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The Relationship of Teacher, Student, and Content in the Clinical Psychology Classroom

Hannah Lord
Antioch University - New England

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by

Hannah Lord

B.A., Brown University, 1998
M.S., Antioch University New England, 2008

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by

Hannah Lord

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Psychology
and hereby certify that it is accepted*.

Dissertation Committee Chairperson:
Theodore J. Ellenhorn, PhD

Dissertation Committee members:
Peter Baldwin, PhD
John T. Murray, PsyD

Accepted by the
Department of Clinical Psychology Chairperson

Kathi A. Borden, PhD

on 12/10/12

***** Signatures are on file with the Registrar's Office at Antioch University New England.

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Table of Contents

Abstract

The field of clinical psychology is in the midst of redefining graduate school education with a push for competency-based approaches and measurable learning outcomes. This dissertation explores the best-practice knowledge regarding the education of professional clinical psychology graduate students and uses cooperative inquiry to richly detail the educational approach of a thus far "silent stakeholder," Dr. Colborn W. Smith, a long-time teacher and training director. This inquiry is intended to help me [Hannah Lord] understand an important personal educational experience, to explore the tangible art of teaching that made such an experience possible, and to contribute to the evolving discourse on training within the field of professional clinical psychology. In the paper that follows, the project is introduced, the relevant literature is reviewed, the research approach is detailed, and the findings are discussed.

Keywords: education, teaching, training, classroom

> I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I one of your Hollywood-movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me. (Ellison, 1964/1995, p.3)

"To risk meaning nothing is to start to play" (Derrida, 1972/1981, p.11).

The Relationship of Teacher, Student, and Content in the Clinical Psychology Classroom

Chapter 1

Several years ago in Stamford, Connecticut, a set of elementary schools implemented a style of classroom management called *Responsive Classroom*—a model that addresses how teachers can engage students and facilitate community within their classrooms (Charney, 2002). This model is about classroom environment and student and teacher interactions and relationships; it is not about academic content. The large-scale implementation in Stamford was carefully tracked by a group of researchers who aimed to look at outcomes of strong and weak implementers of the *Responsive Classroom* model (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). What the researchers found after three years was a lot of expected data about the social milieu of the classroom and one piece of totally unexpected data: Math scores within the high-implementation schools had skyrocketed. So three groups—control, low-implementers, high-implementers—all teaching the same math content, in the same format, with the same materials, and in the high-implementation schools, those that shifted attention to environment, to relationship, to engaging students directly and intimately, math scores inexplicably and significantly rose. Changing the relationship between students and teachers changed the way the students engaged with and integrated content (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006).

This example speaks to the more personal experiences that spurred this dissertation. In my third and fourth years within the Doctoral Clinical Psychology program at Antioch University, I took a series of classes with Dr. Colborn W. Smith [Colby], a psychologist, 35-year teaching veteran, Director of Student Affairs, founding member of Antioch University's doctoral program in clinical psychology, and, as I would come to learn in later conversations, someone who has spent most of his life thinking about how we as a profession welcome, nourish, and train

students in the art of therapy. Colby's classes were both tangibly and intangibly different from any class I had taken previously.

Tangibly, Colby brought apples to class each day, was particular about the lighting, asked us to write him letters rather than papers, encouraged us to write about our grandparents, invited our metaphors and images rather than our intellectual critiques, and requested that we not take notes but instead trust that we would retain what was most important and useful—and likely different for each of us. There was something intangible in these classes as well: A curiosity? A playfulness? A faith? Yes, these descriptors all in some way fit, and yet they do not fully capture that atmosphere; leaving his classes, I could not pinpoint just what it was that felt so valuable. What I did know was that in these classes that *felt* so different, I felt, acted, learned, and ultimately acted differently as well—as I sat in this different class, with a different sort of teacher, I also began to sit differently with myself, with the classroom content, and with my clients. Like the budding mathematicians in Stamford, things "skyrocketed" for me and yet I could not say why, nor point to the specific content of my learning. What I realized as I reflected on Colby's class, in other words, was that traditional notions of "content" could not explain what I had garnered from Colby's classes in the same way that math "content" could not explain the significant difference in math learning in Stamford.

This insight led me to a relatively simple set of questions: What had happened in those classrooms? Was it intentional? Did our field of clinical psychology include some language or explanation for that experience? To answer these questions, I looked to the training literature of the discipline, and I asked Colby himself.

What I found in the literature (and will discuss in much greater detail in the literature review portion of this dissertation) surprised me. Whereas in print the professional clinical

psychology community has very rich descriptions of the content clinical psychology students should master and the skills they should be able to display in order to be "good" therapists, there is little that speaks directly to how teachers might best move students towards content and skill mastery in the day-to-day life of their classrooms. When we as a field do talk about and look at teaching or training (two terms that are used relatively interchangeably), we do so in a manner that is either very broad and nonspecific or quite mechanized and rote. In either case, the results of the research on the effectiveness of our training models are not that promising: Our approaches to teaching are not reliably correlated to better outcomes for clients, and in many cases, our training seems to have a negative impact on those outcomes. For reasons that I will discuss in the literature review, the result of this state of affairs is a body of training literature that actually talks a lot about what is unteachable but doesn't talk very specifically about students, teachers, or the relationships they may have with each other and around their academic pursuits. In other words, besides finding no descriptions of what I had experienced in Colby's classrooms, I realized I would find little to guide me as I, an aspiring teacher, imagined stepping into a classroom wondering what it was my job to *do*.

What I found when I brought these questions to Colby—asking him to teach me about his classrooms and his teaching—was, perhaps not surprisingly, as you will learn in this dissertation, an unwillingness to be a subject and to answer my questions directly. Instead, Colby proffered a revised invitation to explore these questions together—engaging and languaging through shared exploration and reflection.

In my exploration of the literature and in the invitation to and from Colby, I found the impetus for this dissertation: Could I, within the field of clinical psychology, think deeply about what happens in our classrooms outside of academic content and traditional notions of teachers

as the relatively neutral conveyers of that content? Could I do this in a way that was not a "top-down" theoretical hypothesis, but instead could I do it from the "bottom-up:" Could I grow action from action harvesting what the educator Schulman (2004) succinctly calls "the wisdom of practice" (p. 504) and richly detail the artistry of teaching? Could I and Colby describe something both tangible and intangible, so that it could be known, named, valued, and *heard*? In other words, could I, and Colby, join the conversation!?

I imagine this sort of dissertation will be of interest to me, to any aspiring teacher looking for guidance as she steps into the role of "professor," and to students and teachers, who, like me, have experienced something valuable in their learning and teaching that, without language, is in danger of being overlooked or undervalued. More generally, the timing of this dissertation seems important. As the field of professional clinical psychology shifts from more traditional notions of teaching towards a competency model, the need for more detailed reflection on the teaching process is paramount and has been highlighted by the frontrunners of this shift as an important area of study (Borden & McIlvried, 2010).

I have explained what brought me to this topic and briefly outlined the territory and the conversations that this dissertation will be joining. I will now review the relevant literature and take a more detailed look at the state of the training literature within our field. This review will survey what we have tried, how it has worked, and where we might move next. With this literature review, I will also explain why I see this dissertation as useful in both focus and form.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review discusses the body of literature within the field of professional clinical psychology that is dedicated to exploring, assessing, and detailing the training of clinical psychology students within professional doctoral clinical psychology programs. First we will look at the goal of clinical training ("good" therapists), the components that seem to contribute to this goal (technique and relationship), and the general and specific approaches our field has taken towards training for each of these two components. Second, we will look at two promising areas of training (engaging the intrapersonal world of the student and the relationship between teachers and students) that each have evidence pointing towards their importance to current and future training discourses. Lastly, I will summarize the main points of this review as they relate to the aspirations and intent of this dissertation.

The Goal of Clinical Training: Good Relationships, Good Technique

Returning to Stamford, Connecticut, we might imagine that an elementary school's objective is to "produce" students who know how to "do" math. One of the most basic objectives of training programs in clinical psychology is to "produce" therapists who know how to "do" therapy. The effectiveness of therapy is measured, in the research literature, by looking at positive outcomes of therapy—that is, a client, therapist, or independent reporter's observation that something has changed for the better. What contributes to good outcomes has been the subject of several decades of research. Although the details are often debated, an average estimate of effect that many researchers cite is Lambert and Barley's (2001) breakdown between four factors: Fifteen percent of the variance in outcome can be attributed to therapist and client's expectations about the therapy; forty percent of the variance can be attributed to factors occurring outside of therapy, such as getting a job or falling in love; thirty percent of the variance

can be attributed to factors that are generally seen as common to most therapies and that include the therapeutic relationship (also referred to as the therapeutic alliance) as well as many ways of relating, such as empathy, genuineness, and congruence; and fifteen percent of the variance can be attributed to the specific techniques that the therapist uses within the therapy (Lambert & Barley, 2001). It is these last two factors over which therapists are seen to have a significant measure of control, and towards which most clinical training programs aim.

The Relationship Component

That the relationship, and certain ways of relating, accounts for more of the variance in therapy outcomes than any particular technique or model is an often cited, well-accepted notion within the research literature (Beutler, Machado, & Neufeldt, 1994; Hilliard, Henry, & Strupp, 2000). Attention to the alliance between therapist and client dates back to Freud, who argued that something active and therapeutic was happening in the relationship between analyst and analysand (Horvath, 2001a). Over time, various theoretical orientations have taken up the notion of an active and curative relationship factor in various degrees; perhaps most often cited is Carl Rogers (1957), who saw this relationship as the key to therapeutic growth. Currently, the notion of therapeutic relationship is considered a transtheoretical, solidly validated, and central mechanism of therapeutic change (Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000; Wampold, 2001).

The Technique Component

The research literature suggests that technique also contributes to outcome, though to a lesser degree than does relationship. Figuring out what technique is best has been the subject, especially recently, of rigorous and hotly debated study. The idea that we must know how to *do* something, however, has been present since the beginning of the PsyD degree, the creation of which was propelled by a desire for training that was less about what one *knew* per se and more

about what one would primarily be *doing*—therapy (Benjamin, 2001; Peterson, 2005). Although the PsyD degree aimed to achieve better training in "doing" therapy by providing more relevant, practice-focused training, it was, at its start, still largely flavored by a traditional model of graduate education—the mastery of academic content was central (Benjamin, 2001; Kaslow et al., 2004; Nelson, 2007). More recently, our field has begun to adopt a competency model of education that more fully aligns with the PsyD goals: The competency movement offers a rich and detailed account of what therapists should be able to *do* rather than what they need to *know* (Borden & McIlvried, 2010; Kaslow et al., 2004). While there is a drive within the competency movement to view the relationship factor as central to all areas of competence (Peterson, Peterson, Abrams, Stricker, & Ducheny, 2010), technique remains a major focus of clinical psychology programs.

We have now identified the two components that make up the yardstick of training: that is, relationship and technique. Although "relationship" is sometimes referred to as a technique within the literature, within our discussion we will use "technique" to refer to a discrete set of interventions that are governed by an overarching and distinguishable theory of psychological change (for example, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Motivational Interviewing) and that might include, for example, the techniques of chain analysis, cultivating willingness, or paradoxical questions. Without entering the debate, to be elucidated more below, as to whether relationship can effectively be viewed as a discrete set of actions accurately definable as a "technique," we will distinguish relationship trainings as those trainings specifically aimed at improving relationships—no matter by what means (a continuum spanning from appropriately timed eye contact to personal therapy). First, then, we will look at the general

state of best practice training knowledge in our field, and then we will look specifically at that research as it relates to our two identified training goals—relationship and technique.

Overview of General Approaches to Training

The Research on the Efficacy of Training

Clinical psychology has never focused a significant amount of attention on the intricacies and outcomes of training. In a short summary of the history of training within our field Henry, Strupp, Butler, Schacht, & Binder (1993) point to a 1966 review of 2,741 references that returned only 1% of references speaking about training; this study was repeated in 1979 with largely similar results. Those articles that did speak about training spoke primarily of discrete interviewing skills, and most did not have graduate psychology students as a central cohort. Subsequent updates of these reviews in 1990 and 1995 showed little had improved and concluded that minimal evidence existed for our training models (Miller & Binder, 2002). Now, more than a decade later, the general consensus still seems to be that the empirical research on training is not sufficient either in breadth, cohort studied, or ability to draw direct conclusions about what we should be doing to help students (Barnett, Doll, Younggren, & Rubin, 2007; Fauth, Gates, Vinca, Boles, & Hayes, 2007; Herschell, Kolko, Baumann, & David, 2010; Hill, 2005). Summing up the general state of the training literature, Herschell et al. write, “skill acquisition is assumed rather than confirmed” (p. 450).

This is especially concerning given that the research we do have, discussed in more detail below, is not that promising (Fauth et al., 2007), often showing either a negative impact on therapist behaviors, client outcome, or both (Henry, Schacht, Strupp, Butler, & Binder, 1993; Orlinsky et al., 1999); learning gains that do not reliably sustain after the active training ends (Buser, 2008); a positive change in behaviors (that is, technical improvement) without a parallel

improvement in client outcome (Rea, 2001; Wheeler, 2002); or a lack of correlation to outcome that makes the trainings difficult to truly assess (Buser, 2008). We might say, then, that acquisition is assumed despite significant evidence to the contrary. Dissenters to this view, few and far between, argue not that this is untrue, but rather that the under representation of graduate students within studied cohorts (Hilsenroth, Defife, Blagys, & Ackerman, 2006; Miller & Binder, 2002), makes it difficult to truly access whether claims for or against training models can be substantiated. While this may be technically true, it is hardly reassuring. What can be said fairly and with confidence is that we within clinical psychology do not have a sturdy bridge between the research (what we know about therapy and training) and how we teach or train (Piper, 2004; Whiston & Coker, 2000).

The Focus on Content Rather Than Competence

Two other trends within the training literature are worth mentioning. First, in a wonderful training article written in 1964, Truax, Carkhuff, and Douds point out that within the clinical psychology field, training had, up to that point, primarily been focused on discrete actions and accumulated knowledge—in other words, discrete behaviors and didactic teaching aimed at the accumulation of knowledge. Forty-six years later, many authors point out similarly that our research has looked at accumulated content (something more easily measured) more often than we have looked at a more holistic notion of competence; this is despite the fact that these two concepts (accumulated content and competence) are not always positively correlated (Herschell et al., 2010). In many ways, this is a dilemma of conflation that the competency movement aims to address, however it is also a dilemma that the training research has yet to fully tackle.

The Lack of Focus on the Classroom

The second notable trend within the training literature is that when we do look at training in a more holistic way, the training we're looking at is largely outside the classroom. For example, there is a rich body of literature that looks at supervision and even mentorship as an active area of engaged, experiential, relational learning (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; Ronnestad & Ladany, 2006). The classroom as a location of learning is often neglected or overlooked. For example, in considering the capacity to build alliance, Horvath (2001a) asks whether the best place to address such a skill is in our screening of potential students, in supervision, or through personal therapy—the classroom is never mentioned. One wonders if one reason for this is that supervision grows out of analytic tradition (Piper, 2004) with a rich body of literature, whereas classrooms grow out of a more traditional content- and knowledge-based tradition where the actual act of teaching is not seen as central or essential.

A Summary of General Approaches to Training

To review, there is general consensus in the field that our empirical research does not tell us enough about how or why we train students in the manner that we do. Some of the research we do have suggests that the manner in which we do teach doesn't work as well as we might wish. Other research, showing that trained therapists achieve better outcomes than untrained (Stein & Lambert, 1995), suggests that our training is useful; we just can't really say why or how. Moreover, the trend within our training discourse has been to look at concrete skills and at training experiences that occur outside the classroom and to overlook teaching as a potentially essential part of learning outcomes. To understand where we might move next if we wished to improve the breadth or quality of the training literature, let us look more closely at the research we do have, specifically as it relates to our two training goals—technique and relationship.

A Review of Training Literature Specific to Technique

A Seminal Study

Perhaps the seminal study on training and the one that most complicates our notions of training within clinical psychology is the Vanderbilt II study by Henry, Strupp et al. (1993). This five-year-long project looked at the training and implementation of Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy [TLDP] (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993). Large and well funded, this was the first study of its kind to look so closely at the process of training as well as the impact of the particular intervention itself. This study was particularly useful to those interested in training clinical psychologists for two reasons. First, although the cohort in the study was composed of experienced therapists, not graduate students, the training that was provided closely mirrored the type of teaching typically seen within clinical psychology programs—for example, a didactic format combined with group supervision (Henry, Strupp et al., 1993, p. 434). Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the Vanderbilt II study did something that no study had ever done before and that very few have been able to do since: The researchers took pre-measures of therapists and their skill sets so that they could then measure specifically what the impact of their training had been (Miller & Binder, 2002). The findings of the Vanderbilt II study have since been echoed by smaller-scale studies and ones more directly looking at a graduate cohort (e.g., Hilsenroth et al., 2006); however, it continues to be considered unique in the breadth, depth, and detail of its findings (Miller & Binder, 2002).

The research by Henry, Strupp et al. (1993) led to three major training-specific findings. First, they found that mastery of content (that is, TLDP) was not as straightforward a process as one might guess. For example, although training led to improved technical prowess, this prowess was often accompanied by an increase in the therapists' rigidity and by poorer therapeutic

alliances. Therapists and researchers both reported that therapists "spontaneity and intuition" (Henry, Strupp et al., 1993, p. 438) declined; and the therapists, after training, were rated as "less approving and supportive, less optimistic, and more authoritative and defensive" (p. 439). Therapists also reported difficulty integrating new methods with their established personal styles and an increased worry over doing the "right" or "wrong" thing within sessions. These observations and reports reflected what researchers were seeing in sessions and in client outcome: Although therapists seemed to get better with technique, they were getting worse at maintaining the therapeutic relationship—an especially significant finding given that TLDP pays particular attention to this relationship (Henry, Strupp et al., 1993). The central idea here is that although training led to good adherence to a specific technique, adherence did not necessarily lead to a more global competency or more positive outcome.

The Difference Between Adherence and Competence

In a review of the impact of training on treatment behaviors and treatment outcome, Miller and Binder (2002) point out that across a number of studies this is frequently the case. Mastering technique, also known as adherence, is most often *not* related to a more global competence (a qualitative measure of treatment quality as rated by experts in a particular intervention)—though they are often mistakenly conflated. Similarly, Miller and Binder report that across a range of studies, adherence or fidelity to a particular model has not been well linked to outcome. Part of the reason for this seems to be that successful therapists (as measured by outcome) are those that display a flexible and eclectic approach (Miller & Binder, 2002), often diverging from a given technique or set of techniques. Miller and Binder, in their review, go so far as to say that "Therapeutic improvisation may be the ultimate goal of effective psychotherapy training" (p. 196) and that "the inability so far of teachers and researchers adequately to define

and operationalize the components of therapist competence and expertise may be the primary reason for inconsistent relationship among therapy training, therapist performance fidelity, and treatment outcome" (p. 196). Flexibility and the ability to engage in a metaperspective of ongoing interactions are goals that the competency movement has defined (Mangione & Nadkarni, 2010; Rubin et al., 2007) and ones that many new theories of training, particularly those fueled by a focus on mindfulness, are beginning to explore (Bruce, Manber, Shapiro, & Constantino, 2010; Fauth et al., 2007). This brings us to the second finding of the Vanderbilt studies.

Different Teachers Appear to Produce Different Learning Outcomes

The second finding of the Vanderbilt II studies was that different teachers, of equal expertise and using the same material and format, had cohorts who ultimately integrated the material much differently and more effectively. When subsequent researchers went back to look more closely at the difference between trainers, they indeed found an identifiable difference in the ways in which teachers engaged their trainees (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993). The teacher who had better training outcomes both in terms of therapist learning curve and subsequent client outcomes:

- Was more specific in the ways he asked trainees to engage with the material during supervision (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993).
- More often focused on, and encouraged trainees to focus on, their own internal processes and core processes rather than focusing on the client and their processes (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993).
- Discussed clients largely in terms of specifics within the current therapy rather than in broader theoretical frames (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993).

- Was very specific in what the therapist had done well while at the same time emphasizing the trainees' beginner status despite the experience with which they came to the training (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993).

This research suggests many further questions. Why, for example, would emphasizing an experienced clinician's beginner status be helpful? Overall, however, the research again emphasizes the intricate nature of training. Taught, or we might say engaged, in a different manner, trainees also then engaged, assimilated, used the content and their own self-processes, and related to their clients in a different manner. This study supports the argument that the debate over *what* techniques to teach must widen to include *how* to teach those techniques.

Therapists' Personal Histories Appear to Impact Learning Outcomes

The third finding, which I will discuss again when we look at training for relationship below, was how the therapists' relationship to themselves impacted how they assimilated the training for technique. For example, those trainees with "hostile and controlling introjects" (Henry, Schacht et al., 1993, p. 446) showed both the best technical adherence *and* the largest increase in subsequent negative interpersonal behaviors within the therapy. This idea, that one's relationship to one's own history and internal processes impacts how one engages the client, has been well established (Dunkle & Freidlander, 1996; Henry, Schacht, & Strupp, 1990; Hersoug, 2004; Mallinckrodt, Poter, & Kivlighan, 2005) and will be discussed in greater depth below. That one's individual relationship to oneself *also* impacts how one engages with and assimilates training and content is a newer idea albeit one that is gaining increased focus (Bruce et al., 2010; Roffman, 1996).

A Summary of Training Specific to Technique

In summary, the Vanderbilt II studies, along with several smaller subsequent studies, point to the idea that training for technique cannot be viewed as a simple, content-driven process. Instead, training for technique is a complex and multifaceted endeavor that impacts and is impacted by the way in which trainers engage trainees, by individual trainees' relationships to themselves, and by trainees' ability to display divergence rather than adherence to a particular model. In other words, training for technique cannot be viewed as a simple question of what technique to train for (i.e. traditional debates over content) but instead must broaden its lens to include the ways in which trainees engage with their trainer, the content, and themselves. While such a conclusion has far-reaching implications when it comes to, for example, treatment manuals, assessing efficacy of treatment, and how to achieve the goals of the competency movement, for our purposes the importance of this research is the spotlight it shines on the process of training not as an add-on but as central and inseparable from mastery. Moreover this spotlight gives credence to the hypothesis of this dissertation: that it would be useful to look more closely at the intricacies of teaching as well as at individual students and their learning.

A Review of Training Literature Specific to Relationship

Therapeutic Relationship, Common Factors, and the Relationship Competency

As already stated, the therapeutic relationship or alliance and related common factors are the most significant mechanism of change within psychotherapy (Hilliard et al., 2000). Within the common factors that have been studied, substantial research supports the importance of empathy, and positive regard, congruence, and genuineness have all collected a promising base of research as well (Ackerman, 2003; Benjamin et al., 2001; Lambert & Barley, 2001). When we as a field look towards training for these "skills," the challenge is not small. For example, the

research has shown a range of traits that can help to build a strong alliance—being open, flexible, trustworthy, alert, and relaxed (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2003; Crits-Christoph et al., 2006)—as well as a range of traits that have been shown to be detrimental to that relationship—uncertainty, criticalness, distancing, tenseness, distraction, inappropriate self-disclosure, rigidity (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2001; Crits-Christoph et al., 2006; Hersoug, Hoglend, Havik, von der Lippe, & Monsen, 2009). Moreover, individual concepts, such as congruence, for example, set a high bar. Defined first by Carl Rogers as the therapist being "accurately himself" (1957, p. 997, as cited in Klein, Kolden, Michels, & Chisholm-Stockard, 2001, p. 396), congruence is described in the literature as being nondefensive, real, and in touch with one's own self and self-experience (Klein et al., 2001; Lambert & Barley, 2001). These are difficult qualities to pinpoint, let alone train for.

While the relationship competency itself does aim to detail these ideas into discrete building blocks (Mangione & Nadkarni, 2010), these are in the end no less overwhelming. This competency spans a field that covers everything from style of dress, hygiene, and timeliness in arriving for meetings to a "sense of spontaneity within relationships" (Mangione & Nadkarni, p. 75) without ever indicating how one specifically achieves these particular learning goals. We are left with fairly basic questions, such as how does a teacher help a trainee to relate better, to be more themselves, and to be more trustworthy and genuine?

Trends in Relationship Trainings

Two trends have emerged in the response to questions such as those just outlined. First, a group of thinkers and writers acknowledge the complexity and importance of relationship and in some way indicate that the self of the therapist, and the therapist in relationship, will be important to training (Peterson et al., 2010; Wheeler, 2002). A subset of these authors stop after

making this statement—in other words, they in no way indicate how, when, where, or what this training will look like. For example, Sumerall, Lopez, and Oehlert (2000), write rather vaguely that training sites should "modify training as necessary to ensure the best treatment is being provided" (p. 7). Another subset of these authors makes a more concerted effort to talk about the process of training for relationship. This group is exemplified by Mangione and Nadkarni (2010), who argue when talking about the relationship competency that the competency can be engaged through the processes of the classroom, not just within the academic subjects themselves. And they do detail this in some way, such as by pointing to the importance of a teacher's having "strong relational skills, an understanding of group process, and a way to help students sit with difficult feelings, interactions, and ambiguity without rushing to blame or to fix" (Mangione & Nadkarni, 2010, p. 80) or suggesting that forums such as fishbowl discussions may be useful training tools (p. 81). While overall such suggestions certainly seem like a good start to talking more deeply about what training entails, as with the first subset of authors, questions of how, when, why, and where echo loudly.

The second, much larger trend in responding to the challenge of training for relationship is to "break down" the components of relating, of empathy, etc., into small pieces that can then be controlled for and taught. This vein of training focuses on everything from body posture, appropriate eye contact, and well-timed facial expressions to accurate reflective statements and honed observational skills. This is a more mechanized view of relationship in that the therapist is construed as something of a technician "doing" the components of relationship rather than as a whole, complex relating body. In a review of such relationship-building training programs, Buser (2008) highlights Ivey's Micro-Counseling Program, Human Resource Training, Interpersonal Process Recall, and the Skilled Counselor Training Model as well as thirty additional protocols.

Research on the Efficacy of Training for Relationship

Considering the first trend, it is difficult to state the adequacy of the training models as they are not well detailed and the authors themselves often state that they are not complete. In the second case of discrete relationship skills, which are much more easily measured, the overall consensus about their efficacy is lukewarm at best (Hill, 2005; Piper, 2004). There are several reasons for this assessment. First, much like the findings of Henry, Strupp et al. (1993), researchers have consistently found that while trainees may master technique, relationships themselves do not improve. In other words, the parts do not actually add up to the whole. The second reason for this assessment is that there is not solid evidence that when trainees do achieve gains both in training and in improving therapeutic relationships, these gains are sustained (Fauth et al., 2007). The third reason that the research on discrete skills is inadequate, and one which will again be discussed in much more detail below, is that students' own history, personality (Henry et al., 1990; Hersoug, 2004; Mallinckrodt et al., 2005), and even social milieu (Dunkle & Freidlander, 1996) appear to have a big impact on the therapeutic alliance, and training focused on techniques of relating has not been able to correct for this (Hilliard et al., 2000). Fourth and lastly, we know that more training generally seems to lead to poorer alliances (Hersoug et al., 2009), which while not specific to relationship training models, does seem to indicate that there is something we do not understand about how to help students learn to build better therapeutic alliances. Suffice to say, we do not have a clear, articulated description of how to train for the therapeutic relationship within the professional clinical psychology literature, and we have evidence that suggests the training we do have is minimal at best.

The Impact This Training Knowledge Has Had on the Field of Clinical Psychology

This review of the literature suggests that the dilemmas just outlined have impacted the field of clinical psychology in five distinct ways. First, there is a large component of our training literature that simply focuses on technique, often exemplified by a focus on evidenced-based practice, without mentioning relationship at all (Norcross, 2002; and see, for example, Chu, 2008). This body of writers seems at times to simply have not read or not believed the outcomes studies that point to the importance of the relationship to therapeutic outcome and its inextricability from technique.

Second, oftentimes the literature relegates relationship training to mentor or supervisory relationships (Clark et al., 2000). While certainly supervision, with its roots in an analytic tradition, has a richer body of literature exploring the development of relational capacity (Piper, 2004), the studies looking at supervision's impact on the therapeutic alliance are positive but certainly not adequate in breadth or depth (Crits-Christoph et al., 2006).

Third, historically for all students (Garfield & Kurtz, 1976; Strupp, 1955), and more currently with problem students (Forrest, Elman, Gizara, & Vacha-Haase, 1999), personal therapy (*rather than training within the school setting*) has also been viewed as a potential training ground for relationship skills. For the general student populations at least, however, this is a weakening trend, with fewer and fewer schools requiring personal therapy and only a portion of therapists-in-training pursuing it (Dearing, Maddux, & Tangney, 2005; Norcross, 2005; Sandell et al., 2006; Weintraub, Dixon, Kohlhepp, & Woolery, 1999; Wiseman & Egozi, 2006).

Fourth, and likely reflective of the trend just discussed, is a tendency to look to relationship training issues only when a problem identified with a particular student emerges

(Barnett, 2007; Mangione & Nadkarni, 2010). This tendency places relational training in a largely remediative (vs. cultivating) frame.

Fifth, and perhaps due in large part to all that has just been discussed, the field works hard and strategizes on how to recruit trainees who, they hypothesize, do not need to be taught certain relationship skills (Crits-Christoph et al., 2006; Hill, 2005). This has the somewhat odd and perhaps unintended effect of suggesting that the relationship skills we seek to train for are somehow no different from day-to-day relating and certainly not the specific, intentional relationship skills distinct to psychology and to therapeutic work (Norcross, 2002, p. 13). While certainly aptitude seems an appropriate criterion for the field, the research literature suggests it is a thin solution to the larger question of how students transform aptitude into therapeutic ability.

Whether we are ignoring the relationship issue, nudging it out of classrooms, reserving it for problem students, or attempting to find students who are in a sense already trained, the message seems to be that relationship skills are in some way unteachable or, in the words of Crits-Christoph et al. (2006) that the "true inner person" is not "trainable" (p. 277). Interestingly, this is not a dilemma uncommon in graduate education. In his expansive study of teaching within various graduate fields, Schön (1987) points out that debates of this kind date back to Socrates' and Plato's arguments over whether virtue could be taught or was only innately born (and then awoken). Schön writes that many graduate schools have traditionally valued knowledge over what he calls the "artistry" (p. 13) and creativity of professionals and that this becomes problematic when it comes to training because what a professional *does* is poorly described in the terms of knowledge or technical prowess and is better described in terms of "'wisdom,'…'intuition' or 'artistry'" (p.13). Schön argues convincingly that this sort of doing is certainly difficult to make explicit.

Our Lack of Clarity Is Problematic

So we in the field of professional clinical psychology are perhaps not alone, which while comforting, is hardly sufficient. As I will say many times in this dissertation, my argument is not that we don't know how to train therapists or that a lot of thoughtful teachers and administrators aren't thinking about this but their representation in the research literature of our field is slim. So while the competency movement, with its insistence on the relationship and the carving of space for integrated personal and professional development, provides important and even essential scaffolding for talking about these very issues, the lack of elaborated training discourses around how students will learn to be effective therapists remains a central concern of our profession. This is true not only because of the cost of our training (five years and roughly one hundred thousand dollars), not only because the competency movement has value only when there is also a path one can take towards it, and not only because our governing ethical code demands it of each of us as clinicians—this is important because, as this literature review has outlined and Rubin et al., (2007) argue, the relational component of therapy underlies *all* of the competencies, and its achievement is paramount to our integrity as training institutions and as therapists.

A Summary of Training Specific to Relationship

In summary, the relationship competency spans a wide range of skills, some more discretely defined than others. When it comes to training for relationship, the approach within the field has been either focused on a notion of relating that is quite complex, with an absence of sufficient detail about how to teach towards that complexity in the day-to-day of classrooms, or it has mechanized relationships, largely viewing therapists as technicians, with weak evidence for the actual effectiveness of this approach. The field appears to have dealt with this reality in several ways, including ignoring it, outsourcing the training, constricting the training to

problematic relating, or selecting students whom we view as not needing training. This in many ways suggests that our field actually sees much of the relationship competency in some way as unteachable. This is a common challenge within graduate schools when it comes to the more complex skills that professionals exhibit and that are poorly described by their component pieces. That said, this also poses a significant challenge to our field because relationship is a central building block on which we stand and by which our clinical work defines itself.

Possible New Horizons for the Training Discourse

We have now reviewed the overall goal of clinical training as it relates to doing therapy (good therapeutic outcome) as well as its component pieces (relationship and technique). In this review, I have suggested that we do not yet have a well-articulated training frame for either relationship or technique and, therefore, that we are in danger of not achieving our primary training goals—helping students to do good therapy. This review so far suggests that our training has not sufficiently engaged the intricacies of why or how students arrive at their learning outcomes, though we know that personal history, teacher engagement, and something other than simply mastery of content seem to be important. Moreover, our approach to training for relationship suffers from both an overly broad, under-detailed approach on one end of the spectrum and a technical, mechanized, and not sufficiently validated approach on the other end of the spectrum. In both cases, our research has tended to focus on content rather than process, paid scant attention the classroom setting, and largely ignored the role of the teacher in the learning process (more on this below). We will now shift our lens to two areas of training that we have mentioned briefly already and that represent two possible new horizons for the research discourse on training. First, we will look more closely at the idea that students' internal processes may impact their response to training and their ability to form therapeutic alliances, and we will

consider the implications of this for training. Second, we will look more closely at the ways in which our field has approached the art of teaching and explore promising research suggesting that the relationship between teacher and student is an important area for further study.

The Intrapersonal World of the Student

One of the most striking elements of the training literature on relationship is not actually the lack of specific ideas or well-defined successes, but instead the trend of treating the individual trainee and direct engagement with that individual as, by the absence of focus, unimportant. By this I mean that a competency movement that looks at what therapists need to be able to do without a lengthy and immediate discussion of how we might help trainees "get there" in some way leaves trainees alone and therefore treats them as unimportant. On the other hand, the trend to mechanize relationships into depersonified pieces writes the therapist and student as veritable machines that dole out good eye contact, rather than living, whole beings in active, cooperative engagement. In both cases, the self of the trainee is conspicuously absent.

This phenomenon may in some ways be attributable to the way that trained therapists have often been viewed by those looking to understand relationship. Henry, Schacht et al. (1993), for example, address this when they write "researchers must take seriously the proposition that therapists are not interchangeable units who 'deliver' a standard treatment" (p. 447). As already noted, our research also grows from a tradition of randomized control groups in which the practitioner was inconsequential—generic, if you will (Kim, Wampold, & Bolt, 2006), And Wampold (2001) points out that in our roots or in our yearnings towards the medical model, we have inherited an emphasis on treatments rather than providers. When we have looked at relationship as an embodied, individualized process, the emphasis has more typically been on the client, rather than on the therapist (Dunkle & Freidlander, 1996). Use or maximization of the self

is commonly relegated to psychoanalytic hallways, a perfunctory nod to Carl Rogers, or placed on the shoulders of clinical supervisors, one morsel amongst a smorgasbord of tasks.

A closer look at the research regarding the therapist herself suggests that this "unit" notion of student/therapist is misguided at best. In fact, as we will now explore, the evidence points to the idea that the intrapersonal life of the therapist may be distinct from, as important as, and in some case more important than, the interpersonal or technical aspects of therapy (Horvath, 2001b).

Individual Differences Between Therapists Can't Be Controlled or Accounted For

Despite rather large and consistent efforts to erase the impact of the therapist on therapy, research has repeatedly found evidence that who the therapist is matters above and beyond any specific technique that he or she may deliver. We know this to be true in two ways. First, researchers have not been able to account or control for the impact of the individual provider's influence on outcome. Looking across several studies, Wampold and Brown (2005) summarize that within clinical trials, therapist variability accounted for significant variance in outcome—most often more variance then was attributable to treatment type or the alliance. This finding reflects earlier statements reviewing broad swaths of research such as that by Henry (1998), who wrote that the "largest chunk of outcome variance not attributable to preexisting patient characteristics involves individual therapist differences and the emergent therapeutic relationship between patient and therapist, regardless of technique or school of therapy. This is the main thrust of three decades of empirical research" (p. 128, as cited in, Norcross, 2001, p. 347).

Intrapersonal Factors Impact the Therapeutic Relationship

The individual therapist—their personal history, orientation towards relationship, and even physical body—seems to have an impact on the work of therapy and the alliances built therein. A therapist's interpersonal style of relating (Hersoug, 2004), history of parental bonding (Hersoug), introject (Henry et al., 1990), attachment style (Hersoug, 2004; Mallinckrodt et al., 2005), and even social support network (Dunkle & Freidlander, 1996) have all been correlated to the quality of the working relationships they facilitate. Moreover, a range of research has found support for the idea that when client material touches on the therapist's own history, their interactions change in a way that also impacts the therapeutic relationship (Beutler et al., 1994; Henry et al.; Rosenberger & Hayes, 2002). How one sits with oneself and one's history affects how one sits with clients and the outcomes that are achieved (Bruce et al., 2010; Wampold, 2001). And as already mentioned, the research on training suggests that even relationship-focused trainings cannot correct for the influences just described (Hilliard et al., 2000).

Self-Awareness May Be an Avenue for Impacting Intrapersonal Influences

Though skills training has not shown strong evidence to correct for personal influences, a body of scattered research suggests that when we do engage the self of the therapist, there is actually a notable impact on the therapist and the therapy. We have already reviewed the research by Henry, Schacht et al. (1993) that pointed to the importance of teachers who encouraged trainees to investigate their own internal processes. More currently, mindfulness-based programs are blazing a path in which self-engagement and self-awareness of one's own internal process is central to the training and the therapeutic frame. Additionally, neuropsychology is pointing to self-regulation as the starting point for any interaction aimed at

helping a client learn to self-regulate (Siegel, 2010). And indeed, from these fields grows research that suggests, for example, that when we increase our attunement to ourselves, we also increase attunement to others (Bruce et al., 2010; Roffman, 1996; Rosenberger & Hayes, 2002; Siegel, 2007). This is a phenomenon that therapists themselves often highlight when reflecting on their own careers. In a major study documenting the developmental trajectory of thousands of therapists, Skovholt and Ronnestad (1992) found not only that personal and professional development overlap and intertwine but that the more a therapist matures in their career, the more they are cognizant of this interrelatedness (Donati & Watts, 2005; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992).

Our Training Literature Does Not Reflect This Research

It can seem a bit strange that all that has just been reviewed must be described explicitly and that, even then, it is often disregarded. After all, we are a discipline with deeply reflective analytic roots and, from the research world, the discipline that found monkeys prefer the soft fuzzy towel to actual physical nutrition (Harlow, 1958). In other words, the idea that therapists have complex internal processes that impact therapy or that the motions of relationship do not sufficiently describe the complexity of engagement is not new to our field generally but it is inadequately engaged within our mainstream training literature. We simply do not have detailed literature on how one might address the person-side of the therapist when teaching students to become clinical psychologists (Donati & Watts, 2005). And we have not, I would argue, met the challenge, as Shulman (2004) writes, "of creating a curriculum that is intellectually honest, to use Bruner's phrase, with respect to the knowledge that our communities have acquired" (p. 494). There is real tangible danger in not having a language to describe something—without language, phenomena may be overlooked, under-funded, under-researched, and, subsequently,

under-languaged again. One wonders if this cycle is at work given that, over time, we have spent less rather than more time studying these phenomena (Kim et al., 2006).

A Summary of the Importance of the Intrapersonal

In summary, although much of our training tends to depersonalize the role of the therapist and pay little attention to the intrapersonal influences on therapist and student, it appears that the intrapersonal impacts both therapy and learning outcomes. Traditional methods of training within professional clinical psychology programs have not shown evidence of correcting for this influence. Engaging the internal processes of the student, on the other hand, shows promise in improving both students' assimilation of training content and therapists' ability to build stronger therapeutic alliances and show improved empathy within therapy sessions. While certainly the analytic tradition has paid ample attention to the intrapersonal world of the therapist and student within its training models, engaging the intrapersonal world of the therapist and student within professional clinical psychology programs is a "new" horizon within our current climate and one that the research and training literature is only beginning to explore. We will now turn to the second of the two new horizons forecasted earlier—that is, the role and impact of the teacher within the classroom.

The Role of the Teacher

As already discussed, in their seminal study on training, Henry, Schacht et al. (1993) discovered an interesting and unexpected outcome in their research: They found that the students of different teachers had different training outcomes and their trainees subsequently exhibited different interpersonal patterns of relating within their role as therapists. This small piece of research suggests a hypothesis, and a corollary to all that I have just discussed regarding the therapist: Who is teaching a class, and how they teach content, matters. While this seems like a

logical and fair conclusion, what is interesting is that the field of clinical psychology, as discussed briefly above, has paid relatively little attention to *how* we teach, focusing much more frequently on *what* we teach. In this section we will look more closely at how the field of clinical psychology has approached teaching, the relative adequacy of this approach given the challenges of training discussed thus far, and where potential exists to usefully expand or deepen the discourse on teaching.

Teachers Are Generally Not Trained to Teach

One way that our field has approached teaching is to not approach it. Psychology programs, and some would argue graduate programs generally, exhibit a relative absence of focus on training to become a teacher (Peterson, 2005; Prieto & Scheel, 2008). And as Peterson (2010) argues, we as a field have not traditionally paid much attention to what qualifies someone to teach psychology—valuing nonteaching skills, such as publishing, as qualification enough. This lack of attention is notable especially because, as Hilsenroth et al. (2006) point out, accumulated knowledge is not an essential prerequisite to being a good trainer. When it comes to supervision, for example, well-trained clinicians can effectively supervise within a frame to which they have no "prior allegiance" (p. 302). This fact challenges the notion that specific mastery of an area of content is the primary qualification for effective teaching.

How We Do or Don't Talk About What Teachers Actually Do

Another way that our field has approached teaching is to construe teaching as a series of techniques that are add-ons to the more central focus of content. This response is exemplified, for example, by studies reviewed by Chu (2008) that consider whether content is better assimilated through, for example, readings, workshops, or web-based training. Though an improvement, a close cousin to this approach is to acknowledge the importance of teaching as a

proverbial last line, or to acknowledge its importance without detailing the intricacies of that importance or the route to its achievement. Take, for example, a really wonderful article by Singer, Peterson, and Magidson (1992), who argue for the need to have a place in the curriculum where students reflect on the intersection of their personal and professional selves, consider their varied roles, and find their own unique voices as practitioners. While this article has many merits, what is most notable for our frame is the way the authors approach the teaching for such a course: They note the importance of a "'holding environment'" (Winnicott, 1965, as cited in Singer et al., 1992, p. 138) and outline a few of the dilemmas a teacher of such a course might encounter, but they never detail what will be important for a teacher to do, shepherd, or provide. A more recent example is Mangione and Nadkarni's (2010) article on the relationship competency that was discussed earlier. Mangione and Nadkarni write explicitly about the importance of recognizing the implicit learning that takes place through the process of teaching and outline many concrete examples such as "creating art that represents one's identity" (p. 80) or "fishbowl discussions" (p. 81). These teaching techniques, however, are not coherently tied together by any apparent base understanding as to what is at stake within the classroom—instead, the details, much like the mechanics of relationship, seem to describe pieces of the puzzle without adequately describing the whole.

Unanswered Questions and Silent Stakeholders

The overall message of all of these trends is that teaching is at worst not worthy of mention and at best something that's important but not so essential that we can't figure out all its intricacies at a later date and, in the meantime, get on with the learning of psychology. In either case, we are not moved closer to understanding the questions raised by this literature review—such as why is it better to approach an experienced student as a novice? Or how does

one help a student achieve greater flexibility and spontaneity with technique? Let me be very clear: I am not arguing that reflective, skilled, complex, coherent, and thoughtful teaching is not going on. Instead, I am arguing that we are not talking enough, publicly, about that teaching. Schulman (2004) argues that one reason for this may be that teachers are busy teaching—the result of this being that while there is often "more wisdom in practice then in the academy," this knowledge is often "isolated and unvoiced" (p. 504).

Arguments for Paying More Attention to Teachers and Their Teaching

There are many challenges to the general idea that teaching is innocuous, not worthy of study, or worthy only of study that can wait while we debate the important work of content. The first challenge to this general idea comes from the surge of feminist and cultural studies, as well as from post-modernism more generally, over the last several decades. All of these thinkers have encouraged us to look much more critically at the environment and relationships within the classroom itself (see, for example, Maher & Tetrault, 1994). These movements question the validity of assuming that any process of engagement is benign or innocuous and point out the simple fact that whether you are doing something, or doing "nothing," you are doing something (Geller, 2005; Maher & Tetrault, 1994). A second challenge to this notion of teaching as relatively unimportant comes from much of the research already reviewed suggesting that different styles of teacher engagement and different amounts of attention paid to the student's process outside of academic content lead to different learning outcomes. The third challenge comes from voluminous research from other disciplines, scattered research within our own field, and one very exciting study on the clinical psychology classroom that points to the central importance of the teacher's role in learning—all three of these we will now review.

Looking More Closely At How, Where, and Why Teachers Might Matter

In younger cohorts, we have for fifty years or so had measures that look at the climate of a classroom and at the interactions and relationships that develop between students and teachers (Fraser, 2002). The general gist of this research is a consistent link between classroom environment, or the teacher's style of relating, and learning outcomes (Fraser; Brekelmans, Wubbels, & den Brok, 2002). Within our own field, and saying largely the same thing, Skovholt and Ronnestad's (1992) study of therapist development found that when seasoned therapists look back on their training, they consistently cite relationships as far more influential then content (that is, research or data). This finding is also supported by varied research studies on supervision and mentorship and the process of learning that takes place in these settings. This body of research suggests that within supervision and mentorship, the relationship is an important factor (Clark et al., 2000; Ronnestad & Ladany, 2006). Studies have also found that the quality of those "learning" relationships—how one experiences the relationship—has an impact on the quality of the therapeutic relationship that supervisees then engage in with their clients (Ronnestad & Ladany).

Jones, Mirsalimi, Conroy, Horne-Moyer, and Burrill (2008) set out to identify and quantify this same phenomenon *within the clinical psychology classroom*. They posited that just as in therapy and in supervision, where the relationship impacts outcome, the relationship between student and teacher might be related to learning outcomes. Indeed, they were able to isolate six factors of relationship that are significantly related to both skill acquisition and student self-efficacy, four of which had to do with interpersonal matters rather than content areas of the classroom. This research project suggests, at the graduate level, that effectiveness of teaching is

highly related to the quality of the relationship students have with their teacher (Jones et al., 2008).

A Summary of the Role and Importance of the Teacher

In summary, clinical psychology has traditionally given little attention to the act or the art of teaching. When we have paid attention to teaching, we have largely treated it as a second-class citizen to content or failed to detail it in a rich and comprehensive manner. This approach is inadequate, given what we know about the active nature of all relationships, the research on training outcomes, voluminous research on teaching within other fields, corollaries that can be made from what we know about supervision, and perhaps most importantly, a recent study linking teacher–student relationship quality to learning outcomes. The relative dearth of focus thus far may be due, in part, to the fact that teachers are often not conducting research or publishing; instead, they are teaching. Here then is another new horizon within the training literature—that is, looking more closely at the act and art of teaching, evoking the voices of teachers, and turning a close eye in particular to the territory of relationship within the classroom.

Literature Review: Summary and Next Steps

This literature review has outlined a central goal of training in professional clinical psychology programs: to help students do good therapy. This goal has primarily been pursued through training focused on technique and on relationship. Within the available training and research literature, training for technique and relationship, within professional clinical psychology programs, has been characterized by a focus on content rather than competence and by a focus *outside* of the classroom. And the research that we have on these general approaches to training is not promising, suggesting that we do not fully understand how to achieve our

training goals through our training models. More specifically, the training for technique has been complicated by findings suggesting that 1) mastery of a technique is not a good measure of actual competence and that 2) training for technique appears to be highly influenced by students' intrapersonal histories as well as the specific approaches of their trainers. With respect to training focused on relationship, the literature suggests that the field has been in many ways confounded about how to help students improve this particular competency. The trainings that we do have are either vague (and therefore difficult to recognize, learn, or value) or they are quite mechanized and lack evidence that their "parts" actually add up to a meaningful whole. In both cases—relationship as well as technique—general consensus exists that our training literature is simply not adequate. Although such an inadequacy is not unusual within graduate education, where many fields struggle to concretely define the often-implicit artistry of professionals in ways that are explicit and available for trainers to consider and access, this inadequacy is problematic both as it relates to the basic value and integrity of our training institutions and as it influences an overall notion of what we do as therapists as distinct and skilled.

Two areas in particular appear to be important for further study within the training discourse. First, as the research on both relationship and technique suggests, the intrapersonal world of the student or therapist appears to have a major impact not only on therapy but also on the learning outcomes that occur within training programs. Engagement of the individual students' intrapersonal world in some manner shows promise via research on mindfulness, for example, but has largely been under-studied and under-detailed. Second, while the training research, extensive literature from other fields, and one surprising study on the importance to learning outcomes of one's relationship with a teacher all suggest that teachers and their actual

teaching areas are important areas of study, a focus on teaching and on teachers' practical knowledge is conspicuously absent from the training discourse.

In summary, questions of how students engage content, how trainers help students to make meaningful change in the ways they relate to clients, how students' intrapersonal lives are addressed, what happens in actual classrooms in the day-to-day, and how teachers themselves think about the art of what they do and the achievement of the goals just described, as well as questions of how all of this may or may not relate to client outcome, are paramount to the training discourse as it moves forward towards improved praxis on training and a meaningful ability to achieve the goals of the competency movement. This dissertation aims to address some of these areas—giving voice to a teacher, offering thick descriptions of the art of teaching, considering how to engage the intrapersonal world of the student, and more thoroughly investigating how content is engaged within classrooms—so that we have language and concepts that can then be considered by others in addressing the remaining goals (improving relationships and forming a stronger link between training and client outcome). How such a thick description, an intrapersonal focus, and an investigation of how content is engaged, will be achieved will be the focus of the next chapter, a discussion of my research design.

Chapter 3: Research Design

As just outlined, and as outlined in the introduction, the goal of this dissertation is to give voice to two thus far quiet stakeholders within the training discourse: a student and a teacher. Specifically, this dissertation aims to give voice, or language, to the day-to-day experiences of engagement between student and teacher, of student and teacher with content, and within intrapersonal histories from the perspective not of theory ("top down"), but from the depths of practice (bottom-up"), mining the lived experience of participants to richly describe their own lives and knowledge. This dissertation aims to achieve these goals through the collaboration of the two participants, actively engaging with and reflecting on the very topics they aim to explore.

While this is most certainly a qualitative endeavor—aiming to give rich, in-depth description arising from what is a co-created experience—such an endeavor could fall under many paradigmatic umbrellas. Giving voice to a largely silent stakeholder, for example, is a transformative endeavor. Giving a richly detailed description of a territory that has thus far remained largely unexplored reaches, in a sense, towards avant-garde descriptive statistics. Mining my own lived experience is an autoethnographic endeavor. Because the primary goal of this project, however, is to describe the actions of a classroom, and the interactions of a teacher and a student *through* active engagement and intentional reflection, so as to better inform further action within classrooms and by students and teachers, this dissertation falls best within the participatory paradigm and the methodology of cooperative inquiry, both of which we will now explore in more detail.

Paradigm

The participatory paradigm rejects the traditional dichotomy of roles between researcher and subject and instead embraces the notion of collaborative inquiry in which all research

participants are engaged as co-researchers from start to finish (Reason, 2003). This paradigm, Reason argues, is particularly well suited to projects that seek to understand the intricacies of human experience because it engages all participants as actual people, capable of self-reflection and rich embedded meaning-making, rather than as sedentary objects of study. The paradigm aims for and values practical, action-oriented knowledge; personal meaning-making; and political impact. It empowers "subjects" to claim their inherent ability to know and name their own experience so that they can better describe, understand, participate in, and intentionally impact their own reality.

Ontology

The participatory paradigm embraces a relativist ontology in which multiple realities are possible and all reality is a creation of cooperative meaning-making between individuals and between individuals and their environments (Denzien & Lincoln, 2005). "Truth" is found in the reflections and meaning-making of individuals engaged in intentional, cooperative dialogs of inquiry about their lived experience and actions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Reason, 2003). It is a reality not of hard facts in the positivist sense, but instead of "localized, pragmatic and constructed practical knowings that are based in the experience and actions of those engaged in the inquiry project" (Reason, 2003 p. 206). Put another way, it's an ontology of "embodied know-how" (p. 206) embracing the phenomenological goal of seeking "wisdom rather than science" (Creswell, 1998, p. 50).

Epistemology

The participatory paradigm is characterized by an interpretive and subjectivist epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). More specifically, the participatory paradigm embraces an extended epistemology that highlights a multitude of ways of knowing the ontological reality

just described (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Reason, 2003). This extended epistemology includes *experiential knowing,* which can be sought through all the senses and which arises from direct engagement and relationship; *practical knowing,* which is action knowledge—knowing how to do something; *propositional knowing,* which represents a metaperspective about something; and *presentational knowing,* which includes the ability to symbolize experiential knowing in a way that links the experiential to the propositional, thereby giving the propositional embedded meaning (Reason, 2003; Reason & Heron, 1995). All of these ways of knowing arise through all of the senses, grow out of relationship and "through participation and intuition" (Reason, 2003, p. 207), and are discovered and refined via critical subjectivity (Reason & Heron, 1995), an active, self-reflective stance that is discussed further below (Heron, 1996; Reason, 2003).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework lays out the theoretical perspective one will take in approaching the research endeavor; in other words, it describes the lens or lenses through which one will approach unknown territories. In a certain sense, the literature review above serves as a conceptual framework: that is, it has directed the lens of this project towards the interaction and relationship between teacher, student, the intrapersonal, and content while engaged in teaching and learning in the classroom. And certainly there are echoes of other influential theories that have shaped this project. For example, in the importance this project has placed on hearing from a teacher and student about teaching and learning, there is a current of Freire (1989), his notions of conscientização, and the importance and empowerment of understanding experience from the inside out, rather than analyzing from the outside in (Freire, 1989; Reason, 2003). Or, another example: the post-modern notion that whether actively or inactively something is always happening inside a classroom is an idea well exemplified by dyadic communication (Beebe,

Jaffe, & Lachmann, 2005), which argues that all interactions are mutually constructed and that the essence of those communications can be found in the actions, mood, frame, context, rhythm, affect, fantasies, and spoken and unspoken elements of that interaction. Having detailed the participatory paradigm, however, one can also see that within the participatory frame the conceptual framework is simply that true knowledge grows only *up* out of experience and from the ability of thoughtful, reflective, active individuals to investigate their own activity and make useful meaning from that engagement. So while there is no doubt that various theories and thinkers may influence the directions in which Colby and I explore and reflect (for example, Colby has often noted the influence of Winnicott or Bollas on his meaning-making, whereas I noted the influence of Wilson, Ogden, Porges, or Siegel), these ideas and people cannot frame or direct our endeavor. Instead, guided by the participatory frame, we must aim to give language from *within* an experience, growing the language up, rather than fishing with a rod of theory.

Methodology

Having reviewed the four cornerstones of the participatory paradigm—"treating persons as persons, a participative world-view, an extended epistemology and a liberationist spirit" (Reason, 2003, p. 208)—as well as our conceptual framework, we will now explore the specific methodology to be used—that is, cooperative inquiry—as well as how Colby and I have used this frame to guide our engagement, exploration, and reflection.

Cooperative Inquiry

Action research, from which cooperative inquiry grows, defines three levels of inquiry: first-person inquiry involves a researcher investigating their own experiences, influences, and impact; second-person inquiry involves dialog with others to investigate areas of common interest; and third- person inquiry involves larger groups of participants (Reason, 2003).

Cooperative inquiry uses second-person research as a context within which to pursue first-person research, with the intent of impacting third-person research and practice (Bray, Lee, Smith, & Yorks, 2000; Reason, 2003, p. 208). For this reason, cooperative inquiry is often referred to as a "science of persons" (Reason, 2003, p. 205) because it starts and proceeds via the individual experience and reflections of participants, in dialog with each other, with the aim of impacting the actions of individuals or communities (Bray et al., 2000). More simply, Freire (1989) writes that within this approach, participants are not treated as generic or "abstract" (p. 35) but are instead approached as an "act of love" (p. 35), with the aims of giving voice to and honoring each person's individual experience and seeing "truth" as only knowable from their eyes and within relationship. Cooperative inquiry is unique also in what it aims to do with its "truths." For example, whereas grounded theory uses such truth-mining to build more embedded theories, cooperative inquiry aims first to enrich the meaning individuals make of their lives and to use this consciousness to inform further action based on internally generated (rather than externally imposed) impetuses. In fact, cooperative inquiry generally opposes the construction of depersonalized theories, arguing that such theories often "silence the realities of less vocal, and often also less powerful, stakeholders" (Freire, 1989, p. 14). Cooperative inquiry is successful, then, when it helps participants to know and name their experiences and when it informs and sparks further action. We will now look at the methods by which cooperative inquiry achieves such aims.

Methods

The aims of cooperative inquiry are achieved by participants, in dialog about an agreed-upon area of experience, engaging in ongoing cycles of action and reflection (Bray et al., 2000) while maintaining a stance of, among other things, subjective reflexivity (Reason & Heron,

1995). In regards to the cycles of action and reflection, the cycles are conceived of occurring both across the overall project (delineated into four phases) as well as appearing recurrently within each phase. Cycles can last minutes or months (Reason, 2003) and generally can be understood as the taking of planned action, critically reflecting on the experience of this action, and then planning further action.

In phase one, participants define the questions they will engage with and what this engagement will look like, including a commitment of focus, reflexivity, and disclosure. In phase two, participants enact the planned activities and in some way record this action. In phase three, participants engage experientially knowing most fully, reflecting on their actions and experiences, and remaining open to possibilities of meaning-making that may go beyond the original goals. Finally, in phase four, participants come back together again and reflect on their original intentions, their experiences, and their dialog with each other (Reason & Heron, 1995, pp. 124–128). As a project progresses, more emphasis may be placed on one phase or another, and many times, the phases overlap (Reason, 2003). Generally, a project aims to achieve five to eight cycles and, within this frame, aim not necessarily to answer all of the original questions, but to create, in the area of inquiry, "new congruence between the four kinds of knowing" (Reason & Heron, 1995, p. 128).

In discussing the approaches and attitudes that allows participants to access all four ways of knowing, Reason (2003) argues that practical and propositional knowing are often accessed through careful observation (the craft of which we will discuss further in a moment). To access and create experiential knowing, cooperative inquiry researchers have developed the notion of critical subjectivity. Critical subjectivity encompasses the acceptance,

> That our experiential encounter with ourselves in our world is the grounding of all knowing. At the same time, we accept that naïve subjectivity is potentially open to all the distortions of defense processes…so we attend to our experience with a critical consciousness. Inquiry thus becomes, in Torbert's words, 'consciousness in the midst of action'. (Reason & Heron, 1995, p. 124)

In other words, critical subjectivity involves approaching one's own experiences and meaning-making with careful, self-reflective, lens. In addition to careful and detailed observation and a commitment to critical subjectivity, Reason (2003) also outlines several additional skills that aid inquiry and improve the validity of the eventual meaning-making. These skills include being *present and open* within the dialog, to others, to experience, to oneself, and to potential meaning-making; engaging in *bracketing and reframing,* which includes an active cultivation of flexibility, perspective taking, and nonattachment; *radical practice and congruence,* which entails paying attention to all the influences that surround and exist within a project and noticing when these influences are at odds; *nonattachment and meta-intentionality,* which, much like critical subjectivity, includes a commitment to self-attunement without becoming stuck within one's own experience to such an extent that reflections become narrow or rigid; *emotional competence,* which includes careful investigation of one's own internal landscape and motivations as well as attention to frames that encourage emotional competence, such as sturdy holding environments and attention to group process; *authentic collaboration,* in which all participants are fully engaged and influential; *challenging consensus collusion,* which entails creating an environment where disagreement and questions are welcomed; *managing distress,* which impacts many of the skills just discussed; *maintaining a balance* between reflection and action; and, lastly, *chaos and order,* which means both investing effort in the creation of clear

and sturdy structure and then tolerating the chaos and ambiguity inherent to the experiential, dialogic process so as to avoid a rush to meaning or conclusion (Reason, 2003, p. 225).

Lastly, within cooperative inquiry it is also important to note that while all of the structures and commitments just articulated are central to the research process, so too is openness to and welcoming of the unexpected:

> Heron (1996) suggests that inquiry groups need to draw on both Apollonian and Dionysian qualities in their research cycling. Apollonian inquiry is planned, ordered and rational, seeking quality through systematic search: models are developed and put into practice; experiences are systematically recorded; different forms of presentation are regularly used. Dionysian inquiry is passionate and spontaneous, seeking quality through imagination and synchronicity: the group engages in the activity that emerges in the moment rather than planning action; space is cleared for the unexpected to emerge; more attention is paid to dreams and imagery than to careful theory building…Apollonian inquiry carries the benefits of systematic order, while Dionysian inquiry offers the possibility of stretching the limits through play. (Reason, 2003, p. 223)

Participants

The "sample" within this research design is driven by my wish to explore my own experience as well as to mine the experience and knowledge of Colby in particular. This is not a project that is intended to be representative; instead, it is meant to be richly descriptive, and specifically to be richly descriptive of my own and Colby's experiences. For this reason, notions of sample in the traditional sense do not apply. However, due to my focus on a potentially rich single source, the "sample" of Colby and me is perhaps most closely aligned with critical case sampling (Mertins, 2004).

Collecting the Research

Within cooperative inquiry, "data collection" is achieved through cycles of action and reflection, as well as through the myriad of skills and commitments just described in the methods section. How this "data" is tracked is largely decided by participants. Within this project, Colby and I agreed to meet regularly (generally at three- to six-week intervals) for extended dialog sessions (generally lasting two to three hours). The structure of these meetings can be described as bi-directional, in-depth interviewing (e.g., Charmaz, 2001) in which we engaged the cycles of action (exploring components of the classroom experience, attempting to describe the art of teaching, relating with critical subjectivity) and reflection (sharing experiences and associations, wondering, stepping back, reflecting). As agreed upon, each meeting was digitally recorded and transcribed for further exploration and reflection. Additional sources of data included our individual inter-meeting reflections, which were at times communicated via email or simply described in the next meeting, and exploration of the themes that we elicited from the transcriptions just described.

Analyzing the Research

Within cooperative inquiry, "data analysis" is largely an ongoing process enabled by critical subjectivity and the skills described in the methods section. Additionally, the records of all dialog sessions were transcribed and reviewed several times for convergent themes, which were then returned to the dialog space for further refinement or correction. Lastly, as planned from our initial stages, and as recommended by Reason (2003), this planned analysis was also accompanied by an honoring of "spontaneous" (p. 223) methods of knowing such as dreams, imagery, or associations that arose when reflecting within or between dialogic sessions and that often offered insight or a metaperspective on the work of the dialog sessions.

Participation vs. Bias: Managing the Influence of Participants

In any research design, it is essential to consider the biases that may arise for participants and impact the quality of the meaning-making within the project. There were several ways that bias could have interfered with this research design. First, participants could have lost track of their skills such as critical subjectivity. Within this project, this potential problem was managed by ongoing dialog about the skills (and obstacles to them) and by an agreed-upon intention to take action when the skills were elusive or absent. Additionally, the interval between dialog sessions and, therefore, iterations of the research cycle gave ample time for participants to emerge from the experiential dialog and to use distance to encourage more critical reflection. A second area of risk for bias was the possibility of over-generalizing or, in other words, assuming that our experiences were reflective of others' experiences. Within this project, this potential was managed by the attention paid to our initial frame-building (to richly describe our own experience) as well as by the attention paid to the ways in which our "findings" would be represented, which is discussed further below. A third area of risk for bias grew from the investment that participants may have had in a certain outcome in the meaning-making. Because the impetus of this research endeavor was my own experience and an experienced teacher's discussion of his own skills, this potential was especially present within this project. Within this research endeavor, this risk was managed by careful attention to the actual actions that took place in the classroom, an active and strong commitment to the critical stance, and an attitude of acceptance towards the possibility that the research might *not* describe or account for the experiences as remembered.

Representing the Findings

Denzin & Lincoln (2005) point out that in the emerging, post-modern realms of all qualitative research, the question of how to convey the findings of one's research endeavor has brought attention to a "representational crisis" (p. 19) within the field. Denzin and Lincoln, along with many others (e.g., Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Jones, 2005; Richardson & Adams St. Pierre, 2005), point to the fact that in a co-created frame of meaning, readers themselves must be approached as active and embodied meaning-makers. At its fullest, this fact points to the idea that a text cannot be understood as an endpoint in meaning; instead, it is in the reading and use of the text that yet another iteration of meaning is created. Moreover, within qualitative research the writing and representation of findings is no longer seen as a neutral act in form (which impacts meaning and use), perspective (which is unavoidably present), or influence and impact (an unavoidably political act) (Ellis & Bochner; Holt, 2003; Jones; Richardson & Adams St. Pierre). Freire (1989) perhaps forecasted this dilemma when he wrote in his original work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* that "no one can say a true word alone—nor can he say it *for* another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words" (p. 76).

Cooperative inquiry itself echoes these notions by asserting that the finished work of a cooperative inquiry endeavor exists, most importantly, within the participants and how that is represented to the larger community is less important (Heron, 1996) or encompasses a wide spectrum of potential formats ranging from committed action to poems to more traditional academic papers (Heron, 1996; Reason, 2003). Whatever format of representation is chosen, the impact of such a format must be considered. Freire (1989) himself perhaps states this most forcefully when, in describing cooperative inquiry more generally, he writes:

> The investigator who, in the name of scientific objectivity, transforms the organic into something inorganic, what is becoming into what is, life into death, is a man who fears change…In making people the passive objects of investigation in order to arrive at rigid models, he betrays his own character as a killer of life. (pp. 99–100)

Representing the research endeavor of this dissertation is a necessary and, considering all just written, complicated act. In writing about solutions to this dilemma of representation, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) encourage the qualitative researcher to act as a "bricoleur" (p. 4), or a quiltmaker, who creatively evokes an experience through montage. Within cooperative inquiry, this has been described as improvising with tools old or new to create a representation that leaves room for readers' active engagement, in which voice and ownership are present, and in which the sum of experiencing the representation is greater than the pieces of which it is made (Holt, 2003; Reason, 2003).

While this is helpful, with representation being such an essential piece of the project, I decided that more framing was needed. Qualitative research often blends methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), so this research design will use the principles of autoethnography to further guide the representational endeavor. For this project, autoethnography was chosen because of its intentionality around the aims of making the voice of the writer explicit, inviting the reader into an experience, and evoking and inviting rather than serving up, representing, analyzing, or commodifying for consumption (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Jones, 2005; Speedy, 2005). Autoethnographies may take many forms, but common to all is the idea of an intimately and creatively detailed journey that evokes rather than states and invites the reader through felt description. As Ellis and Bochner write,

> In personal narrative texts authors become 'I,' readers become 'you,' subjects become 'us.' … Readers, too, take a more active role as they are invited into the author's world, evoked to a feeling level about the events being described, and stimulated to use what they learn there to reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives. The goal is to write meaningfully and evocatively about topics that matter and may make a difference, to include sensory and emotional experience (Shelton, 1995), and to write from an ethic of care and concern. (p. 742)

Ensuring and Assessing Quality

In his comprehensive book on the cooperative inquiry method, Heron (1996) outlines the many attitudes and approaches for insuring validity within cooperative inquiry described above. These include the importance of being present and open; constantly bracketing and reframing content while practicing nonattachment to evolving experiences and meaning-making; cultivating emotional competence (including building a sturdy enough frame to ensure encouragement of and safety for such self-reflexivity); authentic collaboration, which actively includes all participants and acknowledges and manages incidents of distress or disagreement; a balance between reflection and action; a tolerance for the chaos and ambiguity inherent in the exploratory, collaborative meaning-making endeavor; and, perhaps most centrally, a commitment to the research cycle and the process of moving experiences and ideas through multiple oscillations of action and reflection (Heron, 1996; Reason & Heron, 1995). These activities and qualities are implemented from the very start of the endeavor and returned to actively throughout the course of the dialog to ensure their constant presence and immediacy.

As one moves towards the final stages of the research endeavor, quality can also be explored by looking at the relative congruence between the four ways of knowing—experiential,

practical, propositional, and presentational (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Heron, 1996). In other words, we can ask: Do we have a better understanding of, language for, and coherence amongst these ways of understanding our actions and experiences? Lastly, Heron reminds us that validity within cooperative inquiry is sometimes a misconstrued notion. Because cooperative inquiry is engaged with the meaning-making of individuals and views reality as relational and subjective (as well as very real), *any* meaning-making can be construed as valid. Instead of narrowing the gaze to validity, therefore, Heron points researchers back to the original goals of cooperative inquiry: rich languaging of one's experiences and more clearly informed impetus for and knowledge of action. Within our research endeavor, we might ask, Did this process help me and Colby better understand our experience of engagement and learning? And, for reader, does the "final product" help you wonder, think, or act about or within your own teaching and learning and the classrooms you have been or will be a part of? Moreover, was this experience useful in enriching the meaning of all of our lives? To summarize this approach, in the words of Heron (1996),

> The underlying theme in all this is that any research method that is exclusively preoccupied with validity issues is insecure about the values of being. As Goethe observed, being too busy with justification misses the point of life, which is about exuberance. Valid outcomes alone are not enough. They need to be self-transcending and metamorphose into exuberant outcomes. Beyond epistemological validity is the joy of human life. (pp. 167–168)

It is with a commitment to the first and second notions of validity procedures, as well as a celebration of and commitment to this third notion of validity, that I will now transition to a

creative and cooperative re-presentation of this research endeavor, a project that encompassed twelve interviews during the period from March 2010 through September 2012.

Chapter 4: Our "Findings" in Three Acts

Dear Readers

As you can see, I am starting this next chapter as a letter. One of the things that I am trying to name and explore with this dissertation is the idea that how one frames content, how one invites conversation, and how one engages individuals as well as concepts, matters. Starting this section with a title would feel different. And it would invite different.

This story starts simply. I take a class and find that I am sitting in myself differently, and with my clients differently. Something has happened in this class. Something has happened in me. I don't really know how or why, though my sense is that whatever has occurred is important. And I trust my sense. That second part shouldn't be overlooked.

Or maybe the story starts earlier, in a rather large tree house built by my father. This house was mine and had a sink. When I turned the faucet on in that sink, water ran. The house stood high in a tree and had no piping or plumbing; perhaps you may sympathize with those who disbelieved my reports of running water. I do remember my attempts at convincing as unsuccessful and the particular frustration and sadness that accompanied this. This memory is sharper than the delight of that water. This is a hint that recently occurred to me: this story has something to do with the reclamation of water.

And could I move earlier still? Before I was me, my mother tells me, I was a twinkle in her eye. And she in her mother's? Yes! That grandmother, Phyllis, will sum this story up with one five-word question scribbled on a scrap of paper in red pen and a wobbly hand. But that comes later and before The End, making it all the more remarkable. Here is what she writes: "Is play contagious, suicide is?"

I am afraid I get ahead of myself again. Have you lost faith? Faith is important to this story, and we will get to that, too. For now, I will borrow an invitation from W. R. Bion (1962), who writes in the introduction to his book *Learning from Experience:*

> I gave experience to records, but how to communicate this experience to others I am in doubt; this book explains why…Nevertheless I believe it may be possible to give some idea of the world that is revealed by the attempt to understand our understanding. If the reader is tempted to go further the object of the book is achieved…The book is designed to be read straight through once without checking at parts that might be obscure at first. Some obscurities are due to the impossibility of writing without pre-supposing familiarity with some aspect of a problem that is only worked on later. If the reader will read straight through, these points will become clearer as he proceeds. Unfortunately obscurities also exist because of my inability to make them clearer. The reader may find the effort to clarify these for himself is rewarding and not simply work that has been forced on him because I have not done it myself. (pp. VII–VIII)

Or in Colby's words: "If you have to get it by swallowing it—NO!" (C. W. Smith, personal communication, March 20, 2010).

Or in my words, "Away we go!"

Act One: The Student at Center Court

It's summertime. Our cohort's first class with Colby. As students file in, Colby plays *Summertim*e by George Gershwin. Then he begins to talk, and students, me included, bring out notebooks. Scribbling begins. After a few moments, Colby pauses. He asks us to put down our pens. He invites us to simply listen and to trust that what is most important—and likely different

for each one of us—will stay with us, find a home inside us, will be ours. And not because he trusts that we have an innate capacity to glean essential content from his lecture, but rather because what finds a home inside us, what we come upon, what arises spontaneously from the inside, is, and is a doorway to, what's most important.

Here are some of Colby's words:

> [Traditional notions of graduate school training] are more knowledge based—a gas station where you pull in and someone fills you up. There is really no engagement process; you are just supposed to get filled up and then go someplace with it and do it. (October 16, 2010)
>
> If you are left out of this, or don't come upon your own worth or what is made worthwhile is the reification of the literature, it does miss the point. (August 5, 2010)
>
> It doesn't have to do with content, it doesn't! (April 16, 2011)
>
> I'm fighting for the legitimacy of self-experience. (October 16, 2010)

Find what has meaning for you! What finds a home? What moves you? These moments of connection that students come upon spontaneously, this is an aliveness of self that Colby is fighting for and where he begins. I call these moments "sparks" – I like the brightness the word brings to mind and the moment of contact it describes, the illumination of what was before unseen. Colby might point out that when a spark appears, the person themselves is illuminated, a face, a hand—oh, here I am! So when Colby starts with and honors sparks, he not only immediately positions the student as someone whole and sufficient (enough!) but he also frames the central value of his teaching: the student, alive, present, and playful (creative, spontaneous, engaged, evolving) rather than performative or productive. This is not a frame shaped by learning objectives, lesson plans, syllabi, or discrete skills. It's a frame of curiosity, engagement, and faith. It's a frame that honors sparks: Sparks will be welcomed, received, exchanged, and survived by all!

Are you feeling confused? Perhaps upset at the lack of direct, commodified advice or description? I agree, it's maddening. But perhaps important! More on that below in the section titled "The Importance of Fog." For now, let's consider this valuing of self-experience (i.e. "sparks") as our first stepping stone within Colby's teaching philosophy. Stepping stone one: Honoring and inviting sparks helps students to show up in the classroom, and students' showing up can be the centerpiece of one's teaching.

How to help students show up, lingering with it when they do, really believing that showing up is incredibly important and truly achievable, that's what we will turn to now.

Starting with Associations

Twelve fourth-year students sit at attention in Colby's class on supervision. Colby has just finished a twenty-minute supervision of a classmate. Colby turns to the rest of the class and asks everyone to start by simply sharing an image that came to mind while listening—not elaborate or explained, just a few words sharing what arose within. In another class, he begins by playing music. In another, on the first day, he asks students to close their eyes and name the first thing they noticed in the classroom. As he sits with me during this dissertation, he returns again and again to his different ideas—of starting each class with a different song, of asking students to speak about a movie they saw over the summer, of assigning a prerequisite of reading one book having nothing to do with psychology and then talking about it with the class, of bringing an ambiguous picture ("an oar dripping with oil that looks like caramel!") and asking students to associate to that.

Here are more of Colby's words:

> So coming upon something and noticing is one's own narrative, one's own story as a way to start. I do a little bit of looking out the window or close your eyes and what do you notice. That's intentional. Or trying to find a song to be part of each lecture. It's all the

> same thing—to understand that we experience things. We have a whole experience that is going on that is more than words and that words are also working. (August 5, 2010)
>
> When we close our eyes and associate, we are with ourselves in the group, we come upon the object, we come upon ourselves. (April 16, 2011)
>
> It can be Freud or Mickey Mouse [that we associate to]; it's not about reification, it's not about evidence. There are no requirements. (April 16, 2011)
>
> There is a difference between literature that is oppressive or confining and legitimizing and literature that you associate to. (October 16, 2010)

Opening space to sit with oneself, questions that cannot be answered without going to the self, one's own experience as the source, and it's to the side: "not what do you think?" but instead, "where does this take you?" Starting with associations means starting with the self, rather than with an idea or an author. The "spark" is not in the text (to be underlined, highlighted, and redisplayed with varying degrees of finesse) but in where the ideas come alive inside of the student. Associations are an invitation not for analysis, mastery, and meaning-making, but for the students' unique, spontaneous, arrival.

I am reminded of a concept in mindfulness practice: the idea that one can have an experience or thought without being or believing only that experience or thought (i.e., being overwhelmed, driven, awash, mesmerized, etc.). It's a change of relationship to self that can be summed up thusly: Can you *have* a thought, without being *had* by that thought? Coming back to Colby, Colby does not ignore the literature and theories of psychology. With associations (and images that we will get to below), Colby does, however, invite students into a different relationship to that content. He invites students to have themselves first, and therefore offers them the opportunity to have the literature, rather than being had by it.

Stepping stone two: one way to help students show up, to begin to explore themselves as a valuable and valued "source," and to have the literature, rather than being had by the literature, is to invite associations.

That it is an invitation, that we do all this in the presence of another, are ideas that we can explore later in this journey. For now, more on inviting and honoring sparks.

Images and Lingering in the Place before Meaning with a Capital "M"

I will start this section with three images; all came to me by way of exchange; now I share them with you.

First. When I was in high school, I wrote my English teacher a passionate poem about how hard it was to be myself. This teacher wrote me a letter in return. In it, he spoke of sitting in his writing studio watching a squirrel perched on the edge of the field. "I've always marveled in the dash," he wrote, "but never have I considered the moment before the dash, on the edge of the field, quivering" (N. Fleck, personal communication, May 10, 1992).

Second. I had just started this project and I invited Dr. Peter Baldwin to be part of my committee. I wrote to Dr. Baldwin that Colby and I were going to talk about the role of play in the classroom and that we were going to *try* to be at play ourselves. Dr. Baldwin emailed me back:

> Try to be at play" No, no, no! Trying will never do! And trying is an exhausting and trying experience!...There is looking and finding…and letting go! When we are totally at playing nothing is happening. "Hey, kids, what have you been doing?" "Nothing." And, if you push them to explain, then all you get from them is something. (P. Baldwin, personal communication, May 30, 2010)

Third. I am sitting at the Bookmill Café with Colby. This is where we have met regularly over the past year. This, however, is not our regular table. Usually we sit at a refurbished sewing machine table. We put our coffees on it and it feels cozy to me both because it is tucked into a corner and because I come from a lineage of sew-ers and the quilting of knowing has been something Colby and I have talked about often. We've also talked about water, waves, rowboats, baseball, stepping stones, bears, dreams, songs, memories, mermaids, and seals. Now we sit across the room, our comfortable spot not available in this time and space. And perhaps even the corner would not have saved me today. I am uncomfortable, stuck, addled by weeks of writer's block and a sense of stymied voice. I can't seem to move beyond our conversations—I am balking at putting the experience, the knowing, into concrete terms. So much seems to be at stake. Colby smiles gently. "When you find yourself stuck" he suggests, "come back to your images" (C. W. Smith, personal communication, October 16, 2010).

More from Colby:

> I think it's Sartre who says something about "evil is a categorization of experience." (August 30, 2011)
>
> It's important not to be too quick to label when we are building knowledge. (August 30, 2011)
>
> It's a continuum of experience—something hits you in a certain way, then observe, then reflect; still it's images and felt experience. Then we assign language. But you can't start with language. (October 16, 2010)
>
> Language is pseudo-play. (October 16, 2010)
>
> When you find yourself stuck, go back to your images. (October 16, 2010)

Three morals of Colby's teaching that these images describe for me. First, when we have to come up with "something," it takes us out of our own playing. And within an industrious doctoral program, there is almost a constant press for "something," which doesn't leave much

room for playing. A corollary, if there is not much room for playing, there is not much room for the self of the student to show up authentically and spontaneously. Second, it's not just the press of graduate school that takes us away from playing (and ourselves) but WE take ourselves away from playing, because playing is a dangerous thing to do (what will come next?! how will it be received?! will it be destructive? consuming? exposing? somehow wrong?). But, and here is the third piece, if we don't have ourselves and our play *or* we only have our teachers' and our theorists' play (their images, their metaphors), then learning (being, creating, doing, evolving) can go "dead" very quickly. Another word steeped in meaning! "Dead" as in concrete, set in stone, *lifeless because it's self-less*.

Colby does not jump over or rush through the playing; it's not a rote stepping stone en route to meaning. Colby is interested: What will show up here if we LINGER?! It strikes me that this is perhaps easier said than done. Among other things, lingering means both student and teacher sitting with a "quiet" – the student exposed and vulnerable in their own self-experience and play; the teacher un-shored in the absence of an affirming reflection of their competence and worth. Lingering also requires faith: To linger means a willingness to be with what shows up and it carries an implicit belief in the survivability of that encounter. So if it's uncomfortable, why do it?! Consider another square of this quilt. When we start with images, we also begin an exchange. An image or a metaphor has room for meaning-making. So when we share an image or a metaphor, we share the space (and invitation) for the receiver to make their own meaning, to be at play themselves (and with us). Aha, space for the other! And if the other returns with their own image or metaphor? If they are alive as well? Then we have an exchange in which what arises spontaneously, from the self, can not only be held, but can move; both participants can be

at play, more images can arrive, and images can emerge into more explicit knowing, without loss of self or relationship.

Our third stepping stone: Images and metaphors help us stay at play, stay with not-knowing, and stay in play with another. Language can take us away from ourselves; lingering with images helps us honor "nothing" as its own destination. And a return to images is a return to self—remember that, should you ever find yourself lost.

Now let's spend a little more time with this idea of its being important and even essential to spend time in a place of Not Knowing.

The Importance of Fog

A movie, *The Secret of Roan Inish* (Green, Sloss, Jones, & Sayles, 1994), has threaded through many of Colby's and my conversations. In this movie, a little girl and her cousin, a boy just a few years older, paddle again and again into the fogs of Ireland to reach a small island. The island is abandoned, left by her family after their small baby, her brother, floated off into the ocean in his rowboat crib, never to be found again. The family is racked with grief and displacement. The little girl believes that perhaps her brother could be alive (tended to by the seals), and some in the community hold this faith too. The girl has the company of her cousin—a capable rower. To the island they return, where the little girl spots her brother, now a sturdy toddler, peeking out here and there, always disappearing when she moves too close. The family does not believe the girl's tales. Still, she and her cousin paddle again and again into the fogs, two little bodies: one brave with curiosity and faith, one a sturdy companion. Eventually the girl and her cousin reclaim the family's long abandoned house—scrubbing and straightening, making a home the little brother can return to. Or perhaps reclaiming for her family something of the home and hope that was lost with the disappearance of that little boy.

Here are some of Colby's words:

> A student said to me: "You're making me so angry and I love it! The ambiguity! And you're holding me to it!" People want something to hold onto a path or guidance…It's experiential rather than explicit: if we said all those things it would be different; instead I keep it to the side. (July 10, 2010)

> It's not play if it's done to meet the expectations of the surround. (May 29, 2010)

> To really play, I can't be invested in how it shows up, do you understand that? (October 16, 2010)

> There is a leap of faith that it isn't empty. (October 16, 2010)

In Colby's class, assignments are invitations, papers are addressed as letters, deadlines are loose, parameters of assignments are vague—what strikes you? Start with an image. Find a metaphor. And if they don't turn in an assignment? "Write them a letter about that." I imagine Colby as the cousin, happy to venture out in the rowboat, comfortable amidst the fog, unattached to what his companion will find but engaged in the discovery and transformation, faithful that something will emerge in its own time. I like this image of Colby, and I remember that he stated more than once that "we should be able to play without knowing" (May 4, 2010). I take this to mean that when we have to Know (with a capital K) to feel safe (as teachers, as students—and as therapists?), then we rush through fog, insist on shorelines, focus only on landmarks, and leave little room for anyone to come upon themselves, their sparks, their curiosity, their magic.

But wait, there is still more to this tale. Consider transformation. The little girl and her cousin do not stay in the fog. They transform the home. The family is invited. And we never Know whether she truly found her brother. We do know that she no longer has to search—seeing her brother disappearing over the crest of every wave. The mystery and grief do not hold her in the same way: she has the freedom to do something else, the spark has transformed. I think of my

tree house—I wanted to stay there forever, I long for the water I left there—this transformation tells me something about leaving the tree house, water in hand.

Stepping stone four: Fog can make us angry or anxious or generally uncomfortable, but it also allows us an opportunity to come upon ourselves and our internal compass, rather than beelining for the shore. Risking the fog, a faithful cousin, the movement of sparks—these all help keep magic in, and at, hand.

Act Two: Keeping Company

Colby and I began this project sitting at a small table in a café at Cushman's Corner Country Store. Music on the radio. Hustle and bustle around us. We agreed to take an adventure together. He agreed to join me—pick up my invitation. We plan a few logistics and walk outside to our cars. As we say goodbye, Colby checks in—he notices I am holding my breath, is everything OK? Driving home, I think I will title this dissertation "On leaping!" And then later, another title, another capturing of what we are up to, and maybe what we are trying to describe: "Breathing in the Presence of Another."

From Colby:

> There are two tragedies of play – one if people can't play and two is if one doesn't have company. (May 29, 2010)

Keeping company! That's where we travel next. I'll highlight four territories along the way: curiosity, invitation, exchange, and teachers themselves—living, breathing, alive!

Curiosity

Colby spoke to me about a friend, a body worker, who told Colby that he never touches a patient's physical body until his hands are curious: "'I don't touch to fix,' this man said." (May 29, 2010)

Colby says:

> A baseball hat is my metaphor and if we do this it [our project] will go dead if you just become an audience or if you have to become a baseball player too. (March 20, 2010)
>
> To really play I can't be invested in how it shows up – do you understand that? (October 16, 2010)
>
> If there is an open curiosity, it allows the unknown, it allows things to move. (August 30, 2011)
>
> Can we be curious about it without a demand to change it (resistance in the class)? (July 10, 2010)
>
> I don't have an agenda that they [students] become therapists. (August 5, 2010)

Colby is a curious teacher. Openly, nondirectionally curious. The work of his teaching is to provide space (which we are in the midst of describing) and objects of all kinds (for Colby, it's literature, apples, his own images if students don't have their own, music, pictures, songs) that students can pick up and play with. Theory is not ignored; in fact his class is steeped in that, but Colby holds no predetermined hope of what will arise for students within his classroom or what they will do or not do with the materials he provides. Instead Colby approaches students with faith and confidence: confidence in the student, confidence that something will show up, that whatever shows up—no matter what—it can be survived by all (the teacher, the student, the syllabus, the department, the profession) and therefore can be just what it is. This sort of curiosity and openness is not a technique (i.e. if we just leave things open-ended, then XYZ will surely arise); it's actually a belief that *whatever* arises will be a gift—as in, something of worth.

We might say that Colby doesn't believe in teaching until you are curious! To understand why this might matter, let's consider for a moment what it looks like when we teach to "fix." Teaching to fix, I call the XYZ frame. Within this frame, teachers are curious about students within a set of parameters or learning objectives (the teacher's metaphors!). Within this frame,

what arrives from the student will be bounded by those expectations. When teachers (or a profession?! or a therapist?!) are invested in their own metaphors alone, their own knowing, their XYZ, then students will find their aliveness in those metaphors. These may be valuable metaphors, useful metaphors, practical metaphors, but they won't in the end be the students—that aliveness wont be embodied—it will be echoed but not voiced.

Let's return one more time to curiosity. In the absence of XYZ parameters, students can come upon themselves ("row!") and their sparks can arise ("islands!"). And then, because those sparks don't have to be anything other than what they are, there is room also for them to *transform*—change, grow, evolve, MOVE. Colby calls this the paradox of change: When we can receive something as it is (be openly curious), then that something is more free to evolve—to stay in play and alive. This is a chorus we have already had humming in the background, this idea of MOVEMENT and something staying at play and alive. When students are approached with curiosity, and sparks arise, and those sparks can be just what they are and don't have to be anything else, then students can understand those sparks as survivable. This relative security opens up a doorway for the sparks then to be played with—followed, exchanged, tossed. More sparks! The actual movement of the spark is perhaps less important than the experiential knowledge that sparks can move and therefore don't have to be feared or contained (with XYZ frames); students don't have to be scared of what arises or is absent, and therefore don't have to guard against it. Once again, they can have themselves rather than being had by themselves! Colby said once that the gift of teaching is when he sees a student become more curious. Maybe a curious student is one who has embraced a confidence in movement and found steadiness (an internal cousin!) within the fog!

Stepping stone five: Open-ended, nondirectional curiosity creates space for students to show up, find their voice rather than hone their echo, and maybe even get more curious themselves.

Invitation

As a student in Colby's class I found myself often turning in my written work to him late. "Late" is my adjective. As I remember it, Colby suggested a timeframe but there was no deadline, no date in the syllabus. Even within those vague boundaries, though, I delayed. And what I did turn in finally was sometimes many papers batched together, or just pieces. Once I turned in a poem. These papers sit beside me now in a file drawer. They are some of my proudest work, and they sing of some of the ideas that are most influential in my work as a clinician. I am proud that I, a normally conscientious-verging-on-neurotic and sometimes wheedling student, turned them in on my own timetable, in formats that voiced what I wanted to express. It was a leap for me, one that has stayed with me. As have the ideas: They have life and continue to live. As do I.

As I think of it all now, I smile. Colby says mischief carries with it a wish for someone to pay attention. I am proud of my mischief. I had fun. And Colby did pay attention, which is part of it too (see "Exchanging the Gift, the Gift of Exchange" below).

From Colby:

> There is an activity but it's not the activity of produce or performance or something that is objectified. It's the activity of invitation and providing space. It doesn't get acknowledged, it's hard to evidence. Where it's evidenced is in the experience of the other, that they get insight or they get surprised or they come upon in a new way that they haven't thought before or they open up a window of something more deeply personal that five minutes before they hadn't imagined – but if I was doing it to get to that point I wouldn't get to that point. (August 5, 2010)

> What welcomes your presence and your voice? (April 10, 2010)

How does it [the classroom engagement] not become chaos or passive? (August 5, 2010)

Colby offers invitations. Invitations to participate, to engage, to dream, to associate, to show up, to write him letters, to eat an apple (he brings a bowl each week and each week a different kind). These invitations are not demands; nor are they assignments. Invitations, after all, by definition acknowledge and assume your right of refusal. You *can* refuse. And that's an active stance too. Something we can be curious about. You won't be passed over, failed, fought. Your yes's and your no's are invited. Let me pause a moment to enjoy a reverie: Steve Martin in the movie *All of Me* (Friedman & Reiner, 1984), half man and half woman, stretching, prancing, singing: "All of me! Why not take all of me…!" This is followed closely, I imagine, by screams of horror, "but what if the student _____!?" In this blank, fill in anything that you think doesn't belong in a classroom. I don't think Colby is afraid of this blank or what might fill it in. This is not because everything is acceptable to have in the classroom (please!) but because he believes everything that shows up can be engaged, can move and change, can become something else. He is not scared about getting stuck – forever. Which is not, by the way, to say that Colby imagines everything will become unstuck in his class ("it's just a taste!" (August 5, 2010)). This belief in survival—holding it, sharing it, having faith in it even when outcomes may remain unseen or unknown—is another invitation and statement of faith in the student and the continuity of self and experience.

Let's review the properties of invitations then: They can be direct (write me a letter), or they can be to the side (a changing bowl of apples that appears each week), they can be rote (if I ask X I will get XYZ) or they can be heartfelt and authentic (see curiosity above), they can be

refused (and that refusal can be welcomed), and they imply in their proffering that your arrival (your "yes," or your "no"—all of you!) will be welcomed.

Stepping stone six: Invite, don't assign. And have faith that everyone and everything will survive whatever does or doesn't show up.

This faith part we will return to below. It's important.

Exchanging the Gift, the Gift of Exchange

My eight-month-old son Max sits in front of a puzzle. Each piece is an animal, with a knob attached to it for easy lifting. His little hands work diligently to pick up the elephant. He tugs, bends over, bites! His brow crinkles; two hands? He lifts—whoosh, it's out! Big eyes, big smile. He studies the elephant carefully, turning it round and round, holding different edges, chewing. Then he looks over at me as if just noticing that I am there. Have I seen this elephant? Did I see what he did? What do I make of it? He reaches out his hand, offering the puzzle piece to me. My eyes get wide; an elephant! I take the gift—thank you! I turn it round and round myself. Quizzical. I make my best elephant noise: "Arumphhhh!" We both giggle. He looks at the elephant again. I extend my hand; "Does he want it back?" Grabbing with both hands, Max taps the elephant on his head and then bangs it on a nearby book, grunting; then he sets the elephant down and reaches for another piece.

From Colby:

> I am reading a book right now it's called The Gift…It's about gift exchange and he [Lewis Hyde] is writing about art but he references therapy. And I was reading it and thinking about what we are talking about. It's a neat book about offering: you think it's about the object, but what makes it the gift, is in the exchange…Offering, receiving, exchanging, and movement; and nobody holds onto it because then it would become an object. I thought about the apples I bring to class and playing…What allows the exchange? How can it be fueled? What is required? (July 10, 2010)

I like to get my hands dirty. (April 10, 2010; August 5, 2010; July 30, 2012)

The teacher makes room and invites the student to show up. The student shows up and brings a gift (images, metaphors, anger, resistance, poems, papers—sparks). The teacher receives that gift, not as a deposit (an object to be encased and admired with an "A") but as an invitation to engage with the student and to be at play with the student. Within this exchange, the teacher bears witness to the student, engages the images and metaphors of the student, has their own play, and shares something of themselves, just as the student has. The teacher is impacted by the student and they shares this delight—which is, itself, another invitation.

Now I begin to see why my frequent inquiries about holding environments and classroom *structures* were met by Colby's frequent insistence on classroom *dynamics*. A traditional holding environment emphasizes respect, careful listening, encouragement, ground rules, and SAFETY. These elements may have their place in Colby's classroom, but this container vision—a surround in which the student can unfold (and, often, get on with the academic work of the classroom)—is at best one-sided and at worst static. It also makes me feel a bit lonely! Colby's dynamic version emphases engagement and MOVEMENT: The teacher is not simply an admiring or reassuring mirror, they are at play themselves, actively receiving what the students bring, alive to it, willing to be played upon (i.e. impacted) and at play themselves. Which is not to say that teacher and student are peers. The teacher must have themselves, know their play, and be available to tend to the play of the classroom—all this we will get to in a moment. For now, remember when Colby said, "It's not about content, it's not!"? Maybe this dynamic *is* what it's about; maybe the exchange is the central work of the classroom. And a gift that the student will pass on? I'll restrain myself from jumping up and down and shouting, "Yes!"

Stepping stone seven: Be present, receive the student actively, be impacted, offer something of yourself—let the gifts of the classroom move and locate this exchange as the central work of the classroom.

Teachers Alive Themselves

We are drawing to a close of this "outing" of the relationship of teacher and student. I want to pause and return to that note just made about teachers having themselves and being available. I have an image now of a client about to leave their therapist's office, their hand on the doorknob "Oh, by the way, did I mention…" BOOM! This last piece we will turn to now is that sort of a P.S. we have been talking about it all along but have not yet spoken to directly.

Here's Colby:

> Space in the room but space in myself! I have to have my own space of experiencing before I can plant my feet and invite the class. (July 10, 2010)
>
> We have to stay present for things to stay alive, which also means present to ourselves not just the other [person or literature]. (March 20, 2010)
>
> 'Oh here I am,' which also includes, 'oh here you are.' (April 10, 2010)
>
> I know when I am connecting and when I am not – open and closed space – I know it viscerally, I know it inside. I also know when things are getting scripted. (April 10, 2010)

Roll call? Here! To do all that we have just described, if an exchange is to occur, *someone must be there to do the receiving and the exchanging*. The teacher must be alive and present and available.

Alive? As in, inspired and engaged, knowing their own metaphors, curious about others' metaphors, available to be played upon (impacted), at play with the class, the student, the content, and themselves—"Arumphhhh!"

Present? Not only in their own play. Paying attention to what's happening in the room. Tending to the play of the classroom; knowing when it's alive or dead not from afar, but from within.

And available? Willing to be impacted not destroyed by what shows up (and therefore afraid or aggressive or avoidant), not shored up but what might show up (and therefore directionally invested or a dispenser of praise), not absent so the student's arrival falls on deaf (dead) ears.

Keeping company: curious, contained, and at play oneself; one's very presence and faithful, lively relationship to self an invitation (and modeling) in and of itself. I feel sails unfurling, full of breeze; a boat dancing across the waves; and singing: "here we go loop-de-loop, here we go loop-de-la…

Stepping stone eight: When we are alive, when we have space inside to play, and when we have space for the other, we invite the same.

Act Three: Faith Is Required!

Colby tells this story. The department has convened a meeting to address the challenge of students' writing skills, or lack thereof. The question is open ended: What can professors do to help students improve? There is talk of writing workshops, of screening applicants differently, of managing drafts and editing within syllabi. Firstly and primarily the conversation is about teaching *skills*. Colby offers this: "I think you should teach them all to be poets and have faith that they will figure these things out" (April 16, 2011).

More of Colby on faith:

> If you have space within then you can allow yourself to play with what you are coming upon…and then I really have faith that the other part takes care of itself. (April 16, 2011).

> Sitting down with someone without the expectation of change but with the faith that something else is going to happen. (May 29, 2010)
>
> I do have faith that everyone in their aloneness and chaos of things, that everyone has a desire to play and a way to find it. (April 10, 2010).
>
> It's a gift to have something up and out, that too is about faith. (May 29, 2010)
>
> There has to be an assumption of faith that being becomes doing. There is a leap of faith that it isn't empty. (October 16, 2010)
>
> A lot of worry comes up with talk like this—how do you know they have gotten it?… It's a matter of faith that they get to know. And also I don't presume everyone knows everything out of my class. Artistry and creativity is ongoing; some people don't even know what they learned in my class until they are on internship. Until they are thinking about it later. (April 16, 2011).

Faith. Faith. Faith. We have spoken of so many kinds already: faith that students can find what's of value inside of themselves, that they can go out into their images and associations and come back, that these "journeys" and the fogs they travel through are survivable, that whatever shows up in play can be survived, can transform, can move and move us, and that all of these don't need to be seen to be trusted. This is not a willy-nilly, laid back sort of faith; it is a profound belief in the indomitable nature of the inner spirit, in inner capacity, and in the process and ongoing-ness of experience.

Associating to this sort of faith, Colby talked about a favorite movie, *Field of Dreams* (Frankish & Robinson, 1989), and the famous refrain Kevin Costner hears: "If you build it, they will come." I associate to my tree house and a comment my father, the builder of that tree house and a teacher himself, made when reflecting on this dissertation. "Hannah," he said, "you can't create magic, but you can create an environment where magic can happen; you can create an environment where magic is possible" (J. Lord, personal communication, April 6, 2011). I think Colby's faith is a sort of tree house—a scaffolding in which students can come upon their own

magic. This “house” is built with faith in the student, and within it, a student doesn’t have to be anything but what they are. This is perhaps the most striking of Colby’s faiths and, I imagine, a gift he hopes his students will carry with them and continue to exchange.

Stepping stone nine: Have faith. Have faith in the students, in their poetry, and have faith that if you build it, magic will come.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, or, in My Words, Onward Still!

Dear reader. Those are the stepping stones. This has been our play. It strikes me now as I reflect on this journey that I found nine stepping stones. This was unintentional, and it pleases me: Colby's metaphor through much of our conversations was baseball with its nine innings; mine was quilting, and I always sew a "nine-patch" design. And of course there are the nine months of gestation. So as we begin the final chapter of this dissertation, I sit with the question of What happens next? What follows the game's end? How will the quilt be bound? And what will be born of this labor and of our play? Is "conclusions" the right word?

If you are willing to sit with me a little longer, I am going to pick up that question and share a reflection on where this project has brought me. This final chapter will be an epilogue to our three-act-play and an ending to the story that I promised to tell you when I began this letter. It will include ideas about evidence and knowing, fighting and aggression, and heroism. I will also return to the beginning—which is maybe the best sort of ending.

Evidence and How Do I Know

Colby tells me this story about a baseball game:

> There has hardly ever been a perfect baseball game pitched. A perfect game would mean there are three batters up each inning, all three make outs for nine straight innings, you have no hits and no errors, no walks, and nobody gets to first base. There have been only about fifteen in the history of baseball. So about four days ago a pitcher was on the eve of a perfect game. It was last batter up, the crack of the bat, and the first baseman fields the ball and the pitcher covers first base; the ball hits the mitt, the foot hits the base, and the umpire, who is the authority, says "safe." And the guy was out by about a yard—it wasn't even close. So the fans started booing and the manager got in his face and the pitcher, he had this huge smile—he was so much onto himself! Then this is what happened: The pitcher went and struck the next guy out, the game ended, and the umpire, without changing, waited outside the locker-room and he apologized. He said, "I just cost you your no-hitter and it was a mistake." Umpires never apologize! So recovery and repair. And they hugged each other and the pitcher was interviewed and he talked about what a human moment this was: fullness, let-down, repair, sadness—all of it! And the next game, that umpire who had called that play safe was going to be the head umpire at home plate. So they had the pitcher come out and deliver the score card to him and they

> hugged each other again. And all of it was so full of everything. But what's happened since then is that there are calls for instant replay so that we never make that mistake again. A call for evidence. A call for constriction instead of understanding that this is something that has to happen. … The wish to have everything be unsullied! Is that going to lead us into more rules and more rules and more constrictions? Where does it stop? (May 29, 2010)

I began this dissertation with a wish for evidence. I wanted to give voice to Colby's teaching, but within that was the eventual agenda of identifying fact, causality, PROOF that what Colby and I had done in that classroom and in our subsequent play, that what we had to say mattered. When I outlined that journey, through our play to evidence, I planned at this juncture to turn Colby's and my voices, the details and textures of our play, into conclusions: This stepping stone means ABC or Colby's teaching will accomplish XYZ. Our play, however, has changed me. Now I sit here thinking of the ways that conclusions concretize and foreclose. Using our play to prove something or to venture answers would be to turn our play into "something." It would be a last-minute hairpin turn into product and away from the play I invited you, the reader, into. Such a move, ironically, would make my project invalid in the sense of the research protocol I outlined. "A killer of life!" I thought it dramatic when I put that phrase in the beginning of this dissertation; now I find it potentially true—for me and for you.

OK then. But what of the question inherent in my wish for conclusions and for evidence: How do we know? How do we know about teachers and students and classrooms? How do we know what is important?

Colby told me once that he thinks suicide, among other things, expresses a wish for no more mistakes. A call for instant replay is a call to take people out of play. Having people, having our humanness, is messy. Safes will be called out. My take on things will not be yours. There will be loss and heartbreak. Chance will not be controlled for. In this, there will be

vulnerability and therefore danger. We will not Know. When Colby and I talked together for our final reflection on our three-act-play, he pointed out that what I said about the absence of XYZ parameters in his classroom wasn't really accurate. "We do have parameters! We know when things are alive and when they've gone dead!" (September 12, 2012). Colby's parameters, I am reminded, are just not about solving or controlling vulnerability and chance. Not knowing can be a parameter! Staying in play, trusting that play is enough—these are also parameters.

There is a paradox here: How do we know (about teaching and students and classrooms, about what is important and what to pay attention to) and not know (not concretize, not insist it all fit neatly, embrace the inherent sulliedness of humanness and chance)? At the start of this project, one of my committee member, Dr. John Murray, encouraged me to "consider all of the senses" (J. Murray, personal communication, June 8, 2011). At the time, I was resistant—senses!? Didn't I already have enough with my citations and with Colby? Now it dawns on me that when I wrote at the beginning of this dissertation that I trusted my sense, I think what I meant was that I trusted myself. All of my senses? All of me! Ralph Ellison whose words began this dissertation, wrote later in the same book I quoted, "Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in the face of certain defeat" (Ellison, 1964/1995, p. 577).

I don't have an answer for our paradox. I like the paradox. I think we need the paradox: Not knowing, chance, is our life blood, and we shouldn't be about solving it because in having chance, we have the self, which means we have life. Humanity is won.

Fighting and Aggression

Here is another piece. When I initially recalled that quote from Ralph Ellison, I remembered it as "*fighting* on in the face of certain defeat"—not playing. This was interesting to

me for two reasons. First, Colby and I had talked in our conversations about the role of aggression in play—not aggression with the intent to spoil or hurt, but aggression in the sense that the self showing up and claiming a place for itself is indeed intrusive and assertive. The second reason my slip caught my attention was that in my final conversation with Colby, he himself reflected on his use of the word "fight" within his quotes in this dissertation. "Did I really use that word?" he asked (September 12, 2012). In fact Colby used the word "fight" many more times then I had room to represent. Here was one of my favorites—Colby's reply after I asked him why therapists in training should play:

> One of my thoughts is that if we know it, know-it-in-our-bones know it, then we will honor it, then we will fight for it and it will help our work with our clients who need someone to fight for them and that place and space. We'll know it when it's not there, [and] we won't like it. (May 4, 2010)

Play, aggression, and fighting. As I wandered amidst these ideas, another puzzle piece came to mind. During the course of this project, I shared an anecdote with Colby, a story of my five-year-old niece, whose friend was being mean and exclusive. My sister and I were a bit frozen with the pain, not sure how to help. A friend advised this: Tell Margaret to say "Actually I am a really interesting person and I am going to find someone else to play with." Colby, on hearing this story, reflected, "The 'No' and the affirmation of oneself: the faith that you will be loved by loving yourself and *the 'No' creates a space where you don't get caught up*!"[*emphasis added*] (October 10, 2010).

When Colby uses the word "fight," there is a "No" there that is creating space. There is also Colby—his conviction, his fighting spirit, his BRASS! I think that one of the reasons that I have liked evidence so much in the past is that it's "neutral"—denuded of its speaker and, therefore, of the speaker's intent—their will, their will to assert, their responsibility, and therefore, their vulnerability. When we claim our "No's," our conviction, and our fight, when we

say “No” to one kind of knowing, or one kind of teaching, when we allow our vulnerabilities, we make space for the self—ourselves.

Our community has been in conflict for some time, our roots in self and relationship clashing with a current press for evidence in and of all that we do. I think evidence is a sort of siren song—irresistible and likely to lead us to shipwreck. I’m not suggesting we, like Odysseus, stuff our ears with wax, or tie ourselves to proverbial (theoretical) poles. Instead I wonder about saying “No” to instant replay—embrace vulnerability, embrace knowing about not knowing, allow for things to be true *and* not defined with a pointer. I wonder if Colby’s “No’s” are a fighting spirit that we as a profession might do well to claim? What would it feel like to say this is not who we are or how we do things or how we know that we know? Or perhaps more aptly and with faith: This is who are! This is how we know, we know! Who would we be talking to? Or for?

Heroism

I feel my skin tingling a bit and my stomach churning and I find myself worrying if you are still with me. I’ve gone out on a limb, like the squirrel; I’ve trembled and I’ve dashed. To care, to believe, to want, to say “No,” to express oneself with conviction, is to be in touch with vulnerability and the unknowns of the future. It’s scary and it’s brave.

I began this dissertation thinking about *The Odyssey* and heroes. Odysseus came back to me as I thought of fogs and boats and islands and siren songs. Now I think of fighting on in the face of certain defeat and winning our humanity. I think about aggression and saying No—to the siren song of evidence and evidencing. I think about my tingling skin and churning stomach. I think of Colby’s conviction. I think about therapists fighting for their clients. I think about bravery. To do and believe in what we are talking about, to subscribe to the intangible as

evidence, to take a stance, to fight for it—it's daring and, within the current climate of our profession, dangerous. Oh but risking and winning ourselves?! Life is to be lived! And maybe our humanity—our own, our profession's, our clients'—IS won by playing on in the face of certain defeat. That is what a hero does, after all; she takes on seemingly insurmountable odds and, in the end, wins herself and reclaims her home.

The Beginning in the Ending

"You have to believe that there is a return" (May 29, 2010)

I began this dissertation wondering about what had happened in my class with Colby. I looked to the empirical research within the professional clinical psychology literature to find answers and instead I found more questions—about how students learn, about what's happening in classrooms is addition to content, about how to help therapists show up with their clients spontaneously, genuinely, nondefensively, and with empathy and congruence. And I didn't find the voice of any teachers. So I decided to engage in conversation with Colby with the hopes of amplifying his voice, mining his knowledge, and perhaps in some way proving that what happened in that classroom mattered. To do all this within the demands of a dissertation, I also outlined a research protocol that honored individual voices and personal experience and that called for exuberant, transformative, action-inspiring outcomes.

So I sat in conversation with Colby, and then, for a long time, I became really stuck with how to put any of our conversations, my experience, our play, into words that I could share with you. A year ago, for example, long before I dreamt up our three-act play or this epilogue, I wrote this:

> I am sitting by the ocean, eight months pregnant. My husband has just helped me dive into the waves. Now I watch a seal, lazy and arching in the swells. During this process of sitting, we, Colby and I, we have talked so much about water. And it comes to me now

> that one of our initial conversations revolved around a movie—*The Secret of Roan Inish*—which, among other things, is the story of seas and seals and loss and recovery and faith. It is also about space for wonder and wander despite the deep travesties of life and living and loving and the hard edges of our surrounds. Now I sit on this shore enjoying the drift that the beach—this beach, these waves, the wind, the presence of my partner and baby, the gulls and seal—invite. I am struck by the enormity of the task of conveying to you the meaning of water. Or how to capture in words the invitations of a teacher who, in his own words, distrusts language and essay—the easy pomp of academia that privileges some "knowing"—quantifiable knowing—over innate, felt knowing; that uses the barometer of publishability over the aliveness of something that grows from within and alights. (H. Lord, personal communication, August 30, 2011)

Now here I sit writing the end of this story. My son is 11 months old. I have skipped and rocked through the waves. Sometimes it's felt as if I am floating, sometimes it's felt as if I am gasping for air, sometimes I've simply been frozen, sitting on the sand terrified to dive into the waves and yet unwilling to back away. All that is true. As I sit with this year-old reflection today, though, it no longer holds me in the way that it did. I don't feel stuck. Instead I feel compassion for this writer—for my implicit wish to stay in the drift, in the ocean, in the play and for the overwhelming worry of how to return, of how I will be received, of what will become of my play.

Again, it seems to me that the work and play of this dissertation changed me. And even though I wrote that research protocol that called for self-transformation, this change somehow still surprises me. It seems magical. And as I sit here, I think to myself, it *is* magical! Here's why: Colby asked me about my word *sparks*—"You wouldn't have sparks in a tree house, right?" (September 12, 2012). As I play with this, I think about sparks and their potential to burn things down. Which is perhaps a way that I have experienced my own sparks. I also think of sparks as something that can kindle a fire—something that transforms something dormant into a roaring, dancing, indefinable, transforming, and warming fire. Then I went back through my writing and I traced my use of the word spark and I noticed that at some point I mostly stopped

talking about sparks and I started talking about magic. OK, so what was this magic? I think magic is maybe that fire. It's not the glimpse of the missing baby brother and that first step into the rowboat; it's the reveling: the rowing, the scrubbing, the occupying and movement of self, the spark that is held by that little girl and her cousin, the spark that finds space and expression, that *breathes* and transforms. Breathing in the presence of another! Coming upon oneself in the light of the spark and the fire! Sturdy companions who lend us boats and build us tree houses! Having ourselves!

And reclaiming water? I think I have felt that if our play ended, if this dissertation were complete, then the magic, some piece of me, would be lost. I suppose I still have this fear. I want to protect our play, I want to prove that what happened in that classroom was important, I want to shout from the rooftops that everything I have written about has everything to do with learning and being and living and sitting with clients and doing therapy. But I also feel your presence. Remember Colby's words—here I am includes there you are (April 10, 2010)? Those words come back to me now. I can't know what you might come upon in this dissertation, what will become of my words and of our play, how it may be used or transformed, picked up or left behind. I can't <u>K</u>now. Ending, leaving this dissertation also means leaving this play. Letting it go. Letting it become something else, unknown, born within you the reader and reborn within me. And I do now have faith; that's why I chose an epilogue rather than a conclusion. I have faith in the future of the players, in movement, in conviction, in survival. I trust in the play and the ongoing-ness of experience, I trust I can leave the tree house with magic (water! myself!) in hand.

Trusting vulnerability. Letting go and still having. These are more paradoxes. They are also my transformative and exuberant outcomes, our ending and our beginning.

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