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EPILOGUE

Introduction

The epilogue deals with this study's relevance to present day education, future research and other, unanticipated, related benefits encountered in the process of research. Through these life histories the researcher has sought to "understand how thought and action have developed in past social circumstances. Following this development through time to the present affords insights into how those circumstances we experience as contemporary 'reality' have been negotiated, constructed and reconstructed over time." (1) This study cannot provide "how to" answers for successfully designing and implementing a curriculum that builds moral character. It can, however, give those who are responsible for presenting such curriculum points to consider and explore as to how students interpret what is being taught, especially implicitly.

Significance to Education

Significance of findings

The moral component of the Chefoo School's curriculum presents both positive and negative examples from which parallels can be drawn for today's educators. A positive example that educators today can emulate is that the Chefoo teachers were most effective at providing a feeling of safety for their students within the midst of the war.

Mary and Kathleen felt secure in the structure, routines and rituals of school, which also carried over into the internment camp. Chefoo was a well organized, structured school with ritualistic rites of passage and privilege as students matured and a progressive, though albeit at times abusive, discipline code. This formal structure provided safety and security for the students in knowing the routines, expectations and standards they were to uphold. Were it

not for the prolonged periods of separation from parents, as one Chefusian intimated, Chefoo would have been an incredible school. Students today need that same sense of security.

In *Leadership for the Schoolhouse*, Thomas Sergiovanni talks about the need for schools to be "a kind of moral learning community . . . that enjoys a place within our society very close to the family as a moral nurturing community." To do this, schools need to begin "developing a practice of leadership for the schoolhouse [which] will require a change in the theory of school itself. The change proposed is to understand schools as moral communities.. . . The moral voice of community is anchored in shared values, ideas, and purposes." (2)

These shared values, ideas and purposes should be encompassed, Sergiovanni contends, in a theory that "encourages principals and teachers, parents and students to become self-managing, to accept responsibility for what they do and to feel a sense of obligation and commitment to do the right thing." The students of Chefoo were raised and taught by the school to be exactly what Sergiovanni indicated: self-managing, responsible, and having a sense of obligation and commitment to do what is right. These core values, or the students' moral identities, were developed and molded under wartime circumstances and without active parental guidance or support.

The Chefoo teachers have demonstrated that in the absence of parents, a school can be the prime provider of moral and social mores. The Chefusian's separation from parents due to boarding and the war is analogous to the emotional or physical abandonment of parents that children today experience whether due to parental neglect, parent incarceration or placing a child in foster care. While today's schools should do all that they can to gamer and incorporate parental support and involvement, they must also recognize that for a variety of reasons, that support may not be consistently available for some or even many of their students.

Rising above their circumstances and striving for something better rather than relaxing their standards was another hallmark of the Chefoo School staff. The Chefoo teachers expected their students to maintain their pre-internment behaviors and activities so as not to let God, king, country or the school down. The teachers themselves did not yield to the temptation to lower their academic, social or moral standards. The staff modeled a stalwart attitude to life which instilled in their students a pride and loyalty to the ethos of the school. Self-pity was not an option.

However, this display of moral courage was not limited to just the Chefoo teachers during this time period. Werner writes about German children who were evacuated to rural Germany and surrounding countries to escape the Allied bombings. Many of the children were placed in KLV (Kinderlandverschickung)

camps with their teachers and Hitler Youth functionaries. Werner found that "children who were placed in KLV camps lived their lives according to a tightly organized schedule.. . many preadolescent children liked [the camp] routine," similar to Mary in this study. But, the "adolescents had more ambivalent and sometimes downright negative feelings about the KLV camp experience," (3) not unlike the teenage children interviewed for this study.

Werner cites a study done by Gerhard Dabel (4) of KLV children where Dabel found that children from those camps

> paid tribute to their teachers who became surrogate parents for them while they were separated from home. . . . their classroom teachers. . taught them the basic skills necessary for survival after the war. Most former evacuees felt that the camp experience taught them flexibility and independence.

Werner also found in her own study that students credited their teachers with providing a

> semblance of normalcy to the life of school age children, whether they taught in air raid shelters in England or Germany, in resettlement centers for Japanese Americans in the Arizona desert, or in displaced persons camps in Austria. The lack of physical comfort and the absence of instructional material in a partially bombed-out school, or the cold and dust that penetrated the makeshift tents in an internment or refugee camp that served as classrooms, did not prevent children from experiencing the miracle of learning. Schooling gave some structure and focus to their lives. (5)

Unfortunately, due to the chaos often found in the home life or neighborhoods of today's students, the "miracle of learning" does not readily occur. A school would do well to have structured, predictable routines and rituals in which the students and neighborhood community could find security, comfort and a point of focus in their lives to enhance the wonder of learning. Schools need to become once again, as houses of worship also once were, a pillar of the community. Schools, faith communities, local businesses and community organizations must strengthen their ties in order to revitalize their neighborhoods by setting standards and expectations that not only reflect the values and cultures of the community members, but that also extend to a higher good and measure.

The sentiments of this view was expressed by the National PTA and the U. S. Department of Education when they issued pamphlets to public school administrators to encourage "education partnerships with faith communities as another effective way to support children's learning... In this way, community

groups, businesses, family organizations, and local government agencies join the partnership, resulting in a broad- based effort to help educate children." (6)

The National PTA stated views similar to the principles Sergiovanni expressed in regards to shared values and beliefs in that

> Parents are the first and most important moral educators of their children. Thus public schools should develop character education programs only in close partnership with parents and the community. Local communities need to work together to identify the core moral and civic virtues that they wish to be taught and modeled in all aspects of school life. (7)

Today's teachers can also learn from the negative impact that the Chefoo teachers and schooling had directly or indirectly on their students. While the structure and rituals of Chefoo went a long way in providing safety, security and a good education for the students, it did not do enough to meet the needs of their students. Having high expectations and standards is only effective and rewarding for the elite few unless the necessary supports and scaffolding are provided to help all students achieve. Chefoo's competitive system in all facets of life—academics, athletics, the Arts and deportment—in effect, created a class system. Placing every aspect of a child's thoughts and behaviors under the ever watchful eye of not only the staff but also "the Lord", contributed to crippling the self-esteem of those students who did not quite measure up to the standards.

In today's age of achieving educational benchmarks and standards, aside from constructing academic scaffolding, what can be done to maintain positive contacts with those students struggling with their self-worth or who feel that they are the outcasts? Here again Kathleen and Mary give answers by responding to the things that were not done at Chefoo, but which need to be done in schools today. First, in our concern for achievement of standards, we cannot forget the heart of the child. Both Mary and Kathleen commented that the Chefoo teachers never touched the child within. They did not feel listened to or respected for their own thoughts or feelings. This is significant because they did not have their parents with them who would normally have provided that intimate support. Many students today are also lacking that necessary foundation.

School staffs need to activate students' prior knowledge not only academically but in the affective domain as well. Schools need to provide an atmosphere of emotional safety where students can freely articulate what they know and how they feel. Students also need adult mentors of their choosing with whom they will regularly meet, especially if the students have poor relationships with their parents. Schools and community organizations should do all they can

to support the relationship between parent and child, and then to advocate for the child where the parent-child relationship is weak or non-existent. By working together, schools, houses of faith, businesses, and community groups can do much to enhance the resiliency factor of a student's successful navigation through childhood and adolescence into productive adulthood.

The prevailing negative theme of the Chefoo story was that the students could not be listened to or valued by the staff the way they would have been by their own parents. Yet, the staff was placed in such a position to act as surrogate parents, especially when the school was interned. Students without consistent physical contact with parents had few if any people with whom to share their joys and fears. Though the oral history is a reflection back over time, it does provide the opportunity for the narrator to tell the story from his or her point of view. As a researcher, I thoroughly enjoyed meeting each Chefusian and getting to know them personally. I believe it added to my understanding of them as a collective group in their responses to telling their life stories. As Kathleen stated in one interview, "It's nurturing to talk to you because you really listen--something they didn't do at Chefoo."

Where Do We Go From Here

Future Research

Currently, character and moral education are the "hot-topics" of educational seminars and research, unfortunately brought about by incidents such as the Columbine High School shooting and the bullying and violence that still pervades our schools. It is good and necessary that these issues be addressed. It is hoped that future research will also look at how schools, faith communities, businesses, and community groups in general can better develop positive, personal relationships with students so that each child has someone who will listen to her or him, to touch the child within, and be their advocate, especially if his or her parents are unable or unwilling to meet that responsibility.

In a related area, more research needs to be done on the continuance of education even under duress. This would look at how and why education goes on even in the midst of wars, persecutions, uprisings, ethnic cleansing, and other man-made traumatic events that interfere or would seem to stop the normal disseminating of education. I personally would like to continue doing oral histories with those who were interned by the Japanese in the area of south-east Asia during the Second World War. These children continued life and education under much harsher conditions then those of Chefoo. They had fewer materials to work with, were a less organized group, and were usually placed in all female camps with primitive living conditions. Time is running out to gather their stories before they pass away.

Related Issues

Outside of the realm of public education, but still affecting certain students is the connection this study has with those who are in boarding school situations. Students of all ages currently board either in their home country or abroad because their parents are involved in military, diplomatic, missionary or international business activities. The situation that occurred at Chefoo is but one example of past mission field boarding experiences that contributed to changes that have since taken place. Some of these changes include more frequent home visits, shorter periods of time between furloughs, and an effort to develop a surrogate family setting for children at the boarding school. It is good to know the past from which one came and the rationale for why things are now done as they are. It provides continuity between the past and the present.

A second issue for the informants involves the therapeutic value of telling one's story. Collecting the oral histories gave these women and men permission to share long held thoughts, feelings and views about their lives and the surrounding historical and personal events of their time. Due to traveling distances and time limitations, many interviews were done with a variety of people in a limited time period. While the telling of their stories was a catharsis for the narrators, it became emotional overload for me as I heard story after story. It was hard not to come away depressed from hearing the Chefoo stories. I struggled, as the narrators did, with wanting to share all that was good about Chefoo and yet consistently hearing and feeling the hurt and pain that was present in the stories of those who were separated from their parents. Each person's story was contradictory as part of it was terrible and part of it was exciting.

Like the informants, I wrestled with the paradoxical nature of their boarding life experiences. Recent work done with adult third culture kids (ATCK's) who attended boarding schools has found that,

> These ATCK's may have so many great memories of the camaraderie experienced there and the friendships made and maintained down through the years that they can't imagine there could be any negatives. . . .their identity is deeply tied to the boarding school experience. To acknowledge anything but the good could threaten their entire sense of self. . .They don't want to negate the way of life that is the only one they have known and the core element of their identity. (8)

This not wanting to negate their way of life leads to the last benefit of this study for the informants and their contemporaries who experienced similar situations of either internment or boarding away from parents. This study gives them a voice and recognition of what they experienced. This is especially needed for those who were children of missionaries. For years many felt they could not

talk about the loneliness and hardships of their childhood for fear it would sound as if they were criticizing or letting down their parents, the mission organization or God. The life-histories of the informants in this study will hopefully provide for other adult missionary children a sense of identity, acceptance and belonging that they perhaps have rarely found elsewhere. And that may be the most crucial benefit of all.

Conclusion

The method of oral history was used to discover two women's motivations, feelings and interpretations of schooling during a stressful historical time period. From each woman's story, supported by corroboration with other interviewees and with related written documents, themes were established by the researcher as to how these students interpreted and internalized the implicit and explicit moral components of their school's curriculum. These themes revolved around "Safety in Structure", "Discipline" and "Feeling Special". The issue of "separation" was also discussed as it was a recurrent theme with all of the interviewees.

Three assumptions were held by the researcher during the collection and analysis of the life histories. The first assumption was that, whether explicitly or implicitly presented, students do internalize and act on the moral elements found within the schooling process. Second, the internalizing of the moral elements of the school curriculum may cause conflict with the values of the student's home or those of the surrounding society. This conflict can have long term effects on the student's perception of her/himself and his/her character development. And finally, in order to quell the internal conflicts of values, the student incorporates coping skills, one of which is being a "co- constructor" with teachers of the curriculum and thus determining what is learned and what morals are preserved. The method of life history was utilized because it allows for the study of the intersection of biography, history and social structure and "penetrates the individual subject's consciousness and attempts also to map the changes in that consciousness over the life-cycle" (9)

The frame of this study is the internment of a whole private school during the Second World War. But the picture within the frame is of the continuation of schooling in spite of war and internment. Would schools today be able or willing to function under such circumstances? The fact that the Chefoo School continued functioning even in an internment camp signifies the values and beliefs of the staff and students. This message was not lost on its students. And that is what this study was about: that schooling is a shared, or co-constructed, value system that uses the curriculum to transmit the cultural traditions, social norms and history of its people to the next generation.

The contemporary value of this study is in helping parents, educators, students and community participants of schools to define the type of supportive community they desire their schools to be in the midst of financial, moral and the violent behaviors that challenge education in our schools. While a school's main purpose is often thought to be academic only, in reality, schooling encompasses a student's affective life as well. As Sergiovanni stated that, "children and adults construct their own understandings of the world in which they live," (10) this study stresses that all school stakeholders must work together as "co-constructors" of the curriculum to determine what is to be learned and what morals are to be preserved despite the surrounding environment.

On an international level this study, though seen through the lens of an historical event, has themes that are applicable to the world today. This is due to the fact that unfortunately

> In the second half of the twentieth century more than 100 armed conflicts have been fought in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Nine out of ten casualties in contemporary wars are noncombatants. Millions of children today will bear the physical and psychological scars of war for the rest of their lives. For some, the impact will be disabli-g; others will learn to live with their painful memories, as did most of the children of World War II. . . . We can give hope to the children of war, provide them with the love of caring adults—a member of the family, a teacher, someone who will listen and hold their hand. We can use schools as places to restore structure and routine in young lives, where the children can learn the skills to rebuild their world in peace. (11)

When parents are a non-positive-factor in a child's life, whether on an international or local level, and for whatever reason, war, drugs, emotional abandonment, that is when the extended school family must intervene to fill that separation void. All students should feel safe within the structures and teachings of their school and know that they are valued by the school community for herself or himself, regardless of their performance. Students need to rest in the confidence that they will be listened to and respected by their school community. Establishing a moral climate of positive relationships, safety and respect for one another in our schools is the long term goal of this study.

1 Goodson & Walker, (1991), 176. ↑

2 Sergiovanni (1996), xii., xiii, xvi. ↑

3 Werner, p. 48-51. ↑

4 "Erfahrungen, Auswirlcungen and Lehren aus der Sicht von Teilnehmern," in Die erweiterte Kinder-Land-Verschiclaing: KLV-Lager 1940-1945, ed. Gerhard Dabel, (Schillinger: Freiburg, 1981) 309-312. ↑

5 Werner, p. 58 & 221. ↑

6 U. S. Department of Education and the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, How Faith Communities Support Children's Learning in Public Schools, December, 1999, 1. ↑

7 First Amendment Center and National Congress of Parents and Teachers, A Parent's Guide to Religion in the Public Schools, 1999, Item 15. ↑

8 David C. Pollack and Ruth E. Van Reken, The Third Culture Kid Experience: Growing up among worlds (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1999) 286-287. ↑

9 Goodson, (1988), 62. ↑

10 Sergiovarini, (1996) 38. ↑

11 Werner, p. 227 & 229. ↑