

THE WHY OF “WHAT ONE FAMILY BECAME WHEN WE GREW UP”

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DEDICATION

To my wife Courtney & daughter Emma,

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is the story and intergenerational study of the author's family, a family of educators. More specifically, it is a study of the characteristics and the familial, cultural, spiritual, and economic influences that led the author's family to enter the field in disproportionate numbers. The paper explores the circumstances that led to the family's lifelong careers within education. The entire study is done through the lens of the author's personal journey of self-discovery. For that reason first person pronouns will be used throughout the dissertation. It is my hope that I can take what I learn about myself and my family and use this information to guide my future actions as an educator.

Chapter 1 provides background for the study by chronicling significant pieces of my family's history in and around education. Parameters are also set for the study and context for many of my personal perceptions and beliefs are explored.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature relevant to this study. Specifically, it focuses on the various factors that lead persons to enter, and remain, in the field of education. Chapter 2 will also explore studies that discuss intergenerational family influence on vocational choice.

Chapter 3 discusses the qualitative methods used to conduct and evaluate the study.

Chapter 4 integrates the family history and the relevant literature in an attempt to answer the specific and overarching questions of the study.

Chapter 5 concludes the argument of answering the overarching question of the study and includes both my personal reflections and sets out areas for future self-exploration. I also take a moment to thank those that have contributed to helping me along life's journey.

CHAPTER 1

My Past Is My Future

Aunt Stella: I don't know. I just turned out that I wanted to be a teacher and I lived it.

Sean: You lived it?

Aunt Stella: I lived it!

(Aunt Stella, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

The school business was eaten, slept, and drank in this family. Everybody was always very concerned about things working the way they should be working and making sure everyone had every advantage, teachers and students, that they needed.

(Patricia Carmack, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

“What are you going to be when you grow up?” Every child in this United States, the great land of choice and opportunity, must answer that question a million times growing up. For most, I am sure, the answer changes nearly as many times as it is asked. For me though, and yes I now realize that I am weird, the answer was always the same, “I’m going to be the shortstop for the Texas Rangers, and then, when I retire I’m going to be a teacher and a coach.” The first part of that dream faded away in high school. I was good enough to play at that level, but it was apparent that Cooperstown was not in my future. Fortunately, my desire to be an educator was even stronger than my desire to play baseball.

While the dream never changed for me, the reasons behind the dream did. When I was young, it was simply a case of hero worship. My grandfather was a superintendent and had been a teacher and a coach, and I literally wanted to be him. When we went to Detroit, Texas to visit, I stuck to him like glue. Where PawPaw went, little Sean went, what PawPaw did, little Sean did. We were “partners.” My cousin Chuck had a similar experience with Granddad Parsons “Yeah, Granddad was my hero. I mean I rode in his back pocket everywhere he was, every moment I was at that place” (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008). My reasoning changed as I grew older. I still wanted to be just like him, but I began to be influenced by my family’s immersion

into the field of education. Other than my father, just about everyone in my family, to whom I was close, was in education. Additionally, most of my Mom's friends were teaching colleagues. This created a situation where the school business was always present in the home. Every conversation revolved around "what worked with my kids," what new mandate was coming from the state, stories of some funny thing Johnny said in class, and so on. I was enthralled by these tales. I noticed that my friends, and non-adult family members, would do just about anything possible to get away from these 'adult' conversations, but I was fascinated by the storytelling. Teachers are great storytellers and when you add that skill to the genuine care, love, and passion they had for their students, I could not walk away from it. According to Wright and Tuska (as cited in Zeichner and Gore, 1990) my experience might not have been as unique as one would expect. They suggested that:

Teacher socialization is affected to a considerable extent by the quality of relationships teachers had as children with important adults (e.g. mother, father, teachers) and that becoming a teacher is, to some extent, a process (sometimes unconscious and sometimes deliberate) of trying to become like significant others in one's childhood or trying to replicate early childhood relationships. According to this view, early relationships with significant others are the prototypes of subsequent relationships throughout life, and the kinds of teachers that education students become are governed by the effects of this early childhood heritage on their personalities. (p. 333)

Both Lortie (2002) and Knowles (1992) echoed Wright and Tuska when they found in their studies that being surrounded by positive teacher role models as a child had a corresponding effect on young teacher's view of themselves as teachers. Knowles (1992) stated:

All the individuals were greatly influenced by their experiences with teachers. Elizabeth tended to be positively influenced and had clear conceptions of her role as teacher. A number of factors amplified her perception of self as teacher. Not only did she have teacher role models in the home but her teachers consistently recognized her teacher-like skills, and to some extent, she was inculcated for the role of teacher because she was the kind of student that teachers like, commend, and induce to become teachers.

Consequently, she had a strong sense of the role of teachers in the public schools. Pp. 129

Teacher Before a Teacher

As I got older my reasoning continued to change as I began to have opportunities to teach before I was a teacher. One of the great advantages to growing up in a small community is that people are willing to allow you opportunities to gain experience and grow. For example, I grew up in a wonderful little church named Kingswood United Methodist Church. Kingswood was its own small community and if the doors were open, and they generally were as seemingly everyone had a key, the Scott family was there. As my Mom stated:

When I raised my kids, they helped me raise them. Looking back on it I wouldn't have wanted to raise you boys without that church to help. There were people there who did what people did for me when I was growing up. They kept you on the straight and narrow and let you know there were other people and not just your family that loved you.

(Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Not only did the people of Kingswood help to raise my brothers and me, they gave us leadership opportunities as well. From the time we were in middle school we were helping to teach bible school, taking our regular turn with the adults as nursery workers, leading children's church, and

acting as worship leaders. I also served as the president of our youth group, giving me the opportunity to sit on the Administrative Board. On Youth Sundays we ran the show. I still have bulletins and my notes from the two times my fellow youth members selected me to deliver the sermon. One of the greatest memories I have of Kingswood came after I was an adult and was head baseball coach at Eastern Hills High School in Fort Worth. I was asked to deliver the message on Laity Sunday, and I invited my baseball boys to come. I was able, as an adult, to thank all the people of the church for all they had done for me. I showed my players a little more about who I was and why, and I delivered a message to them in a different setting about what I expected of them, why I expected it, and why I loved them. It was one of the most meaningful days of my life.

The leadership and early opportunities to practice being a teacher did not end at church. The schools and community presented many opportunities as well. In junior high and high school I was able to participate and hold leadership positions in many organizations like Student Council, National Honor Society, FCA, and PALS. One of the most valuable experiences I had came from my favorite teacher of all time. I had Mrs. Brenda Johns in eighth grade algebra and ninth grade geometry. She was the absolute epitome of what a great teacher should be. I truly formed the foundation of what I wanted my classroom to look like by the time I was fifteen years old. Her classroom was a whirlwind of activity from the opening bell. Her enthusiasm and determination made us truly believe that there was nothing more important than what we were learning at that exact point and time. She was an expert in her subject, she was always prepared, she was creative, she had us up and moving, she worked with parents, she was demanding, and most of all she believed in us. I watched every move she made. While I wanted to be my

PawPaw, I wanted to teach just like Mrs. Johns. In his findings Lortie (2002) emphasized the strong effect teachers have on the practices of future teachers:

Although Five Towns teachers were not asked about the influence of former teachers, it is evident that many consider it important. A large proportion of respondents volunteered information about how their current work is affected by the teaching they received. (p. 63)

Mrs. Johns even gave us a few chances to try our hand at teaching. If you were willing to come in and work with her outside of the school day for a couple of weeks, she would help you develop a lesson and allow you to teach for a day. There were a few of us that took her up on her offer. During the class period she would act as a support person moving about the room working with individuals on problem areas and helping with classroom management when needed. Lortie (2002, p. 606) and Knowles (1992, p. 136) posited teachers' prior experiences as students served the role of an apprenticeship. This went beyond taking my seat and playing the traditional role of student. It was an incredible experience. It was kind of like riding a bike with training wheels. I got such a huge rush out of teaching without the worry of crashing and burning. Every time I was able to teach, it just confirmed more deeply that this was what I wanted to do with my life. I cannot thank Mrs. Johns enough for her influence. Now when I go into a classroom as a middle school principal, in the very same building, I am looking for teachers who create an environment that allows and promotes students to have the desire to learn the way I did. I am looking for a classroom where there is such an electricity I know the students are going to be spending three nights a week on a three-way phone call arguing over the best way to solve a tough problem.

Focused Youth

As stated earlier, I realized that I was a little ‘weird’ when it came to being this focused as a young person. I only slowly realized that was unique as I grew older. I am the first born so there was no older sibling to model my life after within the home. I definitely had a real and intense desire to please my parents, grandparents, and teachers. Cooley and Mead (as cited in Lortie, 2002, p. 45) have argued that:

Personal identity is influenced by how others respond to one; one aspect of such influence is the labeling of a child’s behavior and the attribution of occupational futures. This process is likely to develop, reasonably enough, when others observe particular propensities in a person and attach specific meaning to them.

The school system and the communities, such as the church, that my parents exposed me to, praised the behavior and reinforced the culture in which my parents raised me.

One of the issues with being focused is that you do not always look up to see what those around you are doing. I remember distinctly two moments in my life when I realized that my close peers were very different than I was. In the third grade, I was astounded that one of my three best friends since kindergarten did not attend church. It is really not up to the eight year old whether the family attends services on Sunday. I vaguely remember mentioning to my friend about something that happened in Sunday School from that week, and he responded by asking me why I would go to school on a Sunday. That is an innocent enough question, but I was floored. I had simply assumed that Justin and his parents went to one of the seemingly dozens of other churches in town. After Justin’s revelation I literally remember going to several other classmates and grilling them about their church-going habits.

The second moment of my life that I realized my perceptions were much different than those of some of my peers occurred my senior year of high school. As graduation approached I began to notice that while many of us were excited about moving on and conquering the world, others were sad and scared. Two of my best buddies had no idea what they were going to do next. Both were academically strong in high school, but neither expressed a real goal or life direction. Neither friend had parents that were college graduates. Chris applied and was accepted at the last minute to a local university, but never really found his place there and eventually dropped out. Scott, one of the most talented artists I have ever seen, never ended up applying anywhere and went to work literally digging ditches. While neither of these gentlemen finished college, they both eventually found their way and now have productive careers. As shallow as it may sound, this really put a strain on our relationship. Looking back on it, I was judgmental. I did not understand why they were not taking advantage of the opportunities that were out there for them. Schulenberg and Crouter (1984), Altenbaugh (1992), Farber (1996), Lortie (2002), Croll (2004), and Dingus (2008) all cited the importance of family role models in the educational and career attainment of children. Croll (2004) viewed the likelihood for success as a recurring cycle, “The central idea underlying social capital is that social relationships and the personal networks which they create are a resource which can be used to generate outcomes which are valued” (p. 398). We quickly went from spending much of our school time, and all of our free time together to exchanging emails once or twice a year. I don’t remember being mad at either of them. We simply ran out of things to talk about. Our relationship was built on the common experiences of everyday life growing up in Burleson, Texas. When we no longer shared these experiences our friendship faded.

Conversely, I am still extremely close with the last of our band of musketeers. David went off to a different school and pursued a different line of work than I did, but he had a direction and a desire, as I perceived it, to ‘better himself.’ Like Chris and Scott neither of David’s parents had a college degree. Financially, David’s family struggled more than either of Chris or Scott’s families. David came from nothing, but he had a drive to make something out of his life. I guess I admired that. I respected that. I thought he was a better person for what he was doing. These perceptions were greatly influenced and, perhaps at some point misinterpreted, by the values I was raised on. David overcame obstacles that previous generations of my family had already toppled for me. He, “worked two, sometimes three, jobs, helped run a cattle ranch, and took care of a dying grandfather, all while taking 12-20 semester hours every spring and fall to graduate in four years” (Eder, 2009). David wrote of his time in college, “So I didn’t have the ‘college experience.’ Who cares? I received so much more, something that no one can take away from me, accomplishment and pride!” (Eder, 2009) When I asked him to reflect on what, or who, drove him to work toward a college degree he, much like I did in this paper, had trouble narrowing down the variables. He listed his sister and a youth director as guiders in his faith, his mom for providing a nurturing home, his brothers for showing him how to work hard and to persevere, and his dad for his tough love and always expecting the most out of him. Finally, he stated his desire to emulate the lifestyle of my family. (Eder, 2009) I feel David’s accomplishments, and his fight to get there, is one of the reasons we remained close enough friends to stand up at each other’s weddings, and why we are still close today.

Learning to Teach

My high school basketball coach encouraged his players to give back to the community by coaching youth basketball teams. Each year I would find a buddy or two and we would take

on a team. These experiences proved beneficial once I became a 'real' teacher. Teaching a first-grader how to shoot a basketball really forces you to learn how to teach in incremental steps. You cannot say, "Go work on your mid-range jumper coming off a screen to your left and make sure it is sharp. Don't drift." It turns out that a six year old does not know what any of that means. We started with how and where to hold the ball and took baby steps to teach them different facets of the game. I was able to transfer these principles to the classroom. Before I could expect my students to write a term paper I had to teach them to take notes, organize their ideas, write for a specific audience, and design them several shorter assignments on which to practice. I had to deliver the instruction in incremental steps. Coaching youth basketball was a great time and, like the classroom, as long as we were excited, they were excited. Looking back, I think I enjoyed this experience simply because I enjoyed seeing their progress. The first year we coached I'm sure we did so because we thought it would get us in good with the coach, but after that it was just fun. I am not sure how much we improved the skills of our players, but I know that they looked up to us and I liked that. Hansen (1995) wrote about teaching as a vocation or a calling.

Vocation does not imply a one-way subordination of the person to the practice. Vocation describes work that is fulfilling and meaningful to the individual, such that it helps provide a sense of self, of personal identity.

In short, a vocation describes work that results in service to others and personal satisfaction in the rendering of that service. (p. 3)

It turns out that this concept translated well when coaching varsity baseball, teaching research methods in AP US History, or mentoring a teacher on classroom procedures. Even though learners in those situations have some background knowledge, you have to ensure the

information is not only broken down into digestible chunks, but that you allow for opportunities for practice, time to reflect, and then more time to practice. When this is accomplished, and your student is successful, you as the teacher, gain a sense of purpose and achievement.

Living the Calling

These experiences, and learning from the experiences of my family, allowed me to have a pretty clear understanding of what it took to be a successful classroom teacher long before I ever became a professional teacher. That does not mean I was great from the start. I made as many mistakes as anyone, but I had a better understanding of what the mistakes meant, what to do about them, and where to go for help. I think one of the greatest advantages I had starting out was an understanding of what the life of an educator was really like, and what it really took and meant to be successful. As Aunt Stella emphatically stated in the opening quote to this chapter, “I lived it!” (Personal Interview, December 14, 2009) My entire family lived it. Not only did I have the benefit of hearing the stories, I saw the blood, sweat, tears, and hours it took to be prepared to go into that classroom everyday and be there for your kids, to really give them what they needed academically, structurally, and most importantly, emotionally. As I learned from watching Mom, teaching is not a nine to five job; you become an integral part of each child’s world:

You spend every day with a first grader - by the end of the year they just, they love you. I mean that’s just the way it is. Granted after they move on, they get more teachers and you become less important to them, but for that year, right next to mom and dad and grandma and grandpa there is my teacher. You know those teachers are important, well really for forever, but especially those first few years. You are like a substitute parent for them. As a matter of fact I ran into a parent yesterday at Penneys who screamed and got out of line

and hugged me because we went through two years of really intense issues with her young man when he was going through school. We became really close (laughs) because we worked so hard on him. She was like, “He passed his TAKS in reading!” So, I was like, “Yes! He goes to Jr. High now.” (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Though the needs are different, what Mom says about first graders holds true with many high school seniors as well. Many of the experiences I had at Eastern Hills put me more in the position of parent than that of teacher or coach. This is always a difficult position to be in, especially when only a few years in age separate you from the students. Eastern Hills High School is an inner-city, majority-minority school, and most of its 1,600 students live in poverty. It has been five years since I taught at Eastern Hills, and I still talk to several of my boys weekly. Many of them witnessed things as small boys that I could never have imagined, except through the stories they told. For whatever reason, I was in the right place at the right time, with the right skill set to help many of these students others had cast aside or for whatever other reason had been unable to reach. Now I count several educators, businessmen, soldiers, medical professionals, and a Navy SEAL among the boys that I coached. This continually reaffirms my belief that education is my calling. I mean this exactly the way it sounds. I believe that God put me here on this earth to be an educator. He gave me a family and the experiences I had growing up so that I could help these young men. This is my ministry. As my Navy SEAL says over and over again, “I’m not bragging Coach. That’s what we did. We’re motivated.” As he feels like it is not his accomplishment, but the accomplishment of the team when a mission is completed, I feel that the boys’ success is not my accomplishment. God had already given them all the talent they needed to accomplish anything they wanted in life. He simply used me as a tool to help

unlock that talent, confidence, or skills set and give them encouragement. I think that Nieto (2005) summed up my experiences at Eastern Hills well when she wrote:

Yet in spite of difficult conditions, people continue to choose teaching for what may appear to be idealistic, even romantic and naïve, reasons: they love working with young people; they consider teaching a mission and a calling; they see it as an opportunity to share their enthusiasm and learning and to leave their imprint on the future. (p. 167)

Perhaps I am most proud that many of these young men are now leaving their own imprint on the future as they are using their experiences and talents to help others through teaching, coaching, healing, volunteering, and serving our country. I do not look at education as a job. It is my mission to serve the students, my community, and God.

The Family History

As stated earlier many in my family are educators. When I refer to family, I am specifically referencing the descendants of my mother's maternal grandparents. Figure 1 is a family tree of all working age members of this line of the family. All educators are indicated in bold.

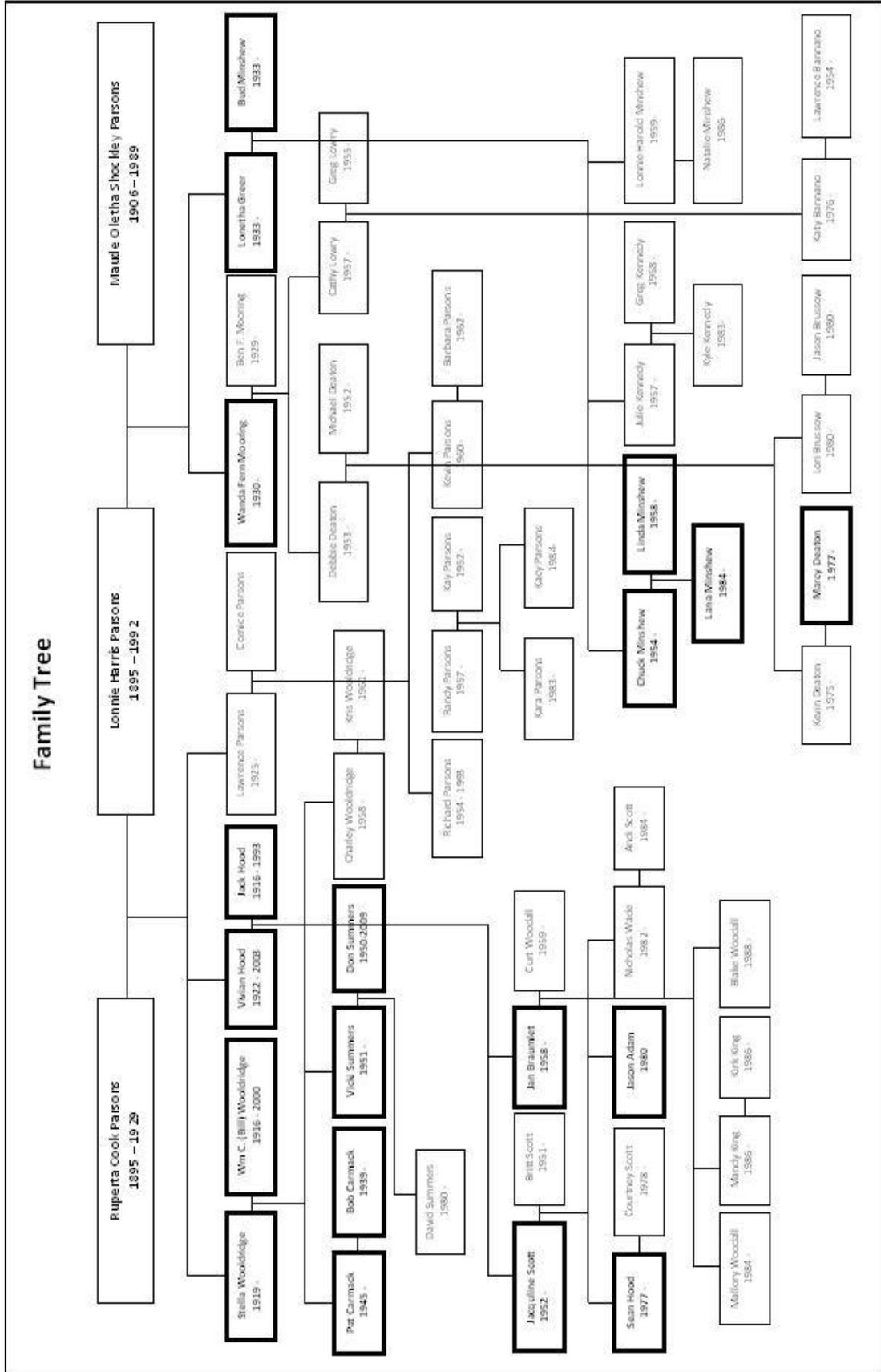


Figure 1. Family Tree (Working Age Family Included)
 Note: All educators are outlined in bold.

My great-grandfather's name was Lonnie Harris Parsons, known to me as Granddad Parsons. He, along with his brothers settled a remote section of Lamar County known as Belk, Texas. The following is what the Texas State Historical Association Online, says about Belk:

Belk is at the intersection of Farm Roads 197 and 1499, three miles south of the Red River in extreme north central Lamar County. The site, settled in the 1840s by herders who ran their livestock on the open range of Round Prairie, remained sparsely settled after the railroads of the 1880s chose other settlements as rail stops. A post office was established in 1899 but closed six years later. In 1933 the settlement had thirty residents and one business. Maps for 1936 showed a store, a church, a school, and a cluster of houses. In 1949 Belk had a population of fifty and two businesses. In 1957 the children of Belk were attending school in the Chicota Independent School District, and in 1970 the community had no businesses. Maps of 1980 showed the United Methodist Church, Midway Church, and a few dwellings along Farm Road 197. The population in 1990 and 2000 was fifty-five. (McCroskey, 2008)

Most of those houses were owned by ranchers and farmers related to Granddad Parsons and his brothers. The two businesses it references in 1949 were the general store, owned by his brother, and the cotton gin that he and his brothers ran. The gin served all of the surrounding communities. The United Methodist Church is the Church they all attended. The Chicota Independent School is where all but one of his children graduated from high school and two of his son-in-laws taught, coached, and were principal. The oldest sibling, Aunt Stella, being the only exception as the school did not go through high school at that time.

I graduated from Paris High School. Vivian graduated from Chicota High School and Wanda and Lonetha and Lawrence, they all graduated from Chicota. I rode the school

bus, the first school bus that Lamar County had. I rode the school bus to Paris High School and we were frozen and late nearly every morning. We went to Cavness and then back to Emerson, and from Emerson to Sumner to Hopewell and from Hopewell to Paris. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Granddad Parsons had five children. The first three were born to his first wife Ruperta Cook Parsons. They were Stella, born 1919; Vivian, my grandmother (Nanny) born in 1922; and Lawrence, born 1925. Ruperta died in February of 1929 when her youngest child was barely three years old. Granddad remarried in December of 1929 to Maude Oletha Shockley, known to me as Granny Parsons. The family story goes that the three children of Granddad Parsons and Ruperta, who had been sent to live with their paternal grandmother after the death of their mother, disliked her so much that Granny Parsons awoke from her 'Honeymoon' night to a house full of three kids. It seemed that ten year old Stella and seven year old Vivian had gotten four year old Lawrence up and dressed and walked the two plus miles back to their dad and new mother's house. The kids were waiting for them when Granny and Granddad awakened. Granny did not stop with this inherited instant family. In all Granddad produced five children: three children with first wife, Ruperta, and two with second wife, Oletha. Born to Oletha (Granny) were Wanda Fern, born 1930; and Lonetha (Lonnie), born 1933. All five children graduated from high school and four of them, the girls, graduated from college. Aunt Stella and Aunt Lonnie earned master's degrees. All four sisters became educators. Three of the four sisters married educators, two of whom earned a master's degree. Aunt Lonnie recalled the day that five family members received college degrees on the same day.

I don't know if any of them told you about when they all got all the degrees. I stayed home. I was about twelve or so, on a Sunday afternoon. I had my foot operated on and

thought it was terrible they all went off and left me at home. Then the next morning on the front of the Paris News was, “Sheepskins Given in the Parsons Family” (smiles). The girls all three got their bachelor’s and Jack and Bill got their master’s. (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

In the next generation, eleven of the thirteen grandchildren received degrees. Five of the grandchildren became educators and of those five, three married educators. Among the great-grandchildren eleven, are working age. Of the eleven three of us, including myself, are currently teaching, and there are nine others currently in college. Three more are not yet college age.

This record is especially impressive because family members relate that Granddad had only an 8th grade education; as at that time, an eighth grade education was all that was offered, and as Mom reported:

My grandmother, my Granny, she I think went through the sixth grade. That was because her dad said that girls didn’t need to be educated past then and she was very bitter about that I think. She was determined that (a) she was going to be well read, well educated, and keep up on everything and (b) that all of her girls were going to school (college), whether they wanted to or not. Some of them wanted to so that was easy, but my Mom did not want to so my grandmother and my Mom’s older sister registered her for school and got her a place to live and took her there and told her she was going. So that is how my Mom got her college education (laughs). (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

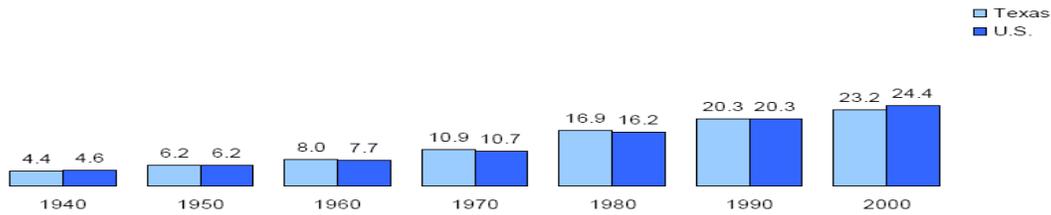
When you combine that with the fact that Granny was only sixteen years older than Aunt Stella and that the three oldest children had to overcome the death of their mother at a young age, these

children would all be labeled as ‘At-Risk’ if they were in school now. Margarita Donnelly (1987) defined At-Risk students:

At-Risk students are students who are not experiencing success in school and are potential dropouts. They are usually low academic achievers who exhibit low self-esteem. Disproportionate numbers of them are males and minorities. Generally they are from low socioeconomic status families. Students who are both low income and minority status are at higher risk; their parents may have low educational backgrounds and may not have high educational expectations for their children. (p. 1)

I have often wondered what my great-grandparents did that was so special. Why was education so important to them? Why did Granddad volunteer to serve on the Lamar County School Board? Why did they allow one of the teachers from the two-teacher primary school to live with them? Most importantly, how did they instill the importance of education so deeply into their children? It was unusual at the time for four sisters, born between 1919 and 1933, and all from a remote area, to attend college and obtain degrees. The following graph, Figure 2, entitled “Percent of the Population 25 Years and Over with a Bachelor’s Degree or More” contains data in Texas from 1940 – 2000.

Percent of the Population 25 Years and Over with a Bachelor's Degree or More



U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Figure 2: (Texas: Educational attainment of the population 25 years and over: 1940 to 2000, 2007)

The percentage of family members that receive a bachelor's degree far outpaces the population, regardless of the decade. Table 1, which lists the level of educational attainment for each generation of the family, demonstrates that the value Granny and Granddad placed on education was passed on to their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren.

Table 1
Family Educational Attainment

Generation	High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree
Granny & Granddad	0/2	0/2	0/2
5 Children & Spouses	10/10	9/10	4/10
13 Grand Children & Spouses	23/24	18/24	8/24
26 Great-Grand Children & Spouses of Appropriate Age	26/26	13 Conferred Degrees 4 Full Time Students under age of 21 4 Part-Time Student over age of 21	4 Conferred Degrees 2 In-Progress

A big part of the reason I am pursuing this doctorate is because I feel like I have opportunities that those before me did not have, and I do not want to waste them. I want to show my daughter how important education is. I want her to read this dissertation someday and find encouragement and inspiration from the stories of her family. I want her to know that she truly can accomplish

whatever she sets out to accomplish. Education is a means to leave things a little better than the way they were. As you will see throughout the pages of this dissertation, this will be quite a feat for me to accomplish.

Purpose of Study

The overarching question of this study is: Why did such a disproportionate number of family members make a career out of public education in the state of Texas? The assumption here is that there are common factors or root causes within this family that led to successful careers in education. This is not the first study to look at career choice, but it is hoped that it will be one of the few that looks in greater depth using qualitative research to move beyond the numbers to discover the whys. The study will be a qualitative study and consist specifically of family interviews and a review of family video, tapes, and artifacts.

In order to answer the overarching question I will attempt to address the following specific research questions:

1. What are the origins of the family's emphasis on personal education? In what ways did this emphasis affect/influence the participants?
2. What factors including family, religious, and community activities or experiences were influential in the decision of the participants to make education a career?
3. What is the life of an educator? What appealed to the participants about this life?
4. Under different circumstances and knowing what they know now would the participants make the same decision to make education their career choice?

Research Design

The objective of this research project is to identify the root reasons for one family's disproportionate entry and continuance, across generations, in the field of education. Research subjects consisted of twelve family members who are public school educators in the state of Texas. Four others are deceased. I chose not to interview an additional family member who married a cousin close to my age and was already an educator when she married into the family. Finally, I chose not to interview one other educator who divorced a family member before I was born.

This study is qualitative in nature. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) reported that traditionally qualitative “research provides the foundation for reports about and representations of ‘the Other’” (p. 1). Historically the studying of the Other, defined by Schwandt (2007) as those with a different, “language, culture, community, norms, values, beliefs, ways of life, traditions” (p. 213) than that of the researcher, is done as a means to better understand, and possibly reform, outliers that do not conform to dominant cultural norms. There are, however, continuing and evolving movements in which the researcher place them self, at times by studying a population of which they are apart, as a central part of the study. This is done not only in an attempt to keep from studying subjects and phenomenon in isolation from the real world, but many times to allow the investigator to gain a better understanding of oneself. While this elicits crises of representation and legitimation, in taking away the perceived objectivity of remotely observing the Other, this can, in part, be overcome through reflective practices and safeguards. We will delve more deeply into the philosophy and reasoning behind the use of selected research methods in Chapter Three. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 66-68)

Participants were called and the research project explained. They agreed to participate in the study and also sign their Consent form. The study took place entirely within the state of Texas as I traveled to interview each of the participants. The interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and occurred outside the traditional school day and in an agreed upon location. The interview questions for the participants were open ended. Much of the data was gleaned from stories told by the participants. The interests and comfort of the participant drove much of the interview. I also reviewed family artifacts, archives, and videotapes.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The identities of the participants will remain confidential, unless permission is granted by all participants to use identifying information. All identifying information was kept separately in a locked filing cabinet. The participants were allowed to withdraw from the project at anytime or choose not to answer any questions that were asked. The participants viewed all collected data concerning the participant in question and were allowed to strike any or all of said data. The data were analyzed for commonalities and patterns that presented themselves to help to answer the overarching question of this study.

The Researcher

I am currently a middle school principal in my tenth year as an educational professional. The first four years of my career were spent as an AP US history and US government teacher and the head baseball coach at Eastern Hills High School in the Fort Worth Independent School District. I am now in my sixth year as an administrator in the Burleson Independent School District. I first came to Burleson as an assistant principal at Frazier Elementary. The following year I served as an assistant principal at Burleson High School. The following summer the principal position at Frazier Elementary became available, and I was fortunate enough to be

selected. I spent two years at Frazier before becoming the principal at Hughes Middle School in the fall of 2008.

I entered the MBA/Ed.D program at Texas Christian University for many reasons. Chief among them was to prepare myself for future roles within public education. There was also a very strong desire to take advantage of the opportunities that those before me did not have and to set in place opportunities for those that come after me. It will be a special day for me when I become the first member of my family to earn a doctorate degree.

I acknowledge that while my closeness to the research subjects, my family and myself, will allow for unique insights and background knowledge, it could also serve as a liability by biasing my judgment in research design and interpretation of data. I have worked to limit these possibilities through journaling, having multiple coders of the data, entering into a writers group with fellow doctoral candidates, and seeking the guidance of my dissertation advisors.

Significance of Study

The populations we as a country expect to be educated have grown steadily since the inception of compulsory public education. We have gone from a very narrow focus of educating ‘the few,’ to ‘equal access for all,’ to the current legislation of ‘achievement for all’ or No Child Left Behind. All children are not only expected to finish primary school or the eighth grade, but are expected to graduate from high school. If too many students fail to graduate, schools are sanctioned by both the state and federal governments. Over time, education has changed a great deal and it has been increasingly difficult to lure highly qualified professionals into the field. Still, from generation to generation, my family continues to enter and make a career in public education. This study is to find out why we are drawn to the vocation of education.

Perhaps as significant to me, I would like to take an introspective look and garner a greater understanding of who I am and why I make the decisions I make. I want to know what I do not know about myself. My hope is to use that information to guide my future actions and decisions, both in my personal life and in my position as a public education administrator. I have become more and more steadfast in the belief that one must know himself, or at least be continually and actively involved in the pursuit of this knowledge, to effectively help others find and create knowledge.

Many have studied these topics in pieces. In *Please Understand Me: Character & Temperament Types* Keirsey & Bates (1984) dedicated a portion of their book on the four temperament types to the study of common teacher temperaments and how the resulting characteristics influence their thinking, perceptions, and actions. Several others studied both why persons select a career in education and commonly held characteristics of teachers. These authors include Schwarzweller and Lyson (1978) in *Some Plan to Become Teachers: Determinants of Career Specification Among Rural Youth in Norway, Germany, and the United States*; Zeichner and Gore (1990) in their article "Teacher Socialization"; and Vegas, Murnane, and Willett (2001) in "From High School to Teaching: Many Steps, Who Makes It?" Lortie (2002) then took these characteristics and their effect on practice a step further. In his seminal work *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* he asserted that by the time teachers become teachers they have been socialized, and apprenticed, by their own teachers to the point that little, including teacher preparation programs and professional development, can be done to change their practice. The changes in practice and perception that do occur are usually facilitated through the mentoring of trusted colleagues. I will use Lortie's (2002) work to suggest that the shop talk

family discussions not only helped to recruit many of us into the field, but later provided trusted mentors promoting successful and long careers within the field.

Hansen (1995), *The Call to Teach*; Blacker (2002), "In memoriam: Understanding teaching as public service"; Bullough, Gitlin, & Goldstein (1984), "Ideology, teacher role, and resistance"; and Nieto (2005), *Why We Teach* expanded Lortie's work by studying the reciprocal service and vocational relationship within education. They delved into teaching as a calling, while noting that teachers receive many psycho-social and monetary rewards as well.

These authors along with Sharp (1957), *Why Teach* and Smulyan (2004) "Choosing to teach: Reflections on gender and social change" studied the societal role and view of teachers. They also looked at the monetary shortfalls versus the stability of being in education. This is studied through the eyes of both men and women and explored as a reason for the feminization of the field. Finally, they looked at the role the opportunities that social mobility plays in alluring or dissuading candidates from entering the field of education.

The works of Flouri and Hawkes (2008), "Ambitious mothers - successful daughters: Mothers' early expectations for children's education and children's earnings and sense of control in adult life"; Farber (1996), "An integrated perspective on women's career development within a family"; Croll (2004), "Families, social capital and educational outcomes"; Restuccia and Urrutia (2004), "Intergenerational persistence of earnings: The role of early and college education"; Schulenberg and Crouter (1984), "The influence of the family on vocational development"; and Statvrou (1996), *Intergenerational transitions in family enterprise: Factors influencing offspring intentions to seek employment in the family business*, took an intergenerational perspective to study the influence of family on education level, choice of vocation, income level, social mobility, and the desire to strive for various measures of professional success.

Finally, Dingus (2008) in "Our family business was education: Professional socialization among intergenerational African-American teaching families" came closest to the focus of this project. Instead of studying a single family, Dingus explored the lives of three generations of three African-American families. Dingus included a total of nine participants, all female, in her study. While her overarching question was different, she did an excellent job of answering the same specific research questions that I have posed in this project:

1. What are the origins of the family's emphasis on personal education? In what ways did this emphasis affect/influence the participants?
2. What factors including family, religious, and community activities or experiences were influential in the decision of the participants to make education a career?
3. What is the life of an educator? What appealed to the participants about this life?
4. Under different circumstances and knowing what they know now would the participants make the same decision to make education their career choice?

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Three major areas of literature were reviewed for this study. They included: (a) factors that traditionally lead persons into the field of education, (b) what leads people to remain in the field of education, and (c) intergenerational factors influencing career choice. Finally, I will look more closely at Dingus' (2008) study, "Our family business was education: Professional socialization among intergenerational African-American teaching families." Dingus attempted to combine all three major areas in her study.

Multiple information sources were used to conduct this literature review including books, dissertations, internet resources, and professional journals. These resources were accessed through Academic OneFile, Academic Search Complete, Eric, JSTOR, and WorldCat Dissertations. Timeframes researched generally ranged from 1930s through the present as these dates coincide with the post-secondary academic careers and the teaching careers of the participants.

The chapter closes with an interpretive summary that discusses how the literature has informed my understanding of the topics and how the materials contribute to the ongoing development of the study.

Factors That Traditionally Lead Persons Into The Field of Education

Yet despite all this, our knowledge of the complex processes that affect the tracking of certain young people toward careers in teaching is rather limited. An extensive search of the contemporary American literature in sociology and education (facilitated in part by

accessing the ERIC/CRESS files), turned up very few works bearing upon this particular issue. (p. 29)

Since Schwarzwel & Lyson (1978) penned these words there has been a great deal more research done on this topic. Much of this research was precipitated by perceived teaching shortages. While much of the work is quantitative in nature, at times commissioned by government entities, qualitative research will be reviewed as well.

Lortie (2002) presented and discussed what he has called the five attractions to teaching: (1) Interpersonal Time, (2) The Service Theme, (3) The Continuation Theme, (4) Material Benefits, and (5) The Theme of Compatibility (p. 27-33). Nieto (2005) also named five core qualities of those entering the teaching profession. She compiled her list through analysis of teacher essays. “The five qualities that I am suggesting are: a sense of mission; solidarity with, and empathy for, students; the courage to challenge mainstream knowledge; improvisation; and a passion for social justice” (p. 204). Nieto’s (2005) five qualities overlapped those of Lortie (2002) in the areas of service, mission, and interpersonal time.

Teacher Characteristics

Before diving into what leads people to entering education, I feel it would be beneficial to take a closer look at what characteristics make up a teacher. Two distinct ‘personality tests’, the Keirsey Temperament Sorter and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), have gained popularity in assisting personnel directors in all fields to find the best match for a job.

The Keirsey Temperament Sorter

Keirsey and Bates (1984) delved into this question in their book on temperament types. They stated there are four main types: Artisans (SP), Rationals (NT), Idealists (NF), and the

Guardians (SJ). There are very few SP teachers on any one campus. Many campuses have none and they make up about two percent of all teachers. SP teachers are interested in the development of freedom and spontaneity in their students (p. 157). They are performers and prefer classroom communication to remain between the teacher and student. Students look forward to class activities, but may or may not have to learn the curriculum. SPs rarely hold their students accountable and treat their students much like younger siblings. SPs are few in number partially because, “few SPs stay around higher education long enough to obtain the necessary credentials to teach (p. 158). This does not mean however that the SPs are not bright as they are “most apt to show discrepancies between scores on academic ability tests and grade point average” (p. 158).

NTs make up the next smallest group of teachers. They “are interested in the development of intelligence. They seek answers to nature’s enigmas and inspire their students to do likewise (p. 161). They assume that students want to learn and are cold to those that do not. They are excellent at writing and planning curriculum, but “can be oblivious to the emotional climate of the classroom and may continue a planned lesson when the students would benefit more from another sort of experience” (p. 161). NTs are more prevalent “in higher education where, presumably intellectual demands are the greatest” (p. 161). Keirsey and Bates (1984) summed up the NTs and SPs in the following way:

The one or two NTs in the school (if any) stand on the sidelines of this ideological tug-of-war, amused, puzzled, skeptical, and detached, wondering how these people got so mixed up and why they don’t get on with the “real business of school,” which is, of course, “intellectual development.”

The single SP (and in most schools there isn't even one) doesn't even stand on the sidelines. He hasn't the faintest notion of there even being a tug-of-war; he is off doing his thing, oblivious to the regulations as well as the course of study. (p. 156)

While still not as prevalent in schools as SJs, the NF contingent "far exceeds NF frequency in the general population" (p. 155). The NFs are outspoken about their belief "in the 'search for self' and they will never back down or keep quiet about it" (p. 156). They believe that their students must know themselves before they can truly make sense of the curriculum.

Finally, the most dominant group of teachers are SJs. In fact:

Three out of five teachers are likely to be SJs, and their interest in preserving and passing on the cultural heritage within the context of socially recognized institutions explains this percentage. Responsible, dependable, contributing to the needs of others, and creating and preserving social harmony are all terms that characterize the SJ teachers. (p. 159)

SJ teachers like the organizational structure of schools and remain loyal despite occasional disagreements. In the classroom, procedures are defined and practiced. "SJ teachers usually are excellent in teaching by the Socratic question. They generally can be observed encouraging student-to-teacher interaction" (p. 160). They expect conformity and excellence from their students with an emphasis on work being done on time. They are more likely to point out mistakes than to praise good work. "The 38 percent of students who are SJs tend to harmonize with the climate established by SJ teachers, a climate which is nurturing but which expects that lessons be done on time and in an orthodox manner" (p. 160). To SJ students SJ teachers, "are willing to devote endless energy to helping those students learn" (p. 160).

Keirsey and Bates (1984) stated that while the SJ and NF contingents far outdistance the NT and SPs no one temperament is inherently better than the other.

We cannot change another's character any more than a leopard can change his spots. But it is well that we cannot. The real pedagogical problem is not how to change temperament, but how to utilize one's own temperament in establishing and maintaining a facilitative relationship with the differing temperaments of students. (p. 157)

Palmer (1998) concurred with Keirsey and Bates (1984) when he analyzed the shared characteristics of effective teachers. He stated that:

The methods used by these weavers vary widely: lectures, Socratic dialogues, laboratory experiments, collaborative problem solving, creative chaos. The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts-meaning heart in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self. (p. 11)

Though he did not focus heavily, as Palmer did, on the "softer" introspective aspects of teaching, Lortie (2002) agreed in his review of his Five Towns study. In this study teachers reflected on what traits they recognized in outstanding colleagues. He stated, "They are impressed by teachers who establish and sustain cordial disciplined, and work-eliciting relationships with students. Such abilities, it seems, can be held by persons of various personalities and teaching styles" (p. 132). In more simplistic terms, "The teachers described were not all alike; they were male and female, young and old, warm and cold, attractive and repulsive, exciting and methodical" (p. 117). Sharp (1957) expanded on the positive mindset of most teachers:

Teachers are great optimists, if not the greatest. They recognize the great potential of the human mind. They can take a student who has gone through any number of years of failure and still hold out hope for him. They begin with a new approach or look for new avenues of interest, and most interestingly are often rewarded for their search. (p. 19)

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The MBTI measures four, bi-polar dimensions of personality. The four scales are: Extraversion (E) versus Introversion (I), Sensing (S) versus Intuition (N), Thinking (T) versus Feeling (F), and Judging (J) versus Perceiving (P). (Rushton, Morgan, & Richard, 2007, p. 433-434)

The four bi-polar scales can be combined to create sixteen unique combinations that help to explain a person's orientation to the world (E or I), preferences in collecting information (S or N), process by which one comes to a conclusion (T or F), and actions that make up how one lives their life (J or P). Many researchers have attempted to use the Myers-Briggs to study the most common teacher profiles. The results, however, are conflicting. Lawrence (as cited in Sears, Kennedy, & Kaye, 1997) stated, "The primary MBTI typology for educators was Extroversion-Sensing-Feeling-Judging (ESFJ) because 52% of the sample reported themselves to be" (p. 195). Sears, Kennedy, & Kaye's (1997) study found that, for all teachers, the, "S-F-J configuration emerged as the predominant personality profile. The bipolar Extroversion-Introversion personality dimension, however, was found not to be material" (p. 201). They did find however a, "significant number of secondary teachers who fit the NTJ profile" (p. 201).

Rushton, Morgan, and Richard (2001) took a more unique approach than just measuring the personality types of the average teacher. Instead they compared, "the personality preferences

of both USA national and local samples of teachers to see if teachers considered effective share personality preferences and or differ from the typical public profile (p. 433). They made this comparison by comparing the results of a 2006 study done by Rushton & Rushton of thirty-nine district level Teachers of the Year (ToY) and their own study of fifty-eight Florida League of Teachers (FLoT) teachers, which is a Hall of Fame of Florida teachers, to a randomly selected national sample of 804 teachers. The FLoT teachers not only sit on an advisory board for the Florida Department of Education, they also “help coordinate professional development, become model teachers, provide trainings, and help in the facilitating and coaching of other teachers’ professional development” (p. 435) While the national sample reported the most common profile to be ESFJ, whose key themes are, “preservation, prevention, and protection” (p. 438), Rushton, Morgan, & Richard (2007) found in both the ToY and FLoT studies that among effective teachers the most common profile was ENFP. They found that, ENFPs:

- “Have an orientation to the outer world of possibilities.”
- “Their intuition draws them to a new way of doing things.”
- “ENFPs tend to be optimistic, active, and imaginative with an open eye to the future.”
- “Has a desire for the dramatic and will create stimulating and novel lectures.”
- “Will always be mindful and sensitive to the individualities of their students.”
- “Notice a wide range of teaching strategies such as class discussions, class and team building activities, cooperative learning strategies, and an emphasis placed on divergent thinking.” (p. 439)

They also found that these teachers more strongly aligned with their personality types than did teachers in the national sample giving them conviction in their beliefs.

The Continuation Theme

It is clear, however, that some who attend school become so attached to it they are loath to leave. Five Towns teachers talked of such attachments and referred to them as attractions to the occupation. Some said they “liked school” and wanted to work in that setting; others mentioned school linked pursuits and the difficulty of engaging in them outside educational institutions.

A mass system of public schooling means that millions of young people move through the schools; it is hardly surprising that some develop lasting affiliations. Widespread contact with each generation is a powerful recruitment resource possessed by few occupations. (Lortie, 2002, p. 29)

Lortie’s (2002) theory stated that schools provide a strong and constant recruiting tool for those students who enjoy school. Zeichner & Gore (1990) went so far as to state that, “Formal teacher education is viewed as having little ability to alter the cumulative effects of this anticipatory socialization” (p. 333). Zeichner & Gore (1990) are not alone in their support for Lortie (2002) whose work closely aligned with Wright & Tuska’s (1967) Childhood Romance Theory of Teacher Development. Knowles (1992) listed early teacher role models among his top three most important factors, “in the formation of an ‘image of self as teacher’” (p. 126). In total Wright & Tuska (1967), Ross (1987), Knowles (1992), Lortie (2002), and Dingus (2008) have all published studies identifying the strength of the influential socialization teachers received as students. Lortie (2002) emphasized the strength of his argument when he stated that even though teachers in his Five Towns study were not asked about the influence of former teachers:

A large proportion of respondents volunteered information about how their current work is affected by the teaching they received. The information was elicited by a question

asking respondents to describe an outstanding teacher they had; 42 percent of the respondents went out of their way to connect their own teaching practices with his. (p. 63)

Bullough, Gitlin, & Goldstein (1984), Zeichner & Gore (1990) and Vaughn-Roberson (1992) all described how many teachers played school as children, were allowed to tutor weaker students, and took part, “in such activities as camp counseling, baby-sitting, and teaching Sunday school” (Zeichner & Gore, 1990, p. 334).

Societal Role

Societal roles also influence an individual’s desire to pursue a career in education. Bullough, Gitlin, & Goldstein (1984), Vaughn-Roberson (1992), Blacker (2002), Smulyan (2004), and of course Dewey (1916) wrote extensively about teachers being ‘keystone’ occupations in a democratic society. They wrote about teaching as a public service. Bullough, Gitlin, & Goldstein (1984) invoked Plato as the origin for this view of educators:

The traditions of public service that so powerfully influence teachers’ work are best understood by turning to Plato’s Republic, our culture’s first treatment of public service and its first philosophy of education. The Republic is a model of coherent philosophy of education, for in it Plato shows just how educational means and ends must be justified. Moreover, it is the first treatise to declare that public education is the most desirable means for promoting social change and for maintaining social control, an outlook we still honor. (p. 343)

If public education is the “most desirable means for promoting social change”, it is logical to ask how the change agents are viewed by the very society they are working to better.

Farber & Miller (1981), Vegas, Murname, & Willet (2001), Lortie (2002), Smulyan (2004), Nieto (2005) all stated that teaching is viewed as a low status, gendered occupation by the general public. Farber & Miller (1981) stated that, “In the last decade, probably no professional group has been criticized as frequently or as intensely as teachers” (p. 235). More recently, and more personally to the participants in his study, Smulyan (2004) wrote that the women in his, “study were well aware of the low status of teachers in society and the gendered nature of that status” (p. 523). The National Opinion Research Center (as cited in Lortie, 2002) ranked the field of education in comparison to similar vocations:

The best national data we have on the social position of teachers remain the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) studies; these two studies done at two distinct times, place teachers below the established professions, top government officials, and business executives, but above craftsmen and some others whose earning exceed teachers’. (p. 12-13)

Not only is teaching viewed by society as below most professional vocations it is, as Lortie (2002) demonstrated, less profitable than many non-professional occupations. Berg & Donaldson (2005) cited several studies in their assertion that there is a growing discrepancy:

There is substantial evidence that teachers are paid less than comparably educated workers and that this discrepancy is growing. An analysis conducted by Education Week showed that in 1994 the difference between the salaries of teachers with bachelor’s degrees and non-teachers with bachelor’s degrees was \$11,035 (in 1998 dollars). Four years later, in 1998, this gap had expanded 61 percent to \$18,000. For master’s degree recipients, the comparison was even starker. The salary gap between teachers and non-teachers had almost doubled between 1994 and 1998, from \$12,918 to \$24,648 (Olson, 2000). Similarly, Henke et al. (2000) analyzed NCES data and reported that, among

bachelor's degree recipients who graduated in 1993 and were working full-time five years later, teachers' salaries, as compared to the salaries of other professionals in the cohort, were the lowest of the cohort. (p. 37-38)

Nieto (2005) went even farther when she stated that, "They are overworked, underpaid, and underappreciated, and they rarely experience the support and public acclaim of other professionals" (p. 10). We will look further at additional reasons teachers enter the profession, despite the public's dim view. Smulyan (2005) offered the opinion of one of her study's participants:

These women recognized the low status of teaching but chose to teach, because they saw teaching as an important, and even powerful, role in society. But I don't consider teaching to be a lower-status position. I think that the pay scale is way off. I think that teachers are more important than just about anybody else, because teachers are responsible for educating all the people who are going to be the next generation of leaders and people holding jobs. So I don't think of it that way. (1991-1992) (p 530)

My brother, Jason, agreed. When asked a question about the advice he would give his son if he chose to enter education, Jason outlined the shortfalls, but then he added:

He would have my utmost respect, more than if he became a doctor or something. While a doctor can fix somebody, a teacher can change somebody and teach them to fix somebody. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Social Mobility

Knowing that teaching is a low status, low paying, gendered profession why would most students consider entering the field? For many, according to Schwarzwell & Lyson (1978), Schulenberg & Crouter (1984), Lortie (2002), and Smulyan (2004) it provided a chance for upward social mobility. Lortie (2002) stated that, "Teaching is clearly a white-collar, middle-

class work, and as such offers upward mobility for people who grew up in blue-collar or lower-class families (p. 35). According to Schwarzwell & Lyson (1978) this was especially true “among rural youth who aspire to enter the professions, teaching is undoubtedly the most popular career choice” (p. 35). They went on to explain:

Compared with their urban counterparts, rural youngsters are less likely to become familiar with as broad a range of occupational career models (Lipset, 1955); indeed, the teaching role may virtually dominate the spectrum of professional career options visible in a rural setting. (p. 31)

Finally, when one is from a working class area there is a certain amount of prestige that is derived from being an educator. A participant in Smulyan’s (2004) study said this about teaching as a profession:

I think that a lot of people think you get looked down upon because you teach. I just never felt that and it might be because of the people I knew. In my community the people I knew, if they weren’t teachers, which most weren’t because they worked at a grocery store and other things. Most of my friends did [that kind of work]. The fact that I had a dental plan was enough for them. In my town I didn’t really have upwardly mobile professional friends. (2000-2001) (p. 525-526)

Social mobility even plays a role in the feminization of the field as Lortie (2002) stated:

Men and women do not benefit equally from these mobility gains. The NEA data disclose that women teachers typically originate in higher status homes than men in the occupation; for example, more men teachers’ fathers were blue-collar workers. Perhaps the disparity stems in part from the differential opportunities perceived by women and men. (p. 35)

Feminization

Women have dominated the teaching field throughout the history of compensatory education in the United States. “By 1888, women nationwide comprised 63 percent of the teaching force while in the cities they constituted 90 percent” (Altenbaugh, 1992, p. 9). In 1978, “Over 80 percent of those who aspire to professional careers want to become teachers” (Schwarzweiler & Lyson, 1978, p. 35). In 1994 the National Center for Education Statistics (as cited in Smulyan, 2004, p. 515) reported that, “Women dominate the ranks of teachers (83% at the elementary level and 53% at the secondary level).” These statistics confirm what one observes anytime they walk the halls of most public schools. Education and teaching, in particular, are dominated by women. Schwarzweiler & Lyson (1978), Schulenberg & Crouter (1984), Altenbaugh (1992), Vegas, Murname, & Willett (2001), Johnson & Birkeland (2003), Smulyan (2004), Buchman & Diprete (2006), all issued similar theories.

Altenbaugh (1992) cited one of the pioneers of compensatory education in laying out the traditional view of why women dominate the field:

As secretary of the first public school system in the country, Massachusetts’ Horace Mann, officially promoted this notion, particularly in the case of young children: She (the female teacher) holds her commission from nature. In the well developed female character there is always a preponderance of affection over intellect. However powerful and brilliant her reflective faculties may be, they are considered a deformity in her character unless overbalanced and tempered by womanly affections. The dispositions of young children of both sexes correspond with this ordination of Providence. (p. 8)

While Mann's theories may be relevant, the literature shows there to be several more economic and societal reasons for women dominating the field. The most prominent reason women enter teaching seems to be the limited opportunities afforded to women. "Since other professions excluded them, women turned to the classroom as the only outlet for their talents" (Altenbaugh, 1992, p. 8). As Vaughn-Roberson (1992) showed this opinion was held many times by the family of the educator as well:

Christine Kirkpatrick's parents concurred with the Schroters that 'teaching was the highest profession a young woman could pursue (Dickey, 1980, p. 46), while Opal Scales (1976) recounted that she and her sisters 'became teachers because at that time teaching was considered the most desirable occupation for a young girl'. Presenting a dramatic example of a parent's commitment to education, Allie Collin's mother pleaded with her father-in-law from her deathbed, 'Pa, promise me that my children will get an education.' For Allie such schooling led to a teaching career ('Allie Smith Collins: Wife, mother teacher', 1982, p. 4-B). (p. 18-19)

Lortie (2002) felt that the low pay might have just as much to do with the low number of male teachers as the 'commission from nature':

Economists will argue that what has been said will make teaching less attractive to men than to women and that this will perpetuate female dominance of teaching ranks.

Granted. What I wish to point out, however, is that some men do become teachers and that their sense of loss has a depressing effect on the recruitment of younger men. We can reason that male teachers will have greater material motives for regretting their fates and are thus less likely to project high enthusiasm for their work. We will see later that

identification with teachers plays an important part in recruitment and that young men and women tend to identify with members of the same sex. (p. 34)

Buchman and DePrete (2006) discussed America's 'new' gender gap:

In 1960, 65 percent of all bachelor degrees were awarded to men (Figure 1). Women continued to lag behind men in college graduation rates during the 1960s and 1970s, until 1982, when they reached parity with men. From 1982 onward, the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded to women continued to climb such that by 2004 women received 58 percent of all bachelor's degrees (U.S. Department of Education 2004). The U.S. Department of Education predicts that the "new" gender gap in college completion will continue to widen over the next decade. (p 515-516)

Among the reasons for females choosing to teach was Lortie's (2002) Theme of Time Compatibility which outlines how teaching is compatible with women's roles as wife and mother. "The dominant obligation referred to were those associated with wifeness and motherhood; the schedule permits time for shopping, household duties, and so on, and matches the schedules of school-age children" (p. 32). Eccles (as cited in Smulyan, 2004) was a little less clinical in his assessment when he stated, "Women put more value than men on the importance of making occupational sacrifices for one's family and on the importance of having a job that allows one to help others and do something worthwhile for society" (p. 516). There is no doubt that women, for whatever combination of reasons, do an excellent job as teachers. Additionally, unless the current trend is reversed, they will continue to widen the educational attainment gap over males. As this happens women will have more and more professional opportunities and the choice to teach truly will be a choice. Long after the numbers declare the professional playing

fields even, and the glass ceiling has been shattered, in their quiet reflective moments, women teachers will likely still ask themselves the following question:

They wonder if they are entering teaching because it fits a comfortable gendered definition of self and position. Or have they chosen teaching despite their recognition of its gendered (and subsequently devalued) status, or even, perhaps, as a way of resisting or trying to change that gender regime? (Smulyan, 2004, p. 514)

The Calling

Palmer (1998) and Nieto (2005) used the term ‘calling’, Blacker (2002) ‘public service’, Berg & Donaldson (2005) ‘moral activity’, Lortie (2002) ‘The Service Theme’, and Hansen (1995) ‘vocation’ to describe a teacher’s sense of being driven to a profession, teaching, that allows them to be a part of something bigger than oneself. To be a part of something that means something and benefits all participants. Hansen (1995), in *The Call to Teach*, was the most exhaustive in his explanation. He began by defining *vocare*, the Latin root of vocation, which means ‘to call,’ “It denotes a summons or bidding to be of service. It has been used to describe both secular and religious commitments” (p. 1). Hansen (1995) did not feel that a calling occurs in a vacuum. Both the past practice and belief in service and the structure or practice within which one carries out their calling must be in place:

I would suggest that the reason they heard the call to teach has to do with their active lives up to that point. Without any prior or deliberate intent, all that they have done has fashioned them into people capable of hearing the call and of responding to it - a point worth underscoring because some may hear it but lack the courage or circumstances to act. It would be misleading to say that the teachers or other like them were “born” to teach. Persons who give that impression were more than likely active when younger -

they were curious and interested in things - such that their doings then and their efforts today add up to their appearing “natural” at the work. But what appears natural to a person is often the result of years of activity. (p. 125-126)

One thing learned when volunteering, or serving, is that many times, it is as rewarding to those serving as to those being served. Nieto (2005) wrote:

Teachers enter the profession because they also benefit from teaching. Forget conventional notions of teachers as saviors or miracle workers: If it were not also deeply rewarding, if it were only hard work and sacrifice and selfishness - at times, even agonizingly difficult work - if they did not get something back from teaching, people would not teach. (p. 167)

Palmer (1998) concurred, “Good teaching is an act of hospitality toward the young, and hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest” (p. 50). Hansen (2002) simply stated that, “a vocation describes work that results in service to others and personal satisfaction in the rendering of that service” (p. 3).

Factors That Traditionally Lead Persons To Remain in The Field of Education

Education as a Career

A career educator may be defined as a person who has spent the vast majority of their working years as an educator in K-12 schools. In the words of Hansen (1995), explored earlier, education is their vocation. In past years, it might not be necessary to define this term, but as Johnson & Kardos (2005) wrote, this definition might be influx:

When the cohort of teachers now preparing for retirement entered the profession in the late 1960s and early 1970s, public service was respected and long-term careers were the norm...In fact, those who entered teaching at that time were the first cohort to make

teaching a lifetime career (Grant & Murray, 1999). Most began teaching right after college, having completed a traditional teacher preparation program. (p. 10)

The mentality of remaining with one job for the duration of one's career has changed. According to The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (as cited in Johnson & Kardos, 2005), "Of 50 new Massachusetts teachers studied...only 3 were entering teaching as a first career and planned to remain in the classroom full-time until retirement" (p. 11). Johnson and Kardos (2005) went on to report that, "Many new teachers today are career switchers. Our random sample surveys of teachers in six states show that between 33 percent and 48 percent of those entering teaching today come from another line of work rather than straight from college" (p. 11). The research of Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman, & Kardos (2001) concurred:

Our findings suggest that, rather than regarding teaching as a calling and a lifelong commitment, many new teachers - both those who completed traditional teacher preparation programs and those who did not - approach teaching tentatively or conditionally. (p. 304)

Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman, & Kardos (2001) went on to say that, "slightly less than one-third of our respondents anticipated making teaching their primary, if not their only, career" (p. 304).

The participants in Peske, Liu, Kauffman, & Kardos' (2001) study took a somewhat broader view in defining the term career educator than the traditional classroom teacher. "When respondents in our study talked about a lifelong career in teaching, what they often meant was a lifelong career in education" (305). Johnson and Birkeland (2003) made some predictions, based on their study, on who will remain in the classroom for the duration of their career:

A first-career teacher, a woman, or someone with traditional preparation and certification was more likely to remain in public school teaching than was a mid-career entrant, a man, or someone who had entered teaching through an alternative preparation and certification program. (p. 583)

From a policy standpoint, Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman, & Kardos' (2001) observed that the quality teacher shortage cannot be remedied by simply by publishing front loaded salary schedules and reducing the height and number of hurdles that stand between a degreed person and a teaching certification. "Just as it is important to think about recruitment in new ways, it is important to think about retention in new ways" (p. 305).

Teacher Role

While the societal role and prestige of the profession has diminished over the years, the functional role of the teacher has remained relatively stagnant:

The teacher's job design remained unchanged in fundamental ways. Teachers continued to be seen as transmitters of information and not as investigators or inventors; in a sadly real sense, they were defined as "practitioners" rather than professionals. (Lageman, 1993)

Lortie (2002) noted that perhaps the reason teachers are so focused on the function of the classroom is that it is the only place they have been allowed the authority to act:

The principal and superintendent emerged as persons of presumed greater expertise and standing during the latter decades of the nineteenth century; during the twentieth century...Thus teachers never did gain control of any area of practice where they were

clearly in charge and most expert; day-to-day operations, pedagogical theory, and substantive expertise have been dominated by persons in other roles. (p. 12)

Why Teach

“In deciding whether to stay in their schools, transfer to new schools, or leave public school teaching, the teachers weighed, more than anything else, whether they could be effective with their students” (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003, p. 583). Regardless of the study or the author, this seems to be the central theme to why teachers teach. Having already documented that teachers’ reasoning for entering the field is to be with and help children, it is logical that the carrying out of this function would make the job fulfilling and satisfying. Lortie (2002) stated that:

It is of great importance to teachers to feel they have ‘reached’ their students - their core rewards are tied to that perception. Other sources of satisfaction pale in comparison with teachers’ exchanges with students and the feeling that students have learned. (p. 106)

It is, however, about more than getting results. There is an old saying in education that, “Students don’t care what you know until they know that you care.” Good teachers recognize that, and most desire, relationships must be developed with the students before significant academic progress can be made. This many times leaves the teacher and the student vulnerable, but as Palmer (1998) stated it is a necessary vulnerability if authentic learning is to take place:

The courage to teach is the courage to keep one’s heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require. (p.

11)

To many teachers the relationships with students, and the non-academic growth that occurs, become as vital to their job satisfaction as the academic growth of their students. Palmer (1998), a teacher himself, wrote, “I hope never to encounter an alienated student sitting in the back row of a class and act as if he or she did not exist: when the student from hell ceases to be relevant to me, my life becomes less relevant to the world” (p. 49). Many teachers not only have a desire to connect with their students, but worry that they will not be able to do so. “One of the greatest sources of uncertainty for teachers is whether they will be able to connect with students and build productive relationships” (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003, 584). Nieto (2005) even connected love, as did several participants in my study, to teaching satisfaction and getting results from the students:

Love is not simply a sentimental emotion, especially when defined within schools. For teachers who think deeply about their work, love means having genuine respect, high expectations, and great admiration for their students. (p. 206-207)

Sikes, Measor, & Woods (1985) summed the reciprocity of student – teacher relationships and the importance of these relationships to teacher satisfaction when they wrote:

What constitutes the nature of a satisfactory relationship varies, both between individual teachers, and for the same teacher at different times. It can be to do with successfully passing on and sharing subject knowledge, with getting pupils through exams, with preparing them for adult life, with mutual enjoyment and fun in each others’ company, and especially for older teachers with hearing about how they have got on since they left school. (p. 156)

Doubt

Even the greatest of teachers, those that have excellent relationships and show academic growth in their students, have moments, and sometimes prolonged periods, of doubt:

The last caveat calls attention to the fact that while a person may have a strong inclination to teach, he or she may have equally strong questions about it and about his or her fitness for the work. One can conceive teaching as a vocation and still harbor real doubts about how successful one might be (or is) in the classroom. Doubt and commitment can go hand in hand, as the lives of many well-known figures show. (Hansen, 1995, Pp. 11)

As Hansen (1995) went on to say, doubt is sometimes beneficial:

Yet such doubts need not lead to paralysis - nor to abandoning teaching or its prospect altogether. On the contrary, some have argued that the unknown and the unmeasurable in the practice invite creativity and an individualized response on the part of the teacher, and render teaching the compelling work it is to many. Moreover, commitment to a practice without entertaining doubts about it can border on ideology or close-mindedness. (p. 11-12)

The Role of Colleagues

Lortie (2002) outlined the ability of the colleague versus the administrator in leading a teacher to change their practice or help them grow:

The data in *Schoolteacher*, particularly in chapters 3 & 8, underscore the limits of vertical authority in influencing teacher classroom behavior. Official curricula are accepted as

blueprints for action, but when teachers seek advice, they are considerably more likely to turn to each other than to administrators. (p. xiv)

As Lortie's (2002) Five Towns study showed not all teachers, forty-five percent, choose to have contact with their peers, but in the same study fifty-four percent said, "The good colleague is willing to share. He shares ideas and work supplies and helps beginning teacher" (p. 193-194).

Lortie (2002) then stated:

Surveys of teacher opinion, for example, reveal that teachers consider faculty relationships to affect their professional achievement. We found earlier that teachers see each other as the primary source of useful ideas; we also noted that some elementary teachers assess their progress by comparing it with that of other teachers. (p. 193)

Johnson's early research (as cited in Kardos & Johnson, 2007) described a more isolated teacher than those described in Lortie's (2002) study. He found that most teachers were not taking advantage of faculty relationships, "As a group, they prize the privacy of their classrooms and rely on their colleagues primarily for social support" (p. 10). Farber & Miller concurred in their 1981 study:

As it stands, teachers' needs for affiliation and support are often unfulfilled. For the most part, teachers are terribly alone in their helping roles. They not only function independently, but, within the confines of their classrooms, they become the sole repository for skills, stamina, and enrichment - a role that cannot long be endured by any single individual.

Along with Kardos & Johnson (2007), Berg & Donaldson (2005) reported that there has been a positive shift in recent years from isolation to collaboration.

Teachers' increasing reliance on colleagues is also apparent in survey data collected from a random sample of teachers every five years by the National Education Association (National Education Association, 2003). From the first administration of the survey in 1956, teachers identified "cooperative/competent teacher colleagues/mentors" among the top six factors that "help [them] teach well." Since 1996, however, teachers have ranked this factor as number one. (p. 68)

Johnson and Birkeland (2003) felt this movement had strong implications for the retention of teachers:

Teachers who felt successful with students and whose schools were organized to support them in their teaching - providing collegial interaction, opportunities for growth, appropriate assignments, adequate resources, and school wide structures supporting student learning - were more likely to stay in their schools, and in teaching, than teachers whose schools were not so organized. (p. 581)

They then described what strong and satisfying collaboration looks like in practice versus the traditional method of teaching in isolation:

In the former, teachers recognize their interdependence, have high standards for their work, readily share what they know, and promote continuous learning by all. In weak professional communities, teachers are left to fend for themselves and find themselves competing rather than collaborating with colleagues. (p. 585)

The reason the collaboration, or Professional Learning Community, as it is marketed by Rick DuFour, movement took so long to develop might be because these adult relationships, especially those that question one's professional practices, are not all together natural to teachers. "Relationships with other adults do not stand at the heart of the teacher's psychological world;

being shaped by deeper commitments to students they are secondary and derivative in nature” (Lortie, 2002, p. 187). Palmer (1998) was the most ‘radical’ in his proposal for improving teacher and student performance:

If we want to grow as teachers - we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives - risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract. (p. 12)

Material Rewards

There is a give and take, risk reward, factor persons must explore when considering teaching as a profession. Lortie (2002) cited Parsons (1956) when he wrote that while incomes might be lower, they are also more secure, “than those earned in the private sector. He sees a trade-off between the amount of money received and the amount of risk entailed” (p. 6). For many, one of the primary allures to the field of education is the opportunity for social mobility. Once teaching however many educators, depending on the geographic location of their school and the financial wellbeing of a spouse, teeter on the edges of poverty. Contrastingly, the salaries offered teachers can, “work as a deterrent to teaching for those who want more financial security than they feel teaching provides” (Smulyan, 2004, p. 526) while providing the promise of a guaranteed retirement. Lortie (2002) explained how teachers are often able to live middle class lifestyles with salaries that barely qualify as such:

Teachers receive a certain level of respect and have the advantage of being able to plan ahead; though they are not truly affluent, their assured income permits them to undertake purchases (homes, cars, etc.) which certify their middle-class standing (National Education Association 1972). Unlike those engaged in business enterprises, however,

teachers have faint hope of economic breakthroughs, of gaining that large fortune which releases one of the necessity of earning one's living. (p. 13)

In his section on material benefits Lortie (2002) went on to say that teachers rarely talk about their salaries with anyone other than close colleagues, "since many people both inside and outside teaching believe that teachers are not supposed to consider money, prestige, and security as major inducements" (p. 30). Unfortunately the relatively low salary of teachers is a long standing problem. Johnson & Birkeland (2003) cited several studies in outlining relative wages over time:

Relative to other lines of work, teachers' pay has improved little in the last 30 years. The American Federation of Teachers' Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2000 (American Federation of Teachers, 2000) reports that "after adjusting for inflation, the 1999-2000 average teacher salary of \$41,820 is only \$46 above what it was in 1993. It is just \$2,087 more than the average salary recorded in 1972 - a real increase of only about \$75 per year" (p. 15). Similarly, Education Week reports that the earnings gap between teachers and non-teachers with bachelor's degrees increased between 1994 and 1998 from \$12,068 to \$18,006, while the gap between teachers and non-teachers with master's degrees increased from \$12,918 to \$30,229 ("The High Cost of Teaching," 2000, p. 30). (p. 584)

When a teacher sees that the Texas state minimum in salary today, 2009, is \$27,320 ("Texas Education Agency - Minimum Salary Schedules," 2009) this is more than a significant price to pay. Johnson & Birkeland (2003) confers with Benson's 1961 study (as cited in Lortie 2002) that named not only the disparity between teaching and other professions, but lamented that teachers have little to look forward to in the way of pay increases throughout their career:

Teachers receive (on the average) five to seven thousand dollars less per year than four other college-based occupations. He also points out that teaching salaries display a low, fixed ceiling; the typical salary schedule projects an ultimate income which is no more than twice that received in the first year. (p. 7)

Lortie (2002) called this Unstaged Income. In other terms there is very little difference between experienced teachers and new teachers as year to year gains are modest.

The result is that income profiles of teachers today are predictable, comparatively unstaged, and “front-loaded.” A beginning teacher knows what he will earn and can see that long service brings limited reward. Those who persist in teaching experience the drop-off in percentage gains associated with fixed dollar increments: each pay increase is a smaller percentage of the salary base than the previous one. Earnings are “front-loaded” in the sense that one begins at a high level relative to one’s ultimate earning potential. (p. 84)

Berg & Donaldson (2005) went into great depth describing the broadening salary gap between teachers and equally qualified professions:

There is substantial evidence that teachers are paid less than comparably educated workers and that this discrepancy is growing. An analysis conducted by Education Week showed that in 1994 the difference between the salaries of teachers with bachelor’s degrees and non-teachers with bachelor’s degrees was \$11,035 (in 1998 dollars). Four years later, in 1998, this gap had expanded 61 percent to \$18,000. For master’s degree recipients, the comparison was even starker. The salary gap between teachers and non-teachers had almost doubled between 1994 and 1998, from \$12,918 to \$24,648 (Olson, 2000). Similarly, Henke et al. (2000) analyzed NCES data and reported that, among bachelor’s degree recipients who graduated in 1993 and were working full-time five

years later, teachers' salaries, as compared to the salaries of other professionals in the cohort, were the lowest of the cohort. (p. 37-38)

They then proceeded to explain how equally qualified professions were defined:

These findings are echoed in the recent report from Allegretto, Corcoran, and Mishel (2004) of the Economic Policy Institute, in which the authors find a large difference between teachers' weekly salaries and those of employees in comparable fields (e.g. accountants, physical therapists, editors, registered nurses, and architects). The authors utilized a measure that defines the level of skill needed for a job along ten different dimensions, including knowledge, complexity, and scope and effect of one's job. This, along with a measure of the market value of a job, was used to determine the occupations that are comparable to teaching. They conclude that, on average, teachers earn 12 percent less per week than the composite salary for the comparable professions. (p. 38)

The numbers are even starker for men, "By 2003, teachers earned weekly wages that were 13.6 percent lower than those of comparable workers. For men this figure was 23.1 percent less, while for women it was 8.9 percent less (Berg & Johnson, 2003, 39). This concern was reflected emphasized by the participants in my study. While eleven of the twelve said they would advise their children to pursue a career in education if that is where their heart was leading them, ten of those eleven, unprompted, expressed concern for the earning power of their male descendants in supporting a family:

The average teacher spends 50 hours a week on all teaching duties, more than those in many other professions, and they get an average of 32 minutes for lunch. They spend nearly \$500 a year of their own money for classroom supplies, and their salaries are less lucrative than those of other professionals requiring similar credentials. (Nieto, 2005, 3-4)

The result of Nieto's (2005) study, along with the others cited above might explain the obvious frustration expressed by one of the participants in Smulyan's (2004) study:

Why are the people who are teaching -- the people who are going to become lawyers, if they're so great they get paid \$100,000 a year while a teacher makes \$29,000, why doesn't that make sense? [Teaching] should be the most rewarding profession in our society. That bothers me. I feel like I'm getting paid nothing to do one of the most important things.

Lortie (2002) stated that the only possible way for most educators to achieve greater monetary rewards is to become an administrator or specialist which, "blurs one's identity as a teacher and means abrupt discontinuity in tasks" (p. 84).

Living It

Despite all the monetary and societal concerns that accompany being a teacher researchers have found that many that make a career in education do so by immersing themselves into their practices and rituals that accompany the profession. Palmer (1998) wrote:

When you love your work that much - and many teachers do - the only way to get out of trouble is to go deeper in. We must enter, not evade, the tangles of teaching so we can understand them better and negotiate them with more grace, not only to guard our own spirits but also to serve our students as well. (p. 2)

In the previous section Nieto (2005) stated that the average teacher spends fifty hours a week on teaching duties. Many in society say though that teachers, whether they be at a restaurant, their child's or a school ballgame, church, or a local civic association meeting, are never off the clock. Many teachers in Lortie's (2002) study were willing to invest their personal funds, limited as they may be, in professional growth activities. "Overall, 61.8 percent reported some such expenditure" (p. 90). Palmer (1998) stated that all of the time, money, effort, and soul teachers

dedicate is a good thing. “If we want to develop and deepen the capacity for connectedness at the heart of good teaching, we must understand – and resist – the perverse but powerful draw of the “disconnected” life” (p. 35).

Doing It All Over Again

Looking back, having weighed all of the plusses, minuses, stresses, and reasons for joy, would teachers choose to do it all over again? Would they choose to live the same life twice? Several authors addressed this very question in their studies. Farber & Miller’s (1981), Lortie (2002), Johnson & Birkeland (2003), and Nieto’s (2005) studies all showed that at least half of the teachers would choose to teach again if they were starting their career over. These statistics are rather astounding considering the disparity in salaries between teacher and like careers.

Lortie’s (2002) Five Towns study reported that 52.6% ‘Certainly would become a teacher’ and 25.4% ‘Probably would become a teacher’ (p. 91). Similar numbers were reflected in Farber & Miller’s (1981) review of a 1979 NEA report on burnout. They reflected the NEA’s negative slant when they stated that, “In this regard a recent NEA poll noted that one-third of the teachers surveyed stated that if they were starting their careers over again they would choose not to become teachers” (p. 235). One could look at the NEA’s numbers and say that two-thirds would consider the possibility of teaching again, but their point is well taken. Teaching is a highly stressful, relatively low reward profession.

Intergenerational Influences

This section will review the literature of studies focusing on intergenerational influence on career choice.

Career Advice/Influence – Family

Just as it was difficult to identify a great number of intergenerational studies focused on education, it was difficult finding intergenerational studies focusing on career choice in general. Stratvrou's (1996) dissertation was interesting as its focus took a similar look at the business world:

The study was one of the first to explore the factors that affect the intentions of offspring to seek employment in the family business. It focused on the transition period between the first and second levels of offspring involvement discussed above. (p. 5)

Statvrou (1996) found that the actions and beliefs of the family played a significant role in not only entrance into the family business, but the survival of the firm as a whole:

Among the most important factors that can affect the survival of family firms seem to be the beliefs and actions of the owning-families when it comes to dealing with issues of intergenerational transitions. For example, even though most owner-managers want to transfer ownership and control of their firms to their offspring, few have formal succession plans. (p. 4)

Schulenberg & Crouter (1984), Croll (2004), Flouri & Hawkes (2008) took a broader look at "the issues of the family of orientation's impact on vocational development" (Schulenberg & Crouter, p. 129). Schulenberg & Crouter (1984) felt that the greatest "single variable with which to predict an individual's occupational status, it surely would be the SES of that individual's family of orientation" (p. 130). Blau and Duncan (as cited in Schulenberg & Crouter, 1984) focused more directly on factors affecting social mobility:

Occupational mobility (upward or downward) occurred much more frequently among those with intermediate SES backgrounds than among those with extreme (high or low) SES backgrounds. Hence, the general pattern that emerges is that SES begets SES. (p. 130-131)

Croll (2004) considered family values and the connections built through the family, “The central idea underlying social capital is that social relationships and the personal networks which they create are a resource which can be used to generate outcomes which are valued” (p. 398). The second part concerning living up to the values of the family and personal networks concurred with Lortie’s (2002) study:

One is not surprised to find that some children choose to follow the same occupations as their parents and other kin; not only does identification encourage such occupational inheritance, but occupational choices express values which are influenced by parents (p. 44)

Lortie (2002) went on to state that, when combined, the influences of one’s family and teachers could be a powerful attraction to the field, “In instances where this influences people to enter teaching, elements of continuity are double apparent, for they include esteem for one’s family as well as emulation of teachers” (p. 45).

When studying intergenerational influence on career choice it is important to look at where exactly this influence is coming from. When studying daughters’ career influences the first thing one must look at is the daughters’ likelihood to work outside of the home.

Schulenburg & Crouter (1984) found that, “If a mother is employed, the daughter can observe and learn from a ‘working model’” (p. 137). Huston-Stein & Higgins-Trenk (1978) found the

same to be true, “The most consistent and well documented correlate of career orientation and departure from traditional feminine roles is maternal employment during childhood and adolescence” (p. 279-280). Schulenberg & Crouter (1984) summarized the mother’s influence on the daughter working when they stated, “In general, if a daughter’s mother was employed outside the home, there is a greater probability that the daughter also will work outside the home” (p. 137). Oliver (1975) studied the father’s influence on the daughter working outside of the home. He found that the women’s career orientation was more reliant on the father’s attitude toward the women in career roles than the mother’s. Weitz (as cited in Schulenberg & Crouter, 1984) also found the father to be a major factor in the career choice of female offspring:

This factor (paternal attitude) is complementary to maternal influences . . . for two reasons: (1) it can directly affect career choice through nontraditional socialization practices and through exposure to career fields, perhaps the father's own; and (2) it indirectly provides a counter-model for the cultural 'male attitude,' reassuring the girl that she has not priced herself out of the marriage market by choosing a career. (p. 137)

Flouri & Hawkes (2008) were able to work in more depth and detail in their 2008 study, “Ambitious Mothers – Successful Daughters.” They stated that, “Although maternal expectations are anticipated to be related to both sons’ and daughters’ sense of control and earnings, they are expected to be particularly influential for daughters’ outcomes” (p. 412). They went on to state the mother’s influence was much more pervasive in daughters than in sons, “The results showed that mothers’ expectations for their children’s education were related to children’s positive adult outcomes, although they were so only in daughters” (p. 429).

Though, concerning career choice, Lortie (2002) stated that, “Women were more inclined (55 percent versus 40 percent) to portray their decisions as influenced by parents,” (p. 48) we

will look briefly at the parent's influence on the career choice of sons. Blau & Duncan (as cited in Schulenberg & Crouter, 1984) stated that the, "Father's occupation directly influences son's education, which in turn influences son's occupational attainment" (p. 131). This is about as close to real feelings or relationships as the literature gets to a father's influence on a son's occupation. Schulenberg & Crouter (1984) went on to say that fathers have a stronger influence on their son's career choice than do mothers. One exception is specifically relevant to this study. They found that a "positive mother-son relationship was salient for 'people-oriented' vocation expectations in sons from professional families" (p. 138). Shulenber & Crouter (1984) went onto say that, "The effects of mothers' employment on males vocation outcomes have been widely ignored by past research" (p. 138). This is in large part due to the relatively short history of women in the workplace. Being the son of a working mother, I was able to identify when they continued, "males of all ages with employed mothers have broader and more egalitarian sex-role concepts than do males with non-employed mothers" (p. 138).

A Closely Aligned Study

This section will focus on one relevant qualitative study that looks at intergenerational influences on entering and remaining in the field of education.

There still exists a need to examine the influence of family on professional entry as a more encompassing source of professional socialization, particularly that occurring before individuals follow formal routes into the profession. (Dingus, 2008, p. 606)

When Dingus (2008) began to follow her curiosity about the, "professional socialization experiences of African-Americans within families of teachers" (p. 606) she began to find the above listed holes in the research. Her discussion concerning her second overarching research

question is particularly relevant. “What forms of professional socialization occur among intergenerational teachers, and what does each generation transmit to the next” (p. 607)? Dingus’ (2008) study was made up of, “Nine Black women teachers, all members of three intergenerational teaching families” (p. 205). While there are several differences between the Dingus’ study and my own, a three family all female African American study versus a single family mixed sex Caucasian study, there is a great deal of relevance as well and several of her conclusions are applicable. It is interesting to note as well that the time span of the studies are nearly identical.

Dingus (2008) found that “The impact of the family figured prominently in the career choice and entry of participants, while also providing professional socialization across generations and family” (p. 611).

Most reported attending faculty meetings, assisting teaching relatives with classroom projects, grading and setting up classrooms alongside family members. Opportunities to watch family members interact with other teachers and community members was yet another important form of familial socialization reported across familial teaching triads. (p. 613)

The words of one participant, Jane, were reflective of Lortie’s teacher socialization theory, “I wanted to be a teacher all my life. But teachers were in the family and that made me want to be a teacher. We made up our own minds. [Teaching] wasn’t odd to us; we were used to it!” (p. 616-617).

The societal roles or respect within their own communities that Dingus' (2008) participants described aligned closely with the views of many the participants in Smulyan (2004) and Nieto's (2005) studies.

Teachers are special. They are very involved. They are respected despite what the status quo may be at any given time. At least they are respected by the people that they help. And they go along with being some of the local celebrities of a small community. It was always a good feeling knowing that people appreciated your mom. She had done something good in someone else's life and they appreciated her. (p. 615)

Like Schwarzwell & Lyson (1978); Schulenberg & Crouter (1984); Lortie (2002); and Smulyan (2004); Dingus (2008) found teaching to be a "means of upward social class mobility" for her population, black women, as well (616). In Dingus' (2008) study "All the first-generation participants had parents who worked in agriculture" (p. 617). All participants in the second and third generation had parents who were educators. One of Dingus' (2008) participants went onto say "Her father worked as a tobacco farmer and did not want his daughter limited to agricultural work as generations before her had been" (p. 616).

If education and becoming an educator was a means for social mobility for the first generation, why did the following generations not continue to move up the societal ladder through more lucrative occupations? One of Dingus'(2008) participants who benefitted from the achievements of previous generations words commented:

The idea was to go and do something different because opportunities continued to get better as the generations go on. But, it was in my blood and I guess I just didn't realize until probably mid-way through college that it was something. The legacy means something. It's a powerful one, the socialization thing of being a daughter and

granddaughter, on both sides, of a teacher. It was a powerful shaper of my ideas that alone fueled the passion once I did say, ‘okay, this is where I want to go’. (p. 619)

Dingus’ (2008) findings also reflected those of many of the previously cited authors. “Violet was socialized to believe that while a teaching career did not yield high salaries, it provided something more important: stability (p. 616). This stability was very important to the women of Dingus’ study.

Summary

This chapter reviewed existing research through three separate lenses including (1) factors leading to candidates entering and making a career of education, (2) intergenerational effects on career choice, and (3) intergenerational effects on career choice within the field of education. While it was determined that significant literature existed on the first of these lenses, substantially less existed on intergenerational effects on career choice and only one related study could be found on intergenerational effects on career choice within the field of education.

CHAPTER 3

Methods of Qualitative Inquiry

The overarching question of this study is: Why did such a disproportionate number of one family enter and make a career out of public education in the state of Texas? In order to answer the overarching question, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the origins of the family's strong emphasis on personal education? In what ways did this emphasis affect/influence the participant?
2. What factors including family, religious, and community activities or experiences were influential in the decision of the participants to make education a career?
3. What is the life of an educator? What appealed to the participants about this life?
4. Under different circumstances and knowing what they know now would the participants make the same decision to make education their career choice?

In the first section of this chapter the rationale for using qualitative research and, more specifically, case study is discussed. The second section contains a brief overview of my background and the factors and events that led to the selection of the research topic. Section three provides an overview of the research design. Specifically, a discussion of the selection of the study's participants, or research sample, is included. Section three concludes with a justification for the use of an open-ended semi-structured interview design. Data collection methods used in the study are reviewed in section four. Section five shows how ATLAS.ti 6, a qualitative research software program, and traditional sorting methods, were used to organize and interpret data. The validity of the study, through the use of Creswell's (1998) eight verification procedures, is discussed in section six. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the methodology.

Why Qualitative Research?

The intent of this study is to discern why a disproportionate number of my family enter and make a career out of public education. With twelve active participants in this study, it was decided that qualitative, rather than quantitative, methods would be implemented to provide the rich and deep data explorations necessary to fully explore this question. Denzin & Lincoln (2008) explored the focus of the qualitative researcher, “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape that inquiry” (p. 14). The focus of this study is my family. I had no interest in conducting research in a method that attempted to separate the researcher from the study, nor was it possible for the study to be ‘value-free,’ both hallmark characteristics of quantitative research.

Case Study

Creswell (1994) described the design of a case study as a study in which, “The researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (“the case”) bounded by time and activity (a program, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures” (p. 12). In this study the single entity was the family and the participants were bounded, through their familial relationship, as a single social group. The phenomenon is the family’s disproportionate entry into the field of education. Specifically, I chose to use the method Yin (1993) referred to as explanatory theory:

Whereas other methods may prefer single-variable theories and the incremental development of causal links over a series of studies, the pattern-matching in case study

analysis permits case studies to test multiple-variable, complex causal explanations within a single study. (p. 21)

The consideration of multiple-variables was important in this study. While there was one overarching question the thought that the twelve unique and independent participants followed the exact same path into the field of education was far too narrow a focus. For this reason the four research questions were developed to explore multiple influences and their affect on each participant.

Structurally, I followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) case study structure which suggested that first an, "explication of the problem" (p. 362) be stated. This task was accomplished in Chapter 1. The problem was to be followed by a "description of the context or setting within which the inquiry took place and with which the inquiry was concerned" (p. 362). The context was set in Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of this dissertation. Lincoln and Guba stated that description of the context is, "one of the two items that make up the bulk of the 'thick description'" (p. 362). The second item contributing to 'thick description' was the, "thorough description of the transactions or processes observed in that context that are relevant to the problem" (p. 362). This task was accomplished in Chapters 3. Finally, "a discussion of outcomes of the inquiry, which may most usefully be thought of as the 'lessons to be learned' from the study" (p. 362) was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Stake's (1995) description of why one might select a particular case aligned closely with my thought process in selecting this case, "We are interested in them for both their uniqueness and commonality. We seek to understand them. We would like to hear their stories" (p. 1). Creswell (2002) stated that, "When the case itself is of interest, it is called an intrinsic case" (p. 485). I have spent my entire life hearing pieces of their stories. I knew there were commonalities

amongst them and I knew they were their own unique and individual people. I also developed hunches about how their actions, stories, and lives had impacted each other's and my own. This study allowed the opportunity for the researcher to listen carefully, and individually, to the stories of all twelve family members; sort, organize, and analyze the data; and then create a new truth, altering previous perceptions, or reality from the findings.

Researcher's Background

The idea for this dissertation topic came about over time and was settled on despite a great deal of angst and only after several conversations and refocusing sessions with advisors. Early dissertation topics were all within the quantitative pre-test, post-test vein. This is understandable as I view myself as an educational practitioner, rather than as a philosopher or an academic. I wanted something that I could 'use' to help my students. Professor Mike Sacken pointed out that when I wrote and spoke about education I generally did so in terms of a 'service' or a 'calling' and relationships. He suggested that I do a project along those lines. Despite the fact that this intrigued me, I paid little heed to this suggestion early on. This was in large part due to a lack of familiarity and comfort with this type of study. I knew very little about qualitative research and what I did know seemed frighteningly unstructured. My demeanor in general is highly structured. I tend to believe there is a right way and a wrong way to go about life and part of being an educator is to help students find their way. Being thrust into positions, head coach, age 23, and Principal, age 28, at very young ages reinforced my reliance on structure. While the challenge excited me and they were roles that I pursued, there was little professional experience to draw on.

Despite my structure, I was intrigued by going deeper than raw numbers would allow me to do. My time at Eastern Hills, a high poverty inner-city high school, had shown me that if I

really wanted to make a difference in the lives of my students I had to gain their trust and in order to gain their trust I had to become a part of their world. Every story I told about my time there was exactly that, a story. It was the real life of a young man or woman. No story was short or simply documented an accomplishment. Every story had extenuating circumstances, offshoots, and ten background stories. I began to look for a topic that I could still ‘use’ to help my students, but that went deeper than the numbers. In the spring of 2008, I enrolled in a qualitative research course taught by Dr. Sherrie Reynolds. This class allowed me to study, practice, and become more comfortable with qualitative methods. What I discovered was that they actually aligned more closely with the way I thought about education. Whenever I saw a study that declared ‘x’ was successful because of ‘y’ I always wanted to know the parameters. What are the other factors they are not telling us about? Will this work with my students? The capstone project for the class was the completion of a pilot study. My topic concerned the unique strengths of economically disadvantaged middle school students at a middle school within the district I worked. I planned to expand on this study for use in my dissertation. That plan changed, however, when I was named principal at the school in which I was conducting the research. I feared that my authoritative position as principal would make it difficult to elicit valid data from the students. The class and the pilot study did, however, solidify my desire to do a qualitative study.

Late in the spring of 2008, I attended a graduate student dinner in which one of my colleagues described her project. She was writing a series of reflective letters to friends, family, colleagues, and students describing the role they had played in her development as an educator. Her goal, as I understood it, was to better understand herself, so that she could better perform her duties as an educator and positively affect the lives of those around her. Now I was excited. Ideas

started to pour in about how to use Dr. Sacken's suggestion to explore my view of education as service or a calling and relationships. I began thinking about the origins of these beliefs. The vast majority of these ideas linked back to an experience with, or a story told by, a family member who was an educator. I eventually decided to simply include the service and relationship themes into a case study of my family.

Research Design

On October 20, 2008 a Research Design Proposal, as seen in Appendix A, was presented to, and approved by, the Dissertation Committee. At that time a Protocol Review Request was submitted to the Instructional Review Board (IRB). Notification of approval for the study was sent by the IRB on October 30, 2008. A letter, as seen in Appendix B, was mailed November 1, 2008, along with the required Consent to Participate in Research form (Appendix C), to all research participants. The letter and the consent form explained the study and asked permission to travel to the participants and complete an hour to an hour and a half interview with each. A follow-up call was made to each participant the second week in November to confirm receipt of the letters, attempt to answer any questions they might have, and to set a date and time for their interview. All Consent forms were signed and collected before interviews were conducted.

Sample Selection

Selection of the study sample was a simple process. I requested, and received permission to interview all twelve living current and retired educators within the family. Three participants, Aunt Stella, Aunt Wanda, and Aunt Lonnie, were from the first generation. My grandmother (Vivian), grandfather (Jack), and Uncle Bill are deceased. Seven participants, cousins Pat, Bob,

Vicki, Chuck, Linda; Aunt Jan; and Mom were interviewed from the second generation. Finally, two participants, my brother Jason and cousin Lana were interviewed from the third generation.

Interview Design

Interview questions (Appendix D) were designed in an attempt to elicit stories from participants that would answer all four specific research questions and, subsequently, the overarching research question. Stories were elicited instead of conducting a closed question and answer interview or survey because as Atkinson (1998) wrote, “These things that happen to us, throughout our lives, can only be shared with others through story, and this is what also gives them their meaning” (p. 22). Silverman (as cited in Schwandt, 2007) stated that the purpose of these semi-structured open-ended interviews is the, “elicitation of stories of experience” that brings out “authentic accounts of lived inner experience including emotions (and) feelings” (p. 164). Thirty interview questions were developed in collaboration with the dissertation advisors. Questions were asked based on the responses and the perceived line of thinking of the participants. Questions were asked in a variety of orders, not all questions were asked in each interview, and follow-up questions were added during each interview. The philosophy was to, “attempt within the interview, semi-structured interviews as ‘conversations’ (see Bishop, 1996, 1997), actually co-construct a mutual understanding by means of sharing experiences and meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 167). Stake (1995) made an argument for catering the interview to each participant, “The case will not be seen the same by everyone. Qualitative researchers take pride in discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case. The interview is the main road to multiple realities” (p. 64). Perhaps the most interesting part of this project was discovering the variety of interpretations of the like events, people, and situations.

Everyone works from their own sense of reality and truth and these interviews helped uncover the individual truths of the participants.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted all around the state of Texas as I traveled to the research participants. As seen in Table 2, all interviews were conducted between November 25, 2008 and March 28, 2009. All interviews were conducted outside of the regular school day and within the home of a participant. All interviews were video recorded in attempt to capture the emotion, gestures, and expressions of the participants. A digital voice recorder was also used during each interview as a backup. All interviews were transcribed within one week of the interview being conducted. Interviews ranged in length from approximately one hour to an hour and a half.

Table 2
Interview Dates

Research Participant	Interview Date
Jason	November 25, 2008
Aunt Stella	December 14, 2008
Bob	December 14, 2008
Pat	December 14, 2008
Vicki	December 14, 2008
Chuck	December 20, 2008
Lana	December 21, 2008
Linda	December 21, 2008
Aunt Wanda	February 16, 2009
Aunt Lonnie	March 6, 2009
Aunt Jan	March 17, 2009
Mom	March 28, 2009

A second letter was mailed to each participant on March 29, 2009 (Appendix E) along with that individual participant's transcript. They were asked to review and correct their transcript for accuracy and to ensure that their intended meaning was conveyed. They were also

reminded that the original Consent Form allowed for them to strike part, or all, of their transcript from the study. All corrections were returned by April 10, 2009.

Alternate Means of Data Collection

In addition to the interviews, several other sources of data were reviewed including family video, documents, letters, yearbooks, speeches, PawPaw's Master's thesis, *My Experiences in World War II* by Jack Hood (1949), and newspaper articles. This data was reviewed to substantiate stories from family interviews and in an attempt to capture firsthand accounts, feelings, and ideas from those family members that are deceased. To facilitate the reviewing of newspaper articles a subscription to NewspaperArchive.com was attained. A visit was also paid to the A.M. & Welma Aikin Jr. Regional Archives at Paris Junior College. Senator Aikin served 46 years in the Texas Legislature, a record for Texas legislators, and was a champion of education. He also ran a men's clothing store in Paris, Texas and was a personal friend, and creditor, to both PawPaw and Uncle Bill. Uncle Bill drove to Austin each weekend with Senator Aikin for over a year to assist him in writing the Gilmer-Aikin Act, passed in 1949. This act established the first permanent funding system for education in Texas, set the first minimum salary schedule for teachers, legislated equal pay for Black teachers, and established the Teachers Retirement System. It served as the state's principal education legislation until the passage of House Bill 72 in 1984.

Organizing and Interpreting Data

All data was coded, subcoded, and analyzed using ATLAS.ti 6.1.1, a software program for qualitative data analysis, management, and model building. ATLAS.ti, developed by Technical University of Berlin, is an acronym for "Archiv fuer Technik, Lebenswelt und

Alltagssprache,” which when translated means, “archive for technology, the life world and everyday language. The extension ‘ti’ stands for text interpretation” (“ATLAS.ti - The Knowledge Workbench : Frequently Asked Questions (ATLAS.ti4)," 2002). Functions of the software that were used to analyze data were Quotation Manager, Code Manager, Coding Analyzer, Family Manager, Network Manager, Memo Manager, and Query Tools.

Initially the software assisted in the coding of the data. Coffey & Atkinson (as cited in Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 2004) described coding as, “assigning tags or labels to the data, based on our concepts. Essentially, what we are doing is condensing the bulk of our data sets into analyzable units” (p. 165). As the data was coded themes and concepts continue to emerge throughout the research process. As new data was added codes and families were continually reevaluated and adjusted. Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul (1997) stated that, “research proceeds most productively when analysis and data collection run concurrently for most of the time expended on the project” (p. 164). In addition to the use of ATLAS.ti, codes were sorted into families, and families into hierarchical displays through the use of note cards. This was done to create a visual and contextual display that could be more easily manipulated.

Data was also reviewed and coded by a colleague. Her feedback helped in reevaluating and streamlining the data. My closeness to the data, as a member of the family, had resulted in the pursuing of too many rabbit trails. My ‘areas of interest’ were not always germane to the research topic. Finally, research participants were solicited for their feedback during the interpretive process. Glesne (2006) felt this practice was important for three separate reasons:

Obtaining the reactions of research participants to your working drafts is time-consuming, but doing so may (1) verify that you have reflected their perspectives; (2)

inform you of sections that, if published, could be problematic for either personal or political reasons; and (3) help you develop new ideas and interpretations. (p. 167)

Reflection

A reflective journal, memos, and digital voice recordings were kept throughout the research process. Glaser & Strauss (as cited in Glesne, 2006) outlined how reflection assists in the emergence of themes and concepts:

By writing memos to yourself or keeping a reflective field log, you develop your thoughts; by getting your thoughts down as they occur, no matter how preliminary or in what form, you begin the analysis process. Memo writing also frees your mind for new thoughts and perspectives. (p. 148)

The reflective journal in this study played a distinct role in what Denzin & Lincoln (2008) called reflexivity:

Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human as instrument” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). It is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself. (p. 278)

Continual reflection allowed me to realize that while my initial, and personal, thoughts about the perspectives of the study’s participants were not wholly wrong, they were certainly incomplete. Review of the journal pointed out the persistence in believing that my way of thinking is the norm despite continual evidence to the contrary. Subsequent entries assisted in allowing the study’s findings to reflect the data rather than solely the perspectives I brought into the study.

Validity

In their intricate discussion on validity Denzin & Lincoln (2008) stated that, “no method can deliver on ultimate truth” (p. 272). Still they argue that careful steps must be taken to attempt to create a valid or trustworthy study. Schwandt (2007) defined validity as:

One of the criteria that traditionally serve as a benchmark for inquiry. Validity is an epistemic criterion: To say that the findings of social scientific investigations are (or must be) valid is to argue that the findings are in fact (or must be) true or certain. Here, ‘true’ means that the findings accurately represent the phenomena to which they refer, and ‘certain’ means that the findings are backed by evidence. (p. 309)

Throughout the course of this study Creswell’s (1998) Eight Verification Procedures were used in an attempt to increase the validity of the study. Creswell (1998) emphasized the procedures so that as Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Creswell, 1998) stated, “The naturalist’s alternative trustworthiness can be operationalized” (p. 201). The Eight Verification Procedures put into place a structured set of practices for qualitative researchers to follow to help combat the subjective biases their research is often charged with having. Creswell advises that qualitative researchers engage in at least two of the eight procedures to substantially validate their research. I have chosen to employ seven of the eight procedures in this study. Triangulation was not used as very little quantitative data was collected.

Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation

My relationship with all of the participants stretches the length of my lifetime. While this creates potential issues of subjectivity, it also assists in my ability to build trust, elicit honest

reflections, and flesh out my hunches. Our extended relationship also provides knowledge of the participants' culture.

Peer Review and Debriefing

Each chapter underwent multiple reviews by advisors and colleagues. Feedback was provided, acted upon, and then resubmitted for additional review.

Negative Case Analysis

A conscious effort was made to find studies that conflicted with my hunches about what leads individuals into the field of education and intergenerational influences on vocational selection. This forced me to review and alter my stance on some issues and research to defend my hunches on other issues such as the mother's influence on the vocational choices of male children.

Clarification of Research Bias

My relationship with the participants and subject matter calls into question my subjectivity or ability to be objective. The very nature of qualitative research, and this study in particular, precludes the distancing of the researcher from study. I had no interest in creating a value-free study. A continual effort was made however, through reflexivity measures such as a reflective journal, memos, and digital voice recordings to reevaluate and reposition my hunches and ensure they aligned with the emerging data themes.

Member Checking

Interview transcripts, drafts, and the final product were shared with research participants to ensure their ideas, feelings, and truths were accurately represented.

Rich or Thick Description

Denzin (as cited in Glesne, 2006) defined thick description as, “description that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act (thin description), but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action” (p. 27). Each interview was videotaped to capture the emotions, feelings, and gestures of the research participants. These characteristics are reflected in the recording of data and weaved into the text of the dissertation.

External Audit

The data underwent a separate coding by a colleague. The review of her coding system produced new ideas and helped to streamline my research. Her outside perspective gave me permission to greatly reduce the number of codes and convert other codes to sub-codes. It also assisted in allowing crucial themes to emerge from the data.

Summary

This chapter outlined the justification of the use of qualitative research, specifically case study, to explore the overarching and specific research questions of this study. The background of the research was discussed in reference to the factors that led to the selection of the research topic. Research, interview, research sample, and data collection methods were explored. The use of ATLAS.ti and traditional qualitative methods of analyzing data were detailed. Finally, the chapter concluded with a discussion of the study’s use of Creswell’s Eight Verification Procedures.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

- Sean: Being the oldest and already teaching do you think you had any influence on your sisters becoming teachers?
- Aunt Stella: Uh, yeah! (laughs) I said, “You better get in there and work!”(laughs) No, Daddy and Mother they had a set, you know. They wanted us to be teachers and after I got my degree and started teaching, well as the others came on, they started teaching. Then we married teachers. I guess Lawrence is the only one that is not teaching, that didn’t make a teacher, and Wanda, Lonetha, Vivian, and myself. In the same family we all made teachers.
(Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Results of this study indicated that the family did play an intricate and positive role in a disproportionate number of family members entering and making a career in the field of education. It is important to note that while each participant was highly influenced by the family there was no prescribed formula or path for entering the field. Each participant experienced their own unique life journey and set of influences. Four major findings emerged from the data:

1. The origins of the family’s emphasis on personal education began with Granny and Granddad Parsons, but each succeeding generation was most heavily influenced by their own parents. Marriages to like-minded persons acted to reinforce the importance of education.
2. While the deciding factors for each participant were unique, it is clear that Family Influence, Teacher Influence, Being a Teacher Before a Teacher, and Feminization played major roles in influencing the participant’s decision to enter education. Among these four factors, Family Influence was the most significant contributing factor across the sample. While not as widespread in their influence, Calling, Social Mobility and Friends played a major role in individual participant’s decision.

3. The life of the educator is one of relationships. Strong relationships must be forged with student and colleagues alike. Relationships permeate every part of the job and supportive reciprocal relationships with students and colleagues are essential to a feeling of accomplishment as an educator. The family stories provided examples of how to work with and treat students as well as the support of another set of trusted colleagues to plan, learn, and laugh with.
4. Eleven of the twelve participants stated that they would enter the field of education again given the opportunity to live their life over. When asked if they would still enter education if they had been raised in different circumstances, such as gender, family, time in history, the number changed drastically to only half of the participants saying they would enter education. These discoveries reinforce assertions from Finding #2 which stated that the family and feminization played a prominent role in the participants entering the field of education.

Finding 1: Emphasis on Personal Education

The origins of the family's emphasis on personal education began with Granny and Granddad Parsons, but each succeeding generation was most heavily influenced by their own parents. Marriage to like-minded individuals who valued education served to reinforce its importance.

Values-Granny & Granddad

Most every experience the family had with Granny and Granddad centered around their ranch in Belk. The ranch was the gathering place for every Thanksgiving, for every Christmas

Eve, and other family gatherings. Chuck, who spent much of his summers with Granny and Granddad, described how he remembered the ranch:

My grandfather, Granddad Parsons, I wanted to be him. I wanted to be a cowboy. When I was a little boy, shoot, give me some boots and a pair of jeans and a calico shirt. Man, I'd follow that man from daylight to dark, from can see to can't. I mean from milking the cow in the morning to throwing hay out, vaccinating. I mean, heck I remember Richard and I with hay hooks in our hands when we were probably no more than five or six years old. We couldn't move it, but we thought we were. Somebody else was dragging it I'm sure. Dragging hay in a hay loft (sigh), I loved that ranch. I mean that was just the greatest thing. You never got to see it man, but when the back field used to be grown-up in corn and they would take the mules and the wagon out and you would pull the ears of the corn. Then there was an old sharecropper's house that was our playhouse. I mean we had two rooms and you could ask any kid, "meet me at the Old House" and he knew exactly what you were talking about whether it be Robert or Richard or Randy, any of those kids that lived around there. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Perhaps part of the reason everyone continually flocked to see Granny and Granddad was that, despite the seemingly endless sea of relatives, they had a way of making each one feel special.

Pat remembered her experience as one of the grandkids:

I think that the most wonderful thing about Granny and Granddad was that they loved us so much and they made us feel so special. There were thirteen of us and they always made us feel like each one of us were so special to them and that each one of us were loved so much and that they were so proud of us. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Vicki's memories went beyond Granny dressing up as Santa each year for 'all' of the grandkids, to being made to feel special as an individual, "Granny always had the knack of making you think that you were the most special person and that every holiday was exciting because it was you" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Being made to feel special did not end with the grandkids. My brother Jason remembered his experiences visiting as one of the great-grandkids:

She still would buy individual gifts for us and remembered what snack I liked and had it for me when I came over. I know she had it just for me because I loved what everyone else considers the nastiest stuff in the world, orange slices and circus peanuts. She knew I loved them so they were always there and I know they weren't there forever because every time I went over there I emptied the jar. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Granny and Granddad's influence extended beyond holidays and family gatherings. Granny is remembered by the family members for two distinct qualities. She was known as a caring listener and as a what Chuck called, "one fun loving lady" (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008). Aunt Wanda remembered Granny's spontaneous side,

Mother was fun with us. We would be sitting around the dining table on a summer day and we would have been working like mad all morning and someone would say something about a movie and she would say, "If you can get these dishes cleaned up we'll take off to the movie," and off we'd go. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

Chuck's story confirmed Aunt Jan's assertion that, "Granny was a jokester" (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). "You never sat in a chair near a window when she was outside watering her flowers, I know that. It didn't matter. She would soak you down even if it got the house wet!" (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008).

Granny was not all jokes and fun, though, even her scolding carried some levity. Her favorite phrase when she caught one of us doing something she disapproved of was, “I’m going to get in your eyes like onion!” The implication here of course being that if you did not behave she was going to make you cry. She also continually told each of us that she “loved us like a pig loves slop.” Maybe her levity and her love is what made Granny easy to talk to. Aunt Wanda described the impact Granny had on her two daughters:

You know Debbie calls herself Granny to her grandkids and she is a lot like Mother, but she says she would not have taken for the experiences she had with Granny. After Kathy was grown and we were in Houston when Kathy had a problem she came to Mother’s. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

Aunt Jan stated that she could always depend on Granny for an open ear and understanding, “Granny, you know, I could always talk to her. She always listened. There were many times where I would call her or write her a letter or something that I couldn’t talk to Mama about because she’d be too opinionated for me” (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). Aunt Wanda remembered that Granny’s care and love did not end with blood:

I had in my high school class in Chicota, there were three girls that did not have mothers. Their mothers were dead and there was one whose mother was dead and had a step-mother...My Mother was their other mother. When Mother died they all came to her funeral. They told me, “I could not have missed being here because your mother was my mother. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

While Granny was fun loving, loud, spontaneous, and through the eyes of her great-granddaughter Lana, “a big woman who would rap her arms around me” (Personal Interview,

December 21, 2008), Granddad was small, quiet, unassuming, thoughtful, and hardworking.

Mom remembered Granddad:

My Granddad was a very quiet man, but you knew where you stood. He was a very small man in stature, but a very big man in who he was. If Granddad said it, it was law. Again it was hard work and honesty and responsibility and doing what you said you were going to do. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Chuck had a very similar assessment, “Hard work, honesty, go to Church, you know pay your bills. It was just things like that. If there was something to be done you did it then, not later. Respect for older people. That sort of thing” (Personal Interview, December 20, 2009).

Granddad had a long life, allowing him to be influential to his great-grandchildren as well. He lived to the age of 98 and worked his ranch until a stroke took that ability away from him at 96. I distinctly remember two stories that demonstrate his work ethic. When I was ten or eleven years old, and Granddad in his early nineties, we were at Granny and Granddad’s for Thanksgiving like we always were. I was sitting out on the front porch banister, trying to be grownup, and eavesdropping on to the men’s conversation. A couple of days prior there had been a cold snap and the ponds had frozen over. Granddad had taken an axe down to the ponds and broken the ice so that the cows could drink. I guess this was the topic of conversation among the women in the kitchen because all of the sudden all of Granddad’s daughters and a granddaughter or two came flying out onto the front porch. They were all talking and fussing at him at one time. Like most conversations in that house, no one waited their turn. It was just one giant barrage of noise. After they had all had their say they filtered back into the house. Granddad never said a word until after they were gone. Without changing his expression and toothpick still in mouth he

softly and simply stated, “Those cows had to drink.” At that point the men picked back up whatever conversation had been interrupted.

The second story I was not present for, but evidently Granddad found some humor in episode. Since only he and a stranger were present he must have been the first to retell it. Their house was set way back off the road and one day as he was up on a ladder changing out the storm windows a man stopped his car in front of the house, backed up to the gravel driveway, and then pulled up to the house. When he got around to where Granddad was, Granddad asked him if he could help him. The man said that he just wanted to stop and see what a 70 year old man, standing on a ladder, and changing out storm windows looked like. Granddad responded, “Well, you still haven’t seen it friend because I’m 88.” Granddad went back to his work and the man got in his car and drove away.

Maybe it was Granddad’s quiet nature and hard work or Granny’s fun loving good nature, or maybe it was the two of them working together, but it is clear they had a strong impact on their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Aunt Wanda remembered the impact they had on her effort and behavior when she was young, “Oh, don’t you dare be anything but the best! (laughs) Don’t you embarrass me! (laughs) That was mother. You know that I would not have done anything that would have upset my Dad. I would not have done anything” (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009). Aunt Lonnie seemed to reflect some of Granny’s mischievousness in answering a question about the values her parents left her with:

Honesty was one and not to do anything that you wouldn’t want anyone to go home and tell them, because they certainly would. You know to act your best, behave, at all times. I sometimes maybe didn’t (laughs) listen to them in total. I mean you know you try. I have life experiences. (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

My brother Jason voiced a common theme that arose in the participants' answers to questions about the values of Granny and Granddad. He spoke of respect, a type of respect that speaks to one's character. A respect that must be earned. A respect that cannot be forced or 'implemented'.

The respect that they commanded without even having to say anything, just their presence, made everyone ready to snap to. That many people doing that, that's amazing, that that many people just automatically, just know to show respect is just incredible.
(Personal Interview, November 11, 2008)

Linda summed up the participants' assessment of Granny and Granddad's values, "Love of family. I think to them their family and God were the two most important things to them"
(Personal Interview, December 21, 2008).

Values – Parents

While the values espoused by Granny and Granddad were important to the forming of the character of all participants, the farther you move away from them, generation wise, the less impact they have. The data showed that for each participant, their parents were the central characters in instilling a value system within them. These values, honesty, respect, hard work, responsibility, and having the integrity to act right when no one is looking are closely aligned with those of Granny and Granddad.

Aunt Jan stated of her parents, "They taught me right from wrong, they always carried me to church, and I knew what was expected of me and how to behave. You know, you react to where you are" (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). Jason remembered:

We were always expected to respect any adult. One of the best lines I remember Mom always saying was, and I actually use this today in class, was ‘you better act better when I’m not here than when I am around.’ That just meant that you represent our family, you represent who raised you, you represent yourself and you don’t need me there to tell you how to act and if I’m not there you better be on your best behavior so that person, when you walk away, is boasting and praising about how good you are. I still get in trouble today at twenty-eight for saying yes sir or yes ma’am to people... They say it makes them feel old, but I’m just like well, I tell my kids yes sir, yes ma’am... To me that is just something that you do. Growing up, I also got in trouble a lot for lying and now it disgusts me. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Lana’s parents, Chuck and Linda, wanted her to stop and think about what she was doing and then make the right decision:

Anytime that Mom and Dad would leave me by myself he would start out with, “What’s that grey matter between your ears?” “It’s your brain Dad.” “What are you going to do with it?” “I’m gonna use it.” It got to the point where he was like, “What are you going to do Lana while you are here?” “I’m going to think.” Then he would get to the point where they were going to leave and he would just point to his head and I would yell, “I know, I’m going to think!” (Personal Interview, December 12, 2008)

Mom learned from her father that values did not mean much if they did not apply to the way you treated everyone. The following story took place during the time PawPaw was superintendent of schools in Annona:

They expected me to treat people with respect. That's everyone, no matter whether they had money or what color they were or whatever. We were taught to treat everyone with equal respect and fairly. At the time I grew up it was during segregated schools and not everyone treated everybody in the correct way. I know when we moved to Annona there was the 'White' school and the 'Black' school and the Black school only went through eighth grade. It was in a shack. I mean it was awful. It was dirty and it was smelly and you could see through the walls. It was cold in the winter and hot in the summer, which it was hot in our school in the summer too. We didn't have air conditioning, nobody had air conditioning, but their school was in really bad shape. One of the first things he did when he got there was to work to get a bond passed to build a better building for them.

Integration at that time wasn't even an option and he knew that would never happen at that juncture of time so his goal was to make sure they had a, you know, a nice place to go to school. When all was said and done they had an air conditioned building and we were still sweltering (laughs). That went through eighth grade and I think integration was on a voluntary basis either when I was a freshman or a sophomore in high school. That is when that (integration) started to happen, but anyway the black people in Annona respected my Dad and they were always coming to the house for things. At the time (white) kids weren't supposed to say "yes ma'am and no ma'am" and "yes sir and no sir" to black people. They didn't even consider it etiquette. As a matter of fact I was told once, "You don't have to say yes sir and no sir to me," by someone who came to the door and I said, "Yes Sir, I do." (laughs) That's just the way it was. Also they were not supposed to come to the front door, but at our house that was the door! He was like, "Ya'll come to front door next time" because that is the way he was. He was always loaning out money to people and buying tennis shoes for people who didn't have shoes to

play sports. We might not have it, but he was giving it to someone else. We were always taught to treat everyone with the same respect so that was one of the main values. Honesty, hard work, responsibility, and everyone is respected even if that is not how society is looking at it right now. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

PawPaw later sacrificed his position as superintendent by recommending that Annona consolidate with the larger neighboring Clarksville ISD. He knew he would only be an assistant superintendent in Clarksville, but it was the only way he saw to integrate the Annona school, as Clarksville had already integrated. He felt consolidation gave the best opportunity to each child to learn and achieve. I can tell you as Mom's son that this had a great effect on the way she raised us and the belief system of my brothers and I.

Education Importance – Family

In reviewing the data there is disagreement on who deserves more credit, Granny or Granddad, for beginning the family's emphasis on education. Some give their remembrances of Granny and why she was more instrumental and others tell of Granddad and the role he played. The more I look over the data, the more I am convinced they are both responsible and needed each other to make it happen, to ensure that all four of their girls received a college education. It is clear that they are both responsible for sparking this value or interest that has carried down through their great-grandchildren. The opinion of the participants as to which one is 'more' responsible seemed to depend on their own personal journey. Aunt Lonnie credited both Granny and Granddad with emphasizing education:

Granny did (emphasized education) because she didn't have one and would have loved to have had one. She loved to read and she would have given her eye teeth to have had a

degree. She insisted she would go with us if, well...Granddaddy always said it was an insurance that nobody can take away from us. He wanted us to have the degree and I used to always laugh and say too that everybody was related to us out there so they had to send us away to get married (laughs). (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Aunt Wanda agreed with her sister's assessment of Granny's desire to be educated, "She would have liked it (to get an education). She never stopped learning. She was self-taught. She could have handled herself in most any situation" (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009). Mom remembered her Granddad as a self-educated man who kept the books for the gin he and his brothers ran. She also remembers him taking time each day, when he came in from the fields to eat lunch and rest during the heat of the day, to keep up on current events and to read. Mom went onto describe how Granny felt about education for girls:

My grandmother, my Granny, she I think went through the sixth grade. That was because her dad said that girls didn't need to be educated past then and she was very bitter about that I think. She was determined that 'a' she was going to be well read, well educated, and keep up on everything and 'b' that all of her girls were going to school, whether they wanted to or not. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009).

That "wanted to or not" clause was sometimes tricky. Aunt Stella, Aunt Wanda, and Aunt Lonnie were more than happy to do as instructed and go off to college. As Aunt Stella, the oldest of the four sisters said, "Just everybody stressed, 'You've got to go to college.' So, I went to college" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). My grandmother, Nanny was not an easy sell. She flatly refused to go to college. As it turned out however, she did not have a vote.

No! (laughing) Mother and I went to enroll for her. She wouldn't even enroll. She wasn't standing in line for anything. Anyway, she flatly refused so Mother said, "Yeah, you're going because Stella has gone and you've got to go." So, Betty Jo was her friend, our cousin, (and) Miss Mattie was a counselor in charge at the Lamar County Schools. She let Vivian and Betty stay with her and what they didn't do was left out (laughing). (Aunt Stella, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

This was a popular story among the family, and it was related to me repeatedly during the interviews. It seemed they found a great deal of humor in the story as well as thought it was a pretty good snapshot of Nanny's personality and feisty nature. My Mom relayed the story as it was passed down to her:

Mom did not want to (go) so my grandmother and my Mom's older sister registered her for school and got her a place to live and took her there and told her she was going. So that is how my Mom got her college education (laughs). I think that after she was there for a while she decided it was OK, that she needed to finish. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

To this point I have reviewed how four rural farm girls born between 1919 and 1933 all went on and graduated from college, two with Master's degrees, so the next logical question is how this momentum was carried to the next generation? Even in a seemingly progressive family like this one, the husband many times still dominated the household. This was true in the Parsons family. Granny ran the day-to-day show, but when Granddad had had enough that was it. As Mom said, "If Granddad said it, it was law" (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009). What if the sisters had married men who did not put an emphasis on education? Fortunately, from my perspective, they did not. Each of the four sisters married a college graduate and three of them

married fellow educators. PawPaw and Uncle Bill were educators and friends before they married into the family. They became friends before World War II as young teachers and principals in Lamar County. They entered the Army and went through the first month of their formal training together before being placed in their respective units:

That night I was interviewed and told that I would be in the “Flash” section. That meant very little to me as I had no idea what “Flash” was like. My friend, Billy Wooldridge, was placed in the Meteorology (later intelligence) section, and we were allowed to remain in the same barracks. (Hood, 1949, p. 8)

Uncle Bill and Aunt Stella were married and had Pat before the war and during the war they attempted to get Nanny to write PawPaw. Nanny, once again showed her ‘independent’ nature. She once told me that she refused to write “some old boy that would want to come back and marry her.” Aunt Stella remembered that, “Oh, she wouldn’t do it. She didn’t meet him until he came back” (Aunt Stella, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Once the war was over and they were back home Uncle Bill and Aunt Stella tricked Nanny into a meeting by inviting her to a ballgame. When they went to pick her up, PawPaw was in the car with them. Six months later they were married.

Luckily, those that married into the family put a strong emphasis on education as well. Perhaps the reason Uncle Bill and PawPaw became such good friends was their similar backgrounds and outlook. Both men grew up in extreme poverty and saw education as a way out. Pat said of her dad, Uncle Bill:

For him, he just championed education because he was a poor boy whose father died when he was very young. He and my grandmother nearly starved to death during the Depression. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Pat went onto speak to the importance of education to both of her parents:

Our parents just did anything they could do to send us to school. It was quite a stretch to do that on two school teachers' salaries at that point and time, to send three kids to Southwest Conference Schools, which was my Dad and Mother's dream to send us to, to get an education. Not just any education, but a really quality education. They paid some prices for us to do that... He always said that education was good to him and he wanted us to get an education. They spaced the three of us out in our family so that they could educate us. We were told that all of our life. We want to send you all to college and you are separated by seven years and six years so that we can send you all to college... Education was a big deal in our family. It was very, very important. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Though PawPaw had both of his parents, his financial situation was no better. During World War II he sent his salary home to assist his parents. When he returned there was nothing left. While his father was still living PawPaw employed him as the maintenance man at his school. The 1948 edition of Chicota School's yearbook, the Indian, is dedicated to his father, John Felix (J.F.) Hood, "We dedicate the 1948 edition of the 'Indian' to 'Pop' Hood. His friendly smile and unexcelled devotion has been an asset to the students at Chicota School during 1947-1948. -The Staff." Mom spoke about the role education played in helping to lift PawPaw out of poverty:

He just wanted to better himself and he believed in education. He believed that is how you got yourself out of poverty. He grew up pretty poor. He grew up in the twenties and thirties and he didn't have a lot. That's how he pulled himself out, yeah, was through education. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

It is clear that his struggle had a great impact on his younger daughter. Aunt Jan's emotions overcame her when she retold his struggle to get through school:

Because it was important to them. Daddy was the only one out of his family that went to college and I know you've heard the stories. He used to hitchhike from Deport to Paris to get to college. He would hitchhike to Commerce. He might go a day early because he might have to sleep out in a field somewhere. He used to sleep in the basement at PJC when he couldn't get home. That's how bad (starts to tear up and cry)...next question. That's how badly he wanted to go, so... (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

Following the war both PawPaw and Uncle Bill took advantage of the GI Bill to pursue their Master's degree. PawPaw concluded his Master's Thesis, *My Experiences in World War II* (1949) by showing his eagerness to take advantage of another opportunity to further his education and his hope for the future:

I entered East Texas State Teachers College after being home for only two weeks. The next fall I was hired as Principal of Chicota High School, the position which I now hold. On December 21, 1947 I was married to the former Miss Vivian Parsons and together we are facing the future with the hope of national peace and security. (Hood, p. 109)

As referenced earlier in a story from Aunt Lonnie, PawPaw would graduate with that Master's degree on the same day in August of 1949 that Uncle Bill (Master's degree), Aunt Stella

(Bachelor's degree), Aunt Wanda (Bachelor's degree), and his wife, Nanny (Bachelor's degree) all graduated from East Texas State Teacher's College.

The lesson of the importance of education was clearly and explicitly passed onto my Mom's generation. As my Aunt Stella stated, "I wanted to make good grades. My desire was to make the highest grade and I instilled that in my kids. I instilled that! Make the highest grade you can" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). This message was loudly heard and passed on to my generation even if we did not always want to listen. My brother Jason found out that, like our Nanny, we didn't always get a vote:

She (Mom) would have me up doing my work at three in the morning. I remember this one time sitting in her closet at the old house with the light on while ya'll were out in the room sleeping in your bed and Mom and Dad were in there bed. There I was sitting under Dad's shoes and belts hanging from the wall and Mom made me stay up and work on this book report I was supposed to have done. It was like pulling teeth trying to get me to read. I would read until my eyes wouldn't open anymore and then she would come in there and wake me up and tell me to go stand in the shower for five or ten minutes and then get back in here and read. There were many times like this where I would have to stay up way past our bed time to do work and she would always stay up with me as long as it took to get the work done. (Personal Interview, November 28, 2008)

Lana's household followed similar priorities when it came to putting education first:

You have priorities. We did not go outside and play until homework was done. If you were sick and you did not go to school you were not going to the baseball game, you were not going to dance class, you were not going out with your friends because you

stayed home from school. School was number one and if you were so bad off that you couldn't go to school then, you were not doing anything else until you were able to go to school. That was THE factor. If you were too sick to do that then you were not doing anything else. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

College – First Thoughts

Clearly education was a top priority in each of the participant's homes growing up. At the conclusion of this section Table 3 displays each of the participant's education history. On a hunch that the participants might have a similar experience as I did, I asked them when the thought of first going to college entered their mind. As it turned out my hunch was right. Not going to college was not an option for anyone except Bob who married into the family.

I graduated with a bachelor's degree with a 2.0197 GPA. I went to school at Stephen F. Austin and got a degree in Business with a minor in economics. I had no earthly idea I would ever use it. Now, I got that only because Mrs. Carmack (Pat) said I had to do it. We have the same number of B's on our transcript. She had one and I had one, but then the rest of hers were above that and the rest of mine were below that, but I at least ended up with a higher GPA in my Master's than she did. Yes, she knows that. I do not let her forget it because it was because of her that I did. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

In contrast to Bob, who stated he went to college because of the influence of his wife Pat, the other participants' answers ranged from humorous to indignant to a slight shudder of fear at the thought of traveling back to their late teens and trying to broach that subject with their parents.

We have already discussed the four sisters' path to college in detail, but it is pertinent to examine the responses from the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Chuck stated, "That was a seed very early. It was something that I realized from the very beginning that I would attend college. It was never a thought not to" (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008). Mom said, "I never thought that I wouldn't go to college. My parents both went to college and it was just a given. What I did was open, but I was always planning on going to college. I don't remember ever thinking that I might not" (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009). Mom's response to whether it was normal for people her age and from her town to go to college revealed just how influential her parent's education was to her attending:

Oh no. As I think back even from my high school class, which was quite large, I bet there weren't twenty kids that went to college and a few of those just went a year or two and that was it. We were in a rural area and most people just went to work when they got out. Some of them stayed around. Most of them took off though. They moved off someplace else and got jobs or they got married.

My Aunt Jan's response gave an insight into what many members of the family might have considered as the only viable alternative to not entering college:

Did I ever not realize I was going to college? It was like go to college or move to another state and change my name. I always knew I was going to college. That was never a question. I mean that's just the way it was. (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

Among the great-grandchildren the answer to the question of "when did you first realize you were going to college?" were very similar to those of their parents. Jason stated:

(laughs) There wasn't a thought that I wasn't. That's what you did after you graduated high school. Mom and Dad always said, you can chose whatever you want to do. "If you don't want to go to college that is fine, but I'll let you know, if you want to go to college we'll help you out. If you don't want to go to college you're on your own." I didn't go to college out of fear, but my family went to college after you graduated, that is just what you do. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Lana did not want to waste the gifts she had been given. She answered, "Uh, when I could talk. That (not going) wasn't an option. I was going to college. I was smart enough that that was something I wanted to do" (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008).

Table 3
Education Resume of Participants

Participants	High School	Bachelor's	Major	Master's	Major
Aunt Stella	Paris High	ETSTC	Elem. Ed.	ETSTC	Education
Uncle Bill*	Petty High	ETSTC	Education	ETSTC	Education
Nanny*	Chicota High	ETSTC	Elem. Ed.		
PawPaw*	Deport High	ETSTC	History	ETSTC	History
Aunt Wanda	Chicota High	ETSTC	Elem. Ed.		
Aunt Lonnie	Chicota High	ETSTC	Elem. Ed.	Lamar	Education
Pat	Dekalb High	TCU	Music Ed.	SFA	Education
Bob	Abilene High	SFA	Business	ETSU	Education
Mom	Clarksville High	ETSU	Elem Ed	NTSU	Education
Vicki	Dekalb High	TCU	Speech Path	ETSU	Speech Path
Chuck	Port Neches High	Lamar	History		
Linda	Thomas Jefferson High	Lamar	Business		
Aunt Jan	Detroit High	ETSU	Elem. Ed.		
Jason	Burleson High	TAMU	SPED		
Lana	Port Neches High	St. Thomas	Education		
Sean**	Burleson High	TCU	History	TCU	Education
*Deceased - Not interviewed for this study			**Principal Investigator		

Same School – Parents, Other Family

Many in the family felt that attending school in the same district, or specific school, while a relative worked there placed an added emphasis on the quality of their performance as well as their behavior. This was not always a good thing as a certain amount of pressure and scrutiny comes along with this circumstance. PawPaw served as principal, teacher, and coach at Chicota high school when his sister-in-laws Aunt Wanda and Aunt Lonnie were attending. Aunt Lonnie felt that he had been sent to destroy her world:

Oh, gosh yes (laughs). He was my high school principal. He made all kinds of rules and regulations trying to make me be good, specially designed for me. It didn't work (laughs). Sean, it was so funny, he had gotten on to me. I was talking to a boy outside on the steps, an old country school, and Jack tells the boy to go to the baseball field and tells me to get in this vacant room. He proceeds to tell me...you know, and I tell him, "I don't like you. I don't want you to come into my house anymore." (Laughs) I had had him until I was up to here (motion with hand at neck). So he goes and tells Vivian and Vivian tells Mother. Mother didn't say a thing to me about it because she said she really felt like I had all I could do, because he made rules like a seat between everybody in the study hall. He was doing it for my own good, but back then I just thought it was, (shakes her head, closes her eyes, and grimaces)it was terrible. (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Even with the added scrutiny Aunt Lonnie enjoyed some aspects of having PawPaw as her principal and teacher:

Yet he was good to me. He and Vivian, you know, they did so much for me. I mean they really did. He was a good teacher, real good teacher. I had him in math and in history.

History was great. He knew, it was right after he got out of the war and the experiences he had been through. He was still very emotional about that...But Jack I think loved me anyway (laughs).

The added pressure occurred despite the best efforts of some parents. Aunt Stella stated that, "I didn't supervise them in any way. I let their teachers do that" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Chuck said:

I have never entertained the idea (of moving from middle school to high school) because I did not want to be at the same campus as my kids. I wanted them to have at least some freedom because I knew they were going to encounter at least half the kids they went to high school with have come through my class. I didn't want to place burden on them. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Mom, who did teach in the same elementary school my brothers and I attended, and who not only attended the school where PawPaw was superintendent, but had been taught math by him, stated that she attempted to allow us as normal an experience as possible:

I know it was probably difficult for you guys sometimes because you were a teacher's kid and that invites people to pick on you a little bit. I tried to, like I said, let you learn responsibility and take care of yourself. If you were sick or something I was there, but the day to day, I let you do your own thing.

As I stated earlier, being the child of an educator many times brought with it added pressure, stress, and expectations. Not only did you have to meet the expectations of your educator parents, "I used to say that if I brought home an A-, my Mom would ask me why I didn't make an A+. We were capable of doing good work and we were expected to do it" (Pat,

Personal Interview, December 14, 2008), but you also had to deal with the ever watchful eye and expectations of the other students, the school faculty and if your dad was superintendent, the whole town.

Jan, Mom, Pat, and Vicki all grew up in districts where their father was superintendent. Jan stated the pressure of being the superintendent's daughter frustrated her and caused her to keep her best effort out of the sight of others:

When I was in Junior High I got that a lot. "Oh well, she's just the superintendent's daughter. " So I never really tried to excel at anything. I just was right there, under the line, but (sigh) I don't know. I felt like, I don't know, I just never wanted to stand out. OK? I just did what I did and got out. (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

Mom and Pat felt the same pressure, but in almost a rebellious nature reacted to it differently. Mom felt that:

It was really good and bad being a teacher's kid because, on the one hand, anything that you accomplished some kid would say, "Well it's because your dad is superintendent" or something like that. So that kind of gave you a little bit of angst as to whether you were really doing what you were doing or if it was all just somebody handing you something. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009).

One of Mom teacher's, and Nanny's best friend, observed early on that Mom was putting too much pressure on herself:

My fourth and fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Brown, was like family. While I learned some hard lessons from her they were probably important things to learn. She gave me my first 'B' because she said I needed to get it behind me, (laughs) I was putting too much stress

on myself. I needed that first 'B' so it would be over with and I wouldn't, you know. She knew I would keep on working to make 'A's but still it needed to be behind me. So I got that done, but she was a very good teacher. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Finally, Pat expressed how she reacted to pressure of being the superintendent's daughter:

You were always different than the rest of the kids in a small town because you were the superintendent's kid. I really tried harder because it made me mad that people thought that they gave me my grades. It was kind of a big deal for me to actually earn them and be the best or be the best I could be so that I could say that nobody gave me anything. I earned this, did this on my own. I studied. (Personal Interview, December 12, 2008)

The reactions of Aunt Jan, Mom, and Pat are all real and legitimate reactions to the circumstances they were in. They are also the most intense of the situations and exaggerated representation of the rest of the participants. While the others experienced the same high expectations for academic performance from their parents they did not feel the added weight of carrying the family name that children of superintendents felt. Generally responses centered on behavior. Comments like, "I could not get away with anything" were prevalent. Chuck's answer to a question about added pressure and expectations was representative of other participants, "No (was never at the same school as his mom), but my Dad was a teacher too remember and I was in the same school he was at which typically meant that I couldn't do anything without getting found out" (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008).

Finding 2: Influence on Career Choice

While the deciding factors for each participant were unique it is clear that Family Influence, Teacher Influence, Being a Teacher Before a Teacher, and Feminization played major

roles in influencing the participant’s decision to enter education. Among these four factors, Family Influence was the most significant contributing factor across the sample. While not as widespread in their influence, Calling, Social Mobility and Friends played a major role in individual participant’s decision. Table 4 displays major and contributing factors influencing the participants’ entry into the field of education.

Table 4
Factors Influencing Participants’ Decision to Enter Education

Participants	Calling	Family Influence	Social Mobility	Teacher Influence	Friend	Teacher Before a Teacher	Feminization/Family Consideration
Aunt Stella		X	x			x	X
Aunt Wanda		X	x	x		x	X
Aunt Lonnie		X	x	x		x	X
Pat	X	X		x		x	X
Bob		x			X		
Vicki		X		x			X
Mom		x		X		x	X
Aunt Jan		x		x	X		X
Chuck		X		x		x	
Linda		X		x		x	X
Jason	X	X		x		x	
Lana		X		x		X	
Nanny (d)		X	x				X
PawPaw (d)			X	x			
Uncle Bill (d)			X				
X' indicates major factors influencing decision to enter education 'x' indicates contributing factors influencing decision to enter education							

This dissertation has been about the family in education, but a career in education was not everyone’s first choice. Aunt Wanda wanted to be a nurse, Lana a doctor, and Jason considered computer science. Linda worked for Southwestern Bell, Chuck was a soldier in the US Army, and Bob was a men’s clothing salesman before entering education. As told earlier, Nanny was literally forced to go to college. My Aunt Jan didn’t know what she wanted to be, but she was pretty sure it was not going to be education:

(Laughs and shakes her head) You know I had no idea. I always said, and your mother will verify, that I would never have children or be a school teacher. I now have three kids and I teach school. I don't know. To be real honest I didn't know what else to do and that's the truth...you reach a point where you have to decide what you are going to do when you just go to college for no reason. Mom and Daddy thought that I needed to get on out so I decided to go into education (laughs). (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

For the rest of us the decision was a little easier. Aunt Lonnie did not waste any time getting through college so she could get into a classroom, "Oh we started out to be teachers, or I did. I didn't take anything at Paris Junior College that would not transfer to East Texas on my degree toward elementary education. See I finished it in three and a half years by going two summers" (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009). For Mom, the desire went back even further. Much like my experience, she knew what she wanted to be very early on in life:

Probably when I was in the first grade. It was just something I knew I wanted to do. Before that I don't remember thinking about what I wanted to be, but in first grade I decided I wanted to be a teacher like Miss Essie. That's what I wanted to do. I wanted to teach first graders and that's kind of what I did. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Teacher Influence

Teacher Role Models

Mom was not the only one to be influenced early in life by teachers and the participants were not just influenced within the classroom. Outside of Bob and Linda, who married into the family, every participant except for the first generation of four sisters, grew up in a house where

at least one of their parents was an educator. Even the sisters had teachers living in the house with them:

Mother had a bedroom. I don't know if you remember how the house extended? She had that front room. It was just a room that we called our parlor room and nobody ever used because the fireplace room was where everybody stayed. They put a heater in there and rented that bedroom and Mother cooked for them. In fact my first grade teacher, she lived there and I was so close to her I went home with her on the weekends when I was in her class. It's just different, but how it was. They didn't have a place to live so Mother, I don't know if she even charged them knowing her. I really don't. (Aunt Lonnie, Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

As Linda stated teachers become very close, "There are five of us that teach third grade at my school and we are like sisters. We get along so well. Other grades laugh and they say we breathe in unison" (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008). When teachers become this close, as often happens, these friends start to have a big influence on each other's children:

We had a group of friends and Mrs. Brown was a teacher...There were a whole bunch of kids that were kind of close to the same age so that we could do stuff together. At one point they even went together and built a big cabin on Crystal Lake down there. We would go down there and spend the night and have picnics and stuff. It was grand when we were kids because it was like we had all these different moms and dads, but Mrs. Brown was probably the closest to us... Mrs. Brown, she just considered us hers. She especially adopted my sister because she was a baby at the time, and they only had just the one child, and she just spoiled her rotten. (laughs) It was absolutely awful. I always thought as a kid that if I didn't have any place else to go I could go there... Mrs. Brown

would love you on one side and straighten you up on the other. (laughs) (Mom, Personal Interview, March 28, 2009).

Favorite Teachers

Favorite teachers identified by the participants clearly played a role in influencing the age group they worked with, subject matter they taught, and even the ‘type’ of teacher they became. Nine of the twelve participants’ favorite teacher worked with the same age group, elementary, middle, or high school. Ten of the twelve taught the same subject matter as their favorite teacher. Self-contained elementary teachers were counted as teaching the same subject matter.

Perhaps most important is the influence the favorite teacher had over the type of teacher the participants became. Mom’s nurturing style and belief in the importance of the student-teacher relationship came from her favorite teacher, Miss Essie:

She wasn’t just about teaching. She took her kids, and for the time she had them, they were her kids. I think that’s what I wanted to take too. While I had those kids they were mine! They weren’t just somebody else’s kids that happened to be in my room. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Lana related how her second grade teacher’s hands-on style affected her practice as a teacher:

Mrs. LaRue (is my favorite teacher). She is my second grade teacher... my first “How To” paper was in her class and it was How To Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich... she brought out some bread and peanut butter and jelly and plates and knives and napkins and everything else you could think of... If they didn’t say pick up the knife, you didn’t pick up the knife. You put your hand in the jelly and you put it on the bread and then you put your hand in peanut butter and you put it on there... It is just like the

little things. The hands-on stuff we would do. It was second grade so you know we would want to do stuff with our hands. I do that with 8th graders and they love it. We go outside. We had to do a force in motion thing and then velocity so we went outside and ran and did jumping jacks and jump rope. When we did chemistry we did endothermic and exothermic reactions so we did it in plastic baggies instead of beakers so they could actually feel the bag and walk around or see the color change. They were like, “Look at this!” Anything that they can actually see and do is always the best. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Interestingly her father, Chuck, remembered his favorite teacher for her hands-on style as well, “I would say that I remember Mrs. Brown in seventh grade Texas History. We baked cornbread and we churned butter. There is just all kinds of stuff that sticks in my mind that I remember as being a lot of fun” (Personal Interview, December 20, 2009). While Chuck did not make the connection himself, I found interesting corollaries between his description of Mrs. Brown’s class and the hands-on and ‘fun’ themes he describes when asked to paint a picture of his own classroom:

I’m a firm believer that you interject as much humor as you can because it keeps them on the edge of their seat because they really don’t know what’s happening next. You make the stories as interesting as you can. You throw in the gossip from history that makes it so much fun. You might see a simulation of something. I might reenact Braddock’s ambush on the Monongahela with paper balls or something or we might put a British Redcoat on trial for the massacre in Boston or something along that order. We may draw a map on the floor of something that is going on. We’ve always got something going on whether it’s artistic or Trivial Pursuit or what not. Middle school kids are kind of like the audience

sitting in your typical church. If the sermon gets longer than fifteen minutes people are going to start looking at their watch so you have to change direction. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Jason was very specific when he stated his desire to follow the lead of his favorite teacher in instilling a sense of responsibility in his students and holding them accountable:

My other favorite one in high school was Mrs. Stover. She spoke more monotone than anyone I know, like a robot or you were just listening to a computer, but just that little look out of her eye of 'I got you' or 'I know what you're saying, now shut-up' always cracked me up (laughs)... She was one of the first ones that said, you know, when I got to the point where I slacked off after previously busting my tail, she gave me one more chance to come in and make it up. When I didn't come in and asked her for another chance she said, 'No, that's it. I am being fair Jason.' I still passed, but realized from then on not to try that stuff. I've always respected that...I try to emulate that to my kids, my students. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Activities/Hobbies Growing Up

All of the study's participants were highly involved in and out of school. Stories told during the interviews were chocked full of references to participation in sports, the fine arts, church groups, and student organizations. The vast majority of all participants participated in sports throughout their high school years. Aunt Lonnie, basketball, PawPaw, track and field and football, and Lana, volleyball, also lettered in college. The vast majority of participants participated in the fine arts throughout high school including band, orchestra, piano, choral groups, drama, and art. Pat and Vicki attended college on music awards. All participants were

involved in student groups either at school or through their church. Many of the participants held officer positions in organizations such as National Honor Society, Key Club, Student Council, FFA, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and church youth groups. While one can draw corollaries between being highly involved and successful as a young person and being successful as a professional, no participant mentioned a major link between these activities and entering education. However, participation in these activities did have an impact on Pat's subject selection of band and PawPaw's, Lana's, and my own decision to coach.

Teacher Before a Teacher

All participants were able to describe ways in which they were teachers before they were teachers. Another way to phrase it would be practicing for their profession. Aunt Lonnie stated that 'playing school' was encouraged by Granny.

Well I played school all the time, but that's the way we grew up doing that... We always played school. Mother always made sure, you know we lived close to that store, we always had our Big Chief tablets and our pencils and our crayons and we played, you know. That was part of our play-like. Then Vivian and Stella, they worked with us too.

(Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Pat, later a band director, remembered her first experiences heading up a stage production. The Parson family had a tradition of the children putting on a Christmas program each year.

Oh yeah. I guess you are born what you are because when we would go to Granny's every year for Christmas Eve I was seven years older than my sister who was the next child down and then the rest of you all, the cousins, came. I was the one who always got the Christmas program together. I would get all the little kids into the back room and we

would practice and we would come out and we would sing our little things. I was doing that way back then. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Lending a little credence to Pat's assertion that "you are born what you are" Chuck remembered the productions slightly differently, but does not deny continuing the tradition:

We carried on that tradition down here later, in the next generation. Julie's kids, my kids, and Harold's daughter they always had to put on a Christmas show before we let them open presents just like the misery we went through up there at Belk. We were just like, "We'll do anything, just get the presents out!" (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Lana, Linda, and Aunt Stella all described how their experiences teaching children at church had an effect on their decision to enter teaching. Aunt Stella made the most direct connection, "When I was twelve years old I taught the Card Class, they called it. I learned I wanted to be a teacher then. That was my desire!" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Linda talked about how it affected her decision to change careers, "I taught classes at church and I just loved fooling with kids. I thought, 'I could get paid to do this and I could see my children's games.' So I looked to see what it would take for me to go back (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008).

For Mom, Jason, and Lana their experiences working with classmates sparked their interest in teaching. Lana spoke about unexpected opportunities that arose in her college dormitory:

I would sit out there and they just assumed I was smart because I was always studying and they would come and ask questions. I think I understood Biology and Chemistry better once I started showing them what to do, how I did it, what this was, and what that

was. Some of those things that hadn't quite clicked for me then clicked for me when I was teaching them. I actually got enjoyment from seeing that spark people get when they finally understand. You know, I helped them do that. It was a neat feeling, so my junior year I changed mid-semester and became an education major. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2009)

While at a crossroads in college Jason remembered back to an experience from his high school days:

I went for a long walk around campus and just asked God what He wanted me to do. I thought back to high school when I was helping out with a special ed. choir as a teacher's assistant... The teacher didn't know how to work with them so, instead of asking me to run stuff to the office, she asked me to sit in the group and to help them and work with them. I was pretty much their para professional... I remember the accomplishments that they didn't think they would be able to do. There was one kid that could only say one phrase. He would constantly ask, "W...w...w...what time is it?" because that was all he could say. He got to where he could sit on stage in a live concert performance, in front of the whole school, and keep beat to the music. He was just perfect, no matter what song it was, he was right on. He couldn't do the dances, but once we sang the song, bam, it was stuck in his brain forever and he could sing it while he kept time. Just to see the looks in those kids' eyes who couldn't do anything in academics, to see that they felt like they were part of the group, that they were accepted because they were able to perform in front of the school. I just thought about that and asked God what I was supposed to do and he answered pretty loudly that that was what I was supposed to be doing. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Not only did this experience lead Jason to become a teacher, but more specifically a Life Skills teacher. The first four years of his career Jason worked with students facing similar challenges as the classmates from his story.

Calling

Jason's story speaks clearly to a belief that God was directing, or calling, him to teach. Pat felt a similar calling:

One of the reasons I went into education besides Mother and Daddy was that I just always felt a sort of calling to that. It involved my faith. You grow up and you think, "I don't want to do that, I want to do something else" and I changed my major in college and looked some other places, but when push came to shove it came back to the fact that this was part of who I am and part of what I was supposed to do with my life. I couldn't be in the classroom like my Mom, or your mom and grandmother, but my love was music as opposed to an academic subject. It was part of who I am. Even today, as I work in the ministry, I have that desire to teach people. I teach classes and do things up there as the opportunity arises and it is like that thing is still in me to try and help somebody go forward or help somebody grow from where they are to improve their life. I've had this feeling from the beginning. There was something more there than just that they (parents) wanted us to do it. There was a calling to do it. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

While Jason and Pat were the only ones that specifically stated they felt that God called them to teach, all of the participants spoke of the influence of growing up in a Christian home. They spoke of the influence the church had on their belief of what a teacher should be, and that their relationship with Christ influenced their teaching and relationships with students. Vicki stated

that, “It dovetails with everything we do...I know Mother and Daddy took us to church every time the door opened” (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Mom’s experiences growing up in a small town church was representative of the participants:

Well, I think it played a big role in the way I was raised, my morals, and my attitudes. I was definitely raised in church. We went to church every Sunday. We went to Sunday school every Sunday. It was in small churches so they were like family too. They helped raise me. In a small town, in a small group the people there are not just people you know, they help take care of you and they let you know if you are messing up and if you need encouragement or something... It’s like a family when you are in small church and they teach you. It’s where you learn your integrity and your morals. My Dad always taught a Sunday school class and it was a part of life. I never thought about it being anything different...Then you know the teachings that you learn and trying to model your life after Jesus, that is a huge philosophy of how I teach. That’s what Jesus was. He was a teacher. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Social Mobility

Granny and Granddad were not rich, but they did well for farmers and ranchers, especially compared to many others during, and following, the Great Depression. So the question of whether or not social mobility played a role in the four sisters entering education is a bit more complex than simply aspiring to move from poverty to the middle class. Contrary to the norm, at this time, being female seems to have increased Granny and Granddad’s desire for the sisters to attend college and become educators. Agrarian culture is dependent upon the male, even more than most cultures, to ensure the family’s income and wellbeing. It seems that Granny and

Granddad did not want their girls to be dependent on a husband. When asked if Granny encouraged the girls to marry well to ensure their economic wellbeing Aunt Jan stated:

I don't think she did. I don't think she encouraged them to get married and settle for that. That's just my opinion. Nobody ever really told me that. I don't remember Mother ever saying that, but I just think that. I think Granddaddy too, wanted his children to go to school. (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

That does not mean that Granny was not concerned with money, fashion, or nice things. Aunt Jan thought that part of her motivation might have been to not only give her girls the education that she missed, but also a bigger taste of culture and society:

Granny wanted. Granny would have been happy in a big house up here in the city with some well to do ladies as friends. She liked to be 'oot-n-about.' She liked to be in her garden club and she liked to hobnob. She wanted her children to make something of themselves and not just stay on the farm or be a housewife. She always saw that they had clothes that were in style and she made them, most of them, but she always made sure they were up to times and up-to-date and that's just the way she was. (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

Granddad continued to work his ranch until a stroke in his mid-nineties and he loved his ranch, but that did not mean that he did not share his wife's desire for his daughters to have an easier life. When asked why Granny and Granddad emphasized personal education Mom stated, "I think they wanted more for their kids than to work the fields" (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009) and when asked why so many of the family are educators, Vicki said, "I think it probably did start from Granny and Granddad because I think they wanted good things for everyone. I

think for them, perhaps, it was a way that you don't have to farm the rest of your life" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008).

For my PawPaw, husband to Nanny, and Uncle Bill, husband to Aunt Stella, social mobility played a much bigger role in choosing to enter the field of education. Their background is reviewed in the section on Educational Importance. Both men grew up in extreme poverty and education was a way out of this poverty for both of them.

While social mobility played a role in the sisters and their spouses entering education, I could not find a connection for subsequent generations. For Pat, Vicki, Mom, Aunt Jan, Chuck, and Lana, the move could be classified as lateral with children of teachers becoming teachers. For Linda the move was a financial sacrifice for both her and her family:

It's sad to say that when I quit working for Southwestern Bell in '95, and I worked part time from June to the end of the year, the salary I left in 1995 took me until 2005 to come even with that salary that was part time ten years before. That is a sad statement for teaching because the job I was doing did not require a college education. You just had to have a high school education. That's a shame. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Though Jason and I started out as teachers out of college, we too took a step down the social mobility ladder in comparison to our parents. While Mom was a teacher, Dad is an Analytical Chemist in Research and Development for a major pharmaceutical company. Jobs like my Dad's traditionally bring in a significantly higher salary and garner much more professional respect from the general public. The reasons Linda, Jason, and I made the decision to enter education are discussed throughout the chapter, but we did, especially Linda, recognize that this was a sacrifice for both us and our family.

Feminization

Traditionally, the field of education has been dominated by women. It has served as a double edged sword by both limiting and providing one of the few socially acceptable professional fields for women to pursue. Each of the female participants worked through retirement age, with only Mom, Nanny, and Aunt Lonnie taking off any significant time while their children were young. Feminization played a big role in the family deciding the sisters should become teachers:

I think that at the time Mama and her sisters went into education that was pretty much what a woman did that had a career. I mean when you think about it most women didn't have careers and, if they did, they were school teachers. I think that's why they went into teaching. (Aunt Jan, Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

Mom described the limited options for women at this time, "Well as far as the four girls were concerned, like I said, back in that day and time there weren't a lot of approved occupations for women. They either got married or they became a teacher or a nurse or a secretary (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009). Finally, one of the three sisters, Aunt Lonnie simply stated, "It's a good, you know really a good, job for a woman. I'll put it this way, back in our time, it really was" (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009).

Though PawPaw and Uncle Bill entered education, their careers were influenced by the feminization of the field. While most of the teachers at this time were female, most of the administrators were male. When they entered the field they entered as principals-teachers and remained administrators throughout their careers, each serving long tenures as superintendants.

Among the sisters, only Aunt Lonnie and Aunt Wanda became administrators and this was after years and years in the field.

Things did not change all that much from my Nanny's generation to my Mom's. In reflecting on how most of her good friends have always been teachers, Mom stated:

Yeah, I think they have (been teachers) starting even in high school. A lot of the kids that I was close with, that went to college, several of them made teachers. I guess for girls, a lot of times its nurses or teachers for my age group. There are not that many of them that went off other ways unless they were secretaries. It's different now thank God. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

While Mom continually speaks in glowing terms about her career as a teacher she was rather emphatic about her feelings concerning girls and women being limited professionally. In the description of one factor in her decision to be a teacher, Vicki listed the possible career choices for women of her generation:

Well, you know Sean when you are my age there were about three different things you could be. You could be a secretary, a nurse, or a teacher. Daddy always said you have to be able to feed yourself and you can always get a job teaching so we all got a job teaching. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Family Consideration

Women are traditionally the caretakers of the household making Family Consideration an influential factor in career decision for many of the female participants. Family consideration is a part of feminization. Once children enter school, they have a very similar schedule as their teacher-parents allowing for supervision during the evening and extended summer breaks. Mom

said of her time teaching, “It allowed me to be with my own children as well as a parent which was very important to me” (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009). For Linda, family consideration was a primary factor in her decision to leave her career at Southwestern Bell and enter education. Though she looked back at the money she left on the table, she did not regret her decision:

There was a time where my old boss stopped me, she’s still a friend of mine, and said, “We are hiring again. We would like you to come back. If you would like to come back, put in your application. You can have your same job.” I hesitated because you know I’m thinking, you know, I could double my income by going back. My daughter, who was by this time in middle school and we didn’t by the name brand jeans or anything, turned to her and said, “Miss Phyllis my Mama has gone to all my volleyball games and she’s gone to my softball games. I don’t want her to go back and work there.” I said, “There’s your answer.” You know, that was coming out of my child. That’s another reason. My family was more important than my job. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Family Influence

Daddy - Daughter Hero

All twelve participants in the study listed a family member as their hero growing up. Specifically, the Father-Daughter relationship played a large role in influencing the forming of the perceptions and beliefs of the participants. Eight of the nine females in the study listed their father as their hero and it seems they did not want to do anything to disappoint them:

I didn’t want to do anything that Daddy wouldn’t approve of. That was just the way we grew up. Mother grew us up to think that our Dad did no wrong. She did, I mean we were

to respect him no matter what. He never laid a hand on me. Of course he might have needed to, but that's just the way he was, I mean he could say one word. He talked to me all the way back when he would take me back to college over at Commerce. We'd be going through old Camp Maxey on the old road and it would be muddy and all, but he would talk to me all the way about how to act like a lady and all these things. I would think, "Gosh, I can't do anything to hurt him." You know how he was. (Aunt Lonnie, Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Lana too spoke about how much it would hurt to have disappointed her father:

He wanted me to have every advantage and he did what he could to make that happen. I would say my Mom is the same way too, but if I was to disappoint him that would hurt the worst. I'm sorry, it's just like, (wipes away a tear) he's that person. My Mom would tell you to do something, but he would be the one it mattered for. Just the way he talked to you about it. He was just so passionate and sincere about it. He wanted you to strive for the best because he would say, "I see it in you. I know you're there. I just need you to do it one more time. I just need you to do this for me. Just try it!" (Personal Interview, December 21, 2009)

For each of the fathers listed as their daughter's hero, Granddad (4), PawPaw (2), Uncle Bill (2), and Chuck (1), every one of their daughters became educators. Aunt Jan's response about PawPaw, her father, being her hero gives insight into the influence these men might have had into their daughters entering education, "My hero? Gosh, I guess Daddy! I guess my Daddy. I just thought he was better than everybody else. I thought he could sing better and he was the superintendent. People looked up to him and I looked up to him" (Personal Interview, March 17,

2009). For Aunt Wanda the reliance she had on Granddad's influence on her in everyday life carried over to her decision to become an educator:

Lonnie and I were talking about that and I said, "You know, Daddy was my big influence actually." When I was in school, I stayed part of the time with Bill and Stella at Paris Junior College. Daddy would pick me up on Friday afternoon to come home for the weekend and we would talk on our trips and he would influence me on decisions I should make... You know Mother never said a lot to me about my decision (to become a teacher), but Daddy was very strong in making it. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

Uncle Bill was direct when dispensing career advice to his daughter Vicki:

No, Daddy would not let me be a music ed major. He said, "You get a real job." In '73 the Education of All Handicapped Students bill had just passed. He saw that speech therapist was going to be part of the type of services that were going to be offered and he said, "You'll always have a job, I hope you like that." I wanted to be a home - ec major and everybody laughed because I have no home-ec ability. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

PawPaw, Uncle Bill, and Chuck were educators themselves and a desire to spend time with them, when the girls were young, seems to have played a large role in the girls emulating their career path.

Probably my Dad, yeah. If I could have spent twenty-four hours a day with him I would have, but like I said he was an educator so I didn't see him as much as I wanted to. He was busy at work with other people's kids. He would always sit you down and talk to

you. That's probably where I got a lot of my philosophies and ideas. He didn't yell at you. He would just sit you down and say, "Look, this is how it needs to be" or "this is what needs to happen." (Mom, Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

As Mom stated the time she spent with PawPaw, her father, had a great deal to do with her philosophies and ideas about education. Her response to a question about teaching style reflected these values:

I don't have a commanding voice or a commanding personality so I have to deal with things in a calmer, more personal way so if I had a discipline problem I would take care of it eye to eye, nose to nose, quietly. That's usually by talking... You have to deal with things by getting them on your side. So, you know, sometimes it's difficult to convince them that you are on their side. You have to make them want to do what you want them to do. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Lana's description of her hero, her father Chuck, paints the picture of the teacher any parent would want for their child:

My Dad. He's, I think, the smartest person I've ever come in contact with. He's passionate about history and he knows everything about it. He just knows and he's never made me feel stupid if I didn't understand something. He was always able to explain it to me and he set the bar here (holds hand above head) and I always wanted to be up here for him. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2009)

Enjoyed It

The biggest influence by far, for the family entering education seems to be that they saw those they loved enjoying the work and the life that comes along with being an educator. Though

no participant was ever asked if they enjoyed or loved their work those terms were used in forty-two distinct instances by the participants to describe their work. Some, in the course of the interview, floated their own theory as to why so many of the family entered education. Aunt Lonnie theorized on why my brother Jason and I became teachers:

I think that your mother probably instilled in you her love for it and that's why you did it and your brother too. I don't know, I would just say that it was just sort of a hand-me down thing that got started and it was just catching. If you enjoy, it I think you put out that you enjoy it. I think Jackie loved doing it. (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Chuck discussed the influence he might have had on his wife entering education:

We had been married at least ten. She was in her thirties, late thirties in fact. I think she saw how much I enjoyed it and her particular work situation was such that while Lana was in middle school and Nathan was in elementary she was missing so many of their activities...She said, "You enjoy teaching. I think I am going to give it a try." She has been just really fantastic. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2009)

He then looked at the impact he and Linda both might have had on Lana:

I would guess so. You know there is something to be said for being able to get up in the morning and look forward to going to work. It's not an impressive type of situation. I mean you get to play with kids all day. Just because we enjoyed it, we may have influenced her. I never put any pressure on her. I didn't try to encourage one way or the other. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2009)

Linda, who married into the family, and entered education because of family considerations, her experiences acting as a teacher before she was a teacher, and the enjoyment

she saw her husband Chuck experience as a teacher, might have the best perspective on the impact enjoyment had on participants entering the field:

We have watched them enjoy their life, enjoy what they do, and get fulfillment out of it. I don't think I've ever seen any of them say something bad about being in education. They all loved what they were doing no matter what level they were at. When you can see the joy and the good that comes from it you want to be a part of it. You know you are not doing it for the wealth. You can see a satisfying calm about them. I know they were all feisty, especially Vivian, and Stella still is, but you knew that they felt that their job was worthwhile and they got enjoyment and fulfillment out of it. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2009)

Of the participants, only my Aunt Jan did not reference the enjoyment she got from her job. She recognized the importance of teachers and speaks passionately about her students and instilling academic and life lessons in them, but never mentioned enjoying her work or the life that goes along with teaching. When asked what advice she would give to her own three children about entering the field she stated:

This is awful but I told, this is the God's truth, I told them that if they wanted to go to college I would pay for it as long as they didn't go into education. Is that awful?...Because I just, I don't want to say because I thought they could do better for themselves, but because it seems to be a low paying, for the most, part thankless job. I know it's not and I know that nobody would be anything if they didn't have teachers, but I just wanted them to do something to make more money.

As this study looks at the influence of the family over participants entering the field of education it is also interesting to note that Aunt Jan's children have taken her advice and none of the three have chosen a career in education.

Finding 3: Teaching as a Career

The life of the educator is one of relationships. Strong relationships must be forged with students and colleagues alike. Relationships permeate every part of the job and supportive reciprocal relationships with students and colleagues are essential to a feeling of accomplishment as an educator. The family stories provided are examples of how to work with and treat students. They also detail the necessary support of trusted colleagues both within the family and in the workplace.

Teacher Characteristics

Each participant was specifically asked what characteristics make a good teacher? Not one of the twelve mentioned anything coming close to a methodology of teaching. No one weighed the merits of constructivism versus behaviorism or fought for Madeline Hunter's lesson cycle to the exclusion of Fisher and Frey's gradual release model. Even with all of the early elementary teachers, no one made a case for guided reading over whole group instruction. It is not that these folks are not aware of these methods. I've heard arguments between them over topics just like these. The truth is they believe being a good teacher has a lot more to do with who you are than what you do. Aunt Stella gave the most simplistic, and possibly valid, answer, "Someone that can love kids" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Lana talked about her definition and the ultimate goal of teaching:

That's what teaching is. You get to work with somebody so hard and you get to see them grow and hopefully at the end of your time with them they are at least a little bit better at your subject if not a little bit better at their work ethic for doing something... I think you're just there to help somebody to guide them along through their path, because you're just a small step. You only spend twelve years of your life in school and if you go on to get more education then you're making the first step to saying I want it for myself. The first years are, you have to, because the national government says, you will get an education. So we are there to help you get your education and help you make those steps from year to year and if we can get you to say, "I want to go to college" then we helped you decide you want to learn for yourself, not for others. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Mom felt that she might have been born with some of the traits that might lead one into education:

I think I'm bent toward that type of profession. It's just kind of who I am. Of course, if I had been raised in a family that had not been teachers maybe I would not have been. I don't know. I think coming into the world predisposed to certain personality traits lead you toward certain types of work probably, but I don't know. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Lana agreed with Mom's assessment that certain types of personalities might be 'bent' toward a profession like education, but she made strong arguments for nurture over nature in her explanation:

I think education is a personality. I think it's a nurturing personality. I think it's a very caring and loving personality and I think that's all Granny and Granddad ever gave. You went there and you always got greeted with a hug and the best food you could eat and you were taught from the moment you got there. I mean you got to watch them do whatever on the farm and Granny would show me how to cook. I was taught how to play dominoes there and then that stems down to my Dad teaching me how to do things all the time. It was constantly a learning experience. If you ever said you didn't know how to do something, well, let's fix that, let's teach you, let's get you to know how to do that. I think if you're accustomed to that, if you're accustomed to somebody saying, well you don't know then let's make sure you know how to do it then that stems to other people and you just become a more helpful person and helpful people always want to help others and that is what teachers are, they're helpers. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Societal Role

For the most part this paper has been positive in its portrayal of the teaching profession. I have done my best to remain neutral, but as I stated in the Methods chapter I was biased. I was brought up by, work with, and admire educators. My brother, Jason, expressed what we were raised to believe about educators, "We were just taught to hold teachers up in a higher esteem than other professions. When you're around it like we were it just becomes natural. It is built into you" (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008). However, not everyone holds teachers in the same esteem as Jason and I. As Aunt Jan said in the response to why she advised her children not to go into education, "it seems to be a low paying, for the most, part thankless job" (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). Even my Aunt Stella who repeatedly stated that she 'loved teaching' and that she 'lived it' mentioned that, "they tell me that you should be happy you're not teaching

now” (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). It is not within the scope of this paper to explore the reasons for the change in public’s esteem toward educators, but Jason remembered his vision of the respect our grandparents received as educators and an ultimate hope for effect he would have on his students:

Even though we don’t get the respect they used to, they still get it from me. Through my eyes I have huge respect for someone who has been doing it forever. I think we will get our rewards later on. The respect I saw PawPaw get when we were little. We would walk around town and everyone would know him. We’d run to the store a quarter mile down the road and not get back for forty-five minutes when the only thing we were going up there for was to pick up the mail and to get a Whistle Pop or something. We wouldn’t get back for so long because everybody and their dog would want to stop and talk to PawPaw and he would stop and talk to them. Just the stature of our grandmother and great-aunt, who are like 4’11” and watching the respect they got from men who were bigger than me (6’3”). I saw grown men flinch because they knew they meant business and they knew that they had helped bring them up... You see the respect that they are shown and you aspire to have that same respect. You aspire that when you retire people will still be telling stories about you. You aspire to have kids walk up to your children and say, “Oh your Mr. Scott’s son. He was my favorite teacher.” (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Money

In America we many times assess the value of a person or professional position by the amount of money earned. I never asked any of the participants about salary, money, financial security or anything else related to the living they earned as a teacher. Still it was the second

most discussed topic. Ironically, the number one topic was how the participants advised their family members to enter teaching because they “enjoyed it.” I also never asked any participant if they enjoyed teaching. This might tell us a little bit about the participant’s motivation for teaching. As Pat stated, “You will never have the life of a rich person and you don’t need to go into it thinking that you will. It’s just not going to happen...There is always going to be a large element of service involved in it because it’s what it is” (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). The thirty-two distinct spontaneous mentions of money, or lack thereof, certainly clue you in on how the participants felt society viewed their profession. As Linda stated earlier it took her ten years as a teacher to match the salary of a position that did not require a college degree she left at Southwestern Bell.

There was particular worry expressed by the female participants concerning men entering the field. Even among this group of educated, and I would venture to say progressive, women there is still a traditional belief that the man has the responsibility of being the family breadwinner. Linda stated:

It’s very hard for a man to come through education and support a family. The wife would have to work whereas if he were in some other endeavor his wife would have that option of staying home. As a teacher that would probably, in this day and age, not be an option for his wife. You cannot make it (a family) on a single teacher’s salary and that’s a shame. That is probably the biggest deterrent for any male coming into education.

(Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

In addressing a question as to whether she would become a teacher again if she could start over Mom said she would, but gave the following caveat:

If I were a male then I'm not sure either. I might have thought more about making a good living. Even though my Dad was a superintendent we were always worried about money growing up. We never had a huge savings and we never lived in a really nice house. We were OK, but there were never extras. Then when my Dad was just working and my Mom wasn't working there were some winters when we ate a lot of beans because there just wasn't extra money for other things. We ate my grandfather's garden until we ran out of that so we ate well most of the time, but there were times when we didn't have stuff and we certainly didn't buy extras. It just didn't happen. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Mom was not the only participant who mentioned the lack of money earned teaching affecting children. Aunt Lonnie stated in reference to her three children, "They grew up without a whole lot and they knew teachers didn't make a whole lot" (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009). In a question about how he would advise his son if he came to him wanting to enter the field of education, Jason said he would ultimately support and respect his decision, but "I'll remind him of what he went through growing up with Daddy's money...I'll remind him of the hard times and ask him if it's worth it?...I would worry about him financially and the stress he would have to go through dealing with it" (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008).

In mentioning the lack of money their parents had growing up, several of the participants mentioned sacrifices their parents made so they could have opportunities. Previously I wrote that Vicki and Pat were told by their parents, Aunt Stella and Uncle Bill, that the three kids have been spread out by seven and six years expressly so they could afford to send them to good colleges. Lana remembered her dad, Chuck, working extra to provide her brother and her with opportunities:

He built fences, drove busses, worked football games every Friday night and drove the bus for the football games, for the band, and if there was a fieldtrip he drove the bus for that. He did everything in the world to make sure that if I or Nathan wanted to go to Disney World with the band trip, we could. If I wanted to go snow-skiing with the church group, I did. If I wanted to go to the incredibly expensive college, he made it happen. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008).

Linda said the lack of money growing up nearly prevented her daughter, Lana, from entering the field of education:

When she first started out she was not going to be a teacher because she was not going to be poor. She was not going to be a teacher because she was not going to be poor! I can't tell you how many times that has come out of her mouth and here she is a teacher. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Lana backed up her mother's story:

I was like, "That's just too much." We are definitely not rich people. It just seemed like it was too hard for too little amount of money to be stressed out over what is going on all the time. I was just like, "I am not going to be a teacher." (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

With all of the negative statements about the money that educators make, there was one positive theme. Aunt Stella gave the best and most succinct account of the participants' feelings toward education. Perhaps this is appropriate being that it was her husband, Uncle Bill, who assisted A.M. Aikin in writing the legislation that established the Teacher Retirement Services.

She stated:

I think retirement is wonderful...I have received enough that I can live and I don't have to work other than when I worked in the classroom. You know, not many jobs can you live on your retirement, unless you're one of those big shots" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008).

It is pertinent to note that both PawPaw and Uncle Bill optioned to take a smaller percentage of their retirement so that their spouse could continue to receive a portion of their benefits after their deaths. As Aunt Stella stated, "He took less so that I could get more" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008).

Classroom Picture

In describing what their classroom looked like, the participants painted pictures of activity. Bob spoke about how his classes actually carried out the real life job simulations:

I got merchandise from stores and I built a section in the back of the classroom that had a showcase, a display counter, and we had kids open cans at the bottom and got merchandise and I got clothing from clothing stores that were damaged and I have them a tax write off for it. I rented a cash register from NCR and we played store. Every kid had to do two sales demonstrations per six weeks. When we studied inventory they actually inventoried what we had. When they did a sales demonstration we would tell the kid, "This lady has a thirteen year old daughter that's having a birthday" and that's all they knew. Then we had someone come in that was that person and the kid had to determine what they wanted, did they have it, make the sale, make change, gift wrap it, and give it to them. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Chuck stated he felt it was important to do whatever is necessary to help his students learn:

The guy next door to me was a first year teacher as well and we brought little red wagons to school and we were going to take fire extinguishers and do a little propulsion experiment down the hall and he invited the principal over. Only the fire extinguisher he gave his kid was not a CO₂. It was a dry chemical and our principal, Mr. Beasley, was standing behind this kid when he fired it off and it covered him. This man, he had his suit on, and it covered him with this white dry chemical. I knew we were going to get fired. How we didn't is still beyond me. We didn't do anymore red wagon experiments down the hallway. Some things work, some things don't. I've always approached it as it's better to ask forgiveness than to get permission so I've always just been very proactive and if it works it works and if it doesn't we'll scratch it from the list. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2009)

Only one participant mentioned anything about sitting in straight rows and only one participant commented about kids needing to be quiet to learn. In describing her classroom and an event from her career, Mom professed her belief that she believed an active classroom was necessary for students to learn:

Probably it would be controlled chaos. I know that we did a little teacher swapping one time where our principal wanted us to partner with a teacher from another grade level and go and observe that teacher and then they were to observe us. I got paired with a third grade teacher who for some reason had only twelve or thirteen kids in her class, which I never, ever in my life had... They would do something and she would give an instruction and they would do it and it was dead silent. I just sat there the whole time going, "OK, this is just creepy." (laughs) So when she came to my room I was like, "You might want to wear ear plugs and take aspirin (laughs) because there are twice as many children and

they are all up.” I said, “They are doing something they are supposed to be doing, but they are all busy and they’re talking to each other because as long as they are talking to each other about what they are doing that is allowed. That’s how they’re learning!”

(Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Mom was describing a first grade classroom and all of the primary teachers described a similar scene. Aunt Lonnie described the typical accoutrements of their classrooms:

Well, we had what we called centers and bulletin boards and art work. I put up the kids artwork. I had a little house, the frame of a house...Back then we still had our libraries in the rooms...Then we had an art center and you would have little desks and chairs. They didn’t stay that much in those. We had what we called a listening center, which back then was ear phones and cassettes with books and stuff. And lots of books, I love books. We also had a rug they used for listening to books and reading, that type of stuff. (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Though the participants spoke a great deal about the active nature of their classrooms, they also spoke about the necessary structure and procedures:

Well (laugh), if it was in kindergarten you would see all of the different centers of interest that I had...The kids would go and stay in one center and I would work with a few of them and then they would go to another center and then they would come to me. I had a big huge table that was in a circle, like a kidney type you know. We just had fun all the time. (laughs) (Aunt Stella, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Classroom routine played a prominent role in each of the descriptions. It is impossible to have an active primary classroom, like those listed above without a consistent and practiced routine. Lana gives an indication of where these practices might have their roots:

I think routine is key. I've always grown up with a routine. I guess that goes back to the house. Like I said, you come in, I would sit down at the kitchen table, I would do my homework. Then I would help Mom with dinner. Then you go about your business and maybe interjectedly there was softball game or a dance class or something that held up the regular routine. But if it was just a regular day you came in, you got your homework done, and then you helped Mom with chores. That's the way we always did it. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

This routine Lana described from her home life as a child and young adult has manifested itself in the classroom:

So my kids come in, I have my agenda written in two places, on the board in the front and then I have a Smart Board. I have it projected on the Smart Board via a power point. It tells everything we are going to do for the day, any future assignments. I give a weekly TAKS homework. You know it will say remember your TAKS homework is due on Friday, there is a quiz on Friday, or our Unit Test is on whatever day. Their journals are in the same spots in color coded bins for the different class periods. They grab their journal. If they need to, their phrase cards are hanging on curtain rods on the other side of the room in the same location underneath the word wall with the matching words from the phrase model. They grab it, they sit down and the bell will ring. I will come tell them to read everything on the agenda. Then I will push the slideshow button to make it go to

their warm-up. Then we go to a science question of the day, an SQOTD... (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Lana has just described about the first four minutes of her class and she was able to go on and on from there describing the typical classroom routine. Remember, though, that she previously described the importance of hands-on activities. These activities fit within the structure of an organized class. Her dad, Chuck, gives a good example of how the two concepts are integrated in his description of his classroom:

One of the things as a teacher I always have more to do than I can fit into a period. There is not ever a slack time in my class...I mean I am on my feet walking around talking and telling and we're doing something engaged until I go, "OK, pack it up." By the time I say pack it up, they hadn't got ten seconds until that bell is ringing and the next group is coming in...When I taught science it was very experiment oriented with hands-on. With history the way I see to teach it and make it interesting is to pose it as a problem.

"You've got to make a decision here. You're faced with this dilemma. Which way are you going to go?" For instance we are just getting ready to do the Revolution, Declaration of Independence. They were assigned a character by name and given a colony that they were in and whether they were a city dweller or a farmer. They had to write an autobiography of this person and they could create as many children or if they were a veteran of the French and Indian War. They got to pick everything. Then these characters would have to write a letter to the editor describing why they were against the stamp act. These characters would then all be miraculously elected to the Continental Congress and we would do a little resolution debating. Based on who their character was they had to write and explain their position on various issues. I would question them quite

severely on, if you're one of the King's ministers, why are you voting for independence right now. I think that the reason most children enjoy my class is because we do a lot of things and we have a lot of fun at it. Some of it is pure foolishness, but like I said, you can only keep them focused for so long. It is middle school. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Family – Learn

One thing that every good educator has learned along the way is that you cannot be a successful, mentally healthy, teacher on your own. One of the hunches I had coming into this project was that the family played a prominent role in professionally supporting individuals once they entered the field of education. Perhaps the most prominent example is the work the family did to get Uncle Bill elected Lamar County Superintendent while he was still overseas in Japan during World War II. The following is an excerpt from a letter he wrote to The Paris News thanking constituents for their votes:

Further I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and thanks for your consideration and support given me in the election. My thanks are offered to my friends who worked on my behalf and also to the public for their courteous attitude toward members of my family and relatives who were in charge of the campaign in my absence. (Wooldridge, 1946)

While this is the most public example of the family helping family, the participants spoke a great deal about how education was always a topic of conversation when they got together and how they tried to help each other along the way. Interestingly, among the four sisters they split themselves into pairs. Aunt Stella described her working relationship with Aunt Lonnie:

Oh everything. (laughs) What the kids would get into and what would work with this kid and what would work for the other kid. You know if she found out that something would work she would pass it on to me and the same way I would do that for her. Oh yeah, then Lonetha came along and she taught kindergarten and we really did have a lot in common. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Aunt Lonnie echoed Aunt Stella's words:

When we went home, when we went to Granny's, that was all we talked about. She and I always shared because I gave her my student teaching book that I had done at Commerce and she used it teaching her third grade forever and then when I got into kindergarten we had materials in Port Neches that Bill said his school couldn't afford to buy and I shared with her. (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

Aunt Wanda and Nanny (Vivian) shared a similar relationship:

Oh yes we did. Did you ever know teachers to get together that we didn't talk about school? I mean you just do. In fact after Lonnie started I would send her ideas and things up until she had established her own things. Stella was not as much help I think to me as Vivian was. Vivian would answer my questions and things and help me. Vivian was a big help to me. There is always talk. You think you're not going to. "Oh it's a holiday, let's not talk about this," but you can't help it. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

I did not discover this split until well into the writing process, but I do find it very interesting. I suspect, just as there was a difference in the level of credit participants gave to Granny and Granddad for the influence on personal education, the difference here has something to do with the temperaments of the sisters and the way they preferred to receive and deliver information.

Regardless of the reason, it is a positive outcome as each sister felt they had a trusted family member to work with and support them.

Aunt Wanda remembers PawPaw and Uncle Bill pairing off as well to discuss the administrative issue of the day:

You know when Jack and Billy were both superintendents I can remember at Christmas or Mother's Day or Thanksgiving or anything where we would all be over at Mother and Daddy's house they would be off somewhere discussing their building plans and stuff for their schools. Yeah, you just can't help it. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

The discussion was not always in isolation between one or two people of like job function and the teachers of the family were not in the least bit intimidated by the administrators. Mom recalled a story where this was the case:

Well yeah! I mean anytime you put teachers together what do they talk about? They talk about school. They talk about what's happening. I can remember back when we started Career Ladder stuff and the superintendents, my Uncle Bill, was talking about going in to the schools and evaluating teachers. My Mom said, "You mean you can go into a first grade classroom and you can tell if they are doing what they are supposed to be doing? How do you know about teaching first grade?" He goes, "Well I went to training." She goes, "For a day?" and he said, "For a day and a half." She said, "Well that makes you an expert doesn't it!" (laughs) Of course he just laughed at her. He was messing with her too. (laughs) You just, whatever is new in education you're talking about that. You're talking about kids that you used to have. Then somebody will say something that will remind you of something and you will talk about that. You know you grump and you

gripe about things you don't like and you laugh and talk about things that are funny and things that went right. I don't know, it's just what you do. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Jason talked about how the passion for talking education has not changed and how the subject dominates the conversation, sometimes to the exclusion of those that are not teachers:

The conversation between you, me, and Mom...always centers around education. When we would go out to eat as a family with our spouses we just kind of ran the table and everyone else just kind of felt like they were left out of it. It wasn't like we had to talk about it, but it was all we wanted to talk about. It was our desire and passion. Once you told one story it just led to another one and another one. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Colleagues – Learning & Relationships

The reason I found the family's education discussions so interesting is because it is an extension of the positive and supportive collegial relationships teachers must have at school to be effective teachers. The participants spoke about the importance of these relationships. Mom spoke to her strong belief in this philosophy:

You make a lot of good friendships at school because you are all in the same boat and if you don't have good friends there I don't think you can make it as a teacher. I think that the people who don't build friendships at school probably don't stay in teaching very long. If they do they are probably extremely unhappy and not very good teachers. You need that comradeship to get past the issues of the day. You need somebody to talk to and eventually you become close enough that you start sharing your personal issues too so

they become that person that you go to when you don't have anybody else to go to.

(Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Aunt Lonnie described her relationship with one of her colleagues, "Well I used to work with a lady, and her name was Eva Walker. We used to say we were partners in crime. We taught first grade together. We worked well together, real well" (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009). Linda described a similar close relationship with her team, "I am in a unique situation. There are five of us that teach third grade at my school and we are like sisters. We get along so well other grades laugh and they say we breathe in unison" (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008). Only Aunt Stella, wife of a superintendent, described a situation in which it was hard to make close friends among colleagues:

Yeah, but you know you don't make close friends. They always think of you knowing too much that is inside, so, I didn't... No, my best friends have never been teachers. They're friends now you know, but there's a stigma I think to being a superintendent's wife.

(Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Ever the teacher, Aunt Stella found a mentoring way to satisfy the need of camaraderie:

They were good teachers. When I taught there was a lot of good teachers. In fact four of us get together and eat lunch about once every six months and two of them are still teaching. They are younger. They were my student teachers. I taught them what I wanted them to know and they did it. (laughs) (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

The participants not only mentored younger teachers, but the close relationships they shared with their colleagues benefitted them a great deal as well. They have been able to learn

from those they work most closely with. Jason described how his fellow life skills teacher mentored him early in his career:

Michelle, the other teacher, who had several years of experience, helped me focus on what I needed to pay attention to and not focus on all of the small stuff that I was worried about. She helped me by telling me, “OK you need to set up this program for this, and watch for this when you do this.” She let me know that the other stuff would come. Anytime that I was worrying about how we were going to deal with this many kids in this amount of time or what are we going to teach, she was always there to help come up with some great ideas. Once I could sit down with her for just a few minutes it just relieved my mind and allowed me to relax enough to where we were able to get through it and move on to the next crisis. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Lana spoke about how she and one of her colleagues brought different strengths to the table and worked together to create the best instruction for their students:

He came in and had the knowledge of how to align things for GT, Pre-AP, Spec Ed. He really coordinated all the tests because it was new curriculum for him as well as for me. I came fresh out of college with all of these activities. I brought in the interactive notebook. I came in with all of these classroom ideas where as I really had no idea how to make out a test. He had the testing aspect of it. I had the in-class ideas, that weren't worksheets that I could pull from a reference book. We just meshed well because we were both in the same predicament of, I have no clue, you have no clue. Let's do it together. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Much of what the participants said they learned, they learned through observing their colleagues. As Lana learned from her favorite professor, “Teachers are the best borrowers, beggars, and stealers you will ever find” (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008). Pat, who started out as a middle school band director, had to import her mentors:

I had to take kids to contest right off the first year I was there. That was a new world for me. That was really scary and I didn’t do that great to begin with. Finally, I started asking the men that were at the high school and the other junior highs to come over and they would come in and work my band. They didn’t know it, but I was taking notes over what they were doing and the minute they left I kept on doing what they were doing until finally I began to learn what I had to do to have a successful program. I have to give them all the credit because they flat taught me what I know about that. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Even for an experienced teacher, a change in assignment can send them back to the drawing board. As Aunt Jan stated watching and learning from colleagues can help put them back on track:

Oh, yeah. I mean when I had to go back to second grade this year it was like starting over. I mean it wasn’t like it was when I left. It was a whole different curriculum. I mean, Reading First (rolls her eyes) I had no idea... Nobody has sent me off to train me so it was just kind of like, “Here’s the book. Here’s the room. There’s your kids. Knock yourself out.” So I had to go and just do some observing in other classrooms just to see what’s going on. It ain’t no big deal (giggles). It isn’t! It isn’t a big deal. It’s pretty much reading like I’ve taught for twenty-eight years. (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

The participants not only learn curriculum and instructional techniques from their colleagues, but at times they also learned lessons about how to deal, and form relationships, with kids. Jason had a hard time adjusting from Life Skills students to teaching general education math:

She has helped me to realize that I need to relax a little bit and realize that it is not all about math and academics with the general ed. kids. I've always had patience with my special ed. kids, but it was a hard switch over to the general ed. because I knew the kids could do the work and it aggravated me so much that they had the ability, but didn't care whereas the sped kids who do not have the ability will work so hard just to do the smallest thing. I had to get over my aggravation and pride and realize that they actually had other stuff going on at home and even at school, that they were trying to deal with. Sometimes it was the same stuff that I dealt with, but I was completely ignoring it or had forgotten about it. Sometimes it's not just about getting their homework done. Sometimes it is about sitting down with that kid and finding out why they didn't get their homework done... I've realized that it is not just about the academics, but about relating to the kids and helping to grow up and be better people in real life. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Chuck learned important lessons from watching one of his colleagues deal with students. The philosophy fit well with his personality and beliefs and helped him to form relationships with the toughest of students:

We always called her Saint Vickie because she could find something good in a kid the rest of us wanted to ring the neck of. I guess just to learn no matter how bad that kid is there is something there if you just work with the kid. If you just say something positive

everyday even if it's just some little something, "Hey I appreciate you getting that out." "Hey good to see you this morning, what's going on?" "Thanks for doing that for me." I've never really had a kid that you couldn't deal with. I think that's one of the things I really learned from her, awesome teacher. It was a bad day when she retired. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Relationships – Students

The participants discussed both the short-term and long-term importance of forming relationships with students. Chuck summed up the far reaching effects of being a positive influence:

You think in twenty years you probably have influenced three thousand kids, but if you do it in a positive manner that spreads beyond just them. How you dealt with children may affect the lives of four or five times that number of people ultimately, just in that one generation. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2009)

When I asked participants about relationships with students many of them recalled a specific student or group of students. Many times they labeled these students as 'favorites'. The great majority of the time these were students that struggled academically, socially, emotionally, and/or physically. Aunt Lonnie stated, "I'll tell you this Sean. Most of the time you don't remember your really smart kids, you remember those that you have to put beside you." (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009). Mom described one of her favorite students:

The little boy that I had the last two years was such a little animal that he ate with his hands. We had to start from scratch on everything like how to eat in public. If he wanted in line he would just go knock somebody over. It was just because nobody had ever told

him. I had to say to him, “Why don’t you try this. Why don’t you say, ‘Excuse me? This is my place. Do you mind?’” So he practiced and the first time he tried it, it worked. He came running up, “It worked! It worked! It worked!” It is funny things like that that I remember. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Linda described the importance of forming a relationship with not only the student, but their family in her story about a young boy from Taiwan that she had for a total four years as an ESL teacher and as a general education third grade teacher:

He is a sweet boy, but he came and he knew not a word of English. The only thing he knew was he would do this (hand motion showing pounding on keys and then holding hands in the shape of a box, repeat) and say, “puter, puter.” He wanted to play on the computer. Just to watch him go from not knowing a word of English to I just saw him a few days ago and he’s telling me he’s reading Twilight and it’s a good book and he’s enjoying it, and I should read it. He’s speaking in complete and full sentences. It’s just to me that was my baby. It’s like I watched him grow up. He had fallen and broken his arm and had to have surgery to have the bone reset. In the hospital I went to go see him, and then afterwards when he was at home, I went to his house. Then his dad came up to the school while he was recovering and he comes to me and he brings me a paper... I read it and they (the doctors) were trying to set up an appointment with him and he did not speak English and still does not speak English. So I called and arranged for the appointment for them to go. Then he didn’t know where it was at so I went and showed him where it was at so he would be able to bring him. They didn’t really have very much and I ended up probably clothing him for several years. At the time he was probably about Nathan’s size so as Nathan outgrew (something) I gave him that. I think the only thing I didn’t buy him

was shoes... We gave him coats and all. It's just rewarding to see that child go and to see that family be so grateful for the help. Still I'll see them out and the man comes and tries to speak. When we would have meetings the dad would be there. We would get an interpreter and finally she stopped interpreting and said, "All he says is whatever Mrs. Minshew says is what he wants to do." I said, "OK, that's easy enough." At that point he was in third grade and he knew me. He knew there was nothing I was going to do that wasn't for the good of that child. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

The student in Linda's story had an uphill climb ahead of him. He and his family had a language barrier and he was extremely poor. He did however have a supportive family who was willing to work with Linda and the school. Many students, like the one in Jason's story, do not have this advantage:

I guess my first year at White Oak I had the biggest challenge of a student who both of his parents had left and he was being raised by his grandparents. I think the only male influence in his life, his grandfather, had died the year before. Since then he had just been raised by his grandmother who was about 61-62. He was doing everything in his power to rebel against everything. He was a genius, he was a smart kid. He got asked to leave advanced classes because he didn't see the point in showing work because it was too easy for him. I think that when I started working with that kid it made a difference, even though we butted heads all the time. He still comes up to me when I see him outside and he wants to talk to me. He seems to be excited. As cool as he is trying to be and putting up a front in front of everyone else he can't hide the fact that he is excited to see someone he looks up to. Things like that where you make a difference for a kid who didn't have that influence before. (Personal Interview, November, 25, 2008)

Chuck was the most outwardly emotional about helping those students without home support. During his interview we were trading stories about things we had done for kids from poor circumstances. The stories included actions like taking them home or buying a ballplayer dinner before a game. There are regulations and sometimes laws against actions like these. When it seemed we were both ready to move on, I began to ask Chuck a question on another subject when he interrupted me. With a great deal of emotion while pointing his finger at me he said:

Let me go back to your previous statement there about taking kids home. I tell you what I have never ever let the dad gum law of the land influence me from doing what's right and I'll never change that! That may get me fired someday, but I'll just have to live with that.

(Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Student Take Away

When designing the questions for the interview I wrote the question: If you had to pick the most important thing you wanted every student to leave your room with at the end of the year what would it be? When I wrote this question I think I wrote it from the viewpoint of a principal interviewing a potential teacher. I was trying to see how knowledgeable they were about their curriculum. I wanted to know if my family really knew their stuff about what they were teaching.

I obviously did not get curriculum type answers as it is now a subsection under Relationships – Students. During the first couple of interviews I listened carefully to their answers and then rephrased the question to get the type of answer I was looking for. The new question was very explicit and direct in its reference to curriculum. The participants would skillfully describe what they were supposed to teach and then veer off down the same rode the first two participants had gone down. Finally, after transcribing several interviews I realized that they were trying to communicate something much more important than anything the TEKS had

to offer. I went back to asking the question in its original form to see if the same type of answers were given. I was not disappointed. I have simply listed them as I believe they speak for themselves and do not need any commentary from me. I have started with the two that most resemble the answers I was originally looking for so the reader can see just how far off the mark I was:

I wanted them to have progressed from where they were when they came in on their instrument... I always wanted kids to mature in their ability, to become better than they were when they came to me. (Pat Carmack, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Love of learning. That would be to read, to like to read and to be interested in reading. Once they've gotten the love of reading in, they will be able to accomplish whatever they want. (Linda Minshew, Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Success. Success is using your strengths to take care of your weaknesses. (Vicki Summers, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Confidence. A little self-esteem. (Aunt Wanda, Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

I think more than anything self-esteem...to feel that they could do something with their lives. If their dad was in jail they didn't have to follow in that footsteps. They could go on and get an education. (Aunt Lonnie, Personal Interview, March 6, 2009)

I hope they leave with the idea that I really care about them. (Chuck Minshew, Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

I hope what they realize first of all is that they can do it if they try. I also hope they realize that whatever they put into it, they will reap that. (Jason Scott, Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

A love of learning and a confidence in their ability to do what they are willing to work to do. (Mom, Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

That if you try, you are not going to fail, that if you at least give it a chance and do something it can have a positive outcome. (Lana Minshew, Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Greatest Accomplishment

In this section I will discuss the participants' answers to questions concerning their greatest accomplishments in both education and life. Strong corollaries exist between the two and the central theme remains centered around relationships.

Education

Seven of the twelve participants' answers start out with the phrase "I don't know." Obviously, they have not spent a great deal of time pondering their legacy. They are in a servant's profession and if a servant spends too much time thinking about how great they are, I would imagine they would lose their ability to be a very good servant. Even so, some of the answers were surprisingly humble. Aunt Jan stated, "Well you know I've never really done anything fantastic. I've just taught. I don't know. I really don't know" (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). Pat spoke to the reciprocal relationship of serving others:

I don't really know how to answer that question, but I appreciated the opportunities I had to be in the classroom. They were always very satisfying to me. Overall I felt like I was very blessed by that rather than the students being blessed by me working with them.

(Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Most of the participants simply spoke about helping students. Vicki was the most specific in her answer. She was very proud of a program she had written to educate one hundred and twenty-five medically fragile children that had previously been enrolled in little more than a babysitting program:

We did some research and came up with an idea called a multi-sensory approach with these children. From that we won a Promising Practice Award for two years in a row from the Texas Education Agency. It was wonderful and the people that come to see our program at Gladewater are astounded. They would come and leave with big tears running down their faces because these kids were learning. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Mom and Aunt Wanda spoke about the immediate help they were able to provide students in the classroom. Aunt Wanda stated, "I don't know. I really don't know. I'm just really proud of helping some child, I mean, I know there were children that I helped that would never had done if I hadn't of been in their life" (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009). Mom downplayed the importance of extrinsic rewards:

Well you get awards every once in a while, but that's not what, you know I like those things, but that's not an accomplishment as far as I am concerned. I think it's individual kids that you make successes with, that you feel like you had a little bit to do with them

turning it around, heading them in the right direction. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Aunt Stella and Chuck spoke to the long-term effect they were able to have on students.

Aunt Stella stated:

I don't know. I'm just so proud of the kids when I see them and how they've done and I get a hug from them and they'll say, "What are you doing?" and all that type of stuff. Everyday almost I meet somebody that I've taught. They're always so glad to see me. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Chuck felt a certain amount of pride in his students coming back to the community to become teachers themselves:

Shoot I don't know. Just how many of my students have become teachers is kind of interesting. I mean I've got four of my former students working with me and I've got a fifth one that is going to be taking over in January for a teacher that is going out on pregnancy leave. That's kind of interesting to see these kids that were little sixth graders come back and there must be two dozen across the district. One of the guys being considered for our new head coach, I remember when his feet didn't touch the ground when he was in the sixth grade and he sat in the chair. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Life

This is the simplest and shortest of all the sections. Every single participant who had children stated that their biggest life accomplishment was their children. All of the responses

emphasized the importance of family on the success of the children. Jason's answer was representative of the other participants:

Raising my son definitely. Twenty-five and having a kid, even though that is older than most people having a kid, I didn't think I was ready. It has just come really natural for me. It is just like back in psychology class when they were teaching us how to deal with a student. To me it was just common sense because that is how our Mom dealt with us. I never did have to study in that class. It is the same way with this. I don't have to study to be a Dad, it is already built in... I know it is built into him already, just to see what he can already do at the age of three. He's higher than the other kids and the respect that he has for adults just amazes me. I guess I take a little bit of credit for that. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Lana is just starting out in her career and does not yet have children of her own. Still, her accomplishment centered around family, specifically making her parents proud:

I think that making them proud is a good accomplishment. They get to go to all of their friends and be like, 'This is my daughter. She is already teaching and she has her own place. Here is our son Nathan. He has a full scholarship.' (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Finding 4: Doing It All Over Again

Eleven of the twelve participants stated that they would enter the field of education again given the opportunity to live their life over. When asked if they would still enter education if they had been raised in different circumstances, such as gender, family, time in history, the number changed drastically to only half of the participants saying for sure they would enter

education. This lends strong credence to the role the family and feminization played in the participants entering the field.

Do Over – Same Circumstances

Perhaps the true measure of whether it was all worth it, whether the positives outweighed the negatives, is to ask whether or not a person would live the same life again. In this instance I asked the participants whether or not, given the opportunity to live their life over, they would enter the field of education again. Eleven of the twelve said they were glad they became educators and they would do it again given the opportunity. Aunt Stella's answer was short and to the point, "Yeah, I'd still be one!" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Aunt Wanda elaborated only slightly, "With the same circumstances and family, yeah!" (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009). For the sisters the answer was an easy one. Granny and Granddad specifically brought them up to be teachers. With limited exposure to any field other than agriculture and based on previously presented evidence that they loved teaching, this was an easy question for them to answer.

When talking to the following generations all but Aunt Jan said they would become a teacher again. Aunt Jan stated, "Probably not. I'd probably go into something that had to do with business. I don't know. I really don't know. I'm fifty years old and I can't tell you what I really want to be when I grow up. Retired (laughs)" (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). Those that would be a teacher again gave more detail and justification to their answers than the first sisters. Linda expressed her disappointment that education was not her first career choice, "I know this. If I was to do it all again, I would have gotten my education certification the first time I was in college" (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008). Vicki cited her love of children, "Probably. Oh, I love kids. There is a reason anyone who goes into education goes. Even the worst teachers

I have ever seen, there is that little spark of ‘I like kids’” (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Jason just loves working with students in a classroom setting, “Every once in a while I consider, or think about being a counselor, but then I think I would miss the classroom too much. I love working with the kids. Other than an educator I don’t know what I would do” (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008). Finally, Mom invokes the rewards of the profession and family consideration as her reasons:

Probably, yes I feel sure I would. I feel sure I would! It’s very rewarding in many areas and it allowed me to be with my own children as well as a parent which was very important to me. I don’t know I just loved it. That’s what I do. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Do Over – Different Circumstances

When asked if they felt they would have still been educators under different circumstances such as gender, historical era, family, or geographical area the answers became a little more complicated for some. While no one dismissed the possibility, only half of the participants committed fully to saying they would have been educators again. Ironically, one of those that did say she would go into education again under different circumstances was Aunt Jan who was the only participant that said under the same circumstances she would not have been an educator again. “Probably if I had been a guy I probably would have been coaching or something. That sounds like it would be (pause) I would enjoy that. I mean I could have done that anyway, but I didn’t (laughs) (Personal Interview, March 17, 2009). Mom also felt that she would have still been a teacher:

I would probably still go with the education, yeah. There are some other things that I thought would be interesting to try and I may still do that, but I’m pretty sure that is what

I would have done. That's what, like I said, I loved it. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

Chuck felt that, though the family had a huge influence on who he is and his exposure to education through the family left him open to the idea, he became an educator because of unforeseen circumstances:

I don't know. That was a happy accident. I certainly never planned to. I had been in the military and got out and went to college with the intent of going back. My ambition was to be a soldier. After ten years of service, I let a head hunter talk me into leaving it and take a position as a superintendent with a construction company only to have the company go bankrupt in the savings and loan scandal that took place back in eighty three or eighty four. I had to do something after getting pink slipped and I started substitute teaching. I got a long-term teaching position because someone was hospitalized. I was teaching biology in high school and I thought, 'Well this is great!' I mean that was the first time it struck me how much I enjoyed doing that sort of thing was when I was doing that substitute teaching. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Aunt Wanda felt that without her family's focus on being educators she would have gone down a different route:

You know I don't know because when I was growing up that wasn't my thing. I was going to be a nurse. When we played I was always the nurse and took care of everybody and all that. But, then when I started to college I guess was when I first knew for sure because Daddy said, "Make up your mind what you want to do. You don't want to waste your time with your curriculum. So make up your mind. Take the right courses." Of

course Stella and Vivian had already set the table for us too. (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009)

Advice to Family

The final way in which to measure the participant's feelings about entering the field of education was to inquire about the advice they would give their loved ones about entering the field. As was stated earlier in the section on the importance of personal education, only Aunt Jan fully advised her children against entering the field by going so far as to tell them she would not pay for their college education if they went to college to become teachers. While all other participants said they would advise their children to enter the field, only the sisters and Chuck gave unqualified yeses. Aunt Stella stated, "I'd say go for it... Teaching is a nice clean job for kids to go into. Bill and I, we had a good life and we wanted our kids to have a good life" (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Aunt Lonnie, whose son Chuck, daughter-in-law Linda, and granddaughter Lana are participants in this study said of her other children and grandchildren, "Oh, I've tried to get them all into it." Finally, Chuck said of his college age son, "We've already had this discussion. He had said something at one point in high school about being a coach. I said, 'fine if that is what you want to do you go right ahead.'... I would encourage him in that." (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008).

Pat's response was the next closest to an unqualified yes, but still issued a warning:

My advice would be to make sure it is what you are supposed to do because I think that the best teachers are the ones that love kids and do it because they feel a calling. Once they found that answer I would say don't let your coattail hit your backside, get on with it, keep going, get moving! Don't let anything stop you because if that is the right answer for you, God will prepare you, he'll make a way for you to do the things that you need to

do. You will never have the life of a rich person and you don't need to go into it thinking that you will. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Most of the cautions came from concerns for their children and grandchildren's financial wellbeing. This topic was discussed in detail in the subsection 'Money'. Mom's answer was representative of the other participants:

I tell them to do what they want with their lives and how they're led, but I also tell them the good and the bad about it. However, I worry about them going into that profession because I know it is a lot of work and a lot of stress, and the pay is not what it should be and I worry, especially them being men, that they will not be able to support their families. Like I said, it's a hard profession. It's really a hard life if you are depending on that as your only source of livelihood. As far as time and money, it's difficult. I kind of hoped they would show aspirations in other more lucrative, more easy on them, professions, but I'm proud of what they are and what they've done. It's not that I didn't want them to be teachers, it's just that I thought their lives would be easier if they went a different direction, but I'm very proud of what they do. I know they are all good at what they do. All three of them decided to do some form of education, even Nick even though he is not a teacher per say, what he does (youth minister) is educate. (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009)

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Reflections

He would have my utmost respect, more than if he became a doctor or something. While a doctor can fix somebody, a teacher can change somebody and teach them to fix somebody.
(Jason Scott, Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

The opening quote to this chapter came from my brother Jason during the first interview I conducted for this project. He made this statement toward the end of the interview in reference to whether or not he would advise his then three year old son Caleb to enter the field of education. Jason was in the midst of the toughest period of his life. Soon after moving from Burleson to a small East Texas town to be near his wife's family, a move that cost Jason nearly twenty thousand dollars a year in salary, his wife decided that she did not wish to be married any longer. After nearly a year of trying to get her to work it out, Jason had recently relented and agreed to the divorce. Due to his son's age he was looking forward to at least fifteen years of the state minimum salary schedule before he could move back to the Metroplex where teacher salaries are considerably more competitive. His only friends in the area were family members of his wife. To make ends meet he had been working after school and on weekends for her father. Jason was unsure of how those relationships would hold up given the circumstances. Even so Jason stated that if Caleb really wanted to teach he would advise and have the utmost respect for his son being a teacher:

I'd tell him that I respect it, but I'll remind him of what he went through growing up with Daddy's money, regardless of what Mommy's money may buy. I'll remind him of the hard times and ask him if it's worth it? I would tell him that if this is really what you want to do then I respect it and back it. To me it is not worth the money to go into a business, or something, that you are not going to enjoy. If the drive and desire is there to

be a teacher then I will still warn him about all of the heartache he is going to suffer, not just financially, dealing with a system that sometimes doesn't seem to want to work to actually teach the kids. It has become more of a business than a teaching tool. I would let him know about that, but also that he would have my utmost respect, more than if he became a doctor or something. While a doctor can fix somebody, a teacher can change somebody and teach them to fix somebody. I would have huge respect for him, but I would worry about him financially and the stress he would have to go through dealing with it. I would even be concerned, depending on where he chose to work, for his physical safety. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

During the interview this quote caught my attention because of the circumstances and struggles that I knew surrounded Jason's life at the time. As I transcribed Jason's interview it began to grow on me even more and by the time I began the coding process I had put this quote to the side and marked it "Ultimate Quote." From this point on I knew I was doing the right project.

Nieto (2005) wrote:

Something besides romantic notions of teaching is also at work here. Teachers enter the profession because they also benefit from teaching. Forget conventional notions of teachers as saviors or miracle workers: If it were not also deeply rewarding, if it were only hard work and sacrifice and selfless - at times, even agonizingly difficult work - if they did not get something back from teaching, people would not teach. (p. 167)

I believe that, as Nieto stated, we do get something back from teaching. Many times this 'something' has to come in great quantities to outweigh the struggles and the heartbreak that the profession brings with it. After hearing Jason's quote, and several more as I continued the

interviews, I was able to see that though coming from different perspectives the participants were basically saying, ‘There are good sides and bad sides. We will never be rich. Some of us, depending on our spouse’s profession, will be poor. Our students will break our hearts and they will fill them back up again. In the end it is worth it. In the end it is who we are.’ This is close to what I had expected, though to be truthful, even after almost ten years in education, I personally am an optimist. I always believe a situation is going to work out with a student until it actually does not. Sometimes I feel like this saves a few more and other times I feel like it just brings more heartache. Right now the few more are worth the heartache and I pray it stays that way.

As I wrote, Jason’s quote convinced me that I was doing the right project. In the quote he talks about himself, his feelings, his view of education, the system, and his desires for his son. This is a different type of conversation than the family education conversations I grew up with and now participate in. The normal family education conversation is projected onto the progress, the heartbreak, the funny story, or method used to assist in the success of the student. The conversation almost never turns toward personal reflection of how it made the storyteller feel or changed their way of thinking. We are practitioners. We take ourselves and our feelings out of it. When I first started out at Eastern Hills High school I actually had the philosophy of, ‘Your problems are not important between the hours of eight and four unless you are under the age of eighteen.’ This is ridiculous of course. While, as educators, we do need to be able to focus on helping our students everything we bring from the outside affects our interaction, and ultimately our success with the students.

As a family we seem to operate under the assumption that we are called to action, not reflection. To this day my favorite Bible verses are James 2:14-18.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. (p. 938)

Not only is this verse an indication of my Methodist upbringing it envelopes the family’s collective philosophy. We are there to ‘act’ in a way that will help the students. As Chuck said in reference to doing what is necessary to help a student, “I tell you what I have never ever let the dad gum law of the land influence me from doing what’s right and I’ll never change that!” (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008).

Taking the Bible analogy a step further to the story of Jesus visiting the home of the Lazarus’ sisters Mary and Martha, we are a family of Martha’s. Our instinct is serve our students by taking action. We take little time to sit, listen, and be replenished as Mary did. I am not bragging or even necessarily proud of this fact. As you read the story of Mary and Martha, Jesus rebukes Martha when she complains to Jesus that her sister is not assisting in preparing the meal. He said that they had a choice to make between working and being replenished, sitting and listening at the foot of the Lord. Jesus said that Mary has chosen wisely and that, while He would soon be gone, the work would be there later. This project gave me, and hopefully some of the participants, a chance to reflect, a time to consider how our lives are impacting our work and our work is impacting our lives.

Influences

Though for the most part the family has a common outlook on how we go about our jobs as educators it does not mean that we all view our influences in the same way. I have always been fascinated by history and my family's history in particular. Hanging on the walls in my home office are Granddad's baseball uniform and PawPaw's baseball glove and spikes. I have inventoried and kept up with both my grandfathers' artifacts from World War II and the World War I items from my paternal great-grandfather. Several years ago, I had copies of PawPaw's Master's Thesis, *My Experiences in World War II* put in hardcover for family members for Christmas. I have always found the stories and the history fascinating and looked for connections to how I live my life. While Chuck shares a common interest in history and finds motivation for his personal life from past generations, most of the participants' way of thinking seemed to fall more closely in line with my brother Jason. In talking about whether he would still be a teacher if he could do it all over again, he expresses that he views his family connections in a much tighter circle than I:

If Mom would have been (a teacher) then I think I still would have been. I don't put a lot of stock in the fact that my aunts and stuff are I guess. I never made the connection like you have, and other people have, to all of the family. The stuff that draws me to our family is our tight family, Mom and Dad and my brothers. I've never really felt the big connection to the rest of our family. It just came down straight from Nanny and PawPaw into our close family. If Mom was still a teacher I probably would have still felt the need or the desire to do it because of how she raised us, but I also know that from the bigger picture, she wouldn't have gotten there without her parents setting that in her and her grandparents doing the same thing. You can also see it in Aunt Jan and Aunt Debbie from

how they were raised. I think it is all connected; I just don't always look at the bigger picture. I don't look outside my peripheral; I just look at what I can see straight ahead.

What I have always seen straight ahead is just our family. (Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

Jason's answer did not disappoint me. As I said in the first chapter, I realize that I am a little different, or weird, in the way I view the world. It did demonstrate for me that, though the perspective and the influences might be different, the results were the same. In recalling her biggest influence to entering education Aunt Wanda stated, "Lonnie and I were talking about that and I said, 'You know, Daddy was my big influence actually.'...Lonetha was saying that Mother was more of her influence" (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009). If all of the participants perceived that their influences were coming from different family members, then the ideas and values that were being shared about personal education and entering education as a profession must have been extremely pervasive.

Educator – Definition

One perspective that was common among the participants was the role or definition of what an educator is. Lana, the youngest of the educators, summarized the participants' definition:

I think you're just there to help somebody to guide them along through their path, because you're just a small step. You only spend twelve years of your life in school and if you go on to get more education then you're making the first step to saying I want it for myself. The first years are, you have to, because the national government says, you will get an education. So we are there to help you get your education and help you make those steps from year to year and if we can get you to say, "I want to go to college" then we

helped you decide you want to learn for yourself, not for others. (Personal Interview, December 21, 2009)

This concept of continually trying to learn and better oneself is pervasive throughout the family starting with the family stories of Granny and Granddad working to educate themselves. This was reemphasized to me as I traveled to interview the family. Each house I entered was filled with bookshelf after bookshelf, books stacked on coffee tables, dressers, night stands, and in corners, and boxes. When questioned, few had just one book going. Everyone was in the middle of three or four. Their houses looked like my house. The support for this type of self-improvement transferred to the family stories about the topic of conversation always being education. Family members sought out advice so they could help their students and become better educators, but as Mom says the advice came about naturally instead of being forced:

I'd tell a story that happened and then they would tell a story of how they handled something a long time ago and you learned from the stories, but it was more anecdotal than them telling me what to do. If I went and asked, "What do I do about this?" I could get advice if they had any and they usually had something to say about everything so (laughs) I could get advice. (Personal Interview, March 3, 2009)

As I interviewed the participants I was able to see something else that we all shared. There was a great deal of pride in what the family had accomplished and in what we do for a living. In the methods chapter of this paper, I listed all of the ways I attempted to remain as objective as possible, but I also stated up front that there are certain aspects of this study where that is hard to do. The pride of the participants came both from what the family had accomplished and for the legacy they left behind. The legacy was based on the type of people they were. Pat described the legacy her father, Uncle Bill, left for her:

I think he was proud of what he did with the A.M. Aiken Bill (Gilmer-Aikin Act) that really revolutionized education in Texas back in the late forties and fifties. I think he was proud of that and I think he was proud of the buildings that he built. I think he would have been proud of the people that I meet. I run into people that knew him every once in a while and it is so gratifying to me that they say nice things about him and say what an influence he was in their life. I think that would be something that he would be very proud of also. I have great admiration for my father as my Dad and in the field of education. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

I have had similar experiences meeting people that knew PawPaw. I look a lot like he did and when visiting East Texas I have been stopped on several occasions and asked if I ‘knew Jack Hood’ or ‘are you Jack Hood’s grandson?’ Generally these meetings were followed by stories of how he had helped them or a family member. Knowing that someone you love has helped and meant a great deal to other people elicits a great deal of pride. Jason had a similar experience attending his high school reunion:

You aspire that when you retire people will still be telling stories about you. You aspire to have kids walk up to your children and say, “Oh you’re Mr. Scott’s son. He was my favorite teacher.” At my high school reunion I had a girl realize I was Mrs. Scott’s son and told me that she had Mom and now her daughter had her and that she was just the best teacher that her daughter could have had. She said that her daughter was not good at school and that Mom had just worked with her everyday and how loving she was.

(Personal Interview, November 25, 2008)

I think the image Jason conjures up with his words, “You aspire to have kids walk up to your children and say, ‘Oh you’re Mr. Scott’s son. He was my favorite teacher’” are a big part of

why I enjoy being an educator. It is true that when I got into education I did not have children, but I always knew I wanted to leave something behind that those that came after me could be proud of. Now that I have my daughter, Emma, the legacy I leave and the example I set becomes all the more real and important. She is behind every decision I make. It is funny how the instant you lay eyes on your newborn child you go from trying to make those that came before you proud, to being obsessed with making your child proud. Everything you once did without half a moment's consideration now brings with it a whole new set of consequences. Many of the daughters, Aunt Wanda, Aunt Fern, Mom, Aunt Jan, Pat, Vicki, and Lana all used phrases concerning their fathers like, "He would say, 'I'm disappointed' and I was on the floor" (Mom, Personal Interview, March 28, 2009). Now that I am a father of a beautiful little girl, I know that if that phrase were turned around and it was my daughter who was disappointed in her Daddy, it would do a lot more than knock me to the ground. Having Emma disappointed in me would absolutely destroy my world. I want to do things, be involved in things that will make her proud of me, make her proud to say, 'That's my Daddy.' I believe that, while it may be an annoyance in her teenage years, continuing to be an educator will do that. I know times have changed from when the family first entered education back in the early forties, but there is still honor in helping your fellow man, or child, get along through their life's journey.

Why So Many

The overarching question of this project is, "Why did such a disproportionate number of family members choose a career in public education?" I have attempted to answer this question by asking and discussing the four research questions, but I felt it would also be helpful to ask the participants directly what they thought. Responses and theories varied widely, but carried

common themes. I have chosen to allow the participants to answer, for all of us, in their own words. Chuck simply stated:

I don't know. It just seemed to be natural I guess. I couldn't tell you. I never planned to be a teacher... I really couldn't tell you any one thing why so many in this one family did. It's a good thing. They've all been really good at it in so many multifaceted ways."

(Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

Aunt Lonnie identified her parents and her older siblings as the source, "I felt like it started with her (Aunt Stella) and it was just a handed down thing. It's what I wanted to do because they had done it and Daddy expected us to do it that way too. You do what everybody else did" (Personal Interview, March 6, 2009). Aunt Wanda laughed about it being catching once it got started, "It's kind of like measles (laughs), it's contagious. You grow up hearing it and you can't get away from it!" (Personal Interview, February 16, 2009). "I think it probably did start from Granny and Granddad because I think they wanted good things for everyone. I think for them, perhaps, it was a way that you don't have to farm the rest of your life" (Vicki Summers, Personal Interview, December 14, 2008). Aunt Jan added that in order to get all of these young women started as professional educators, Granny had to be forward thinking. Unlike many parents of the day, Granny and Granddad were looking for more for their daughters than to simply marry them off to a trusted man to take care of them:

I don't think she did. I don't think she encouraged them to get married and settle for that. That's just my opinion. Nobody ever really told me that. I don't remember Mother ever saying that, but just think that. I think Granddaddy wanted his children to go to school.

(Aunt Jan, Personal Interview, March 17, 2009)

This is a progressive, forward thinking view even if Granny and Granddad were encouraging them to enter a female dominated, or feminine field. “Well as far as the four girls were concerned, like I said, back in that day and time there weren’t a lot of approved occupations for women. They either got married or they became a teacher or a nurse or a secretary” (Mom, Personal Interview, March 28, 2009).

Once the field of education got its foothold with the sisters it was able to keep ‘advancing’ because of their choice of husbands. “They married them. That’s right, you know out of the four sisters that were teachers three out of the four had husbands that were teachers” (Chuck Minshew, Personal Interview, December 20, 2008). Mom outlined exactly how this all started, “When my Aunt Stella met Uncle Bill he was already in education and then he introduced my father and kind of pushed my mother and father toward each other and my Dad was already in education” (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009). Now that the four sisters had their ‘allies’ in their husbands they were ready to heavily influence the coming generations, whether they meant to or not. The most commonly mentioned ways in which the participants felt they were influenced were watching their family members be invested, or ‘living it’, watching them enjoy it, and being taught to respect educators. “If you enjoy it I think you put that out that you enjoy it” (Aunt Lonnie, Personal Interview, March 6, 2009).

We have watched them enjoy their life, enjoy what they do, and get fulfillment out of it. I don’t think I’ve ever seen any of them say something bad about being in education. They all loved what they were doing... When you see the joy and the good that comes from it you want to be a part of it. (Linda Minshew, Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

“We were just taught to hold teachers up in a higher esteem than other professions. When you’re around it like we were it just becomes natural, it is built into you” (Jason Scott, Personal Interview, November 25, 2008).

Vicki felt like, though heavily influenced, choosing to go into education was still a personal choice:

I think everybody in that family, and maybe I’m tooting my own horn, is intelligent and independent thinkers. There are a lot of independent thinkers in our family and I think because of that we just all found our niche and perhaps it was supposed to be in education, perhaps in something else, but I think we chose it because it was the right thing to be. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Pat was one of the few who had pondered this question on her own and gave the most complex, and probably complete, answer of any of the participants:

That has always been sort of a mystery to me. I think it was the influence of my parents and that row of folks (siblings and spouses). Education was always good to them. It gave them jobs and a way to raise and support their families along with the opportunity to do something besides just make a living. I think they loved people. They believed in education. They believed it was a great stepping stone to improve your life. They wanted us to have a better life than they had and they pushed us, not pushed us, but encouraged us to go that way. (Personal Interview, December 14, 2008)

Personal Reflections

I have done my best to represent the thoughts of the participants and to be true to the findings of this study. Truth be told however, no single participant completely reflects the profile

presented above, including me. The reasons I chose a career in education are both simple and complex. I first wanted to be an educator when I was very, very young because my 'Partner', my hero, my PawPaw was. As much as I looked up to him, however, the admiration of a five year old is not deep enough to drive a way of life and 'education' is a way of life. I think many of the participants showed incredible insight when they spoke of watching family members enjoy their work. I agree, but for me, it was more than this. It was not like they came home happy from a day of working at the bank or the factory. It was more than just enjoying or being at home in the work they did. I was able to watch them, Mom mostly, live their work. I saw what she actually did and how she did it. I was able to see that her work aligned with the values she and my Dad were raising my brothers and me by. There was no disconnect there to confuse a six, ten, fifteen, or twenty year old. What was right at home was right at school.

During the MBA portion of my degree program I took a class on business ethics. The conversation would continually turn back to whether or not private ethics were appropriate, or even applicable, in the work place. There was always an accepted disconnect or understanding that they had to be separated if you were going to be 'successful'. I kept thinking of what a terrible conflict this must create within the souls of the people who had to make this decision to separate themselves at work from who they believed they truly were and who they prayed their children would become. I also pondered how long one could compartmentalize the two worlds before they started to bleed into one another. My assumption was that the bleeding would only leak in one direction. I am not saying that there are no ethically skewed or morally bankrupt educators. That fantasy was long ago shattered. I know there are those out there in education who have lost their way and perhaps some who never knew there was a path, but I have never heard a single argument from any educator that they could be more 'successful' by acting unethically.

The goals of our profession are simply different from those of most of the business world. Regardless of how many bonds we have up for passage, what state or federal standards say, or what curriculum is currently up for adoption, the standard for success is still simple: Can you, did you, make a difference in the life of that child right there? If someone doubts that is still the case I challenge them to do as I did in this project and sit down and talk to educators. The age of the participants in my study ranged from twenty-four to ninety years old and every one of them described their professional accomplishments in the same way, they were able to reach students that others may not have been able to reach.

As I grew older, my feelings and beliefs were continually reinforced. My extended family, my church, my teachers, and my Mom's educator friends valued and praised the same values, practices, and accomplishments that I was getting from home. This encouraged me to become more and more involved in teacher like activities as a young person. I enjoyed and was rewarded for playing the responsible big brother role whether I was at home with my two little brothers, at church in our youth group, coaching youth league basketball, or in organizations at school. In addition as I grew older, I began to hear others praising and being appreciative of what my Nanny, PawPaw, and Mom had done for them. People literally stopped to tell me stories about what they had done for them. It makes a huge and reinforcing impact in a young person when these people, who you have already been raised to love and respect unconditionally, are openly praised by outsiders for exhibiting the very attributes that they are working so hard to instill in you.

Finally, I do believe that I was called by God to be an educator. I also believe that God was much smarter than to call me without first preparing me to do His work. The life my family, and subsequently, I lived prepared me to hear his calling. There was no thought to buck or go

against what He was asking me to do. This does not make me any better a person, or even educator. We each walk the path and gather the life experiences He has set out of us so that we can better serve His purpose when the time comes.

This is the story of how my family and I became, and God willing will remain, educators. There were many players including teachers, church and community members, and friends, to which I would now like to pay homage, but I want to be clear that I feel that God, immediate family, and a set of previously chronicled values played the biggest role in each of our journeys. The order and proportion of the ingredients were not always the same, but the ingredients were all there just the same.

Hero List

This is perhaps the least traditional aspect of this admittedly non-traditional dissertation. It is also perhaps the most important and difficult section for me to write. I chose this topic to make better sense of who I was by exploring my family's involvement in the field of education. I also wrote this dissertation as a thank you to them, and others who have influenced me, for the incredible gift and legacy they have given me. Finally, I wrote this dissertation for any member of future generations who, like me, have a desire to look back at their past, warts and all, to gain better understanding. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all those who have helped me along my life path. I have been too blessed to create a complete list such as this. The people listed below include those that I believe have made a significant contribution to who I am as an educator. I know I will leave those deserving of 'recognition' out. There is no particular order and I am not a talented enough wordsmith to express my true and complete appreciation. Thank you for reading.

Educators and Friends

Tine Cregg – For working with me until I quit pronouncing the letters of the word C–A–T as three separate syllables and finally began blending them as a single word. You opened up the world to me by teaching me to read and helped start the journey that has led to this doctorate degree. During her interview Mom listed you as one of the best educators she ever worked with. She said about you, “She just loved her kids and she was very good at teaching them to read and trying all different ways and worked hard with them and taught them more than just education” (Personal Interview, March 28, 2009).

David Eder – For being my best friend since kindergarten. For allowing us to grow apart and grow closer together. For always encouraging, supporting, and holding us both to a higher standard. For calling me out when I am full of it and allowing me to do the same for you.

Brenda Johns – For showing me every day the teacher I wanted to be and allowing me to practice ten years before I got my ‘own’ class.

Team 106 – For providing the first real set of friends that might believe differently about things than I did. For challenging and pushing me and allowing me to challenge and push you. This will make three doctors and one lowly Kellogg MBA all out of one dorm apartment.

Carl Long – For helping me muster up the courage to enter the Masters program at nineteen and doing it with me. For being the ‘idea guy’ of our twosome. For knowing where I was coming from when others did not. For always being Carl regardless of the situation.

Kingswood United Methodist Church Family – For helping to raise my brothers and I with the same values as our parents. Everywhere we turned there was another set of parents with the same consistent and loving expectations (and the authority to enforce them).

St. Matthews Cumberland Presbyterian Church Family – For filling a void that I was not sure could be filled again. Thank you in advance for helping to raise Emma the way Kingswood helped raise me. For the support and prayers of my fellow Diaconate members throughout this program.

Michael Prewitt – For spending your career as the most passionate educator I know. For putting in a good word for me at an inner-city, poverty ridden high school so I could watch and learn from you how to help kids realize they are winners in the classroom, on the playing field, and in life. You have walked six years ahead of me my entire life setting a good example all along the way. For you and Stephani being Emma’s Godparents and allowing Courtney and I to be Maggie’s Godparents. We kind of love Emily too.

Randall Shepherd – I did not know you when I decided to be an educator or even when I became an educator, but you are the reason I do what I do. You are the success story that keeps an educator going for an entire career. I could not be more proud of you. Your accomplishments serving our country are incredible, but what makes me even more proud is the way you continue to fight to grow as a person. Few people have the courage to grow. You are going to be a wonderful father for Miss Audrey.

Dean Pritchett – For leading with dignity, respect, and as yourself in the toughest of situations. For always taking time for a young coach and his boys. You played a role in the success stories of some young men you do not even know about.

Dr. Mark Jackson – For giving a young, superficially confident, educator a chance to be a principal not once, but twice. For being a true instructional leader and insisting that my fellow

principals and I work to be the same. For being sure our learning does not end when we cross the stage and that we fulfill our mission to become lifelong learners.

Walter Johnson, Robert Metcalf, Mark Jones, Robert Harper, Michelle Wilson, Cretia Basham, Philo Waters, Vickie Overton, Pam Ehrich, Christy Strayhorn, Dr. Paul Uttley, Karen Sanders, Charlie Osborn, Tami Vardy, Kim Cantu, Mekasha Brown, Rich Darr, Lisa Schaub, Jennifer Culpepper, Jack Goleman, Robert Moorhead, Donna Click – For being mentors regardless of title. For your influence in keeping the focus on what is important, student success. For keeping me sane. For calming me down. For motivating me. For doing what you do for kids.

Frazier Elementary & Hughes Middle School Staff – For sharing the need and passion to make a difference in the lives of our students. For being open to my ‘leadership.’ For letting me come into your classrooms and learn from the best.

Dr. Dan Powell, Dr. Mike Sacken, Dr. Janet Kelly – For providing me the structure, and for forcing me to abandon structure, over the years to reflect on who I am as a person and as an educator. I do not know how good of an educator I am, but I do know I am better because of each of you. You are partially responsible for each student that I or my school reaches.

Family

Granny & Granddad & the Parson Family – For providing a legacy that gives meaning and purpose to what we do every day as educators. For creating a community, family, that understands who we are and yet remains open to where we are going. For always expecting more while accepting who we are. For collectively influencing us all to be educators regardless of the path of each individual.

Nanny – For being feisty, tough, unbending, and accepting. For kicking off your high heels everyday of your career during recess to play ball with your students. For continuing to love PawPaw and continuing to live. For our talks the last months of your life during which you made sure I understood that you do not have to be sure to be sure. Let God worry about the details.

PawPaw – For being my ‘Partner.’ For making me believe I was going to play shortstop for the Rangers or anything else I wanted to do. For believing in yourself. For teaching me how to treat and how to talk to people. For loving my Nanny. For starting a college savings account for me when I was born. For telling me you were disappointed in me when I was eight and lied to my parents even though you knew it would temporarily destroy my world. For pulling yourself out of the Great Depression, getting an education, and giving us opportunities. For volunteering to fight for your country in World War II after you were already a teacher and principal. For writing your Master’s Thesis. For being my hero.

MawMaw – For continuing to love Daddy Bee and continuing to live. For teaching me to never be afraid to start over. For not being afraid to learn new things regardless of age (you are the Facebook Queen). For being eternally optimistic.

Daddy Bee – For always working for your family. For showing me the importance of detail. For learning everyday of your life. For loving MawMaw. For loving, appreciating, studying, and working with God’s natural creations. For teaching others about it. For holding honesty above financial security and for having the faith to live out this lesson.

Mom – For absolutely, positively always being there for your boys. For showing me that women are strong, equal partners in the family and in the work place. For sharing your passion for children and exhibiting that passion through teaching. For not giving in when it came to choosing

between homework and practice. For pushing back dinner to practice/play with us. For raising us in the church. For loving Dad. For being Granny to Emma.

Dad – For struggling financially through a Bachelors and Masters Degree to provide my brothers and I with opportunities you never dreamed of. For showing me how to love my wife. For trying and learning new things, as an adult, because your boys were ‘into it’ and that allowed you to spend time with us. For being eternally optimistic. For admitting when you make a mistake. For crying occasionally in front of your boys. For raising us in the church. For being PopPop to Emma.

Jason – For being a better teacher than your big brother. There was no greater gift than when I came back to Burleson as an administrator to hear and personally see the impact you had made in the lives of your students and their families. I get the same pride out of listening to people talk about you as I did when they talked about Nanny, PawPaw, or Mama. For being Caleb’s Daddy. Every time you are in town I watch how you interact with Caleb to make sure I am doing OK with Emma.

Nick – For following your passion into the ministry. I am as proud of you as I possibly could be. I wish I understood your job as well as I do those in education. I promise to be big brother less and to listen more.

Courtney – For loving me no matter what I choose to do with my life. For loving me more for being an educator. For enduring the stories. For straightening me out when I get self-righteous. For supporting me as I spend ‘our time’ coaching, as an administrator, going to school, or at the church. For being a strong and equal partner in our marriage. For being the absolute love of my life. For giving us Emma and being the perfect Mommy for Emma.

Emma – For meaning everything. For giving me a reason to be a role model and to leave a legacy. For cheek kisses, neck hugs and chewing on my ear. For being my biggest motivation to get this Doctorate and greatest temptation to walk away and play with you. You are proof that God is great and He gives more than you even know to ask for. Your Mommy and I will always love you and be proud of you. We pray for your walk with Christ continuously.

Areas of Future Self-Reflection

Completing this project has allowed me to see where so many of the influences in my life originate. To be honest the realm that influences me is much wider than I thought when I first began. Since I have become an administrator I am more dependent on colleagues for influence than family as most of my family's experience is in the classroom. Fortunately, however, this teacher-heavy family is not afraid to remind me what it is like on the front lines and how the decisions I get to make by virtue of my position affect those doing the important work. As recently as last year a family member, Chuck, had a major influence on a decision I made as a principal. I had been named principal at Hughes Middle School that fall. Hughes had not had a change in leadership since 1992, sixteen years. Needless to say it took a while to gain the staff's trust and to prove to them that my motives concerning the school, its staff, and its students were pure. One of the major problems we had was overcrowding and large class sizes. We had maxed out the efforts of our current staff. I had been playing with the idea of the assistant principals and I taking on classes to lighten the load, but had not committed to doing so when we left for Christmas break because I was worried about being able to fulfill our normal job responsibilities. During my interview with Chuck over Christmas break he inadvertently reminded me of why, for many reasons, teaching the classes was a good idea.

You even look at your grandfather and Uncle Bill. Even when those guys were principals and superintendents they still taught classes. I remember at Annona, Uncle Jack he taught Calculus at the high school. Even though he was the school superintendent down there he went into the classroom. To me that was fascinating because in this day and age I don't see my principal sometimes for an entire week because, you know, he's off in meetings and I couldn't tell you the last time I saw a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, or somebody from administration. The idea back in those days (was) those people got into the classroom and still got to where the cutting edge is. (Personal Interview, December 20, 2008)

To be completely honest my motives, and probably those of PawPaw, were partially driven by necessity. The results for me, however, were amazing. Teaching the classes was something tangible and real that the assistant principals and I were able to do to have direct contact with kids and to show the staff that we were there and fighting with and for them. It really helped to turn things around garnering the trust and boosting the moral of the staff and gave me a clearer idea of the challenges that my staff and students were facing.

Growing up in my opinionated family of teachers also helped me to understand that teachers have real and valid input. As an administrator, I rarely make a decision in isolation. I've always viewed doing so as arrogant. I do not have the ability or the intelligence to decide what is best for all people at all times. My role is to facilitate the decision making process, put in the leg work on developing the processes by which we will carry out the results of our decision, and work to ensure buy-in and follow through from those few that might not agree with the group. I do not know if this is the right way to go about things, but in large part it is because I was brought up to respect the opinions of teachers that I function in this way.

This process was reinforced to me early on in my administrative career. I was an assistant principal at Frazier Elementary school and a team of three veteran first grade teachers, who each had more years of teaching experience than I had years of life experience, came to ask me if it would 'be alright' if they made an adjustment in their reading curriculum. They had solid reasoning and described exactly how the move would allow them to better serve our students. This process of 'asking permission' was what they were accustomed to. If I would have had a couple more years of experience, and a little more confidence, I probably would have burst out laughing at them. Instead I put on my best concerned and thoughtful face, asked them a couple of half-baked pedagogical questions and then gave them my 'blessing.' All I could think of while they were talking to me was how absurd this conversation was. Here they were with over a hundred years of experience teaching kids to read between them. They knew how to teach a kid to read better than they knew how to do anything else in the entire world and they were asking a twenty-six year old who had never spent two minutes of his life teaching a child to read if they were 'allowed' to try their idea out. I decided right there and then that the biggest goal of my entire administrative career would be to continue to work to avoid falling into the alluring trap of arrogance. Later, after becoming principal at Frazier, I brought up this early meeting to these three ladies one day in the teacher's lounge. They laughed and agreed with me that I was ill-equipped to make that decision, but stated that they were following the procedures of how 'it had always been.' They also wisely reminded me that it is not always easy on the teachers to function under my style of leadership. Some teachers see it as pushing the principal's work and decisions off on the teachers and that I would have to continue to work with the teachers to prove that I was in the trenches working beside them. To that I simply say thank you to PawPaw for setting the example and thank you to Chuck for reminding me of how important it is to continue to follow.

There is still a great deal I have to learn about the mechanics of being an administrator especially central office and the superintendent position. I think that being a superintendent is something I might like to do someday, but I am thirty-two years old and have three-quarters of my career ahead of me. To this point I have advanced quickly, but priorities and opportunities change and I do not yet know what God has in-store for me. I know now that I do not want to be a superintendent just because PawPaw was a superintendent. That is not what would make him or anyone else in my family proud. They will be proud if I find the position where I can best use the gifts God gave me to assist students along their life and educational journeys. I think that will make Emma proud as well, and if she is proud of Courtney and me, she might, like I have done, take the time to look back at her past to help guide her future.

I am inspired by the sacrifices made by those that came before me to get their education and to ensure that I had the opportunity to do the same. Their sacrifices were one of the great motivating factors of wanting to complete my doctorate. I am also hopeful, that in some small way, this effort will inspire my children or grandchildren to do the same. I am not so set on them getting a doctorate as I am ensuring they fulfill their potential and make sure they do not prematurely close any doors on their future or their children's future. As I stated, I have not yet completely decided if I would like to be a superintendent, but if this is the way that God sees fit to use me, I want to do all I can to assure I am ready. Lana was also inspired by the struggles of those that came before her. She would like to use this as motivation to both pursue her educational dreams and to see if she can gain insight into how to help students reach their full potential:

For me, I ultimately want to get my Ph.D. in educational psychology and study the individual person. I want to study how the mind works and how differentiated learning is used for different people and how people can come from the same background and one

person excels and the other one doesn't. Why? They were given the exact same amenities. They had the exact same teachers. If everything was the same for them why does one do better than the other? Why does someone who has everything, every obstacle imaginable in front of them and yet they hurdled it like it is nothing? They just do wonderful things. Then there are people who have it handed to them after having it handed to them, every gift you could think of and they pilfer it away. Why? Why would you do that? (Personal Interview, December 21, 2008)

Lana has a good start on a dissertation, and career, topic. This was one of the early topics I explored and a topic that haunts educators every day. Many of the participants talked about students closing off options at a young age. If I accomplish one thing in being awarded a doctorate, I hope it is to set an example to those that come after me that no doors are closed to them and that they can accomplish whatever they are willing to work for.

I know this project will not end my use of the interview transcripts. I may never sit down again and write another work of this size, though I do have interest in doing a straight family history or shorter individual biographies, but the process and ritual I have developed for this project has helped me to be more like Mary from the story of Mary and Martha. I am now better at sitting, listening, and reflecting. Thank you to my family for giving your lives to education and ensuring I have something worth listening to and reflecting on.

The Why of “What one family became when we grew up”

Primary Investigator: Sean Scott

Purpose of Study

The overarching question of this study is: why did such a disproportionate number of one family enter and make a career out of public education in the state of Texas. The assumption here is that there are common factors or root causes within this family that led to successful careers in education. This is not the first study to look at career choice, but it is hoped that it will be one of the few that looks in greater depth using qualitative research to move beyond the numbers to discover the whys. The study will be a qualitative study and consist specifically of interviews and review of family video, tapes, and artifacts.

Theoretical Background

Public schools in Texas, and around the country, continually struggle to find highly qualified educators to fill their classrooms. As a middle school principal, I see this scenario play out over and over again especially in the field of math and science. The problem is even more amplified in high school. The state has gone so far as to grant “Alternative” routes to certification to lessen the roadblocks for those who have not gone through a traditional university plan. In areas of high need, schools are even allowed to hire teachers who are not currently certified by the state.

This study looks at a family, my family, who has entered and made a career of education in disproportionate numbers. The goal is to find out why this is the case. What about their culture, beliefs, purpose, and opportunities drive them to pursue a career in education?

Significance of Study

The populations we as a country expect to be educated have grown steadily over time since the inception of compulsory public education. We have gone from a very narrow focus of educating “the few”, to equal access for all, to the current legislation of No Child Left Behind. All children are not only expected to finish primary school or the eighth grade, but are expected to graduate. If too many students fail to graduate schools are sanctioned by both the state and federal governments. Over time education has changed a great deal and it has been increasingly difficult to lure highly qualified professionals into the field. Still from generation to generation my family continues to enter and make a career in public education. The goal of this study is to find out why this is the case and to propose suggestions for the recruiting of new professionals to the field.

Perhaps just as significant to me I would like to take an introspective look and garner a greater understanding of who I am and why I make the decisions I make. I want to know what I do not know about myself. My hope is to use that information to inform my future actions and

decisions, both in my personal life and in my position as a public education administrator. I have become more and more steadfast in the belief that one must know themselves, or at least be continually and actively involved in the pursuit of this knowledge, to effectively help others find and create knowledge.

Research Design

The overarching objective of this research project is to identify the root reasons of why one family disproportionately enters and stays in the field of education. Research subjects will be family members who are public school educators in the state of Texas. Participants will be called and the research project explained. They must agree to participate in the study and also sign their Consent form. The study will take place around the state of Texas as I travel to interview participants. The interviews will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will take place outside of the traditional school day and in an agreed upon location. The interview questions asked to the participant will be very open ended. Much of the data will be gleaned from stories told by the participants. The interests and comfort of the participant will drive much of the interview. I will also be reviewing family artifacts, archives, and video tapes.

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The identities of the participants will be kept confidential, unless they grant permission to reveal their identity, through coding. All identifying information will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet. The participants will be allowed to withdraw from the project at anytime or choose not to answer any questions that are asked. The participant may also view all collected data concerning the participant in question and may choose to strike any or all of said data. The data will be analyzed for commonalities and patterns that present themselves and help to answer the overarching question of this study.

Work Plan

Tasks	Timeline
Secure participants: Contact family members and have them agree to be interviewed and to sign off on Consent forms.	October 15 - 31, 2008
Conduct all Interviews	October 15, 2008 – April 5, 2009
Transcribe all Interviews	October 15, 2008 – May 5, 2009
Review and Transcribe Family Artifacts, Archives, and Video Tapes	October 15, 2008 – June 1, 2009
Code and Sort all Data	June 1, 2009 – July 1, 2009
Write First Draft	July 1, 2009 – September 15, 2009
Revise and write Final Draft	September 31, 2009 – December 1, 2009
Dissertation Defense	Mid December 2009

Appendix B

Dear _____,

As you may or may not know I am enrolled in a dual program at Texas Christian University that allows me to complete a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) as well as a Doctorate in Educational Leadership (Ed.D) concurrently. By the grace of God, a little hard work, and a lot of understanding from Courtney I have finally completed all of the necessary coursework. It is now time for me to write my dissertation. This is the time when every Doc student realized that what they thought was a light at the end of the tunnel, is really a train! To be truthful though, while I find the enormity of the task to be more than a little daunting, I am excited to be at this stage and to have the opportunity to do a project of this type.

The working title of my dissertation is, The Why of "What one family became when we grew up". That's right, I have been able to convince TCU to let me look at our own family, to interview all those that are educators, to break down, analyze, and code the resulting transcripts, and finally to write a paper on why I think so many of us have been sucked in and trapped in this vortex of education (I guess I got a little of my Paw Paw's gift for schmoozing). I will get to take what I discover in the 'data' and compare it to other intergenerational family studies about career choice. I will also have to write about the research methods I chose to use and plenty of other marginally interesting stuff.

The part I am excited about will be the focus of the majority of the paper. That is our family history, particularly our family history in education, and how it has 'made me', and is still forming me, into the educator that I am today. Our family history in education was always a great source of pride to me growing up and is a big part of the reason why I went into education. All of my heroes (other than my own Dad) were teachers and most of them came from within our family. I think I know why I became an educator, but this study will help me look deeper. I want to know why you became an educator. I want to hear all of your great stories. I want to find out things that I never knew before and get them on paper so that future generations of our family can read about them. One of my most valued possessions is the book Paw Paw wrote to complete his master's program that chronicles his experiences in World War II. I have read it ten times minimum and have even planned a trip to Europe after I graduate with Mom, Dad, and Courtney to retrace his journey. I want to see what he saw, maybe get a better glimpse into what he felt. I would be honored if you would share your story with me so that future generations of our family can read about our collective story and maybe understand a little bit more about themselves.

I do need your help to make this happen. If it is alright I would like to come and record a video and audio interview with you. It should take about hour to an hour and a half. I will come to

you. I have attached a Consent form that I would need you to sign before I interview you. This is a form required, and approved, by the University to ensure that all research participants are protected. I will be happy to answer any questions that you have about the form or what I am trying to do with this study. I promise to honor the family by pouring everything I have into this project over the next year to year and a half.

I will contact you by phone in the next week or so to see if you have any questions and if you are alright with doing the interview. If you are, we can try and set up a time for me to come and see you. Thank you so much for reading and considering this.

Love,

Sean

Appendix C

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, Texas

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research: The Why of “What one family became when we grew up”

Funding Agency/Sponsor: None

Study Investigators:

Principal Investigator: Mr. Sean H. Scott, Ed.D Candidate

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of this study is to look at why a disproportionate number of one family entered into and remained in public education. It is hoped that Mr. Scott will not only gain a better understanding of himself through the interviewing of family members, but will also gain an understanding of what drives, or calls, people into the service of public education. It is also hoped that this information can be used to recruit and retain a greater number of highly qualified public educators.

How long am I expected to be in this study for and how much of my time is required?

The data gleaned from the interviews will be used throughout the time of the research, but one sixty to ninety minute interview will be all the time that is required from you.

How many people will participate in this study?

Participation in this study will be limited to fifteen to twenty members of the Principal Investigator’s family.

What is my involvement for participating in this study?

Your involvement will consist of one sixty to ninety minute interview discussing the circumstances and factors which led you to enter and remain in public education.

What are the risks of participating in this study?

There is a risk that during the course of the interview painful or sad memories could surface. Interviews can and will be terminated for this, or any other reason, at your request.

What are the benefits for participating in this study?

Any benefits associated with participating in this study are intrinsic. Studies and interviews of this type are often beneficial to the interviewees in helping them gain a better understanding of self.

There are no clear and tangible benefits to participating in this study.

What is an alternate procedure(s) that I can choose instead of participating in this study?

There is no alternate procedure to participating in this study.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

The researcher is fully committed to protecting your confidentiality. Mr. Scott's actions to protect your confidentiality include:

- Conducting all interviews after school hours and in a mutually agreed upon setting.
- Storing any identifying information, such as your consent document, in a locked filing cabinet.
- Ensuring that all data (transcription of interview and notes) do not contain your name and are stored in a locked file drawer that is separate from the drawer that contains your consent document.
- Ensuring that you will have an opportunity to review and request changes to any papers, articles, and reports before they are submitted for publication or presented.

Is my participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary.

Can I stop taking part in this research?

You can refuse to participate, withdraw your participation, refuse to answer any question, and withdraw your data, in part or in total, at any time before a paper is published or presented without any repercussion or negative consequences. Once a paper is published or presented the information contained in it enters a public arena. You will have an opportunity to read what is written about you and to request changes prior to publication.

What are the procedures for withdrawal?

Should you choose to withdraw from the study the procedure for withdrawal is simply to contact Mr. Scott and express your desire to be withdrawn from the study. Withdrawal of your data will be done immediately without repercussions or negative consequences.

Will I be given a copy of the consent document to keep?

You will be given a copy of the consent document prior to being interviewed by Mr. Scott.

Who should I contact if I have questions regarding the study?

Principal Investigator: Mr. Sean Scott, Ed.D. Candidate, Telephone 817-913-3631

Who should I contact if I have concerns regarding my rights as a study participant?

Dr. Meena Shah, Chair, TCU Institutional Review Board, Telephone 817 257-7665.

Dr. Janis Morey, Director, Sponsored Research, Telephone 817 257-7516.

Your signature below indicates that you have been read the information provided above, you have received answers to all of your questions and have been told who to call if you have any more questions, you have freely decided to participate in this research, and you understand that you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Participant Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Sean Scott
Dissertation
Kelly, Sacken, Powell
October 26, 2008

Interview/Topic Questions for Review

1. Tell me one of your favorite stories from growing up a teacher's kid.
2. Talk to me about a favorite kid or class that you had while you were teaching.
3. As a kid what types of things, in school or outside of school, did you really excel in?
4. What values do you think that Granny and Granddaddy instilled you?
5. Can you tell me a story about how values were instilled in you by family?
6. Tell me a story about the favorite teacher you had as a student.
7. Paint a picture for me about what you see when you think back to your classroom.
8. If you had to pick the most important thing you wanted every student to leave your room with at the end of the year what would it be?
9. If you had it all over to do again and you couldn't be an educator what would you be?
10. Tell me a story about the person who had the biggest influence on you going into education.
11. Tell me your favorite story you remember a family member telling about being a teacher.
12. What are you most proud of accomplishing as an educator?
13. What are you most proud of accomplishing in your life (as a whole)?
14. Do you think you would have become a teacher if you had been born thirty years later, raised in the city, been a man, not had so many family that were teachers?

15. How many years did you/have you spent in education?
16. Tell me a story about how you were a teacher before you were in the profession.
17. Who do you look up to the most and why?
18. Talk me through what you would tell your son/daughter if they were a freshman in college and they came to you and told you they wanted to become a teacher.
19. Tell me the story of how you got your first teaching job.
20. How, if any, did religion play into you becoming a teacher?
21. Tell me a story about the relationships you had with your co-workers?
22. How did you know you were a good teacher?
23. Tell me a story about what you missed most after you retired?
24. Tell me about being an educator in the same place where your kids went to school.
25. What role do you think that your being an educator played in your siblings/children/grandchildren going into education?
26. Why do you think so many people in our family went into education?
27. Tell me a story about the best educator you ever worked with. What did you do to become more like them?
28. Describe to me how you taught your favorite lesson.
29. Tell me a story about how your personality is reflected in your teaching style.
30. Describe the extracurricular activities in which you participated in elementary, middle, and high school.

Appendix E

March 28, 2009

Dear Family,

First, I want to thank you all for allowing me to come and interview you for my dissertation project. I had a great time traveling south and east to do these interviews. As you discovered, if you didn't already know, I am quite the dork when it comes to learning about the family. I have a classmate who kiddingly (I think) says that what I really am, is a narcissist and the reason I'm doing this project is to find out why "I am so great."

Attached to this letter is a copy of the interview that we did together. I have attempted to get your words as close to what came out of your mouth as possible. One thing I can promise you is that there will be grammar and spelling mistakes. I will correct these later in the process. As I told you in my original letter you have the right to remove any part or your entire transcript if you choose (although I will weep openly if you do the latter). When I am close to being finished I will again send you the part of the dissertation that concerns the family and you can choose to remove a quote at that time as well. It is hopeful though that reviewing the transcripts at this time will allow us to avoid any changes occurring that late in the game.

Please review the transcript and let me know if there is anything that you would like to remove. I would like to have these back by April 10th if at all possible. I have included my email address below if you would prefer email instead of snail mail.

I hope all is well with everyone. Thank you again for taking your time with me. It was an honor to be trusted with all of your stories.

Sincerely,

Sean
s.h.scott@tcu.edu

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ABSTRACT

THE WHY OF “WHAT ONE FAMILY BECAME WHEN WE GREW UP”

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This qualitative intergenerational study explores the life of the author and his family of educators. The study goes back four generations to look at the influence that family, social norms, opportunity, religion, and other factors played in a disproportionate number of family members entering and spending their careers in Texas public schools. While each participant followed their own unique path into the field of education, family influence remained a significant factor for each participant. The family of colleagues provided instructional and emotional support to participants once they entered the field as well as serving as a recruiting tool to those who were not yet educators.

This study also follows the author’s journey toward a greater understanding of himself as the origins of his perceptions and beliefs are uncovered through the storytelling of family members. He is able to explore his thought process as he uses the study’s findings about his family to trace back the origins of influences on his ways of thinking, feeling, and decision making. The author also explores how this knowledge will help to guide his future decisions as a public school administrator for the benefit of the students, staffs, and communities he serves.