

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH CENSORSHIP:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Education
Degree
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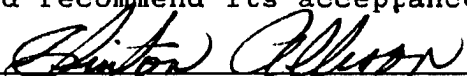
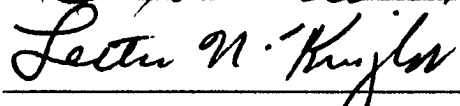
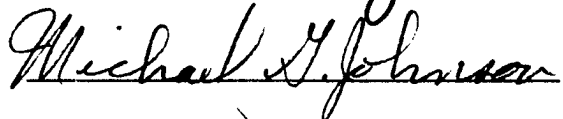
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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mary Jean Ronan Herzog entitled "Teachers' Experiences with Censorship: A Qualitative Study." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.


J. Estill Alexander,
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe teachers' experiences with school censorship. Teachers were asked to describe their school censorship experiences and to discuss their responses to those experiences.

Qualitative research procedures were used to investigate the topic. The data for this study were collected through unstructured, open-ended interviews. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed, and the resulting protocols formed the data base for analysis.

Thirteen teachers were identified and selected as participants in the study on the basis of their having had experiences with school censorship. They were teachers of two adjacent school districts, one a city and the other a county district, in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. The group included three primary grade teachers, two middle school teachers, and eight high school teachers.

The data were analyzed through a three-component analysis procedure which included data reduction, data display and conclusion-drawing and verification. The results were divided into two main categories. The nature of the school censorship experiences among the participants in the study were broad and diverse but also shared common features. The 55 censorship episodes that made up the experiences of the 13 teachers in this study covered a wide range of types

of censorship episodes and a variety of topics, from administratively-induced censorship to religious-based censorship.

Teachers' responses to their school censorship experiences had affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions. Their responses were strong, complex and largely negative, but also ambivalent in certain respects.

Several major themes emerged from the study. Censorship experiences made it difficult for teachers to fulfill the responsibilities of their many roles. Censorship experiences were accompanied by a myriad of emotional responses including anger, anxiety, frustration, isolation and defeat. Teachers reported feeling threatened and vulnerable and a sense of diminished autonomy, freedom and control. Censorship experiences resulted in teachers' avoidance of potentially controversial topics, methods and ideas.

The small, subtle, covert types of censorship experiences seemed to have as powerful an effect as did the big episodes that became public issues. Taken as a whole, the censorship experiences described by the participants in this study resulted in a pattern of cumulative, often imperceptible experiences which gradually and subtly altered teachers' thoughts, feelings and acts. This phenomenon has often been referred to as the "chilling effects of censorship."

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SCHOOL CENSORSHIP

School censorship is a phenomenon which periodically commands public attention. Surveys by People for the American Way (PFAW), an anti-censorship organization, report that American schools are in a crisis because of an increase of censorship attacks on books and curricula (PFAW 1986; 1987). The surveys document a 20% increase of censorship incidents in schools and libraries nationwide from 1985 and a 168% increase since the first PFAW survey in 1981. Other surveys substantiate the position that school censorship is on the rise and has been for at least a twenty-year period (Ahrens, 1972; Burrell, 1979; 1982; Spears, 1982; Tlou & Bennett, 1983).

The PFAW (1986; 1987) surveys describe trends in censorship cases. Censorship attempts are not limited to a small geographical region nor are they limited to objections to "dirty books." Censorship attempts occur regardless of political persuasion or affiliation of the initiators. While some may think that censorship is a phenomenon of the far right, censorship attempts are in fact initiated by liberals as well as conservatives. Censorship attempts cannot be characterized as "book banning" alone, nor are they confined

to the high school English class. The fact that school censorship attempts are pervasive is illustrated by the following information documented in the surveys:

1. Censorship attempts occurred in every region of the country with an approximately even distribution.

2. Almost 60% of the incidents were attempts to ban ideas, information, curricula and teaching methods.

According to the survey (PFAW, 1987), censors are no longer satisfied with removing a few books from the school library and "more than half the incidents in 1986-87 involve the language of censorship, words and phrases ... such as 'secular humanism,' 'values clarification,' and 'globalism.'"

Most content areas have been subjected to censorship attempts. Challenges to school library books continued to grow and account for approximately 40% of the incidents documented by the surveys.

3. Censorship cases increasingly involve the financial and legal support of national and local organizations. In the 1986 survey (PFAW, 1986), 43% of the cases reported were initiated by national groups such as the Eagle Forum led by Phyllis Schlafly, the Freedom Council led by Pat Robertson, Concerned Women for America led by Beverly La Haye and the National Association of Christian Educators (NAEC). In the 1987 survey, Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE), the activist affiliate of the NAEC was the most active group. According to PFAW, these groups hope to "bring public

education back under the control of the Christians" and have been actively organizing local chapters and supporting candidates in local school boards races (PFAW, 1987, p.3). The Gabler's Research Analysts continue to be active proponents of censorship, providing workshops for parent and church groups around the country (PFAW, 1987). Jenkinson (1986) also finds that censorship attempts are increasingly coordinated by national and local organizations and constitute a national movement that he calls The Schoolbook Protest Movement. He argues that censorship is an organized movement, and that it can no longer be viewed as isolated pockets of book banners.

Censorship attempts have also been instigated by groups of blacks, women and environmentalists. To Kill a Mockingbird has been targeted several times, as has The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn because of alleged racism (Haight, 1978; Karolides & Burrell, 1985; PFAW, 1986). The National Organization for Women objected to five dictionaries because of their "sexist" portrayal of women (Jenkinson, 1979). Environmentalists in Oregon objected to "pro-industry propaganda" in a 4th grade social studies textbook which they claimed gave biased views on "controversial issues such as clear-cutting, field burning and coyote eradication" (PFAW, 1986). So while censorship attempts are often stereotyped as coming from an isolated, conservative segment of society, that is not always the case.

People For the American Way is not alone in arguing that censorship attempts undermine the mission of public education in the United States and that these attempts have a negative effect on the overall quality of teaching. Many of those who write about censorship discuss it in light of the purposes of education: as a "marketplace of ideas" (Rowell, 1986); as a place to exercise the free intellect (Lehr, 1985); and as an opportunity to learn about reality (Donaldson, 1987). Donaldson (1979) argues that school censorship has a "chilling" effect on the spirits of teachers and students. The National Education Association (Weiss, 1987) takes the position that the worst consequence of censorship attempts is the climate of fear and intolerance and the resulting self-censorship. Teachers, librarians, administrators and publishers have all been accused of pre- or self-censoring (Hopkins, 1987; Logan, 1985).

Censorship is a subject that inspires writers from a wide variety of fields: A 1987 ERIC search listed over 1300 documents on the subject. Many professional educational organizations deal with censorship in their literature. For example, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) has been an active proponent of academic freedom for many years, publishing books, articles and pamphlets and conducting surveys on censorship incidences (NCTE, 1982; Burress & Jenkinson, 1982). The International Reading Association (IRA) also publishes material on censorship

(Hatcher & Erickson, 1979). Many of the professional associations concentrate on providing help for teachers in avoiding censorship issues and in dealing with them when they occur (Davis, 1979). The American Library Association's (ALA) Office of Intellectual Freedom keeps track of censorship incidents, especially those that occur in libraries and schools. PFAW is an anti-censorship lobbying group.

Only a small portion of the vast censorship literature, however, can be classified as empirical research. As McKee (1977) noted in a review of the research on censorship, the majority of the literature is not sufficiently systematic or rigorous. Of the empirical studies that are available on censorship, the majority are descriptive or quantitative. Several dissertations have examined aspects of censorship using a variety of methodological approaches, and they are reviewed in Chapter II. The emphasis in the research studies is often on the material censored.

Censorship studies generally fit into one of the following: content analyses of specific literary works (Williams, 1987); analyses of complaints about curricular materials (Lapota, 1976; Last, 1984); chronicles and analyses of specific censorship cases (Kincheloe, 1980; Spears, 1982); and surveys of censorship incidence (Baxter, 1964; Borowiak, 1983). The majority of surveys of school censorship have sampled administrators and librarians but not teachers

(Burress, 1979). Students' attitudes toward censorship of reading materials have been investigated (Purdue University Measurement & Research Center, 1974). English and social studies teachers have been surveyed about the incidence and outcome of censorship cases (Ahrens, 1972; Spears, 1982; Tlou & Bennett, 1983).

While quantitative studies are significant in the development of a data base on school censorship, there are many facets of censorship incidents and issues which are neglected by quantitative approaches. One censorship issue which has received very little attention is that of teachers' experiences in censorship controversies.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' experiences with school censorship. Because teachers are so often directly involved in school censorship incidents, it is important to find out what those experiences are like and how they affect teachers. In the present study teachers were asked to describe their school censorship experiences and to discuss their responses to those experiences. The meaning of censorship to teachers was interpreted through analysis of data collected through recorded interviews.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The main assumption of this study was that teachers' descriptions of their experiences with school censorship would provide rich data on an important socioeducational phenomenon and that the most appropriate approach to the examination of this phenomenon would be through a qualitative research design. The open-ended, in-depth interview was the procedure through which data were collected. This study was limited to a small group of teachers from one region in the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

The study was based on the broader assumption that school censorship is a significant educational, social and political problem. Although censorship cases may be resolved in the principal's office, they are usually centered around classroom activity or curricula. Teachers are at the center of many school censorship incidents and are often in the middle of pressures from parents, students, administrators, school boards and the public. Censorship may affect a teacher's life at many levels including relationships with parents and students, autonomy in selecting materials and making curricular decisions, and actual teaching performance. Therefore the meaning of censorship experiences to teachers is considered a subject worthy of investigation.

The procedure used for investigating teachers' experiences with school censorship was the qualitative research interview. These open-ended interviews were based

on guidelines developed by Patton (1980) and Colaizzi (1978) and a model study by Dapkus (1985) which suggest that the interviewer identify a set of issues to be explored during the natural course of the interview. The resulting transcripts, referred to as protocols, were analyzed through qualitative measures. Justification for the methodological approach taken in this study is as follows:

1. That the qualitative research interview is a more effective research tool for investigating the experience of censorship to teachers who have had first-hand experiences with this phenomenon than is a survey. Ethical considerations limit opportunities for experimental designs that can be used in schools.

2. That teachers' reflections on their experiences with censorship provide legitimate descriptions of their past experiences.

3. That a small sample can provide insights which do not normally emerge from large, representative samples. The large sample is helpful in establishing statistics on censorship incidents, but in-depth or longitudinal studies must be used if the goal is to describe the qualities of the censorship experience, a uniquely human phenomenon.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

There is a growing concern in the social sciences that the application of the positivist approach to questions of

human behavior, knowledge and values unnecessarily limits the kinds of questions that can be asked and the kinds of studies that can be done. Much of the research and experimentation done on humans in the past century has been criticized for its remoteness from real human activity. In the areas of human perception and thinking, Neisser (1976) criticized research on human cognition for its lack of ecological validity. That is, much of the psychological research has concentrated on the examination of isolated phenomena in laboratories. Ecologically valid studies concentrate on the study of phenomena in the ordinary environment and in the context of natural purposeful activity.

Harre and Secord (1973) have developed a theoretical account of human beings as rule-following agents whose models of themselves are embedded in much of the logic of ordinary language. Their perspective involves a shift to a realist, non-positivist conception of science which considers humans as capable of controlling their performances and commenting intelligently upon them. Their theoretical perspective rejects the traditional conception of the human 'automaton'.

Within the social sciences, there is a growing perspective that psychological states, conditions and powers can be better understood through procedures that are not limited by the constraints of traditional quantitative research (Harre & Secord, 1973; Colaizzi, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980).

Attempts to assess attitudes, values and interpersonal responses often use survey and questionnaire data, a particularly unrevealing method in that the standardized, forced-choice format often leads to superficial and restricted results. Survey data, at best, can provide help in answering literal, factual questions; it is not very helpful in developing insights about human nature.

Qualitative research puts the emphasis on gathering in-depth data from a limited number of subjects as opposed to collecting a small, pre-categorized body of data from a large number of subjects. Certainly, the fact that three of the most influential psychologists, Freud, Piaget, and Skinner, derived theories from intensive studies of small, selected populations provides some support for this methodological approach. The aim of the qualitative approach is to:

...provide a window into individual human experience, and researchers using qualitative interviews are typically more interested in describing how individuals experience issues and events than in reporting what percent of a group agrees or disagrees with a set of statements. While such methods may lack the rigor of standardized survey techniques, they can provide insight unattainable by traditional methods (H. Herzog, Vore & New, in press).

The present research was conducted as a qualitative study in which unstructured, open-ended interviews served as the data collection procedure. The procedure was adapted from Patton (1980):

The general interview guide approach involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins.

The issues in the outline need not be taken in any particular order and the actual wording of questions to elicit responses about those issues is not determined in advance The interview guide presumes that there is common information that should be obtained from each person interviewed, but no set of standardized questions are written in advance. The interviewer is thus required to adapt both the wording and sequence of questions to specific respondents in the context of the actual interview (p.198).

In this study, each person interviewed was asked to describe a censorship experience he or she had had as a teacher. Each participant was asked to elaborate on his or her responses to and feelings about each incident at appropriate times during the interview. Other methodological factors considered in the data collection procedure were:

1. The participants were teachers who had experienced some type of censorship that affected the instructional setting. They were identified through local teachers' professional organizations which were National Education Association affiliates. Each participant signed a consent form. Confidentiality was assured by avoiding the use of names and other identifying labels.

2. Handwritten notes were taken during interviews. Each interview was recorded on a Sony M-19V Microcassette-corder. Each interview was transcribed and the resulting protocols formed the data base.

3. Following the suggestions of Miles and Huberman (1984) a three-component analysis procedure applied to the

data involved (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and (c) conclusion drawing and verification.

In the data reduction stage the protocols were examined in terms of the nature of the censorship episodes and teachers' responses to the censorship episodes. Analysis procedures resulted in the following division:

- a. Protocols were divided into censorship episodes.
- b. Episodes were categorized by type and description.
- c. Teachers' responses were categorized according to specified aspects of the censorship experiences.
- d. Responses were summarized in terms of their affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions.
- e. Themes within censorship experiences were derived and categorized (Colaizzi, 1978; Kvale, 1983; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 1980).

4. Traditional reliability and validity procedures that are standard in positivist research are not usually appropriate for use with research based on a naturalistic and phenomenological paradigm (e. g., Colaizzi, 1978; Kvale, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, careful documentation of procedures in qualitative research provides the opportunity for replication. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest several procedures for establishing trustworthiness, credibility and confirmability. Of their suggestions, those that were used in

this study included (a) peer debriefing, (b) referential adequacy, and (c) member checks.

Peer debriefing is a technique of exposing the initial plan for the study to disinterested peers in analytic sessions to expose and control the researcher's biases and to examine the methodological design. Referential adequacy is a procedure for checking the accuracy of the protocols in relation to the audio and/or video recordings. The member check is the method of checking the accuracy of the data, categories, interpretations and conclusions with the participants after the analysis is completed. Member checks are similar to Kvale's (1983) suggestion of the re-interview as a means for the researcher to check the accuracy of the analysis. The third stage of Miles and Huberman's (1984) model also relates to verification through re-interviewing.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Spring (1988) says that "conflict occurs as different groups attempt to have the educational system serve their own interests and ideologies" (p. 23). Several different groups with differing identities, purposes and statuses all have roles within the educational forum. Groups such as school administrators, teachers, community members, parents and children are forced into the community of the school and conflict is almost inevitable. School censorship reflects conflicts about differing interests and ideologies among

these groups. The cultural and geographical background relevant to this study was public education in the region of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

The Southern Appalachian Mountains constitutes a culture that has a unique heritage and identity. The communities from which the participants were drawn are populated by a mix of people from within the local culture and transplants from other regions. The area of the study includes both a small city (pop. 60,000) and outlying rural region. The rural areas of the region reflect the Appalachian cultural heritage more than do the city and suburban areas. The cultural features of the region may affect the particulars of the present study, such as the types of censorship episodes that were found or the kinds of responses teachers had to their experiences.

Loyal Jones (1978) described Appalachians as traditional people who were isolated and self-reliant. He said that the qualities of life in the wilderness contributed to an Appalachian value system that is quite different from mainstream America. The first among the values that he argues are important to Appalachians is religion. Jones also describes Appalachians as individualistic and non-confrontative.

Religious influences have often been said to be more strongly felt in the Southern Appalachian Mountains than in other regions of the United States. Jones says that the

strength of the religious attitudes of the Appalachians has its roots in the locally autonomous sects that grew out of the isolation of the mountains. Jones says that these sects "helped sustain us and made life worth living in grim situations" (p. 40) and that religion has helped to give Appalachians meaning in their lives and in themselves.

In addition to the geographical features of the region in which this study was conducted, it must also be acknowledged that censorship experiences for teachers will be affected by the contexts of teaching. The state of education in a society is part of the zeitgeist. School censorship experiences do not occur in a vacuum. Teachers' experiences are influenced by national, state, and local and economic politics.

Teachers' experiences reflect the times. If for example, the dominant educational mode is "back to basics" then conflict should be expected when teachers try to emphasize cognitive processes and critical thinking. In fact, teacher training programs in colleges and universities often emphasize learning processes. Teachers come from these programs and continuing education with expectations of teaching learning processes only to find that their role is not limited to that of professional educator. They are merely one of the players in the education arena and they have multiple roles to fulfill. External demands from society combined with internal demands from the education

establishment conflict with their ability to play those many roles successfully.

American education in the 1980s has been characterized by a national reform movement, from the Nation at Risk report (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) to the Carnegie report A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century (The Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, 1986). Teachers have been the object of many of the attacks and proposals for reform leveled at public education. Many of the reports have emphasized the need for high quality teachers: The teaching profession is regarded by many to be in a quality crisis. Frymier (1987) argues that empowering teachers is the key to getting the best and brightest people into the teaching profession. Continued censorship pressures may be one factor considered by those thinking about joining the teaching profession.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The qualitative, open-ended nature of this study precluded the use of pre-defined terms. However, two terms which emerged early in the study were censorship episode and censorship experience. The term censorship episode refers to censorship events and subevents which became units for analysis. Censorship episodes are subsets of the broader term censorship experience. The term censorship experience refers to the total phenomenological experience that teachers

had with school censorship. School censorship experiences included all of the discreet censorship episodes that a teacher experienced plus all of the outcomes, results, related censorship incidents, repercussions, and responses. The censorship experience is the entire phenomenological experience.

For each teacher, censorship experiences were unique although there were common features among the group. School censorship experiences were defined for the purposes of this study as those descriptions given by the participants of their objective and subjective experiences. The participants were not asked to define school censorship; rather they were asked to describe their school censorship experiences. Their descriptions took many varied forms. For three teachers, censorship stemmed from a letter on secular humanism; for three other participants, it began with a sex education controversy; and for others the episodes were based on individual classroom experiences.

SUMMARY

School censorship incidents have been increasing over the past twenty years. They occur throughout all regions of the country, involve much more than literature and textbooks, and are promoted by many national and local organizations. Censorship is attempted from people regardless of their position on the political continuum, and it is often claimed

that it results in self-censorship on the part of teachers, librarians, administrators and publishers. The experience of school censorship may affect job satisfaction for teachers.

Although the literature on the subject of censorship is vast, research on it is minimal. The emphasis in the professional literature tends to be on the documentation of censorship incidents and advice to professionals on dealing with censorship. Surveys have focused more on school administrators and librarians than on teachers.

This study investigated the meaning of the censorship experience to teachers, a facet of school censorship which has not previously been investigated. The approach taken in this study was the qualitative, open-ended interview. This qualitative approach to the examination of teachers' feelings about the impact of censorship on them personally and professionally should serve to illuminate one aspect of a significant social issue.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The introduction, Chapter I, presents the school censorship problem, some literature background, the purpose of the study, assumptions and limitations, the design of the study and definitions of terms.

Chapter II, the literature review, is an examination of school censorship from three different perspectives: Court

decisions, empirical research, and themes exemplified by two specific censorship cases.

Chapter III is a description of the methodology used in the study and the results are given in Chapter IV. The summary and conclusions are in Chapter V. Chapter VI contains the discussion and implications of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School censorship is an issue that has social, educational and political ramifications about which there is a large body of literature. The subject of censorship lends itself to essays, opinions, and news reports much more readily than carefully controlled research. Systematic research on censorship from the social science perspective is problematic. Censorship cases tend to make good "news" because of their controversial nature. In this literature review censorship is discussed from the three perspectives of (a) legal rulings (b) empirical studies on censorship incidence and attitudes and reader responses, and (c) two major cases.

LEGAL RULINGS

Constitutional Provisions

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution says that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Tenth Amendment provides for States rights:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

The Fourteenth Amendment protects American citizens from States' actions which may infringe on federally protected rights:

...No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

These amendments have provided the basis for many complex and diverse legal cases relevant to public education. It is the breadth of the First Amendment that allows claims to be made whenever religion seems to be encroaching on the schools. It is through the First Amendment that cases have been argued for and against seemingly unrelated controversial issues. The following list of controversial issues shows the breadth and diversity of cases that are argued in light of the First, Tenth and Fourteenth amendment provisions:

The teaching of evolution

The teaching of "scientific creationism"

Sex education

Religious instruction

Bible instruction

Prayer

Moment of silence

Christmas carols

Book censorship

Student press censorship

Freedom of expression

Financial aid for private and parochial schools

A few of these issues will be discussed in the following section.

Evolution and Creation

A state law banning the teaching of evolution was upheld in *Scopes v. State of Tennessee* (1927), better known as the "Scopes Monkey Trial." The Scopes case never reached the Supreme Court, but in 1968, a similar state law in Arkansas was unanimously declared unconstitutional, in that it conflicted with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, by the Supreme Court in the *Epperson v. Arkansas* case (Reutter, 1982). In 1987, the Supreme Court again ruled in favor of the teaching of evolution, this time when equal time was demanded for the teaching of "creation theory."

Financial Aid for Non-public Schools

Several First Amendment education cases have dealt with questions regarding public financing of private schools. In 1930, in *Cochran v. Louisiana State Board of Education*, a

judgment was made in favor of the state furnishing textbooks to children in private schools. New Jersey's law providing public transportation to children attending non-profit, private schools was upheld in *Everson v. Board of Education* in 1947, on the basis of the Establishment Clause. Textbooks again became an issue in the *Allen* case of 1968, when New York's policy of purchasing textbooks for the use by children "...enrolled in grades seven to twelve of public or private schools that complied with the compulsory education law" (Reutter, 1982, p. 22). Although textbook and transportation cases were consistently ruled in favor of the state statutes, it was with the involvement of the states in supplementing salaries for teachers that the Court found "excessive government entanglement with religion" (Reutter, 1982, p. 26). In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* the Supreme Court articulated the well-known three tests: "...First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; finally, the statute must not foster "an excessive government entanglement with religion" (Reutter, 1982, p. 26).

Religion and the Schools

The place of religious instruction in the schools has been an issue for the courts since 1948. In the *McCollum* case, religion teachers of a variety of denominations were

allowed to teach religion classes in the public schools of Champaign County, Illinois. The Supreme Court found this to be in violation of the First Amendment (Semonche, 1985). The use of an oral, non-denominational prayer, developed by the New York Board of Regents, became the focus for Engel v. Vitale in 1962. The Supreme Court found that this school prayer was in violation of the Establishment Clause in that the "...first and most immediate purpose of the Establishment Clause rested on the belief that a union of government and religion tends to destroy government and to degrade religion." School prayer was in the courts again in 1963 when two cases were consolidated into Abington School District v. Schempp. The Supreme Court found unconstitutional policies in two separate school districts, one in Pennsylvania and the other in Maryland, which provided Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer in public schools (Reutter, 1982).

Censorship of Books, Ideas and Expression

The Supreme Court entered the realm of school book censorship with the 1982 hearing of the Pico case (Coggins, 1986). This came on the heels of several lower court split decisions regarding book removal from school libraries and the alleged infringement on students' rights. In the Island Trees, New York school district, the Board of Education ordered eleven "objectionable" books removed from the school

district's libraries. Several students including Steven Pico, for whom the case was named, sued the school board on the basis of First Amendment violations. The Court had ruled in support of students' First Amendment rights in various earlier cases such as the Epperson case mentioned above, the Barnette case in 1943, and the Meyer case in 1923. In the Tinker case of 1969, the Court ruled that a local school board had violated free-speech rights when it suspended students for wearing black arm-bands as a protest against the Viet-Nam War. In the Tinker case the Court said that "students do not shed their rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse door" (Coggins, 1986, p. 19).

In the 1980s censorship of school books moved beyond the library to the classroom. Numerous cases of objections to textbooks have been in the lower courts. In Alabama in 1986 Judge Hand banned 44 textbooks from the public schools because he found them guilty of promoting the "religion" of secular humanism in the schools. Hand's ruling was overturned in the 11th Circuit Court where it was found that the texts do not endorse secular humanism or religion but that they attempt to instill "such values as independent thought, tolerance of diverse views, self-respect, maturity, self-reliance and logical decision-making" (American Association of School Administrators, 1987).

In the 1986 Tennessee case, known as *Mozert vs. Hawkins County Public Schools*, Judge Hull ruled that the reading

program, Holt, Rinehart & Winston (1983) violated the plaintiffs' religious freedom under the First Amendment. This ruling, and a subsequent damages award was overturned by the 6th Circuit Court, which affirmed that exposure to competing concepts and ideas does not violate the Free Exercise Clause (Leadership News, 1987). The Supreme Court rejected the plaintiffs' appeal in February, 1988.

Concluding Comment

This overview of rulings on censorship related school cases shows only a small part of the judicial picture. Teachers' rights are another legal area which encompass loyalty, expression and due process, and conditions of employment. And then, of course, there are the numerous legal cases on censorship in arenas other than education. From evolution to school finance, from religious instruction to "a moment of silence" to secular humanism, from library book withdrawals to textbook banning, from suppression of expression to restriction of methods, school censorship cases do not show any sign of staying out of the courts.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF CENSORSHIP

Research on Incidence, Attitudes, Reader Responses

Although the topic of censorship inspires prolific writing, the bulk of it cannot be classified as research.

The most common approach to research on censorship seems to be in incidence studies.

In a study typical of school censorship surveys, Woods (1979) analyzed over 900 censorship attempts that had been listed in the Newsletter on Intellectual freedom from 1966 to 1975. The Woods study can be compared to the 1986 and 1987 surveys conducted by People for the American Way that are discussed in detail in Chapter I. In the Woods study, the rates of censorship incidence were higher in New England and the Middle Atlantic states than in the Southeast or the Southwest. Half of the cases in the PFAW studies (1986; 1987) involved the censorship of ideas in contrast to the earlier study by Woods which primarily concerned books and textbooks.

Although there are other differences, the similarities between the 1987 and 1979 surveys are notable, particularly in the comparison of censored books. The following books were objects of censorship attempts during the ten years that the 1979 survey covered and during the five years covered in the 1987 survey: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Black Boy, Brave New World, The Catcher in the Rye, Flowers for Algernon, Go Ask Alice, The Grapes of Wrath, The Joy of Sex, The Learning Tree, Lord of the Flies, My Darling, My Hamburger, Of Mice and Men, Our Bodies, Ourselves, The Pigman, Slaughterhouse Five, and To Kill a Mockingbird. In the 1987 survey, there were also some notable additions:

Children's fairy tales: Little Red Riding Hood; Mother Goose Rhymes; The Three Billy Goats Gruff; dictionaries, and many basic textbooks, particularly in reading and social studies. A summary of censorship surveys (Karolides & Burress, 1985) that were conducted from 1966 to 1982 was published mainly to provide information for teachers concerned dealing with censorship in the classroom. Their list of the most frequently challenged books is similar to those mentioned above. Eleven of the first 15 on their list are duplicates of the above list.

There has been an apparent decline in the success of censorship attempts over the years. In the past (Woods, 1979) a majority of the attempts (about 65%) were successful (i.e., they resulted in removal or banning of books) whereas in 1987, 37% of the cases resulted in banning or restricting the challenged materials. These statistics do not, however, account for pre- and self-censoring by teachers and librarians (PFAW, 1987). All of these surveys depend on reported censorship; it may be that numerous cases went unreported.

Some studies have been limited to particular states. Borowiak (1983) investigated textbook and library censorship in Illinois public high schools. While he found that the topics of greatest censorship controversy were sex, language, morals and religion, in the past (Woods, 1979) politics accounted for more problems than religion.

Borowiak (1983) also looked at the relationship between the number of attempts and the stated policies of the school system. Ironically, schools which had a board policy to deal with objections or had a written rationale to support the selection of material experienced significantly more attempts than those school systems lacking such policies. Other findings from his study indicate that larger schools experience a higher percentage of censorship attempts by lay citizens than professionals. As is the case with most correlational material, these findings do not make any claims about cause and effect.

Ahrens (1965), in a study that focused on English teachers found that English teachers who were involved in censorship experiences used practices which were designed to help prevent censorship attempts. She argued that the English teachers in her study were censored because they were doing a good job, that the majority of the censors were parents and that teachers are the ones who are ultimately responsible for defending their educational practices.

Other surveys show that less than half of the public schools have clear policies for material selection or instructing teachers on appropriate procedures for dealing with citizen complaints. Burress (1985) argues that schools of education should include curricula on dealing with censorship.

The Purdue University Measurement and Evaluation Center (1974) surveyed a stratified nation-wide sample of 973 students in public and private schools. Most of the students polled held anti-censorship views but there was a small group of pro-censorship students who also had low scores on vocabulary tests, used more radio and television and had poorly educated parents. This study claimed that the teaching of English has implications for cognitive and value development. Beach (1976) found little short term change in values or attitudes from reading specific books that had been identified as being restricted to 21 year olds. He also found lack of support for common assumptions such as the claim that adolescent development is jeopardized by reading books that deal with sex and that censorship deters interest in reading censored books. It is commonly understood that censored books may actually be more appealing to students than never-censored books.

Some studies focus on the subjects of censorship. Spears (1982) examined censorship of high school social studies texts in Alabama. Her study supported the following ideas: (a) that the fear of censorship may result in publishers imposing restrictions on themselves, (b) that teachers lack experience and preparation in dealing with censorship, and (c) that textbook selection is closely related to censorship. In Alabama the textbook selection procedures had become highly politicized.

Baxter's (1964) study supports some of the same ideas discussed above but also makes an additional point about the underlying implications of book selection policies that are guided by lay persons. He argues that textbook selection should be a professional responsibility, and that considering lay persons to be better qualified than teachers is a negative comment about teaching.

Many professionals, particularly English teachers, are concerned about unauthorized editing of literature. In a study comparing textbooks adopted in Tennessee with original texts, numerous undocumented changes were found (Weathersby, 1975). Attention is rarely drawn to these publishing-house changes.

Last (1984) conducted an extensive analysis of the arguments used by petitioners against literature books proposed for adoption in Texas in 1978 and found that they expected literature to be read literally and to be positive and uplifting. The petitioners also expected education to be factual and skills-oriented and strongly supportive of the values of the home and the church. It was also found that the petitioners were well-organized and could skillfully succeed in their attempts to get books censored.

In another case analysis, Swearingen (1986) showed that school censorship was encouraged by "religious fundamentalists and the far right" and that it revealed deep community conflicts. She concluded that textbook

controversy is predictable in communities with divergent values, educational levels and political affiliations.

THEMES EXEMPLIFIED IN TWO CASES

In the final section of this literature review, the predominant censorship themes of the 1970s and 1980s are illustrated through a discussion of two major school censorship cases. The two cases, separated in time by nearly a decade, shared the common theme of fundamentalist Christians pitted against mainstream, liberal "humanists" in battles about differing value systems. Both cases share geographical roots with the present study as it, too, took place in the region known as the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

Both cases became celebrated media events which helped cement stereotypical public views. Some have argued that that stereotypical "good guy - bad guy" view is overly simplistic and that the argument for minority status to people of fundamental religious backgrounds should be taken seriously. Furthermore, the argument also criticizes the education establishment for overreacting with unilateral decisions (Balajthy, 1988; Kincheloe, 1983).

Kanawha County, West Virginia, 1974

The Kanawha County, West Virginia textbook controversy of 1974 generated a tremendous amount of national attention

and has been considered the beginning of a wave of censorship that is still rising over a decade later (Kincheloe, 1983; Oboler, 1981). The Kanawha County textbook case was centered around language arts books, but had actually started as a protest against sex education, led by Alice Moore who had been elected to the school board on a fundamentalist platform. In 1974, after the school board voted unanimously to adopt the texts recommended by the English Language Arts Textbook Selection Committee, Moore initiated opposition to the language arts textbooks by securing a delay on the purchases of those books until they could be studied further. In the end, Moore found the textbooks to be "anti-Christian, anti-American, anti-authority, depressing, and negative" (Kincheloe, 1983, p. 19). She advocated educational free enterprise as a means of reestablishing the priority of parental rights. Moore had widespread support in her efforts: She won the 1976 school board election by the largest majority in Kanawha County history (Kincheloe, 1983).

Hawkins County, Tennessee, 1983

Surveys document the idea that censorship is not an isolated social phenomenon but occurs in all sections of the country (PFAW, 1987; Spears, 1982; Tlou & Bennett, 1983; Burress, 1979). Although there have been hundreds of documented censorship cases since Kanawha County, a case in a small town in East Tennessee which has received considerable

national attention began in 1983 (Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools, 1986) and was quickly labelled "Scopes II." Kanawha II would probably have been more appropriate as the objections were centered around reading textbooks rather than evolution as was the case in the Scopes Monkey Trial.

In Tennessee, several fundamentalist Christian families protested the use of the Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston (1983) basal reading series that was used in the elementary school for the same basic reasons present in the Kanawha County textbook case. They opposed the humanistic, anti-Christian bias of the school textbooks. They argued in court that they should not be "forced to choose between reading books that offend their religious beliefs and foregoing a free public education" (Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools, 1986, p. 2). They also argued that the reading curriculum would have a strong and lasting effect on their children and that "...after reading the entire Holt series, a child might adopt the views of a feminist, a humanist, a pacifist, an anti-Christian, a vegetarian, or an advocate of a 'one-world government'" (Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools, 1986, p. 12). A lower court ruling was that the plaintiffs were allowed to "...opt-out of the reading program while still enjoying the benefit of the rest of the curriculum..." (Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools, 1986, p. 27). The parents were to be held accountable for their children's progress in reading, in concert with the Tennessee

home-schooling law. A district court later overturned the ruling, and in the long run, the Supreme Court refused to hear the plaintiffs' last appeal (Taylor, 1988).

Analysis of the Controversies

The Kanawha County controversy has been analyzed extensively. According to Kincheloe (1983), it resulted from conflicts that went far beyond objections to textbooks and deeply into perceived differences about the aims of public education. He argued that it was a conflict between parents' rights to influence what their children should be exposed to and a majority view that the schools should reflect the nation's diversity. On the other hand, Glatthorn (in Davis) (1979) argued that while school censorship can be seen as scapegoat for society's problems, that it is mainly an "ideological warfare" between the disenfranchised, white working-class and the liberal, middle-class majority. Further, he argued that "...we are locked in a struggle over the fundamental principles of freedom and liberty...a struggle to ensure that the public school classroom remains a forum for free inquiry..." (p. 52).

There was also a tremendous public reaction to the Hawkins County ruling, generally negative among educators and liberals and favorable among right-wing fundamentalists. Many argued that the "opt out" provision would create chaos in the schools; that anyone with any complaint might be able

to have a child exempted from any subject on any grounds (Rowell, 1986). The school system had made the reading of the Holt, Rhinehart and Winston series an absolute requirement. Many educators, while disagreeing with the parents' complaints, could not support the rigid approach to teaching reading that was reflected in the school policy. In the end, the ruling was overturned and the Supreme Court rejected a final appeal by the plaintiffs (Taylor, 1988). However, the effects of the case may, like Kanawha County, be felt for years to come in what Donaldson (1979) called the "chilling effect" of censorship. Although the plaintiffs lost in the end, there are some ways in which they may have really won.

SUMMARY

Literature related to censorship is as diverse as are the kinds of cases that go to court. Censorship cases that reach the courts usually do so under the protection of the First Amendment, with also in consideration of the Tenth and Fourteenth Amendments. Controversies have ended up in the courts over issues as diverse as evolution, sex education, prayer in the public schools and financial aid for parochial schools.

Research related to censorship is limited; it has focused on incidence surveys and case studies. While these provide some information about censorship, analysis of

individual censorship cases can add insight about the patterns, themes and conflicts present when censorship controversies erupt.

The two cases discussed in this chapter may serve as a reference point for some aspects of the censorship experiences of the teachers in the present study. The fact that this study also took place within the region known as the Southern Appalachian Mountains may provide some insights in the analysis of the issues surrounding school censorship.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study was designed to examine the experience of school censorship for teachers. In individual qualitative interviews, thirteen teachers were asked to describe their school censorship experiences and to reflect on their responses to those experiences. Additional discussion and justification of the qualitative research procedures is given in the first chapter of this study on pages 6 - 13.

THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEW

The qualitative research interview is useful when the purpose of the investigation is to understand human qualities such as feelings and thoughts that cannot be observed but can be accessed through language. Among the many analysts of qualitative research (Colaizzi, 1973; Kvale, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1984) Patton's (1980) description of the purpose of qualitative interviewing clarifies the point:

The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind but rather to access the perspective of the person being interviewed. We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid, or meaningful than self-report data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. The

purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (p. 196).

The data collection procedure for this study followed an interviewing method which is a combination of procedures described by Patton (1980) and Kvale (1983), phenomenological approaches described by Colaizzi (1978), and the clinical method described by Dapkus (1985). Patton suggests that the qualitative research interview can fall into one of the following categories: The first is the informal conversational interview; the second is the general interview guide approach; and the third is the standardized open-ended interview. Kvale suggests that the qualitative research interview is semi-structured, being "neither a free conversation nor a highly structured questionnaire. It is carried through following an interview-guide, which rather than containing exact questions focuses on certain themes" (p. 174). Colaizzi (1978) argues that the success of phenomenological research depends on the extent to which the researcher is able to tap the experiences of the participants. Colaizzi says, "As a phenomenologist, I must begin by contacting that phenomenon as people experience it" (p. 57). This method of interviewing is also similar to the clinical method of interviewing described by Dapkus (1985) in which the participant is asked to elaborate on and explain statements that appeared to be limited, ambiguous, or confusing. In the present study, these ideas and methods were combined to form an unstructured, open-ended interview.

Some qualitative researchers have proposed a need for a more rigorous methodology for analysis of the interview data, particularly for the purpose of replication (Kvale, 1983; Miles & Huberman; 1984). It is recommended that the researcher carefully document each step of the data collection and analysis to enhance the likelihood of adequate replication; this careful record of the procedures does not necessarily adversely affect the quality of the data or analysis.

The limitations inherent in a research approach which is not based on a positivist orientation are mitigated by the purposes for which qualitative research is conducted and the quality of the resulting data. As Kvale explains, "The qualitative research interview is based on meaning which rests on a subjective understanding" (p.183). The present study was purposely open-ended to provide the opportunity for the participants to describe their experiences with school censorship through an approach that was unconstrained by pre-ordained categories and questions. Studies by Dapkus (1985) and Colaizzi (1978) were used as procedural models for this study.

PARTICIPANTS

"Experiences with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice as criteria for selecting subjects" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 58). The participants for this study

were selected on the basis of their having had experiences with school censorship. Officers and representatives of the local teachers' associations, affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA) were asked by the researcher to identify teachers who had experienced school censorship. Those teachers were asked by the officers and representatives if they could be contacted by the researcher. Fourteen teachers were thus identified and telephoned by the researcher and informed of the study. Of the 14 referrals, 13 participated in the study. (One declined because of timing.)

The thirteen teachers from two adjacent school districts in the Southern Appalachian Mountains were interviewed about their experiences with school censorship. One of the districts was a city school system of approximately 5000 pupils while the other was a county school system of approximately 21,000 pupils. The group of teachers interviewed included three primary grade teachers (K-5), two middle school teachers, and eight high school teachers. Subject matter specialization for the middle and high school teachers included biology, English, language arts, and social studies. Their years' experience ranged from 3 to 28, with a mean of 15. Eleven of the teachers were female and two were male. As a group these teachers were professionally active in teaching and subject area professional associations, and several were nominees for teaching awards.

DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data was collected through open-ended, unstructured interviews (Colaizzi, 1978; Harre and Secord, 1973; Kvale, 1983; Patton, 1980). Nine interviews were conducted in the teachers' homes. Because of logistical problems, three participants were interviewed at their schools and one was interviewed at the researcher's office. Twelve of the interviews lasted one to one and one-half hours; one interview lasted only thirty minutes. Each interview was recorded on a Sony M-19V Microcassette-corder, and the interviewer took notes during the interviews. Each interview was transcribed verbatim, and the resulting transcriptions, referred to as protocols, ranged in length from 9 pages to 45 pages for a total of 307 pages.

The following procedures were used during the interviews:

1. The researcher described the study to the participant and answered any questions.
2. Each participant was assured of confidentiality.
3. Each participant signed a Consent Form (See Appendix A).
4. Each participant was asked to describe an experience with school censorship.

As the teachers described their experiences, the researcher asked questions such as, "How did you feel when

you had that experience?" "How has that experience affected you as a teacher; as a person?" "How do you resolve these conflicts in your mind?" "What kind of response did you get from your colleagues; from your administration; from the parents?" The researcher responded during the interviews with clarification comments such as "And you were saying..." "Oh, is that right..." and "Can you elaborate on that comment..."

One of the tendencies in interviewing that can create a problem is the reluctance of the interviewer to be quiet and listen carefully. It is natural to want to fill up quiet time during a normal conversation, but the quiet time is important to the success of the interview.

As the interviews in this study progressed, the researcher listened and took notes. The researcher allowed for "wait time" or quiet time between questions and comments during which she was writing notes while avoiding eye contact with the participant to allow time to continue on a line of thought or start on a new one. This wait time was particularly useful in providing for the phenomenological, open-ended aspects of the interviewing process to take place. When the interview was coming to an end, the researcher asked the participant if he or she would like to make any other comments and to summarize the important aspects of the censorship experience.

DATA ANALYSIS

The initial steps in data analysis proceeded from a generalized, whole text approach. This was followed by analysis of separate, discreet parts of the data. In the end, the analysis was brought back from parts' analysis to whole analysis to create the final thematic analysis.

Following Miles and Huberman's (1984) and Colaizzi's (1978) suggestions for the systematization of qualitative analysis, a three-component analysis procedure was applied to the data. These three components are described as three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion-drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The procedures involved in each of those concurrent flows of activity will be described below:

I. Data Reduction

Data reduction is the process of "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data that appear in edited field notes...it is part of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 23). Qualitative data can be reduced through the extracting of significant statements, that is, phrases, sentences or paragraphs that relate directly to the phenomenon being investigated (Colaizzi, 1978).

Following each interview, the researcher listened to the tape recording while editing the notes that had been taken during the interview. After each interview was transcribed, a validation procedure described as referential adequacy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which involved checking accuracy through listening to the audiotapes while proofreading the protocols was conducted two times on each protocol.

Following referential adequacy analysis, each interview was read for a general feeling, as Colaizzi (1978) says "a making sense out of them" (p. 59). Two protocols were shared with a qualitative research seminar under the direction of Howard Pollio at the Learning Research Center of the University of Tennessee for further "making sense out of them" and feedback regarding procedures.

The next step involved segmenting interview data into manageable units for analysis. A unit was defined as a change of subject much like a new paragraph in written discourse (Dapkus, 1985). A unit can be conceived of as an episode which, according to Harre and Secord (1973), "is any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity. Episodes have a beginning and end that can usually be identified" (p. 10). They further argue that episodes are difficult to classify because they are enigmatic and structured on two levels, overt and covert.

For example, a teacher would talk about a specific censorship episode and in the next sentence start discussing

her response to the episode. An example of a unit or episode division taken from one protocol is as follows: One unit - "When my principal heard about the complaints about the play, she requested that I not do the last performance." The next unit, in the next sentence-- "I really couldn't see that. I was very much against that." Each unit was marked in pencil with brackets and margin notes and eventually highlighted with a color-coded scheme.

Each protocol was also analyzed to determine if there was a common structure to the censorship experiences described by the teachers. The following common elements emerged from the protocols: (a) central incidents, that is, the main censorship episode or episodes within the experience described by the teacher, (b) peripheral incidents, that is, other censorship episodes, sometimes directly related to the central incidents, sometimes not related at all, (c) responses, that is, teachers' reactions to the censorship episodes, (d) types of responses, that is, the responses according to particular categories, (e) resolutions, that is, the concrete outcome of the censorship episode, and (f) repercussions, that is, the often subtle and unexpected long-term results of the censorship episodes. Figure 1 gives a visual portrayal of the structural analysis of censorship experiences that emerged from the protocol analysis in the

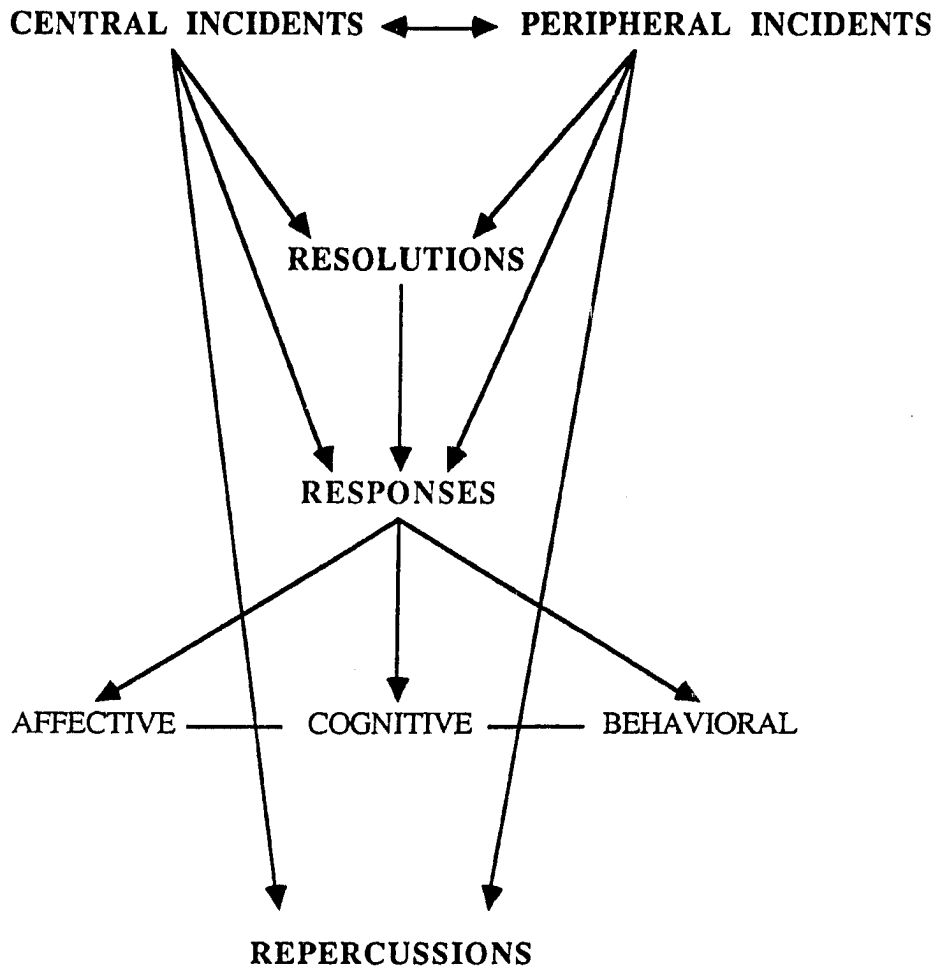


FIGURE 1. Structural Analysis of Censorship Experiences

data reduction stage. Appendix B gives one example of the structural analysis applied to one protocol.

Through the process of continually reading, rereading and marking the protocols, a pattern emerged through which the elements were organized into the following categories: (See Figure 2. Data Display of Protocol Typology.)

1. Each protocol was marked for censorship episodes. Censorship episodes were defined for this study as specific censorship events and subevents (i.e., central and peripheral incidents) that teachers described. For example, when a particular censorship event was described, it was marked as a unit. Each unit was highlighted, numbered and collapsed into one file of censorship episodes for all of the participants.

2. Each censorship episode was categorized by type. Through a process of entering the units that had been delimited as censorship episodes onto 5 x 8 index cards and subjecting them to a sorting process, episodes were eventually categorized as a particular type. This process involved two other readers performing the same procedure and categorizing the episodes into similar and dissimilar groupings and resulted in four different categories (A = parent complaints, B = administrative censorship, C = self-censorship, D = other) which were later organized as subsets of other categories.

3. The third major unit of analysis was teachers' responses which were were marked according to specified

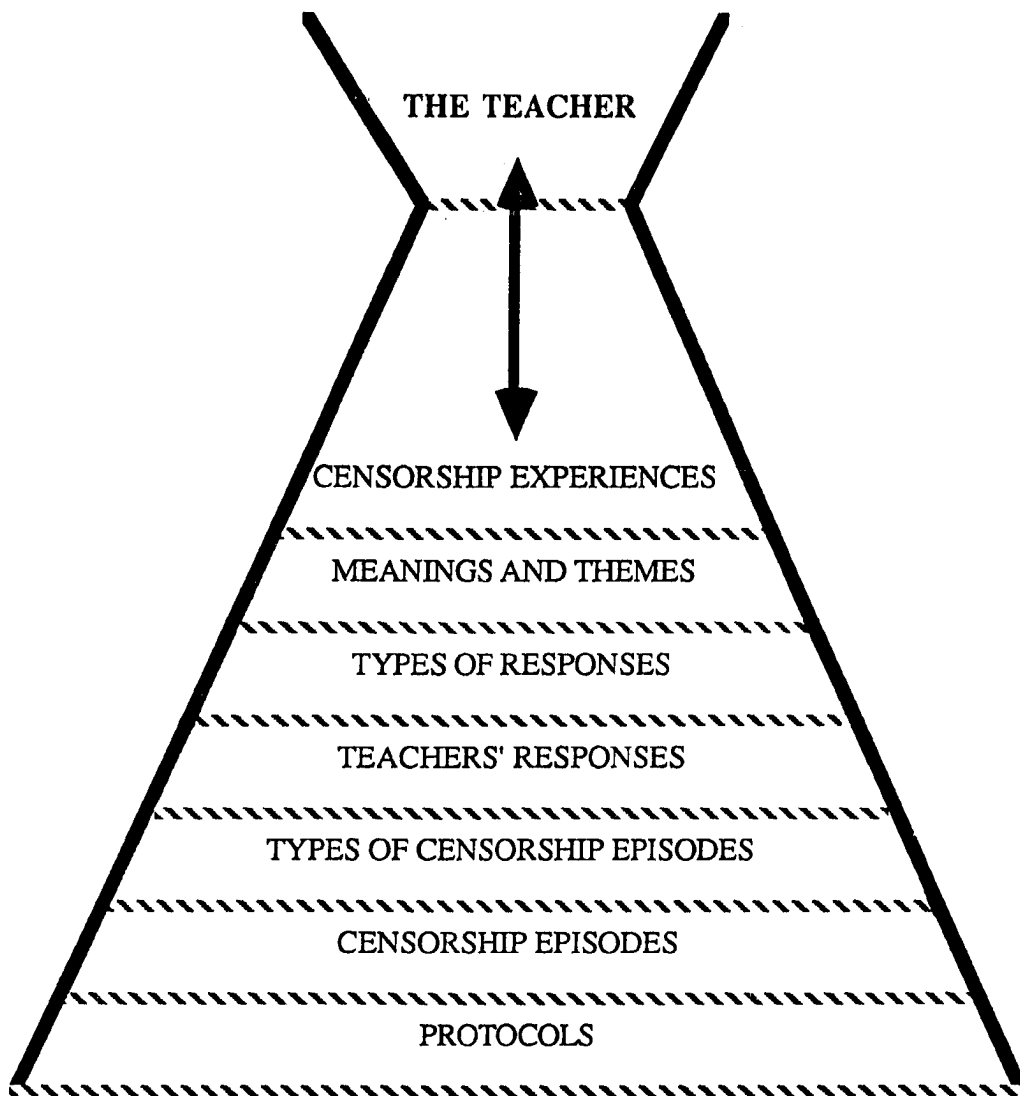


FIGURE 2. Data Display of Protocol Typology

aspects of the censorship experiences. Each unit was highlighted and marked according to the category into which it fit such as "response to the children involved in the censorship episode" or "response to the initiators of the censorship episode." All of the responses were then designated as a file of teachers' responses for all of the participants.

4. All of the teachers' responses were eventually summarized to answer the question: What kind of response was this? The teachers' responses were marked in the protocol margins in terms of their affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions. The next step involved summarizing those dimensions of the teachers' responses for the group.

II. Data Display

Data display is the second major flow of analysis activity and is defined as an "organized assembly of information that permits conclusion-drawing and action-taking... It is not separate from analysis: It is a part of analysis" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 24). Data display is all of the ways in which the data is coded during and after the data reduction process. At the simplest level data display may include underscores, brackets, and margin notes. Highlighting and cutting and pasting excerpts (Lofland, 1971) and significant statements are also often used in data display. Summaries are usually used at some point in the

analysis, and they can be extracted from the preliminary codes. Summaries may be recorded on index cards or in separate files. Summaries are easily entered on word processing equipment. A higher level of abstraction might include outlines, matrices, graphs, charts, and tables.

In the present study, data display included simple levels such as underscores, brackets, and margin notes. Highlighting was found to be preferable to the cutting and pasting systems because of the importance of adhering to the natural context of the protocols. A color coding system was developed to designate differences in text categories (green = censorship episodes; pink = teachers' responses; blue = words and phrases that signify affect; orange = resolutions/repercussions.) The structural analysis (See Figure 1 and Appendix B) that was conducted on each protocol to determine similarities in the structure of the individual censorship experiences provided a summary and graphic image of the structure of the censorship experiences for the participants. Outlines were constructed for each protocol as an organizing device and a validation check. See Appendix C for an example of the outline that was used for analysis of each protocol.

Separate summary files were compiled from data extracted from the text for each of the factors examined in the protocols. These included:

1. Censorship episodes - A list of each of the censorship episodes experienced by each of the teachers in the study was extracted from the data reduction process. These were entered into a separate file.

2. Types of censorship episodes - Each type of censorship episode for each participant was extracted from each protocol. These comprised a separate file.

3. Descriptions and definitions of censorship experiences - After all of the censorship episodes and the types of censorship episodes were listed, the descriptions and definitions of censorship experiences were collapsed and edited. These resulted in one summary file on the descriptions and definitions that teachers gave of their censorship experiences.

4. Teachers' responses to their censorship experiences -- This examination resulted in five categories that included teachers' responses to (a) the censorship episodes, (b) the consequences of the censorship episode, (c) the people involved in creating the censorship episodes, (d) the children who were involved in the censorship episode, and (e) others' reactions to the censorship episodes.

5. Categorization of teachers' responses to their censorship experiences - At a higher level of abstraction, teachers' responses were summarized and categorized as (a) affective, that is, emotionally-based responses (b) cognitive, that is, intellectually-based responses and (c)

behavioral, that is, responses that resulted in doing or not doing something.

III. Conclusion-drawing and verification

In the third flow of analysis recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984), conclusion-drawing and verification, meaning is drawn from the reduced, displayed data and then verification is sought. It is, as Colaizzi (1978) describes, "...a precarious leap from what the subjects say to what they mean" (p. 59). The meanings, themes and conclusions must stem directly from the protocols and not from the researcher's own experiences, suppositions, or biases. Conclusions, in the end, must be tied to the data base.

In the present study, the conclusion-drawing process involved the extraction of themes from the reduced and displayed data and the analysis of the participants' experiences in broader contexts. In addition, four people were asked to read two sample protocols and to mark and list significant aspects and themes of the experiences. Two of those readers were experienced in qualitative research design, and they were also asked to give feedback about the analysis periodically. The other two readers were academics not familiar with this particular form of research design. The themes and comments from the readers were put into one file with those of the researcher and consulted in the final analysis.

Further validation procedures involved re-interviewing the participants, a process referred to as member checks (Kvale, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The member check is the method of checking the accuracy of the data, categories, interpretations and conclusions with the participants after the analysis is completed. Member checks are similar to Kvale's (1983) suggestion of the re-interview as a means for the researcher to check the accuracy of the analysis. The third aspect of Miles and Huberman's (1984) model also relates to verification through re-interviewing the participants.

In this study, participants were asked in a telephone call to signify their level of agreement with the (a) summaries of their individual censorship episodes, (b) summaries of their responses to their censorship experiences, and (c) derived themes and conclusions of the study, all of which were read to them. There was no disagreement among those who were reached. Two of the participants were unavailable. One example of a reinterviewing interaction follows: Researcher - "Please tell me if you agree or disagree with specific aspects of my analysis." Participant - "It sounds to me like you're right on target." The researcher also agreed to send to the participants a copy of the study when it is completed.

SUMMARY

This chapter provided a detailed review of the research procedures used in this study with background and explanations from leaders in qualitative research procedures. The qualitative research interview was described, and the particular type of interview - the open-ended, unstructured interview - that was used in this study was explained. The actual interview procedures were outlined. The subjects for this study were referred to as participants, and the selection process was described. The geographical limitations were stated. Data analysis was discussed in the framework of the three concurrent flows of activity that guided the analysis. Those were data reduction, data display and conclusion-drawing and verification. The detailed descriptions of the research procedures used in this study were given for the purposes of clarity, replication and credibility. For further clarification, one sample protocol is given in Appendix D.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to examine the experience of school censorship for teachers. The participants were teachers who had had school censorship experiences. They were asked to describe those experiences and to discuss their responses to them. The results are divided into two main sections: the nature of school censorship experiences and teachers' reactions to school censorship experiences.

The first section of this chapter deals with the nature of school censorship experiences. Through the data reduction process, all censorship episodes were extracted from each protocol. Following an overview of the types of censorship episodes that were experienced by the teachers in the study, a summary of the descriptions of those episodes, in lieu of pre-defined concepts of censorship, is given. Following the descriptions is a typology which examines censorship episodes according to (a) the kinds of things to which objections were raised, (b) the sources of the censorship episodes, (c) the procedures which were used to raise objections, (d) the reasons given to the teachers for the objections, (e) the tone of the objectors, and (f) the resolutions and repercussions of the censorship episodes.

An analysis of the participants' responses to their censorship experiences comprises the second major section of this chapter. Teachers' responses were found to be complex. They often had multiple responses, sometimes paradoxical, to different aspects of their censorship experiences. In the data reduction process, these complex responses were teased out and resulted in a response typology to (a) the censorship episodes, (b) the consequences of the censorship episodes, (c) the initiators of the censorship episodes, (d) the children who were involved in the censorship episodes, and (e) others' reactions to the censorship episodes. Following the response analysis is a synthesis of responses that involved collapsing the data into three categories: (a) affective or emotional, (b) cognitive or intellectual, and (c) behavioral responses.

THE NATURE OF SCHOOL CENSORSHIP EPISODES

This study supports the contention that school censorship attempts are broad and diverse (Jenkinson, 1986). The 55 censorship episodes that made up the experiences of the 13 teachers in this study covered a wide range of types of censorship episodes and a variety of topics. Two of the episodes were public controversies. Three of the teachers in the study were involved with a sex education controversy, while three others were involved with a controversy about an unsigned letter on secular humanism that had been

disseminated to the teaching staff of a school system by the superintendent. The other seven teachers' experiences were private interactions about books, controversial topics, and teaching techniques and approaches, usually between the teacher and the one objecting person.

It is often assumed that censorship attempts take place only in high school English, social studies and sex education classrooms (Jenkinson, 1986). The teachers in this study consisted of 3 elementary school teachers, 2 middle school teachers (Language arts and Science), and 8 high school teachers (4 English, 3 Biology and 1 Social Studies).

The experiences of the teachers included controversies about subjects that ranged from abortion to drugs to the devil, from evolution to sex education to witches. Several teachers were accused of being secular humanists. Objections were raised to Lord of the Flies, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, To Kill a Mockingbird, and Grapes of Wrath.

Teachers said that innovative and creative teaching techniques were under fire; they said that there was pressure to "stick to the book."

Objections were instigated mainly by parents, but also by other community members, school administrators, children, librarians, publishing companies, and teachers. Self-censorship accounted for 14 of the 55 censorship episodes from 10 of the 13 participants.

Teachers perceived their censorship experiences in a negative light, and they perceived the initiators of the censorship episodes to be highly emotional and sometimes irrational. The perception of negative tones was often balanced by teachers' willingness to see the issues from the objectors' perspectives.

The reasons for the objections were not always clear to teachers. They expressed surprise about objections to class activities and topics which they had not previously considered controversial such as holidays, witches, devils, ghosts, and items listed in documents against secular humanism such as role-playing and critical thinking activities.

This study avoided pre-defined concepts of censorship; teachers' descriptions of their experiences were summarized to help clarify the meanings of censorship that were derived from the protocols. The following seven descriptions of censorship are given to address the question of the meaning of censorship to the teachers in the study. They range from outright book-banning to subtle episodes such as the feeling of being watched. They were derived from the censorship episodes given by all of the participants in the study. Censorship for the teachers in this study occurred when the teachers:

1. Provided an alternative assignment to a student whose parents objected to a curricular activity or method because of its controversial nature.

2. Cancelled or changed a curricular activity because of objections about controversy raised by individuals or groups.

3. Received information describing topics and activities that they should avoid because of their controversial nature.

4. Received complaints about curricular activities perceived by others to be controversial and inappropriate.

5. Did not use certain materials, activities and procedures for instructional purposes because of direct or implied criticism regarding their controversial nature.

6. Were told by the school administration to change or stop actions, activities or reports that teachers felt were justified or when such things were unilaterally changed by the administration.

7. Felt inhibited about using certain materials, activities, topics and procedures for instructional purposes because of their controversial nature.

To illustrate the diverse nature of the censorship episodes experienced by the teachers in this study in the context of their individual experiences, the following section provides a summary of each participants' school censorship experiences.

Summaries of Participants' Censorship Experiences

1. First grade teacher. This teacher received a letter on secular humanism describing topics that teachers should avoid. It had been put in all of the teachers' school mailboxes at the directive of the superintendent.

She was accused of being a secular humanist by the father of one of her students. She explained, "He said he didn't want any holiday things. He said that everything we did in school was secular humanist."

Later, she was on a committee that recommended the rejection of Cabbage Patch books that were offered to the school. She said, "These were books that we knew were offensive to some degree in our community. To me it was just commercial. It wasn't good literature. It wasn't worth fussing over."

She stopped a student teacher from telling a folk tale about the devil for Halloween. She worried about class discussion about an upcoming AIDS movie. She said that "Children are really stressed about things and yet I feel a reluctance to give a good, a real discussion. There isn't any guidance really, and it's almost like you're just supposed to second-guess this stuff."

2. 3rd grade classroom teacher. Her experiences tended to revolve around problems that she perceived as having been created by administrators' censoring teachers. She received the same letter on secular humanism from the county Baptist

committee that had been distributed anonymously by the superintendent of the school system as did the teacher in #1 and she was furious.

In another situation, she wrote the guidelines for an alternative education program in which she taught and said that they were "whitewashed by the administration, the school board and then the faculty." Additionally, the reports that she helped write for the Southern Association reaccreditation process were edited so that "Most of the negative things we said were glossed over."

She was prohibited by the principal from giving presentations at two conferences to which she had been an invited speaker. She also said that the principal prohibited the teachers from having a meeting to discuss school problems. She said that even with the children's writing such as creative writing exercises and the class newsletter, the principal always demanded the right to be the final editor so that the school would not be portrayed in a negative light.

3. High school English teacher. This teacher had received the same letter (as the previous two teachers) on secular humanism listing topics that teachers should avoid. He said that he resented receiving the letter. It had been distributed to all of the teachers just before a vacation. He said that "It was part of the censorious climate in the schools."

He said that there were several times that the principal pressured him to change his holistic teaching style. He wanted him to buy classics rather than the more popular young adult literature. Specific books to which the principal objected were, in fact, "classics" such as Grapes of Wrath, Huckleberry Finn, and To Kill a Mockingbird. He got a directive from the central office not to use Manchild in the Promised Land. He said that he received unfair teaching evaluations because he wouldn't succumb to the pressure the principal was putting on him.

4. High school English teacher. This teacher received objections to Lord of the Flies two years in a row. The first time a mother did not want her daughter exposed to "that satan worship." The second time a mother said that her son had come home very disturbed and upset that the book had been assigned. The teacher said, "This year I am not doing Lord of the Flies with the class."

There is a school policy of sending a book list home so that parents have the opportunity to inform the school about any books their children should not be allowed to read. This high school English teacher said that she avoids the use of a lot of modern books because of the possibility of controversy.

5. High school social studies teacher. People had been calling the school where this teacher works, she said, "Making outrageous accusations, saying, 'Someone in your

school is teaching about death' and ridiculous things like, 'We understand that students are having to lie down in a coffin.'"

She stopped instructing students in yoga and meditation when studying Asian religion because "That is the sort of thing that could activate those people in the community who seem to be waiting for an opportunity to come in. It is almost as though people are searching for evidence of teachers destroying American values."

She did not use the Newsweek issue on abortion in her current events class which normally used this magazine every week. She said, "There was at least one kid in the class who was watching me." The abortion issue came up in her class again when a student included it as part of a mock presidential debate.

This teacher also became aware of censorship pressures as president of the teacher's association. She said that many teachers came to her out of fear, telling her about their censorship experiences. "To protect myself," she said, "Rather than get in trouble, I have become a censor."

6. 4th grade classroom teacher. A Baptist preacher, the father of one of the students in this 4th grade teacher's class, accused her of teaching meditation, which he thought was a way of encouraging children to get inside their minds. She said, "He started talking about satan worship and everything else." He had misread the letter she had sent

home explaining that she was planning a class activity on mediation.

She also said that a group of parents was fighting the school drug prevention program because "they thought it talked to kids about drugs in such a way that it would make them want to use them."

She had a complaint from one father who is a Baptist preacher about something

We were doing in science...studying the body system.... Oh, boy, he met me in the office one morning because I had sent home a run-off with detailed bone structure in it with the outline of a man's body. And boy, did I hear about that!"

She said that she was afraid to use guided imagery and other methods for tapping childrens' creativity. She said that she is concerned about textbook publishers precensoring potentially controversial material. She also thinks that "Kids' bring with them attitudes and their own close-mindedness from home." She feels as if she has to present herself as someone she is not.

7. High school biology teacher. At the high school where this teacher taught, the sex education program was taught during 10th grade. Three teachers were scheduled to teach one-week units. This teacher happened to be scheduled to be the first one to teach it, and the next teacher was scheduled to teach his unit the following week. The third teacher was not going to be ready to teach her unit until a few weeks later. At the end of the unit taught by this

teacher, the parents of one of the students complained because their daughter took it without having had a permission slip. The complaint was just the beginning of what erupted into a full-scale controversy during which a group of parents, community and church members observed the class taught by the second teacher. The group filed an official complaint with the school board. A huge, public incident ensued during which time the central administration of the school system made it a policy to require permission slips when teaching controversial subjects. This teacher said that the administration made it seem as if the policy had been in effect all along. She said that this was their way of blaming her for the incident. She said that the teachers in the school started to get a lot of "pressure not to bring up any controversial subjects" after the incident. She said that the principal told the teachers to "lay low." She said, "Teachers were asking, 'What if the students bring up a controversial issue? Do we just say I'm sorry, I've got to send home permission slips before we can talk about this issue?' And he (the principal) said, 'Yes. Just put them off. Don't answer the questions.'" This teacher said that she kept teaching the way she thought she should even though she thought that she could be fired for it. In the year following the big sex education controversy, she quit teaching biology and just taught physics because she thought it was not controversial.

8. High school biology teacher. This person was the chairperson of the department in which the sex education controversy erupted. She was scheduled to teach the third unit, and as a result of the controversy, it was cancelled. She said that it was instigated by a group of people associated with a church. She said, "At the same time we got a directive from the school board that listed all of the topics that we needed to be careful of - everything from abortion to communism." The school board warned the teachers that they had to be careful. Often a student would bring up a question, she said, "Say about abortion, and I felt very inhibited - very careful about what I said and how to choose my words."

The sex education class had been co-ed and was divided as a result of the controversy. That year Planned Parenthood was taken off the list of resources and could not come into any classroom in the school system for the next couple of years. When they were put back on the list, it was only with the stipulation that their speakers use a script approved by the school system. She said that she feels "more and more that my door has a wedge in it, and I can't close it and shut off the rest of the world."

9. High school biology teacher. This teacher was involved in the same sex education controversy, but he was the central figure at the time of the controversy. His class

was visited for several days by a group of parents, community and church members objecting to the course.

I think they were there for three days, and the kids were clamming up, because, everybody had ties and coats on; I mean there were probably eleven people in there, and they were all taking notes and some of them had cameras.

He received threats and phone calls at his home. He said that the principal wanted to handle it but that when "administration and the board of education and political people take care of things, they do it in their way, and their way is never up front." The teachers involved in the controversy had a meeting with the superintendent who asked them not to display any condoms. This teacher felt that his class was misrepresented in the media and that the administration did nothing to clear it up. He said,

I was never asked by any board of education member what happened in my class. I was never asked by any administrator what happened in my class. I was never asked by any of the media what happened in my class. Someone from the media did try to call me, but they never did reach me. It was McNeil-Lehrer. And they had our controversy on for fifteen minutes one night after the Board meeting, but no one ever talked to any of the teachers.

Since then, he said that he has been very careful about how he approaches teaching everything, including evolution. He said, "It sure did kill our freedom of expression in the classroom; every time I opened my mouth I was having to pre-evaluate what was coming out and wondering how that was going to sit with the community."

10. Middle school science teacher. She was the director of a school play that had language to which a parent objected. She said that the objection came just before the fourth and final performance, so at "the last minute they changed the play to a happily ever after ending."

In a separate and earlier incident, she was accused by parents of being a humanist. Their child was not allowed to participate in some of the activities, especially those that mentioned the "evil word evolution." She had to make a substitute assignment for him.

Parents have said things like "Oh, I don't mind your teaching evolution as long as you're also teaching creationism." She just "smiles sweetly and bites her tongue." She no longer does Halloween plays because of the accusation that they lead the children into devil worship. She also said that she is concerned that textbooks eliminate controversial issues.

11. High school English teacher. This teacher was out of class attending a workshop and had left a video of The Outsiders for the substitute. The substitute filed a complaint alleging that the film had sexually explicit scenes. It went to the media committee which determined that the film was appropriate for the class.

She was planning to show Romeo and Juliet and would be sending home a permission form saying that "within the movie

of Romeo and Juliet there is a nude scene where you see his buttocks and his shoulders."

12. High school English teacher. A father objected to his son's reading The Scarlet Letter. She gave him another book to read, but because he missed the class discussions he failed the first six weeks.

She has been active in fighting textbook censorship. She thought that the best textbooks coming out were not being considered for adoption by the State Education Department, and said that the "most insidious thing about it is that in the ensuing years the textbook publishers have steered clear of controversial issues."

She also said, "Librarians just don't buy things if there is any question about them which means that some of the selections in the library are sort of watered down, not the best literature." She has served on the what she called the "school censorship committee; actually it's called the library committee."

She said, "I never steer clear of topics, but I do think that I have to be careful about the way I present things such as myths. They will ask me sometimes, 'What do you believe about this?' And I try to be as honest as I can, but I know how much it upsets them."

13. Middle school language arts teacher. This teacher said that when she was teaching in "one little school, we used a wonderful book of short stories that had stories that

were not just your basic Dick and Jane ... it was critical thinking type material." When she transferred to a different school and went back to borrow the books, she was told, "Oh, we can't use those any more. The parents complained about them." That was the same school that had the trouble with the school play.

She now makes certain that students who will be offended by controversial subjects are not in the room during a debate. She said that she stops the conversation if it gets to religious questions although she thinks that she should be able to discuss anything in a classroom setting. She said "It's gotten to be second nature to remember to be very careful about saying certain things."

Concluding Comment on Summaries of Censorship Experiences

The summaries of the censorship episodes experienced by the teachers in the study illustrate several things about school censorship. There were 55 censorship episodes experienced by the 13 teachers in the study. For each teacher, there was one main or central episode, but the majority of the episodes could be categorized as peripheral, often stemming from the initial, central episode. Many of the peripheral episodes were subtle repercussions of the initial episode. The summaries of the individual cases make it clear that a pre-defined or dictionary definition of censorship would have been too limiting for the teachers in

this study. The range of censorship episodes they experienced was broad: For three teachers, censorship stemmed from an administratively initiated letter on secular humanism; for three other participants, it began with a sex education controversy that was instigated by a parent, community and church group; and for others the episodes were based on individual classroom experiences.

Types of Censorship Episodes

In addition to descriptions and summaries of individual participants' experiences, a typology was conducted as part of the data reduction process. This analysis resulted in a typing system that included the following categories: (a) the kinds of things to which objections were raised, (b) the sources of the censorship episodes, (c) the procedures which were used to raise objections, (d) reasons given to the teachers for the objections, (e) the tone of the objectors, and (f) resolutions and repercussions of the censorship episodes. Each of those aspects of types of censorship episode is discussed in the following section with examples for each category.

Kinds of things to which objections were raised. The teachers in this study had school censorship experiences that covered a range of topics, materials and techniques; their experiences were not limited to "dirty words" or books. This finding is consistent with the contention that anything that

can be censored will be censored (Jenkinson, 1986; People For the American Way, 1987). Objections experienced by these teachers ranged from traditional book banning to the banning of ideas. Four sub-categories emerged from this analysis: (a) controversial subjects, (b) materials, (c) pedagogical techniques, and (d) ideas and expression.

Controversial subjects. The participants described school censorship experiences which included objections to: Abortion, AIDS education, anatomy and physiology, devils, drugs, evolution, language, meditation, the occult, sex, sex education, racial issues, religion, and witches. The specific controversial issues to which objections were raised may actually reflect deeper, underlying issues. In most cases, the controversial subjects branched into several areas. For example, objections to abortion, evolution and witches may reflect religious-based objections. An objection to meditation may occur because of a fear of psychological manipulation. Objections by administrators to reports written by teachers may reflect fear of the loss of authority.

Materials. Objections that were brought against the teachers in this study focused on content over medium. The controversial subjects to which objections were raised came in several formats such as novels, short stories, plays, folk tales, films, magazines and general curriculum and text materials. Examples included the books Lord of the Flies,

and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, the plays "Country Gothic," and "The Outsiders," Newsweek, and halloween stories. The medium seemed immaterial.

Pedagogical techniques. Several teachers reported censorship of pedagogy. They were pressured not to use innovative, creative techniques such as brainstorming, intuition, guided imagery, creative problem-solving and creative and critical thinking types of activities. As one teacher said, "I was pressured not to use anything that wasn't straight from the book." In explaining a situation in which a book of short stories had been removed from the school, a middle school teacher said, "It was not just your basic Dick and Jane kind of book; it was critical thinking type of material." Another teacher talked about being pressured to take a more traditional approach: "He (the principal) pressured me a lot to change my teaching style, and to me that's a form of censorship, too."

Ideas and expression. Some teachers experienced pressure against teaching ideas and encouraging children to use their imaginations. This pressure was illustrated by the case of a father telling a 4th grade teacher that he thought it was "wrong to do anything that would get inside childrens' minds." Teachers also felt inhibited and stifled in terms of their freedom to express themselves. As one teacher explained "I felt very inhibited-very careful about what I said and having to choose my words so that the students

wouldn't go home and tell mama about something going on in class."

A few teachers felt that they were teaching in a "censorious atmosphere" in which they were not allowed to freely express themselves. Two teachers felt that their experiences stemmed from censorship of ideas and expression by the school administration. In a couple of cases reports that teachers wrote that were critical of the school were censored by the administration. One teacher said that the teachers in her school were prohibited from having faculty meetings to discuss school problems. Another teacher said, "The groundwork for censorship is laid by the administration. They create an atmosphere of authoritarianism, of an undemocratic approach to decision-making."

Sources of censorship episodes. The censorship episodes were initiated mainly by parents. However, the parents were often affiliated with organized community and church groups that were involved in protesting controversial issues. In some cases, the objections were raised by individuals in the community who did not have children in the school. School administrators were involved in creating key censorship events especially in the case of the superintendent who distributed the letter on secular humanism. In addition, administrators were often a secondary source of censorship. For example, a parent would make an objection known to a principal who would then issue an order to halt an activity.

In each case, the original source of the censorship might be a parent, but the enforcer of the censorship might be a principal. The main sources of objections were (a) parents, (b) community groups, (c) school administrators, and (d) children.

Parents. Parents led the list of sources of objections. Most of the teachers (10 of 13), cited parents as at least one source of complaint against something the teachers were doing. A typical example came from a first grade teacher: "One father said that everything I did in school was secular humanist." A middle school science teacher was asked to cancel the last performance of a play when the "parent of one of the actors took offense at the language and the theme of the play." According to a high school English teacher who had sent home a list of books, "A parent called and said that she did not want her daughter exposed to that satan worship."

Community groups. Community groups were involved as the initiators of censorship attempts in 7 of the 13 cases, A first grade teacher said that "It was inappropriate to be getting information about what the Southern Baptist Association thought should be going on in the schools." Another teacher described her feelings about the influence of a group from the community: "It really made me mad that this small, this very, very small group of people could prohibit us from doing that. I did have a lot of anger because it was

a very small group that was controlling things pretty much for that year until the board came out with their written statement of policy."

School administrators. School administrators were seen as the main source of censorship by 3 teachers, and, in addition, their lack of strong support was mentioned by most of the teachers as a problem. A controversy erupted when a school superintendent was implicated in sending to all of the teachers in the system "A letter on secular humanism that listed things that would be offensive to people in the community." The lack of administrative support was described by a middle school science teacher when she spoke of how the principal handled the controversy over a school play: "She handled it exactly the way I expected her to because she is an avoider of negative publicity. My principal views the world through rose-colored glasses. I was a little disappointed that she didn't back me up." This perception of lack of support by the administration was also documented in a sex education controversy described by a teacher who said that when she went to see the superintendent

He sat back and started young ladying me and shaking a finger at me, saying, 'You broke a written school policy, and you're real lucky that we're going to keep you on.' You know, 'We could very easily dismiss you at this moment.' And I said, 'Hmm, can I have a copy of that written school policy?' And the written school policy was dated way after I had taught the course.

Children. Some teachers said that there were children in their classrooms "watching" them. One high

school social studies teacher said that she had to be careful of one particular student. She said, "I didn't feel I could leave the students free to bring up topics without a lot of guidance, and the reason I couldn't was because there was at least one kid in the class who was watching me." A middle school language arts teacher made certain that "they are not in the room if we are debating a topic that their parents may not approve of." One teacher said that some of the children brought "with them attitudes and their own close-mindedness from home."

In addition to the sources of censorship episodes described above there were some others that were cited less often. A couple of teachers were concerned about censorship at the level of textbook publishing companies and the state textbook adoption committees. Two teachers said that school librarians had been initiators of censorship although neither case became a big issue. One teacher said, "I know that there are things that don't get on the library shelves because the librarians just don't buy them if there's any question."

In some cases other teachers were mentioned as contributing to censorship, but the most dramatic finding was in the frequency of teacher initiated censorship or self-censorship. This experience is exemplified by a comment from a high school teacher who said, "Basically, I have had two sort of negative experiences with censorship, and the result

of that is that I do some of my own." Another high school teacher put it even more succinctly when she said, "I have become a censor."

Procedures used to raise objections. The ways in which teachers were approached seemed to affect their reactions to their censorship experiences. The main vehicles for communicating objections to teachers in this study were through (a) school mailboxes, (b) phone calls, (c) personal confrontations, and (d) administrative request.

Mail. Three teachers received an unsigned "letter on secular humanism" in their school mailboxes. They all objected to its being placed there, especially unsigned and indicated a feeling of having been violated. As one teacher said, "I got really upset because the letter was not identified." And another teacher said,

There was no cover letter attached to this letter. It was just placed in the mailbox postage-free. It was kind of slipped in one day when everyone was rushing around. And I remember thinking 'This is very peculiar. Why are these people putting something in our mailboxes? Is this endorsed by the school system? And if it is, that really bothers me.

Phone calls. One teacher was informed about the objections to a book she was using via phone calls. In her case, this "approach" did not seem to bother her. In another situation, a teacher said,

We had had a rage of wild criticisms. People calling the school, I mean it had been many incidents, saying someone in your school is teaching about death. And ridiculous things like,

'We understand that students are having to lie down in a coffin.'

Personal confrontation. The teachers who were confronted by objectors in person seemed to be the most strongly affected. One teacher recalled,

I spent my whole lunch hour talking to these folks, and I was real angry about that. They walked out agreeing with me, and then the next thing I know, they go behind my back to the school board.

A middle school science teacher talked about the first time she was "accosted for a censorship type of thing." A fourth grade teacher was confronted by "one father, a Baptist preacher, came storming into me, and he thought I was talking about meditation. He had read it wrong. And then he started talking about satan worship."

Administrative request. There were several cases in which school administrators requested that teachers cease activities about which there had been complaints. A middle school science teacher discussed her principal's reaction when the school play became an issue, "When my principal heard that this was going to go on, she requested that I not do the last performance." Another teacher described his experience with administrative requests for censorship,

When I was delegated to select books for the school, I came up with about 300 titles of young adult books, the kind that would appeal to our kids who are here because of their problems. The principal insisted that we get classics and criticized me in my evaluations saying that I had chosen inappropriate materials. Well, I can tell you, the classics are still sitting on the shelves.

Other. Some school systems have standard procedures for filing complaints. One teacher heard about a complaint about a film after the complainant, in this case a substitute teacher, filed a written objection which eventually went to the media committee. Another teacher talked about her experiences as part of the "censorship committee."

The grapevine or hearsay played an important role in developing awareness of censorship pressures. One teacher described several of her colleagues' concerns as reasons for her own awareness of the need to be careful when she said, "I can tell you that I am not unusual. The only people who feel that they don't have to be guarded are people who don't know enough about what's going on." Another one said that she was aware of the problems in other places, particularly in Hawkins County, Tennessee and was just waiting for a "major public conflict to erupt right here."

Perceived tone of objections. Teachers generally portrayed the censorship initiators as highly emotional. The descriptions that teachers used had negative connotations. Teachers used words and phrases such as "complaint," "object," "fight," "up in arms," "took offense," "Boy, did I hear about that!" and "They took it to the school board."

One teacher said she tried to convince the mothers who objected to Lord of the Flies to read it and found one of them to be defensive about not having a college education.

Another teacher said that a group of parents was prohibited from using a tape recorder and taking pictures while visiting a sex education class. One of the sex education teachers said of the main objector,

I thought I was going to have to physically throw him out. I found out later that he was supposed to be a black belt in Karate, so I'm glad I didn't. But at any rate, he was violent, real violent about it. I mean, he didn't throw anybody around, but he was yelling and screaming.

Perceived Reasons for Objections. Objections to non-Christian ideas such as devils, witches and the occult seemed to be have a religious basis. A parent who objected to secular humanism told the teacher he didn't want "anything inside their minds." Some of the teachers described parent attempts to protect children from exposure to things and ideas that were offensive. A father who objected to meditation referred to it as satan worship. The three teachers involved in the sex education controversy said that parents perceived it as teaching the students to go out and have sex. Objectional language and ideas were cited as reasons for objections. A 10th grade boy told the teacher that Lord of the Flies was disgusting and that it was inappropriate for students to be "exposed to ideas and thoughts that showed a negative view of man." A teacher who blamed the administration for much of the school censorship, said that it is caused by an atmosphere of authoritarianism. One teacher said that the school superintendent defended his distribution of the letter on secular humanism on the grounds

that "I was just letting the teachers know what kind of sentiments are in the community."

In these school controversies it became apparent that there was a gap between perceptions of the same thing by different people. Teachers' interpretations of the meaning of the issues were very different from the interpretations given to the same issues by the objectors. While a teacher may feel that having children develop their imaginations is unquestionably a part of accepted pedagogy, a parent might feel that it is psychological manipulation. One teacher discussed her resentment about controversy in teaching "Romeo and Juliet." A parent told her that the naked buttocks suggested that fourteen-year olds can have sex. She said,

To me it's not suggesting that they can have sex, it's showing two kids who took a stand against their parents and married and broke tradition and in the end brought the two families together. And The Outsiders deals with growing up and making choices. These two girls from the hip crowd take a stand against their drinking boyfriends and end up liking the boys from the other side of the tracks.

Resolutions of Censorship Episodes. Although school censorship conflicts were sometimes administratively resolved, they often had long-lasting repercussions. That is, the solution to the problem did not necessarily make the problem go away. The rippling effects of censorship experiences were felt long after the resolutions were in effect. Examples of official resolutions to censorship episodes are given below:

- Three teachers said that the school superintendent had publicly retracted the letter on secular humanism.

- A teacher substituted other books as a result of objections to Lord of the Flies that occurred two years in a row.
- A teacher did not use the Newsweek issue on abortion.
- A 4th grade teacher explained to the father that she was teaching mediation, not meditation.
- A teacher made formal complaints about the administrative editing of her written reports.
- A sex education program was cancelled for the year. It was reinstituted the following year with formal guidelines including parent information sessions, sexually segregated classes, and specific limits on guest speakers.
- At the last minute a teacher/director changed the ending to a school play.
- A school media committee supported a teacher when a grievance was brought against the use of the film, The Outsiders.
- A teacher substituted a different book for The Scarlet Letter. -A book of short stories was banned.

To illustrate the point that the censorship episodes had long-term impact regardless of their resolutions, the same resolutions are given again with the addition of some of the repercussions:

- The school superintendent publicly retracted the letter on secular humanism. A first grade teacher "had that information (from the letter) in our minds ... about what

sort of things would be offensive to the community" when she voted not to accept the donation of Cabbage Patch books.

-A teacher substituted other books as a result of objections to Lord of the Flies that occurred two years in a row. The teacher explained, "So this year I am not doing Lord of the Flies with the class. And I don't know if I'm really not doing it because of those negative experiences or if it is truly I've just decided to change my course. I would dearly love to use some other books with my students, but I am afraid of what their parents' reactions might be. One of those is Song of Solomon, Tony Morrison's book which I think is just, oh, beautiful. To me it is a literary masterpiece with all the biblical allusions. But it has sex in it and language that I know many parents would find offensive."

-A teacher did not use the Newsweek issue on abortion. This teacher said, "I think the whole basic idea of my experience with all this is rather than get in trouble, I have become a censor."

-A 4th grade teacher explained to the father that she was teaching mediation, not meditation. So I certainly felt that I couldn't do anything with that. And I might have done more of that with the group had I not felt it was a dangerous area to deal with.

-A teacher made formal complaints about administrative editing of her written reports. Now we're having to rewrite it again, and I'm wondering if this is going to happen again.

-A sex education class was cancelled for the year. It was reinstituted the following year with formal guidelines including parent information sessions, sexually segregated classes, and specific limits on guest speakers. One of the teachers quit teaching biology the next year and finally left teaching after the following year. She said that her censorship experience was only one of the reasons that she decided to get out of teaching. Another teacher said of the sex education controversy, "It's made me cautious. Since then I guess I've felt somewhat stifled or stilted. I used to do a lot of role playing and group consensus type things. And since then I've been very wary of that."

-At the last minute a teacher/director changed the ending to the school play. This teacher said that she would no longer direct the school play.

-A school media committee supported a teacher when a grievance was brought against the use of the film, The Outsiders. If I do The Outsiders toward the end of the school year, I might put out a letter saying that I am showing this film. If you have any objections, your child may take an alternate exercise. I'll have to send home a letter about showing the film "Romeo and Juliet."

-A teacher substituted a different book for The Scarlet Letter, and the student stayed out of class during discussions. He failed the first six weeks.

-A book of short stories was banned. The teacher who described this experience said, "I think it's a little bit stifling not to be able to have complete rapport with the children. It's gotten to be sort of second nature, though to remember that there are certain things that I have to be real careful about saying, and I realize that they're not like me."

SUMMARY

In summary, the nature of the school censorship experiences among the participants in this study were broad and diverse but also shared common features. Among the 13 teachers there were 55 censorship episodes. For each teacher, at least one censorship issue emerged as a central episode or focal point. Most of the participants in this study described peripheral episodes that emerged from the central issues. In some cases the central event became a public issue, known far beyond the school walls through the media and local cultural transmission. Other censorship episodes attracted little or no public attention, but stayed within the confines of the school or classroom. In many situations the episode was a private, one-to-one interaction between a teacher and a parent. In other cases teachers' experiences with censorship were caused by their responses to censorship events and pressures in which they were not directly involved.

Some of the cases were resolved with official actions, but in other cases, it was difficult to draw the line between the resolutions and the subevents. For example, in the sex education controversy, the central episode occurred when the parents came to the school to complain and then went to the school board. One of the temporary resolutions to the problem was for the administration to ask the teachers to "avoid any controversial topics." Another resolution occurred when the administration cancelled the sex education class and then developed an official policy on procedures for handling controversial issues. Although these were "resolutions" intended to solve the problem caused by angry parents, they then became peripheral censorship episodes. Finally, the teachers became self-censors in that they avoided potentially controversial classroom discussions and activities. In this case, the teachers were first "censored" by the parents, then by the administration, and finally by themselves.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO CENSORSHIP

The reactions of the participants to the censorship episodes were a part of the total phenomenological censorship experience. Teachers' responses to their experiences had affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Their reactions tended to be complex and largely negative, but also ambivalent. In some cases, teachers' responses indicated

that they derived some benefits from their experiences. Their emotions included anger, fear, defensiveness, frustration, anxiety, surprise, restraint and shock. On the other hand, teachers also expressed understanding and empathy for all of those involved in the censorship episodes. They were concerned about the effects of censorship on the children who were the central characters in the events as well as for the children in their classes whose learning opportunities would be diminished as a result.

On the whole teachers felt a general lack of support when in the process of coping with their censorship experiences. Their main support came from other teachers through their professional associations. The teachers involved in the sex education controversy were the only ones who described experiencing positive support from the teachers in their school. The administration was generally portrayed as non-supportive and mainly concerned with protecting themselves. Teachers responded differently to different aspects of their censorship experiences. The levels that emerged from the analysis were categorized as teachers' responses to (a) the censorship episodes, (b) the resolutions of the censorship episodes, (c) the people involved in creating the censorship episodes, (d) the children who were involved in the censorship episode, and (e) others' reactions to the censorship episodes.

Responses to the Censorship Episodes

When teachers were asked how they felt when the incident occurred, their reactions tended to be on an emotional level. Their responses included (a) anxiety, (b) feeling threatened, (c) feeling violated, (d) anger and frustration, (e) surprise and ambivalence, and (f) inhibition. Discussion and examples are given in the following section for each of those types of responses:

Anxiety. Many of the teachers said that their experiences had made them feel anxious. The first grade teacher who received the unidentified letter on secular humanism in her school mailbox said that it made her feel "Upset and really, really offended. I wondered if I had gotten singled out, like, is somebody offended by what I'm doing in my classroom? I felt very anxious." Another teacher who had been misinterpreted by a parent said, "What if I had been teaching meditation? I could have gotten into a lot of trouble. It's very hard for me; stressful. Uncomfortable."

Feeling threatened. The participants described feeling threatened by their experiences. One teacher for whom the objection was to Lord of the Flies said that,

The mother was calling my judgment into question. How could I claim to be a teacher who was guiding young people and expose them to such--she didn't say trash, she just kept using satan worship and devil worship. That I could destroy their outlook on life and change their personality. I felt uncomfortable, adrenalin flowing and--more than threatened. I wanted to convince her--the mother--

that I was right, but I wanted to do it diplomatically.

Anger and frustration. Most teachers expressed feeling anger as a general reaction to the censorship episodes. One teacher who was involved in a sex education controversy said that it made her so angry that she wanted to quit teaching. She said,

The main feeling I had was just anger. I was so mad I was thinking things like, well, fine. If you don't like the way I do it, you can do it yourself. I don't need this job. If you start messing with me like this, I'll just quit. Which I did."

A teacher who had directed the school play that was criticized at the last minute expressed her anger this way:

I felt angry that it had gone on so long. If indeed my judgment was off in choosing this play and all of the parents had copies, why didn't they bring it to my attention sooner. I was more upset for the students than I was for me."

Another teacher was angry when a book of short stories that she wanted to use was banned. She said,

My reaction to that was one of anger. That was a case of parents interfering the way I look at it. And I just thought that was such a waste of human minds, to use a cliché, because the stories were so thought provoking. I can understand that parents may object to a particular story for their child, but the thing that upsets me is that I don't think that any one parent should have the right to take that away from all children.

A high school biology teacher was upset and angry when her sex education class was cancelled. In another teacher's reaction to the sex education controversy, he wondered why no one was asking the teachers what was really happening. He said, "At the time I was frustrated that I was not allowed to

give my ideas of what was actually happening in the classroom."

Surprise and ambivalence. Teachers often responded to their censorship episodes with surprise and incredulity. They said that they had thought they knew what was acceptable and what was not, but the lines seemed to have been stretched so that all sorts of commonplace things were suddenly becoming taboo. It was as if the rules of a game had changed after it had begun. One teacher explained her concern about using Cabbage Patch books that had been donated to the school when she said, "We have been educated kind of in a back door way on things that might be offensive, like magic, anything that man can figure out how to deal with in life rather than having God do it." In another situation she asked her student teacher not to tell a folk tale about a devil during Halloween. She said,

The student teacher was going to tell a story, a folk tale about a devil, and I asked her if she really thought she should do that and I felt myself doing that, because I know of two families that are real fundamentalists. One said he didn't want any holiday things. He said that everything we did in school was secular humanist.

Another teacher reacted to the unsigned letter on secular humanism with surprise. She said that when she first saw it she thought, "This is very peculiar. Why are these people putting something in our mail boxes? Is this endorsed by the school system? If it is, that really bothers me." A high school English teacher was shocked when a substitute

made a formal complaint about the film, "The Outsiders." She said,

I was shocked. I thought it was ridiculous that this was even happening. I was just amazed that she was making the allegations that there were sexually explicit scenes in there. It just seems utterly ridiculous to even object to a film with the kids all fully clothed just because the boy is rubbing her red hair.

Inhibition. Many of the teachers expressed feeling some degree of inhibition and spoke of having to be very careful. One teacher said,

I felt very inhibited--very careful about what I said--and having to choose my words. I was very upset that the class got cancelled. It really made me mad that this small, this very, very small group of people could prohibit us from teaching the sex education class.

Responses to the Resolutions of the Censorship Episode

In the cases in which there was an attempt to resolve conflicts that had been created by the censorship episode, the teachers expressed their reactions to the resolutions. Teachers' feelings about the resolutions included (a) disbelief, (b) discomfort, (c) vulnerability, (d) resentment and (e) anger.

Disbelief. One of the teachers who had received the unsigned letter on secular humanism said that she didn't really believe in the superintendent's publicly professed motives. After the professional association and a parent group objected, she said that the superintendent "Retracted it, saying that he was a voice of moderation on the Baptist

committee that had written it and that he was trying to protect us, which maybe yes, maybe no." Another teacher involved in the incident felt the same way. She said,

I really think that the letter incident--and this could be completely wrong--but he left not long after that. There was a lot of resentment from the teachers' association. You know, they publicly renounced his doing that. And he left. He didn't even finish out the school year. He left about last April. He just suddenly moved.

Discomfort. In the case in which the mother conceded to let her daughter read Lord of the Flies, the teacher said that she felt uncomfortable. In the second case, she felt "much more confident and sort of on top of it."

Vulnerability. In one case a teacher said that she practiced self-censorship to protect herself. She perceived a climate of censorship. She was president of the local teachers' association, on TV often and was very vulnerable. She told her students, "I'm vulnerable, gang. And I'm not going to do it. Period."

Resentment and anger. The teachers involved in the sex education controversy were angry. As one of them said,

We were all pretty angry. We figure we're capable of teaching and that's why we're there. The parents aren't and that's why they're not teaching their children. And I think they ought to have minded their own business and let us do what we're trained to do and leave us alone.

Another teacher said,

I did have a lot of anger because it was a very small group that was controlling things pretty much for that year until the board came out with their written statement of policy. Meanwhile we were in kind of a limbo as to what to do. The other thing

that really angered me was that the group causing the conflict seemed to be getting a lot of press, but we were not. Nobody ever sought out any of us. Nobody ever interviewed the teachers.

Responses to the People Involved in Creating the Censorship

Episode

Teachers' responses to the people who created the censorship episodes were ambivalent. They expressed anger, and referred to them as stupid and ridiculous as if they were indignant that their professional judgment was being called into question. On the other hand, teachers also expressed some empathy and understanding for them. They generally could understand parents' objections regarding their own children, but were angered when they thought it might affect the other children in the class. The teachers' responses illustrate their conflicting feelings about the objectors.

One teacher, in describing the father who made an objection about her curriculum said,

He's just got this real wacko religion - and yet I feel pressure by this person who is not real intelligent and yet, I know, could cause me trouble. Now I'm reluctant to discuss anything controversial. Because, I may be wrong, but I sometimes feel like the really poorly educated parents are the ones who would like to go to court for some reason--if they thought they could get money. They're easily led, pressured by church groups.

A high school English teacher said that the mother making the objection kept saying,

'Well, I didn't go to college' almost as if it were a defensive thing and somehow she needed to justify

what she was doing. I tried to get her to read the book and told her that I would be glad to send home a copy for her. I was disappointed that she didn't read it because I felt she really would have supported the use of the book in the class if she had read it. I always feel that if somebody would read the work in its entirety they would say, 'Yes, I see where it has a place in the classroom and certainly it is worthwhile.' But when I run up against parents who say 'Well I've heard so and so about the book.' or 'I haven't read it, but...' That's the thing that kind of bugs me because you can't force them to read it. And they are certainly entitled to their opinions. Because I am a parent I know there might come a day when I might not approve of something and would certainly feel that I would want to voice my opinion. I tried not to make the parents feel uncomfortable. The mother was the wife of a very prominent businessman in the community who had done a lot for the school--had a lot of clout. In that way I felt somewhat threatened.

One teacher expressed extremely hostile feelings toward the people who had instigated the sex education controversy. She said,

After my initial anger went away I started really feeling sorry for the people, because they're the type of people - they've been brainwashed. They want their children to be brainwashed. They don't want them to be able to think for themselves. They're afraid of people who can think. I think that these people are so insecure, and they don't know how to think themselves and they just feel so threatened by somebody who can that that's what they were lashing out at. And so, I actually started feeling sorry for these people - that there were people like that in this world.

The mentality of the people we're dealing with-- they're so narrow minded. They get on one track of thinking and they don't see anything else. Just one narrow minded little tunnel they're going through life with. I don't even feel like they're living. I don't even feel like they're humans in a way.

The teachers seemed to be able to take the point of view of the parents or other objectors but resented the lack of reciprocity. One teacher said,

Whenever I think about these parents, I guess I feel anger in a sense. You cannot discuss a subject with them. I felt like I could hear what they were saying but they could never hear what I was saying. And it was never a discussion; it wasn't a two-way street. I could accept the fact that they did not want their child to be exposed to this. But there were many students whose parents did not share that point of view.

Another teacher expressed that same ability to take the parents' point of view when he said, "That guy was strange. But I think he was truly interested in doing what he thought was right."

Teachers objected to parental dogmatism. As one teacher said,

I can understand that parents may object to a particular story for their children, but the thing that upsets me is that I don't think that any one parent should have the right to take that away from all children. In the case of the play, a group of parents had such narrow religious beliefs that they trapped everybody into those same types of beliefs.

One teacher said that the first time parents had complained that she was teaching secular humanism,

It made me feel like there are some people who simply don't understand things. If the parents felt this strongly about learning things like science that were not in the Bible what was the child doing in public school? The family was economically depressed and educationally handicapped. That's the nicest way I can say it.

There were three teachers who felt that most of the

censorship was instigated by the school administration. One teacher's hostility is obvious in his analysis:

By and large they are all conservative. I do mean that in a negative sense. I don't mean that in a positive sense. I mean that they tend to pass down rules that are rigid and highly restrictive and that give those in charge the opinion that they have a free hand and can sit on teachers whenever and wherever possible. The real nitty gritty censorship occurs when the principal says, 'I don't want you to use that book.'

Responses to the Children Who Were Involved in the Censorship Episode

Teachers often spoke about the children who were involved as central figures in the censorship episodes. Usually these children were the sons and daughters of the objectors. The teachers discussed their feelings about those children with concern and sympathy. They often felt that they had a more realistic understanding of the children than did their parents. The teachers perceived the children to be (a) confused, (b) misunderstood and embarrassed by their parents, and (c) interpersonally and intellectually hurt by the censorship experiences.

Confused. One teacher said,

This father has actually turned around and said he doesn't want his first grade daughter to feel different. But this child is so confused. She knows there are things that she's not supposed to learn. She said 'My daddy doesn't want me to learn the ABCs.' She had all kinds of learning problems anyway. And she's confused. It's hard not to think, 'Oh, that's so ridiculous' rather than 'Oh, that poor kid.'

She felt that the child was put in an untenable position and explained it this way:

Lots of times children misunderstand. They get part of it and not the rest. Or there's conflict with what the parents are saying at home. Teacher says this, mama says this, and the child's in the middle.

Several of the teachers worried that the students might misconstrue class events to parents. One teacher said

I felt myself just stop rather than go on and discuss it, because I wondered if the child would go home and say 'Oh, my teacher was talking about AIDS - and I don't have to worry.' It's so controversial that I'm afraid to talk about it.

This paranoid-sounding reaction was also illustrated by a high school social studies teacher who said,

There was at least one kid in the class who was watching me. I was told by one of the other students that she had made comments about how she was going to make sure to report to her parents and church about what went on in class. She was a highly motivated girl but she felt out of it with the kids in the class who had more ability and better skills.. She was very rigid and defensive. But I was real careful.

Misunderstood. In some cases the children of the objectors were perceived by the teachers as maladjusted. A fourth grade teacher said,

The father complained because the outline of the body was on a paper about the circulatory system. His son was the one that was more messed up than any of the other kids in that class. I can't help but think it's a direct result of what he's picking up from the parents. They're the ones with the dirty minds. You know, they think everything is funny. He knows how to freak his parents out. This one child is more immature than most of the other kids in the class. You can't leave the classroom without somebody watching him because he would be into something devious.

One teacher felt that she had good rapport and communication with her students. She said of the parents,

They wanted to pull their daughter out of the sex education class. They told me that I embarrassed her to death, but I could tell when I was embarrassing a student. I'm very perceptive of students' feelings. The girl never acted like she was the least bit bothered by the class. I do a lot of watching faces when I'm teaching and if I see eyes light up I'll ask them what they're thinking. I always have eye contact with each of the students. You can tell if you're embarrassing someone.

Another teacher felt that the parents' attitudes created a stigma for their children. She said,

I felt sorry for the kids. Because I knew them and the things that the parents said about the kids were not really true. I know that some of those students were sexually active and the parents had no idea about that. The daughter of the man who made the big stink came and talked to one of the teachers and said that she was very sorry that all this had happened. And they felt very embarrassed. I tried very much not to let the other children know who's not allowed to be in class. We try to make it a point not to single them out. I think some of the students feel kind of funny about it.

Another teacher's comments illustrate the same point:

The man behind it, the instigator of all the trouble, I think he is a Baptist. Very fundamentalist. He said to the principal about his seventeen year old son, 'He does what I want him to do and thinks what I want him to think.' And, of course, that is totally unrealistic. That boy is the biggest hell raiser that ever was.

Hurt. Teachers consistently expressed concern for their students' welfare, educational and emotional welfare. A high school English teacher said,

The student who objected to Lord of the Flies was in the gifted program and planned to take advanced

placement English in the twelfth grade. I said that if he was offended by that kind of material (Lord of the Flies), he might want to pursue a different course of study because we dealt with challenging, thought provoking things and that I felt that one of the most important purposes of education was to enlighten students to that fact that there are lots of other views in the world and that one way you can be sure what you believe is strong is to actually put it up beside something that is different. The blind faith didn't really work with an educated person.

The same point was made by a middle school science teacher who said, "Why cause such hard feelings and real hurt for the students who saw nothing wrong in it? I was more upset for the students than I was for me."

Responses to Others' Reactions to the Censorship Episode

The censorship experiences of the teachers in the study were affected by the reactions of others to the censorship episode. The question guiding this section is how did teachers feel about the ways in which others reacted to them and to the censorship episode? The teachers described what they perceived to be the reactions of administrators, parents, the community, children, and other teachers' to the censorship episodes. For most of the teachers, there was some sense of isolation and lack of support. Two cases illustrate the teachers' responses:

Case one. One teacher felt very vulnerable because she had taken a stand against administrative censorship. She was a single parent and worried about losing her job; she

temporarily quit taking evening courses toward her Master's degree. She said,

It was such an upsetting year. Because I had publicly complained about receiving the letter on secular humanism, I felt pressure. I wasn't sleeping at night. I thought that more people from the administration were observing me--from the central office and my principal. I felt like I put myself out on a limb. I even felt pressure to be quiet about it from some of the other teachers.

I don't know if this is true, but there was a lot of speculation that the superintendent was removed--promoted to another job--because of this mess he had created.

Case two. One of the teachers in the sex education controversy felt that her fellow--teachers were very supportive but that the administration was not. Her case exemplifies a general perception among the participants in the study that administrators do not aggressively support teachers in censorship episodes and that teachers are left to fend for themselves. She said,

All the teachers were very supportive of me. I got a lot of support from the teachers, and they kept telling me what a good job I was doing. We kind of stuck together.

The principal was subtly supportive. He's just--he's the type who worries about public opinion, and he wouldn't voice his opinion out loud whereas the teachers did. They went to the school board and sat there with me and gave verbal support. We had a big faculty meeting and the principal said, 'Lay low. Be real careful until all this blows over.'

You could see that he was on our side but yet at the same time he had to protect--I guess, the administration. The community gets in an uproar about an administrator and they can be switched to a different school. It's real political.

The administration wants to ride fences. They never came out and said, 'You're doing a good job. We're behind you 100%.' You could tell they were hurting, but they didn't want to take a stand and say that for fear that it might sway the community's ideas about them. They don't ever want their opinions to be known. They just kind of stand in the middle of everything trying to keep it all together.

I went down to talk to the superintendent to find out what was going on and let him know how I felt about all of this. And he sat back and started 'young ladying' me and shaking a finger at me saying 'You broke a written school policy, and you're real lucky that we're going to keep you on - we could very easily dismiss you at this moment.' And I said, 'Hmmm, Can I have a copy of that written school policy?' And the written school policy was dated way after I had taught the course.

They made it up after that, saying that it was a written school policy that I had to send home permission slips. It was never really a written school policy until after I taught my course. Yes, yes, I was very angry about that. Being lied to. Being made to feel like I was in the wrong. And what it was was that they were just worried about--not man enough to stand up and back me. They were going to let me, a teacher, take all the blame. And try to blame me.

But the date was clearly on the top of that written policy. And I, being a member of my professional association, I took it to my lawyer. He wrote a letter, a real nice letter, back to the superintendent telling him to put it in my file. I had gotten a written reprimand in my personnel file.

Need for support. The teachers felt that they needed outspoken support by parents and community members who favored their classroom practices, and that those who would be supportive often did nothing.

One teacher described this feeling, There were a lot of people around here--the parents and people in the community--who were in favor of having a sex education program. But the people who spoke up

were those against it. The people who didn't have a problem with it didn't have a reason to speak up. I mean, if you have a real problem with something, you're going to speak up. If you don't have a problem with it, you're probably not going to go overboard and back people up, so we didn't get much backing. People just said, 'Ah, that's crazy. They're crazy.' about the objectors. But they didn't say, 'I'll help you.'

Summary of Teachers' Responses to the Censorship Experience

At the end of the interviews, teachers were asked to make a concluding comment. Their responses tended to divide along emotional and intellectual dimensions, although responses sometimes included two or three dimensions. Responses that could be characterized as mainly emotional were defined as affective. Responses that involved intellectual analysis and justifications were categorized as cognitive. Teachers' responses that resulted in their doing or not doing things in the classroom were defined as behavioral.

These affective, cognitive and behavioral responses are discussed in this section in relation to the major meanings and themes that emerged through the analysis.

Affective. Some of the teachers' responses were mainly at the emotional level. Comments such as "I was so angry," "I was furious," and "it would make my life hell" are examples of emotional reactions. Descriptions that teachers used such as attacked, upset, afraid, resented, extremely frustrated, and exhausted were also categorized as affective.

In the affect'ive dimension, there is a theme that censorship episodes result in teachers' feeling tremendous pressures that affect the way they teach and their feelings about themselves. The following exerpts illustrate this theme:

Censorship experiences resulted in teachers' feeling pressured. One teacher said,

I feel more and more pressure as the years go on. I just feel like there is going to be some major battle in the future. We hear about the battles in other places. When I think about the future it just seems like a big burden. A lot of pressure.

I just feel like I would be absolutely sick to my stomach if something that I was doing in my classroom was questioned, like getting called on the carpet in the principal's, the board, the superintendent's office, or if I had something written up.

Another teacher talked about feeling stress. She said:

It's hard for me because I feel like my values are very liberal and it's been stressful for me around here, working in a very, very backward, conservative community. You know, you can't help but be who you are and that's what you end up transmitting to the kids. It's stressful when you feel like you have to go in and present yourself as someone who you're not. That's kind of censorship just in terms of who you are--that's difficult for me.

She also said that she felt that she would get burned out:

It makes me feel resentful. Once you start feeling resentful because you can't do all that you want to with the joy that you initially planned it, then you start--that leads to burnout as far as I'm concerned. You know, resentment. That's what exhausts me. That's much more exhausting than working around the clock to me.

Some teachers internalized guilt and negative feelings.

One teacher said,

I was under a lot of pressure. Not pressure in that people were putting it on me, but I just - I let it build up inside, thinking - you know how it is when you feel like you were in the right to do something and then other oppositional forces start saying, 'Well, you weren't in the right; you were wrong.' And that just builds up stress and pressure inside. Just an internal sort of war, but no particular person putting pressure on me.

The same teacher felt a sense of responsibility when the daughter of one of the most vocal complainants was withdrawn from the public school and her parents were going to be teaching her. She said,

And I felt real bad about that like I might have been a part of that. I didn't like that at all. I was real sorry that they took her out. That was probably the thing that made me feel worst of all is that she was taken out of public school. And being taught by parents like that you might as well not be taught at all in my opinion. I felt real bad about that. And I guess I still do. I feel like public school has something for every child.

Another teacher said that she felt pressure to be careful.

You have to be very careful. I mean, you have to watch every word you say because you never know, although most of the kids are fine, there can be one kid out there who will go home and tell mommy that teacher is trying to convert him to Buddhism and destroy his Christian values. Now, one kid doing that can activate enough people in the community to make your life hell. It's hard to defend yourself. An accusation these days is often times all it takes.

Cognitive. Teachers' responses leaned toward the intellectual level even more than the affective although they often began with emotional responses and followed with

elaborate cognitive responses. Their cognitive responses included their reflections about the effects of censorship on teaching autonomy and curriculum, freedom and control, self-protection and the role and function of teachers and schools in society. The main theme that emerged in the cognitive dimension was that censorship experiences diminished teachers' feelings about autonomy, freedom, and control. This theme is illustrated with protocol excerpts:

Censorship experiences diminished teachers' sense of autonomy, freedom and control. A first grade teacher explained,

There isn't any guidance really, and its almost like you're just supposed to second-guess this stuff. It just seems that you've got to be so careful. I think it affects my teaching. A child has a right to the answer. If I'm pretending that I don't know or am not interested or didn't hear the question or can't answer it or its something not to be discussed, then I think that really is bad for the children. It causes mistrust. And I know I am not really doing the best thing for that child because of these outside fears that I shouldn't be doing that. I don't think a doctor or a lawyer or another professional would be so questioned or so reluctant to use their best judgment. We're supposed to be professionals and yet there are some topics that we are not trusted with.

A high school English teacher responded,

Well, at this point I don't feel as if I have as much freedom and control in selecting materials as I felt when I first started teaching--in my first ten years of teaching. I really felt that if I wanted to use something in the classroom, if I thought it was worthwhile, I could justify it and sure, we could do it. And now I don't feel that we have that freedom. But I don't feel that there's less freedom because of what the administration has done. They certainly have not done anything to

limit what I use. But, I don't know, I guess it is sort of a societal pressure. There's a much more conservative attitude, I think about what schools should do and should not do.

A third grade teacher said,

It's hard enough to teach, but when you have to fight to do anything you want to do. You know, the administration really doesn't seem to be particularly interested in anybody being competent. They just want standardization. So anytime you do anything, you're resented and punished for it. It's the most unempowered situation that I've ever been in. When I taught before I taught in a state that had a strong teacher's union, and we filed grievances and got rid of principals and really did some stuff, but I don't know. It seems to be really different here.

A high school biology teacher said,

Basically, I guess what I came out of this feeling is that anybody who tries to censor anything is doing it out of their own insecurities and they feel threatened, which is a shame. It's just a shame that they don't have any better sense than they do.

Maybe it would all be different if they had had better teachers. Teaching is not just teaching the content. Reading or writing or arithmetic. It's teaching kids to be able to think. Just to be told that they can't read a book because it's got one dirty word in it. A student ought to be able to think about it and be able to discuss issues. That's what teaching's all about.

Censorship is a very dangerous thing to teaching and learning. A very dangerous thing. It could turn society into--take away our freedom of thinking and turn us into just people who follow a dictatorship. It needs to be fought. People need to stand up and preserve the right to teach and think. That's what makes our nation so great is being allowed to carry ideas and to speak ideas and to put ideas into motion. That's what makes us great as a country and if you take that away, then we have nothing.

Another high school biology teacher explained her ambivalence on the matter:

I would have to say that I have mixed feelings and that through this issue of censorship with sex education in my classroom, I get ambivalent feelings and sometimes I think, gosh is it all worth it? I'm not going to mess with this anymore. And then I guess I get angry and I'll resolve, I'm going to do it.

When I started teaching I knew that there was always a lot of mess that goes on with education. And I've always felt like when my classroom door was closed that it's okay because I can control what goes on in my classroom. But more and more. I must admit not just with censorship but various things like the career ladder and basic education plan and everything else that's going in education. I feel like more and more my door has a wedge in it and I can't close it and shut off the rest of the world. And all these hassles are coming in. So I don't know how long I'll stay with it.

One high school social studies teacher explained that by precensoring she was actually able to have a better sense of freedom and control. She said,

I'm a pragmatist. I think you can do lots of good things in class, and I think I do. And I want to protect my right to do those good things. If I become a focus of community outrage or if I have to deal with parents' accusations and trouble, then that's another battle to fight. I just balance out the good. Being the censor myself, you know to prevent these kinds of issues from coming up, makes life more pleasant. It gives me more freedom. I'm in control. I'm not being controlled by outside forces.

A middle school science teacher said that she felt that she had to plan ahead to avoid potential problems. She said,

I'm very open to having parents ask me about something they don't like. No problem. I felt like in public schools children were to be exposed to all theories and differences to expand

themselves, and it's not my business to teach religion. That's not my job. I teach science.

She continued,

This incident made me feel like there are some people who simply don't understand things. It made me wonder if it's starting at this level, what in my science curriculum is going to be questionable to others? And it made me think what steps can I do now to still teach the things that I think might be questionable but to cover myself to keep parents from saying, 'This is absolutely wrong' and that kind of stuff.

A high school biology teacher said,

Everytime we talked we were constantly checking ourselves, and that was kind of stressful in the classroom. We had always felt like we could say pretty much what we wanted to in the classroom.

Well, maybe you shouldn't say pretty much what you want to in the classroom, but it sure did kill our freedom of expression. And I don't know that that's all that bad. We probably ought to check ourselves. But I felt like I was constantly checking myself. That every time I opened my mouth I was having to pre-evaluate what was coming out and wondering how that was going to set with the community or how they were going to react to my statements and whether the kids were going to bring home the wrong information. If they would misconstrue what I was saying.

So I had to be extra careful and tell them, 'Now, don't take this home to your parents and say this because we're really saying this.' That kind of thing. And we still do. And like I say, I don't think that's all bad because I think you need to check what you say, but at the same time you don't need to be battered with it.

A high school English teacher said,

Parents expect their children to graduate from high school able to meet any obstacle that comes their way and be able to handle it, but yet we're not able to prepare them fully.

I'm not saying that we should teach moral issues here at all, but to say that I can't show The

Outsiders because it's suggestive-- well, if their kids are home alone and they say, 'Hey, let's go to the video store and rent a video.' They could rent The Outsiders and see it in their home. I can't show it at school. I can, but you know, that's what this parent was saying, that I shouldn't show it in school, but it would be all right to show it in the home. They can rent Romeo and Juliet at the video store. They can see it on PBS, but I've got to send home a permission letter saying that I'll be showing this film. It does have skin in it. 'If you object, your child can go to the library.'

It seems like sort of a double standard there. The kids have easy access to it, but I'm not supposed to mention it.

A high school English teacher said,

I don't know that it has affected me personally in my classroom. It's just the whole attitude and philosophy. When you talk about education, what is it but opening doors? And when those doors are slammed shut before you can even get to them, I just deplore that. And I think I have seen more students since I have been in this school system who are unwilling to ask questions. It's not that I feel hampered in talking about anything, it's just that those students will not do it in class.

A middle school language arts teacher said,

I don't feel fear because like I said I don't have to teach. I think that's important. I think if you are dependent upon that income for your livelihood, you would be much more worried about everything that you do and more afraid of making a mistake. If I didn't enjoy teaching, I would quit. You need to enjoy your class. You need to feel like you are in control of what's happening. We need to be able to talk without worrying about someone, a parent or a child, or the principal or an evaluator. You just have to be yourself. And in the back of your mind you're going to be the best that you can and you want to be a positive role model for your students. You want to be helpful to your students. That's a very powerful place to be today and you have to be careful of that power. On the other hand, we need to be able to use our own judgment.

Behavioral. Teachers' behavioral responses to their censorship experiences tended toward avoidance strategies. They tended to respond to their experiences with censorship by not doing classroom activities that they had previously done, not doing classroom activities that they thought they should do, and stopping themselves from making comments because of potential controversy.

The theme that emerged from the behavioral dimension was that censorship experiences resulted in the practice among teachers of avoiding potentially controversial topics, methods and ideas. The most common behavioral response of the participants to their censorship episodes seemed to be in the preponderance of their admissions of self-censorship. All of the teachers in this study said that they engaged in self-censorship in varying degrees; often it was a case of not doing something or a lack of behavior. Many teachers said that they worried about discussing controversial issues with their students. Some of them worried that students would go home and talk about something controversial that had been discussed in class. Some of them said that they wanted to do things but were afraid of the repercussions. A couple of them said that they did not avoid any topics but that they were very, very careful about how they presented them. They carefully prepared students, one step at a time, if they were going to discuss anything controversial. Sometimes they made sure that certain students were not in the room when they

discussed anything controversial. The following slices of conversations from teachers in this study illustrate the theme that:

Censorship experiences resulted in teachers' avoidance of potentially controversial topics, methods and ideas.

I stop the conversation.
I don't use...
I am not doing...
I put it away; I did not give it.
I don't answer their questions.
I can't really discuss ...
I feel a reluctance.
I really would not do that today.
I felt myself stop rather than go on.
It is really difficult to discuss.
You've got to be so careful.
I have become a censor.

A sample of teachers' comments further illustrates the phenomenon. A first grade teacher commented that she would not accept a controversial gift unless she felt absolutely sure of its educational worth. A high school English teacher said, "Basically I have had two sort of negative experiences with censorship, and the result of that is I do some of my own." A high school social studies teacher said, "Rather than get in trouble, I have become a censor." A fourth grade teacher said that she would like to use guided imagery but, "No, I have not done that. I've seen that kind of thing done, and I'd like to, but I'm afraid to use it. Because it is so controversial."

Among these teachers, self-censoring behavior was accompanied by a great deal of consideration and reflection. Some teachers took a practical approach to their self-censoring behavior and used it as a means of having more freedom and control. Most of the teachers at some point in the interview expressed sorrow and self-condemnation for becoming censors. They experienced dissonance between their beliefs and their actions, and they worried about the effects of self-censorship on the childrens' education. Self-censorship affected teachers by making them feel restrained and depressed.

Teachers considered avoiding censorship issues by leaving the teaching profession. All of the teachers in this study seemed to be serious career teachers. During the interviews, many of them reflected on their commitment to teaching. A single mother who was dependent on the teaching income was very highly stressed by her censorship experience. Three teachers independently said that they could leave teaching at any time, because they were not dependent on the income and if the problems got too bad, they would do just that.

One teacher quit teaching biology and taught only physics after the sex education controversy. She quit teaching altogether within three years of the controversy, although it was not due solely to the controversy. She said

that that was only one of the things that affected her decision to quit teaching.

SUMMARY

In summary, teachers' responses to their censorship experiences were complex and multifaceted. Although their responses were categorized as affective, cognitive and behavioral for the purposes of analysis, there were many times when the responses blended together. In some situations they had strong negative reactions, while in others they expressed understanding and empathy.

They often felt alone and isolated and were particularly critical of the administrations' handling of censorship episodes. As a whole, the teachers in this study said that their censorship experiences made them feel pressured, diminished their sense of autonomy, freedom and control and resulted in self-censorship.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe teachers' experiences with school censorship. Thirteen teachers who had been identified as having had school censorship experiences participated in the study.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The participants were identified for the study by the officers of National Education Association affiliates. Their anonymity was assured. The teachers were individually interviewed in an open-ended format in which they were asked to describe their school censorship experiences and to discuss their responses to those experiences. Each interview was transcribed from a microcassette along with handwritten notes. The transcriptions were referred to as protocols; there was a total of 307 pages of text.

Data analysis was conducted through qualitative procedures that involved data reduction, data display and conclusion-drawing and verification (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Transcriptions of the interviews were categorized as follows:

1. Summaries of individuals' censorship experiences.

2. Descriptions of censorship experiences.
3. Types of censorship experiences.
4. Teachers' responses to their censorship experiences.
5. Summaries of teachers' affective, cognitive and behavioral responses to their censorship experiences.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Among the participants in this study censorship episodes were broad and diverse, and they were accompanied by "chilling" effects.

The Nature of School Censorship Episodes

For the teachers in the study, censorship experiences were diverse; they were not limited to "dirty books" in the English class. The censorship episodes that made up the experiences of the 13 teachers in this study came in many gradations and forms. Two of the censorship episodes were public controversies, but most of them were private interactions between one parent and one teacher. The subjects of the censorship episodes for the teachers in this study included a folk tale, abortion, meditation, drug prevention, secular humanism, sex education, a book of short stories, the film "The Outsiders," the play "Country Gothic," and the books Lord of the Flies, Grapes of Wrath, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, To Kill a Mockingbird, Manchild in the Promised Land, and The Scarlet Letter. For

two of the teachers, censorship experiences revolved around administrative suppression.

The sources of the censorship attempts included parents, administrators, community members, children and teachers themselves. Teachers were informed about or discovered the complaints in a variety of ways; the strongest reactions were to personal confrontations and administrative policy. The objectors were perceived by the participants as highly emotional and unreasonable. Controversial issues seemed to be symptomatic of deeper, underlying concerns related to religion, values and authority.

The censorship episodes often came to conclusions and were resolved but the repercussions were long-lasting and pervasive.

Teachers Responses to Censorship

Teachers responded to their censorship experiences with a complex mixture of emotional, cognitive and behavioral reactions. The types of responses teachers expressed depended on the particular aspect of the experience to which they were responding. The different aspects of their experiences included (a) the censorship episodes, (b) the consequences of the censorship episode, (c) the people involved in creating the censorship episodes, (d) the children who were involved in the censorship episode, and (e) others' reactions to the censorship episodes.

The teachers' reactions were complex. Teachers described feeling upset, vulnerable, disappointed, threatened, inhibited, exhausted, shocked and angry. They were often left feeling alone and unsupported, especially by the administration but also by their colleagues. They expressed concern and empathy for the children whose parents had instigated the censorship episodes. Teachers were willing to listen to other points of view but said that others were not willing to listen to them. And they often felt that the instigators were not thinking for themselves. In some cases, teachers felt that there would be positive benefits from their experiences in that they would more carefully justify their educational plans. They used strategies for self-protection. The most common result of censorship attempts seemed to be in the prevalence of varying degrees of self-censorship.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined school censorship from the perspective of teachers' experiences and found that it was a complex, multifaceted experience; the experience affected teachers on personal and professional levels, on affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions.

The censorship experiences of the teachers in this study affected them strongly. They felt as if they were caught in the middle of conflicting pressures from parents, children,

administrators and the community. In addition to those pressures, they felt internal pressures to do what they thought was the "right thing."

Their feelings about autonomy as teachers in selecting materials and topics and in making curricular decisions were diminished by their experiences. Although they were largely negative, there were aspects of their experiences that teachers felt were understandable and with which they could empathize.

The experiences of the teachers in this study support the idea that censorship leads to censorship. All of the teachers felt that their experiences had made them much more careful, and most of them claimed that they, in fact, practiced self-censorship.

The major themes that emerged from this study of teachers' experiences with school censorship were:

1. Censorship episodes were symptomatic of deeper, underlying social and cultural conflicts that divided along the lines of religion and authority. Mainly, the conflicts stemmed either from religious and values' issues or from problems created by administrators who were protecting the school bureaucracy and their jobs.
2. Censorship experiences made it difficult for teachers to fulfill the responsibilities of their many roles.
3. Censorship experiences were accompanied by a myriad of emotional responses including anger, anxiety, frustration,

isolation and defeat. Teachers also reported feeling threatened and vulnerable, and they developed strategies for self-protection.

4. Teachers felt a sense of diminished autonomy, freedom and control as a result of their censorship experiences.

5. Teachers avoided potentially controversial topics, methods and ideas as a result of their censorship experiences.

6. The small, subtle, covert types of censorship experiences seemed to have as powerful an effect as did the big episodes that became public issues.

Taken as a whole, the censorship experiences described by the participants in this study seem to have resulted in a pattern of cumulative, often imperceptible experiences which gradually and subtly altered teachers' thoughts, feelings and acts. This phenomenon has often been referred to as the "chilling effects of censorship."

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

THE RESULTS

Schools are a microcosm of society. School censorship is a reflection of social conflict and power. It is social conflict that takes place in the classroom setting. It is conflict between educational philosophies and practices. It is about conflicting religions and values. It is about conflicting political ideologies. It is about conflict between individuals and between groups. These conflicts lie in progressively smaller circles: society, education, individuals. School censorship becomes a symptom of social conflict.

Role conflict is the essential theme that emerges from this study. The teacher is an individual in an educational institution in society whose various role expectations are subjects of debate. While the widespread "Hunterization" of American schools takes responsibility and autonomy away from teachers, demands for teacher empowerment are being heard from other circles (Garman & Hazi, 1988; Maeroff, 1988).

Teachers' roles are multidimensional: They are supposed to know and nurture children, teach basic skills, impart knowledge, and model values. There is not a universally accepted doctrine that prescribes the ways in which the

functions of these roles are best fulfilled. Teachers take to their daily duties all of the attitudes and values that they as individuals have accumulated in addition to professional theory and practices that they have learned.

Many teachers in modern society believe that they have the right to make educational decisions and that they deserve to be treated as professionals. They are often assigned superhuman capabilities: They get the blame when children fail to behave in keeping with the norms; conversely they are expected to be saviors. The role conflicts in which teachers find themselves reflect society's conflicts. Censorship experiences place the teacher in the center of several conflicting forces. Teachers perceive the instigators of censorship episodes as questioning their prescribed roles.

The censorship experience creates a threat to the teacher in all of these roles. Within all of the censorship experiences described by the teachers in this study, whether instigated by fundamentalist parents or school administrators, a recurrent theme was that conflict arose when the teacher overstepped the bounds of the information-giving role. The reflections of the teachers on their censorship experiences reflect paradoxes and conflicts inherent in their attempts to fulfill the requirements of the various roles that they take. Those roles can best be examined in the context of the long-standing debates that surround each of them.

The Teacher as a Child Development or Subject Matter Specialist

The question of whether teachers are supposed to focus on children or on subject matter is one that should have been put to rest many decades ago. Children are not empty vessels into which information can be poured. Teachers must understand children at their developmental levels. In order to teach information or ideas, teachers must be able to understand and communicate with children at their developmental levels. Teachers must be able to deal with needs that children have whether those needs are affective, cognitive, social, or behavioral.

The teachers in this study consistently expressed concern and empathy for the children in their classes. As one teacher said,

When a child has a question, a child has a right to an answer. When you can't answer their questions, I think it causes mistrust. And then I know that I am not really doing the best thing for that child because of these outside fears.

There were many cases in which the teachers said that they understood their students better than many of the parents did. This knowledge of children was striking in the sex education controversy. One teacher said that the parents thought that "teen-agers should still be looking at Mom and Dad and doing what Mom and Dad say and not make their own decisions." The parents were afraid that taking sex education would lead to sex. The same teacher said, "I know

that some of the students were very sexually active. And, see, the parents had no idea that their kids were sexually active."

Another example came from a high school English teacher who said,

The instigator of all the trouble, I think he is a Baptist, very fundamentalist. He said to the principal about his 17 year old son, 'He does what I want him to do and thinks what I want him to think.' And, of course that is totally unrealistic. That boy is the biggest hell-raiser that ever was.

The Teacher as a Conveyor of Information or a Facilitator of Critical Thinking

The debate about whether the purpose of schools should be to provide instruction in basic skills or to stimulate students to become well-rounded, critical thinkers is a long-standing one. It is reflected in public debates about product vs. process education, competency-based vs. discovery education and educational assessment. These conflicts of purposes and roles were reflected in this study.

The teachers resented the idea that their only function was to teach basic skills. The teachers said that they felt that the parents educational goals were too narrow. One teacher gave her interpretation of the parents who objected to her sex education class:

All they wanted their kids to do was read the chapter and answer the questions at the end of the book. That was it. They didn't want any discussion. They just wanted the anatomy and

physiology of giving birth. They were against the thinking part.

A first grade teacher said she was doing an experimental whole language program for teaching reading and language arts. She said, "I feel that the old lock-step, basal readers are really what's expected, and I just can no longer go with that."

Teachers said that they had to be careful whenever they step outside their role as a giver of information. They avoided creative teaching approaches. As one teacher said, "I don't think I can use pedagogy that I think would be very useful to the kids." Another teacher talked about how the kids used to love it when they were studying Asian religions and she would bring in a yoga expert. They would "put mattresses on the floor and play Indian sitar music and really get in the meditation mood, and that was sort of a focus for studying Asian religion." But she said, "I would really not do that today."

The teachers in this study frequently referred to their role as a facilitator of critical thinking. They often felt frustrated in their attempts to fulfill this function, not only in relation to their censorship experiences but also in trying to meet the demands of a highly structured career program. A high school English teacher explained her concern,

The head of the English teachers' association said at a public meeting that her only goal for next year was to get all sixes in her evaluation so she

could move up on the career ladder. Not that she had some good ideas she wanted to try out; not that she was excited about teaching. I wanted to cry.

Teachers expressed a strong desire and need to help children learn to think. As another high school English teacher said,

We dealt with challenging, thought-provoking things, and I felt that one of the most important purposes of education was to enlighten students to the fact that there are lots of other views in the world and that one way you can be sure that what you believe is strong is to actually put it up beside something that is different. The blind faith didn't really work with an educated person.

A middle school teacher who was angry about a book of short stories having been banned said,

It was not just your basic Dick and Jane kind of book. It was critical thinking type material. It brought to their minds things they had never thought of. It was wonderful for building thinking skills.

Another teacher said that she did not understand why the parents had their child in public school. She felt that in public schools children were to be "exposed to all theories and differences to expand themselves."

One teacher said that his experience with censorship had actually liberalized his thinking. In the past he thought that dangerous information should be restricted, but that now he believed that anything had the right to be published, regardless of how controversial. He said,

I feel that the lack of information is even worse than the wrong information. I believe that as long as they can get all of the information, people have the intelligence to at least see both sides.

A high school English teacher said,

It's just the whole attitude and philosophy when you talk about education. What is it but opening doors? And when those doors are slammed shut before you can even get to the kids, I just deplore that.

The Teacher as a Decision Maker and a Professional

Another long-standing debate is on whether teaching is a profession. The 1980s brought a "reform movement" to education. What is "best" for schools has been battled around by government officials, legislators, educators, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and the general public. The late 1980s have been characterized by attention to the need for teacher empowerment much as the 1970s were characterized by concern for teacher "burn out" (Maeroff, 1988).

Teachers' responses to their school censorship experiences reflected a concern with this aspect of their role. The teachers interviewed for this study were thoughtful, articulate adults who viewed teaching as more than just a job. Censorship experiences threatened teacher's decision-making functions. As one teacher said,

I don't feel as if I have as much freedom and control in selecting materials. In the past I felt that if I thought something was worthwhile and I could justify it, sure we could do it. Now I don't feel that we have that freedom.

A middle school teacher said,

You need to feel like you are in control of what's happening and can talk about what needs to be

talked about without worrying about someone, a parent or a child, or the principal or an evaluator. We need to be able to use our own judgment.

A 4th grade teacher said,

I'd like full range to do everything that I think is right and to use the materials that I think are appropriate for the students I have and to be able to use the most progressive methodology that I feel fits the situation or the student.

One of the teachers whose main complaint was with the school administration said that the system is wrong. He said,

You have this atmosphere that's created of authoritarianism, of an undemocratic approach to any decision-making. The administration makes the rules. They're supposed to be facilitating what the teacher does in the classroom. But they really don't. They interfere.

The teachers in this study seemed to be active, committed teachers. There were many cases in which they felt that their judgment or authority had been usurped by parents, community groups or school administrators. One teacher said,

I don't think a doctor or a lawyer or another professional would be so questioned or so reluctant to use their best judgment. We're supposed to be professionals and yet there are some topics that we are not trusted with.

Another teacher said that "Parents expect their children to graduate from high school able to meet any obstacle that comes their way and be able to handle it, but yet we're not able to prepare them fully."

A third grade teacher said,

We are censored at every single faculty meeting. Any time any of us asks a question or raises a protest to anything, we're just told that we're out of line. She (the principal) is the boss. There will be no discussion of this issue. When we ask a question, the other teachers run to her office saying how terrible it is that those teachers question authority and teach children to do that. That they teach children to break laws and rules. You know, any question is looked on as some big threat to some sort of established hierarchy.

The Teacher as a Transmitter of Cultural Values

Educational historians have studied the functions of schools for decades, particularly since the 1960s when the revisionist movement surfaced. Some revisionist historians argued that the main function of schools was for social control as opposed to a means of social mobility (e. g., Katz, 1968; Spring, 1976). An extension of this idea is that the teacher's role is to present and reflect the dominant culture. Throughout the history of education in America, teachers have held moderate rather than radical views, and have often been portrayed as vehicles for the maintenance of the status quo.

While the teachers in this study may in fact reflect the values of mainstream, middle-class America, they felt pressured to meet the needs of views which often seemed to them anti-intellectual. These teachers did not reflect so much the idea of social control as they did the idea of critical thinking, an inherently mind-expanding process.

This is an idea that goes against the view that the function of schools is as a vehicle for teaching basic skills.

Compounded upon the inherent clash of cultural values that may naturally occur between educators and their clients was the location of this particular study: the Southern Appalachian Mountains. While the urban areas within this region are often considered unrepresentative of its mountain culture, this study included teachers from both city and rural schools. Some of the teachers in the study were natives while others were transplants.

The schools have often been regarded with suspicion by uneducated groups of people within the region. These mountain people have, throughout history been able to achieve more of a sense of control through their churches than through the schools. Loyal Jones (1978) described the mountain people as religious. He said,

One has to understand the religion of mountaineers before he can begin to understand mountaineers. In the beginning they were Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and other formally organized denominations, but these churches required an educated clergy and centralized organization, impractical requirements in the wilderness and so locally autonomous sects grew up (p.40).

The schools, in contrast, did not grow up as locally autonomous institutions. They were usually organized by the state bureaucracy which dictated policies and gave financial support to its constituents. The mountains, in many of the Appalachian states, often have been the last in line to reap the benefits of the education institution. The Appalachian

Mountain people continue to turn to their churches in times of trouble (Jones, 1978).

Some of the teachers who participated in this study described situations which fit this religious orientation and suspicion of schools. Parents, church and community members often voiced objections against the school curriculum as a basic rejection of their religious values. Churches were often active in helping people organize and articulate their objections to ideas such as those labeled "secular humanist."

The conflicting missions of education are at the heart of censorship conflicts. When the teacher's mission is in conflict with the parents values and beliefs, controversies erupt. The public majority may favor the broadening of childrens' minds through education, but they were often silent during the censorship episodes that the teachers in this study experienced.

None of the teachers in this study were censored for trying to teach a religious doctrine or point of view. It was, rather, the absence of a conservative Christian point of view that seemed to be the dominant issue creating conflict which resulted in censorship experiences for most of the 13 teachers. The religious beliefs of the objectors were characterized by the teachers as fundamental Christianity. The conflict of religious beliefs may, in fact, be a part of a broader conflict, that of conflicting world views and ideologies. It is important to note that several of the

teachers interviewed perceived themselves to be from the dominant culture and to hold moderate views. Several of them mentioned their own Christian beliefs, but they felt that the beliefs of the objectors were extreme in comparison. In this study several objections were based on this underlying issue of values conflict.

The high school English teacher who received objections to Lord of the Flies said that the mother was worried about her daughter being exposed to satan worship, "because her older child the year before had absolutely been destroyed by the study of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance." In her second incident, she said that she explained to the mother that the class was looking at the book as symbolic and as a parable and said, "Perhaps your son would like to do something with the parables in the Bible." And "She (the mother) jumped on that. Yes, she thought that would be the ideal thing to do."

The incident regarding the letter on secular humanism that was sent out to all of the teachers in one school district by the superintendent affected three of the teachers in this study. It was formulated and distributed by a Southern Baptist association through the Superintendent. One of those teachers said that just about anything, like magic, might be offensive to the fundamentalist Christian parents in her community. Another teacher described it as "some sort of

statement of intention about protecting citizens from the harmful effects of humanism and this type of thing."

Several of the teachers experienced objections to the teaching of evolution because, as one teacher described it, "I was teaching their son things that were not in the Bible, that were against the Bible, and I was putting science above God." A high school biology teacher said that "creationism" comes up all the time.

Teachers said that they avoided the subject of religion. A middle-school language arts teacher said that when religion comes up she just stops the conversation because of the problems in the past and the "very fundamentalist powers that be, I would not discuss religion."

The three teachers who were involved in a very divisive and bitter sex education controversy described the initiators as fundamentalist Baptists who preached the idea that teaching sex education was teaching the students to go out and have sex. The teachers said that those parents wanted sex education to be limited to the abstinence view because "it is sinful to have sex before marriage."

The conflict of the teacher's role as a transmitter of values can be best illustrated by the teacher who said, "You know, you can't help but be who you are, and that's what you end up transmitting to the kids."

SUMMARY

Social conflict emerged as an essential theme of teachers' experiences with censorship. The teacher is an individual in an educational institution in society. The teacher plays numerous, diverse roles which conflict when oppositional social forces interact with the educational institution.

A question that scholars have debated for centuries is whether education shapes or reflects society. School censorship experiences certainly reflect social conflict. But teachers' responses to their school censorship experiences can certainly have an effect on the students who are the future shapers and molders of society.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION

This study was an examination of one part of the censorship picture; it is suggestive of several possibilities for instruction and further research. Teachers ought to be prepared for adequately dealing with controversies in their classrooms. Similar studies could be conducted but with specific population differences such as the use of a similar size group from a different region of the country or the use of a nationwide, random sample.

This study was about school censorship, but the methodology lends itself to insightful analysis regardless of the issue or topic being investigated. It would seem that

there are many questions about the experiences of teachers that could be illuminated through the use of the same methodology to other aspects of teaching.

This study documents the difficulty of school censorship experiences for teachers and carries with it some implications for preservice and inservice teacher education. The colleges and universities responsible for preparing new teachers should provide guidance in the area of dealing with controversial issues in the classroom. Teachers' professional associations should provide forums for helping teachers to understand how to deal with school censorship. And school systems should provide teachers with continuing education on policies and procedures for dealing with controversial issues and objections to methods and materials. With the looming national shortages of teachers and the high proportion of those leaving the profession after five years, research and instruction designed to investigate and improve the quality of teachers' daily lives should be welcomed.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I hereby agree to be interviewed about my experiences and feelings regarding school censorship as part of a study of teachers' experiences with school censorship. The interview will be recorded on an audio-cassette recorder. The resulting cassettes will be kept in a secure file box, accessible only to the interviewer and typist. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential from everyone except the investigator, Mary Jean Ronan Herzog. I give my permission for the investigator to anonymously quote my responses in the resulting dissertation and any subsequent publications with the proviso that my identity will not be revealed.

Signature of interviewee

Name of interviewee (please print)

Signature of investigator

Date

APPENDIX B

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF CENSORSHIP EXPERIENCES (EXAMPLE FROM ONE PROTOCOL)

CENTRAL INCIDENT

Did not use the Newsweek issue with the cover story about abortion

PERIPHERAL INCIDENTS

People had been calling the school making outrageous accusations, saying 'someone in your school is teaching about death...' and ridiculous things like, 'We understand that students are having to lie down in a coffin.'

I stopped instructing students in yoga and meditation when studying Asian religions.

...rather than get in trouble, I have become a censor...

RESOLUTIONS

Administration tried to reassure the concerned citizens that their concerns were unfounded.

I agreed that if their parents would sponsor a discussion about abortion in a private home outside of the school, we could have a seminar, but I did not feel I could do it at school.

RESPONSES

Affective: These include the comments that the teachers made regarding their feelings about their censorship experiences.

Inhibited, makes your life hell, attacked, much more guarded, makes me suspect, criticized, afraid, really vulnerable, I lived in absolute fear..., scared, pragmatic

Cognitive: These include the comments that the teachers made regarding their rational, intellectual response , their censorship experiences.

It's hard to defend yourself if you are accused of being anti-Christian. It's like when somebody calls you a racist. Now, how do you say, 'Oh, I'm not a racist.' And everyone says, 'Oh, sure.' You know, so an accusation these days is often times all it takes.

...one thing I can do is to use humor. I can say, 'There are people in the community who would like to interpret what I'm going to be talking about as an anti-Christian thing.' I will say that to the kids. And I say, 'I really hope that you will all go home and discuss this, and these are the objectives.' And I write a syllabus. I've learned with high school classes today in this region that you write a syllabus which explains the objectives phrased in a manner which will make them inoffensive to groups of people who might come in and jump on it.

Teachers today have to understand really well how to protect themselves because they are vulnerable.

...but, then, I could have had a balanced discussion on abortion and been accused of being a baby killer.

...I'm a pragmatist. I think you can do lots of good things in classes and I think I do. ...I want to protect my right to do those good things...I just balance out the good.

When I teach about the Renaissance, I just put it in context...It's one area I wouldn't censor. You can't censor facts in history. It's in the textbooks. These are the textbooks that have been approved by the state of North Carolina...

The only teachers who feel that they don't have to be guarded are people who don't know enough. Don't know enough about what's going on.

If you teach in the public schools, you're going to have to deal with it (censorship).

Behavioral: I write a syllabus which explains the objectives in a manner which will make them inoffensive...

I had to very carefully structure the topics in the class.

We didn't (have that panel discussion at anyone's house). The issue was dropped.

REPERCUSSIONS

This teacher said that she became careful, guarded, avoided controversial issues. She said that she became a censor.

APPENDIX C

OUTLINE USED FOR PROTOCOL ANALYSIS

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Censorship episode. When this term is used, it refers to specific, discreet events, episodes or incidents. Censorship episodes are subsets of the broader censorship experience.

Censorship experience. When this term is used, it refers to the total experience that the teacher has had with censorship. A censorship experience includes all of the specific, discreet censorship episodes that a teacher has experienced plus all outcomes, results, related censorship incidents, and reactions.

I. DATA REDUCTION - Description of censorship episodes

A. Sources of censorship experiences

1. Parents
2. Community groups and individuals
3. School administrators
4. Children
5. School Librarian
6. Self (Teacher)

B. Procedures used to raise objections

1. Mail
2. Phone calls
3. Personal confrontation

4. Administrative request

C. Types of things to which objections were raised

1. Topics

(eg. abortion, AIDS, controversial subjects, drugs, evolution, meditation, sex, sex education, race, religion, witches, devils)

2. Materials

(eg. novels, short stories, plays, folk tales, films, magazines, and general curriculum and text materials)

3. Techniques

a. innovative, creative techniques

(e. g. brainstorming, intuition, guided imagery, creative problem solving, creative thinking type exercises)

b. anything that wasn't straight from the book

4. Other

a. Teachers' rights (the right to meet)

b. Freedom of expression (the right to communicate, right to read, right to write, right to think)

c. Ideas (the right to be exposed to ideas)

II. INTERPRETIVE LEVEL OF DATA REDUCTION

A. Structure of censorship experiences

1. Central episode
 - a. Public issue
 - b. Issue contained to one school
 - c. Issue contained to one teacher
 - d. Administrative fiat
2. Related censorship incidents
 - a. Censorship incidents that occurred as a result of the initial, central episode
 - b. Results of censorship that could be designated as related but separate censorship episodes (like when a principal says "lay low," he is reacting to a censorship episode, but also creating one)
3. Outcomes of censorship episodes
 - a. Clear cause-effect relationship (eg., sex ed class cancelled)
 - b. Less direct, correlational relationship (quit teaching public school)

III. INFERENTIAL/EXPLANATORY LEVEL OF DATA REDUCTION

- A. Type and level of support teachers felt they received during the incident from:
 1. Administrators
 2. Other teachers
 3. Parents
- B. Teachers' responses to their censorship experiences
 1. Affective

2. Cognitive
3. Behavioral

C. Working themes

(these will be elaborated with sub-themes)

1. Censorship is an attack on a teachers autonomy, expertise and self-concept.
2. Censorship is insidious and comes in many gradations, shapes and forms.
3. Censorship episodes occur as a result of conflicts of religious, values, and lifestyle systems.
4. Self-censorship. The effects of direct and indirect censorship episodes are to avoid controversy and to be very careful.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE PROTOCOL

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching at this school?

Teacher: Since 1975. Thirteen years.

Interviewer: I'd like to ask you a couple of questions before we get started. Are you involved with your professional associations?

Interviewee: I am a member of the state NEA. Not active--just a member. I am very active in the state Science Teachers Association. I'm on the board of directors as the middle/junior high school chairperson for the state. And I am very active in the National Science Teachers Association.

Interviewer: Let me just begin by asking if you could tell me about any experiences that you've had with school censorship as a teacher.

Teacher: Okay. I'll start with an experience that was about three or four years ago. It was a school play. I was a supervising director for a student who was directing a play, "Country Gothic", which hints at a cult experience using the death of an individual to procure a good apple harvest. Apples are a big thing in this area.

I'm not so upset with the fact that there was a problem with the play. I'm very open to having parents involved. You know, parents are not happy with the play--that's fine. If they come and ask me there's no problem. What I'm concerned with is the way this was handled. It went on just fine, the kids at the school loved it. There wasn't anything weird about it. As a matter of fact it was a lot more calm than some of the things they watch on television. They enjoyed the play. Really liked it a lot. It's hard to do a straight dramatic show for middle school, and they really liked it, watched it, enjoyed it.

We had done three performances of the show and were getting to do the fourth performance when the parent of one of the actors took offense at the language and the theme of the play, and instead of coming to me and stating that, they went to this county-wide organization involved in, "Let's make sure that no occultism or anything like that being taught in the schools or encouraged." They sent a representative to come and watch the play. When my principal heard that this was going to go on, she requested that I not do the last

performance. I really couldn't see that. I was very much against that. However, at the time I didn't want the kids to be hurt by the bad publicity, so what we did was--in about 30 minutes right before curtain time--we re-shot the show. The show was exactly the same except we changed the ending to a "happily ever after" ending, and that's the last we heard of it.

If the parents were so concerned about their child--they had had the script for over eight weeks. Why did they wait until the last performance unless they were interested in publicity? And, that's what bothered me. I was really, really upset at the way it was handled. I had no qualms if somebody feels like that I'm going to lead their child down the path of sin and destruction or whatever. That's fine. We can make some other arrangements. I'm a great respecter of somebody's beliefs as long as they don't infringe on mine. It just really bothered me the way it was handled.

Interviewer: It seems as if you're focusing on the way the parents reacted. How about the way the principal handled the situation?

Teacher: She handled it exactly the way I expected her to, because she is an avoider of negative publicity. My principal views the world through rose-colored glasses. If a major problem does occur, then she will, if its, you know, if there's no denying it, if its brought up right in front of her, then--like a drug problem--then she will deal with the problem but does not want any publicity. She wants the community absolutely unaware--and its a school matter and we'll handle it within the school, and that's that. I was a little disappointed that she didn't back me up, but I really didn't expect--she crumples under parent pressure all the time--so I didn't expect it to be any different.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you would say in terms of elaborating on your feelings about this situation? You said that you didn't like the way that the parents handled and that you were disappointed, although you expected the principal to handle it the way she did.

If you can think back to the moment when the incident occurred and you realized you had done three performances and the next one was going to have to be different. Do you remember how you felt at that time?

Teacher: Angry. I felt angry that it had gone on so long before anyone complained. You know, if, indeed, my judgment was off in choosing this play and all of the parents had copies, why didn't they bring it to my attention sooner? Why cause such hard feelings and real hurt for the students who saw

nothing wrong in it? I was more upset for the students than I was for me. You know, I have no qualms about parents having the right to know what their children are being taught or anything like that. It's just that if they were so involved, why two months down the road?

Interviewer: How did that incident make you feel about yourself as a teacher?

Teacher: Hmmm. Two or three different things. It made me feel like there are some people who simply don't understand things. It made me wonder if it's starting at this level, what in my science curriculum is going to be questionable to others? And it made me think what steps can I do now to still teach the things that I think might be questionable but to cover myself to keep parents from saying, "This is absolutely wrong" and that kind of stuff. I didn't feel quite as badly with this situation as I did with the very first time I was accosted for a censorship type of thing.

Interviewer: You didn't feel...

Teacher: I didn't feel as badly about this as I did about the very first time.

Interviewer: Would you mind talking about that?

Teacher: No. The very first time was simply a one-to-one conversation between a parent and myself. The parent came to my door, which is against school policy for them to come by themselves like that, just unannounced, asked to speak to me out in the hall, and accused me of being a humanist. That I was teaching their son things that were not in the Bible, that were against the Bible and that I was putting science above God.

Interviewer: When was this?

Teacher: This was in '79 or '80, I don't remember exactly. I'm almost positive it was '79, because it before the change of principals. And I was really taken aback. That if the parent felt this strongly, what was the child doing in public school? Why didn't they put the child in private school where they could teach them what they wanted? I felt that in public school they were to be (1) exposed to all theories and differences to expand themselves and (2) it's not my business to teach religion. That's not my job. I teach science.

The result was that the child was allowed not to participate in some of the activities, especially those that mentioned that evil word evolution. But to make up for that, the child was required to write a paper, an independent study,

stating their interpretation of the origin of the universe, the beginning of life on earth...how that happened and to back it up with evidence. Not faith, but evidence because we've got to go on evidence for science. The family was economically depressed and educationally handicapped. That's the nicest way I can say it.

The paper that was handed in, besides being barely legible, was filled with Biblical quotes and faulty logic. The grade was based on the logic of it. The parent complained about a low grade, and when I sat down with the paper and went through it and showed points of faulty logic they refused to see them. I was obviously wrong and there was no other--that was it--I was wrong and the parent wanted me to admit that I was wrong, and I wouldn't do it. The alternate assignment was supported by the administration and the grade was supported by the administration because we had provided the alternative.

The only other thing that has happened as far as--and its really not censorship--is that, like on open house nights, some parents will say, "Oh, I don't mind you're being taught evolution as long as you're being taught creation too." And sometimes, I just smile sweetly and bite my tongue, because it's easier and because they don't ever know what goes on in the school anyway, most of those parents. I will not teach creationism.

Interviewer: Umm.

Teacher: I will not, it is not a science, and I will not teach it, and that's the bottom line. And I guess it's one of my really touchy subjects because I will argue with--there's another instructor on our faculty who is a--who believes in creationism,

Interviewer: A science instructor?

Teacher: Yes. And he does say that you have to--base it on the evidence. He is just not real sure. He's a biologist, and is just not real sure there is enough evidence to say that evolution is the way it is. Which is fine. More evidence will come. And that's what I tell my students for anything in science there's no sense in memorizing lots of facts because they change. That's the nature of science. That you have to base it on the evidence as it currently stands. As long as I've said that, then I haven't had any comeback. That, and I preface it by the statement that "I'm not going to tell you what I believe because I don't teach beliefs." But, an intelligent person will know what I believe because of the way I teach, and if you want to know what I believe, I will tell you privately out of class, but not in class. And what a person believes is their own business, but whatever you

believe, you must have a reason and evidence to back it up. And so far I haven't had any trouble.

Interviewer: So the event--the incidents that occurred to you in the past, have they affected you since that time?

Teacher: Yes. I no longer do Halloween plays. Because the kind of plays that the kids want to see are the blood, gore, scary stuff, and that's the kind that, particularly this one group that had formed were saying was "leading the children into devil worship" and all that bunch of bunk as far as I'm concerned. If they're that insecure. But simply to avoid the hassle. I just no longer do the Halloween plays.

Interviewer: Would you think about this term "avoid the hassle." I've heard other teachers say the same thing and I'd like to explore the meaning of that.

Teacher: Avoid the process of conflict resolution by simply avoiding the conflict. Because in many cases the process of conflict resolution takes a very, very long time. Because I personally believe the individuals who are instigating this kind of conflict have very closed minds and refuse to see anything else. And the process of opening a closed mind takes a great deal of patience and a great deal of time and sometimes my patience runs out. And you can't--if you're going to open a closed mind, you cannot ever run out of patience. You have to explain it and explain it and explain it, explain it a hundred different ways, a thousand different times.

Interviewer: Do you think it can be done?

Teacher: Sometimes. It depends on if the individual is totally close-minded or just close-minded on one subject. Because sometimes they're fine about everything else. It's like a red flag goes up when they hear the word evolution or something or Halloween or whatever. And that signals them to quit thinking and to, you know, just believe whatever somebody's told them.

Interviewer: You said you no longer do Halloween plays. Has it affected you in your teaching, in your science teaching? In either big or subtle ways?

Teacher: I think I've become more adamant in expressing that evolution is the way. The things that were controversial--I have become more adamant in standing up for that. In the years that I've been at this school I've earned a very good reputation of being a fair teacher and so when I stand up for something and really, you know, really, really stand up for it, it means something to the students. It's because of the respect that I already have. It's a little easier for them to

at least think about it if not accept it. And if I was at a new school, I don't know if I could do that. But because I am established at this school, its easier.

Interviewer: So, it has not made you, it hasn't made you restrict..

Teacher: Anything. I am--in the plays, yes, because I just don't do them. I just don't do them. But not in my science classes. It's made me even more adamant to stand up.

Interviewer: So you don't avoid certain words or...

Teacher: No, but I am very careful to define them. As a matter of fact, I don't even use the word evolution until I have thoroughly defined the word, and then I talk about it in this, you know, changing this, changing that, and then I say evolution. Also, I have used the word evolution in referring to things not pertaining to life so that they know that the word evolution only means change. I use it to talk about life cycles in stars. Stars are not living things but they do evolve from one thing into another. And that's usually where I hit it first. I say, "And this, the evolution of this star's life is to start from here and then to go to here and go to here." And then, I get the red flag at that point just to the word, not to the concept, to traditional Darwinism or whatever. So I can deal with the word first and then we can talk about everything else and it just helps clear the fog.

Interviewer: Have they usually heard the word evolution before?

Teacher: Sometimes. Sometimes. Usually in church.

Interviewer: If you were to describe the population that goes to your school, what would you say about them in general?

Teacher: Mixed. We have everything from, I guess the low end of the jet set scale to way below poverty level. The majority of the population are middle to upper middle class. Professionals.

Interviewer: Do the people from the professional part of the population object to science or

Teacher: No. No. It's the people from the low end of the socioeconomic scale.

Interviewer: I heard that there was a hassle at your school about a book of short stories. Are you familiar with that?

Teacher: I remember that the teachers couldn't believe that

somebody would object to it.

Interviewer: Just in summary, if you would reflect on these experiences that you've had and your feelings about them. How would you summarize them?

Teacher: I think that in a society like ours, it is a crime to ban any book. That books that reflect differences of opinion or thought are the essence of a free society. That to keep those books from the public is an act of repression which can only serve to hurt rather than encourage the freedom that we experience.

Interviewer: You're referring to books here. Do you mean...

Teacher: Books. Ideas. Anything along--the repression of those types of things. Something that is not true will be proven not true and will be knocked down on its own. It's like, for an example, all these channelists--these people who do mystic channelling and this kind of stuff--I think its just the craziest thing that ever was. I think the people who believe it are wacky, but I don't have the right to say, "You're wacky," you know. What they want to read, what they want to do, what they want to believe, that's their business and I have absolutely no right to say otherwise.

Interviewer: However, as a teacher what rights do you feel that you have?

Teacher: As a teacher I feel that it should be a union between the parents and the teachers to instruct the child. However, I also feel a very great demand--calling--necessity to explain the truth in a situation as it currently stands. Not to repress any information regardless of whether or not it fits the particular idea that I prescribe to or not. And when my ability to present the evidence, the truth as it currently stands, is denied, then I feel like my ability as a teacher is severely hampered. My job is not to establish a belief system. It is to present information upon which a conclusion can be drawn.

Interviewer: Is there anything else?

Teacher: I can't think of anything. That seems to be it. I don't know. I know that some people get real upset when I talk about evolution in class, but well, some of my children do because they're confused. Mama says this, teacher says this, who do I believe? And so we talk about what is a good belief? How do you establish a criteria for whom to believe at the present time? And we talk about the fact that you have a brain to synthesize information and that just because somebody in authority, no matter who it is, even me, says something,

doesn't necessarily make it true. That who a person believes is--that's their own--they have to decide. It gets down to critical thinking. Teaching critical thinking skills.

Interviewer: And you believe in teaching critical thinking skills?

Teacher: Yes. Yes. I believe it's essential. I guess the funniest thing that ever happened. I had a class of students who, you know, whatever I said was gospel and they just believed it.

One day, I mean, I couldn't get a rise out of them, I couldn't get them to think. Nothing. So finally I came out and started explaining why the world was flat. That new scientific evidence had come out that the world was in fact flat. We had been wrong all these years.

After two or three minutes some kids looked back and they kind of looked at me funny. They didn't want to say anything. And they didn't. And so I finally got to the end of the class, and I said, "Whoa! Wait a minute. Let's back up. Remember when I said all this? That was a lie! I was lying right to you and you didn't even catch it." And then, finally someone said, "Well, I didn't think that was right." And I said, "Well, why didn't you say something?" And so it finally got them to think critically.

Interviewer: That's a neat approach.

Teacher: But, it was the only way I could get through to that class. "Do you believe everything I tell you? Good. I have land in central Florida. Would you like to buy it?" And then they all cracked up and everything. You know. Whatever you hear, whatever you read, you have to look at it critically.

Interviewer: I appreciate this. You have been very direct and given me a lot of your time.

Teacher: That's a result of my experiences. I'm to the point if there's something I believe in, if I'm not in front of the class, I'll say it. Now, if I'm wrong, I'll come back and admit that later too. And I do that in class if I say something that's wrong. I come back and say, "I made a mistake. I was wrong." And correct it. So they know everybody makes mistakes. Everybody needs to go back and look.

Interviewer: You said that you were thinking about going for your doctorate and you're not sure because you like working with middle school kids. Have you thought about leaving teaching?

Teacher: No. I enjoy the interaction. But it's very tiring. It's very trying. I think the reason I enjoy it is because I'm not married. I have no family that I have to go home to. I can go home and block the world out. I'm a Star Trek fan, so I put on my Star Trek and make the world go away, and then I can have a chance to get the equilibrium back. But ah...

Interviewer: But these experiences haven't made you feel frustrated to the point of...

Teacher: No. No. As a matter of fact, it's made me want to continue fighting. I'm not willing to give up my freedom that easy.

Interviewer: But I wonder. There's been a lot written in the past year or two about the watering down of text books and curriculum materials to avoid controversial issues.

Teacher: They are.

Interviewer: And I wonder. I mean, I would think that in science education people would be looking at, you know, what is in fact going on in the textbooks and in the curriculum guides for the state.

Teacher: Thank God for California because for a long time Texas was demanding what went into textbooks and finally California came out and said there is no way unless you say this in the text book we're not buying it. And because they're such a big state and have such economic power behind them it stopped this overwhelming flood of elimination of controversy, elimination of things that make people a little uncomfortable, as far as their religious views go.

I don't use the text that much. Just for substitutes or for occasional use. Only about half of what I teach is in the text anyway. But most of what I do is my instruction, because a lot of the textbooks, some of the kids can't understand anyway when they read it. I do a lot of experimentation. And then beyond that the text book is either introduction or review.

VITA

I was born in Suffern, New York on July 14, 1949. I attended college in New York and graduated from the State University of New York at Brockport with a major in psychology in 1972. I received a Master of Science degree in Education from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1974. After teaching in the public schools of Asheville, North Carolina and Knoxville, Tennessee, I took a position at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina in 1978. In 1986, I was granted a sabbatical to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Following the sabbatical, I returned to Warren Wilson College to continue teaching in the Department of Education and Psychology.

My husband, Hal, and I live in Swannanoa with our three children, Adam who is 9 years old, and Katie and Betsy who are 5.