Reflections of Reflections of Reflections: A Multi-Case Study of Women Educators' Callings to the High Arctic

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Reflections of Reflections of Reflections

A Multi-Case Study of Women Educators' Callings to the High Arctic

by

Judith Knapp

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

School of Education
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Dissertation Committee

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Abstract

Reflections of Reflections of Reflections
A Multi-Case Study of Women Educators' Callings to the High Arctic

This study examines the stories of six women educators who were called to teach in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northwest Territories, Canada, from 1970 to 1985. Placed within a historical context, I set out to understand what called each educator to teach in a cultural context so different from her own in Canada's Arctic. In order to arrive at a deeper, more intrinsic understanding of her career decisions, I explored each educator's calling through three, increasingly deeper levels of reflection.

In Reflections, as "In an instance of reflecting," I explored each participant's call to teach, specifically her calling to teach within another cultural context in Aboriginal communities in the High Arctic. Their explicit stories revealed the challenges each faced in teaching within another culture which embraced differing values about life and the importance of education. Each tells of her fears, failures, triumphs, and passions experienced during her years in classrooms in the Arctic.

In Reflections of Reflections, as in "An effect produced by an influence," the educators considered why they had stepped out of the classroom to enter the world of administration. Through administration, each disclosed stories of leadership and influence: assisting novice teachers, buoying up disheartened administrators and mid-career teachers, and becoming part of the greater educational plan for the future of education in the Northwest Territories.
Then in *Reflections of Reflections of Reflections*, as "A transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis. . .," each presented stories revealing the even deeper, more philosophical view of her life’s work through calling by peering even more intimately into the looking glass of her past. Each felt transformed through and by her calling as educator in the High Arctic, becoming one with people of differing cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Each also feels she has given something back—she has made a difference in the lives of others within the greater educational community of the North.

Using a cross-case analysis as yet another angle of reflection from which to view the stories individually and collectively as "Something produced by reflecting," I found further insights which suggested what the Department of Education could do today to support and renew its most precious resource—its educators.
Dedication

Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it.

—Buddha

Upon reflection, I dedicate this study to two important individuals, who have contributed greatly to my calling. Both have invested a great deal of commitment, faith, and love in assisting me to answer a higher call, and to reach my goals while enjoying life through my calling along the way:

To Gustav Daemich, who recognized in me the beginning sparks of my calling as worthy of his faith in me. Throughout my young life, he supported and encouraged those sparks to grow into a raging flame. He continued to fan those flames as I pursued my calling to become a teacher and educational leader; and

To Wolfgang Pauli, my husband and friend, who continues to support and encourage me in the constant renewal of self as I live my calling each and every day.
Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful . . .

To the educators who shared their stories of their callings in this study . . .

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I celebrate and thank you all!
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Chapter One

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

Little is known about what calls teachers to work in cultures other than their own. In particular, there appears to be a lack of awareness about what might call women educators to leave their own cultural setting to teach children of other cultures, particularly Aboriginal, in remote, isolated areas of Northern Canada.

Moreover, there is little awareness of what calls these teachers to subsequently move away from the regular classroom into educational administrative roles. Is it because they feel they might be in a better position to make significant differences in the educational system by providing leadership and educational direction from a broader base? Does this decision signal an even firmer commitment to living and educating in another cultural context, and to responding even more widely to a range of historical and cultural features?
Background of the Problem

In the 1940's, the Federal Government of Canada established public schools in its geographically isolated communities in Northern regions to provide educational programs closer to home for Inuit and First Nations children. This initiative was a direct result of an inquiry launched by the United Nations regarding the Canadian government's role in educating its Native population in Northern Canada. This action was also supported by the general decline in public support for the residential school delivery system of education. With this educational initiative came the need to employ fully qualified teachers in the local Native schools. Since there were few, if any, trained educators from within those Aboriginal communities, teachers were often recruited from Southern, more urban areas of Canada, where there typically existed a greater pool of university trained professionals. Often these teachers, usually Non-Native, were hired from such large urban centers as Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto. These teachers were then transported from their known world to a new and often very different cultural and social setting, with the expectation that they would not only all “fit in” generally, but also provide appropriate and effective educational programs for students with cultural backgrounds very different from their own.

The challenge associated with the calling to teach in the Northwest Territories, is summed up in this excerpt from the Teacher Orientation Course, 1965,
Essentially the administration and development of the North is the task of coping with three basic problems of the world today: the political growth to self government, the economic transformation of an underdeveloped area, and the social adjustment of people unadapted to our modern way of life. It is in this latter problem that you teachers will play the greatest part - to open doors, to enlighten, to show the way and give guidance to a people eager to learn so that they may take up their rightful place of responsibility in our complex society. (cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 161)

While many teachers would stay for a usual term of three years, others would leave after one. Yet some committed themselves for a significant part of their life-time. They became part of the community. They planned and implemented long range educational programs with and for the community, based on the unique and collective needs of the village. Still, some decided to leave their classrooms to take on administrative roles within the system, where they could make a greater difference on behalf of the greater community's educational needs. What might be the reasons these committed educators felt called to move to isolated areas to provide educational programs for children of another culture, within the context of another culture? What makes some more committed within that culture, allowing them to understand the real needs and concerns of the culture and community in which they immerse themselves? What
called them to leave the classroom and move into administrative roles? Are there other, deeper forces which called them to make such career decisions?

**Importance of the Study**

To date, little research has been conducted to find out what calls educators, to leave their own cultural environment and select a teaching career in another cultural context. Also, little is known about what compelled these individuals to commit a significant portion of their professional life as educators to work within another cultural setting in Aboriginal communities in Canada's Arctic. Furthermore, the motivating factors which call some of these teachers to move into administrative roles has not yet been studied in terms of their personal and professional reasons for seeking such leadership roles. This research project, therefore, is an in-depth, multi-case study of selected women educators who chose to teach in cultural settings other than their own, who then became administrators within that cultural context, in order to discover what called them to make such decisions for their life-career path.

**Purpose of the Study**

I conducted a qualitative, multi-case study of selected women educators who have taught and then held administrative roles in cultural settings other than
their own, in order to discover what called them to make such decisions for their life-career path so that educators can know more about essential teacher attributes and leadership potential. Specifically, I narrowed the study to six women educators who worked for a period of more than five years in isolated communities in the Northwest Territories, Canada between 1970 and 1985. They all began as classroom teachers in remote, isolated Aboriginal communities and then moved into administrative positions. By analyzing their callings for such a career path, I intended to learn what patterns might emerge as well as gain a better understanding of the cross-cultural context of their experiences as educational leaders, as well as my own.

Today, as in the past, the Government of the Northwest Territories struggles with high teacher turnover, affecting the consistency and general quality of education for youngsters in the Northwest Territories. This study looks at the stories of educators who committed a significant part of their educational career and life to providing educational experiences for students in isolated, Aboriginal settings to discover what called them to the Arctic and what sustained them in their work within another cultural context. The findings of this study may provide the necessary information to assist the Northwest Territorial Education System and other similar cross-cultural educational institutions to select and retain teachers with the necessary attributes and leadership skills to provide just such an educational environment for children within the cultural context of their home environment in the High Arctic. Since my own biography represents such
major cultural experiences, I have a personal interest in exploring what called other women educators to make the same kinds of career decisions I have made.

As suspected, my cross-case analysis of the research data has provoked reflection, and a reframing of my own experience as a classroom teacher, locally known as eeleehaairee to the Aboriginal people, in Gjoa Haven and later as Teacher Consultant in the Inuvik Region from 1975 to 1985. Through this study, I too, have come to better understand the depths of my own calling.

**Research Questions**

Within the context of teaching as a calling, the research questions are designed to prompt and explore subordinate themes, asking the participants to reflect deeper into the multi-dimensions of their calling to teach, cross-cultural calling, calling and relationship, and commitment and change through calling. The following research questions create the framework for this exploration:

1. What called these women educators to move to isolated areas in the Northwest Territories, Canada, to teach children of other cultures?
2. What enables some teachers to better understand the deeper, more intrinsic educational needs of another culture, within the community in which they are immersed?
3. What then called these teachers to leave the classroom and enter into administrative roles in those same regions?

4. What might be the deeper callings behind such life-career decisions?

5. How have these experiences affected them as educators?

Assumptions of the Study

Through the stories of selected educators who have experienced teaching and administrating in cultural settings other than their own, I expected to find common callings which affected these women’s career choices. Using my experience as a foundation, it was my assumption that possibly an interplay among the following factors might have called the subjects to seek employment in a cultural setting different from their own, specifically in the High Arctic of Canada: the prospect of adventure; dissatisfaction with their career at the time; an interest in cultures other than their own; or financial considerations, since teachers in the High Arctic, on the average, receive a higher salary and benefit package than most Southern Canadian districts offer.

Again, my experience tells me that some teachers are more sensitive to the apparent needs and concerns of their students than are others. Simply put, this sensitivity and genuine concern for others, may explain why some teachers seek to better understand their students’ cultural background and be more committed within that cultural context than other teachers.
In addition to this genuine concern for others, my assumption was that their classroom experience in their new cultural setting developed in them an awareness that the traditional Southern Canadian orientated system of education was not culturally appropriate or consistent for their Aboriginal students. Overall, as part of their professional mandate, teachers want students to be successful. Perhaps these teachers felt that from their vantage point in the classroom they could not make the radical changes they felt were needed overall in the educational system. Therefore, my assumption was that they sought administrative positions within that system, to lead change initiatives they felt were necessary to promote student success within the greater global learning community. When asked, most administrators have told me that they were very happy in the classroom, teaching students. Similarly, they have told me that they moved into administration in order to change the system by making significant differences. This change then translates into improved conditions in the classroom. I felt that this desire to change the greater educational system would be the most significant factor calling the individuals in this study to leave the classroom to seek administrative positions. In part, I conducted this study to find out if my assumptions were correct.

Lastly, I intended to uncover what might be the deeper, more underlying forces which called these individuals to make such life-career decisions within another cultural context. Although I sought patterns, my assumption was that each will have different and unique explanations for the factors which influenced
her decisions. While there may be patterns, I assumed that there would also be idiosyncratic reasons to explain each participant's call to teach in remote, Aboriginal communities in Canada's Arctic. Because qualitative research embraces idiosyncratic experience, it therefore is suitable for studying this issue.

**Delimitations of the Study**

This study focuses on the stories told by six women educators, who were attracted to the North, and who first taught and then later became administrators in remote Inuit and First Nations communities in the Northwest Territories, Canada from 1970 to 1985, interwoven with my own similar experiences. The findings are tied to the experiences specific to these women, and to the educational and cultural settings in which they were immersed during this period. The experiences are unique in each case, dependent on the setting, circumstances, and individual's reflection of what transpired during that time. Thus, while the research process may be transferable to other settings, the results are unique to the interaction of the participants within the Inuit and First Nations cultural contexts explored in this study.

The primary data collection methodology was semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The interview data collected was influenced by the questions themselves, the interview context, and intellectual and affective filters applied during the data collection and analysis process. Therefore, by ensuring carefully
conducted interviews and accurate transcriptions, involving the participants in the preliminary research findings to check for accuracy, and creating multiple, faithful analyses, the validity of this methodology was enhanced.

Furthermore, this study recognizes and values the perspective that qualitative research engages an honest and open interaction between researcher and the context. In this study, my personal involvement and similar experiences allowed access to the field and participants. In addition, my association with the same cultural settings during the time period selected also established a particular sensitivity to the data. Consequently, it was possible to remain rigorously faithful to the data throughout the collection and analysis process.

Limitations of the Study

During the time period selected for this study, it was evident that an increasing number of women teachers who had been working in remote Inuit and First Nations communities in the Northwest Territories, Canada, were leaving the classroom and moving into administrative roles. Since the total number of teaching staff in the Northwest Territories is understandably small, it is logical that by proportion, the total number of administrators would also be small. Therefore, in comparison to the whole teaching population, women administrators made up an even smaller, more distinct group.
The selection of the participants depended on my ability to locate and then engage them in this unique study. In addition, since each individual’s calling and experience depended on the specific cultural setting and circumstances in which she was involved in during this time period, coloured by memory and reflection, the results might be very different and unrelated. As suggested by Montaigne in "Apology for Raimond de Sebonde," "The memory represents to us not what we choose but what it pleases" (cited in Tripp, 1987, p. 395). Therefore, while the findings will increase our understanding of what called these individuals to select such similar career paths within another cultural context, they may not necessarily support generalization to the greater teaching population in the Northwest Territories.

**Summary**

The six educators who agreed to participate in this study acted on the challenge stated in the 1965 Teacher Orientation Course, summoning them to teach in isolated, Aboriginal communities in Canada’s Arctic, "... you teachers will play the greatest part - to open doors, to enlighten, to show the way and give guidance to a people eager to learn so that they may take up their rightful place of responsibility in our complex society (cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 161). In acting on their call to teach in the Northwest Territories, each became a teacher of the community and was addressed as eeleehairee. Eelehairee was not only
her position and title—it represented her status and who she was in the greater community, both in and outside of the school setting. With this status came responsibility. In the role of eeleehai'ree, she was seen as both teacher and community leader.

In order to find out what called each participant to teach in a cultural context so different from her own, and furthermore, to better understand what called her to leave the regular classroom setting and step into administration, I conducted a multi-case study focusing on the stories of six women educators who were called to teach in Canada's Arctic from 1970 to 1985. First, to place the study in perspective, I initiated a review of related literature which follows in Chapter Two. To better understand the educational conditions experienced by the participants during their time in the North, within the review of literature, I researched the history of education in the Northwest Territories, concentrating on the Mission Era (1860-1950), Federal Government Era (1944-1970), and Territorial Era (1970-present), covering the major events occurring during the time period from 1860 to present. In addition, to further develop and expand the notion of teaching as a calling and the subsequent elements within that calling, I reviewed literature associated with the following themes: cross-cultural calling, calling and relationship, and commitment and change through calling. Since leadership is an essential and ever present element of teaching as a calling, providing the constant thread which runs throughout the practice, I have devoted a portion of the literature review to examine it as it relates to the calling to teach.
Then to connect the participants' stories and provide a structure for the development of the findings in the study, I examined literature dealing with reflection. Since this study is based on each educator's reflections about her memories of the experiences she had as an eeleehairee in remote Aboriginal communities during the study's time period, an examination of literature addressing reflection is essential to the overall development and organization of this particular study.

To provide particulars specific to this study, I have included a detailed explanation of the methodology used in Chapter Three. Based on the work of Merriam (1988), Stake (1995), Singleton (19830, and Eisner (1991), the data were collected through a series of four interviews with each of the six participants, using guiding interview questions to further probe and stimulate even deeper reflections by the subjects into their experiences as eeleehairee in the Northwest Territories. The guiding interview questions were directly related to each of the five research questions which provided the overarching framework for the study (Appendix B).

Chapter Four is a presentation and analysis of the six participants' callings, presented and analyzed under three levels of reflection. In Reflections, the educator's recall memories of what called them to teaching and what later called them to teach in the cross-cultural context of classrooms in the Northwest Territories during 1970 to 1985. The next, even deeper level of reflection, reveals the reasons they left the classroom to become administrators. Reflection
of Reflections bears memories of teaching and commitment at a more global, greater community level. Then in Reflections of Reflections of Reflections, the participants take an even deeper, more philosophical look into how their experiences in education in education in the Northwest Territories has changed them. Their stories speak of transformation. They are transformed in both a personal and professional light.

Then Chapter Five considers the information collected throughout the process to formulate a summary of the study with implications and recommendations resulting from the research findings. It also raises issues for further examination and study.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

Little is known about what calls teachers to work in cultures other than their own. In seeking a better understanding of what calls them to make this career choice, I wish to explore a broader range of interrelated themes, or layers, associated with such calling and commitment. An investigation of each theme adds depth to the overall study. Through a review of literature, I have explored teaching as a calling. Within that calling, I have focused on the following themes to guide my study and to enrich my understanding of the problem: cross-cultural calling; calling and relationship; and commitment and change through calling.

In order to place this study in a historical context and to better understand the social and political factors at play, I have reviewed literature related to the development of Canada's Arctic, with a focus on the educational initiatives in the Northwest Territories, beginning with the work of the early missionaries to the present Territorial Government's involvement in a more formal and global educational system which has evolved over time. This historical perspective provides a comprehensive knowledge base on which to understand the state of
education in the Northwest Territories when the participants in the study were called to teach in the High Arctic.

This review also addresses the interrelated areas of literature pertinent to my investigation of what might be the factors calling teachers to make such a career choice, while at the same time seeking a deeper understanding of how these callings might relate to moral and ethical leadership in education. Through literature, I have gained a better appreciation of the possible relationship between career and life choices as possibly experienced by the participants of this study.

**Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

In *People of the Light and Dark*, Robertson (1966) reflects on the change taking place in Canada's Arctic,

> Nothing in the north has ever been easy, and nothing is ever likely to be . . . The north is not unique either in the fact or in the source of change. The changes there, like the changes in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world have not come because anyone consciously decided that they should. They have come, essentially, from developments that have made the world a single community. (p. xvi - xix)
While Canada's Arctic remained relatively unchanged for hundreds of years, World War II altered how the rest of the world viewed the North. The demand for minerals pushed prices up, and the development of more efficient methods brought costs of transportation and production down. As a result, the North became increasingly possible and interesting as a source of products and raw materials other than furs and gold.

It was after the war that men's and women's fashions changed to those that suited heated automobiles and the growth of urban life. Along with the prohibitive labour costs associated with the manufacture of fur coats, the prices of raw furs plummeted. This crisis in the staple cash item of the people of the North coincided with the collapse of their other staple, the caribou. Life on the land became precarious at the same time that the population started to rise, resulting from improved medical and health services, and the new morality brought by the missionaries. The ancient practices of child exposure and other means by which human numbers were controlled were no longer acceptable. As the "old way of life on the land" slipped away from them, people gathered into settlements where assistance was available.

At the same time as the old ways tottered under stress from within, the outside world became interested in the Canadian Arctic for a variety of reasons. Air transportation and roads from the South, made the North more accessible. Improved knowledge of mineral resources and future demands for such resources pushed development into areas previously untouched. But most
importantly, the Canadian consciousness of national maturity and national obligation, combined with a growing sense of responsibility for the welfare of other people, led to new interest in the people of the Arctic. The government began to take responsibility for providing education, health, housing, and economic improvements for its Northern citizens.

Prior to government involvement, education was provided sporadically by religious organizations, specifically the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, through their priests and missionaries.

The history of education in the Northwest Territories is divided into three major eras: the Missionary Era (1860 - 1950), the Federal Government Era (1944 - 1970), and the Territorial Government Era (1970 - present). Not only do the eras somewhat overlap, the involvement of both government and church in the education of Aboriginal students are interwoven in the history of Northern schooling. An examination of education in the Northwest Territories, from a historical perspective follows.

**The Mission Era (1860-1950)**

In *Dreams & Visions*, Macpherson (1995) quotes Diamond Jenness who explains that while the motivation and educational practice of the churches has often been criticized, it is only fair to point out that they assumed control of education in the early days by default. In 1934, Jenness reflects,
So the early missionaries rapidly took their places alongside the other pioneers of the Arctic. They learned as quickly as possible the Eskimo language in order to perform their religious duties. With that knowledge they became the natives' advisors, not in spiritual matters alone, but in relations with the traders and other white men who could not understand their tongue. In the absence of government schools, too, they became the educators of the Eskimos - they held classes for the children and taught them to read and write. (p. 27)

While schooling in the Northwest Territories began well before Confederation, it wasn't until the late 1800's that formal schools were established. In fact, in the 1860's three schools had been opened by religious organizations to provide educational opportunities for children of the Arctic.

The first record of a school in the Northwest Territories is the log school built in 1860-61 at Fort Simpson by Reverend William Kirby of the Anglican Church. For a number of years afterward, the school continued to be run by Reverend Bompas and his wife. However, this Anglican schooling was not continuous. From 1935 until 1942, Canon Cook and his wife, Opal, were in charge of the school providing education to students of the Fort Simpson area. Although it was moved in 1925, the same building was being used in 1959. Reverend Bompas, who with his wife operated the school, wrote, "My time on a week day was occupied generally in schooling about a dozen children, all of
them natives of this Country, about one-half of them children of white men, and the other half pure Indian" (cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 27).

Then in 1866, Bishop Bompas organized a school for orphans left by the scarlet fever epidemic of 1865 at Fort Norman. The Hudson's Bay Company hired Mr. Murdo McLeod as the teacher, and the school continued to operate for the next three years. Bompas reported, "I did not find the Indian children deficient in intelligence but only in application. Their restlessness and want of thought appear to be the chief difficulties to overcome" (cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 27).

In 1867, the first residential school in the Northwest Territories was established at Fort Providence by the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, commonly known as the Grey Nuns. From then on, religious schools began to spring up across the Northwest Territories, spreading northward as the Aboriginal population began to center around the Hudson Bay Company's Trading Posts. By 1950, schools had been established by religious organizations as far northeast as Pangnirtung on Baffin Island. In the central Arctic, schools had been established in Coppermine and Chesterfield Inlet. In the western Arctic, schools sprang up in communities along the Mackenzie River from Fort Simpson at the southern end to Aklavik in the Mackenzie Delta, near the Beaufort Sea (Appendix C).

A government education system was established in the Northwest Territories between 1944, when Dr. Andrew Moore conducted a Survey of Education in the Mackenzie District of the Northwest Territories and 1970 when the schools of the Eastern Arctic came under the jurisdiction of the Territorial Department of Education. In Dreams & Visions (1991), Macpherson suggests that although these dates are somewhat arbitrary, they serve as bench marks between church-controlled education and the provincial-like organization of today. Before the Canadian government would consider assuming the responsibility for education in this vast area, it commissioned a number of fact finding studies to report on the state of the art in education in the Northwest Territories. Moore (1944), Wright (1946), McKinnon (1947), Lamberton (1948), Bailey (1949-50), Storr (1949), and Westwater (1958) submitted reports on educational conditions and made recommendations for consideration for the development of future policies and procedures. These reports contributed to shaping the educational practice in the Northwest Territories.

In 1946, Mr. J. W. McKinnon was appointed as the First inspector of Schools for the Northwest Territories. His first assignment was to conduct another survey to assess the educational facilities in the Mackenzie District. Following the completion of that report and after a year spent in Ottawa, Mr.
McKinnon established an office in Yellowknife in 1949, with Miss Marjorie Looker as his assistant. This signified the establishment of the government in education.

During the 1940’s the Department of Mines and Resources was the main authority in the lives of residents in the Northwest Territories. In 1946, Dr. H. L. Keenleyside became the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources, and thereby Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Under his leadership, the Department was reorganized into three workable departments. It was the newly formed Department of Resources and Development which assumed the responsibility for the Northwest Territories and the Eskimos. The Department of Indian Affairs continued to be responsible for all Canadian Indians, today referred to as First Nations People. While education of white children and those of mixed blood was the responsibility of the Territorial Government, at this point in time, the Department of Resources and Development provided the necessary administrative services for education in the Northwest Territories. With the support of the Northwest Territorial Council and through Dr. Keenleyside’s leadership, the Department began building schools in the Northwest Territories. It is interesting to note that at approximately the same time, the Department of Indian Affairs also began a campaign to move more directly into the field of education.

The first government schools in the Northwest Territories were opened at Fort McPherson and Tuktoyaktuk. In 1947, the Department of Resources and Development took over the operation of the school at Tuktoyaktuk, hiring Miss
Dorothy Robinson as the first government welfare teacher in the Northwest Territories. A few months later, Miss Margery Hinds was hired by the Indian Affairs Branch to teach in the school at Fort McPherson.

Then on June 18, 1947 a special sub-committee on education was formed by the Territorial Council and with the impetus given by the newly reorganized Department of Resources and Development, now called Northern Affairs, planned and opened schools in the following communities: Fort Smith (1948), Fort Chimo, Fort Simpson, Hay River (1949), Aklavik, Cape Dorset, Coppermine, Coral Harbour, Fort Resolution, Port Harrison (1950), and Chesterfield Inlet (1951). During this same time period, the Indian Affairs Branch and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration established schools for First Nations students at Rae (1948), Fort Norman, Rocher River (1949), Arctic Red River, Fort Franklin, Fort Good Hope (1950), and Jean Marie River (1953).

With the introduction of schools into the settlements of the Northwest Territories, it was necessary to recruit staff to operate the growing system. One former teacher, Mr. Joe Coady, tells how he entered his career in teaching in the Northwest Territories,

In 1949, I was teaching in the Peace River area of British Columbia, when I noticed a casual comment in the local newspaper that the Government of Canada had embarked upon a plan to establish a limited number of schools in the Mackenzie Valley area of the N.W.T. The Government apparently had been
shamed into making this decision as a result of having been asked at the United Nations to render an account of its contribution to the education of the Native People of Canada and especially those in the far North. It was embarrassed by its own answer, that it had done practically nothing. I immediately wrote to Mr. Philip Phelan in Ottawa, who at that time was the Superintendent in charge of education for Indian Affairs, indicating that I would be prepared to go to the North as a teacher, to assist in this great work. I was amazed to receive a reply indicating that I was hired as a Welfare Teacher and that I should proceed to Fort Norman. I was also amazed that nobody asked any questions of me, nor did they ask for references nor did they interview me. It certainly seemed a shoddy way to hire a teacher for such an unusual Canadian position. I was further amazed when I learned that I was to be an employee of the Department of Mines and Resources. Indian Affairs at that time was merely a branch of that Department. (cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 63)

Mr. McKinnon, the first Inspector, resigned in 1950, and during the 1950-51 school year Miss Looker was in charge of education in the North. In 1951, Mr. J. V. (Joe) Jacobson left an Alberta Superintendency to become the Superintendent of Education at Fort Smith which had become the administrative
headquarters of the government in the North. Mr. W. G. (Gordon) Devitt was recruited from Saskatchewan in 1952, and when Mr. Jacobson was transferred to Ottawa to become Chief of the Education Division, Mr. Devitt became the Superintendent of Schools for the Mackenzie District, a position he occupied until 1956.

Meanwhile in Ottawa in 1953, the Canadian government had created the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources (NANR) with Mr. R.G. Robertson as Deputy Minister of the new department and Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, a position he was to occupy for the next ten years. The Director and Assistant Director of the Northern Administration Branch and the Chief of the Education Division of that Branch and their staffs were given the tasks of organizing and operating an education system for a largely non-English speaking school population that was scattered in small groups across a vast area many hundreds of miles from headquarters in Ottawa.

In 1955, two important events in the educational history of the Northwest Territories occurred. In March of that year, the Minister of Northern Affairs, Honourable John Lesage, announced an extensive construction program of schools and hostels to be carried out in the next six years. Either new or enlarged school facilities were to be built at Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, Fort McPherson, Aklavik (which the government decided to move to a new site), Yellowknife, and Frobisher Bay. In conjunction with these schools, hostels would be built to house the students from outlying settlements. In Yellowknife, which
was to be a vocational high school, the hostel was to be non-denominational, but in all other locations hostels would be built by the government, but would continue to be operated by either the Anglican or Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Lesage emphasized that both the Federal and Territorial governments felt it was most important to avoid any segregation along racial lines in the schools in the Northwest Territories which would be open to all children of whatever race. Segregation along religious lines was not questioned at this time.

A second development which took place on April 1, 1955 was the arrangement with the Indian Affairs Branch that the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources would assume the responsibility for the education of Indian children in the Northwest Territories. From this date, all schools came under the single jurisdiction of the Northern Administration Branch of that Department. It has been suggested that April 1, 1955 is the beginning of the school system in the Northwest Territories.

The statistics for the 1954-55 school year in the Northwest Territories record 19 Federal schools, 2 Company schools, 2 school district institutions, and 6 full-time Mission day and residential schools. They show that 2,067 pupils were enrolled in these 76 classrooms and that the pupils were supervised by 92 teachers.

In 1956 all Mission school teachers became Federal employees and from this date on, criteria was established for hiring teachers to serve in the Northwest Territories. For example, no teacher would be hired for a teaching
position without at least senior matriculation standing, one year of teacher training, and two years of teaching experience.

The residential construction program announced by the Honourable Jean Lesage in 1955 was carried out with surprising speed and efficiency. Breynat Hall in Fort Smith, Akaitcho Hall in Yellowknife, and Fleming Hall in Fort McPherson were opened in 1958.

The two hostels in Inuvik, Grollier and Stringer, were opened in the next year, and in 1960, the residential program in the Mackenzie was completed with the erection of Lapointe and Bompas Halls in Fort Simpson. In each of these centres, schools had been constructed and enlarged to handle the increased enrollments.

Two additions to the staff of District Offices were introduced in 1961-62, the positions of teachers-at-large and principals-at-large. A highly qualified experienced teacher with a good knowledge of primary methods was hired to give aid and support to first-year teachers in the remote settlements of the Northwest Territories. The teacher-at-large had no supervisory role, but, rather, functioned as a helping teacher and as a problem-solving consultant. The title was later changed from teacher-at-large to Teacher Consultant.

The task of the principal-at-large was to visit schools and assist principals with supervisory and administrative problems. The position was filled by highly qualified school administrators. It also proved to be an excellent training ground for future superintendents. Mr. Harold Darkes, Mr. Jim Maher, Mr. Bill Buell, and
Mr. Ivan Mouat were Regional Superintendents who served their apprenticeships as principals-at-large.

Teacher Consultants are still playing a very active part in Northern education today although their role is somewhat changed, with the position often being filled by a specialist teacher in Native languages, Native Education, Special/remedial Education, or Guidance Counselling. In Dreams & Visions, MacPherson (1991) describes the lives of persons holding these positions.

Although both teacher consultants and principals-at-large usually found their jobs interesting and satisfying, the continual traveling to remote settlements in all kinds of weather, and the various modes of accommodation (usually in a teacher's home or on a classroom floor) to which they were assigned, made day to day life arduous and less than idyllic. Teacher consultant "burnout" (although the term had not been coined in the 60's) was certainly a fact of life. (p. 19)

MacPherson further comments on the government's policy to interview all potential teaching staff prior to hiring them for Northern postings,

The policy of insisting on a personal interview before hiring a teacher for a northern school is a wise one, and it has resulted in an extremely high percentage of competent people being employed. No doubt some unsuitable teachers have slipped through the meshes of application form, personal and professional
written references, and face-to-face interviews with two knowledgeable Northern educators, but on the whole the success ratio has been high. It is natural that teachers will recall their initial interview, and will remember their first interviewers, Joe Jacobson, Gordon Devitt, Wilf Booth and Bernard Gillie were surely the "Big 4" of interviewers. Like the apostles of old they traveled in pairs and they made their annual pilgrimage from St. John's to Victoria, visiting every major city in their search for teaching talent. (p. 19)

The Territorial Era (1970-Present)

Although the Government of the Northwest Territories assumed complete responsibility for education in the Mackenzie District in 1969, it was not until 1970 that the schools of the Eastern Arctic - excluding Arctic Quebec - came under the jurisdiction of the new administration.

The construction of school building was not the only project being undertaken by the new Territorial Government. The Department of Education was attempting to build a new system for schooling. This project began with an eighteen month investigation into every facet of education in the Northwest Territories. It ended in 1972 with the production of Survey of Education.

Also in 1972, the Curriculum Division, under the leadership of Mr. Paul Robinson, produced the first "made-in-the-Northwest Territories" Curriculum
Guide, *Elementary Education in the Northwest Territories K-6*. This publication reflected a philosophy that was concerned with preserving and honouring the cultures and languages of the region, and advocated a “child centered” community school.

In 1973, *Learning in the Middle Years*, a Junior High Curriculum guide was published. A great deal of consultation with teachers, parents, native groups and other interested people was carried out prior to its publication. The editor-in-chief of the “Green Book” was Mr. Fred Carnew of the Curriculum Section.

To reinforce the principles of relevance and involvement, a large number of publications written for the Native pupil, in some cases by Indian, Metis or Inuit authors, were distributed to the schools. At the same time, more emphasis was given to cultural inclusion programs, and local native people became teachers of their own skills, occupations, and history both inside and outside of the classrooms of Northern schools.

These new directions in education did not please everyone. Fierce ideological battles were waged over a number of years. During the early 1970’s, critics of education were vocal.

Since 1975, Brian Lewis, Fred Carnew and Ed Duggan have been successively in charge of program development for the Department of Education. Through their leadership, production of meaningful courses of study and program materials were developed. These enabled the Northwest Territories
to move toward the development of a relevant, flexible, unified curriculum into both the elementary and junior high schools. Eventually, the program development department also produced a Northern high school curriculum.

Recommended in the Education Survey of 1972, and after five years of drafting, re-drafting, consultation, discussion and debate, the Education Ordinance became Law in 1977.

The new Ordinance legislated local involvement with education on three increasing levels of complexity and control: the local education advisory committee, the school society, and the Board of Education.

Every school in the Northwest Territories has a local advisory committee. Comprehensive work has been done by special officers of the Department and by elected officials to increase the committees knowledge of and expertise in the complicated tasks of school administration and program development in an advisory role. The elevation to the status of school society is a decision of the local community. It is accompanied by a much greater responsibility for the total operation of the school. Since the passage of the Ordinance, twelve advisory committees have opted to elect a group of citizens who become the governing body of the school in their community. Yellowknife Education District No. 1 and Yellowknife Separate Education District No. 2 are as yet the only tax-based Boards of Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories.

Given impetus by the Legislative Assembly, in the 1970's and 1980's, one of the main initiatives of the Department of Education is the development of
multi-lingual programs for schools in the Northwest Territories. The Linguistic Program Division was established in 1976 with S.T. "Mick" Mallon, long-time Inuktitut proponent and instructor, in charge. It has continued to develop language programs for the Inuit pupils from its base in Frobisher Bay. In 1980, the Athapascan Language Steering Committee was transformed into the Dene Language Program Division and with a number of Native speakers, among them Fibbie Tatti, Jane Modeste, and Ethel Blondin Townsend, have developed and field-tested bilingual programs in the schools of the Mackenzie District.

The Teacher Education Program, established in the mid 1970's, completely under the control of the Northwest Territories, expanded its operation in the 1980's. A new campus was opened at Frobisher Bay to better prepare staff for bilingual education, to develop Inuktitut learning materials, and accommodate within the program, people unable to leave their homes to attend the two year course.

Classroom Assistants have become recognized as vital components to all educational establishments. The training offered, the salaries earned and the opportunities for advancement into the teaching profession have all significantly increased. The 1983 statistics showed that there were in excess of 150 Classroom Assistants in the schools of the Northwest Territories.

Certification of teachers by the Northwest Territories had long been a goal of the Department of Education and the Teachers' Association. It was finally realized in May, 1983. Before that time, a valid certificate from any province in
Canada or from a selected group of countries around the world was the prerequisite to teaching in the Northwest Territories. A Certification Board composed of two representatives from the Department, two from the Northwest Territories Teacher Association, one from the Boards of Education, a representative of the School Societies, a representative of the Northwest Territories. Teacher Training Program and a Chairperson appointed by the Minister of Education, make the decisions as to who shall be given a Northwest Territories Teaching Certificate. Mr. Jim Walker, a former superintendent and later Chief of Recruitment and Personnel, was the Registrar. The Registrar is an ex-officio member of the Certification Board.

Adult vocational training in the Northwest Territories has made giant strides since the introduction of adult education courses and the founding of an Adult Vocational Training Centre in the mid-sixties. Programs which prepared the graduates for careers in industry, business, health services, transportation and communication, food services, and many other occupations have been offered at Fort Smith and at many other locations throughout the Territories. General Education Development (high school equivalence), Apprenticeship Training in many fields, the Renewable Resources Training Program and programs offered at Tuktoyaktuk and Norman Wells in conjunction with petro-chemical firms, are just a few examples of programs available to young people and adults.
According to MacPherson (1991), in 1984 the statistics for the Department of Education for the Northwest Territories were as follows: Pupils—12,731; Teachers—625; Classroom Assistants—143; Adult Educators—36; Vocational Instructors—48; and Teacher Education Program Graduates—10.

In summary, once the Federal Government became involved in education in the North, schools sprung up throughout the Northwest Territories in even the most isolated Aboriginal communities. With this initiative, and through developments in standards and criteria for staffing these schools, fully qualified teachers were required. In the early years prior to local teachers' graduation from the Teacher Education Program, most teachers were recruited from Southern, more urban areas of Canada. While the need for fully qualified teachers presented itself as an opportunity for employment, what called teachers from the South to apply for teaching positions in isolated and remote Aboriginal communities of the High Arctic?

**Callings**

During this time, a teacher in the community schools of the Northwest Territories was *always* a teacher, an *eeleehairee*. The people viewed her always as *eeleehairee*, in school and out of school. *Eeleehairee* was her career. It was her life. She was it and it was her. *Eeleehairee* was her life-career while in the
settlement and within the greater educational community of the Northwest Territories.

What calls a person to become a teacher in the first place? In *Teaching as a Vocation*, Hansen (1995) argues that teaching is a vocation, in that it summons or calls a person to take up the practice. He explains,

"Teaching" and "vocation" are ancient and well-worn terms. The Old English root of teaching, taecan, means to show, to instruct, or in more literal terms, to provide signs or outward expressions of something one knows. The Latin root of vocation, vocare, means "to call." It denotes a summons or bidding to be of service. Vocation emerges over a long period of time. . . . a person cannot "will" a sense of service into existence, nor wake up one day and "decide" to be of service. Those dispositions grow and take shape over time, through interaction with people and through the attempt to perform the work well. (p. 1 - 4)

In *The Call to Teach*, Hansen (1995) also asserts that individuals may work in many professions or jobs prior to answering the "call". He says that

An individual who is strongly inclined toward teaching seems to be a person who is not debating whether to teach but rather is contemplating how or under what circumstances to do so . . . But it may be years before such a person actually takes action. He
or she may work for a long time in other lines of endeavor . . .
before the right conditions materialize. (p. 10)

In addition, he confirms that teaching is a social practice whose
importance is unquestioned, even if what makes it important is constantly
debated. Teachers work in public environments, under scrutiny of their students,
peers, administrators, parents, and community. In fact, Hansen argues

. . . that the sense of vocation can come to life only in a social
context, without the practice of teaching, would-be teachers
would have no context in which to act. Teaching presupposes
a social medium that provides many meanings associated with
it. Persons do not simply invent those meanings out of whole
cloth. They are meanings characteristically associated with
helping others learn and improve themselves intellectually and
morally. In brief, would-be teachers step into a practice with
traditions undergirding it, with layers of public significance built
up over generations. The sense of teaching as a vocation
presumes a willingness to engage with the public obligations
that go with the task, to recognize that one is part of an
evolving tradition. (p. 15)

The notion of teaching as vocation implies that it is greater than an inner
drive or desire to contribute to others. The sense a person may have of being
impelled from within to teach would remain lifeless were not the practice of
teaching there to receive her. Hansen (1995) confirms, "The practice precedes the individual. From this perspective, it 'calls on' all who take it seriously to fulfill its requirements and responsibilities. It obliges teachers to manifest the willingness and courage to confront the demands of the work" (p. 124).

Hansen (1995) further argues that persons with vocational orientations are not necessarily heroic. He says instead, "The sense of vocation implies a measure of determination, courage, and flexibility, qualities that are in turn buoyed by the disposition to regard teaching as something more than a job, to which one has something significant to offer" (p. 13).

In fact, less than heroic or glamorous, along with teaching comes the day to day, regular routine tasks that a teacher performs as part of the work. Teaching as a calling further presumes a sense of it as an activity whose meaning is greater than the sum of its parts. It is larger than carrying out a finite number of pre-specified duties and responsibilities. Smith (1934) calls this work drudgery. He asserts that an additional test of a vocation "is the love of the drudgery it involves" (cited in Hansen, 1995, p. 13). Every vocation embodies a set of mundane chores, and teaching is no exception. Hansen (1995) believes that "it is precisely those everyday doings that, knit together over time, can undergrid a sense of meaning and fulfillment in the work" (p. 13).

He also contends that a teacher "is called" by the practice. He affirms that "... something about teaching is larger than the person ... that calls the
person to it in the first place, that whets the appetite, that captures the imagination" (p. 125).

This then leads to the notion of the teacher as an architect. Hansen (1995) says that "A person with a vocational orientation toward his or her work treats it as an architect would, rather than as merely a laborer" (p. 166). An accomplished architect not only has the skill and imagination necessary for design, but also knows and understands who the structure is being designed for. In Between Man and Man, Buber (1985) echoes this same sense that it is the responsibility of the teacher to mold and build character in students. He alludes to the importance of building character when he reflects,

The class before him is like a mirror of mankind, so multiform, so full of contradictions, so inaccessible. He feels “These boys - I have not sought them out; I have been put here and have to accept them as they are - but not as they now are in this moment, but as they really are, as they can become.” (p. 112)

In the building of character, the vocation of teaching demands that teachers adopt high standards. This conviction to high expectations presents challenges and uncertain outcomes. Hansen (1995) found

... that the vocation of teaching invites one to adopt high expectations and standards regardless of what colleagues near and far might be doing, and regardless of the external support one might receive. Teaching depends far more on what a
person brings to it than on what it affords her or him by way of resources. (p. 94)

There is a certain uncertainty about teaching. One never knows exactly what the student has learned or how successful the teacher has been in conveying her message. Hansen (1995) also found that uncertainty and doubt are part of the calling. Uncertainty accompanies teaching. He says that "... it can render it intolerable to anyone who requires immediate and on-going evidence of making a difference" (p. 117). This is where patience, an element of the practice, comes into play. Through conducting a study of four educators, Hansen also found that all were not comfortable with the doubts and uncertainties that accompany the vocation. All admitted to "... uncertainty and concern about broader issues of education and society... wonder about the extent to which they might be contributing to societal problems" (p. 118). In addition, he found that while all were called on quite regularly to make decisions in regards to curricula and instructional strategies, they had doubts and uncertainty because they felt uncomfortable in that they were second-guessing for the most part, using intuition and common sense to guide them.

Henry Adams once remarked that "a teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops" (cited in Hansen, 1995, p. 134). Influence is embedded in the call to teach. Teachers wish to contribute to the world we live in through their influence. In his study, Hansen also found that teachers wished "... to contribute to the coming-into-being of that world" (p. 134). As history
reveals, one of the things that differentiates human beings from other creatures is the need to cultivate ways of getting along together. Every individual can make a difference in this balance. Hansen (1995) confirms, “This is particularly so for teachers, who are positioned more than most others to have an influence on a large number of young people” (p. 134).

In a review of literature around the quality of life in work, such common threads as satisfaction, motivation, and performance are woven throughout. Such characteristics as creativity, introspection, autonomy, self evaluation, absorption, productivity, freedom, newness or novelty of a situation and joy are found time and again in literature as descriptions of the attributes associated with satisfaction, performance, motivation and quality of life in work (Argyle, 1987; Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Champagne & McAffee, 1989; Hackman & Oldham, 1980; and Privette, 1983).

Similar attributes are highlighted in the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990). He describes such experiences as flow. Individuals experiencing flow relate strong feelings of joy, intense involvement, timelessness, strong sense of control, conscious awareness, passion, and feelings of power. In The Call to Teach (1995), the author captures a similar sense of flow that exists in teaching:

Teaching presupposes hope. . . . It means that as a teacher, one can perceive one's work against a broader backdrop. One can keep the past human effort in view, and see that they were sometimes achieved in conditions far more difficult than those
one faces today. One can see that teaching is an act that, when done well, fully occupies the present moment, but also always with an eye on the future." (p. 160 - 161)

This sense of flow offers us further insight into their calling, making teaching more of a "job", more than an "occupation", and even more than a "profession".

To add another layer to this, Sergiovanni (1990), in consultation with psychologists, agrees that there are certain job characteristics which contribute to enhanced intrinsic motivation. These are also the actions and conditions implied by the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1975), Hackman and Oldham (1980), and Maslow (1971). They agree that these attributes lead to a heightened level of satisfaction, enjoyment, and enhancement of quality of life in work. If one replaces the word work with teach and worker with teacher, the following attributes are possible sources for such a calling for the teachers discussed in this study. These job attributes include:

1. Having opportunity for discovery, exploration, variety, and challenge;
2. Allowing for high involvement and identity with the task, leading to work being considered important;
3. Encouraging active involvement by the worker;
4. Striving for common understanding of purposes and values that bring people together at work;
5. Outcomes that are broad in perspective, established by the worker(s);
6. Stressing autonomy and self-determination by the workers;
7. Allowing individual workers to determine and control their own behavior and environment; and
8. Reinforcing feelings of control, competence, and efficacy.

(Sergiovanni, 1990)

Another compelling motivational force, as explored by Senge (1990), is the freedom to risk. In his work related to learning organizations, Senge looks at conditions existing within organizations which contribute to and promote the feeling of freedom so that individuals will take risks and in so doing, learn from these risks. He applauds this freedom to risk as contributing to and enhancing the opportunity for creativity and feelings of accomplishment. As a result, these lead to the sense of efficacy for the individual within the learning organization.

Cross-cultural Calling

What calls a teacher to leave her known world and seek a position in another cultural setting, very different from her own?

Hansen (1995) provides a clue to assist in the solving of this problem. He believes that

Teachers teach not to serve themselves but to rather serve others: students first and foremost, but by extension the communities and the society in which they live. Moreover, teaching implies serving
learners in ways that are distinct from those of other practices. (p. 140)

This service to others, which is inherent in the practice of teaching, may call some teachers to other cultural settings. With the advances in technology, the world is more accessible. Distance, climate, and time are no longer barriers. In *The Call to Teach*, Hansen (1995) suggests teaching is not coterminous with schooling; he says, "... most people who aspire to teach do not have in mind working in a particular school. Rather they want to teach and to have beneficial impact on the young" (p. 126).

Today, people are more aware of the greater world. This knowledge may further stretch the horizons for teachers deciding where to teach, to take them to such places as Canada's Arctic.

The challenges associated with cross-cultural teaching may call teachers to other cultural contexts. Written in 1960, *The Opening Door*, a treatise on education in the Northwest Territories, offers the following challenge to teachers considering working in Canada's Arctic:

This paper gives no definition of education or its techniques, nor is it a guide for the northern teacher to serve him as the Criminal Code serves a lawyer or the rule books guide a referee. Rather it looks at some peculiar aspects of northern education in the context of some human beings, young and old, and at the gales of change that drive them . . .
Nowhere does the average teacher have a heavier responsibility than in the North. This is so because in many places the government schoolroom is new. Formal education is still a mystique which some fear may rob the pupils of their heritage, while others regard it as the solution to all problems that it cannot possibly solve. Thus the experience of education will be a revelation to some, and a disappointment to others. The conclusion the pupil reaches may be only partly within the teacher's control.

The northern teacher's responsibility is heavier because he must teach across a cultural gulf - a gulf he may not always perceive. Whether he understands it or not (and few teachers from the outside can do so completely), he must respect it and teach his pupils to respect what he himself can only imperfectly comprehend. He must, in short, not take away more than he can give.

Language is the most obvious problem. The physical disadvantages of climate and distance are usually thought of as only minor disadvantages. The homes of school children bear few traditions of academic learning. The child's future is almost always uncertain, and perhaps the most uncertain of all is the future of the unusually able and determined pupil who seeks to travel the whole long road of schooling while knowing very little of what it is all about.
Perhaps most of all, those concerned with northern education face the task of encouraging academic learning. We must teach something of the truth we know, but when our knowledge of another culture's truth is incomplete, it is all the more important for us to teach the means to truth rather than its end alone.

In short, we must teach our pupils to think: this above all. By thinking, I have in mind learning by a thousand ways - by perceiving, by doing, by living. The northern pupil must cover the path of education by himself, by exploring the familiar peaks and dipping deeply into valleys which we outsiders can only briefly explore. We must teach him not just simple reasoning which he may well have developed outside of school, but we must seek to have him think in abstract which is less familiar to a people with little literature of their own and limited access to the writings of other people. (Cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 161)

Not only does The Opening Door challenge teachers to take up the call to teach in the North, it imparts a call for social responsibility that is also an integral part of the calling itself. It also conjures up the notion of education as a new frontier in transition. In The Call to Teach, Hansen (1995) also asserts that the practice involves the responsibilities and obligations that come with educators' role in shaping society. He explains,
Social practices like teaching and medicine are distinct. Each calls on practitioners to accept the particular responsibilities and obligations that accompany it, rather than either to ignore them or to impose their own... Though teaching as a practice evolves with social change, it remains a public act that bears directly on the shaping of society. (p. 140)

For teachers not to impose their own beliefs on others, especially those of another cultural background, requires mutual understanding. Mutual understanding is key to success within another culture. Ricoeur's view that "... aiming for the good life with and for others in just institutions", applies to teachers' roles not only in the classroom but in the greater community, and in some cases, in the global community of learners.

We never fully understand another society by measuring the extent its culture meets our own. In his chapter On Understanding Another People (1966), J. J. Honingmann explains, "To understand another culture (on its terms) requires that we temporarily forget our own and adopt a 'culturally relative' point of view" (p. 72). An anthropologist who has studied the Inuit of Canada, he further explains what advantages cultural relativity has in understanding others,

Cultural relativity means thinking with other rules and standards than our own while holding our own standards, values and beliefs in abeyance. This is not always easy, but anthropologists furnish living proof that with a little practice, cultural relativity can be
mastered. Such mastery offers real advantages. It puts us in a better position to deal more effectively with other people. It prevents us from making costly or embarrassing mistakes through misunderstanding other people. It prevents us from distorting other ways of life by regarding them simply as copies, often inferior copies of our own, which they never are. Cultural relativity provides us with an objective basis for understanding people who follow other customs than we do. (p. 72)

To emphasize this point, he recalls a story about Southern teachers who had come to work in Frobisher Bay, a remote community in Baffin Island, Northwest Territories,

More recently when I was in Frobisher Bay, I heard teachers, who had come to Baffin Island to teach Eskimo children, complain about Eskimo parents. The teachers claimed that Eskimo parents spoiled the children by allowing them to do whatever they pleased. In a way, the teachers were right, but they distorted what they saw. Compared to the teachers' own standards, Eskimo parents do permit their children considerable emotional spontaneity. The teachers distorted Eskimo parents' behaviour by judging it too much from their own standards of parental discipline. The teachers had little regard for cultural relativity, and as a result they railed to
see how consistently Eskimo life encourages children to grow up into independent and very resourceful adult human beings. (p. 73)

In order to gain a better understanding of a culture, through cultural relativity, anthropologists advise that this process involves time and effort. Therefore, teachers who commit themselves to staying in an Inuit or First Nations community for longer than the usual three year term, have a better chance to understand the culture they are immersed in. Honingmann (1966) further explains,

Because it takes time and effort to master another culture and to see it in terms of its inherent standards and values, anthropologists make it a point to live in a foreign culture for a long period, humbly learning their hosts' standards and customs. They need plenty of time to get rid of as many prejudices as possible so that they may perceive in a fresh, objective way what the people themselves are doing and why they are doing it.

In the same way that learning a foreign language requires working with the rules of that language, and not the rules of another, learning to understand how Eskimos, Indians or any other people think and act requires that you forget the standards and habits of your own culture and concentrate on the culture you want to understand. (p. 73)
He also warns that cultural relativity recognizes that behavior is always appropriate to a particular time and place, to a particular system of culture. He suggests,

Therefore, if people cannot adopt everything we try to teach them, we mustn't jump to the conclusion that they are ignorant or that they are of inferior intelligence. If you use your eyes unbiasedly, you will see that every group of people is intelligent enough to solve their own traditional problems quite efficiently. They have to be, otherwise they wouldn't have survived and wouldn't be here any longer for you to see them. (p. 74)

In order to gain cultural relativity, one must demonstrate an interest in understanding the other culture. In the sense of Dewey (1897/1973), "interest" constitutes more than preference; it has more substantive relation to who the person is. Hansen (1995) adds, "The interest one shows in some larger concern or issue helps to shape the person's beliefs, convictions, and attitudes. Interests draw out the person's mind and imagination" (p. 144).

To translate this interest to the world of the classroom, Hansen (1995) suggests, "The teacher's testimony reveals a reciprocal relation between interest and success in the classroom" (p. 144). This would suggest that teachers who are interested in learning about another culture and employ cultural relativity to the classroom setting, would more than likely meet with success in teaching within the cultural context of their students.
Teachers are called to the profession because they feel they have something to share with their students. They feel they can make a difference in the lives of the children they teach. This notion of improving the situation of mankind through education is highlighted in Thomas Jefferson. Bottorff (1997) relays Jefferson's words,

"He who receives an idea from me", Jefferson said in 1813, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me. That ideas should freely spread from one to another over the globe, for the moral and mutual instruction of man, and improvement of his condition, seems to have been peculiarly and benevolently designed by nature". (pp. 54 - 55)

Again this and the notion that teaching is full of hope, explains why some teachers are called to work in societies and cultures where they feel they can assist in the preservation of more global pursuits. Again, Bottorff quotes Jefferson by adding, it

"... may teach them how to work out their own greatest happiness by showing them that it does not depend on the condition of the life in which chance has placed them, but is always the result of good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom, and happiness." (p. 55)
Previous research has shown that many persons enter teaching for idealistic purposes (Cohen, 1991; Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Serow, Eaker, and Forrest, 1994). They want to work with young people, to have a positive influence on them, and to pass on what they know and care for. Research suggests that successful teachers conceive their work in broader than purely functional terms (Bullough et al., 1991; Dollase, 1992; Macrorie, 1984).

It is the research of Hansen (1995) that I find most accurately reflects why teachers are called to other cultural settings like the Arctic. As I pointed out earlier in this chapter, he believes that “The practice precedes the individual. From this perspective, it ‘calls on’ all who take it seriously to fulfill its requirements and responsibilities” (p. 124). He further reveals that teachers “... do not ‘invent’ these situations. They emerge from the terms of the practice itself. It is the practice that calls one to act not the individual per se. The practice is the ‘caller’, inviting the person to meet its obligations” (p. 124). Furthermore, he contends that “The teacher ‘is called’ by the practice” (p. 124).

In contrast to this thinking, Plato likens man’s desire to make sense of his world as going into and coming out of the cave. In this powerful metaphor, man leaves the darkness of the cave, and steps out into the light. The light represents knowledge and helps to create new understanding. Early explorers like Marco Polo, Columbus, and Magellan possessed this curiosity for the unknown. Their interest in the unknown became a powerful force in instigating their expeditions into territories new to them where they viewed many new and
different things. They learned how other cultures were organized, how others' belief systems differed, and gained an appreciation for such things as varied foods and clothing styles, social behaviours for men and women, as representative of these different cultures. Like the teachers in this study, as they interacted with other cultures, they became more able to enact their calling within the new cultural context in which they had become a part.

**Calling and Relationship**

Due to the very nature of their chosen profession, teachers may have through their contact with young students, a natural advantage for being successful within another cultural setting. According to Comer (1996), children are reflections of their environment. Within the school setting, the astute teacher has the opportunity to learn from the children about their culture. In this relationship, the teacher becomes the learner and the student, the teacher. Teachers, through their training, understand the nature of teaching and learning. This can be used to their advantage when living and working within another culture. Another important aspect of this relationship, is the incredible potential influence a teacher has on the group of students in her care. As Comer writes,

> Because of the extreme dependency on the child and the important role of the caretaker, the attitudes, values and ways of the caretaker greatly influence those of the young child. This allows
the caretaker to mediate the child's experiences - to give them
meaning and to establish their relative importance. (p. 44)

Thus, a teacher wishing to understand the new culture she finds herself in
and to also be understood by that cultural group, has a tremendous opportunity
not only to learn from her students but to also influence how the students
perceive and understand her. This shared understanding is powerful as a tool
for developing relationship.

In *Between Man and Man*, Buber (1985) explores the relationship
between education and the development of character. Character is tied to the
culture of the society; character is the embodiment of what that community holds
as its truths, beliefs, and mores. The education of character is not an automatic
outcome of an education. As Buber explains, it is tied directly to the relationship
between teacher and student. He believes that

Education worthy of the name is essentially education of
character. For the genuine educator does not merely consider
individual functions of his pupil, as one intending to teach him
only to know or be capable of certain definite things; but his
concern is always the person as a whole, both in the actuality
in which he lives before you now and in his possibilities, what
he can become. . . One may cultivate and enhance personality,
but in education one can and must aim at character. (p. 104)
In educating character, it is the teacher who engages the student with her whole being. He explains,

Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow human beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them. (Buber, 1985, p. 105)

Out of the teacher’s aliveness, which allows her to communicate honestly with her students, comes confidence and trust. Buber agrees,

Confidence, of course, is not won by strenuous endeavour to win it, but by direct and ingenious participation in the life of the people one is dealing with - in this case in the life one’s pupils - and by assuming the responsibility which arises from such participation.

(p. 107)

In addition to this, Ricoeur’s belief in the value of friendship, which is an expression of justice, through the mutual respect for the other self, could be key in how readily a teacher will become a true part of the community without imposing her will on others. To add to this notion, Aristotle declares "... that the greatest good a friend desires for his friend is to stay just as he is" (cited in Ricoeur, 1992).
Acting in friendship, within community, teachers are also called on to be sources of moral counsel. Whether the teacher is helping junior high school students deal with a friend's suicide, or listening to a parent who is dealing with her learning disabled child, or assisting a colleague who is experiencing classroom management problems, the teacher becomes more than a professional imparting knowledge. She becomes the confidante out of friendship and confidence. In *The Call to Teach*, Hansen (1995) also observed this phenomenon. He notes, “From the first grader worried about how to care for the pet rabbit in the classroom, to the twelfth grader troubled about a classmate's treatment of other people, teachers are called on to be sources of moral counsel” (p. 98).

To further add to this notion of relationship between the teacher and others, in *I and Thou*, Buber (1987) established his belief that the deepest reality of human life involves the meaningful exchange between one being and another.

A teacher who accepts her students and the community of her students as they are, demonstrates this kind of respect for others that lays the foundation for enduring friendship and community membership. As a teacher, success within another culture is dependent on mutual understanding, respect for self and others, and the solidity of friendship as discussed by Ricoeur (1992) in his recent work, *Oneself As Another*. 

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Commitment and Change Through Calling

In 1965, the Teacher Orientation Course explained the situation of the North to new recruits as

Essentially the administration and development of the North is the task of coping with three basic problems of the world today: the political growth to self government, the economic transformation of an underdeveloped area, and the social adjustment of people unadapted to our modern way of life. It is in this latter problem that you teachers will play the greatest part - to open doors, to enlighten, to show the way and give guidance to a people eager to learn so that they may take up their rightful place of responsibility in our complex society. (cited in Macpherson, 1991, p. 161)

The government called teachers to open doors, to enlighten, to show the way and to give guidance to people who are eager to learn. This was also a time of major change and transition. While the life style of the Inuit and First Nations people was no longer able to be supported by their “old ways” on the land, the government was doing its best to assist with their transition into a more modern Southern based life-style.

The government called on teachers to assist with this transition. Buber (1985) explains the crisis and the role of the educator within it. He suggests that
To-day, indeed, in the hour of upheaval, the eternal is sifted from the pseudo-eternal. That which flashed into the primal radiance and blurred the primal sound will be extinguished and silenced, for it has failed before the horror of the new confusion and the questioning soul has unmasked its futility. Nothing remains but what rises above the abyss of to-day's monstrous problems, as above every abyss of every time: the wing-beat of the spirit and the creative word. But he who can see and hear out of unity will also behold and discern again what can be beheld and discerned eternally. The educator who helps to bring man back to his own unity will help to put him again face to face with God. (p. 117)

The relationship between the teacher and the unity of mankind is best explained by Buber, as well,

But unity itself, unity of the person, unity of the lived life, has to be emphasized again and again. . . . This does not mean a static unity of the uniform, but the great dynamic unity of the multiform in which multiformity is formed into unity of character. . . . It is the longing for personal unity, from which must be born a unity of mankind, which the educator should lay hold of and strengthen in his pupils. Faith in this unity and the will to achieve it is not a "return" to individualism, but a step beyond all
dividedness of individualism and collectivism. A great and full
relation between man and man can only exist between unified
and responsible persons. . . Genuine education of character is
genuine education for community. (p. 116)

How does one bring unity to the multiform? How does one assimilate the
cultures of the North and South to make one Canada? Comer (1996) realizes
the power the school has in changing communities. He also recognizes the
power of the school in molding society over time.

According to Comer, "Next to the family, the school has the most
significant impact on children's growth and development " (p. xvii). Particularly,
in small, isolated communities, the school plays a major role in the overall life of
the community. In the Inuit and First Nations settlements during the 1970's and
1980's, teachers were accepted and welcomed as all knowing beings. The
Aboriginal people at that time trusted the teachers sent to them without question.
They trusted the educational care and development of their children to such
strangers; a teacher potentially had a great deal of power. Each community
school was usually located thousands of miles from Yellowknife, the
headquarters for education at that time. In most cases the superintendent, who
resided in Yellowknife, was the sole outside support for the classroom teacher
throughout the school year. If the superintendent visited once a year, particularly
to the more distant, nearly inaccessible communities, he was applauded and
usually esteemed by a community celebration held in his honor.
In *Voices of Beginning Teachers*, Dollase (1992) discusses the power of the teacher as both a seeker and a student. He quotes Plato in the context of this power, through the lens of the liberal preparation of teachers as:

Above all see to it that he is a seeker and a student of that body by which he might be able to learn and find out who will give him the capacity and the knowledge to distinguish the good from the bad life, and so everywhere and always choose the better from among those that are possible. (p. 2)

With Plato's words, I am once again reminded not only of the power a teacher has to make decisions on behalf of her students, but also of the moral and ethical responsibilities that rest within this power. A teacher in the Northwest Territories at this time could enter a community and maintain the status quo within the school system. A teacher could also be a change agent—re-organizing and modifying such things as the learning resources, teaching strategies and methods, to capitalize on the learning styles and knowledge base of her students. The decisions rest with the individual teacher or teachers within each community school.

This brings us back to Hansen's (1995) research where he found that the idea of vocation also underscores just how central the person is who occupies the position of teacher. It highlights the fact that the role or occupation itself does not teach students. He underscores this centrality, "It is the person *within* the role and who *shapes* it who teaches students, and who has an impact
on them for better or for worse" (p. 17). Teaching is about change, growth, and development.

**Reflection**

According to the *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1979), a reflection is defined as the following:

**Reflection:**
1. an instance of reflecting
2. the production of an image by or as if by a mirror
3. a: the action of bending or folding back; b: a reflective part: fold
4. something produced by reflecting: as a: an image given back by a reflecting surface b: an effect produced by an influence
5. an often obscure or indirect criticism: reproach
6. a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a remark made as a result of meditation
7. consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose
8. turning back
9. a: a transformation of a figure in which each point is replaced by a point symmetric with respect to a line b: a transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis of a rectangular coordinate system

Reflection is also an integral part of the calling to teach. As a vocation, teaching calls the person to critique herself as a practitioner. Self-reflection opens the door to renewal. Hansen (1995) suggests,
Rather, the idea of vocation serves as a mirror into which all prospective and practicing teachers might look. It is a mirror that invites teachers to self-scrutiny and self-reflection. It asks teachers to ponder the extent to which they are meeting the responsibilities that accompany the role. It calls on them to be their best when in the presence of their students. It urges them to act, at a minimum, as if their work were a vocation, regardless whether they in fact view it as such. I show that adopting this stance renders teaching a much more interesting and fulfilling activity than it may otherwise appear to be. It enables teachers to have the kinds of positive influence on students society hopes for, and that they themselves perhaps imagined when they first considered entering the classroom. (p. 139)

Reflection is tied to self-assessment and improvement through reflection itself. In the Forward to Hansen's *The Call to Teach* (1995), Larry Cuban confirms that "Adopting the perspective of vocation reveals productive and personally meaningful ways in which to renew oneself as a teacher" (p. xiii). Teachers, as professionals, engage in annual professional development activities: they attend seminars and workshops, spend summers returning to university for up-grading, and often spend week-ends and evenings with
colleagues planning for curricular change and implementation. It is tied to the calling, woven throughout the fabric of teaching.

Tolstoy’s story reveals the educational value of self-reflection, for renewal and growth. Hansen (1995) suggests that “The Three Questions” sheds light on the emergence of vocation in teaching (p. 148). He says, “Tolstoy’s story reveals the educational value of holding one’s experience up to the light of self-reflection and questioning.” (p. 149). This well known version of an old fable, sheds light on the emergence—or the recognition, depending on the angle of vision - of vocation in teaching. As related by Hansen (1995),

One day a king decides that, henceforth, he would never fail at anything if only he could get the answers to three questions: What are the most important things to do in life? When is the right time to undertake them? and Who are the right (or wrong) people to deal with in doing so? He promised a large reward to any person who could provide him answers. But the learned people who came to him from far and wide offered conflicting advice, which confused and annoyed the king, and so he heeded none of it. Instead, he disguised himself as a peasant and went into the woods to visit an old hermit renowned for his insight. He found the hermit digging in a garden. Noticing the man’s frailty and fatigue, the king took over the digging. He dug
for hours. All the while the hermit said nothing in reply to his questions.

Suddenly, just as the sun was setting, an injured man staggered out of the forest. He had been stabbed in the stomach. The king tended his wound and carried him into the hermit's hut. After settling him in, the tired king fell deep asleep. The next morning he awoke to find the now healing stranger gazing at him intently. The man confessed he had been lying in ambush to kill the king for injuries to his family the king's men had inflicted years before. The man had waited and waited in the woods, but the king never returned from the hermit. When he went looking for him, he stumbled on the king's soldiers, who recognized him and wounded him before he got away. The man begged for reconciliation, which the king was happy to grant. Finally, before taking his leave, the king once more asked the hermit his three questions. The hermit, bent over while sowing seeds, looked up at him. "You have already been answered," he said calmly. The king was dumbfounded. The hermit continued:

Had you not taken pity on my weakness yesterday and dug these beds for me, instead of turning back alone, that fellow would have assaulted you, and you would have regretted not staying with me. Therefore,
the most important time was when you were digging
the beds; I was the most important man; and the most
important pursuit was to do good to me.

And later when the man came running to us,
the most important time was when you were taking
care of him, for if you had not bound up his wounds,
he would have died without having made peace with
you; therefore he was the most important man, and
what you did for him was the most important deed.

Remember then: there is only one important
time - Now. And it is important because it is the only
time we have dominion over ourselves; and the most
important man is he with whom you are, for no one
can know whether or not he will ever have dealings
with any other man; and the most important pursuit is
to do good to him, since it is for that purpose alone
that man was sent into this life. (Dunnigan, 1962, pp.
87-88, cited in Hansen, pp. 148-149)

Tolstoy's story reveals the educational value of holding one's experiences
up to the light of self-reflection and questioning. Reflection is an integral element
embedded in the call to teach. Self-criticism leads to improvement and renewal.
While Foster (1989) writes that "certain agents can engage in transformative practices which change social structures and forms of community, and it is this that we label leadership," in my thinking this is only part of what constitutes leadership. According to Heifetz (1994, p. 252), "Leadership is both active and reflective". One has to alternate between participating and observing. Walt Whitman described it as being "both in and out of the game" (p. 252). Again, I am reminded of Plato's allegory of the cave, where educational leaders see the light through their classroom relationships, experiencing the conditions which exist there. They then are compelled to return to the cave via an administrative context to bring understanding to others about what they learned. While teachers are change agents within their own classrooms and schools, it takes leadership at a higher level to make the more significant changes the teachers in this study may have had in mind. In order to make a more comprehensive change in how educational programs were designed and delivered in classrooms in the Northwest Territories during the study's time period, the teachers moved into leadership roles, as Teacher Consultants or school-based administrators, which took them out of the regular classroom. In doing so, they went back to "the cave" to share what they had learned in the light of day about appropriate educational strategies and practices for students of cross-cultural backgrounds living in Arctic communities. I suspect that is why each teacher moved to the District Office, playing a greater role in influencing educational change for the students of the Northwest Territories.
Summary

While little is known about what calls teachers to practice in cultural contexts other than their own, it is teaching which provides the vehicle and the opportunity for teachers to experience, close at hand, living and working in various environments. It has been suggested that the call to teach in such culturally diverse regions as Canada’s Northwest Territories was a reflection of their search for employment opportunities, financial rewards, a greater understanding of their interest in the Inuit and Dene cultures, and adventure.

Following World War II, the North began to change. With the heightened Canadian consciousness brought about by national maturity and obligation, along with the growing sense of ethical responsibility for the welfare and conditions of others, there grew a new interest in the people of the Arctic. As the government began to take responsibility for the education of its Northern citizens, schools sprang up in small, isolated communities across the Arctic. With this development came the need for a qualified teaching force. The government actively recruited teachers from Southern Canada to fill these positions.

To better understand why teachers were called to teach in the Arctic, I examined why teachers are called to the vocation in the first place. In The Call to Teach, Hansen (1995) shares his predictions. While teaching as a vocation denotes a summons or bidding to be of service to others, it also reflects a sense
of determination, courage, and flexibility on the part of the called to make a
difference in the lives of others through the practice. In *Between Man and Man*,
Buber (1985) emphasizes the role of the teacher as the architect of character,
not only contributing to the growth and development of her students, but of
wanted “to contribute to the coming-into-being of that world” (p. 134). Through
their influence on young children, they influence their world and the greater
community of learners.

In addition, Ricoeur’s (1992) belief in the value of friendship, through
mutual respect for the other self, contributes to the teacher’s ability to become a
part of the greater community. Teachers become the sources of moral counsel;
they are more than a professional imparting knowledge to others. The very term
eeleehaairee captures this multi-faceted expectation of teachers’ roles in Northern
Aboriginal communities. Through their commitment to others, both in and outside
of the school setting, teachers gain respect and friendship within the greater
community. Buber (1948) explains that the “genuine education of character is
genuine education for community” (p. 116).

The stories of the six educators not only reveal the extent of each
participant’s commitment and respect for the students in her classroom, but
demonstrate through reflection, each educator’s belief in the value of education
for the greater community. Chapter Three presents the methodology I employed
to obtain and analyze critical data which form the basis of this multi-case study.
The results, based on actual stories developed through three ever deeper levels of reflection by the educators of their experiences in the Northwest Territories follow in Chapter Four. Chapter Five then provides a summary of the study, offering implications and recommendations for future consideration.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

As noted by Merriam (1988), a “qualitative case study is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education” (p. xiii). Thus, a multi-case study was selected for this investigation, exploring the motivating factors which called six selected women teachers to leave their own cultural setting to choose life-careers as educators in cultures other than their own. In support of this, Stake (1995) pointed out that one of the major differences between quantitative and qualitative research is “the distinction between explanation and understanding as the purpose of inquiry” (p. 37). Qualitative researchers seek an understanding of the complex interrelationships that exist rather than merely a quest for explanation and control.

Another contributing factor in my selection of a multi-case study approach is that there might be a greater degree of understanding if I were to explore a number of similar cases, and create individual as well as a cross-case analysis. In qualitative methodology, the researcher is the instrument through which the subjects’ stories are interpreted for the reader. In addition, Merriam (1988)
believed that the investigator is "the single most important component in qualitative research" (p. 122). To further match the research method to the problem to be investigated, Stake (1995) also points out another important variance between qualitative and quantitative research as "the distinction between a personal and impersonal role for the researcher" (p. 37). Patton (1980) also underscores the balance needed between insider and outsider in qualitative research. He says,

Experiencing the program as an insider is what necessitates the participant part of the participant observation. At the same time, however, there is clearly an observer side to this process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation so as to become capable of understanding the program as an insider while describing the program for outsiders. (cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 94)

In this particular study, the intimate knowledge and background of the researcher, are essential components of the study. Also, while conducting this study, I will be analyzing my own calling, as a case within a case, as it were. In addition, since "the importance of the researcher in qualitative case study cannot be overemphasized" (Merriam, 1988, p. 19), Chapter Three includes a synopsis of the background of the researcher.
Methodological Overview

According to Merriam (1988), "qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities - that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring" (p. 17). To further emphasize this role for qualitative researchers, Singleton (1983) adds that "interpretation is their scientific goal" (p. 210). For this study, the I collected and carefully interpreted the data to determine the callings at play in the life experiences of the participating educators.

In order to better understand the life-career choices of the participants, it was important to interpret the life experiences not to measure or judge them in isolation. This study also explored leadership in an educational context, through the life-career choices of teachers who exhibit leadership through their calling. With this in mind and to further support the connection between my approach and the purpose of this study, I was reminded by Eisner's (1991) comments which view qualitative thought and inquiry as "the kind of understanding we need in order to create better schools and to evaluate the results of our efforts" (p. 21). Through the use of qualitative methodology, this study examined the life-careers of six women educators, and interpreted the data to provide a richer understanding of what called them to make such decisions. At the onset of the study, my assumption was that the subjects would feel strongly that their callings
had a positive impact on the educational systems of the Northwest Territories. Indeed, the data collected supported that view.

**Validity and Reliability**

According to Merriam (1998), "regardless to the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted" (p. 165). In qualitative research, the researcher must rigorously remain faithful to the data. "The reliability of the researcher to include all relevant materials and . . . to not seriously distort the interpretation of the data included," is stressed by Hess (1992, p. 180).

This faithfulness can begin with careful selection of the participants, then extend to meticulous attention to accuracy in the recording and transcription of the data collected from the series of interviews. To further augment the elements of reliability and validity, I shared the preliminary findings and assumptions with the participants for confirmation, substantiation, and in some cases, for reframing. In addition, I used multiple levels of analysis to elicit themes and provide a basis for making interpretations. In summary, validity and reliability of the qualitative research process was assured through demonstrating rigor in the data collection process, sharing the preliminary findings with the participants,
continual re-examination and debriefing throughout the analysis process, and using multiple levels of analysis.

Research Design

The most extensive data has been collected through a series of individual interviews with the participants. Pending logistical concerns, I had proposed to augment the study by holding a group forum with the participants, where they would be invited to bring artifacts such as photographs, articles of clothing, and Northern materials which would further personalize and represent their individual experiences, to stimulate an expansion of the data base through the interplay of dialogue and group dynamics. During this activity, I also intended to elicit our mutual understandings of our calling, and our commitment for change. However, due to the subjects' present geographic location, personal commitments, and cost, it was not feasible to unite the group for this proposed activity.

Data Collection

Interviews were central to this study, as each participant could reflect more deeply as she shared her unique story about her life-career experiences while providing educational services within a cultural setting quite different from her own. Each story provided unique perspectives regarding the callings and
commitments that shaped each educator's life during her time as an educator in the Northwest Territories.

Seidman (1991) explains that "interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior" (p. 4). According to Brenner, Brown, and Canter (1985), interviews show a "willingness to treat individuals as the heroes [sic] of their own drama, as valuable sources of particular information" (p. 3). In order to seek out each participant's own drama, interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. A preliminary set of common questions were used to extract further topics for exploration, as they emerged through the interview process. Each set of four interviews were between forty-five minutes to an hour in duration, and were planned for August 1997 to February 1998. However, due to the difficulty I had in locating the participants, I conducted the actual interviews between November 1997 and February 1998.

The data collected from the first set of interviews supplied the information required for Reflections, which highlighted each educator's call to teach and subsequent call to teach in Canada's Arctic, addressing research questions one and two. This initial interview also provided a basis for the formulation of additional questions to further clarify their experiences as eeleehairee in remote Aboriginal communities and to set the stage for the next level of questioning. The second set of interviews served as a forum to validate or verify the preliminary findings, and ask for clarification and even deeper reflection. This set
of interviews focused on gaining insight into research question three. The interviews contributed to the second level of insight, providing the content for Reflections of Reflections. The third set of interviews explored even deeper the topics raised, to address unanswered questions, and to expand my understanding of each participant's unique experience. This level of questioning, evoked an in depth reflection which created, for some, an emotionally charged revelation of her experience as an administrator in the High Arctic, at the time of her career there. The last interview encouraged an even deeper level of inner examination, framing the third layer of inquiry, Reflections of Reflections of Reflections. It focused on research questions four and five, eliciting stories about how their experiences in education in the Northwest Territories during this time period had changed them personally and as educators.

**Entry to the Population**

Since 1975, I have been actively involved with education in remote communities of the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, Canada, as a teacher, teacher consultant, and administrator. During this time, I have had the good fortune to work with and know other women educators who have selected similar career paths. While most are dispersed across Canada today, involved in a variety of educational projects, I have for the most part, been able to stay in touch with some of the subjects I hoped would accept my invitation to participate in this multi-case study.
Selection of Subjects

I based my selection on the receptiveness and willingness of the educators to commit to the study. The primary selection criterion was her involvement in education in the Northwest Territories, from 1970 to 1985, in the roles of classroom teacher who later moved into an administrative position within the public education system as Teacher Consultant, Vice-principal, Principal or District Administrative role.

To initiate the study, I began the process of contacting potential participants in August 1997. While most educators' schedules are tied to the academic year, September to June, I had difficulty reaching possible subjects at their work-sites. Then in September 1997, I found that most of the potential subjects were no longer employed by the district identified on my list.

Furthermore, I found that since I last spoke to them, the following had occurred, making it difficult to locate them with the information I currently possessed: marital status had changed, which in some cases, altered their surnames; employment had changed; several had left the Northwest Territories, some had moved within the Northwest Territories, but the exact location was a question mark; two had retired to Southern locations; several had unlisted phone numbers or had moved to a new address; one was on a year's leave of absence from Cambridge Bay, traveling the world; and two had left education all together, to pursue a different career.
After experiencing so many dead-ends, I then employed the following research techniques: I placed an advertisement in the major newspapers of each Province, plus I specifically asked for assistance in locating individuals through the Northern newspapers in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. These advertisements brought a flood of e-mail messages and phone calls from individuals who knew or had knowledge of the whereabouts of the individuals I listed. Furthermore, the Canadian Broadcasting Company North (C.B.C. North), based in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, had a reporter contact me, inquiring about the study I was proposing to conduct. This led to an early morning interview on live radio which was broadcast across the High Arctic.

As soon as the interview was over, I had a number of phone calls from individuals who had either known me in the Arctic, heard of me as a Teacher Consultant, or knew a possible subject I might include in my study. This was a pivotal event. As a result, I then had a current phone number or address for a number of possible participants.

One of the spin-offs of the radio show was that several of my students from Gjoa Haven phoned me. They are now adults with children of their own. They reflected on how my time as eeleehairee affected them. Their memories were vivid and at times painful. I remembered why it was I had cried from the moment I stepped on the plane to leave Gjoa Haven until I reached Edmonton.
felt I was being torn apart - separated from the people I loved and cared so deeply about.

Once I had received the information from informants, I followed up on all leads. I then located each potential participant, and contacted her directly to schedule a meeting, convenient to her, to outline the proposed study and data collection process. When contacting the individuals, I asked whether each was interested in and willing to participate in the study for the duration. Also, I discussed the amount of time the potential participant was willing or able to devote to the study. At that time, I scheduled initial interviews, including the most preferable time and place. Prior to the actual interviews, I sent letters to each participant explaining the study, outlining the interview process, providing a list of the interview questions, and setting the schedule for the first session. Then, as needed, I made further contact through letters, e-mail, facsimile, and telephone calls, to answer questions, prepare for sessions, and organize for future data collection.

**Protection of Subjects**

The nature of this study required little risk on behalf of the participants other than the commitment of their time. I did not interrupt any workplace activity with the interview process, or with details resulting from the study. All contact was made during personal time, away from the workplace. The focus
emphasized an intellectual involvement with the experiences each encountered while living and working within other cultural settings as teachers and administrators in the North. Participants were assured of masked identity and the confidentiality of their responses. They were also made aware of the option to leave the study at any time. All materials and evidence was coded to further protect the participants. Furthermore, I kept all recordings, data collection evidence and material, in a locked file cabinet in my private office at home. Interview participants were invited to review and reflect on the data collected from the preliminary data summaries and interpretations. In addition, these responses and reflections were included and became part of the on-going data analysis process.

**Approach to Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data (Merriam, 1988). In qualitative research, there is no definitive point where data collection ends and analysis begins. As Merriam (1988) explains, "Data analysis and data collection are a simultaneous activity in qualitative research" (p. 119). She further observes, "a qualitative design is emergent: One does not know whom to interview, what to ask, or where to look next without analyzing data as they are collected. The process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic" (p. 123). In keeping with this advice, in this study, data analysis began
with the actual interviews as the subjects and I exchanged dialogue while responding to each other's statements, questions, memories and reflections.

The process continued with the transcription of the first set of interviews, initial coding of themes, and identification of topics for further investigation, clarification, or reflection. Prior to the next set of interviews, the participants were given a preliminary summary of the findings and assumptions, with a request for possible suggestions for additional topics to pursue and consider. These initial findings assisted me in structuring the next interview and provided insight for further analysis of the data.

Following the completion of the data collection process, an extensive analysis occurred. "At this stage, the researcher is virtually holding a conversation with the data, asking questions of it, making comments" (Merriam, 1988, p.131). For this study, my goal was to organize the data into recurring themes, as well as to examine the unique findings which result from each participant's reflections. As Merriam (1988) indicates, "a qualitative inductive multi-case study seeks to build abstractions across cases" (p. 154). Such an analysis allowed me to identify and describe similarities as well as contrasting elements in the callings and commitments of the participants. Finally, I examined the educators' reflections through the various lenses of a cross-case analysis. Through this approach to data analysis, I have been able to generate interpretations, offer similarities, suggest implications, and extend conclusions that may be useful to the educators in understanding their callings. This analysis
may also add to the information required for the Department of education, Northwest Territories to better understand the essential attributes and characteristics for future educational leaders to staff its isolated community locations.

Background of the Researcher

In 1975, while leafing through the Montreal Star's Sunday newspaper edition, I was caught by a full-page employment advertisement. Silhouetted by the striking symbol of the polar bear, the advertisement read, "Come teach in Canada's Arctic. Take the challenge of a life-time!" Although I put the issue aside, I thought about the offer. The idea almost had a seductive quality about it that somehow appealed to me. It spoke to me of adventure, excitement, challenge, and the unknown. I was attracted to the notion of teaching in another culture, even though I knew little of what that culture represented. Out of interest, I attended an information session held at the Sheraton Inn on Sherbrooke Street in downtown Montreal. Not long after that, I was preparing to move to the isolated Inuit settlement of Gjoa Haven, located on King William Island in the Northwest Territories.

Since leaving Montreal in August of 1975, I have worked as the classroom teacher and principal of Kekertak Ilihakvik from 1975-1978. During this time, I also acted as Area Consultant for teachers new to the Cambridge Bay Area of the Arctic. I later became Teacher Consultant for the Inuvik Region, actively
working with principals, teachers, and teacher aides in the development and delivery of modified educational programs from 1980-1985. Then in 1985, I became the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for School District #87 (Stikine) in Northern British Columbia which served three distinct First Nations groups, as well as seven multi-cultural communities, within a geographic area the size of France. Presently, as the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for School District #48 (Howe Sound), not only am I privileged to work with three very distinct and culturally diverse First Nations groups, I also have the opportunity to serve the multi-ethnic communities of Squamish, Pemberton and Whistler, British Columbia.

As a researcher, it is important that the reader can view my perspectives as a pivotal part of the research (van Manen, 1990). Furthermore, van Manen explains that the researcher's life experiences bring natural biases as to how one might view the same phenomenon. Therefore, during the last twenty years, I have had the good fortune to form close relationships with people of varied ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds in an educational setting, similar to those of the individuals in this study. The nature of this relationship includes living, working, and learning with these unique individuals. As Mirande (1985) suggests, "One cannot help but wonder whether it is possible to do valid ethnographic (and participatory) research without being knowledgeable of and sensitive to the nuance of the culture under study" (p. 215).
To further explore the importance of the researcher's sensitivity to the context and all the variables within it, and in support of evaluators using naturalistic inquiry, Merriam (1988) refers to the work of Guba and Lincoln (1981). They point out that qualitative researchers do not measure. Instead, "they do what anthropologists, social scientists, connoisseurs, critics, oral historians, novelists, essayists, and poets throughout the years have done. They emphasize, describe, judge, compare, portray, evoke images, and create, for the reader or listener, the sense of having been there" (p. 149).

Since I have actually lived and worked closely with the Inuit and First Nations cultures, I understand the time period and cultural context that the individuals in this study have experienced. At this period in the history of the Northwest Territories, various communities were at different stages of development due in part, to the amount of exposure each had with Southern cultures. As researcher, I want the reader to feel that they too experienced these rich life-career situations. Through my first-hand experience, I bring the knowledge and sensitivity required to analyze the data, and to better communicate the meaning and perspectives found through the process. Through the stories of the participants, it is my intention to provide the reader with my sense of being there, for me to relive my own calling, and to create the opportunity for the reader to imagine being there with us, as well, through our reflections of reflections of reflections.
Summary

This study is a multi-case qualitative investigation, analyzing the stories of the callings and commitment of six women educators who devoted a significant part of their professional lives providing educational services to students within a cultural context other than their own. Upon reflection, in response to the interview questions posed during the data collection process, each participant has told her unique and rich life story as eeleehairee in the Northwest Territories. These stories, and the themes which emerge from an analysis of their accounts, provide a rich description of the factors which called them to select and commit themselves to this life-experience as educators in isolated Aboriginal communities in Canada's High Arctic during a period of significant educational change and development.

In Chapter Four, a presentation and analysis of the data are organized in three, ever deeper levels of reflection, to provide answers to the five overarching research questions, which provide the basic framework for the study. In Reflections, the participants' stories provide insight into research questions on and two: What called these women educators to move to isolated areas in the Northwest Territories, Canada to teach children of other cultures?; and What enables some teachers to better understand the deeper, more intrinsic educational needs of another culture, within the community in which they are immersed? In the next even deeper level of self-examination through reflection,
Reflections of Reflections explores the participants’ insights into research question three: What then called these teachers to leave the classroom and enter into administrative roles in those same regions? Finally, Reflections of Reflections of Reflections, takes an even deeper look into the mirror of each participant’s experience through her calling as an educator in the Northwest Territories. This level of reflection focuses on the participants’ reaction to research questions four and five: What might be the deeper callings behind such life-career decisions?; and How have these experiences affected them as educators? Throughout Chapter Four, the stories of their reflections are told in each participant’s own voice. To add yet another dimension, the stories of my experiences as eeleehairee in the Northwest Territories during this same time period, also grouped into the three ever deeper levels of reflection, follow along the margin of Chapter Four, reflecting my unique yet similar calling.

Due to the multi-case nature of this study, Chapter Four not only provides a summary of each subject’s experience at ever deeper levels of reflection, but also presents a cross-case analysis of the data. Chapter Five follows, presenting implications and recommendations resulting from the study, raising issues for further study, and bringing closure to the study.
Chapter Four

Presentation and Analysis of Six Callings: Reflections of Reflections of Reflections

Introduction

Canine “Teacher” Bound for Arctic Bay School

Ottawa (CP) - One woman and one dog is the entire teaching staff assigned to open Canada’s most northerly school. Miss Margery Hinds left Monday for Arctic Bay, a community of 300 Eskimos on the northern tip of Baffin Island 450 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Her only companion is a cocker spaniel called Pingua, whose name in Eskimo means “playful”.

Miss Hinds will be Canada’s most northerly white woman when she sets up school - for Eskimos both young and adult - in a former weather station building. Arctic Bay’s present population includes only one other white person, a trading post manager.
Pingua’s teaching duties come in during English lessons. "I tell him to do something and he understands perfectly and does it," said Miss Hinds. "The Eskimo children try to learn English so they can get him to do the same." The affectionate black spaniel has been with his mistress through her 10 years on northern assignments. Miss Hinds was the first teacher appointed to a northern post - Fort McPherson in the Northwest Territories - 10 years ago when the health and welfare department was responsible for northern education. She speaks the Eskimo’s difficult language. She regards the Eskimos on the whole as an intelligent race.

The greatest problem in her job she says, is “not the teaching but the finding. The Eskimos cannot be concentrated in large groups because of the scarcity of food. But they get together after the trapping season when they come in to trade - and I’ll be there at the school, close to the trading post,” she said (Winnipeg Free Press, August 13, 1958, cited in Dreams & Visions, 1991).

While not all women educators in the High Arctic have enjoyed the same publicity or identical experience in teaching Aboriginal people as Miss Hinds has had, the six educators in this study share their reflections of their own unique experiences through their stories. As did Miss Hinds, each experienced, first-
hand, the challenges and triumphs of their calling as teachers in their Northern postings in the Northwest Territories. Through our reflective sessions together, the participants have provided evidence to suggest a calling to teach, similar to that explored in Hansen's *The Call to Teach* (1995). Through their reflections, each realized a personal calling to teach in another very different cultural context from that of their own background and personal life experiences. In his work in Nazi Germany as Director of the Central Office for Jewish Education, Martin Buber set the following goal for its educational program: the bringing together of groups with differing backgrounds and world views to interact with one another in order to experience the great community - communities of communities, where people of similar or of complementary natures, but of differing minds, lived together genuinely, in mutual support for mutual action. Unlike Buber's intentional great community, these women were called to experience the great community in a real-life setting in the Arctic, driven by their own free choice. As a result of experiencing a natural great community, their stories are rich reflections of living the life of a teacher, an eeleehairee, while being a student of the greater cultural community.

Their stories are presented and analyzed as three successively deeper levels to provide insight through reflection, becoming more philosophical within each level as deeper reflections are reached. The first level, Reflections, will focus on each individual's calling to become a teacher and her calling to teach in another cultural setting, with stories highlighting her students, classroom
experiences, and community life, while serving as teacher in the High Arctic. The second level of reflection, Reflections of Reflections, takes into account the call to leave the classroom to move into an administrative role. This level investigates the calling, tinted with the individual hopes, dreams, and visions of each educator in choosing to move out of the confines of the classroom and into the role of administrator in education in the Northwest Territories at that particular time: a teacher of teachers, a creator of programs, and a designer of schools. At this level, the reality of each educator's life as an administrator is examined through the mirror of time and experience. Lastly, each woman's professional and personal life, as it is today, is considered by looking even deeper into the mirror to better understand the impact of her life's callings and experiences as eeleehairee in the Arctic. Reflections of Reflections of Reflections relays each educator's story as she looks back on her personal and professional life.

As presented earlier in Chapter Two, according to the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1979), a reflection is defined as the following:

Reflection: 1: an instance of reflecting 2: the production of an image by or as if by a mirror 3: a: the action of bending or folding back; b: a reflective part: fold 4: something produced by reflecting: as a: an image given back by a reflecting surface b: an effect produced by an influence 5: an often obscure or indirect criticism: reproach 6: a thought, idea, or opinion formed or a
remark made as a result of meditation 7: consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose 8: turning back: RETURN 9: a: a transformation of a figure in which each point is replaced by a point symmetric with respect to a line b: a transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis of a rectangular coordinate system syn see ANIMADVERSION. (p. 963)

These definitions, along with the work of Buber, Friedman, Hansen, Jefferson, and Ricouer, as well as others, provide a framework from which to analyze the six women educators' callings to teach, and the subsequent callings within each calling.

**Data Presentation: Reflections of Six Callings to Teach**

I recount each woman's story, presented and analyzed under the three related, ever deeper levels of reflection, based on the major themes explored by the research questions, which provide a framework for each educator's individual story as she reflects upon her calling to teach in the High Arctic. I wish to remind the reader that the participants are cited by their pseudonyms. My story, presented under the same themes, follows in the left-hand margin.

In Reflections, as "In an instance of reflecting," the participants take a look into the mirror of their past to tell stories of what called them to teaching and what later called them to teach in cross-cultural settings, in the isolated

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community schools of Canada’s Arctic during the 1970’s and 1980’s. They then peer a bit deeper into the looking glass to reveal stories about their lives as eeleehaires within the Aboriginal communities where they were posted. Their stories tell of challenges and new learnings—word by word, they radiate the hope that is so integral to the calling.

In Reflections of Reflections, as in “An effect produced by an influence,” the educators become even more reflective when they consider why they stepped out of the classroom to enter the world of administration. As educational leaders, they tell compelling stories of the work they performed in assisting novice teachers, new to the North, to better understand the cultural context in which they were immersed. Each reflects on how she influenced the educational system, in her own unique way. Each story is alive with the spirit of life, living her calling every moment of every day, within the greater community of learners.

Then in Reflections of Reflections of Reflections, as in “A transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis. . . .,” each presents stories reflecting the even deeper, more philosophical look into the mirror of her life’s work through her calling. While each feels personally transformed through the practice of her calling, each feels satisfied that she gave something back—that she made a difference.

A cross-case analysis follows the three levels of reflective presentations of the educators’ stories to provide yet another angle of reflection to further examine reflection as “Something produced by reflecting” (1979, p. 963). This
analysis adds richness, extending the tapestry designed by the multi-levels of reflection. By comparing similarities, contrasting differences, and highlighting the uniqueness of each educator’s life as eeleehairee in Canada’s Arctic, I was able to bring out all the subtleties and variances of the individual experiences as well as the collective drama played through the stories of the participants’ calling, at ever deeper levels of reflection. This last reflective process, ties the educators’ stories together, leading me to see the possible implications of their work as educators in the Northwest Territories. Their stories, through a cross-case analysis, deepen our understanding of how they found community through the overcoming of otherness in living unity through their roles as eeleehairee. As Friedman (1990) suggests, This is the essence of all true community, but it is the very heart of the learning community” (p.2). Not only did each educator experience living unity in the community in which she lived and taught, but as she stepped out into the more global community of the greater educational system, she also experienced oneness with each other as educators serving the greater learning community during this period of time.
Standing alone on the windswept airstrip, overlooking the tiny Inuit settlement of Gjoa Haven, Northwest Territories, being blasted by the bone-chilling August winds rising out of the Arctic Ocean, I waved good-bye to the pilot, never realizing that I would not talk to another fluent English speaking person for many months to come.

In Reflections, each participant looked into the mirror of her past to take a glimpse at her calling to teach, and within that instance of reflecting, to look deeper into what called her to teach within another cultural setting, specifically her call to Canada’s Arctic. Within this moment of reflection, each shares her unique experiences as a teacher in an isolated Aboriginal community in the Northwest Territories during the late 1970’s and early 1980’s when education was being introduced to the people of the Arctic, at the community level. Each shares her challenges, fears, and growing commitment to her call to become an eeelehairee within another cultural context. Her reflection represents more than a glimpse at her calling.

Nola

I first met Nola en route from a Territorial Teachers’ Conference in 1975. We were squished into a small aircraft, built for Southern travel, with our immense winter parkas, bulky moose-hide kamiks, and massive purchases from the shops in Yellowknife. We were all headed back to our home settlements to take up teaching again on the following day, Monday. We were happily exhausted from an exhilarating conference, from meeting with so many new and unique people, and from being overwhelmed from all the sights, sounds, and smells of a large centre.

I especially remember Nola and her traveling companion because they stood out—they were so very different from one another. Nola was casually yet sensibly dressed for travel in the North in comfortable jeans and sweater, with a practical down-filled, zipper parka...
I contemplated why I was there. Of course, I was hired by an official team visiting Montreal, on the sole mission of securing teachers and administrators to live and work in isolated aboriginal communities in the High Arctic. Yes, that was it—I was there to teach the children of Kerkertak Ilihakvik. The main problems which worried me were: Who is the teacher? Who is the learner? Who am I? What really is my role here? What do I have to contribute to the common good without destroying what presently exists?

and colourful scarf. Her companion was tall and svelte, wearing a long fitted blue suede skirt and extremely high-heeled, slim leather boots. She had difficulty getting on the plane due to the first step up. Her skirt would not co-operate. Her hair and make-up were suited for an evening out in downtown Montreal. But it was her fingernails that really caught my attention—they were exquisitely manicured and of such length that they looked more like weapons than extensions of her lovely hands. What also made these two stand out, was that they were trying to fit a hunting rifle under their seats in this very small plane!

I did not formally meet her then. However, being seated behind her and her friend on the jammed aircraft for several hours, gave me the opportunity to listen to her stories about teaching in Coppermine and come to know what she valued.

It wasn’t until I had the opportunity to interview Nola for this study that I found I knew very little about her and her background. When I asked her why she had become a teacher, her response was thoughtful,

If you really scratch the surface and find out why people do the things they do, you’re usually going to trace it back to either some kind of intense motivation that’s altruistic or ego-enhancing or you’re going to find a lot of pain. . . . teaching was not my first choice.

She went on to say that she came from Montreal; she had grown up in a middle-class Jewish family with two brothers who are considerably older. She further explained,
As I started down the hill towards the expectant community, I shook from the inside out. I trembled not from the biting cold, but with an all consuming sense of excitement, anticipation, and fear.

I think the most prominent thing I remember about my background is the continual struggle between myself and particularly my mother, in terms of my own identity. I always struggled to be the somebody that I was, against the wishes, I think, of my mother. She had a particular idea of how I should behave and the kinds of things I should be interested in, which I believe were extensions of her own desires for herself. I didn't really meet those expectations. My mother is a very critical person and really practices conditional love. . . . My life was Hell.

I was challenged as a student in school. I found school very difficult when I was in elementary and junior high school. It became much easier for me when I got into university. In fact, that's where I found I was able to excel. I was a real loner as a kid. I didn't have very many friends. I didn't date much. Solitude and isolation were something that I was used to. . . . I think the main reason was that I always felt quite inadequate. I felt very badly about myself. I was a fat kid and I was a fat adolescent. My mother's message to me was that the one equated with my being a social pariah. And so I was a social pariah. In her eyes, I couldn't, I just couldn't--there was no way that I could have a social life. That was the message that came to me. That was the message that I lived.
Without another thought, I became the student of the village. However, every so often a fleeting sense of guilt would interfere with my learning process. I am the "eeleehairee", the teacher. I was sent here to teach. Yet I find myself at every turn, in the role of learner. I reconciled these guilt moments with the thought that today, I am the student. Tomorrow, when I know, then I will teach.

I had very little confidence in myself. Those are the vibrations that you emit to other people. So I never expected to have much of a social life. I was very angry. I remember that being the predominant emotion in my life. Anger, followed by depression. And I lived that. I grew up with that. I had what I would consider to be a horrible childhood. It was very unhappy.

When I went to university I did make a few friends. I always felt like an outsider. Those friends that I had were outsiders as well. I didn't really feel that I fit in in Montreal. Certainly not in the sophistication of the city. I was not a great dresser. I wasn't interested in going out because I didn't feel that I fit. I just didn't.

I went through university in the Faculty of Fine Arts. . . I started off in studio courses and quickly discovered I had no talent. . . . I wanted to be there, I mean, these were all the perceived outcasts, so I figured I would fit in. Except for one small detail--as I moved through university, as I entered my second year and third year, I suddenly lost all this weight. Then I could wear all these clothes that my mother thought were really chic. So there I was in the Faculty of Fine Arts with all these people who were hippies. And there I was, all dressed up. I had one of my profs come and say, "You know, you don't fit in
One such knowing experience, which was particularly memorable, occurred quite unexpectedly, late in August, under the mid-night sun. So I went from one situation of not fitting to another. But I remedied that—I gained weight and I didn’t wear those clothes any more. But I did switch from studio courses to art history. I was really good in art history. I definitely have a knack for it.

I began to doubt my own abilities at that time. I was really having a tough time with life in general. I thought I’d better get myself tested here. I need an IQ test. He said, “Well, you know you’re a social misfit.” At least I knew that what I was dealing with was a learning disability. That’s probably what I had been dealing with all the way through school.

After university, I worked at different jobs, saving my earnings to attend post-secondary school to obtain my Masters in Art History. I was working at an insurance firm. It was not fulfilling. I became frustrated with how long it was taking to save the money I needed for tuition. I decided to take myself on a vacation to Florida. Just prior to leaving, on a whim, I submitted my name as a possible candidate for an experimental program in teacher education at Magill University. They were selecting forty students. I laughed and told my mother to call me in Florida if I was picked. I was shocked when she called me.

The bottom line was I was chosen for this program. It was fantastic. There was my niche. I was happy in education. Teaching was natural for
The entire community came together to celebrate. A variety of fresh and dried foods appeared from giving arms and opened sealskin packs. The elders had assembled, carrying huge caribou antler and skin drums; they busied themselves tightening the membrane by holding the taught skin over low embers smoldering in a special hearth fire. Dazzling stars and a peach coloured moon welcomed the event, along with the glowing amber sun which appeared enormous and oval shaped. I had never experienced such an incredibly beautiful evening sky. It was as if the sky too had dressed up for the very special evening ahead.

It was just the heady days of the early 1970's. We were just beginning to recognize learning differences in students, differences in learning styles, differences in teaching styles. We made a conscious attempt to match up the students' learning styles with the teaching styles. Drawing-board moral was very high. That's what I entered into in education. In terms of my personal life at this point in time, there wasn't much. I was doing really well on the work side but I wasn't doing very well on the personal side. There was always a continuing sense of failure, as a person in terms of my family and my family's expectations. I needed something. I needed to get away. I needed a change. I remember at one point in time I thought I was really dying in Montreal.

The year before I actually left Montreal, I acquired my dog Shadow. I got the dog against everybody's advice.

I said to my principal, "Vicki, I've got this dog and I don't want to leave him at home, I want to bring him to school." She did not object. I had a deaf boy in my class who was really having a tremendous problem socializing. I would bring the puppy in and I would teach him how to be gentle with the dog. He just loved that dog. He just didn't know how to treat him. A little bit at a time--a little bit
The oldest of the elders began to move into the rough Quonset hut which represented the community’s meeting hall. Newborn babies and infants were nestled in their mother’s or older sister’s colorful summer attigies, their little heads were visible from inside the enormous hoods. The hunting and fishing parties had returned as well. Men were proudly wearing the new parkas made for them during the long day-nights of the summer.

at a time; we were working on that. The dog would be his responsibility.

It was working out really well but I was in a very snotty neighbourhood and somebody complained. They didn’t want a dog in school. I was upset for two reasons—one is that I wanted the dog there, and the second reason is that the kids were really benefiting from it.

I was upset about the dog, because the dog was causing havoc in my apartment. I loved that dog. I wasn’t going to get rid of him. Then a friend of mine said, “Hey Nola, maybe you need a change. I went to the Northwest Territories. You need a change too, why don’t you consider it?”

I applied and they accepted my application. They sent me to Coppermine. That’s how I ended up in the North. It wasn’t an educational imperative to go North, it was definitely a personal imperative. I definitely went North for my dog. No, I went North for me and my dog. For me it was the idea of escaping and it was the idea of adventure. I have never really fit in well in a city. . . . plus, too much demand from the family. You know, that idea of being, of being something I’m not.

People would tell me that I was going to suffer from culture shock and a sense of isolation, and so on, and I never did. I noticed the diminishing sizes
A low, eerie singing and chanting began from the center of the hall. The middle cleared as people moved to the walls and quietly sat or kneeled on the hard-packed, sandy floor. I was mesmerized by the unfamiliar sounds of these human voices, ranging from high to low pitched crescendos, accented by the non-rhythmic thudding of tensed skin drums. I closed my eyes to better smell the smells and feel the synergy pulsing in the room and within my being.

of the airports. I don’t think there was any point in time, even when I first arrived, that I questioned whether this was the right thing to do or not. I knew it was the right thing to do. I never felt isolated in Coppermine.

It didn’t take long, that first year I recognized that what I was doing in the classroom, as a result of my training in the South, was inappropriate. I tried to put across lessons the way I learned how to do it in Montreal. It didn’t work. Then the challenge became to find what was appropriate. That I think, of all the experiences I had in the North, that has got to be the most interesting and the most challenging and probably the one that contributed the most to my professional growth.

The other thing is that despite the fact that I tended to work very hard in school, there was more personal time in the settlement. I actually had time to develop as a human being. In Coppermine, being in the settlement, I did have time to explore, I did have time to grow, I did have fun, and participated in personal growth kinds of experiences. It was wonderful.

Gretta and I decided it was necessary to learn to hunt. You know, I’m not the greatest shot in the world. We would go out of town and we would prac-
Then, I sensed a change. When I realized what was happening, the hut had already been quickly and silently vacated. Standing in the far doorway, silhouetted by midnight sun's glow, stood a single man, Kikoaq. Everyone else was gone.

practice with these guns. It was the Fall. Off we would trodle down the road with our rifles. Shadow would be trotting along with us. We'd pass these guys on the road—guys in their trucks. They'd stop. You could see them through the windshield. They'd put up their hands and they'd yell, "Don't shoot, don't shoot!" They made terrible fun of us, but we carried on anyway.

One day the snow falls and one of the Inuits, the caretaker at our school comes in and says, "Want to go hunting?" "Sure", I said. He said, "Go home and get your stuff. We'll meet you right outside the school. Right away." I ran home and I got dressed because it was already quite cold. I got my 30-06 this time, the big one. I'm sure I scared him. I hopped on his sled and off we go. I haven't got a clue where we're going, but we're going. We came to a place where the caribou are grazing. He says, "Okay, now." I get off the sled and I kind of creep along. I get this one poor little animal in my sights and I fire. God only knows where the bullet went. I think I hit it somewhere. He actually ended up finishing it off. We brought the body, the caribou back to my place. So here I am with this dead caribou in front of my house, standing there.

My neighbour, George, comes out and says, "Did you shoot that?" I said, "Well partially." He said,
On another vivid occasion, I was struck by a critical life knowing, while a group of us were out at a seal camp. It was bitter cold. The sun was warm, reflecting radiant heat off the snow banks formed by the driven snow.

“What are you going to do with it now?” I said, “I don’t know, I guess I’ve got to cut it up or something.” So he did help me cut it up. He helped me do all of this. Then he said, “Now Nola, I’ll tell you what you do. You take the hide and you nail it to the side of your house.” I said, “Are you serious?” He confirmed by saying, “Yup, this is what you have to do. I’m telling you, trust me.” So I did it. I nailed this caribou hide to the side of my house. Sure enough, the next time I’m down at the Bay, I’m standing in line to buy something and there are these two guys standing in front of me. One turns around and looks at me, and says, “That your hide on the house?” “Yup,” I said. And he says, “You shoot that thing?” “Yup,” I said. He says, “You cut it up?” I said, “Uhha.” Nothing else was said. That’s all. Next time Gretta and I went down that road, along came these same guys in the truck. They didn’t throw their arms up and say, “Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot,” anymore. And we never heard any more jokes after that. So that’s my big hunting story.

I was in Coppermine for three years. In the classroom, there were challenges. Attendance was always a challenge. I had this one boy who was always away from school. At that time, we were encouraged to make home visits. It would demonstrate that we were reaching out to the community, break-
We were dressed for the land, covered from head to toe in caribou skins, with the fur side turned in, to keep the body’s heat from escaping. We had to be very quiet. We listened. We listened for the sound of seals breathing. Nahaloleq had brought his son, John, and several other boys from the village along with us. Actually, I felt quite honoured that I was asked to go along with the men.

Sure enough, there’s the kid, he’s sprawled out on the sofa fast asleep. The uncle and his friend, two old guys, are making home brew. “Come in. Come in,” they say, “Have a seat.” So we sat and we kind of communicated, in a sort of way. They’re laughing and laughing. They urge me, saying, “Have some, have some.” I thought, well, I don’t know. But I tried it. It was just awful. When I came back to school in the afternoon, I remember standing in the hall talking to the principal. He said, “Did you go and check on your class?” “I did,” I said. And he said, “And what have you been drinking, eating?” Then I said, “In the line of duty, I drank home brew. Wasn’t I supposed to?”

There were challenges. I was trained in the South. I found it difficult to cope with the absenteeism and how to work around that. I also found it difficult to deal with the dialectual understanding of English rather than the use of English as we traditionally used it in the South. English is not their language. English is my language. Even the variety of English which is spoken in the community is not English.

It required a certain flexibility to deal with those difficulties. It was difficult for me as I am quite academically oriented. That’s one of the things that
Once a seal breathing hole was discovered, Nahaleq motioned to John to lay down on the ice, with his face toward the hole, which was covered by a thin bubble of crystallized snow and ice. If you were not aware, you would not know that a hole in the twenty foot ice flow even existed. Nahaleq turned and moved quickly away, taking the other boys with him. I followed reluctantly, feeling uncomfortable leaving John alone, seemingly helpless to the elements, on his stomach, on the ice.

I discovered about myself - I am very academically oriented. I didn't know that about myself and my teaching at the time.

In actual fact, in a classroom situation, in a community, an aboriginal community, it presented tremendous problems for me but where it came in really handy, was when I moved to Hay River, as a Consultant.

I knew exactly what I was dealing with when I was encountering kids who were having problems in the classroom. I was able to bring into play all of my understanding of learning disabilities. The kind of testing that was needed. I did a tremendous amount of work in connecting kids, through testing, and getting program plans set up for them so that they could experience some success. That's when my background came in strong there. But in the classroom in Coppermine, as a generalist, it was difficult for me to make the kinds of shifts that were necessary for me to cope successfully with the kids and what they needed. There was very little parental involvement. In fact, there was none. The extent of parental involvement was in setting up winter camps for the kids, taking them to see igloos being made, and showing them how a seal oil lamp works. Those kinds of things--but in actual fact, the parents and the school were far apart.
As each new hole was discovered, Nahaloleq would motion to each boy in his turn to stay and watch the breathing hole. Within the community, Nahaloleq was known as the best seal hunter in the village. In fact, he was well known for this skill throughout the Netsilik communities. With this skill, came the unspoken duty to train others in this life-skill.

I think the thing that I came away with from that whole experience was an understanding of how inappropriate our methodology was. I knew hands-on things would work. So, that is what I did. Then I would always feel guilty that I hadn’t been following the curriculum.

In acting on her call to teach, Nola found her niche. But it wasn’t until she acted on her call to teach in the Arctic that she found friendship, and a belongingness she had not experienced in her life. She felt part of the greater community of Coppermine--connected. Her call to teach became the vehicle that enabled her to participate fully in the lives of her students, within the Inuit culture of her Northern community. Her call saved her life.

Betty

One of my first trips as Teacher Consultant for the Inuvik Region took me to Fort McPherson. It was here that I met Betty for the first time. She was bending over a small child whose head was intently bent over his work, in fact his face was as close to the paper as possible. His stained fingers grasped the pencil stub with all his might, making his knuckles pink against his bronze skin. “There you go Walter! Just take it easy. You can do this. You know how. Just relax!” She patted him on his back and smiled warmly at him. “Now off you go. Have fun skating tonight!” She then looked at me critically and said, “So, you must be the new Teacher Consultant. Are you ever in for the work of a life-time!” She smiled broadly, laughing to herself, shaking her blonde head. “That Walter is such a smart boy--
"On the land" was a term I heard from the moment I arrived in this vast ocean covered area with little land to be seen. Ocean was all around Gjoa Haven. Our view overlooked the ocean, our food came from its depths, and our weather blew in and blasted our shores.

If only he'd believe in himself. Did you see the grip he had on his pencil? Thank God those tiny pencil stubs have such tensile strength!"

She continued laughing to herself, "Come on. Let's go home. You're staying with us tonight!"

It had been about five years since I had last talked to Betty. I had a great deal of difficulty tracking her whereabouts down, but met with success after phoning another potential subject who gave me her current address. Like everything else she does, Betty enthusiastically accepted my invitation to participate in the study. We began the first interview right away. She launched into telling me about her background and early teaching career

I grew up in a very European home, I spoke German as my first language. I really enjoyed my school years. I grew up in a small agricultural city, a retired farmers' city. Then I went to teachers college. The only reason I went to teachers' college is because it had free tuition at the time. I really had never thought about being a teacher, I didn't grow up wanting to be a teacher. I didn't have any burning desire to be a teacher.

My first year teaching, I got engaged to Will. We went up to Northern Ontario. Will was a man with wanderlust - he loves to travel. I had traveled too. I had gone to Europe--I'd gone to school in Europe for a year. I had gone to California and other different places. Always traveling by planes and staying in nice hotels--my parents were middle class
I found that "on the land" was part of the very being of every Inuit - it represented the essence of life in the past, present, and future. The Inuit were one with the land just as they were one with one another. The land was the ocean, tundra, and heavens. In winter, they all became one - frozen into a solid expanse, allowing the Inuit to travel freely by sled.

After teaching there for a year, Will wanted to go back to university. We went to Brandon University.

After university, we then went to Northern Alberta. I taught in a two-room school house with a lady from Texas. I'll never forget her, Lynn Brown. She said, "Miz Warren, these little Indians just need us so badly." She was the most prejudiced person I have ever met. The little Native kids that she taught, they'd all say, "Miz Warren, you all, you all goin outside?" They all talked with a Texas accent. It was hilarious. She also drove a great, big Cadillac. Anyway, it was so funny. She always dressed just so in beautiful, beautiful suits that she made herself. She had a wig on; I never saw her real hair. She had manicured or false nails. She was an older lady--she must have been in her sixties then. Anyway, she was something else. She was really nice to me, though. She kind of took me under her wing. When the School Board came to visit, she took them to her teacherage next door; it was attached to the school. She said, "Miz Warren, you all come with me!" She left the classroom assistant, Geraldine, with all the kids. She took the Board members and me to her apartment and served us cocktails. Our
From the land came food, shelter, and clothing. It built character— a oneness and interdependence with nature and one another. An Inuit could not live alone. One must live in harmony with the land, our source of survival, and with one another, our source of humanity.

school got a glowing report!

After two years with Miss Brown, we went out to Port Simpson, British Columbia. That was a fly-in First Nations community. We lived there for three years and then we went to Finland for a year. Will went over to play basketball. I taught English at the English Center. We were very popular because we spoke with an American accent.

When we came back to Canada, we taught in Northern Alberta. We were very interested in going to the Territories, even before we had gone to Finland, so we went to one of those seminars. Right away, Will was offered a principalship in Fort McPherson. Will was happy to teach anywhere as long as it had a gym. Typical Will. We were there for five years.

Will and I enjoyed working with Native people, too, because they have such a spirituality about them. We like frontier settings, which for us is exciting. It was the life style that we enjoyed.

When you work in a community, school is almost eighteen hours. You’re there in the morning, you’re there all day teaching, and then you go back at night. And so it was. With Will being Principal, a lot of demands were made. It was nice just to get out of town and get away.

In Fort McPherson, we set up a camp. We
When I arrived in Gjoa Haven, most families were out “on the land” gathering and preserving food for the long, harsh winter to come. The women and children collected berries, usually eating more than they brought home; the men and older boys caught Arctic Char with their massive gill-nets, pulling the tangled fish from the icy waters by hand; the men and women busied themselves during the warmth of the day, cleaning and cutting fish, then hanging it on racks which allowed it to dry naturally under the arid Northern summer sky. The young girls played house, making pretend tea, while looking after the infants and very young children. Everyone helped.

would go out to our camp and skied where no one had skied before. To us, that was more exciting than skiing on a groomed trail. We got real joy out of it. We made some good friendships with people who’d come visit our camp. They poked fun at me because I had a rug down on the floor--elegance in the bush! We found that people were very different out on the land than they are in the town of Fort McPherson or the town of Aklavik. They’re out on the land--they’re very hospitable. Everyone’s at home and comfortable and they’re so happy.

When we moved to the Territories, we knew what to expect. We knew not to expect anything. We knew that we would give and didn’t expect big thank yous. We knew what was expected of us and we’d get paid to do a job. We knew that people didn’t trust you right away because they’ve seen a lot of people come and go. I think we were very well prepared--working with different culture groups helped, and I think because I came from a different culture. Even though it’s European, it’s similar and yet different.

We also have a sense of adventure. We’re not afraid to travel or do without. Especially Will, with his life style, happy sleeping under picnic tables, he didn’t expect luxury, you know. Plus, we’re very easy going people. You just have to be easy going,
Everyone had an important role to play while on the land. The more food collected during the summer was like an insurance policy for the long winter looming ahead.

I think, to survive in the North. If you’re not, you know, you don’t last or you’re not happy. If you’re not happy, the people know it, and the kids know it in the classroom. It makes a big difference.

Other teachers did not accept the cultural differences. They kept thinking they’d be teaching kids like kids where they came from and they’re not. They are kids from a totally different background. Their wants and desires are different. The teachers had to connect a little bit with that to understand and then move on from there.

But they would always forget that in teaching, they were dealing with kids, who, even though they spoke English, that English was a dialect. You’ve got to think of what it’s based on.

You’ve gotta connect with them to make learning fun. It can’t be a competitive thing. That’s not inherent to what they’re all about. You know, it’s more of a community of learners and we help each other. Let’s discover together. A lot of them learn by watching and doing at home so you have to incorporate things like that in the everyday classroom activities. Teaching is about watching and learning from them before you start tromping all over them with your ideas. In the classroom, you learn that they communicate very much non verbally--like by raising the eyebrows to mean “Yes” and scrunching
I learned the importance of what “on the land” meant to my community. People spoke of being on the land with quiet pride. I would come to better learn the significance of being good at being “on the land” during my life in Gjoa Haven which later helped me to survive in my travels across the Northwest Territories in my future life as eeleebairee of eeleebaiiree, teacher of teachers.

their nose for “No”. You need to learn those kinds of things.

When someone hunted they took what they ate, they didn’t stick it in the freezer like we do. What they didn’t eat, they gave away. They never worried about tomorrow—they just hunted and shared. That was such a beautiful concept. They really taught us—like, to put the boughs of fir trees down underneath the floor of the cabin to make it always smell nice. And different things. They were very generous, especially if they saw you making an effort. They certainly jumped right in and made you feel a little more welcome.

We also got to know people on a different level with Will playing basketball. We really got to know people well. We were always in the gym at night. School was different, it was an extension of the community.

Then we went to Inuvik. I worked there for a year between the high school and the elementary school. Yeah, I laugh when people here say it’s cold. I can remember in Inuvik, starting my car and the wheels were square, they were frozen flat.

While Betty reflects that the only reason she went to Teachers’ College was due to the free tuition, the practice called her to it. Her European background, experience with small Northern Native communities in Alberta, and her travel in other cultural settings, made
Yet another significant knowing occurred quite unexpectedly after Christmas of my first year as eeleebairee at Kerkertak Ilihakvik. The Northwest Territories a perfect match for her. Hansen (1995) believes that a person who is called to the practice has no particular classroom or setting in mind. This appears to be the case for Betty. Without being aware of their cultural relativity, through their willingness to share in the community and give of themselves freely, Betty and her husband were able to “know people on a different level.”

Lilly

Although our careers in the North paralleled each other's, it wasn’t until the early 1980's that I had a chance to actually meet Lilly. From others in the field, I had heard wonderful things about her as a caring and dedicated educator, especially in the area of Special Education. It was at a Territorial meeting of Teacher Consultants and Special Education Co-ordinators that I first met Lilly in person. We had all arrived at different times by various modes from our varied locations across the North - representatives from the Mackenzie Delta Region to Baffin Island were gathering to seriously discuss the state of Special Education in the Northwest Territories.

Lea Ann, Director of Special Education Services, was hosting a Wine and Cheese social at her home in Yellowknife to welcome the participants. Her mobile home was decorated with artifacts from various Northern communities, photos of family and friends, and delicious food! She had squeezed tables of delicious cheeses, assorted crackers, exotic fresh fruits and vegetables, and wine into her small living room and kitchenette areas.

As the guests arrived, they made their way through the tables of food to the small bedroom where the coats and winter boots were stashed. Snuggled in a crowded corner, I watched the team arrive. It
One morning following the holiday, I noticed unusual excitement among the school children as I opened the doors to welcome them into the warmth of our classroom. In particular, I was struck by the giggling coming from a group of older girls, huddled together against the wind, faces hidden by their fur lined hoods. This behavior was unusual for this normally subdued and serene group of grade six and seven young women.

was a bit like a Northern fashion parade—bright Inuit-made attigies, with their distinctive wolf and wolverine fur sunburst hoods, dressier fur parkas with ermine collars and dangling tails, full-length zip parkas with decorative embroidered outer covers made in Inuvik, and the ever-practical, unisex down-filled Air Force parkas with wolf-trimmed tunnel hoods.

I knew by her parka that she was Lilly from Cambridge. She wore a parka similar to those worn by the women in Gjoa Haven, conservative but fashionable and warm. That was the type of parka that I wore when I was dressing up, going to meetings. One is very much known by the parka one wears. It tells a story about the wearer. As she pulled back her hood, her eyes were sparkling with excitement and quiet anticipation. She was known as an action leader. This gathering represented action. Her smile showed her pleasure. Change was in the air.

Change is still very much a part of Lilly's life today. When I phoned her, she was ecstatic over a new tri-school project that she was spearheading for her school district. As Student Services Coordinator Administrator, she has been a leader in change at the district level since she left the Northwest Territories. She is much the same today as she was in the early 1970's. She recalls Cindy, a Teacher Consultant, saying back then, "Lilly, you've never been the kind of person to sit and wait for things to come to you." Lilly reflects, "I certainly knew that I could be an influence which contributes greatly to why I stay where I am now." We began the first interview by reflecting on her early years in education.
The little ones were first to share their exciting news with me. Kamookak was back. The informative grade threes told me that Kamookak had been going to school in Yellowknife and had returned on the mail plane the afternoon before. I had wondered about the increased excitement and commotion at the airstrip when the plane landed. From their animated conversation, excitement, and sense of pride, I immediately understood that Kamookak was somewhat of a teenage idol and hero to the youngsters remaining at home in the community school. I was anxious to meet him and welcome him back.

I grew up in Manitoba, in Winnipeg. I went into education right out of high school, not intending to stay in it. There was a shortage of teachers in the province so they were encouraging people to go into the profession. I then took a one year course in education but still wasn’t really intending on teaching. Then a friend of mine got a job in a Metis community as a grade one-two teacher. My friend came to me and said, “Lilly they need a three-four teacher, why don’t you come just for the year?”

I ended up in Saint Ambrose, Manitoba—a little Metis community where the teacherage was in a little compound with the school. The year I began teaching, we didn’t have indoor toilets, we were still in the outhouses. It was not unusual to wake up to cows facing me in my bedroom window. At that time, I decided I wanted to go into special education. I was asked by the superintendent if I would take on the resource position in a much larger school in the division. Most people didn’t want to go to that school. However, that was a pivotal experience for me in that school.

It was a young and vibrant staff, only two people over 30, the principal and the vice principal. People worked around the clock there. It was a child centered school in the true sense of child centered. Everything had to revolve around kids. It was a re-
Kamookak’s presence at school somehow transformed the classroom and the learning environment. Although reluctant and shy when I first approached him with my invitation to visit our school, he soon warmed to the idea of spending some time telling the students about his Yellowknife schooling experience.

ally incredible experience and I think it shaped my thoughts on how kids might be schooled throughout my career.

I think I had always toyed with the idea of teaching. Nursing was a consideration. But working in a nursing home over the summer cured me of that idea. Actually my real interest was always Fine Arts, probably more of an interest and hobby. The whole time that I was teaching, I was also taking university courses, either at night or in the summers. It was a continual learning process. I went to the University of Lethbridge and took courses that I’d always wanted to. A lot of art, some literature, native literature, and linguistics. I taught art and children’s art at the Art Center in Lethbridge, during the summer and weekends. It fulfilled a whole bunch of other interests of mine.

I don’t think I would have stayed in teaching had I been in a classroom situation forever. The reward of working with kids was a pretty big part of it. Wanting to make a difference in kids’ lives, always. I taught in the South for seven years before I went North. And going North was something, again, I was probably looking for more challenge. I have an uncle who lived in Africa. Wanderlust and a cross-cultural interest was something I sort of inherited. What really prompted me as far as going North, was
Without a formal plan or design in place, Kamookak and I began to transform the classroom experience. While in Yellowknife, Kamookak played in a loosely organized rock and roll band. He also spent a good deal of time going to the movies and watching television. In fact, these interests resulted in his suspension from the residence, and eventually from school. In pursuing these interests, he was too busy between 3:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m. to have the required energy left to perform academically and regularly attend school. It was almost as if he had been sent to me.

my father. He was always traveling to Northern Manitoba while I was a youngster. Then when I was a teenager, I had the task of taking him to the airport for the early morning flights. His stories of Northern Manitoba were what fueled my interest in the North.

I was always looking for adventure. That was part of it. My initial year North was actually a year off from teaching; it was because Rick was up North. We had answered the same ad. Rick went through with the interview and went North to Aklavik. I resigned from my position in St. Bonafest. The people were quite shocked. I went North. I then discovered that taking a year off was not really my style. We applied to go to Fort Franklin.

Rick took our dogs by boat, down the Mackenzie. I flew. Fort Franklin was a wonderful experience. It was my first experience in the situation where English was only spoken in school and at the store. Fort Franklin school was really very interesting because it was a whole new staff—a complete turnover of staff.

While teaching in Fort Franklin, one of the Native boys came into school with a Time magazine rolled up under his arm. He slapped it down on the desk and said, "Idi Amin!" They didn't have T.V. then either. Every kid in class raced over to Johnny's...
In the classroom, I capitalized on Kamookak's skills and talents. Although shy, he loved to perform. He also understood English language, and could read and write fairly well. Although his Inuktitut was orally based, he was willing to learn syllabics with the promise that I would help him. Kamookak began keeping his guitar at school, he spent many evenings practicing songs and rhymes for the children which he put to his own music. His interest in cinema motivated me to beg the School Board and the Territorial Government for a television, beta video recording machine, and funds to purchase videos. We also purchased a camera from funds collected through bake sales and community fund raisers organized by the students.

desk and you know what the kids said? They gasped. “He’s black!” They had never seen him but they assumed he looked like all the rest of us—white. Okay, it never occurred to them that he might be a different colour. It was just so amazing. And again, because their world was so limited in that sense, so isolated.

I remember Christmas concerts for example, being Christmas time I guess, and how very special they are in the North. Here they are nothing to the significance they are in the North where kids get all brand new mukluks and new blue jeans and new cowboy shirts. Every single person comes out. It’s the only show in town and it’s so incredibly important. I remember after a Christmas performance in Fort Franklin, we quietly went back to our classroom. I can still see the excitement and sheer joy on their faces when I told them, “You guys were fantastic.” They were just so thrilled.

Lilly’s call to teach was closely woven with her desire to learn. Her interest in art and linguistics, fanned by the wanderlust she inherited from her uncle for travel and her father’s fascination with the North, explains her call to teach in the High Arctic. Again, as we have learned from Hansen (1995), Lilly’s call demonstrates that there is something about teaching which calls the person to it in the first place, whets the appetite, and captures the imagination.
Our classroom of multi-aged students came alive with voices embracing two distinct languages, and with technology, adding realism to the world we knew and about the world outside.

Sarah

"You don't know me, but I know a great deal about you. Since I started contacting people to participate in my study about women educators in the Arctic, your name has been mentioned continually as someone I must contact to include. It is funny that I have not met you since I was the Teacher Consultant in Inuvik about the time you arrived in Aklavik. Perhaps you came on stream when I was leaving to move to Northern British Columbia as Director of Curriculum and Instruction."

Sarah giggled and replied. "I certainly have heard about you too. This should be fun. I too am working on my Doctorate in Education. Yes, this will be fun to reflect on memories of the North."

During our first interview, I asked Sarah why she had become a teacher. At first she hesitated. After her first degree, she told me of her experience of going overseas to France. She taught for one year there but came back to Canada, disappointed.

I wanted to be friends with the kids. I think that's a problem a lot of us have when we start. I didn't really enjoy the teaching experience. I came back to Canada and went on for another degree. Then I went overseas again and did different kinds of jobs, different places. I did a lot of traveling. In my travels, I ended up in countries that were very underdeveloped; there was a lot of hardship and a lot of poverty. I wanted to work in that context. I had a feeling I could make a difference. I know that probably sounds very patronizing.
Student books were published in Inuktitut with English subtexts. Books were created from an assortment of materials, reflecting the size and shape of the products: such things as brown paper bags, freezer paper, gift wrap, cardboard saved from cereal boxes and pantyhose containers, animal hide, multi-colored and textured cloth, and other fabrics were used as a backdrop for the visual representation of the students' work.

Anyway, the only way I could go to those countries was as a teaching person. So I went to Africa with CUSO and stayed there for five years. It was at that point in time that I decided that I really wanted to be a teacher. I really enjoyed working with the students. It was a positive experience. I was able to get over the initial wanting to be friends to the point where I could actually be friends with them. I realized that I was able to teach, the kids were able to learn, and we worked well together. I felt we worked well together. So I came back to Canada and took teacher training. My first two degrees were in languages—French and Latin.

I then went up North because it was advertised as a CUSO-like experience. It was 1981. I went to Aklavik. My overseas experience had prepared me for the cultural differences I found in the students in Aklavik. At that time, most people spoke English or a form of English called Delta English. What I hadn't been prepared for was the wide range in ability levels, age differences, and attitudes toward learning. It was just a real challenge. In Nigeria, the kids were all streamed. It was high school, as well. When I taught in France, the kids were streamed. This was the first time I had a classroom where there were just a tremendous number of levels of ability.
The child’s personal drawing, artistic depiction, or photograph also added visual meaning to the rich and provocative stories the students told.

The attitudes toward education were very different in the cultures I experienced. The kids in Nigeria and the kids in France valued education. In France they have the same middle-class mentality that you and I probably grew up with—you go to school, you go to university, get a good job, be a professional, and be smart. In Nigeria, it was a girls’ boarding school. For girls there, the longer you stayed in school, the more you were worth—the bride price. Some of the girls had reached the point where they realized that if you got all the way through high school, you could manage quite well without a husband. So, things were changing. Students were different in Aklavik. There were only about five kids in the class of twenty that were really involved in the school work, that wanted to come to school, that came regularly, that really applied themselves, that showed school behaviour. The rest were very, very interested in gym.

I was frustrated with the curricula. I found that I was lacking in so much knowledge myself and the resources I had were southern oriented. I found I spent my first year asking myself, “Why was I hired?” At one point that first year, I remembered taking heart when one of the experienced teachers confided in me, “It is a shame that everybody has to go through this first year. It seems there’s not much
Before long, with the assistance of service groups, the little school was able to loan out Polaroid cameras to families going on hunting and food gathering trips. With the assistance of photography, the children recorded their experiences on the land. Once they returned, they told their stories to those who were left behind. Kamookak helped them write songs about their adventures. We both helped them express their stories in graphic and pictorial form.

anybody can do to really help you get through it, other than to support you.”

Sarah was called to teaching as a vehicle to work in underdeveloped countries - this was made possible by the practice of teaching. Her story demonstrates how she was called by the practice; it enabled her to pursue her life’s work--living in other cultural settings in order to be of service to others.

Part of the call to teach, demands reflection. Sarah’s first year in Aklavik, which she found to be quite different from her CUSO experiences, made her doubt her calling and question her participation in the practice. Self-doubt is key to improving the practice.

Mabel

Inuvik is the largest government center in the western Arctic. When I arrived there in 1980, it supported two Territorial schools and two youth residences for secondary students who were from the outlying settlements. Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, more lovingly known as SAMS, was the largest elementary school in the Inuvik Region. It was truly an example of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic educational center. As the new Teacher Consultant I had no difficulties getting on a tiny bush plane, flying to the smaller settlements, and spending the greater part of a week in schools, in classrooms with teachers.

SAMS was different. Its size alone was intimidating. It still had the two entrances, one for boys and one for girls designed in the old residential school fashion. It had one seemingly enormous entrance in the center. I found myself standing before it, frozen in place. I was afraid to climb the few steps to the landing.
With these modifications in instruction, resulting in changes in the learning environment, Kerkertak Ilihakvik had become an exciting place to be. It was not uncommon for parents, young mothers with small children, and grandparents to drop by the school for visits. Even the elders wanted to come to school to help and to enjoy being involved with the young. The tea pot was always on. The doors were open.

Before I knew what happened, the door opened, an arm waved me in from the cold. The husky voice rang out, “Oh, you must be Judy--the new kid on the block. I heard you were from that fancy Montreal. Come on in! Come on! Welcome! We’ve lots to talk about!” Mabel, Vice-Principal, had taken my coat, poured a cup of coffee, then sat across from me in the comfortable staff room. The waning sun filtered in through the huge windowpanes which completely filled the outside wall. She folded her hands under her chin, resting her elbows on the well worn wooden table. With a no nonsense look, she fixed her eyes on mine and smiled, “Great, new blood. Oh, this will be fun! Let me tell you about SAMS--we need your help! I need your help!”

I was greeted in the same, warm way when I phoned her to set up an interview, “Well Judith, I’ve been thinking about you!” She readily agreed to participate in the study and was anxious to get started. Our first interview was a flood of memories, retelling of events, and catching up with each others’ lives since we had left the Inuvik Region. Mabel was now living in Whitehorse, the capital of Yukon Territory. Since Inuvik, she and her husband had separated.

However, she did not let this life crisis stop her. She was now Vice-principal of a predominately First Nations public elementary school on the outskirts of Whitehorse, Yukon. Mabel started her career in Northern Manitoba, working for the Provincial Government, teaching in rural settings for seven years before applying for a position in the Northwest Territories. She reflects, “My first year was in southern Manitoba, actually, I had kindergarten to grade nine. I had thirty-nine kids in that school and no running water! My teacherage
The elders took pride in showing the children how to make tools and clothing, the old way, out of original materials.

was hooked up to power, but it had no running water either." She went on to tell me her story of her early years in teaching and her move to the Northwest Territories,

From teachers' college, I spent seven years teaching in Northern Manitoba, with the provincial government. I think that that was probably one of the reasons that persuaded me and gave me some encouragement to go to the North.

Actually, my first year of teaching was in Southern Manitoba. The very first year I taught, I had kindergarten to grade nine. I had thirty nine kids in that school--and no running water! As a matter of fact, when I arrived in Sachs Harbour, I was amazed at the three bedroom bungalow that I had.

I felt the status of the profession was fairly recognizable in those days. As I went through grade twelve, from the work and the examples that my teachers left with me, I saw teaching as a privilege. It was quite a challenge then to get into a profession.

I also felt that it was a challenge to guide the kids--especially when they enter school. They are such formative years. They're so young and so impressionable. I thought, this is a challenge to help students along the road to reach maturity, become good citizens, mature citizens in their community. I thought it was a good challenge to be able to impart
knowledge to those students so that they could develop their skills and it would afford them the opportunity of becoming good, independent, logical thinkers. They could be good citizens in their own community.

And you know, not only stay in their community but do other things as well as adults. They could enter a career that would be influential in other aspects of the community, branch out and maybe be doctors or lawyers, those kinds of things.

There was a conspicuous amount of space in the North in those days. I wanted to experience the challenge and grow with the North because it was actually really a last frontier.

As it happened, I saw an advertisement in the newspaper. We went to two different interviews, at that time, before being selected to go to the Northwest Territories. The areas I chose were Fort Smith, Yellowknife and Inuvik. Mr. Cody said, "No, I'm going to offer you these communities, they were of course, all in the High Arctic--Tuk, Sachs Harbour, and Aklavik.

First of all, I was interested in the experience of meeting and talking with the First Nations peoples. And of growing with them. At the time they were called Eskimos. Now, though, we call them Inuit.

I felt the North was very much in a pioneer-
The production of these artifacts became the basis for our language lessons, both English and Inuktitut. The children learned to appreciate their own language and were comfortable expressing their creative ideas through the first language they owned. English was introduced at first, as fun, and was then further developed through engagement with song, stories, cinema, and casual daily use. While the students learned my first language, I learned theirs. Although expelled from one school, Kamookak became an accomplished student, as well as a competent teacher, in yet another school. Our school. He made a significant difference: he was the key that unlocked the knowing I required to truly begin my work as eeleeaharee.

I felt that the parents were just starting to come around to the point of view that they needed a new approach to getting their kids educated. They recognized their community did have problems. I think that they felt a real need to get their young folks educated.

I wanted to be a part of that growth. They were very exciting days. I was very pleasantly surprised at the enthusiasm of the community of Sachs Harbour when I arrived. My experience in Sachs Harbour will always remain my true Northern experience. It was a situation where I really felt part of the community. It had a lot to offer. The school was brand new, the teacherage was brand new, the equipment was absolutely amazing, and the school was well equipped.

We were the second set of teachers in Sachs Harbour. It was the first school that they'd ever had in that community. On arrival, I was pleasantly surprised at the enthusiasm of the whole community. All came out to meet us. All welcomed us at the house.

I'd not ever flown in any of the bush planes before and had no experience with a bush pilot. I was scared to death. Mr. Cody said that it would be safe. We went in as a family. Terry was five years old, ready to go to school. He went to school for his

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“Shhh! Shhh! Shhh!” I awoke to find eight little school-aged girls with their younger brothers and sisters sitting ever so quietly nestled around my bed. Some had snuggled up in the comforter which had been tossed off during my slumber. Most of them were holding a copy of Time Magazine or National Geographic, “watching the pictures” as they referred to looking at photographs.

The first three years in Sachs Harbour and I was his teacher. That was part of my decision to go North at that time because I felt that Terry would be in school and I wouldn’t have to be concerned about babysitting. Terry was the only white child in school.

It was amazing, how he was included. For the two weeks prior to school starting when we first arrived there some of the boys came over to the house Terry had about three or four little friends before he even went to school. They all came over and played. There were absolutely no problems, racial prejudices or biases at all at that time.

The people of Sachs Harbour were bilingual. They all spoke English. Father Lemur was the priest. He came into the school and taught the Inuit language to the children. They didn’t really know how to write their own language. When Father Lamur taught it, he pronounced and spelled the words in the Eskimo language but it was still our alphabet that he was using.

In school, one of the biggest things that the little kids had to come to grips with was the sitting and the length of instruction. They weren’t really used to doing that. They were still wanting to be quite active. Of course, what we did then was put into the curriculum things like skiing and outdoor things.
As soon as I opened my eyes, they all piled on the bed, looking expectantly at me. Susie said, “We were waiting for you to open your eyes!” You said we could visit on Saturday! We’ve been watching you sleep!”

They had been sitting very quietly, for how long, I did not know. Now they wanted to participate in my house work.

I would say that by Christmas, they really realized that they had a responsibility for their education. The parents were coming onside as well. They realized that it was important to get their children out of their houses and to school. Unlike other communities, we did not have a problem with attendance whatsoever.

We had a “warm” lunch program put in the school; all the kids were fed lunch. They were always there. They didn’t even want to go home. They wanted to stay and play in the gym.

The school year was flexible. It kind of went around some of their cultural activities as well. There were times like when the ice fishing was good at Fish Lake. We would stop school then instead of having the break at Easter-time. We may even postpone Easter and have it in May. That’s when they could go out to spend the time on the land with their families and do their ice fishing.

I can remember my first experience when Alexander Elias said, “You don’t know how to jig. This way,” he said, “you have to be patient.” I did eventually catch some fish. Terry did too. It was a great experience. We also went caribou hunting. We went polar bear tagging. We saw walrus and musk ox. We went out on the land a lot with the people and with the Wildlife Officer, when he came...
In Gjoa Haven we didn’t lock our doors unless we were going to be away or out on the land. This was partly because of the extreme cold temperatures. It was so cold and windy that the lock might freeze and you couldn’t get out of your house in case of fire. No one ever thought about preventing someone from coming in. The culture welcomed all visitors. Homes were open to all children, all adults, all people. This openness reflects life on the land, where each camp was an oasis in a harsh and unyielding land. Other people were valued most in life.

My term in Sachs Harbour was from 1970 to 1973. I came to Inuvik for the 1973/74 school year as a classroom teacher. After my first seven years, I got into administration. Inuvik was still very much in the pioneering stage of development. There were all phases of life there. Education was still one of the prime considerations. They wanted to have development and progress in the school. Education was one of the largest employers. When I came to Inuvik, we had about eight hundred kids in that school. There was a staff of forty five. It was a big school. I enjoyed it very much. After the first years, I saw that there was considerable social change.

Mabel’s Northern teaching experience in Manitoba as a teacher in a two-room school without running water, prepared her for the conditions she found in Sachs Harbour. Her calling manifested itself early in life; in high school she had decided to make teaching a career. Her wish to “guide kids” and “impart knowledge to those students so that they could develop their skills and . . . be good citizens in their own community” resounds with the personal and service-oriented dimensions of the practice that draws people to it.

Sadie

During Spring Break in 1975, I met Sadie in the lobby of the Holiday Inn on St. Catherine Street. The Department of Education from the Northwest Territories was holding a recruitment session to attract teachers from the Quebec Region of Canada. Sadie was with
People shared whatever they had with others, whether it was food, shelter, or care. On the land, homes constructed of hard-packed snow or animal skins did not lend themselves to be locked, closed up, or knocked on for that matter. When the people moved to shelters made of wood, with solid doors, they never thought to knock to request entry - they continued to freely move in and out of each others’ homes as before.

an older man, handsome in an athletic-way, dressed for downtown Montreal. He seemed a bit aloof and disinterested. She very intent on collecting information, brochures, and data.

She sat beside me on a sofa to organize her wealth of materials and select which sessions to attend. She looked at me and smiled. “Isn’t this exciting? I find this all so interesting; I see so much potential in the North for teaching and learning. I’m really interested in other cultures- in their art, music, beliefs. That’s one of the reasons I came to Montreal. Now with all of the political stress over French as the official language, I don’t feel as welcome here as I once did.”

Before I could answer, she excused herself to catch up with her friend. She happily took his arm and guided him into the session just starting.

Talking to her today was reminiscent of the first time I had met her at the recruitment session—she was as enthusiastic as ever. She told me that she had been given an assignment to conduct a comprehensive review of Special Education Services in her district. She had just found out about it and was starting to plan her strategies for gathering the information she would need to complete the report. To me, it sounded like an impossible task—her timeline was extremely short. She had to have the entire report plus recommendations completed by January 15. She launched into her story with her usual enthusiasm, telling me about her calling to teach and what called her to go to the Arctic in the first place,

I believe I’ve always been a teacher. For some reason, I always thought of myself as a teacher. I always wanted to be a teacher. Even before I ever
Others were always welcome. People needed each other, for their skills and special talents, to survive in the harsh Arctic environment. This was still the practice and belief system that was in place when I lived in Gjoa Haven in the 1970’s. It was quite a wonderful feeling of being part of the greater community. With that openness, came unexpected visitors, often at unexpected times.

When I went to school I had this image in my mind that I was going to be a teacher. I was always interested in learning and I was particularly interested in literature and history.

When I was very young, my mother used to tell us stories and tales, everything from Hansel and Gretel to stories about the ancient pharaohs and Egyptians. When mother got out the ironing board, we would gather around because we knew that she was going to spend time telling us tales and stories. She did it in such a way that the stories became quite alive for us.

When I was eight years old, my Mom and Dad were divorced. My whole life changed. My mother had to go to work and I was more or less in charge of taking care of the home. So, at an early age, I became quite responsible.

Again, I have to admit that my whole life turned inside out when my parents were divorced. What made it worse was when my mother remarried. We somehow were married, we were collectively married to someone who was so different than we were and who took us away, it seemed, to a far away land. Then it seemed, from then on we had to struggle with life. We had to work really hard every moment just to keep our heads above water. As we got older, we became survivors. We hunted and we
One cold, clear, windless night, a group of young women came to my house to call me outside. “Kaanniq, oova lo, oova lo!” I ran to the window and waved. They giggled and laughed, and gestured for me to come outside.

I wriggled into my winter attige, the warmest parka I owned. It has no zipper or opening for the cold to infiltrate. I pulled it over my head and ran out the door, curious to find what they were up to.

As I joined them, they pointed to the sky. The Northern Lights were spectacular, the ice crystals reflected coloured light as the entire curtain of light shimmered and moved across the evening sky.

fished and we trapped. Although we were from the city, we pretty quickly learned how to survive in the country and it was probably to our advantage that we did. Later on in life, it really came in handy for me, it helped me survive in other cultural settings. I think it’s never done me any harm. I think the worst part of my childhood was that I never had much chance to be a child after the divorce.

At the time, it probably seemed really sad, but it probably gave me the skills that I needed to survive in this world that I now live in. It did me well, you know, as far as surviving in the Arctic. In fact, I probably wouldn’t have been able to be as successful there if I hadn’t had that background and training and experience. So I don’t begrudge it.

I was also interested in becoming a teacher because I had this belief that I could make a difference. Partly my experience in going from being quite a well to do child to a rather poor child and living in an environment where there were lots of other poor people around me was difficult. As a kid, I always thought, when I grow up, I want to change this, I’m going to make a difference. I know I can make a difference if I become a teacher.

I’ve always had that in me. It just seemed to be natural for me and I let that lead me and I let that take me through my early career. I’m really happy.
The young women pulled me along with them to the open area of the school yard. They were still laughing with excitement and demonstrated unusual outgoing behaviour, unlike their normal shy and quiet demeanor.

All of a sudden, once in the open playground area, they started yelling, hooting, hollering, and whistling while dancing around, holding their arms up to the sky.

What amazed me, as we all became caught up in the frenzy of noise and motion, was it appeared that the Northern Lights seemed to dance and moved closer to the Earth. The louder we became, the closer the curtain of light appeared to come to the ground, closing in on us, engulfing us with its sparks of dazzling, dancing light.

that I chose education and teaching as my profession.

I also was very fortunate to meet Gus Daemich who was an elderly man. He was an amazing man and he really became my mentor through the years. He saw something in me, I guess. He talked about it as my light. He nourished that light and he helped me. There was no one else. Back then, in rural Pennsylvania, no one ever thought that a girl would ever go on to post secondary education to become a fully qualified teacher, professor or a professional of any sort.

At the time, the most difficult hardship for me was getting to university--trying to basically get enough financial support and other types of support to actually go. Once I got past the financial hurdles of getting money in place, then I was able to blast ahead. There was no stopping me.

I was so fortunate, I entered as a grade six teacher. It was a rural setting. We had one principal who was shared among three small rural schools. Basically, I became the teacher-in-charge during the week; the formal principal would visit once every two or three weeks, or when needed. I was probably the youngest person on staff but because I had the status of teaching the highest grade level, I was automatically assigned to teacher-in-charge.
I later found that this is a custom that unmarried Inuit women practice to ensure that they would be chosen as a spouse. By calling the Northern Lights closer to the Earth, under special weather conditions on very special windless nights, the women believed that if the Northern Lights touched them, they would be the next to be partnered.

I felt quite honored that they thought to include me in such a special ceremony.

The strangest things always seemed to happen in the middle of the night. This seemed even stranger to me since in the winter, it was dark, like night-time for nearly twenty-four hours for several months.

At the very end of the school year, the Susquehanna River flooded its banks. We suffered through a tremendous flood. I lost everything. I found it hard, in my mind, to go back to Elmira after that flood, after I had lost everything, after the way we were mistreated by the National Guard. I saw people behave in ways that I can still not allow myself to believe. It was a horrible experience. It left a very bad taste in my mouth, so I was delighted when I was offered a teaching position in Montreal for the next Fall. Off I went. It was the start of an incredible journey.

I find that there seems to be a real tie in, in my interest in art and my interest in cultures. Therefore, perhaps that was partly the attraction I had to moving to another cultural setting in Montreal. The Montreal Catholic School Commission wanted an energetic person who had training and experience in dealing with other cultures. My background in education was in working with kids from Hispanic backgrounds and also inner city kids, Black kids from centre-city Philadelphia. As a result, I had quite a good grounding in multi-ethnic education.

It was so incredible. I became part of a team of three dynamic teachers. Antonia was Italian. She spoke her native language as well as French. Laura was Jewish, originally from New York City. She
On one such strange occasion, Haumiq came to my house and woke me, shouting, "Eeleehairee! Eeleehairee! You must come!" I blinked the sleep from my eyes and asked him to tell me what was wrong; I could see that he was very upset and worried. He motioned for me to follow him. I quickly dressed, threw on my parka and kamiqs, and raced after him into the night, trying to keep him in sight, while running in the dark, while wearing the bulky outdoor winter clothing.

spoke Parisian French and German. I spoke Spanish and could talk jive. We formed an amazing team. We set up our classrooms in a family grouping organization. It was an experiment. Our students came to us from Portugal, Italy, Spain, Lithuania, and the Ukraine. For most, English was their second language and in many cases, their third language.

We planned for Grades three, four and five. We would arrange them as a family, and as the fives graduated to grade six, we’d get a new group of grade threes. Then it was the responsibility of the grade fours and fives to orientate and train the newcomers. Of course, many of the students didn’t speak English. Many times when they got to Canada, they had a lot of other problems to deal with, like social and economic problems, their parents were going through a lot, they had a lot of emotional baggage. Anyway, the older kids would sort of take them under their wing.

All of us, all three of us teachers worked together with all the students. We had a whole corridor, the whole end of the building was ours. The whole hall would become a theme—like a prehistoric village, an underwater sea world, a circus.

They would learn the language through thematic units; they learned English really quickly. We
He ran into a small, brightly lit house, near the end of town. As soon as I walked in, I was hit by the smell of duplicating fluid. The small area reeked of the powerful odour of methyl hydrate combined with the sweet smell of purple Kool-Aid!

On the floor, near the bottom of the bunk bed, lay Lukee in a pool of blood. Blood was everywhere; it was pulsing out in deep red spurts.

used science and social studies as our motivators. All the reading and language activities were based around those content areas. People would come from other schools to visit our school just to see what the three of us wild women were up to. It was a great place to be as an educator.

All I knew about Gjoa Haven was that the people were Inuit. I really wanted to go to an Inuit community. It was just incredible traveling up there. You went from one diminishing sized airport to tinier, tinier, and then tinier. When the plane left us in Gjoa Haven, we were standing on just a dirt airstrip above the town. It was August, but it was freezing. I was frozen, I looked down at the settlement, there was no road or anything. I could see the village down there along the harbour, it looked so very peaceful and serene. I remember thinking, "I just hope that I am ready for this!" I felt scared but enthusiastic.

Herb was with me, he was very reluctant—he's really had a hard time ever committing himself to anything. But he was game for one year, at least.

The neatest thing about the people in Gjoa Haven was that they wanted to learn—anything and everything. And I learned so much from them. I learned about their culture when they visited me at my home. We had this great big picture window that looked out onto the ocean. Everybody came to
I assessed the situation as one where the five men had been drinking spiked Kool-Aid, and what started out as playful fooling around, turned into pushing and wrestling. Lukee was wrestled off the upper bunk of the bed and fell on a Klim can. These containers of powdered milk opened by a turn key, leaving a thin, razor sharp exposed metal edge. When he fell on the can from the elevated height of the top bunk, his weight pounded him into the sharp can. His entire shoulder was sliced open down to the bone. A major artery had been severed, and he was dazed from hitting his head on the side of the table.

My house because they wanted to “watch the ocean or sea ice” to see if their husbands and sons were coming back from the land. We’d all stand in front of this big picture window. They’d be rocking their babies, talking. Sometimes, we would just watch. I never found the silence uncomfortable. Actually, it was nice just to be there, watching, together.

The kids would come and they’d play. I learned a lot through watching them play at my house, about their values and what were good things and what were bad things. Most homes didn’t have running water so they loved to play in the water and use my soaps. It was quite usual to find the girls in the bathroom, covered with suds, playing happily in the sink.

At school, the kids were perfectionists. They never would make a mark on their paper unless they felt it was right. So teaching them to print was really hard. They would make a mark, if it went over the line, they’d erase it and erase and erase until there were holes in the paper, they were that worried about it, everything had to be perfect.

I learned this, it took a while. On the land, you can’t make a mistake, there’s no room for error. Survival, if you waste your last match or you don’t get that little fire going you could die. It’s in them that everything they do is done right the first time.
The men were sitting quietly, staring at Lukee, then looking sadly at me. The incident had sobered them; worry and fear consumed their faces. This fear rendered them helpless. I put each to work helping. Eventually, I was able to stop the bleeding and sewed him back together, layer by layer with sinew thread. I had never done anything like that before.

Even when the women sew, even in their bead work, everything is perfect. They must visualize it in their minds, then when they finally cut the cloth with their ulu, it’s perfect. It’s just amazing. The men told me when we went hunting, “You look at the caribou, it’s yours.” You know it’s yours before you pull the trigger—that caribou is yours and down it goes. And I’d say, “How could I have hit it that far away?” They would say, “It’s meant to be, it’s yours—one bullet.”

It works. They don’t waste anything. If you find a nail or a screw or a button, whatever you find, you keep it. You put it in your pocket. I still do that, you know, I still collect stuff for them. They would use an old nail to make an ulu. They’d find a piece of metal and carve it out. They would polish it, they would take this old nail and attach it to a handle. They used everything. Nothing went to waste.

So, I think, with the kids in school, particularly when it came to writing, they had a hard time because they wanted it to be perfect—the first time. I’ll never forget Sony Ruben. He was this little guy and he had such trouble with writing. His paper would be a mess. He would erase and erase until there was literally no paper left to write on—it would be smudged and covered with grey streaks. Holes appeared where he had rubbed out the letters over
Two weeks later when the locum physician arrived, he inspected the wound and gave me a complimentary "Thumbs up" on my handiwork. Luckily, Lukee was a strong, healthy man who healed quickly. I understood then why I had chosen teaching over nursing for a career.

... and over again. I said, "Okay, Sony, we're going to practice because practice makes perfect. You don't have to be perfect every time." When I was out that summer, I bought him a little chalk board that he kept at his table. I made lines on it. He could practice writing. Because it was chalk, he didn't mind erasing it and trying again. Then, when he'd finally write it on paper, he felt pretty confident.

Even in their own language, they don't have extra words for augmented meaning. They don't have the adjectives and adverbs that we have to describe things. That's why I think they loved English because they could really describe what things looked like and what they felt like.

English was really fun for them to learn because it had all the nuances and other hidden meanings, they used to love playing with words. We'd learn a new word, this word had more than one meaning, they'd just think that was a gas. The kids were quite neat. The parents in Gjoa Haven weren't as afraid of school because a lot of them had never been to school. I kind of had an open door policy at school, the coffee pot was always on, there was always tea, parents could come in any time and see what their kids were doing. This is when we were down at the old school and it was still very small.

Gjoa Haven wasn't like some of the Native
Sometimes in the settlements, teachers are called on to perform duties other than teaching in the classroom. I certainly felt that my teacher training courses hadn’t prepared me for this extended role as “eeleehairee” in the Arctic.

Communities, where the parents had gone off to residential school. Those folks were still afraid of school. The people I worked and lived with in Gjoa Haven hadn’t had much of that experience. They trusted us 100% with their children. I took their trust as a responsibility. I always felt so honoured that they would trust me, a stranger, with their children. I really took that very seriously.

When I realized they were not learning, they were not learning from the books and materials that I had in my classroom, that were there for me to use, I realized early on I had to change my whole way of teaching. I had to get rid of my Southern background and upbringing and the way I was taught to teach. I had to do things differently. I used the experiential kind of approach but I always made sure I grounded it in the reading, the writing, the literature. I told them lots of stories, read them lots of stories, brought in all sorts of things for them to see and touch. I used my mother’s approach. I think I made a difference there.

Anyway, the Area Superintendent saw something in me, so he asked me to go to other schools. I started going out and spending a couple of days at Pelly Bay School and a couple of days at Spence Bay. Then I’d go and help somebody in Coppermine. Then I got quite involved with the Teacher Educa-
My life as eeleehairee in Gjoa Haven was somewhat like a dream. I somehow felt transformed. To my surprise, before long, I became accustomed to and accepted the twenty-four hours of daylight in the summertime and continual darkness that came with winter. The enormous moon and sparkling, ever-moving curtains of Northern Lights brightened the blackness, making me feel safe. I never became as friendly with the bitter cold, intensified by the swirling and relentless Arctic wind. In a moment, its frigid breath could freeze my cheeks to solid ice and turn my eyelashes to frosty white.

...tion program because in Gjoa Haven we had no one from the community that I could even pull in as an aide to help in the school. I needed someone who spoke the language to help me translate because there wasn’t a lot of meaning for the kids at first. If we could train some people in our community to be teachers or teacher’s aides that will really help. I started taking on student teachers in Gjoa Haven and training them, then they helped me in the class. Sometimes it was more trouble than it was worth. In some ways one girl was wonderful but she was such a party animal. She’d stay up all night and she’d barely drag herself into school. She’d never have her lesson plans ready and it’s really hard living in a small community and kind of directing somebody, especially in another culture.

I got involved in teaching teachers and working with young people who wanted to become teachers. That was a lot of fun. I started working on a project where I wanted the kids in our school to speak their own language and become literate so they could read and write in their own language first, then introduce English verbally, orally. Then, about grade four, introduce the written English so that they would be completely literate in their own language in that first three or four years of schooling. They understood what print meant and they understood
Although harsh in contrast to my home in Montreal, the extreme climate, with its treeless, roughly hewn land, glowed in my heart as it did each evening and morning as I watched the moon or sun bring light to the horizon.

That print has meaning, you can put meaning into print on paper. That's how I got involved in that language development project. I started spending time in Yellowknife, working with a group of people. That is how I came to know Alex, Nola, Cindy, Carol and Lea Anne--the crew.

When we finally convinced the government that the students should learn their own language first, that was a big step, that's why I'm really thankful for meeting and working with that crew. Somehow coming together at the same period of time and saying, this is right, we have to do this, it's the right thing to do. It's still going on, too.

Some of the communities didn't have a written language, they had no symbol system. We had to invent a symbol system or steal one and make it work for them. It was very challenging, exciting times. I got to work with these great linguists who were trying to hear the sounds of their language to put it down on paper and help us learn how to write the language. It was just such an educationally rich adventure for me. I learned so much about learning, I learned so much about people, I learned so much about why learning is important and why education is critical to the preservation of our society, all those things.
Although considered a barren wasteland, to me, the Arctic embraced me with the warmth of human kindness and sincere concern for others, through intense and interconnected relationships, the nature of which I had never before experienced.

The call to teach struck Sadie as a young child—she explains, "It just seemed natural for me and I let that lead me . . . " Her belief in that she could make a difference in people's lives echoes what others have noted as teaching's service-oriented dimension. Her interest and experience in other cultural settings took up the call to teach in the High Arctic, in the isolated Inuit settlement of Gjoa Haven. She immersed herself in the community, becoming part of the culture and demonstrated respect for her new home and its residents.
Life as a teacher Consultant was exciting, challenging, and unpredictable. Times were changing rapidly - the government was becoming aware that the people living in the Northwest Territories cared about education and wanted to have a say in what should happen at school. Many Aboriginal parents had suffered through the Residential Schooling System and Mission Era.

**Reflections of Reflections**


In Reflections of Reflections, each educator looks more critically into the mirror and reflects more deeply on how her calling to teach, and subsequent calling to practice her call in the High Arctic, affected her decision to step out of the classroom and engage in her calling within the greater community of learners. Each speaks of the complicating challenges associated with her decision to work in administration, providing counsel to new teachers to the system, within a vast geographic, and culturally diverse area. Each peers within herself, reflecting on her earlier reflections and memories, to clarify for herself the importance of her work as eeleehairee, at a different level. Upon deeper reflection, her work as an administrator within the cross-cultural context of this period in the Northwest Territories has had an effect.

**Nola**

I met Nola again in the early 1980’s. I had flown over from Inuvik to attend a Teacher Consultant’s Meeting. It was the first opportunity since becoming a Teacher Consultant that I had to meet others in the field. When I was teaching in Gjoa Haven in the late 1970’s, there was no such resource. I looked forward to being with others in my new role to learn from them.

This time, I was formally introduced to Nola, not on an overcrowded bush plane, but in the lobby of the Yellowknife Inn in the capital city of the Northwest Territories. She was wearing the attire of a northern city dweller, not of the teacher in the settlements. Obviously, she must have traded in her blue jeans and sweatshirts for silk,
While they had been taken from their homes and families, suffering through that separation, they did come out of the experience with an education which helped to give them a voice. This voice was calling out from the frozen North, demanding to be heard.

mohair, and woolen dress slacks. Her hair was light brown, curling softly with a light perm. Mine was straight. Although it was 1980, Inuvik did not yet have a trained hairdresser to boast about. But more than her hair, I remember her radiant smile. In the midst of strangers, it was the one thing that seemed genuine and friendly. It was her smile that welcomed and warmed me.

Not only was she sincere, but she was indeed genuine. I came to rely on her wisdom and trusted in her friendship as we traveled to different parts of the barren wasteland of the Arctic in our roles as Teacher Consultant and quasi-mentor/psychologist to administrators and teachers in the settlements within our geographic regions.

As we talked about old times, Nola reflected on her life as a teacher Consultant and administrator in the Northwest Territories. She recalls,

The advertisement for the Teacher Consultant's position in Hay River came out. I applied and I got it. I really loved being a Consultant. I loved the work I did.

I really enjoyed working in the field of Learning Disabilities. I acknowledged the fact that I am not as good in delivering programs as I am in creating them. I've always been strong in curriculum, that's what I get lots of recognition for in the work that I do in my school right now. That's my area, that's where I really enjoy working a lot.

When I started as Teacher Consultant in Hay River, I first began by getting the teacher resource
I arrived at a most exciting time for education in the High Arctic. Change was taking place so rapidly that we barely had an opportunity to manage that change. There were many windows of opportunity for beneficial and positive changes to the educational system, before it began to mirror educational systems in Southern Canada.

materials organized. Then I started going into the schools; I started finding help for teachers with kids who were having trouble learning. Then I started connecting with the psychologists and people like, Brenda Williams. I started getting into that field so I was doing a lot of the work of an educational psychologist without the credentials. It was good. I was able to connect these kids with the help that they needed and then to prepare programs for the teachers to follow through with. That's crucial. What's the good of a bunch of test results sitting on your desk if you can't take those test results and then translate them into something workable? Something for kids?

At the end of the four years, I wanted another challenge. I thought I could do well as an Administrator. I knew it was just the year. I found that there were some skills that I lacked in going into an administrative position at that point in my life. A lot of those skills had to do with helping people to take a stake in things themselves. Rather than kind of coming in with a vision and being gung ho; and saying, "You know, this is the way it should be done." I learned a lot.

I learned I didn't have a thick enough skin. It made it very hard, because I remember, I wanted people to like me. But I also wanted to stay true to
I was part of this change and enjoyed my role as a change agent - acting as a representative of the Northern students, balancing what the people wanted with what the government thought they wanted in the area of education for the youth living in small, remote, and often very isolated settlements of the High Arctic.

the vision that I had. And I was convinced that the whole language methodology was the way to go, not just with Native kids. But with all kids.

Nola’s story reflects her commitment to the greater community of learns, classroom teachers and students, when she moved into a Teacher Consultant’s role to share her expertise in the field of Learning Disabilities. She took her calling seriously, working at the district level, to assist teachers helping students connect with learning. She used her training to improve the more global learning community as a Consultant.

Betty

I asked Betty why she left the classroom to become a Teacher Consultant. Was it because I had pressured her into assuming that role when I was leaving the Region? She answered emphatically,

No. I remember when you asked, “ Why don’t you apply for the consultant’s position?” I know you recommended me. No, I loved that job. It was a real fun job. I worked there for five years. No, it was because I really thought that I could make a difference. I think I had something to share. I think we each brought something, each person brings something.

We had such a dynamic group when I worked there. Jackie Smith was a workaholic. Lilly was a workaholic. We were all on the same stream which really worked well.

I told you, I became a teacher because it was free tuition. I loved it, once I got doing it, I just loved
At last the Territorial Government realized the importance of first language literacy acquisition. We were able to start pilot projects across the Northwest Territories in select communities where the first language was spoken as the dominant language of communication. I was fortunate to provide leadership for the Slavey Language Program in Ft. Franklin. It was a wonderfully exciting time educationally for me.

I do love kids. I think I'm a bit of a performer, too, and I love to perform. As Consultant, you had to be a good listener and you had to build up self-esteem—tell them that they're doing a good job. Point out the good things that they're doing. Show them where they can help with their weaknesses.

One of the most memorable highlights of my teaching career was when I first got into administration. My first year teaching, I worked as a principal's relief, four days a week. I loved it, it was a great job. I enjoyed the administration aspect of it because you have a little more say in what goes on. That I enjoyed. It's funny. I do enjoy working with kids, because kids are so special. . . . something unique about them, but I do enjoy working with adults, too, you really see change.

It's fun and it's challenging. I'm also a person who really likes to learn. That's what I loved about teaching and about being a Teacher Consultant. I was learning all the time. I would learn from the teachers that I would go and help. I would learn from them. You know, back then, many teachers were just trying out their northern experience, saying, "I'm not going to be here long."

I also was able to read and go to workshops. I learned from working on the committees I was in-
It was a time when I worked hand in hand with the elders, linguists, and bright, young educated members of the community who had returned to their home settlement specifically for this project. We started a first language literacy program in the Slavey language from scratch. Not only did we have to develop a writing system to reflect the unusual sounds of the language, but we also had to put the language in written form for the first time ever. What a challenge!

I was involved in Yellowknife. I learned so much from the other people I worked with.

I learned that people took care of each other. I remember, in Sachs Harbour, while staying up at the weather station, I wanted to get into town. I thought, I'm just going to walk in. I started walking and someone came up on a skidoo and said, "You're crazy walking. There are polar bears around here." Some polar bears were actually coming into the community. He gave me a ride in on the skidoo. Sure enough, there was a polar bear outside the house. Somebody from the community came and shot him right there on the spot.

Fort Franklin was where I saw my best Northern Lights display. I can remember going back to the hotel wanting to wake people up to come outside and see. Remember, you always shared rooms with people?

It wasn't a glamorous life, really. No, it certainly wasn't, but it was fun.

But by my fifth year, I think one almost loses touch with what being in a day to day classroom is like. I'd say, "You should read this," because there was some excellent literature available for teachers to read. But teachers wouldn't have time to read. They would look at me and say, "I'd love to read it but I'm just struggling to stay alive here."
In conjunction with developing the written representation of the language, we also had to produce materials in the Slavey language for teaching purposes. We initially concentrated on two areas: collecting and preserving the stories of the elders which represented the past, and tied us to the underpinnings of the Slavey culture and developing materials for the primary grades, based on the stories of the elders.

I also learned that I do enjoy performing. I enjoyed putting on workshops and organizing things. I enjoy getting up and pulling things out of people and seeing them get the best out of themselves. I even enjoyed the financial aspects of setting down the travel plans. I love working with people. That's what I enjoyed.

In her role as Teacher Consultant, Betty drew upon her strength as a classroom teacher and her inclination to perform. This supports that vocation can only come to life in a social context. Teaching presupposes a social medium which provides many meanings associated with it. As consultant, Betty's work became meaningful as she took her practice to the level of teacher of teachers, helping others learn and improve themselves intellectually and morally. She provided support for others in the field; in this way she improved the entire body of practice for the greater community of learners.

Lilly

Our next interview was scheduled for a Sunday, it worked out better for me since we were three hours time difference apart. I could complete the interview and still have time to address some Christmas cards. We talked about the pending mail strike, the pressure that Christmastime brings, and the great time we had up North celebrating the holidays with the people. We both agreed that we had learned many things and had changed from those experiences. Change was so very much a part of our lives in the North. Lilly began
This meant working on a daily basis with the most interesting people I have ever met. It was a time growth and becoming for me. Although we were of different cultural backgrounds, we had so very many things in common. I felt like I was part of a very important educational initiative.

It was at the time when integration and institutional closing was about to start happening big time. The Superintendent asked me if I would take on the role of Special Education Teacher Consultant for the Cambridge Bay Area, working out of Coppermine. I said that it would take me away from children and I wasn't sure I was prepared for all the travel. The Superintendent then transferred to Inuvik. That left me basically high and dry in Coppermine with no administrative support. Rick was then transferred to Cambridge Bay as Assistant Superintendent for Wildlife. I think he accepted that, largely because it would help me out.

That's when I really got to know the communities of Gjoa Haven, Pelly Bay, and Holman Island. That was an incredibly vibrant time in terms of Special Education in the Territories because we were trying to really hammer out the whole repatriating of students who had been in Southern institutions. That was an incredibly vital time. The co-ordinator group, and the consultant group had some very vibrant people. One who really influenced my work was Leona O'Henry from the Baffin. She was just amazing on a professional level. I think that move into the Special Education Consultant role was a particularly bountiful learning opportunity for me. I was faced with challenges that I had no prior knowledge...
Through this project, I became very close to many of the residents of Ft. Franklin. I also learned a great deal about language acquisition from working with the linguists and specialists in the field.

As part of my work as Teacher Consultant, I flew into thirteen very different settlements to assist teachers and school administrators with the implementation of new directions in curriculum, in-service in how to adjust program content and teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students, and to provide help in general.

of. For example, the whole repatriation of kids who were deaf or hard of hearing. And then integrating little kids in a kindergarten who were totally blind.

I spent my summers trying to learn those things myself. One summer I went to Louisville, Kentucky because I wanted to take courses, at the graduate level, in how one teaches kids Braille. I spent some summers at Magill University studying with Marcia Forest about integration. For me these were really fantastic opportunities, learning opportunities. Then there was of course the connection that the Northwest Territories cultivated with O.I.S.E. (Ontario Institute for Special Education).

So my entry, if you like, into administration, was really a major push. It wasn't something that I aspired to naturally because of really enjoying working with children. I didn't enter into it willingly, I'll be right up front, but it presented so many marvelous opportunities. That once I got into it, I realized, I had this group of Special Education teachers that were incredibly dynamic and so willing. We had so much fun. I had a lot more freedom. It was that freedom that gave me the impetus to do what I needed to do. I had less restrictions. We were putting in place concepts like school teams.

You know, one summer at Magill we had an international group of students, at the graduate level,
This was a very challenging part of the role. Each teacher brought a set of beliefs and teaching strategies along with him or her to the job. These sometimes got in the way of their being successful within another cultural setting. So often, teachers would struggle to make the students fit into their Southern mold. This would create problems right from the start.

being blown away with what we were doing in the Northwest Territories. But again smaller populations create certain advantages—more cohesive groups. Despite the isolation, we were able to really make some big differences. My work in the Northwest Territories will always be just a huge part of my heart. I have so many incredibly good memories.

In some ways, it also was a very difficult period because there were a lot of things that I was totally unprepared for, that I had to work out. Teacher resistance, as an example. When you’re in a classroom or when you’re in a school, you know what your job is. When you’re representing the central office, you’re viewed in a different light. Being a Teacher Consultant required super conciliation skills in some ways.

Rick was offered a position in Inuvik as Superintendent of Wildlife, so he accepted that. The Special Education Teacher Consultant position had been vacant for a year and a half. When Jackie Smith heard that Rick was transferred, she phoned me and asked if I would accept a transfer. They weren’t going to interview me, they just wanted me to accept a transfer.

Moving to Inuvik was, in many ways, really traumatic for me, job wise. Although we had a close knit team, Inuvik was this huge sprawling unit with
Most of the time, I would troubleshoot, provide classroom survival skill type advice for beginning Northern teachers, and help the floundering teachers make it through their first year. Usually, with help and if they had their heart in the right place, once they made it through one year, they would be fine.

no cohesion. It was a very different environment. Both in the office and community-wise. I found it very difficult to work my way into that position with so many more communities to cover. Of course, it did allow me the opportunity to go back to Fort Franklin.

The best part probably of working at that central office at that time was when Betty was there and we were working as a team. I know that for me was a real highlight, it really was.

Things were changing rapidly but, in my view, quite rudderless. At that point I decided that I really needed to get back at a school level, only now I wanted to be a school administrator. I applied on the Vice Principalship and I got it. At SAMS, I loved some of the relationships that we built up. We had some wonderful, wonderful teachers on staff. Actually, I’m not kidding, some of which I haven’t seen here in classrooms. Absolutely fantastic things were happening with kids.

Lilly’s leap into administration was more of a “push”. But again, the practice calls one to it. Lilly became immersed in the role, assisting teachers across the Northwest Territories to better understand their pupils and through that understanding, to fine-tune their practice. She is a team player, and in that, spreads her wealth of experience and knowledge of the practice to others. In her story, she speaks of the demands of the practice, yet her words also tell of her hope.
However, those teachers who came with a personal agenda, and were unwilling to compromise their beliefs, attitudes, and approach often did not meet with great happiness or success. This type of teacher was very difficult and frustrating to work with.

I most enjoyed working with teachers who were struggling with cultural issues but wanted to learn about new approaches, materials, and methods which matched the students they were working with.

Sarah

When I phoned Sarah for our next interview, she was busily working on her dissertation. She was truly in a reflective mood. She explained, “I’ve often thought about why I’ve done all these things—particularly being involved in an interview like this. It makes you start to really think about it. Towards the end of my stay in Aklavik, I was teaching junior high students. There were a lot of suicides, Judith, and I found that very hard to take.” She also explained that being considered a senior teacher then, she had become involved in working with educational committees in Yellowknife. She recalled, “I was starting to get involved at a larger scale again, in Inuvik and Yellowknife.” She went on to say,

I left Aklavik in 1987 and then went to Iqaluit as Teacher Consultant. I worked there for two years, out of the Board Office for the Baffin Region. Then I became principal in Arctic Bay.

I was very dissatisfied as a Consultant. It’s not a bad life if you don’t mind not having any friends, spending all your time in an airplane, which I consider was basically a waste of money. There’d be days when you’d get in a plane, fly around, couldn’t land, and go back to Iqaluit. Some of the planes, I found really hard to work on—they’re so small, they’re so cold. So I thought of all the wasted time, all the hours, a lot of it doing very useless things. . . then Arctic Bay came open for a principalship.

That was it. I loved Arctic Bay. I’d been there.
These educators were hungry for advice, assistance, and suggestions. I lived for them. They kept me excited with their enthusiasm and willingness to learn as they became part of their new community. Often, their enthusiasm would spread and positively affect those teachers around them who were not as student and community focused.

I liked the staff, I liked the community, I liked the Community Education Council, I liked the school. There was just everything about Arctic Bay that I liked. You know, when you are a Consultant, you go around to the communities and get to know them.

Sarah tells of her dissatisfaction with the role of Teacher Consultant. In reflection, she realized that it was not what she wanted although she did want to “get involved at the larger scale again” outside of the regular classroom setting. Her role did however lead her to find her perfect match where she could act in her calling. Through her travels as a Teacher Consultant, she found Arctic Bay and a new life opened up to her as an educator within a greater context.

Mabel

Mabel had just come back from working out in the gym. We talked about how important exercise was, particularly in the colder climates. She said adamantly, “You’ve got to get out and exercise. Remember, we even worked out in Inuvik?” I assured her that I did remember, especially those chilly runs around the Bypass road. We talked about others who also exercised with us which brought us to talking about all the principals at SAMS. Mabel reflects back to her days at the elementary school,

Under the administrators that I worked with at SAMS, I did continue to grow professionally. I had good administrators. They were able to help, and make suggestions to guide me. They allowed me to do things for myself as well and make decisions. After my seventh year, the Superintendent at the time,
Ed Duggan, asked me to become the Vice-principal of SAMS. Career-wise I felt that it would be a good advancement.

I like to spend my time in the curriculum aspect of it, to support the programs as opposed to working with the discipline. You do have to be there to support teachers in the classroom. They struggle. You do have to be there as a sounding board to listen to what they have to say. You've got to be a team player. You have to satisfy the department and you've got to also satisfy the teachers. That was a real challenge. It was a good experience for me.

Basically many of the teachers were recruits from down South and they didn't have the teacher education in the North that they have nowadays. I think I tried to give good support to the teachers when they first started because they are so frazzled when they first get there. They tend to be so uptight about the whole situation. If they can just move in and get their home base feeling comfortable then maybe they feel that they might actually make it. Even meeting the odd person or two might be a bonus. All this is to ease that sort of pressure when they first get there--of not knowing where they're at.

Those were the good old days, when people really showed that they cared about others. I tried, because I knew what it was like, what it meant to
I would check my personal mail, answering machine, and usually fall into bed. The next day, I would go to the office to catch up on the paperwork and requests that came in while I was away. All this pre and post trip planning was very time consuming, but absolutely necessary. If one were to be successful in the field, one had to attend to the drudgery of the position as well.

me when I went North. That was one of my best experiences.

One of the most frustrating things about administration was I found that in many cases much of my time was spent being a care giver and a disciplinarian rather than giving support to teachers. I would have liked to have had more time to get into the classrooms to give support to kids and provide relief to some of the teachers. However, the job demands just didn’t let that happen.

In her reflections of reflections, Mabel confides how frustrating administration can become. While her heart has always wanted to make a difference for others, she found that the drudgery of the position sometimes took her away from the aspects of the calling she enjoyed - curriculum and support to students in the classroom.

As principal, she reached out and supported new teachers in the field, making a difference for them personally as well as for the students in their care.

Sadie

Sadie started to reflect on her life in Gjoa Haven. She said that she really felt at home in the small Inuit community. When it was time to leave, she had difficulty ripping herself away. She remembers the leaving,

After three years in Gjoa Haven, we left. I remember, I cried like I’d never cried before. I cried all the way to Cambridge Bay. I loved that place and the people. The people were part of me. I didn’t want to
Often, I would try to write in my journal or attend to letters and critical paperwork while I traveled. This was usually difficult since the small aircraft I flew on were very crowded space-wise and icy cold. I found it hard to write with mitts and my parka on, trying to keep warm with only by breath and body heat until the plane’s ineffective heater warmed up the cockpit.

Also, it appeared rude if you didn’t talk to the pilot. Sometimes you were his only English speaking passenger for days. The pilots always wanted to catch up on the gossip of the settlements, discuss the news of the outside world, and just talk. The pilots became part of my extended family as well over the years.

But Herb was an athlete. He was getting ready to compete in the Olympics, needing a year to get ready. So, we left the Arctic and took our fourth leave of absence from Montreal. We moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida and we trained. Herb trained for the rowing competition, the single sculling event. I was his trainer and helped him. We both raced, ran, bicycled, and trained. That is all we did for a year. Then the United States decided not to send a team because the non-communist countries boycotted the Olympics. They canceled the Summer Olympics. Herb was heartbroken, he was absolutely heartbroken.

We went back to Montreal and started getting ready to go back to teaching. Just before school started I had a phone call from the Department of Education in the Northwest Territories. They wanted me to come up and be the Teacher Consultant for the Inuvik Region. Herb was not prepared to leave Montreal. He told me to go ahead and when he’d finished his Masters degree in Special Education, he said, “I’ll join you.” I really believed he meant that. It was hard leaving him, but again, I wanted to go back up North. I really loved it there. Montreal had changed politically so much, that I knew I wouldn’t be as happy teaching as when I was there.
We all looked after one another. If the weather went out and we were stranded in a settlement, we would often stay at the same place and eat our meals together.

If the plane broke down, the pilot would usually use the school as his communication base, setting up a work area in the staff room or corner of one of the teacher’s classrooms. This was all part of being one big team in the North at the time. It was a great family to be part of if you liked that sort of thing. Privacy was not always possible and loners found it nearly impossible. Flexibility was key.

Before, I resigned from the Montreal Catholic School Commission.

I was on my way to a whole other adventure in life. Herb never did come up. Now I was heartbroken. I have never fully recovered from my sense of loss.

Inuvik was incredible. That’s when I officially became a Teacher Consultant. I had been doing that type of support work, on the side, for a number of years when I was in Gjoa Haven, helping teachers, but now this was really my job. I was to go into small communities and work with the teachers from the South and also the Native teachers and Teacher Assistants. I was to help them prepare their lessons, help them try to understand the communities they lived in and worked in. I also did a lot of work early in the year with teacher orientation. I did research around First Nations people, how they learn, their languages, their culture, to try to help the non-native people fit in a little better and understand. I found a lot of teachers came up North totally ill-prepared. They didn’t know how to teach children, they didn’t know about language development, they didn’t understand the sequences of how people learn language. If you don’t understand how language is learned or acquired, then you’re really behind the eight ball.
Courage was also necessary. I remember on many occasions when I thought that we might crash the plane. On one particular wild and windy flight into Paulatuk, I thought I was most definitely a goner. We were low on fuel, had a tremendous load of materials and supplies on board, and had absolutely no visibility. It was nearly dark, the wind was tremendous, pushing the small craft off course.

We finally made our approach into Paulatuk, but were blown off the runway before we could land. I have never felt the force of nature to be so overwhelmingly strong and relentless - I felt so very helpless. I tried to keep my head and continued to encourage the pilot. He was being tested, using all of his Northern experience to attempt to bring us to land safely.

The Inuvik Region was a huge district. It started above the tree line where the Inuit people lived. Then it moved down into the tree line, serving communities where the Metis people and different Dene tribes lived. I worked in very interesting and really diverse communities, some were tiny and some were huge, some had a good deal of exposure to White people, others had very little.

Inuvik was like a cosmopolitan town in that it was a government centre--it was also the jumping off point for all the Beaufort Sea exploration and Arctic research.

I think it is a benefit to be married in the North, especially in another culture. You need a partner, you need somebody there that you can talk to. It was tough, but then again, I was busy.

I would usually stay three, four days in the community every week and then get home just in time to get ready to go on my next trip. I had over thirteen schools and they were all really far away from each other. I also brought people together and did training sessions in Inuvik. I had four schools in Inuvik itself, besides the other thirteen communities. It was pretty busy. I didn't have much of a life, my own personal social life, that is. My work was my life. I just enjoyed every minute of what I was doing with whoever I was with, whether it's in Sachs
We didn’t have enough fuel to return to the mainland; we were too far from any other landing strip. He decided to make one more sweep. He charged in from the right of the airstrip, which looked to me like we’d land in the settlement’s fuel tank. He judged the wind to blow us back in line with the center of the runway. We did it. We both held on to the flight apparatus to steady the plane so that it did not flip with the off-balanced load we were carrying. It was frightening, but we made it. Two days later, the same pilot was landing another over-weight load in similar conditions at Paulatuk. Both he and his passenger were killed. The evidence of the plane wreck was a constant reminder of just how lucky I was that day and many others during my six years as Teacher Consultant for the Northwest Territories.

Harbour, sitting on the air strip, waiting for the plane to land or if I was in Inuvik, taking someone out for lunch to give them a pep talk. I did that for the six years I was in Inuvik.

I had incredible experiences. I grew as a person and as a professional. I am wealthy with what I learned there, through other educators and through the people. I feel I have made a difference in education. I know I have.

Sadie was asked to become a consultant, working with teachers and administrators in the Inuvik Region. By helping other teachers to understand the culture, language, and beliefs of the people they were teaching and through providing curriculum support, Sadie assisted teachers to improve their practice. While life as a Teacher Consultant was not glamorous, and sometimes lonely, she derived satisfaction from her calling and confirms this, “I feel I have made a difference in education.”
Reflections of Reflections of Reflections

I am a different person today than when I first stepped out of the bush plane on the airstrip above Gjoa Haven so many years ago.

Reflection of Reflections of Reflections

"A transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis..." (1979, p.963)

In Reflections of Reflections of Reflections, the participants reflect even deeper into the mirror of their past and experiences as eeleehairee in the Northwest Territories—both as teacher in small, remote Aboriginal communities and as administrators, serving students and staff across a broader educational scope. When reflecting upon the many aspects of their lives as eeleehairee, each describes how she has changed—how she has been transformed as a person and as a teacher, through her calling to teach in Canada's Arctic. Each story takes on a life of its own, somewhat like a prism of mirrors, in bright, unfiltered light, reflecting upon itself in multiple dimensions, to expose the deeper, even smaller, more colourful facets of reflections, while maintaining the larger view of the whole, as affected by the prism pieces. Looked at individually, each piece is a reflection of meaningful experience. Viewed as a whole, with all its colourful reflections of reflections of reflections, it represents a full life of beauty, meaning, and importance. It is indeed a transformation.

Nola

I was not surprised to find that Nola was busy marking Grade 12 English Compositions when I located her in November 1997. In the Northwest Territories, we would rely on Nola’s perfect grammar and sentence structure when we Teacher Consultants rallied together to initiate educational change. By making educational presentations and through writing proposals, articles, and letters to the powers that controlled the educational system, and specifically, to those who held the Territorial Government's purse strings, we were able to facilitate...
change to improve education for the students in the classrooms across the Arctic and to support our fellow colleagues in those schools—the teachers and administrators. Nola was then and is today a masterful speaker and writer. She put her marking aside and began reflecting on why she decided to leave the North, as well as administration,

I didn’t want the isolation anymore. Actually I wanted to head South. I’ve changed so much since those days, I’ve learned so much that it’s kind of a thrill in a way because you can see the changes that have taken place in yourself.

I now teach in an inner city senior high school. I love it actually. There are lots of challenges but they’re good kids. They’re really good kids.

There’s a local newspaper here, and I do a column. It’s a newsletter, actually, a community newsletter. I do profiles on the entrepreneurs in the community. I also write short stories and fiction and poetry. I think the only time in my professional history that I can remember not having worked myself to the bone was the first two years in Coppermine.

One of the big downfalls of our economic driven education is that it does not value time for reflection. If it did value time for reflection it would build it in. Reflection is extremely important. The ability to stop forward motion and look back and assess and evaluate and reflect on what you’re doing as a teacher and what you’re doing as a person.
My experiences as an eeleebaiiree in the Arctic at that very exciting and special time historically in education, have molded and shaped me into a transformed member of the greater society.

None of us have the time.

Particularly in English. There needs to be time for reflection and assimilation of skills and that’s why we retained our full year grade ten at my school. And when I look at teaching English, sure English literature is our vehicle. But what is it that we’re really teaching kids today? We’re teaching kids to analyze and extrapolate. We’re teaching kids to prepare, to make judgments—the whole English course is very high level thinking.

When it comes to the mandate for teaching English, what you’re really teaching, is teaching kids to be critical thinkers. That’s why a lot of people have trouble with this course—not because of the material itself, it’s because of their inability to understand what the message is.

I’ve thought of going back up North. I have thought about it, I’ve thought about it often. I went up to Whitehorse this summer and poked around there and, you know, I wouldn’t go as a single person again. If I had a partner, I’d go. I’d have no hesitation in going either to a place like Yellowknife or a place like Whitehorse.

Then, I would go North again. Yeah, but the other thing is, Judy, you can’t, you just can’t walk the same roads you walked before.

Well, if you don’t love teaching, it’s a lousy
profession. They say that it's a calling. I think it is.

Nola's story tells of her commitment and change through her calling. She says, "I've changed so much since those days, I've learned so much that it's kind of a thrill in a way because you can see the changes that have taken place in yourself." Today, as a high school English teacher, she demonstrates the same passion for the calling that she did as a beginner in the field.

**Betty**

The next time I called Betty, she was baking Christmas cookies. Her son, Kent, was in the kitchen testing them. She remarked that, "This little baby that you delivered is now taller than I am - he's so handsome." We laughed as the memories of Kent's birth flashed through time. It was a difficult birth. Betty had to come into Inuvik from Fort McPherson a month before her due date to have the baby--it was winter, it was icy, Betty was as big as an igloo, which made it difficult for her to get around. We all took care of her. On Kent's birthday, the attending locum doctor had left the hospital to do home visits, assuring me that the baby was not due for several hours. That was not the case. Kent would not wait. I was the first person to see him and touch him. Again, through that learning experience, Betty and I became bonded forever, like family.

Betty, in a very matter of fact way, explained why they had left the North,

We left the North and came down here for our kids. Rebecca got into a bad crowd up there so we had to leave. She was into drugs. She was experimenting. She's not exactly a follower. But it was, I think
My actions and behaviour represented who I was as an educator, and had an impact on the focus I took while I was with the people as an educator.

it was tough being a teenager where everyone knew your Dad. Will was working at the high school, I was working there. It was tough. She didn’t want to be a teacher’s kid.

And Kate was getting into all kinds of trouble. She organized a strike against a French teacher. Like, she just did not respect authority at all with anyone she could wind around her little finger. It was just not a good scene. No, it was time for us to leave.

Will was there. He wasn’t the watchful parent that I was. Being the Teacher Consultant, I was gone Monday to Friday. Plus you’ve got to get ready for the next set of workshops. Work wise, it was the most exhilarating time. Family wise, it wasn’t great. I think Kate suffered some consequences because of it, although she was on the wild side to begin with, but it certainly didn’t help. If you do the job the way you want to do the job, it’s not one that a married person with small children should do. I did feel guilty for a long time because I think it’s a difficult job to do if you have family. We discussed it as a family. I think I’ve gotten over the guilt feelings. You can’t really bond to anyone when you’re never there.

Also, Will’s Dad had Alzheimer’s or the beginning stages of Alzheimer’s. Our families pressed, “It’s time that you guys came back.” It was really a
Later, through working with new teachers to the North, I also had an influence on how they performed as teachers which also affected the students in their care.

I think our experiences up North added to our spirituality. I'm a more connected person because of my experiences in the North with the people and the land. People were closer up there, I think. It was kind of a cocoon environment. You got to know people differently.

Now, I'm working with kids in a classroom. But I find I do a lot of things school wide and board wide. I love giving workshops at school to the teachers. I enjoy it, it's back to the consultant's role.

I think if we were to go back to Fort McPherson today, it would be very different, because I think the youths are very different. I think television and a lot of those types of things really changed things. I still think the kids are kind of trapped between two worlds.

I do feel that I made a difference.

Betty reflects on her experiences through her calling and call to teach in the Arctic. She feels the experience has added to her spirituality; she is a more connected person today because of her experiences with the people and land of the North. Now a classroom teacher, she still seeks opportunities to engage others in workshops where she can act out her calling in a social environment with her teaching peers.
Lilly

When Lilly answered the phone, she was excited about telling me of her latest project in her school district. Her enthusiasm amazed me. She was always extremely involved in new and exciting initiatives in education. We talked about her plans for her next conference on multiple intelligences. This took us to further reflections about our lives as educators in the Northwest Territories, where we were then and where we are now. She began,

Then my father passed away and a few months later, Rick's Dad died. We were both feeling very much like we had more of an obligation to be closer to family. In the meantime, I was offered my present position in District Administration in Manitoba. I was so delighted to have this opportunity and although it was a gamble on my part, it was also a huge gamble on the part of the administration here. I have never regretted it for one minute. This is a school division that highly values education. My title is Student Services Coordinator Administrator. There are many initiatives that I'm spearheading, that I'm leading. No one ever tells me, "We can't do that." I have the most dedicated superintendent I've ever worked for in my life. He is truly inspirational. He is incredibly child centered, in terms of when you get right down to the core of things. I admire greatly his ability to see ahead. Anyway, that's what I mean by the incredibly wonderful experiences that I've been afforded by being here. And actually, by being wher-
One of the greatest lessons I learned, was to listen - really listen to what others had to say.

My working environment is all encompassing. It doesn't allow very much for the personal side. There's always a drawback to any of this. I don't know how to find that balance, I'll be really honest. Even up North, I bet you didn't find a balance either, being on the road so much. It's sort of like, you know, what Csikzentmihalyi talks about in *Flow*—how time passes and you don't realize it. I know that feeling, I know it very well.

We do still communicate with a lot of Northern people—there is still an extremely strong Northern connection. The funny thing is I don't have a compulsion to return. No, it's really strange but I don't even have a desire to go back to visit.

What I remember the most are the students. I particularly remember a young girl from Coppermine. She was raised literally "on the land". She lived way out, way out of town, in an outpost camp with her granny. She had never gone to school. When I got her in my grade three class, she had never been inside a school before. She did not speak very good English. The kids didn't want to sit beside her because they said she had bugs.

She was the most beautiful child you'd ever want to meet in your life. What I discovered about Edna, was that she was a wonderful artist so I was
I also learned to watch and carefully observe what people of other cultures valued.

able to use that. So in group work, Edna would do the drawings and everybody appreciated her for that. But do you know how I taught her to read? Like this. We were looking at the clouds. We were actually looking at the sky and the smoke from the chimney and the shapes it was making. Edna would tell me what shape it was and Edna would draw it and I would write, "This is a . . . ." That's how she learned to read. It was wonderful and she is a wonderful girl.

You know, before she came to school, from my classroom window at school, I could watch Edna hitching up her dogs and racing them down this hill. Because, you see, she lived on the land, she knew how to do all that, like she was an incredibly skilled little girl, in many ways that were not particularly school smart.

You know when Howard Gardner came up with his research about naturalist intelligence recently, you can imagine how I felt about that . . . from all the people I knew in the Arctic. If only I'd known, formally. I knew intuitively. Why is it that we could recognize how spatially gifted and how artistic a lot of the kids were?

Alcoholism was a problem then only then we never spoke about it in school. It was taboo to talk about. I remember one new teacher was teasing
It's not so important that an outsider change to be like the people she is with, but it is important to accept the people she is with for who and what they are.

Some kid in school about the drinking at his place, at this child's house. I remember staff taking him into the staff room and telling him in no uncertain terms, you don't do that. The difference being that now we're teaching how to be a responsible citizen.

But it was not my culture. While in Aklavik, I became friends with a local Native woman. One night, she shared her story with me. She had grown up never knowing who was her natural mother but knowing she had two moms. Then she talked about her marriage--how her husband had raped and made her daughter pregnant. That was probably my first introduction to it. I was raised in a fairly traditional, fairly religious upbringing so that was kind of way off the beaten path for me. I'm sure I hadn't even read anything like that, so it was pretty shocking for me. But that was my first introduction to it.

We were saying that sometimes your first years are the best because you don't know all the details. Yeah, because you can't see things the same way anymore. That may be part of that tarnished view why I don't feel compelled to go back.

This was not my culture. I remember not wanting to make a mistake, but wanting to make a difference.
We are all different, yet we are alike in so very many ways. I have learned to seek common ground and from there to move toward greater understanding of the differences.

Lilly reflects on her life in the North and specifically recalls her students. Her work with Edna, an Inuit child who entered school at Grade three, was a highlight of her career as a teacher. Lilly’s sense of pride and accomplishment in teaching Edna to read explains the joy of the calling.

Lilly is still initiating educational change, acting on her calling, in the greater educational community. She maintains a sense of ‘flow’ in her calling, which provides even more exactement and interest in the work itself.

Sarah

During the interview, I inquired how long Sarah had been away from Arctic Bay while pursuing her doctorate. She has been away for almost three years on a leave of absence. In the meantime, someone else has assumed the principalship. When asked how this fits into her return, she responded “I was guaranteed another principalship but I don’t really necessarily want a principalship. I would like to go back to Arctic Bay. I’m very interested in classroom work.”

She talked a bit about the effect her present research was having on her thinking. She has been studying the relationship between the classroom teacher and her students.

I’m interested in this--somehow school has got to be more meaningful for the kids, Judith, and it seems to lose that when we come up from the South. It is just like what I went through in Aklavik. It took me a long time to find out, not just what turned the kids on, but how to do it so it was part of the school classroom, part of the learning, and part of the curriculum. It was a lot of learning to do. There’s so little
I feel I was called to teach and I know I was called to practice my calling in the High Arctic. My life has been interesting and fulfilling as a result of my experiences with people willing to learn new ways.

time to do it and there’s so little energy to do it. I’m still interested in working on programs and second language learning. You know, the strategies that are most appropriate, not the ones in books, but the ones that work for us.

Being principal in Arctic Bay, I found it very challenging, very political. I found it often sort of like being a monkey in the middle . . . in between the teachers and the kids, the parents and the kids, the parents and the teachers. It’s just like a classroom you know, you have visions, you have ideas about all the wonderful things I want to do this year--and the kids don’t want to do it.

You have a Southern staff with Southern values and goals and you have a Northern staff with Northern values and goals. It’s very tricky. It is much like a juggling act or so I found it.

Because the school communities are so far removed from the central office in Iqaluit, many decisions are community based. This can place added tension on the staff. One year, in order to base most of the support in the classroom, for the teachers and students, decisions were made to reduce administration time and staff. While the reasoning was valid, the results were less than satisfactory. We made tough decisions. I remember the conversation around the table. “We’ll take the vice-principalship
The Inuit and Dene people are life-long learners by nature. Survival has taught them that.

and scrap it”. “We’ll put that person in the classroom to reduce the pupil teacher ratio”. Or, “I’ll take the Program Support Teacher Role and be the principal. I can do the extra work at night or I can do the extra work on the week-ends and this is important”. Getting extra people in the classrooms and running an extra program . . . concentrate all the time on doing things better for the classroom. You then start pulling out your administrative time. You really expose yourself to a lot of stress.

After five years as principal of Arctic Bay, I was definitely ready for a change. I needed a break. I had always planned on doing a Ph. D. at some point in my life, but I had never planned on doing it in education.

There is so much going on with second language learning right now--do we embrace it, do we scrap it? Those aren’t decisions I make but I have very strong feelings about it. Again, this comes back to Southern staff who are hired like I was, like you were, who know nothing about second language research, second language pedagogy, and you put them into a junior high classroom! Junior high kids will go crazy anyway, but when you start throwing in a lot of these extra factors, it is an overwhelming job.
Being connected to the land and the environment, with its challenges, has made these people closer to one another.

I believe in it. I know, you know. I firmly believe that the kids have got to learn Inuktitut in their first years at school. There is all kinds of research that supports that. I taught in the West where it didn’t happen and it’s absolutely regrettable. I’m going to do something about it.

In her reflections, Sarah, as a Northern educator has looked at the importance of language through the lens of her years of experience in Inuit communities. Her belief that students should learn Inuktitut in their first years of schooling drives her to seek ways of enacting this mission within her calling to teach. After graduation from her Doctoral program, that is what she intends to do.

**Mabel**

Today, Mabel explained that the weather in Whitehorse had been unusually warm this past winter. In fact, she only had to plug in her block heater on her vehicle for one week. I found that amazing since I know first-hand just how cold the Yukon can be during the dark days of the winter months. She was looking forward to Spring—we both were. We then talked about what her life is like since she left Inuvik, she remembers,

I left Inuvik in 1989, after 16 years at SAMS. Then I went to university for the year to finish off my Master’s in Special Education. From there I came over to Whitehorse, Yukon. Since I had my Special Education Masters degree that helped me move into a very specific position here.
People rely on each other – celebrating each others’ strengths and very aliveness. They are one with one another and act for the good of the community.

I’m still connected to administration but they attach all these other jobs to administration too. Oh, they spread you in all different ways. I’m a half-time V.P. and I’m a half time Program Implementation Co-ordinator—a teacher is what I really am. I am certainly ready to retire this coming June, I can’t wait, I’ll tell you that!

I’ve got I.E.P.’s and a classroom to teach to fifteen kids. I have fifteen report cards to write. I draw them from all over the school because they’re kids that can’t stay in a regular classroom. I’m with kids all day, pretty well, but not the same ones. I work with different levels. It’s a heavy duty task. Here, I find it much heavier than when I was in Inuvik. There, you didn’t have so many things tied to you. If you were in administration, you were in administration.

There was a good balance, I was experiencing my chance to get into administration, I experienced the chance of the classroom, I also experienced the chance of the community becoming more a part of education at that time. Also the changeover from Territorial to the Local Education Authorities. I was part of all that change—it was positive.

I would safely say that some administrators today have probably gone back to the classroom because being in administration, the political pressure is too much these days and you can’t stand
the heat too long. It wears you down. I'm trying to do the best for the community and the kids. Communities today put a lot of demands on the school. We're looking after kids who have no parents, we're looking after kids who have had no structure, no guidance, no counsel, no anything.

I'm a very different person and a different educator today than I was when I first hit Sachs Harbour. I have a lot wider perspective. I can also sit back and take a little bit of a slower look at the situation and say to myself, "Yes, Mabel, you can help the situation but you aren't God." And I can take it at a slower pace, I know I'm not going to change this overnight but I can help. I can do some good but I'm not going to change it all. There's no quick fix.

I would have to say one of the best feelings I had was when I was in Sachs Harbour. We were the first group of teachers in there. We were educational pioneers, if you like. We felt that we really did introduce those folks, that whole community, to education. That was the time when I felt that I was really part of helping them get into a situation where they could go ahead and get a meaningful education for themselves. We were part of getting them into learning how the world goes.
I look back on the kids. Some of the kids have made out really well. I can reflect back on the same thing in Inuvik, but I think that education was already born by the time we got to Inuvik. It was already something that the people were trying to come to grips with. They were supporting it and creating a high school. They were trying to bring in the students from the settlement, putting them in the hostels and trying to get as many kids into the stream of education as they possibly could. Whereas in Sachs Harbour, it was a real birth, a real growing stage. And I felt part of it. I really feel that I've been a help.

The teachers in the time when we first went there had an influence on education. They were trying to really help. It was more like a social responsibility, you didn't mind giving up things because you knew you were making a difference. I think that because we did that giving of ourselves to the community, we were part of the receiving. We all benefited. You really felt part of it when they joined you and included you.

I think the North is really hard on relationships. Because you get so wrapped up in your work. That's right. The thing is the families split apart because one or both become so work oriented that they just have no other life. It's a shame that the kids, the other part of the family, just go unnoticed. I
As a result, I am a transformed person.

mean I could probably start naming the different ones that just didn't seem to make it. It would be quite a list. And, I'd be on it.

Approaching retirement, Mabel reflects on her years as an educator called to work in the North. She expresses the dissatisfaction that administrators today feel in the profession. She examines her participation in bringing about the birth of education to the High Arctic. Her experiences in her calling as a teacher in Sachs Harbour have carried her through her years as an administrator. She believes that they were her fondest memories.

Sadie

Sadie explained that she was still working on the District Special Education Review. She remarked that the only thing which stays the same is change—her district was going through another major change, one of many in the last few years. Reduced funding levels for public education was creating major concerns in the educational community. Again, she was faced with doing more with less. This time it was Special Education Services that had to be cut. She remembered the budget cuts in the late 1980's when she had just left the Arctic which also affected Special Education in the Province of British Columbia. She went on to explain how she happened to leave the North,

I went to a conference and I met this really neat educator from British Columbia. He was Superintendent of the Stikine School District. He invited me to come down and present a language development program workshop at their annual teacher's
All I do today is weighed against what is the right thing for others.

classification. It was held in Whitehorse, Yukon with the Northern British Columbia, Alaska, and Yukon teachers. I went and I did a three day presentation.

I met some really interesting people. At that time, they were looking for an Assistant Superintendent in the Stikine School District. They talked me into it and I moved to Northern B.C.

I did a job very much like a combination of teacher training, Special Education, gifted, Native Education—the whole ball of wax. For over ten years, more traveling. I was doing the same thing, traveling to the small communities, staying for the good part of the week, getting home in time to reorganize and leave again. I really worked with all the communities and I got to know them well. I feel I really made some major inroads in education there.

However, I found that when I'd get home to my home community, of Inuvik, I didn't belong. The whole week, while I was away, all my friends had gone off and had all these other experiences of which I was not part.

But because I was detached, it made me better at my job in some respects. I could go into communities, into schools, into classrooms and see things more in a neutral, clear way than if I was emotionally tied up with them.
It certainly has put another spin on how I make educational decisions today in my position as Assistant Superintendent for a public school district.

It was political in Northern British Columbia but people were still hungry for education. It was really important. I know it's important here too but the politics and the concerns about money tend to cut into the energies and enthusiasm that you'd normally have for educational change and progress.

I certainly enjoy administration; I enjoy working with other teachers and adults. I think that I have a strength in that way. I believe in life-long learning. I support my colleagues' professional growth and development. My time as an administrator in the Northwest Territories was really exciting. I think we made a lot of changes; it was very frustrating at times because change takes so much time and you need to get people on board. It seems you're constantly struggling to change other people's views, to make them have a paradigm shift. Rewards were great and there was a lot of loneliness. Like I said, I'd go into a community, fly in, I'd be there for a few days, you never really got to know people intimately.

As an aside, one of the things I learned in the Arctic, is "An Eskimo Kiss" is not a kiss. It's a smell, a total involvement of one's senses. They press their nose and lips right against your skin, your face, your eyes. They breathe in with their lips, their mouth and their nose at the same time. It was like being tasted and smelled all at once. We are shar-
I am transformed as a result of my calling to teach.

ing ourselves with each other—completely. It is the wildest feeling. And, because their noses are so flat, not having the cartilage like we do, they can get very close to you. They can get right into your face--into your pores.

Aside from learning about social behaviours, the thing that really changed me the most, especially after living with the Inuit, is knowing that people are the most important thing in one's existence. People are the only thing that count. Not what you have or what you own, or who you know, it's who you are and how you treat others that really matters most. I think that was really good to have that reinforced in my adult life, that was what I learned as a child. But it does get me into trouble, as an adult in Southern society, because other people don't act the same way I do.

In her career as educator in the Northwest Territories, Sadie reflects on what she has learned in that context. Her belief in the importance of other people is like her absorption in the totality of the Eskimo Kiss. She has been immersed as an educator in the lives of others and has filled her senses, her whole being, with her calling. She is it, it is her.
Cross-Case Analysis

In Reflections, as "In an instance of reflecting", these women educators tell stories which disclose a common calling to teach, which makes it a vocation, and within that vocation, a calling to teach within another cultural context. In The Call to Teach, Hansen (1995) argues that teaching is a vocation. The Latin root of vocation, vocare, means the response "to a call". "It denotes a summons or bidding to be of service" (p. 1). He furthermore asserts that vocation emerges over a long period of time.

. . . a person cannot "will" a sense of service into existence, nor wake up one day and "decide" to be of service. Those dispositions grow and take shape over time, through interaction with people and through an attempt to perform the work well. (p. 4)

Hansen also explains that

An individual who is strongly inclined toward teaching seems to be a person who is not debating whether to teach but rather is contemplating how or under what circumstances to do so. . . . But it may be years before such a person actually takes action. He or she may work for a long time in other lines of endeavour. . . . before the right conditions materialize. (p. 10)

In Reflections, Nola's story is consistent with this summons to teach. While searching for self-acceptance and longing for friendship on her path to a
career in Art History, Nola found her calling to teach quite unexpectedly when she was selected to participate in an experimental program in education through Magill University. She reflects, "There was my niche. I was happy in education. Teaching was natural for me. . ." Betty has a very different story, "I didn't grow up wanting to be a teacher. The only reason I went to teachers' college is because it had free tuition at the time." For Lilly, she had gone "... into education right out of high school, not intending to stay in it. . ." through the encouragement of a governmental program designed to deal with its teacher shortage. She does admit that, "I had always toyed with the idea of teaching." Sarah's story supports Hansen's premise that the right conditions must materialize for some to acknowledge their call to teach. She tells of her desire to work overseas in underdeveloped countries. For her, teaching was a vehicle to pursue her desire. She explains, "... the only way I could go to those countries was as a teaching person. So I went to Africa with CUSO and stayed five years. It was at that point that I decided I really wanted to be a teacher". Without the opportunity to be initiated into teaching through active involvement, would these educators have found their calling? Hansen believes they would. In fact, the stories of these women educators confirm what Hansen (1995) suggests, 

It implies that something about teaching is larger than the person - something to employ familiar terms, that calls a person to it in the first place, that whets the appetite, that captures the imagination.

The concrete source of that call may be one's own teachers, the
influence of friends who are educators, one's experiences working with the young in an educational capacity. But notice that those sources reside not within the person but without, in the broader social world of education. (p. 125)

While Nola, Betty, Lilly, and Sarah were called to teach through various routes, both Mabel and Sadie knew early on in their lives that teaching was their preferred career choice. While still in high school, Mabel's decision to become a teacher was based on her belief, "I saw teaching as a privilege. I felt the status of the profession was fairly recognizable in those days." She also saw teaching as "... a challenge to help students along the road to reach maturity, to become good citizens, mature citizens in their community." To add yet another dimension to the calling to teach, Sadie explains that, even as a young child, "I always thought of myself as a teacher. It just seemed natural for me and I let it lead me and let it take me through my early career." She explained that her most difficult hardship was not knowing that she was called to teach but in "... getting to university - trying to basically get enough financial support. . . . to actually go."

While each participant answered her call to teach through different means, all recognized the practice of teaching as an acceptance to engage in the greater community, becoming part of an evolving tradition. This sense of social context supports Hansen's (1995) argument that the sense of vocation can come to life only in a social context,
Without the practice of teaching, would-be teachers would have no context in which to act. Teaching pre-supposes a social medium that provides many meanings associated with it. Persons do not simply invent those meanings out of whole cloth. They are meanings characteristically associated with helping others learn and improve themselves intellectually and morally. In brief, would-be teachers step into a practice with traditions undergirding it, with layers of public significance built up over generations. The sense of teaching as a vocation presumes a willingness to engage with the public obligations that go with the task, to recognize that one is part of an evolving tradition. (p. 15)

He further believes that the practice precedes the individual. He states, "From this perspective it 'calls on' all who take it seriously to fulfill its requirements and responsibilities" (p. 124). All of the participants, over the course of their teaching careers in the Northwest Territories, examined their practice and made adjustments to meet the unique needs of their students, taking into account the cultural context from which their students came.

For example, Nola realized how inappropriate her methodology was in the context of her Coppermine students' background and knowledge base. She acted, she altered her approach. It emerged from the practice itself. In his study of four practitioners, Hansen (1995) found this to be the case as well,
But teachers do not “invent” these situations. They emerge from the terms of the practice itself. It is the practice that calls one to act, not the individual per se. The practice is the “caller,” inviting the person to meet its obligations. . . . The teacher “is called” by the practice”. (p. 124)

Wrapped within the call to teach is the notion of the service-oriented dimension of the practice. It is my contention that this dimension, above and beyond other motivating factors, is what called the participants in this study to teach in cultures other than their own. In the forward to Hansen’s The Call to Teach (1995), Larry Cuban concurs,

. . . the idea of teaching as a vocation calls attention to the personal and service-oriented dimensions of the practice that draw people to it, and that enable them to find success despite adversity and difficulty. The notion of vocation highlights the quite recognizable convictions and faith that underlie many teachers’ daily efforts. (p. xiii)

While their stories disclose unique reasons why each participant was called to teach within a cultural context other than her own, there remains a common calling. Buber (1985) speaks of this as,

. . . the longing for personal unity, from which must be born a unity of mankind, which the educator should lay hold of and strengthen in his pupils. Faith in this unity and the will to achieve it is not a
“return” to individualism, but a step beyond all dividedness of individualism and collectivism. A great and full relation between man and man can only exist between unified and responsible persons. . . Genuine education of character is genuine education for community. (p. 116)

While Nola declares “. . . I went North for me and my dog,” and the idea of escaping from her lack of personal fulfillment in Montreal coupled with her desire for adventure, her story tells of her involvement in learning about the community of learners in Coppermine, with its cultural and linguistic differences. This involvement led her to question her methodology, “I think the thing that I came away with from that whole experience was an understanding of how inappropriate our methodology was.” She became responsible to her students, and in so doing, to the greater community. She altered her methods though she suffered some guilt as a result of doing what she thought was right. She says, “I knew that hands-on things would work. So, that is what I did. Then I would feel guilty that I hadn’t been following the curriculum.”

Betty was called to the North through her sense of adventure, attraction to frontier settings, and genuine spirit of wanderlust. She was also keenly attracted to the spirituality of Native people since having experienced their beliefs through working with them in previous regions of Canada prior to moving to the Arctic. Bringing with her a rich understanding of differing cultures, she explained, “Teaching is about watching and learning from them before you start tromping
all over them with your ideas." Hansen (1995) further explains this sensitivity as part of the calling's service to others. He says,

Teachers teach not to serve themselves but to rather serve others: students first and foremost, but by extension the communities and the society in which they live. Moreover, teaching implies serving learners in ways that are distinct from those of other practices. (p. 140)

Lilly describes her attraction to teaching in the North as a combination of wanderlust she inherited from her Uncle in Africa, and the significant influence of her father's interest in the North. She also claims that she was looking for challenge and adventure, sparked by her interest in art, linguistics, and cross-cultural experiences. However, she was quite shocked by how little her students knew of the outside world, of the global community. Her Idi Amin story reveals this realization of the isolation of her community. When her students saw a photo of Idi Amin in a Time Magazine, they gasped, "He's black!" They had assumed he looked like the rest of us—White. While shocked by this discovery, she took action to plan instruction to bring the outside world into her classroom.

Sarah explains, "I went up North because it was advertised as a CUSO like experience." While her previous CUSO experience prepared her for the cultural differences she faced in the Arctic, it did not prepare her for the actual classroom context in which she found herself, "What I hadn't been prepared for was the wide range in ability levels, age differences, and attitudes toward
learning." She also felt frustrated with the curricula. She tells of her disenchantment with teaching and her feelings of ineffectiveness during her first year as a teacher in her cross-cultural classroom in Aklavik, "I found that I was lacking in so much knowledge myself and the resources I had were Southern oriented. I found I spent my first year asking myself, "Why was I hired?" Although she had experience as a CUSO teacher in various cross-cultural contexts in her work in Africa, she found that she was ill-prepared for the challenges she met in her initial year as eel İlk in the Arctic. Hansen (1995) confirms Sarah's confusion and lack of confidence in the findings from his study. He agrees, "I also met enough inadequately prepared and dispirited teachers to confirm just how demanding the practice of teaching is, and how vital are opportunities for continued learning and renewal" (p. xv).

According to Comer (1996) children mirror their environment. An astute teacher can become a student of the culture in which she is immersed through observing her students in a variety of settings. Not only did the educators in this study learn from students, they also took the opportunity to learn from the greater community through active involvement and participation. To further support this notion, in Voices of Beginning Teachers, Dollase (1992) supports the power of the teacher as both a seeker and a student.

Nola learned that to deal with such issues as absenteeism, "It required a certain flexibility." She learned from visiting her Inuit students' homes, that punctuality did not hold the same importance for them, in their culture, as it did
for us, in our Southern, post-industrial culture. Sadie learned about the culture of Gjoa Haven people by “watching together” for the hunters to return, she reflects, “I learned about their culture when they visited me at my home.” And Lilly’s poignant story of teaching Edna, the unschooled girl from “on the land”, how to read by watching clouds, presented another example of learning through careful observation and sensitivity to others.

Mutual understanding is key to success within another culture. Ricoeur speaks of this unity within community as “... aiming at the good life with and for others in just institutions.” At the time these educators were in the isolated Northern Aboriginal communities, education was just becoming an institution. As Mabel’s story reflects, education was just being born in Sachs Harbour.

Furthermore, Ricoeur’s belief in the value of friendship, which is an expression of justice, through mutual respect for the other self is essential to a person becoming part of the community without imposing her will on others. Ricouer draws on Aristotle who declares “... that the greatest good a friend desires for his friend is to stay just as he is” (cited in Ricoeur, 1992, p. 184). Through her friendship with Gretta, Nola was able to reach out and become friends with the greater community. Her hunting story tells of this transition. This participation in the people’s way of life, allowed her to connect with them and they with her. Mutual respect was also established. In Fort McPherson, Betty also recalls how good friendships were developed with people who would come and visit their camp. She recalls, “We found that people were very
different out on the land than they are in the town... we got to know people on a different level."

In Reflections, as “an instance of reflecting”, all six subjects speak of the challenges they encountered in the classroom as they practiced their calling to teach within a different cultural context. The challenges arose out of concerns around issues related to differing cultural values and beliefs, such as absenteeism, attitude toward schooling, meaningful parental involvement, and appropriate curricula. These teachers’ stories tell how they were able to rise to the challenges which faced them, dealing with each issue within the cultural context of the community. As highlighted earlier, Hansen (1995) explains this phenomenon as hope. He says,

Teaching presupposes hope... It means that as a teacher, one can perceive one’s work against a broader backdrop. One can keep the past human effort in view, and see that they were sometimes achieved in conditions far more difficult than those one faces today. One can see that teaching is an act that, when done well, fully occupies the present moment, but also always with an eye on the future.” (pp. 160-161)

In Reflections of Reflections, as in “An effect produced by an influence,” we hear the stories of the participants as they reflect on the reason they left the classroom to become administrators. In some cases, they became Teacher Consultants in a district role, while others became administrators at the school
level. While their stories are as individual as they are, there emerges a common calling.

While Nola, Betty, Lilly, Sarah, and Sadie moved into Teacher Consultant roles from the classroom, Mabel became a Vice-principal in a large multi-ethnic elementary school. Nola realized her skills in dealing with students who were having problems in the classroom was her strength. As a Teacher Consultant she “was able to bring into play all my understanding of learning disabilities. I did a tremendous amount of work in connecting kids, through testing, so that they could experience some success.” Nola realized her limitations in the classroom and applied for the Consultant’s position in Hay River.

Sarah left Aklavik in 1987 to be a Teacher Consultant in Iqaluit on Baffin Island. Her association with district staff through project work, her status as Master teacher, and the affect student suicides had on her, motivated her to leave her classroom in Aklavik. She reflects on her life as a Teacher Consultant, “I was not very satisfied as a Consultant. It’s not a bad life if you don’t mind not having any friends, spending all your time in an airplane . . .” Although she was not happy as a Consultant, she was still interested in administration. “. . . then Arctic Bay came open for a principalship. That was it. I loved Arctic Bay.”

Betty, Lilly and Sadie were asked to become Teacher Consultants – they were chosen. Betty reflects on her time as a Consultant, saying, “I do enjoy working with adults . . . you really see change . . . I’m a bit of a performer, too.
As Consultant, you had to be a good listener, and you had to build up self-esteem... I learned that people take care of each other."

Lilly explains her entry into administration as a major push. "It wasn't something that I aspired to naturally because I enjoyed working with children... I didn't enter into it willingly... but it presented so many marvelous opportunities... It was the freedom that gave me the impetus to do what I needed to do."

Sadie was called by the Superintendent of Inuvik and asked to return to the Northwest Territories as Teacher Consultant. She explains, "My work was my life. I just enjoyed every minute of what I was doing... I grew as a person and as a professional."

Mabel was also asked to become Vice-principal after seven years as a teacher at SAMS. In her role, she reflects that, "You do have to be there to support teachers in the classroom. They struggle. You have to be there as a sounding board to listen to what they have to say."

In Maurice Friedman's The Learning Community and the Dialogue of Touchstones (1990), he explains, "Community is the overcoming of otherness in living unity. This is the essence of all true community, but it is the very heart of the learning community" (p. 2). He explains that education is educing, derived from the Latin meaning, educe. He suggests that, "If educing means leading out of, it means starting with the situation where you are - not just pulling out something that is already there, but evoking, calling forth" (p. 2). Nola was able to realize her strength and use it to improve the greater learning community,
beyond her own classroom, admitting, "I really enjoyed working in the field of Learning Disabilities. I acknowledged the fact that I am not as good in delivering programs as I am in creating them. I was able to connect these kids with the help that they needed and then prepare programs for the teachers to follow through with." She offered her services and knowledge to assist others in the greater learning community, which translated into improved programs for students.

Betty also felt a sense of enhancing the greater learning community. She claims that she became a Consultant because, "I really thought I could make a difference. I think I had something to share." Friedman (1990) concurs, "By community I mean people who are in some way there for one another . . . This means caring enough to share." As a Consultant, Betty was enacting Friedman's sense of community on a daily basis through her work with and for others.

Lilly demonstrates her overcoming of otherness to become part of the greater learning community as well. Although feeling pushed into the position, she confirms, "I think that the move into the Special Education Consultant role was a particularly bountiful learning opportunity for me. I faced challenges that I had no prior knowledge of. For example, the whole repatriation of kids who were deaf or hard of hearing."

As a principal in Arctic Bay, Sarah believed that she could assist teachers coming from the South by helping them understand more about their Northern
students in respect to language acquisition. She remembers her first year in the North, "It is just like what I went through in Aklavik. It took me a long time to find out, not just what turned the kids on, but how to do it so it was part of the school classroom, part of the learning, and part of the curriculum. It was a lot of learning to do."

As a school-based administrator, Mabel went beyond the classroom to assist new teachers, "I think I tried to give good support to the teachers when they first started because they were so frazzled . . . Those were the good old days, when people really showed that they cared about others."

In her work as Teacher Consultant, Sadie recalls helping new staff as well. "I found that a lot of the teachers came up North totally ill prepared. They didn't know about language development, they didn't understand the sequence of how people learn language."

As administrators, all the participants in this study showed a commitment to the greater learning community. They shared their knowledge, helped new and developing teachers, and provided moral support. In many cases they were mentors. As Friedman (1990) points out, in many cases, "... the task of mentor stands at the borderline between teacher and therapist" (p. 19). In a conversation with Nola, she referred to her role as Teacher Consultant as, "a quasi-mentor/psychologist to administrators in the settlements."

In summary, in Reflections of Reflections, the participants told of their commitment to improving the educational community, the greater community of
learners, through their daily work as administrators in the Northwest Territories. This commitment called them to step out of their classrooms and serve the greater educational community and give of themselves to others. Through giving of oneself to others, the giver benefits as well. Thomas Jefferson realized the mutual benefits gained in the giving and receiving of ideas. In Thomas Jefferson, Bottorff (1997) relays Jefferson's words,

"He who receives an idea from me," Jefferson said in 1813, "receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me. That ideas should freely spread from one to another over the globe, for the moral and mutual instruction of man, and improvement of his condition, seems to have been peculiarly and benevolently designed by nature." (pp. 54-55)

In Reflections of Reflections of Reflections, as "A transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis...," the participants reflect on how their initial call to teach and subsequent call to teach in a cultural context other than their own, has affected them today. Within the context of their calling, their experience in administration has added more consideration for reflection. The stories of these educators confirm that each, in her own way, has made a difference through her calling to teach, and through her role as teacher and administrator, in the Northwest Territories within another cultural context.
These stores tell of women educators who gave of themselves freely, in the service of others through vocation. Buber (1985) suggests,

Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow human beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them. (p. 105)

Hansen (1995), also supports the notion of the importance of the individual in her role as teacher,

The idea of vocation also underscores just how central the person is who occupies the position of teacher. It highlights the fact that the role or occupation itself does not teach students. It is the person within the role and who shapes it who teaches students, and who has an impact on them for better or for worse. (p. 17)

Through reflection, each recalls the challenges she faced in the enactment of her calling to teach, yet these very challenges created interest in the work itself. Hansen (1995) also suggests,

... the idea of vocation turns the focus of perception is such a way that the challenges and the complexity in teaching become
sources of interest in the work, rather than barriers or frustrating obstacles to be overcome . . . but rather an open-ended series of new opportunities and possibilities. (p. 144)

Each reflects on how her experience has transformed her. Nola says, "I've changed so much since those days, I've learned so much that it's kind of a thrill in a way because you can see the changes that have taken place in yourself." Betty believes that "... our experiences up North added to our spirituality. I'm a more connected person." Lilly reflects on her experience as a teacher in the North, explaining, "sometimes your first years are the best because you don't know the details . . . you can't see things the same way anymore. I remember not wanting to make a mistake, but wanting to make a difference." Sarah talks about what she learned in regards to the critical importance of second language learning. As a result of her experiences within other cultures as a teacher and administrator, she is convinced that initial learning should take place in the child's first language. She states emphatically, "I believe in it. I firmly believe that the kids have got to learn Inuktitut in their first years at school . . . I'm going to do something about it." Mabel reminisces about education during her days as a teacher, "... in Sachs Harbour, it was a real birth, a real growing stage. And I felt part of it. I really feel that I've been a help." And for Sadie, her experiences confirmed what she had learned as a child, "... that people are the most important thing. People are the only thing that
count. Not what you have or what you own, or who you know - it's who you are and how you treat others that really matters most.”

All of the participants agree that they have changed, but even more than that, they have been transformed. Their stories are testimony to this deeper change, in response to their calling as teachers, and their call to work in another cultural context. Hansen, (1995) found similar evidence in his study. He confirms,

If the conception of vocation that underlies this book is sound, these teachers are today different practitioners - with respect to the contours of their beliefs and actions - than when I sat in the back of their rooms and conversed with them in hallways and school cafeterias. They will no longer be the same as they appear in the pages of this book. Second, like persons everywhere they are far too complicated and distinct for any individual to come close to understanding. (p. xvii)

Not only does teaching presuppose hope, it embodies leadership, as well. Foster (1989) suggests that “certain agents can engage in transformative practices which change social structures and forms of community, and it is this that we label leadership.” Heifetz (1994) adds, “Leadership is both active and reflective.” One has to alternate between participating and observing. As classroom teachers, all six stories weave tales of transformation and change, as
each employed a combination of action and reflection to make decisions in her practice to better serve the students and community in her care.

In making decisions to ignore the mandated curricula and utilize hands-on experiences, Nola took a leadership role and a risk. She understood how "... inappropriate our methodology was ..." and altered her approach to provide a more meaningful learning experience for her students. In Fort MacPherson, Betty realized that her Dene students were not competitive by nature, by cultural mores. She then provided a curricula that was based on "a community of learners" approach. "We help each other. We discover together." Lilly was able to take what she knew about language development and apply it in a manner to teach Edna to read. But more than that, she adjusted her expectations for Edna, including her through her artistic expression, to integrate her into the classroom as a respected and able contributor to the total educational environment of the classroom. Edna became esteemed through her "... drawings and everybody accepted her for that."

For some teachers, reflection takes time. Sarah did not make a connection between the adolescent suicide rate in Aklavik and the students' frustration with operating in a second language until she moved to Arctic Bay where she realized a similar pattern of suicides was developing there with junior high students. She since has gone back to university to learn more about these connections. She is going back to Arctic Bay, with new understandings to provide leadership, she says, "I'm going to do something about it. For others,
leadership decisions are enacted with little or limited need for reflection. Without hesitation, Mabel organized the school year around the cultural and seasonal activities of the people of Sachs Harbour. She realized, through her involvement in community that the school year had to be flexible. As a result, she recalls with evident pride, “Unlike other communities, we did not have a problem with attendance whatsoever.” Sadie explains in her story about the Inuit students’ fascination with erasers that she realized the significance of making mistakes with its connection to survival on the land. After some reflecting she took action. The printing mistakes in the classroom were not life-threatening, she worked overtime to convince her students of this.

Again their experiences in the classroom and their active involvement within the greater community, shed the reflective light on them as teachers and on their practice as educators within a different cultural context. My story too reflects similar experiences, leading toward my transformation as a teacher and member of the greater community. We are changed. As with those who return in Plato’s allegory of the cave, we were compelled to take this new knowledge we acquired from our interaction with students and the greater cultural community, along with our new understandings, and share them with others in the profession. Their stories and mine validate, with ample evidence from our histories as educators in the Northwest Territories, that each of us feel we have made a significant difference. Each of us is truly an eeleehairee.
Through reflection, the educators in this study tell stories of leadership, woven throughout their lives as eeleehairee in the Northwest Territories. To hear the call and act on it is to take up the role as leader. Through their stories as educators, it is heard over and over again that teaching and leadership are integral to the calling—they are the fabric of the calling. As noted earlier, Hansen (1995) reminds us, "Though teaching as a practice evolves with social change, it remains a public act that bears directly on the shaping of society" (p. 140). As eeleehairee, each took part in shaping the educational system and programs within the community in which she taught. As a teacher, each provided leadership in shaping the greater community.

The stories also highlight the educators' belief that they have made a difference. As noted earlier, Hansen (1995) explains that,

Teaching pre-supposes hope...It means that as a teacher, one can perceive one's work against a broader backdrop. One can keep the past human effort in view, and see that they were sometimes achieved in conditions far more difficult than those one faces today. One can see that teaching is an act that, when done well, fully occupies the present moment, but also always with an eye on the future. (p. 160, 161)
However, one of the most important messages for the new superintendent may be the one wrapped up in the following story, related by Brian Dumaine in "Why Do We Work?" (Fortune, December 26, 1994, p.196) which tells of the differences between three stonemasons:

In the days of misty towers, distressed maidens, and stalwart knights, a young man, walking down a road, came upon a laborer fiercely pounding away at a stone with hammer and chisel. The lad asked the worker, who looked frustrated and angry, "What are you doing?" The laborer answered in a pained voice: "I'm trying to shape this stone, and it is backbreaking work." The youth continued his journey and soon came upon another man chipping away at a similar stone, who looked neither particularly angry nor happy. "What are you doing?" the young man asked. "I'm shaping a stone for a building." The young man went on and before long came to a third worker chipping away at a stone, but this worker was singing happily as he worked. "What are you doing?" the young man asked. The worker smiled and replied, "I'm building a cathedral."
Chapter Five

Her eye, her ear, were tuning forks, burning glasses, which caught the minutest of refraction or echo of a thought or feeling. . . . She heard a deeper vibration, a kind of composite echo, of all that the writer said, and did not say. (Cather, cited in Breathnach, 1995, Dedication page)

Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

Summary

In this chapter, I summarize and conclude this study concerning the six participants' call to teach in a cultural context other than their own in the Northwest Territories, Canada. In summary, the research questions which framed the study are:

1. What called these women educators to move to isolated areas in the Northwest Territories, Canada to teach children of other cultures?
2. What enables some teachers to better understand the deeper, more intrinsic educational needs of another culture, within the community in which they are immersed?
3. What then called these teachers to leave the classroom and enter into administrative roles in those same regions?

4. What might be the deeper callings behind such life-career decisions?

5. How have these experiences affected them as educators?

These questions created the structure upon which this study was based. Within the context of teaching as a calling, each question prompts subordinate topics which explore deeper into the multi-dimensions of each participants' calling to teach, cross-cultural calling, calling and relationship, and commitment and change through calling. Using the research questions as a framework for the interviews, I engaged each subject in reflecting upon her life to tell her story about her calling to teach in Aboriginal Communities in the High Arctic of Canada. Through their rich, multi-layered stories, each reflected on her calling as an educator in the Northwest Territories, providing insight and real-life revelations which brought greater understanding to the purpose of this study.

Their stories confirm that they are very different educators today than when they were first called to teach in isolated communities in the Northwest Territories, nearly twenty years ago. Their stories also remind me of how complex and rich each of their lives have been, and like persons everywhere, they are far too complicated and distinct for any one individual to even come close to understanding perhaps even to themselves. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once wrote a letter to his sister which explains this point:
He was responding to his sister’s dismay that he was going to “throw away” his academic career, as she put it, in order to teach elementary school in a remote Austrian village. His sister told him that, given his exceptional mind, he was acting like “somebody wanting to use a precision instrument to open crates.” Wittgenstein told her how far she was from perceiving his thinking on the issue. “You remind me,” he replied, “of somebody who is looking out through a closed window and cannot explain to himself the strange movements of a passer-by. He cannot tell what sort of storm is raging out there or that this person might only be managing with difficulty to stay on his feet.” (Monk, 1990, p. 170, cited in Hansen, 1995, p. xvii)

Hansen (1995) reflects on Wittgenstein’ anecdote,

Of course the window to which Wittgenstein refers can never be completely removed. One can never fully understand, much less adequately convey to others, another person’s experience. But it is a good thing that such windows exist and can be opened, even only if part way. Otherwise we would truly remain strangers to one another, and teaching would be impossible. (p. xvii)

This study has given me a window, although it can only be partially opened, because that is the nature of personal knowledge, to gain an insight through the multi-layered reflections of these six women educators who heard a
call to teach in another cultural context and acted on that call. Each story is a reflection of that calling, at several ever deeper levels: Reflections, Reflections of Reflections, and Reflections of Reflections of Reflections.

In Reflections, I examine the call to teach and within that calling, the call to teach in a cross-cultural context. The stories are as unique as each participant, and reflect how each answered her call to teach, specifically within the context of her experience in the Northwest Territories. In Reflections of Reflections, each educator takes a longer, more critical look into the mirror of past experiences, to reflect even deeper on what called her to step out of the classroom to serve the greater educational community as an administrator. And finally, in Reflections of Reflections of Reflections, each participant takes an even deeper, more philosophical look at how her experiences as an eeleehairee in the Northwest Territories has transformed her as a person and as an educator today.

In Reflections, as “In an instance of reflecting,” I found that the cross-cultural calling was predominately a call within the calling to teach. Teachers are called to the practice. As mentioned earlier, in The Call to Teach (1995), Hansen argues that teaching is a vocation, which implies a “summons or bidding to be of service” (p. 1). He further explains, “It implies that something about teaching is larger than that person - something . . . that calls a person to it in the first place, that whets the appetite, that captures the imagination” (p. 125). The concrete
source of the call, as reflected in the stories of the educators in this study, are varied and as individual as each educator.

However, without exception, the sources of the call for these six educators did not reside within the person but without, in the broader more global world of education. While each participant answered her call to teach through different means, all recognized the practice of teaching as an acceptance to engage in the greater community and to become part of an evolving tradition. Their stories highlighted the idea of teaching as a vocation which called attention to the personal and service-oriented dimensions of the practice that draw people to teaching in the first place.

Furthermore, an extension of the service-oriented dimension, is the call to improve the condition of society and mankind, in general. Buber (1948) notes, as presented earlier, that there are common callings to each individual to perform tasks necessary for personal unity, which translate to a unity of mankind, in a global sense. Buber (1985), speaks of the great dynamic unity of the multiform which is formed by the unity of character from which must be born in a unity of mankind. He contends that unity is born through the education of character. Buber (1985), charges the teacher with developing unified and responsible persons through a “great and full relation between man and man” (p. 116). He believes that “Genuine education of character is genuine education for community” (p. 116).
To teach is to be full of hope. Hansen (1995) agrees. He writes, "Teaching presupposes hope" (p. 160). In teaching, this hope is translated into action. The call to teach, calls one to take action and to demonstrate hope through the practice itself. This sense of hope was a common thread that was evident through each subject’s story.

A cross-cultural calling is also tied to the sense that teaching is an adventure. No teacher knows from day to day, or minute to minute, what her students will do. Nor does she know where the students will take her. These teachers reflected that the practice was a vehicle for adventure, taking them where they wished to go. In most cases, while they had either Northern or cross-cultural experience in teaching prior to being called to teach in the Northwest Territories, all admitted that they knew very little about the people or the circumstances they would find themselves in when they reached their first posting in an Aboriginal community. This uncertainty is closely tied to the notion of adventure and appeal of the unknown. To this, Hansen (1995) adds, "The sense of vocation implies a measure of determination, courage, and flexibility, qualities that are in turn buoyed by the disposition to regard teaching as something more than a job, to which one has something significant to offer" (p. 13).

Teaching is not coterminous with schooling. In fact most people who aspire to teach do not have in mind a particular school or cultural setting. Rather they want to teach and have a beneficial effect on the young. Hansen (1995)
also found this to be the case in his study of four teachers in *The Call to Teach*. Without exception, the stories told in this study relate a variety of reasons for teaching in cross-cultural settings. The significance is that while all were called to teach in Canada's Arctic for a variety of reasons, involving differing circumstances, all acted in keeping with the common elements associated with the call to teach. The practice called them to teach, while the Arctic provided them with an opportunity to engage in the practice itself.

Teachers generally teach not to serve themselves, but to serve their students. Not only was the landscape of the Arctic unique, but so were the educational needs of the students they found there. According to Comer (1996), children are reflections of their environment. These teachers tell of learning about the greater community of learners through their interaction and relationship with the students in their care. In *Voices of Beginning Teachers* (1992), Dollase attributes the power of the teacher as both a seeker and a student. Not only did the stories reveal that all participants learned from their students and the greater community, they then applied this learning to the classroom situation to assist them in dealing with the challenges they found there. Through their innate attention to others, seeking to understand, they reflect a sense of cultural relativity required to meet their students' needs. However, they demonstrate an even deeper level of reflection.

In *Reflections of Reflections*, as in "An effect produced by an influence," their stories reflect their call to leave the classroom and become administrators
in the greater educational system. While their stories are different, a common calling emerges. The call to step out of the classroom, and become an actor in the greater learning community became the source for reflection. The sense of enhancing the greater learning community, through service to other teachers and administrators by sharing their knowledge and expertise, became the call. Friedman (1990) partially explains this call, "Community is the overcoming of otherness in living unity. This is the essence of all true community, but it's the very heart of the learning community" (p. 2). This commitment to others, evidenced in the service-oriented dimension of the practice, also transforms a teacher of students in the classroom to a teacher of teachers, affecting an even wider educational community of learners. It is in this higher level of consciousness that Maslow (1971) explains that self-actualizing persons demonstrate commitments outside their own local interests and thereby transcend themselves. Not only have these teachers responded to the call to share their expertise with other teachers and members of the greater educational community, they have also taken up the call to provide wider leadership within the field of education and within community.

In Reflections of Reflections, the participants told of their commitment to responding to the needs of the greater educational community through their daily work as administrators in the Northwest Territories. This work signified a further attempt at bringing unity to the greater community through their calling.
In *Reflections of Reflections of Reflections*, as “A transformation that involves reflection in more than one axis . . .”, the participants reflect even more deeply on how their calling to teach in another cultural context and their subsequent call to work in administration, has changed them today. Each confirmed, while *she* is a different educator today, she has also made a significant difference through her calling to teach. Each has given freely of herself to serve others within an educational context. Their stories also reflect how each has a sense that she has made a difference. Hansen (1995) confirms how central the person who occupies the position of teacher is to the practice. He says, “It is the person within the role and who shapes it who teaches students, and who has an impact on them for better or for worse” (p. 17).

Through reflection, each recalls the challenges she faced in the enactment of her calling to teach. Yet these very challenges created interest in the work itself. Hansen (1995) also found that challenges and complexity of teaching become sources of interest in the work, providing a never ending series of new opportunities and possibilities for growth development, and change.

Each reflects on her calling to teach in the High Arctic as a series of experiences which changed her on many axis. Each felt transformed. As Hansen (1998) also found, “these teachers are today different practitioners - with respect to the contours of their beliefs and actions . . . ” (p. xvii). By reaching out and taking action when they heard the call to teach, each began a journey to self-transcendence through their calling and through their work with Aboriginal
children and communities in the Northwest Territories. As Henry David Thoreau once said, Things do not change; we change" (cited in Breathnach, 1995, October 6).

As previously cited, Victor E. Frankl (1969), a Nazi concentration camp survivor, psychiatrist, and founder of logotherapy, a humanistic therapy based on an intrinsic search for meaning, writes of transcendence,

Man lives by ideals and values. Human existence is not authentic unless it is lived in terms of self-transcendence . . . For it is a characteristic constituent of human existence that it transcends itself, that it reaches out for something other than itself. (p. 55)

Tied to this reaching out for something other than self, teaching presupposes leadership. Throughout the fabric of the call to teach are embedded the threads of leadership. Teaching embodies leadership. Foster (1989) suggests that "certain agents can engage in transformative practices which change social structures and forms of community, and it is this we label leadership." Heifetz (1994) adds that leadership is both an active and reactive process which involves a balance between participation and observing. All six stories weave tales of transformation and change, as each educator employed a combination of actions and reflection to make leadership decisions within her calling, in her service to others.

Their stories attest to the fact that their experiences as educators in the Northwest Territories during the period embraced in this study, has shed new
light on each of them as educators within a different cultural context. They are changed—transformed. As in Plato's allegory of the cave, they were compelled to share their knowledge of the world they found themselves in with others to create new understandings to improve the educational services to the students and greater, more global community of learners. Their stories validate that each feels she has made significant difference as eeleehairee in the Arctic. The passion of their conviction reminds me of the metaphor of The Young Man and the Starfish:

A wise man was taking a sunrise walk along the beach. In the distance he caught sight of a young man who seemed to be dancing along the waves.

As he got closer he saw that the young man was picking up starfish from the sand and tossing them gently back into the ocean.

"What are you doing?" the wise man asked.

"The sun is coming up and the tide is going out; if I don't throw them in they'll die."

"But young man, there are miles and miles of beach with starfish all along it - you can't possibly make a difference."

The young man bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it lovingly back into the ocean, past the
breaking waves. "It made a difference to that one," he replied. (Eislely, cited in Barker, 1974)

**Implications**

As such, this study fulfills its purpose as a qualitative, multi-case exploration of what called these educators to teach within another cultural context since it provides data that suggest a significant relationship among even deeper understandings, in Reflections, Reflections of Reflections, and Reflections of Reflections of Reflections. The study demonstrates the relevance for the following implications:

First, the importance of preparing, selecting, and providing on-going support for novice teachers who are called to teach in Canada's Arctic must be recognized as critical by the Department of Education, Northwest Territories.

Second, efforts also be made by the Department of Education, Northwest Territories for the provision of a pro-active, on-going educational program to affirm mid-career, experienced teachers in the Northwest Territories, to renew and sustain them in their calling.

Finally, an understanding of the call to leadership as a cross-cultural service be examined by the Department of Education. From this understanding, the Department of Education needs to develop a program of support to encourage the educational leaders to remain alive within the community.
The overarching implication, no matter what level of support is required, is that these programs for growth, sustenance, and renewal are to be on-going and continuous.

Recommendations

First, I recommend, that the Department of Education extend resources to support educators in remote schools in isolated communities in the Northwest Territories.

I also recommend that the stories of the actual experiences of educators in isolated communities of the High Arctic, be recorded and shared with the greater educational community for more global understanding among educators.

Finally, I recommend that technology be used as a means to collect communities of educators to both provide resources to remote communities to support teachers and administrators in those distant schools and to access the stories of educators in the field to share their experiences with the more global educational community.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT

Judith Knapp, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Diego, is conducting a research study of women educators who were called to work as classroom teachers, then moved into administrative positions, in the High Arctic of Canada from 1970 to present. The study is entitled Reflections of Reflections of Reflections: A Multi-Case Study of Women Educators' Callings to the High Arctic.

I understand that this data collection process will require approximately five hours of time over a five month period, between September 1997 and January 1998. Participation in this study should not involve any risks or discomforts to me other than time and possible minor fatigue. I can benefit from the opportunity to be part of the study by contributing what I have learned during my educational career in the High Arctic and by receiving the analysis of data collected from other teachers/administrators who also worked in similar Northern community settings, to better understand my experience and calling.

My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I understand that I may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without jeopardy to myself.

I understand my research records will be kept completely confidential. My identity will not be disclosed without consent as required by law. I further understand that to preserve my anonymity, only group data will be used in any publication of the results of this study.

Judith Knapp has explained this study to me and answered my questions. Further information on this study, or on any aspect of participation in it, will readily be made available by Judith Knapp at her home ([604] 898-8235) or office ([604] 892-5228), or by her dissertation director, Dr. Mary Jo Abascal-Hildebrand, Professor, School of Education, University of San Diego/University of San Francisco ([707] 875-3176).

There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study beyond that expressed on this consent form. I have received a copy of this consent document.

I, the undersigned, understand the above explanations and, on that basis, I give my consent to my voluntary participation in this research.

________________________________________  ________________________________
Signature of Subject  Date

________________________________________  ________________________________
Signature of Dissertation Director  Date

________________________________________  ________________________________
Signature of Researcher  Date
Appendix B

Due to the nature of each participant’s individual experience, the following open-ended questions and probing statements may be used to elicit responses from the subjects, when and if appropriate during a series of scheduled interviews. The following probing questions and statements are designed to encourage and stimulate reflections at continuing deeper levels, about her calling to become an educator in the High Arctic, as we proceed through the interview process:

Reflections (Research Questions 1 & 2)

• Tell me about yourself and your background, in general.
• Why did you become a teacher?
• Tell me about your career as an educator. What are the highlights?
• Why did you apply for a teaching position in the Northwest Territories?
• What attracted you to teaching in another cultural setting? in another geographic location with a climate so very different from your own?
• What did you expect your experience to be like in the Arctic?
• Tell me about your experiences and challenges:
  • in dealing with English as a Second Language
  • in the school and classroom setting
  • outside the classroom as an eeleehairee, as a community member
• Tell me about your students. Tell me about their parents.
• Tell me about your classroom and your teaching experiences.
• Tell me about your school.
• Tell me about your community. What were the living conditions like? What were the people like? What community activities did you participate in?
• What stories are most memorable about your life as a Northern teacher?

Reflections of Reflections (Research Question 3)

• Why did you leave the classroom to become an administrator?
• Tell me about your experiences as an administrator in the Northwest Territories, including your successes and challenges.
Reflections of Reflections of Reflections (Research Questions 4 & 5)

- Tell me your most memorable experiences in the High Arctic.
- What did you learn from your experiences in the North?
- Why did you leave the High Arctic?
- How did your experiences as an educator in the Arctic affect you personally?