Iowa Research Online
The University of Iowa's Institutional Repository

Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education
ISSN: 2326-7070 (Print)
ISSN: 2326-7062 (Online)

Volume 2011 | Issue 1 (2011) Article 2

Narrative and Phenomenology as Methodology for Understanding Persistence in Art Teachers: A Reflective Journey

Jackie Ellett *University of Georgia*

Copyright © 2011 Jackie Ellett

Recommended Citation
Ellett, Jackie. "Narrative and Phenomenology as Methodology for Understanding Persistence in Art Teachers: A Reflective Journey." *Marilyn Zurmuehlin Working Papers in Art Education* 2011: Iss. 1: Article 2.

Hosted by Iowa Research Online

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Marilyn Zurmuehlen Working Papers in Art Education 2011
http://ir.uiowa.edu/mzwp/

Narrative and Phenomenology as Methodology for Understanding Persistence in Art Teachers: A Reflective Journey

Jackie Ellett

The Lamar Dodd School of Art
The University of Georgia,
Athens, Georgia

© 2011 Jackie Ellett

"Once again I stand at the gate that is ajar. Now that my life has followed the course of the winding arabesque, I find myself once more at the place where I started."

(Shammas, 1988, p. 226)

In *Arabesque* Shammas (1988) finds himself back to the place where his journey began. His biographical narrative tells of his travels and the people he meets along the way. The pattern of the Islamic arabesque, with its winding vines and foliage motif is, I believe, symbolic of the intricacies of life and for me, the intricacies of research. I feel that my life is still following "the course of the winding arabesque" and often I feel as if I have not gone very far from "the place where I started" (Shammas, 1988, p. 226), though in reality I have grown through the process of researching and studying. Part of being a qualitative researcher is that there is no straight path, there are twists and turns and sometimes these pathways can lead into areas that are dark and unwelcoming, or not clearly visible. Van Manen (1990) describes the research process as "things turn very fuzzy just when they seem to become so clear" (p. 41). This reflective paper is about my journey as a doctoral student in the midst of researching why exceptional art teachers of 20+ years choose to stay in the art room. Both narrative and phenomenological methodologies will be discussed as pathways chosen.

For me, the beginning of my journey as a researcher really didn't start in 2007 when I was first accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Georgia; it actually began when I was seven and able to read on my own without the help of an adult. I remember first reading the tale of Peter Pan when I was in second grade. I hid behind my grandmother's large red and blue checked chair which partially blocked the long bookshelf holding a series of children's classics. These books were for show and kept in the living room, a place where we children were not allowed to play. I would hide behind this chair out of sight from any adult passing by, engrossed in the tales of faraway lands and exotic characters. Looking back now as an adult I

realize how these stories not only introduced me to other places and lives, but helped me in making sense of my world. I, like Peter, am intrigued by the stories of my world. Now as an adult I call that place school.

Stories have been an integral part of my life, both those read and those told by my grandmother. Using stories as data has been and remains very appealing to me. The two qualitative methods of narrative inquiry/analysis and phenomenology were selected to analyze my data and to study the connections between lived experiences as reason to remain in teaching. Peter listened intently to Wendy's stories in order to gain an understanding of his world and that of the Darling children. Like Peter Pan, I, too, am trying to make sense of the narratives of the teachers I interviewed while also understanding my own personal narrative. I believe that the use of narrative and phenomenology are allowing me to gain both a better understanding and a memorable view of the lives of teachers who chose to stay. These methodologies encourage a way/means of keeping intact their stories as told from their perspectives and in their voice that other forms of analysis do not always give (Riessman, 2008, Elbaz-Luwisch, 2005, Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

I began the doctoral program in the spring of 2007. I was initially concerned with teacher preparation and studying student teachers. I had had many student teachers and had supervised student teachers so that I felt their perspectives of entering the profession would be interesting and might make a significant contribution to teacher preparation. As a full time art teacher, mother and wife, I entered into the role of student with ideas of what I wanted to do**,** but as I began researching I found there was a substantial amount of information on teacher preparation. I needed another topic.

My first semester was overwhelming and I felt inadequate; I did not know all of the theorists my peers were talking about. The majority in the class had taken a theory class the previous semester. Things were happening fast- we were reading about both qualitative and quantitative research, my classmates were making connections to philosophers and theories and when I first heard the word epistemology, I thought it was a medical procedure. I felt as if I were the proverbial horse with the carrot hanging in front of me, just out of reach. Elbaz-Liwisch (2005) writes teaching "often appears fragmented" and schools are "lively if not chaotic places where many things happen at once" (p.1). This was how I felt that first semester, fragmented amongst the lively discussions that were taking place; my mind racing to keep up with the new knowledge that was rushing past me faster than I could consume it. I began questioning myself, "what do you want to know?!" and "is it important?" (personal note, Feb. 2, 2007). It was at this point that I began to write questions and notes to myself, sometimes in my books, on napkins, sticky notes, scraps of paper. These later became known as my "ponderings."

I found that many paths could be taken in studying art teachers. I continued researching about teacher preparation, turnover, retention and narratives of teaching. I discovered something in all of this; while there was ample information on the first seven years in teaching and why teachers left the profession, and the role of the teacher in the classroom, there was little on longevity or why teachers chose to stay, particularly those looked upon as exceptional teachers. My reading and researching took me down the path of staying and researching what it means for exceptional art teachers to stay in the art room for approximately 20 years.

In the *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*, Sabol's (2004) article on retention of art teachers looks at some of the research in general education since "the generic nature of these issues has direct implications for art education" (p. 542). As Eisner (2004) notes in the beginning of the book, "art teaching is relatively unstudied by researchers and scholars" (p. 6). This I have found to be very true; only three articles mentioning retention in art(s) education were found with the assistance of a research librarian (Cohen-Evron, 2002; Sabol; 2004; Scheib, 2006). Sabol (2004) encourages researchers "from all levels of experience" and who work with all "types of research" to investigate the area of art education to contribute to the "understanding and development of the field" (p. 546). Within my writing I would like to bring to light the conditions, challenges, angst and joy that art teachers' experience daily. There is very little research which addresses the issues of migration, attrition and retention of those who teach art. To add the perspective of why exceptional art teachers choose to stay to the current knowledge would be beneficial. Who better to tell these needed stories then highly effective art teachers who have chosen to stay?

It is well documented and often in the news the struggles teachers face: students with needs which teachers are ill prepared to address, school environments that are in poor condition, a lack of collaborative practices and administrative support, and inadequate funding for supplies and low salaries compared to other professions with the similar educational backgrounds. Teachers are often "called upon to confront social issues that many believe belong in the home or larger community" (Patterson, Collins, & Abbott, 2004, p. 4). It is not surprising then that many teachers become cynical and leave the teaching profession.

Currently a world-wide recession is upon us. Furloughs, budget and job cuts all contribute to the feelings of anxiousness and despair so many in education are currently living. Couple this with government initiatives, such as, *No Child Left Behind*, *Race to the Top*, *Pay for Performance*, coupled with increase in class size, cuts in programs and financial support, increases in workloads, the end result is overwhelmed educators who are uncertain of their futures, questioning whether or not they even want to continue teaching. Taking a look into the spirit of those who overcome obstacles and continue to teach with passion, commitment, and ingenuity even during times of uncertainty may help inform us of the growth that takes place when teachers move through their lived experiences.

My jotted ponderings evolved into reflective journaling. I soon began writing my thoughts and concerns. *As a researcher who is an art teacher I am concerned that I will bring with me both biases and preconceived notions of why exceptional art teachers chose to stay*. *Using phenomenology to study myself as a researcher studying the phenomenon of "staying" I hope will help me with explicating my pre-understandings (Journal Entry, Sept. 17, 2009*). As this entry notes, I was and remain concerned with keeping my voice separate, yet within my writing.

Many, including theorists and researchers, believe that we live storied lives; I include myself in this group (Polkinghorne, 2005, Bruner, 1990). While my research subject changed over the course of three semesters. I held on steadfastly to narrative as my methodology. Dr. St. Pierre emphasized in my first qualitative research class, "you need to get theory smart;" she would say "read, read, read," and so I did. The problem was I found that the more I read the more I questioned, and the more I questioned, the less I seemed to know. This I later discovered is a common trait in qualitative research. I believe it is a common trait in all research.

In the fall of 2009 a Phenomenology class was offered. I took this class and soon discovered the answer to a series of questions I had written on a napkin, *So, how do I start? Am I a constructivist…interpretivist? Will grounded theory be my methodology? Can I use both narrative and grounded theory? Do I want to…will it help me? Are these mixed methods? WHERE DOES RESEARCH BEGIN? (Napkin Pondering, June 12, 2007*).

As I reflect on my journey as a researcher I cannot help but think that Dewey (1916) was so intuitive when he explained the nature of our experiences in *Democracy and Education*. Dewey explained the nature of experience as something which "can be understood only by noting that it includes an active and a passive element peculiarly combined" (p. 133). He states that with the "active hand... we do something to the thing" and the passive element is when "we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences" (p. 133). Dewey elaborates that experience involves change, but unless this change is connected to a consequence, which can be either positive or negative, it is then a "meaningless transition" and so little or nothing is learned (p. 133). Unless one has an interaction between oneself and another context or environment, whether it is another person, an object, the natural world or an idea, then an experience does not occur.

Learning occurs from an experience which arises from the interaction of two principles, continuity and interaction. Continuity is the experience a person has which will influence his future, for better or for worse. Interaction is the situational influence on one's experience. In other words, one's present experience is a function of the interaction between one's past experiences and the present situation. If I believe, and I do, that my present experiences of

being a researcher is a function of the interaction of my past experiences of childhood discoveries and curiosities, then my research began long before I even dreamed of college. It began as a child reading, and learning to investigate and discover new worlds hidden behind a checkered chair.

My theoretical framework is based on Dewey's (1938) theory of human experience as well as Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner. I look to Schön to help me explain the role of reflection and intuitive knowing in the midst of action. While it took me a long time to become "theory smart," I feel I truly understand the theories on which I am building my research. With my theories intact I could continue learning about the qualitative methodologies of narrative and phenomenology.

As is the norm with qualitative research, it seems as soon as you think you have an understanding of what you want to do, something changes. I was fighting to keep my experiences separate, to not intrude on the stories of my participants. I knew that I encompassed twenty-four years of teaching experience and that it would be hard not to contribute to the my participants' interviews. It was through the use of phenomenology that I discovered I could tell my story as a researcher studying the phenomenon of "staying" separate from the stories of my participants.

What does it mean to stay? Is staying just a physical act? Is it holding steadfast to what you believe in, hold dear? Is it done because there is nowhere else to go…or if there is another place, is it no better than where you are? Why do I choose to stay? for convenience, for comfort, security? Why does anyone stay anywhere? How often are people forced to leave- to go against their will? To be displaced- to feel abandoned by a system, a person? It will be interesting to hear why from my participants. What if they chose not to share? What if they are not honest- they lie or tell me what they think I want to hear? Will I be able to tell? Will I know? How will I know, what will I do? I'm not done bridling my thoughts on this topic, but need to stop for now… (Journal Entry, November 20, 2009)

Van Manen (1990) explains, "The problem of phenomenological inquiry is not always that we know too little about the phenomenon we wish to investigate, but that we know too much" (p.46). "Knowing too much" is a concern. I am continuing to deal with this knowing too much by bridling my assumptions and pre-understandings.

Bridling was introduced by Dahlberg (2006) as a metaphor based upon her experiences with horseback riding. Rather than bracketing ones assumptions and putting them aside, Dahlberg believes that you can't just put aside your experiences; they are there with you always influencing you to some extent. Bridling as a concept draws on Merleau-Ponty's philosophical perspective of the *threads of intentionality*. These are the threads that connect us with the world which could never be cut off but could be tightened and loosened. Dahlberg felt that

bridling while horseback riding accomplished much the same thing. The rider has the ability to tighten and slacken the reins on the horse. This metaphor is a clear visual for me. It is a place that I can say what I feel and can question myself continually. There are three aspects of bridling as described by Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008): 1. Like "bracketing," bridling is "the restraining of one's pre-understanding in the form of personal beliefs, theories, and other assumptions that otherwise would mislead the understanding of meaning and thus limit the research options" (p.129 – 130). 2. It is also about the "understanding as a whole" not just the "pre-understanding"- this is done so as to not "understand too quickly, too carelessly" (p. 130). It is an "open and alert attitude of activity waiting for the phenomenon to show up and display itself within the relationship" (p. 130); and, 3. It is forward looking rather than backward looking**,** allowing "the phenomenon to present itself" (p. 130). The following is a partial example of my bridling about what it means to bridle. See appendix A for journal entry in its entirety.

What does it mean to bridle, to truly bridle? I know it is different from bracketing in that we not only look back- but forward. We put aside our assumptions, first guesses to continue questioning. But what if we come back around to where we first began? Why even go through this process- this questioning? Does it bring clarity or, as I sometimes find- more confusion? I have a difficult time focusing in on one thing; my mind has a tendency to wonder and to wander. I am very curious- always have been, probably always will; it's gotten me in trouble many times. It seems that I do not come to a conclusion when I bridle...is this what was intended? Dahlberg (2008) tells us the "the things themselves…are always something more than what meets the eye" (p. 121). The core of "phenomenology, hermeneutics and lifeworld research" is an openness to the things themselves which "means to not make definite what is indefinite" (p.121- 122). She speaks of bridling as a way of not imposing ourselves on things- "we do not make definite what is indefinite" (p. 121). When I bridle- am I keeping things indefinite and is this a good thing? Don't we need to come to a conclusion, an end? Is it good, is it healthy to keep questioning and not settle?

I have found that with researching, it is impossible for me to separate myself from my study. Instead, I have decided to embrace this problem by allowing my thoughts and experiences to run parallel with those of my participants. The use of bridling allows me to concentrate on my participants while at the same time giving me that place I need to have my voice heard. I am better able to hear the individual stories which are told that are so similar to my own.

When asking the question, *why do exceptional teachers choose to stay*? it is imperative to look at teachers' past experiences through their reflections on their practice, as well as other experiences they find significant. While their situations may be similar, their experiences will differ. Narrative inquiry is concerned with discovering and trying to understand experience

through collected descriptions of storied events. These collected descriptions are synthesized by way of a plot into a story or stories. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006; Polkinghorne, 1988).

To Clandinin and Connelly (2000) narrative inquiry is a way of understanding lived experiences and they often refer to their work as “stories of experience”. Narrative is considered both the phenomenon and the method; central to narrative inquiry are the beliefs that stories give meaning to people's lives, and the stories are treated as data. Based on Dewey’s theory of experience, Clandinin and Connelly believe that growth and transformation should occur in the retelling of stories, though this may sometimes be difficult. With narrative inquiry the researcher is constantly negotiating motion in four directions: “inward and outward, forward and backward;” this is based on “Dewey’s notion of interaction” (p. 50). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain: “By inward, we mean toward the internal conditions such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions. By outward, we mean toward the existential conditions, that is the environment. By backward and forward, we refer to temporality –past, present, and future” (p.50). “To experience an experience” then “is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways and to ask questions pointing each way” (p. 50).

The relationship between the terms narrative analysis and narrative inquiry is not only in that both methods use narrative or story as their basis for analysis; they both study how stories are socially constructed, both prompt the reader to grow and “think beyond the text” (Riessman, 2008, p. 13) with growth and transformation occurring through the process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While meaning has a tendency to be constructed in narrative analysis, and is interpreted in narrative inquiry, both focus on the details, the “how and why a particular event is storied” with “particulars and context” coming to the fore (Riessman, 2008, p. 12-13). “Narrative methods in qualitative research exist in the tension between the tales we live and the tales we tell” (Geelan, 2003, p. 8). This tension is what makes narrative both exciting and challenging.

Sampling Procedure

Snowballing, chain or network sampling was the selection strategy I used in order to “obtain(s) knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests” (Glesne, 2006, p. 35). It was important to have criteria in place so that an understanding of the specifics of the characteristics or traits of the participants would be understood. My criteria were simple; my participants had to be art teachers with 20+ years of art teaching experience, and they had to be what I considered exceptional. I defined exceptional teachers as those who are more than effective at teaching curriculum and standards; exceptional teachers are those who inspire, motivate and create learning experiences which our children remember. Exceptional teachers are the risk takers who are

willing to make mistakes. They step outside of their comfort zones and are committed to their profession and their students. These teachers also persevere in doing what they know is right for their students. They are problem-solvers and answer finders. Exceptional teachers are flexible, willing to change and adapt to new situations. Not all teachers are exceptional and exceptional teachers are not exceptional 100% of the time.

The criteria were used to start the chain of events that led to obtaining a pool of participants by word of mouth or other forms of passed on dialogue. It is important to note that while snowballing may sound random, it is actually used to "purposively fill the data needs of a study" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 141). Two main approaches I used to locate my participants were through the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and through recommendations. I used my contacts at both the state and national level to begin the selection process. These connections allow me to contact many gatekeepers, or those who have access to participants, personally. All of those I interviewed came up more than once.

Participants

My participants are all art teachers: two high school teachers, two middle school teachers, six elementary teachers and one art teacher who travels between a middle and high school. Nine are women and two are men. Among the grade levels, participants from middle school were the most difficult to find. I am finishing my interviews and transcriptions at this time and will be conducting my data analysis over the next several weeks.

Data Collection Methods

The following forms of data were and continue to be collected: minimal field notes taken during the interviews so that I could focus on the person being interviewed; using journal records (my bridling journal and ponderings) (Savin-Baden & van Niekerk, 2007); performing unstructured open-ended interviews that are "dyadic" or one-to-one (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 142); as well as through recorded phone calls and e-mail. Written or visual documents such as personal letters, photos of the participants or artwork examples; and letter writing/e-mail are also being collected. Tape recording of interviews and e-mailing for clarification and as a way for participants to share thoughts that may ~~later~~ occur after the interview are also being done. Narrative inquiry reveals that the statement by itself is more meaningful within the context of the story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006; Polkinghorne, 1988, 2005; Reissman, 2008). Taking notes of where, when and the circumstances surrounding the narrative are also being noted.

Initial Findings

Dewey (1938) explained that life is filled with tensions and that "problems are the stimulus to thinking…growth depends upon the presence of difficulty to be overcome by the exercise of

intelligence" (p.79). While on the surface my participants look alike- exceptional art teachers of 20+ years, each teacher is unique yet connected to the others by their stories of teaching….I am in the very early stages of analysis. I am finishing my transcriptions, member checking for clarity and accuracy and I while I have not created official categories, five common character traits are emerging from these exceptional teachers who chose to stay in the art room: Care, overcoming Identity socialization, Perseverance/persistence, Sense of Humor, and Personal fortitude. I will use excerpts from some of the interviews to illustrate each of these headings.

The act of caring or loving is not out of the ordinary for teachers of any caliber. What I find intriguing is that the care and love were based on fortitude. The stories were of believing in a child no one else believed in, of not giving up nor accepting failure.

> "…..was in a mentally handicapped class and he was very old to be in elementary school, you know, he'd been held back and so forth. He just had this look in his eye that I just saw that there was something in there, but my only experience was he was there for two years and I had had no connection with him. He would come and go around and secretly cut up other peoples papers…….I didn't give up on him."

Identity socialization is the conflict between roles. The role of an artist or performer, and the role as an arts or music teacher might contradict one another as each role is attempted. This is referred to as "role stress" which may be "at the heart of an unsatisfactory work life" (Scheib, 2006, p. 6). Each teacher interviewed has learned how to overcome this; they are an artist and a teacher.

"Well, I just wanted to do art and I just needed to do it…….. I just didn't realize how much I was going to get suckered in and love it [teaching]."

"working on my own art keeps my teaching from becoming stagnant…it rejuvenates me and makes me a better teacher."

Perseverance/persistence

> "I'd tell anybody that walks in the building it's the hardest job you'll ever love. It is not an easy job. It is physically exhausting, it is mentally challenging, you can't stop for a minute- your mind is going all the time. You are getting prepared for the next class that comes in; you're problem solving what you're gonna do, it's, it's, …. it is wonderful!"

Sense of Humor

> "…it was so *big* there was this moment of silence…… watching this large, wet wharf rat climb down from the cabinet dazed and confused with a bloody nose from the poison. [name omitted] went over and grabbed it by the tail, now you got to understand, I'm talking opossum size rat, and he got this thing by the tail, 42 seventh graders squealing as they dodged out of the way … walked to the exit to fling the rat into the school

dumpster. He gave it a gladiator, lasso swing over his head missing the dumpster and landing on the flat roof being tarred. All the men on roof stepped back to make way for the rat which stuck to the roof. 6' 5" and about 110 pounds lean and mean [name omitted]told me, "I ain't afraid a nothin' " and I believed him."

"laugh, laugh, and then laugh some more"

Personal fortitude

"my parents didn't want me to do anything with art……I was left to myself, no help."

"I got called on the carpet because I was showing the slides of "nekkid men and women" to the students….I had to repeat the names of "those guys" to the superintendent….Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci,…..and he found out they were "legit" so he pointed right at me and said, "OK, but I'm watching you". I later had to repaint the exit signs and paint wooden slices of watermelons for his wife's kitchen……any time I questioned anything he'd come into my art room and take measurements for the new teacher workroom."

Each participant had to face personal challenges, some physical, others financial, many emotional. Teaching is hard; it is, to quote one of my participants, "one of the hardest jobs you'll ever love." While my research is not complete, I am coming to the conclusion. *Sometimes we need to hear, speak and open our eyes to what is happening in the classroom. I struggle with separating myself from the stories I'm hearin*g. (*Journal Entry, June11, 2010)*

As I finish my last semester of classes and beginning the analysis of my data I feel that I am once again at the beginning of my research. Like Shammas (1989), "once again I stand at the gate that is ajar. Now that my life has followed the course of the winding arabesque, I find myself once more at the place where I started" (p.226).

References

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clandinin, J. D. (2006). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Clandinin, J. D., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cohen-Evron, N. (2002). Why do good art teachers find it hard to stay in the public school system? *Studies in Art Education, 44*(1), pp. 79-94.

Dahlberg, K. (2006). The essence of essences – the search for meaning structures in phenomenological analysis of lifeworld phenomena. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, *1*, pp. 11-19.

Dahlberg, K., Dahlberg, H., & Nystrom, M. (2008). *Reflective lifeworld research*. Studentlitteratur: Lund, Sweden.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Lafayette, IN: Kappa Delta Phi.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Eisner, E. W. & M. Day (Ed) (2004). *Handbook of research and policy in art education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.

Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2005). *Teachers' voices: Storytelling and possibility*. Greenwich, CH: Information Age Publishing.

Geelan, D. (2003). *Weaving narrative nets to capture classrooms: Multimethod qualitative approaches for educational research*. Dordretcht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (3rd edition). New York: Pearson Education.

Patterson, J. H., Collins, L. & Abbott, G. (2004). A study of teacher resilience in urban schools. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 31*(1), pp. 3-11.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. NY: State University of New York Press.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), pp. 137-145.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Sabol, F. R. (2004). An overview of art teacher recruitment, certification, and retention. In E. W. Eisner & M. Day (Ed), *Handbook of research and policy in art education*, (pp. 523-551). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Publishers.

Savin-Baden, M. & van Niekerk, L. (2007). Narrative inquiry: Theory and practice. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *31*(3), pp. 459-472.

Scheib, J. W. (2006). Policy implications for teacher retention: Meeting the needs of the dual identities of arts educators. *Art Education Policy Review, 107*(6), pp.5-10.

Schön, D.A. (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.

Shammas, A. (1988). Arabesque. Viking: London.

van Manen, M. (1990) *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Althouse Press: London: Ontario, Canada.

Appendix A

What does it mean to bridle, to truly bridle? I know it is different from bracketing in that we not only look back- but forward. We put aside our assumptions, first guesses to continue questioning. But what if we come back around to where we first began? Why even go through this process- this questioning? Does it bring clarity or, as I sometimes find- more confusion? I have a difficult time focusing in on one thing; my mind has a tendency to wonder and to wonder. I am very curious- always have been, probably always will; it's gotten me in trouble many times. It seems that I do not come to a conclusion when I bridle...is this what was intended? Dahlberg (2008) tells us "the things themselves…are always something more than what meets the eye" (p. 121). The core of "phenomenology, hermeneutics and lifeworld research" is an openness to the things themselves which "means to not make definite what is indefinite" (p.121- 122). She speaks of bridling as a way of not imposing ourselves on things- "we do not make definite what is indefinite" (p. 121). When I bridle- am I keeping things indefinite and is this a good thing? Don't we need to come to a conclusion, an end? Is it good, is it healthy to keep questioning and not settle?

While I could not find any one definition in her book on bridling; Dahlberg (2008) gives us three aspects of bridling : 1. Like "bracketing" bridling is "the restraining of one's pre-understanding in the form of personal beliefs, theories, and other assumptions that otherwise would mislead the understanding of meaning and thus limit the research options" (p.129 – 130). 2. it's also about the "understanding as a whole" not just the "pre-understanding"- this is done so as to not "understand too quickly, too carelessly" (p. 130). It is an "open and alert attitude of activity waiting for the phenomenon to show up and display itself within the relationship" (p. 130); and, 3. it is forward looking rather than backward looking allowing "the phenomenon to present itself" (p. 130).

Is it possible then to not impose oneself on things? Is it possible to be open enough to allow things to reveal themselves? Will bridling allow me to focus and see how I find myself researching my study? Or, perhaps not focus- maybe this is the point, maybe this slowing down causes one to focus on multi possibilities, but not to focus on one thing (intentionality?); perhaps the idea is to focus on the possibilities? This "pointing forward"- perhaps like riding a horse you are focused on the end of your path, but you must first move through the forest, pass the trees, through the field... all important parts of the journey to get to that final destination. Perhaps this is how to uncover the hidden meanings? Will bridling allow me to allow the phenomena to be "illuminated" and allow me to see "in what way their meanings are made explicit" (p. 131)? Will I be able to acknowledge my past experiences, put them aside and, as Dahlberg says point forward for understanding? Will this technique help me in understanding myself as a reflective researcher? What happens if and when I discover that something really isn't what I thought it might be? What if I discover this after the fact- do you go back and change your assumptions? I

like the questioning and pushing forward....I hope that I can keep my research fresh and not supply my understanding with meaning, but allow the phenomena to reveal itself- (Journal entry, November 22, 2009).