them time to unpack first. Still to this day, I watch closely for indications from others as to how they expect me to respond.*

There is great risk in producing a video that is so public. How will others respond? What are they expecting of me? How does this represent my understanding or lack of it? How do I move beyond pleasing others if the goal of my work is wanting to live well with others and demonstrate this through this video? If I displease others, will they see living well demonstrated? There must be a way to be authentic and still live well

with others? Where or how is this balance achieved?

*I have experienced this balance before and more frequently during these past two years. The first time I recall was during my initial course in my Master's program and this may have been the very reason I gained the courage to do this degree. I had a professor who continually encouraged each of us to find a way to share our understanding through a form that was meaningful to us. I watched and listened closely growing more confident that this was a genuine offer. The one form of expression I strongly desired to work with but had set aside in order to do this course was quilting. I decided I would work in this medium after all. I had never quilted anything of my own but rather patterns only. I was inspired by the rich work of many quilters before I designed and made the wall size quilt. I was left with several lasting impressions which awakened new willingness in me to take risks. The quilt project had started as usual, lots of ideas, little confidence in my ability. I knew I was a beginning quilter if my work was compared to most. I also did not know if my ideas could be demonstrated well enough through the design. I also wrote a journal of the process. Somewhere along the way, at a point I do not recall but grew slowly aware of, the artistic process took over and my thoughts of pleasing others faded. By the time I finished I was so exalted that I no longer worried about whether it met someone else's ideals. It had surpassed my own. For the first time I understood the reason artists are driven to share their work without the desire to look like the latest famous artist, as it's their ideas, meeting their own need to share. Ted Aoki, while teaching "Writing Teacher's Lives," shared a similar value about writing. He spoke of being responsible for each word he writes. He attends to his words carefully to ensure that what is said is what he needs the words to express in that time and place. But then the words are put out there for others*

*and he can no longer be held responsible for what others will take from these words. This is one way of being authentic while attending to living well with others.*

During editing, I grew aware that as I chose who spoke, what they said and when it was said, there was a danger that it was only my voice others would hear. Editing is like an hourglass which allows only a little sand to pass through its small opening. Only a few ideas were allowed to pass through into the final video. I edited and removed the voices of others. It is a very manipulative process. Is there then any authentic representation left? I believe there is, as I recognize that the contributions of others and their experiences supported the context of the video while providing meaningful representation of what becoming a teacher involves. There was value in editing. There needed to be a balance between organizing each clip and altering the meaning of the clips, between saying what others had intended and fulfilling my vision. The preservice teachers' narratives demonstrated their understandings; they have not been altered to say something other than their own words. Portions of their narratives were edited out while the challenge remained in keeping the content authentic. Each choice required careful examination and the process of cutting clips never became easy for me. Yet I needed to remain true to my desire in producing a video I believed would demonstrate that reflection on one's self is significant in the process of teaching and that also would provide a reliable teaching tool in preservice teacher education. As a teaching video it is my hope that it will support and encouragement other practitioners guiding preservice teachers in becoming reflective while providing authentic images and voices of beginning teachers.

I also grew to understand my responsibility to the viewer. Though clips brought good memories, laughter, or spoke strongly to an idea I value, the video had to fulfill the need of the viewer. It required more direction and explicit headings to assist in its

meaning. Initially these were difficult changes to make as I had already come to the point where I believed nothing more could be cut. I examined the video over and over again and finally the opportunities to say it with fewer words began to surface. A clearer representation emerged while remaining true to the voices of the preservice teachers. I needed to balance the significant points with spaces to absorb them. I had to combine challenges with humor. My role included caring for the interests of many, while attending to my vision of the video. I also now recognize that I could not have had anyone else do the editing for me. I needed to feel the connection to my vision of authentically representing others, of providing a purposeful experience in reflecting on the self that teaches, in growing aware of the filters which are present in communicating with others and in supporting the preservice teachers in their efforts. I needed to experience what I wanted the viewer to experience. After standing beside and behind the interests of many, I ultimately had the responsibility to choose and fulfill my vision through producing the video and the supporting writing which makes this project.

#### Filter #4: Camera off, Lights out

*This final section looks at what I would do differently given the opportunity again, what this project brings to others and my final good-bye.*

As I place the video on the shelf, shut out the lights and leave the room, I sense a point of realization for me and the notion of authentic representation. As I ask myself if I have been accurate in representing others and myself, I feel the recognition and struggle in accepting that these are my truths, edited through my experiences and that they hold no solid claim as they exist in this time and place. If this is what happens to me, within me, then others must do the same. They too will filter ideas through their experiences and claim their own understanding. I am responsible for my actions and they are for their own. So just as my memories partially represent the factual events of my life, they too

hold my experiences as I recalled them and how I felt. They bring meaning to my understanding. And as inaccurate as this may appear, each of us can do no greater than to share our understanding, our lived experiences, our images. So this video is my image, holding meaning for the knowledge I want to share with viewers as they enter into teaching and learn to live well with others.

I am satisfied that I have indeed been able to provide a meaningful experience for myself as well as those involved. I had the opportunity to share the final video with the preservice teachers involved. It was a wonderfully rich experience for me to listen to their voices, hear their comments, see their faces and bring them together in community. They were generous with their comments to each other, supportive of differences and in awe of each of their gifts which they bring to teaching. I had not realized until this moment that none of them had seen each other teach. I had been the only one privileged enough to move among each of their classrooms. There was such a strong feeling of admiration for each other as they watched each individual teach. This was another unforeseen gift that I realize few teachers ever get to participate in. Several of the students voiced their recognition of this unique opportunity. In addition they reflected upon how the process of video taping had been the focus which drew them together in community. And that they had anticipated that the video taping would make them very nervous, perhaps even preventing them from ever relaxing enough to focus on the classroom. However the opposite had occurred as they grew less concerned and more willing to take risks with the presence of myself and the camera. In addition, both the preservice teachers and I felt that the video provided a greater opportunity to share their experiences and write more reflectively than we had been doing previously. Several students have already completed another practicum and have continued to go back to their personal collection of footage of their teaching to inform their emerging practice.

Video taping is a helpful tool providing there is a meaningful method of analysis in place. I have seen several video clips of my own teaching but my focus has not been as defined as it could have been. I have listened to my words and speech patterns, noticed movement and gestures and many of the more common attributes. For the preservice teachers, I provided a handout by Mitchell and Weber (1999) from their book "Reinventing Ourselves as Teachers: Beyond Nostalgia." After viewing his or herself, each preservice teacher said that nothing I could have said would have brought them to awareness the way viewing themselves had done. I will now try this process again for myself but participate with growing awareness not necessarily seeking change. There is a great opportunity for teachers to promote education through producing video clips in school communities as a way of coming together in community. I have taught in the same building without having seen other teachers in their craft. Yes, ideas are sometimes shared, we see each other through open doors but seldom have the opportunity to understand or experience teaching in the classroom. These preservice students brought such support to one another. Teachers spend much of their time alone in actual teaching situations. What an enriching way to come to know others, learning to appreciate differences and celebrate talent.

There are puzzling moments when I am again with the preservice teachers in real life and realize they have not been with me during these months of editing and writing. They moved on with their lives and have thought little about the video process now that their tasks were over, while I have thought of little else. I had not planned or expected this degree of intimacy which I felt with the project and the people involved. I also noticed that though I was entranced with the preservice teachers and the project, the camera person was not. It seemed that he was aware that editing was part of the process, part of the business for him. I wondered if over time I would lose these spontaneous responses

I was experiencing. I don't think I would want to edit to the extent the professionals need to as I feel the need to stay in touch with these emotions. It makes me wonder what I have stopped responding to in teaching.

If I were to do this project again or another, I would seek the advice of others both in the producing and process. I had questions and skirted around trying to find answers without really asking questions. There was one particular individual who has great expertise in video and multimedia. She quietly offered her assistance on several occasions. I was too reluctant to seek her out. I misunderstood that although this was my project, I did not have to have all the answers. I did not know then what I know now; that it is good to have questions and better to ask or discuss possibilities with others.

I visualized meeting her in the hallway and would go through the scenario of what to say, trying hard not to show my complete fear of having taken on more than I could possibly handle. I took her phone number out several times but never made the call. I hate to look as though I do not know the answer.

*Suddenly I am back in grade two, at the chalk board during a Spelling Bee. I always became so nervous and being part of my row's team, I hated disappointing everyone if I was incorrect. And I was always wrong. I often could not even remember the word by the time I got to the blackboard as I was so nervous just walking in front of the class. Then the groans as it was misspelled sent me back to my desk fighting back the tears once again. I would look back and know that I knew how to spell that word but could never do it in front of everyone.*

To this day I still get so nervous I lose my thoughts. I never called or spoke to anyone about what to do. Thankfully she just handed me a book one day as a resource. I wanted to thank her profusely for this touch stone.

There were many moments of doubt, but I did complete this video and the process has left me with more than I am able to recognize even now. I have feelings of satisfaction and pride. It may appear foolish to those who have seen many programs completed, but just as my story is significant among many, so is this moment. I knew I would be able to do it or I would have not started it. And though it was more complicated than I had anticipated, I stayed in the struggle. Where does this hidden confidence come from? How do I provide this for others, especially students who need this courage to continue, the faith to know they can do it?

*My Dad came over yesterday after the boys had relayed my message about the tree. It was sunny for a few minutes as the clouds had lifted. We sat on the rock, looking up at the tree trying to judge the risk factor of having the branches so close to the chimney. After much deliberation I decided to leave it be until Derek, my husband, returned the following day. Dad returned to his cabin and I went back to the day's events. At supper time the rain and wind had returned. It was cooling down quickly in the mountains, and as I stood trying to barbecue, I realized that I would want to have a fire in the fireplace. The ladder would need to be retrieved and once again the boys with complete disbelief headed to get Grandpa's ladder. The rain hardened, the wind swirled around as the boys dashed back to look for their supper, dropping the ladder at the foot of the tree. Several feet behind them came my dad, bundled in his blue rain coat with the hood up to cover his bald head. He stood calmly at the steps and said he was here to help. I denied needing his help and reassured him that the boys could hold the ladder once the rain let up a bit. He quietly continued to wait as if resting while I dashed the meal indoors. I returned under the overhang and he suggested that he had nothing pressing so he'd help if I didn't mind grabbing my coat to hold the ladder. His voice was so welcoming, patient that I did just*

*that. He insisted on climbing up to saw the unwanted branches. There were about 15 branches, and the ladder had to extend up 21 feet into the tree. The rain and wind kept up as I stood holding the ladder in disbelief. How could I have waited till now? 'Til it was raining and now he was up in the tree? When the job was completed he climbed down. I claimed that "I could have done it but I was feeling much better about having it done," and then thanked him. He replied by giving me a hug, saying with twinkling eyes that he knew I could do it and with that he walked down the stone path with the ladder under his arm. Today we are celebrating his 74th birthday and I knew he would do it.*

There are ways which I can learn to enable and support others. As I turn towards my teaching practice, I know that the same type of support which has come from my father and others who have believed in me is the support I need to provide for students. I saw it through the preservice teachers' relationships also. Sharing my faith in their abilities, helping them to come to realize the talents they hold and providing an opportunity to grow and risk learning all enabled these individuals. I need that support to risk trying out ideas, entering into questions and reaching out beyond what I already know to bring awareness to living. As this video has allowed me to reach beyond, it provided others with this opportunity and reinforces my desire to provide safe opportunities for students in the classroom. Learning to remain in questions, to share with others in the struggle and to enter opportunities which require taking risks moves me into spaces of possibility so I may live well with others.

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Appendix

Understanding the Self that Teaches: Video Pamphlet



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## *Understanding the Self that Teaches*



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The questions, discussion topics, summary and further reading list that follow are provided to enhance the learning experience and the viewing of the video. This guide will assist viewers to draw on personal insights which can inform pedagogy in practice. The video focuses on six preservice teachers in their first professional semester. The video representation is arranged within four themes:

1. Images of Teaching
2. Critical Reflective Practices
3. Related Educational Issues
4. Beyond Critical Reflectiveness

reflecting are demonstrated as the preservice teachers question, observe, and discuss their experiences. Dr. E. Hasebe-Ludt and Dr. C. Chambers of the University of Lethbridge are two researchers, practitioners and professors. Together their varied perspectives and research questions bring insight to pedagogical practice.

## Summary

Each of the four sections in the video begins with a question.

### 1. What informs our images in teaching?

The voices of each preservice teacher demonstrate ways individuals come to view teachers and teaching. Teachers teach who they are and what they believe. Growing aware of what shapes their teaching is essential to the process of understanding pedagogical practices.

### 2. How does critical reflectiveness inform our practice?

The writing process provides a tool for emptying the mind, for exploring ways to question and to remain with the questions. The writing focuses on what the preservice teachers are growing aware of in their experiences of what was not attended to, why awareness grew more apparent, and of questions realized yet often not answered.

### 3. What are important issues in education?

While experiencing teaching and the community of teachers and learners, the preservice teachers begin to question issues influencing educational decision making such as assessment, safety, self esteem, the environments and our understanding. These

Challenges can contribute to unrest, questioning and doubt. This process is shared with practicing teachers. It is a challenge to remain with the questions and not seek quick answers. There is a keen awareness of the personal energy and high level of commitment required for the process of reflectiveness.

### 4. What takes us beyond critical reflectiveness?

The video concludes with the acceptance that there is no step by step process in becoming a teacher. There is no promise of solving all the problems or concerns in the teaching practice. The awareness that not all problems can be thought through allows possibilities for all of life's experiences to inform our relationship in self and teaching. The gift is a belief in the self to bring possibility to practice.

## Questions, Activities or Discussion Topics

What are your images of teachers and teaching?

What or who has informed your images of teachers and teaching?

Write about events which contribute to your images of teaching and teachers.

- earliest memories with someone who taught you something
- hardest moment in school
- difficult situations at school

- memories about learning a skill

The viewer is encouraged to go beyond the nostalgia of memory to explore how these events shape responses. If you believe your response was helpful, what did the other individual's actions represent for you? If you believe you responded out of hurt, what do you wish the other person would have done? How would the event appear if you re-wrote it providing the image of the response you believe would have been more helpful? How does this speak to your needs? Look at why you recall these events.

## Activities to Assist Understanding the Self that Teaches

Use the following resources to assist preservice teachers in developing reflective writing practices or providing settings for focused conversation. Write as you practice. Use the tools and activities as well as participate as a writer. Share writing as a community of teachers/learners focused on the experience. Allow writers to voluntarily read their own work so as to benefit from their voice and ignore the editing process. This is writing for content, attending to self. Discuss, write, read, share the educational issues discovered in practice and by other teachers in practice. Initiate or participate in a book study or facilitate book studies using books and guides such as "The Courage to Teach" (see suggestions for further reading)