

The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of Education

**SILENT VOICES: HOMELESS VETERANS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND
PERCEPTIONS ON IDEALIZED DESIGN OF SCHOOLS**

A Dissertation in
Instructional Systems

by

David E. Magolis

©2010 David E. Magolis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010

The dissertation of David E. Magolis was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Alison Carr-Chellman
Professor of Instructional Systems
Dissertation Advisor
Chair of Committee

Heather Zimmerman
Assistant Professor of Instructional Systems

Fred Schied
Associate Professor of Adult Education

Edgar P. Yoder
Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education

Edgar I. Farmer
Professor of Education
Head of the Department of Learning and Performance Systems

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a qualitative research investigation that explores the educational experiences and perceptions of homeless veterans. To shed light on the phenomenon, the following research questions were addressed: What was the nature of homeless veterans' educational experiences? From homeless veterans' vantage points, how would homeless veterans improve schools? What does an ideal educational system look like from homeless veterans' perspectives? The study focused on providing in-depth descriptions of homeless veteran's narratives of their educational experiences and what they perceive as an ideal design of school. Phenomenological research methods based on the works of Van Manen (1998, 2003) and Moustakas (1994) was used to collect and analyze the data. I collected data primary through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The interviews of eleven male homeless veterans describing their educational experiences and perceptions of ideal design of school were audio and video recorded until a point of saturation. Analysis of data provided textures and structures and a synthesis of meaning and essences of the educational experiences. To establish trustworthiness I employed thick descriptions, highlighted my researcher bias, and member checked the data.

Findings from this investigation brought fourth information expanding knowledge about homeless veteran's educational experiences and perceptions of ideal schools which included the first two themes related to the participants' individual experiences: 1) Caring teachers (with the sub-themes of Going the Extra Mile, Mutual Respect, Student - Teacher special bond); 2) Impact of extracurricular activities, especially sports, as motivator. The remaining four themes emerged in relation to the participants' idealized design of schools: 1) Latest Technology, 2) Pragmatic Curricula, 3) Teachers (with the sub-themes of Caring teachers, Active Learning environments),

4) Dress Code. The findings of this study highlight the inherent complexities of educational experiences, educational design, and educational reform.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Context and Background.....	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Research Purpose	8
Research Population.....	9
Coming to Research Homeless Veterans	11
Definition of Terms.....	14
<i>Homeless</i>	14
<i>Veterans</i>	15
Summary	17
Chapter 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	18
School Reform.....	19
Challenges of School Reform	23
Systems Theory/ Systems Thinking.....	27
<i>Hard and Soft Systems</i>	32
Systemic Change.....	34
Education Systems Design.....	40
Understanding Homeless Veterans	42
Summary	45
Chapter 3. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	47
Researcher Identity.....	48
Qualitative Research Paradigm	50
Rationale for Implementing a Phenomenological Approach	54
Phenomenology as a Research Method.....	58
Research Participants	60
<i>Entering the Field</i>	60
<i>Research Participants</i>	62
<i>Data Collection</i>	63
Data Analysis	65
<i>Epoche</i>	67
<i>Horizontalization</i>	68
<i>Thematizing</i>	69
<i>Textual- Structural Integration</i>	70
<i>Trustworthiness</i>	71
Summary	72
Chapter 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY	73
Participants' profiles	73
<i>Bob</i>	73
<i>Dan</i>	74

<i>Bill</i>	75
<i>Rusty</i>	75
<i>Paul</i>	76
<i>Mike</i>	76
<i>Grumpy</i>	77
<i>Pinky</i>	77
<i>Ron</i>	78
<i>Jack</i>	78
<i>Brian</i>	79
Results.....	79
Theme #1: Caring Teachers	80
<i>Going the extra mile</i>	80
<i>Mutual Respect</i>	83
<i>Student - Teacher special bond</i>	86
Theme #2: Impact of extracurricular activities	89
<i>Sports as Motivators</i>	89
Ideal Design of Schools	94
Theme #1: Latest Technology	95
Theme #2: Pragmatic Curricula.....	98
Theme #3: Teachers	102
<i>Caring Teachers</i>	108
<i>Active Learning environments through Teachers</i>	113
Theme #4: Dress Code.....	117
Summary.....	122
Chapter 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	123
Summary of the Findings.....	125
<i>Lived Experience Theme #1: Caring teachers</i>	125
<i>Lived Experience Theme #2: Impact of extracurricular activities, especially sports, as motivator</i>	126
Ideal Design of Schools.....	128
<i>School Design Theme #1: Latest Technology</i>	128
<i>School Design Theme #2: Pragmatic Curricula</i>	129
<i>School Design Theme #3: Teachers</i>	130
<i>School Design Theme #4: Dress Code</i>	131
Limitations	132
Conclusions and possible research studies.....	133
References.....	136
Appendix. Semi Structured Interview Protocols	160

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, this dissertation is dedicated to God and my loving parents, Dick and Charlene Magolis. I could not have completed this dissertation without your support. You have had a profound impact on my life and I am ever grateful for your love and encouragement. Also, thank you for keeping me entertained during the 3 hour commute to State College and back to Bloomsburg. Mark, Deanne, and Kierce Magolis thank you for your continued love and support throughout my life.

The completion of my doctoral coursework and dissertation would not have been possible without the help, guidance and assistance of a number of people. I would like to express my appreciation for the support, time and guidance demonstrated by my dissertation committee. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation committee chair Dr. Alison Carr-Chellman for her encouragement and immutable belief in my ability to complete this dissertation. Her unique ability to educate through constructive comments was a blessing as it built my confidence, and made me a better person. I truly appreciate your guidance and wisdom.

I would also like to recognize the rest of my committee: Dr. Heather Zimmerman, Dr. Edgar Yoder, and Dr. Fred Schied. Thank you for your support and thoughtful comments throughout the dissertation process. I was indubitably blessed with a knowledgeable and collegial committee. I will take a part of each of you with me as I continue my research. Furthermore, I want to express a thank you to Cathy Watson and Nancy Crowder for their patience and guidance.

To my family and friends, I would also like to thank you. With your steadfast support, prayers and patience, I was able to finish this work. Thank you to all my friends at Bloomsburg

University for your encouragement, especially the basketball gang. In addition, I want to express my sincere appreciation to my exceptional proofreader, Dan Neyer.

To all the United States Veterans, I cannot thank you enough for defending this country. You are to be extremely commended for your service. A special thank you to my new friends for letting me tell their stories to the world: Dan, Grumpy, Bill, Mike, Ron, Jack, Rick, Paul, Rusty, Pinky, and Bob. I hope this work provides you with a more prominent voice in society. Lastly, I want to thank my dad for defending our country. Thank you, Dad.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

This study explored marginalized individuals' educational experiences and perspectives on ideal design of schools. Researchers have studied underrepresented populations in different parts of various social systems (Yu, T., 2006; Crozier, G., 2005; Nesbit, 2006). However, there are very few studies which reflect the opinions of underrepresented populations on the educational system. The purpose of this study was to explore, with homeless veterans participants, their educational experiences and perspectives on ideal design of schools (Banathy, 1995). The knowledge generated from this inquiry affords new insights and ultimately informs educational reform efforts. A qualitative multi-perspective study methodology was employed to illustrate the phenomenon under examination. Participants of this study included purposefully selected homeless veterans until themes reached a point of saturation (Strauss, 1987).

This chapter begins with an overview of the context and background that frames the study. Following this is the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and accompanying research questions. Also included in this chapter are discussions of the researcher's perspectives and assumptions in a section titled Coming to Research Homeless Veterans. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the proposed rationale and significance of the research study and definitions of some of the key terminology.

Context and Background

The launch of Sputnik by the USSR in 1957 alerted the United States of a need to strengthen mathematics and science education. On April 26, 1983, in a White House ceremony, Ronald Reagan informed the United States of its poor academic standards in a report titled "A Nation at Risk". The report, published by the U.S. Department of Education's National Commission on Excellence in Education, was a compilation of work that concluded that the

education system was "being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 112). When the report was released, President Reagan outlined a bold vision for reforming education that has lasted for more than a quarter of a century. From 1980 to the present, every administration has implemented a new education reform agenda. George Herbert Walker Bush was instrumental in attempting to increase standards based education according to state standards. Bush's bill "American 2000" failed, but successor, Bill Clinton continued with standards based policies for each state by providing funds to help establish state wide standards. In 2001, George W. Bush enacted *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB). This federal policy mandated that states were to close the educational achievement gap and make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. In 2009, a new initiative, *Race to the Top*, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is a school reform program that encourages and rewards States that are implementing comprehensive reform efforts around four areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Preparing students to enter and successfully compete in the ever-expanding high-tech global marketplace is another attempt to rectify our education system. From the USSR-led

mathematics and science education scare, to *Race to the Top*, our schools have been in a constant state of dynamic reform, and yet they are still found to be lacking (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). To put it simply, “why are these educational reform efforts now working”? “Are we exploring the right places, people, and ideas dealing with educational reform”? Based upon the research, educational reform efforts are failing and thus need to be explored more comprehensively.

It is imperative to look at historical events to enhance future practices. As the aforementioned brief history of educational change demonstrates most education reform efforts have been implemented in a top down fashion (Fullan, 1994). The federal government, along with state wide legislative systems, provides the funding needed for public schools to generate change. Superintendents, school boards, or other local governing bodies who obtain the money decide on the reform efforts and implementation strategies (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). A small number of educational reform efforts have been successful as a result of the current top-down implementation process (Fullan, 2009). But how do we know where to start? I purpose that a reform effort that starts at the grass roots level beginning with underrepresented individuals in our society will help bolster education reform efforts (Carr-Chellman, et al., 2009). By listening to marginalized voices and projecting their stories to a wider audience we can improve the already failed reform efforts.

Federal statistics indicate that 40 percent of enrolled college students take at least one remedial course as a freshman (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). In the United States high school graduation rates peaked at 77 percent in 1969, fell back to 70 percent in 1998, and have remained in this range since. The graduation rate for disadvantaged minorities is thought to be closer to 50 percent (ETS, 2007). According to the National Assessment of

Educational Progress (NAEP, 2009) the average reading and math scores for 17 year-olds has been unchanged since the 1970's. A 2007 report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) finds that the United States ranked 16th out of 21 OECD countries with respect to high school graduation rates. Furthermore, the United States now ranks tenth among industrial nations in the rate of college completion by 25 to 44 year olds (Ischinger, 2008). From these statistics schools at all levels are found to be, at times, ineffective and in some cases failing. I find this current data regarding our educational system alarming and propose that we need to take a critical look at reforming the system.

On a daily basis, educators try to do the right things to improve student achievement (Hebert & Durham, 2008; Wong & Rutledge, 2006). Instructors incorporate small groups, lectures, in-class activities, problem based learning (Rief & Heimburge, 2006; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), and integrate other alternative teaching methods in the best way, but find that test scores are low, mandates are not being met, and as a result other problems are manifesting themselves. Administrators and the government have tried to offer new programs, more money, and tighter regulations, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Schools design integrated curricula (Arredondo, 1998), change the number of periods in the school day, implement year-round courses (Tyack & Tobin, 1994), and move from a competitive grading system to portfolio assessment procedures (Seitz,& Bartholomew, 2008), yet still see only minimal change in the quality of student learning (Holcomb, 2001). In 2003, the Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education issued its report on the state of the nation's educational system since the *Nation at Risk* report. In their final report, the Koret Task Force described that the nation's "test scores have remained essentially flat since 1970. Students do no more homework today than they did 20 years ago. Remediation remains the fastest-growing activity on many college

campuses. Graduation rates have actually declined—less than three fourths of our young people now earn high-school diplomas, though this slippage is often masked by the suggestion that “equivalency certificates amount to the same thing” (2003, p.11). Fundamentally, nothing has really changed in schools in the last twenty-five years (Finn, 2008).

In an age of educational complexity, intensity, and swiftness the field of education systems design (ESD) is attentive to the assessment, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of educational systems (Jenlink, 2004). Educational systems design grew out of the early work of educational technologists. Educational technologists practice the kind of school reform planning that “aims to reduce the problem to ‘manageable parts’, seeking a solution to each. They believe that an incremental, piece-by-piece addressing of what is wrong in the system will correct the larger issue they aim to remedy” (Banathy, 2001, p. 298). Many school administrators savor technological solutions to learning troubles. Early educational reformers advocated new forms of technology from the radio, film, television, and more recently computer applications that never transformed schools in the ways expected (Cuban, Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001). As technological reform failed, user-designers advocated for their voices to be heard as experts in the design process. To date, most educational reform efforts have been top down (Fullan, 2009), and input from “non experts” has been ignored. The technologists’ approaches to reform do not integrate various constituents’ experiences in the design of educational systems (Carr-Chellman, 2005). I contend that we need to start listening to “non experts” as a way to reform the design process. Banathy explains, “The design of social systems, such as education, is a future-creating human activity. People in these systems engage in design in order to create and implement systems, based on their vision of what those systems should be” (2001, p. 288). In 2005, Carr-Chellman et al. began a longitudinal examination of “Unheard Voices” including

prisoners, homeless, working poor, and migrant workers as an inclusion into the ESD stakeholder participation literature (Carr-Chellman et al., 2009). In the first step of this longitudinal study, Carr-Chellman et al. examined reform efforts from the perspective of prisoner's and they suggested that perhaps we are not looking in the right places for our reform agenda inputs. They found from the prisoner's personal experiences that additional support structures in schools, caring teachers as positive influences on their lives, their own personal safety and motivation were all factors influencing their educational experiences. Gail Furman (2004) states that "it is only through 'social discourse' that the voices of the marginalized can be heard and the inequities of the system can be exposed" (p. 220). A systems view of education is sure to include all marginalized populations (Banathy, 1995). I believe that including marginalized populations in the school reform debate will have a positive effect on educational reform efforts. Tony Wagner contends that "the future of our economy, the strength of our democracy, and perhaps even the health of the planet's ecosystems depend on educating future generations in ways very different from how many of us were schooled" (2008, p. xxvii). This entails planning for the future by really listening to alternative viewpoints from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented regarding their educational experiences.

While policy makers, teachers, school boards, and school leaders (and, less often, parents, business leaders, religious leaders, community members, and learners) have worked to improve our schools, the vast majority of those engaged in school change serve on committees, which follow agendas set by policy-makers (Daresh, 1992) and too often amount to "rubber stamp" committees (Carr-Chellman et al., 2009). Many school policy changes are authorized from a central office superintendent, school board, or a political leader (No Child Left Behind), and teachers are faced with the pressure to implement, resist, or discard those directives. Are the

individuals who authorize these educational decisions including all constituents within the educational system? Decisions are being made and policies implemented without inclusion from all stakeholders. Stakeholders are often left out of the decision making process due, in part, to the centralization of school districts. Brown & Hunter (1998) explain that minorities are typically left out of the decision making process because those issues that are not direct orders from a centralized office form councils. Most of the councils elect or appoint community representatives still leaving the majority of voices unheard. Lopate (1969) contends that if minority groups had a say in the decision making process there would be “positive changes in both the affective and instrumental behavior of participants” (p. i). Oftentimes minorities do not take an interest in educational reform because as Comer states they often have a lack of knowledge of school protocol, have negative experiences with schools, and feel unwelcomed in middle class institutions (1980). Interest in understanding the opinions of those who have been rendered silent in the educational policy decisions making may generate more effective and more just educational systems.

Statement of the Problem

Many researchers have studied underrepresented populations in different parts of various social systems (Yu, T., 2006; Crozier, G., 2005; Nesbit, 2006). However, there are very few studies which reflect the opinions of nontraditional populations on the educational system. In Kozol’s work *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools* (1991) he drew our attention to the current state of public education by critiquing the system that created inequalities for poor and homeless children. Similarly, Terrell (1998) raised voices of African-American male inmates and explored their school experiences. While these research studies brought focus to nontraditional populations in schools (Wong, S. T., Seago, J. A., Keane, D., & Grumbach, K.,

2008; Murray, C., Waas, G. A., & Murray, K. M., 2008; Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G., 2002), none of them clearly focused on how alternative populations perceive the *ideal* educational system. Engaging in idealized systems design for schools with a broad base of stakeholders is clearly called for in the Educational Systems Design literature (Banathy, 1995). Banathy notes that, “when it comes to designing educational systems, the right and responsibility to design are shared by those who serve the system, who are served by it, and who are affected by it” (2001, p. 288). I concur with Banathy that since each and every learning environment is unique we need to empower our users to design systems for the participants, by the participants. Carr-Chellman et al. (2009) is one of the few pieces of literature that examines alternative populations as an inclusion into the ESD stakeholder literature and ideal school design. There is an inadequate amount of research that supports how non-experts might inform the school reform and systemic change debate. This research helps fill what appears to be a significant void in the literature in that very few studies examine non-traditional voices in school reform. No research outside of the prior work by Carr-Chellman et al. which serves as a foundation for the present study (Carr-Chellman, et al., 2009) examine under represented individuals with an eye toward idealized design of schools and school systems. This study represents an opportunity to extend this stream of research.

Research Purpose

According to Fullan (1994), the current top-down educational systems design approach is failing. Data clearly indicates that the United States has fallen behind other countries when it comes to Math, Science, and graduation rates, especially for minorities. Therefore, we need to critically examine our current educational systems design by including marginalized individuals, and those who are not characteristically a part of the reform conversation. The purpose of this

multi-perspective phenomenological (Van Manen, 1998) study was to investigate how homeless veterans perceive and describe their educational experiences and ideal design of schools. Below

I defined each term in the research question:

- How-facilitates clear, concise working of the questions and denotes my openness to anything whatever that may emerge about education in the course of my interviews.
- Perceive- implies something about the relativity of education (education is perceived differently by people)
- Describe-refers to what education means for homeless veterans
- Experience- is a way of pointing to the fact that I sought comprehensive stories from the research participants regarding how they perceived and described their lived educational experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 106-107).
- Idealized design- to create the most inspiring and best possible design (Banathy, 1991, p.174).

Through the use of such procedures as semi-structured interviews and participant observation the study aimed to better understand and give voice to homeless veterans' dynamic educational experiences. To shed light on the phenomenon, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What was the nature of homeless veterans' educational experiences?
2. From homeless veterans' vantage points, how would homeless veterans improve schools?
3. What does an ideal educational system look like from homeless veterans' perspectives?

Research Population

This study examined the educational experiences of a segment of Americans that face distinctive problems in society: Homeless Veterans. On January 15, 2008, Fox's pundit Bill

O'Reilly of the O'Reilly Factor television show asserted that there are few, if any, homeless veterans in America by stating "there are not many of them out there (veterans)" (Rieckhoff, 2009). Yet, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that "about 154,000 Veterans (male and female) are homeless on any given night and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year" (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2009). The American society is deeply committed to remembering veterans when it is convenient. On Veterans Day we signify our gratitude for their service by incorporating their presence in parades, dinners, and memorials. We raise our voices in cheers as we exalt their return from combat. And we salute their service with the American flag. However, after their days in combat have passed, political media critics lead us astray from real issues, and we tend to overlook our veterans as they quietly slip through the cracks of society (Cohen, et al., 1999). These individuals have put their lives on the line for our country, yet we fail as a nation to engage and listen to their voices on matters such as school change.

Homeless Veterans make up a large portion of our population, but their voices are not considered when it comes to education forum. According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) July 2008 *Third Homeless Assessment Report to Congress*, in a single night in January 2007, single point analysis showed there were 671,888 sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons nationwide in the United States (HUD). Also, HUD reported the number of chronically homeless people (those with repeated episodes or who have been homeless for long periods, 2007 data) as 123,833 (HUD). Veterans represent about 15 percent of the total sheltered homeless adult population (HUD, 2007, p. 14). Although homeless, many of these people are educated and I believe can contribute to the school reform dialogue if their voices are amplified.

Homeless veterans have been found to be more and better educated than homeless non-veterans. When comparing homeless veterans to homeless non-veterans Tessler, Rosenheck, and Gamache found that veterans have 12:43 years of education compared to 11:21 years of education for non-veterans (2002). Thus, homeless men who are veterans have 1.22 more years of education. Tessler et al. found this to be statistically significant. Winkleby and Fleshin (1993) conducted a cross-sectional survey of 1,431 homeless adults during the winter of 1989-90 at three shelters in Santa Clara County, CA. Of the 1,008 U.S.-born men, 423, or 42 percent, were veterans, including 173 combat-exposed veterans and 250 non-combat exposed veterans. There were 585 nonveterans. Winkleby and Fleshin found that compared to the veterans, the nonveterans had less education beyond high school and a higher rate of not completing high school. Only 4 percent of nonveterans had four years of college or more. Out of the 250 noncombat veterans 7 percent had four or more years of college and 16 percent of combat veterans had four or more years of college. Winkleby and Fleshin's findings are statistically significant and they clearly illustrate that homeless veterans are more educated than nonveterans and have educational experiences well beyond high school which can significantly extend the earlier work on homeless populations' perspectives on idealized school design (Carr, Chellman, Magolis, et al., in progress). This research project indicates that this level of engagement with the specific homeless veteran population has greatly contributed to the educational reform debate.

Coming to Research Homeless Veterans

For as long as there have been armed forces, veterans have been honored and have received substantial public attention and admiration. However, do we consider them when we negotiate a school reform agenda? Homeless veterans are individuals with a wide variety of

school experiences. Most homeless veterans, for example, have high school degrees (GED or Diploma) while others have extensive military training or advanced degrees. Because of homeless veterans' diverse educational backgrounds and their status in society, they make up a population who can significantly improve educational reform if their voices are amplified and taken seriously in the reform dialogue.

The foundation for this research project was originated in August, 2007, when I volunteered to explore educational reform as a research apprentice to Dr. Alison Carr-Chellman. After engaging in a rigorous literature review, and discussions with educational reformists and educational change agents, I progressed with the research under the project title "Unheard Voices". As part of the "Unheard Voices" project, groups of traditionally marginalized or unheard members of our society-- prisoners, working poor, migrant workers and homeless-- were identified to be part of the larger longitudinal research study. I agreed to lead the Unheard Voices study relating to homeless individuals. As part of this project, the amplification of their voices was the primary goal and it was determined that video as well as audio resources should be collected to more effectively share their voices with a broad audience. Upon approval from the University's Institutional Review Board, I proceeded to explore locations where we could identify homeless respondents. As a volunteer advisor to the student group *Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance Against Homelessness* at Bloomsburg University, I facilitated the coordination of students to assist homeless individuals in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Working side by side with homeless individuals while a member of this group, I was awakened to unique issues pertinent to homeless veterans. After a lengthy interaction phase with the homeless, they opened up and enlightened me with unsolicited information about their lives. I quickly noted that many of the individuals that I was helping were United States veterans. I was struck by the

pervasiveness of homeless veterans and decided that projecting their voices could ultimately and notably extend the more general work on homeless to give a different light to the overall study. An extended conversation regarding access to homeless populations is discussed in the research participant section of chapter 3.

Ultimately, this study evolved from the Unheard Voices project where prisoners and homeless individual's perspectives of idealized school design were gathered and data analyzed. This previous research solidifies the voices of marginalized individuals and creates a school reform agenda that includes perspectives of the broadest possible segment of the population. Incorporating once respected and well educated homeless veterans into this research population contributes appreciably to the established reform dialogue with marginalized individuals. Homeless veterans were selected based upon the research by Tessler, et al. (2002), and Winkley and Fleshin (1993) which established that homeless veterans have an increased number of years in a formal educational setting compared to nonveterans who are homeless. Therefore, well educated homeless veterans offered a marginalized group of individuals because there are few well educated homeless individuals. In all probability, the increased learning experiences lead to an even deeper essence of their past experiences and future expectations of schools. Thus, this represents a different finding from the earlier research because my focus was on a population who has been more well-served or at least more successful in the educational system, but still remain in an unsuccessful position in society as defined in traditional terms.

The unit of analysis, homeless veterans, was selected based upon the large number of homeless veterans, their status in society, and my own interests in homelessness. My desire to study this population evolved from my work as a student in the Social Sciences. I studied Criminology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and subsequently pursued a degree in Adult

Education and Communications Technology. Criminology is an interdisciplinary field that deals with individuals in society. Education is also an interdisciplinary field that studies individuals from all societal groups. Thus, my formal educational background stimulated and prepared me for this research project. Gradually, this phenomenological project evolved into this substantive field study.

Definition of Terms

Homeless

What do people mean when they talk about homelessness? Are individuals referring to homeless people as those who sleep on the streets begging for money or the people sleeping in parks or on church steps? How do we classify people living in emergency shelters or transitional homes? What happens when one loses one's permanent housing and stays with a friend or family member? Are people who use soup kitchens homeless? When clothes are donated to homeless individuals, are they truly homeless? Is a fixed living arrangement under a bridge considered a home? When one is called homeless, what does it really mean? How do we define homelessness?

There is no sole and generally accepted definition of homelessness. For the purposes of this investigation, I employed the widely accepted definition created in the 1987 federal McKinney Act. The Act defines a homeless person as

(1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and (2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is — (A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); (B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be

institutionalized; or (C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (P.L. 100-77).

Veterans

Veterans are upheld throughout the world as modern day national heroes. They make extraordinary sacrifices for their country that few individuals are willing to make. We tend to identify a soldier based upon their regal uniforms or during veterans' celebrations. But what is the definition of a veteran? For this research study a veteran is identified based upon the definition from the U.S. Code TITLE 5 > PART III > Subpart A > CHAPTER 21 > § 2108 U.S. code title 5. This definition states

“(1) “veteran” means an individual who—

(A) served on active duty in the armed forces during a war, in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized, or during the period beginning April 28, 1952, and ending July 1, 1955;

(B) served on active duty as defined by section [101 \(21\)](#) of title [38](#) at any time in the armed forces for a period of more than 180 consecutive days any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976, not including service under section [12103 \(d\)](#) of title [10](#) pursuant to an enlistment in the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard or as a Reserve for service in the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, or Coast Guard Reserve;

(C) served on active duty as defined by section [101 \(21\)](#) of title [38](#) in the armed forces during the period beginning on August 2, 1990, and ending on January 2, 1992; or

(D) served on active duty as defined by section [101 \(21\)](#) of title [38](#) at any time in the armed forces for a period of more than 180 consecutive days any part of which occurred during the period beginning on September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last date of Operation Iraqi Freedom;

and who has been discharged or released from active duty in the armed forces under honorable conditions;

(2) “disabled veteran” means an individual who has served on active duty in the armed forces, has been separated there from under honorable conditions, and has established the present existence of a service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension because of a public statute administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs or a military department;

- (3) “preference eligible” means, except as provided in paragraph (4) of this section—
- (A) a veteran as defined by paragraph (1)(A) of this section;
 - (B) a veteran as defined by paragraph (1)(B), (C), or (D) of this section;
 - (C) a disabled veteran;
 - (D) the unmarried widow or widower of a veteran as defined by paragraph (1)(A) of this section;
 - (E) the wife or husband of a service-connected disabled veteran if the veteran has been unable to qualify for any appointment in the civil service or in the government of the District of Columbia;
 - (F) the mother of an individual who lost his life under honorable conditions while serving in the armed forces during a period named by paragraph (1)(A) of this section, if—
 - (i) her husband is totally and permanently disabled;
 - (ii) she is widowed, divorced, or separated from the father and has not remarried; or
 - (iii) she has remarried but is widowed, divorced, or legally separated from her husband when preference is claimed;
 - (G) the mother of a service-connected permanently and totally disabled veteran, if—
 - (i) her husband is totally and permanently disabled;
 - (ii) she is widowed, divorced, or separated from the father and has not remarried; or
 - (iii) she has remarried but is widowed, divorced, or legally separated from her husband when preference is claimed;
- but does not include applicants for, or members of, the Senior Executive Service, the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, the Senior Cryptologic Executive Service, or the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Drug Enforcement Administration Senior Executive Service;
- (4) except for the purposes of chapters 43 and 75 of this title, “preference eligible” does not include a retired member of the armed forces unless—
- (A) the individual is a disabled veteran; or
 - (B) the individual retired below the rank of major or its equivalent; and
- (5) “retired member of the armed forces” means a member or former member of the armed forces who is entitled, under statute, to retired, retirement, or retainer pay on account of service as a member.”

The homeless veterans for the research are located in northeastern Pennsylvania. All participants conformed to the definition of veteran as stated in the U.S. Code TITLE 5 > PART III > Subpart A > CHAPTER 21 > § 2108. Participants are also identified based upon the definition of homeless as stated in 1987 federal McKinney Act.

Summary

This phenomenological study sought to explore the lived educational experiences of homeless veterans. What I have found fills what is a significant void in the literature in that very few studies examine non-traditional voices in school reform, and examined them with an eye toward idealized design of schools and school systems. This study is of interest to anyone involved with teaching, learning innovations, school reform, educational systems design, and user-design. Even though it is was not intended to provide recommendations for sweeping changes to existing processes, lessons learned from this context provide valuable information to others involved in the school reform debate. Since reform can be a slow and complex process in which there is not always a sustainable outcome, the perspectives and stories of the underrepresented individuals in this study serve to inform the reader and help them adapt their own school reform agenda.

Chapter 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this multi-perspective phenomenological study was to explore the lived educational experiences of homeless veterans. Through the use of such procedures as semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the study aimed to better understand and give voice to homeless veterans' potentially dynamic educational experiences. Genuine stakeholder participation involving non-traditional participants is in its infancy in the United States (Davies, 1981). Ulrich (1983) recommends that when working with human systems, we should reflect significantly on problems. He asks: "How can we produce solutions if the problems remain unquestioned"? We should transcend problems such as school reform and investigate critically the problem with all of those who are affected by the problem. I believe this study brings the dialogue on education reform up to date. Specifically, this study offers poignant ideas and idealized images for the educational reform community, which will begin to help cultivate the educational system to better serve marginalized populations. It is in this forum that fresh ideas are needed. Disenfranchised individuals hold many ideas that can contribute to the ongoing conversation of school reform; their voices simply need amplification.

To date, little research exists that has gathered perceptions of marginalized populations regarding their educational experiences. However, this anomalous idea of seeking marginalized views in education has been supported in theoretical pieces. One of the most influential relates the importance of engaging in "social discourse" to address social inequities (Giroux, 1991). Stedman and Kaestle (1987) note that our educational systems have failed marginalized populations, and that, when studied, these groups are treated as objects of the study and not sources of new information. Gail Furman (2004) states that "it is only through 'social discourse' that the voices of the marginalized can be heard and the inequities of the system can be exposed"

(p. 220). Through social discourse, marginalized groups, including homeless veterans, can voice their perspectives of education and participate in the school reform debate.

Because of the unique nature of school reform, a description of the nature and context of school reform and the challenges of reforming the educational system is provided at the outset of this chapter. Following that, an explanation of the aspects of systems theory, systems thinking, and hard and soft systems, the principles that serve as a theoretical framework for this study, is given. Systemic change and educational systems design serve as two main components of any educational reform efforts and are included. The conclusion of this chapter is an examination of the literature relating to homelessness with special attention paid to homeless veterans and the role they play in our society.

School Reform

Educators believe that every child has the capacity to succeed in school and in life. Yet we see as educators that far too many children fail to meet their potential. Is this a societal dilemma? Are the school reform efforts effective? Borman, Hewes, & Brown, (2004) explain that “many students, especially those from poor and minority families, are placed at risk by school practices that sort some students into high-quality programs and other students into low-quality education” (p. 2). This reform effort could be just one of the countless explanations that could help shape an answer to why students and schools are failing. Kaestle & Lodewick (2007) explain that fifty years ago alliances forged between interest groups, government agencies, and political groups dictated policy making in many policy sectors (including education). However, recently we have observed the development of shifting alliances among the previously diverse groups and joint actions by “strange bedfellows” who cooperate on items of mutual interest (including education) (Kaestle & Lodewick, 2007). What is more, there is no clear-cut

educational policy maker, and unheard voices are becoming better represented (Kaestle & Lodewick, 2007) in the education reform dialogue. In this section highlighted a brief history of school reform efforts and discussed the importance of the school reform debate.

In 1957, the USSR was the first country to launch a satellite into space, which created a sense of failure in the United States. With the launch of Sputnik, the United States realized that it needed to strengthen mathematics and science education. In 1965 the federal government enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as part of Title 1 as a method of distributing funds to underperforming schools. The Act is a broad statute which principally funds primary and secondary education. The funds mandated in the Act are authorized for professional development, instructional materials, educational program support resources, and the promotion of parental involvement. In 1983 the U.S. government issued a report titled, *A Nation at Risk*, which highlighted the shortcomings of U.S. schools and led to an inundation of local, state, and federal school reform efforts. By the late 1980s “standards-based reform” was implemented in the attempt to align students’ academic achievement to the curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Kaestle & Lodewick, 2007). In 2001, under George Bush, *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was put into effect, which mandated states to close the educational achievement gap and make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. In 2003, the Hoover Institution’s Koret Task Force on K-12 Education issued its report on the state of the nation’s educational system, updating findings that originally appeared in *A Nation at Risk*. Their report was titled *Our Schools and Our Future: Are We Still at Risk?* In their final report, the Koret Task Force described the accelerated consequences of globalization since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*:

The shrinking globe has made it easier than anyone in 1983 could have imagined for investments and jobs to go anywhere on the planet that seems likeliest to succeed with them. Here we must look to our schools to produce the highly educated citizenry on which America's future economic vitality depends. (p. 9)

In 2009, an innovative school reform effort continues: *Classrooms for the Future*, which encourages teachers to use technology as an effective tool for educating students and to prepare students to enter and successfully compete in the ever-expanding high-tech global marketplace; this initiative is yet another attempt to rectify our education system. From the USSR-caused mathematics and science education scare to *Classrooms for the Future*, our schools have been in a constant state of dynamic reform, and yet they are still found lacking.

School reform is influenced by a variety of interested delegates. A primary agent in school reform is the federal government. Patrick (2006) believes that the federal government's principal role should be to sponsor research into new paradigms of education change at all levels. The author proposes the paradigms should:

- Drive a vision for systemic change. This begins with a serious understanding of what systemic change is, how it happens and what can be done to facilitate it.
- Convene a wide array of stakeholders to connect, collaborate and think about how instruction can best foster individual student growth and how schools of the 21st century might look with blended models of online learning and information technologies imbedded in learner-centered instruction.
- Support research and development (R&D) on a new paradigm of assessment whose summative component produces an "inventory of attainments" for each student rather

than norm-based grades, and whose formative component provides information to guide instruction, and thereby better informs students, parents, teachers and school leaders of how successful their programs are.

- Support R&D on new models of curriculum and assessment focused on 21st century needs and skills
- Support R&D on new forms of instruction that are freed from the shackles of time and customized to each student's needs and talents.
- Require applications for federal grants to illustrate how they move toward transformation and systemic redesign.
- Train teachers and administrators for the information age. This entails fostering a major shift in mindset or worldview about education, as well as training them in the use of specific technologies and learner-centered methods of instruction. There needs to be a very different physical concept of how a modern school works and looks. Commitment to nurturing human quality is critical to successful design. The human being is the most valued part of the system, and helps us create systems that are just better for everyone. (p. 28)

This discussion should make the point that numerous attempts at substantively reforming schools have been implemented. However instead of simply conceiving a new educational idea, we need to focus our efforts on a deep understanding of why the efforts are not working, the process, the system, and most importantly the lived experiences.

Challenges of School Reform

“Like the African proverb, ‘It takes a village to raise a child’, many educational researchers charge that it takes a comprehensive school reform to raise student achievement”.

- Tonia Durden, 2008, p. 403

The *Nation at Risk* report has had many residual effects on school reform. Desimone (2002) addresses two residual waves of educational reform that started in the 1980’s with the *Nation at Risk* report. These reform efforts were largely based on systemic changes, such as “increasing standards and regulations, and resulted in increased teachers' salaries, increased core requirements and a lengthened school day and year” (Desimone, 2002, p. 433). Hawley (1988) criticized the first reform efforts for not adding any substance to the educational system (prescriptive performance measurements) and for relying primarily on top-down approaches (centralized authority for policymaking, thus increasing rules and regulations). As a result of the limiting nature of the first wave, the second wave of reforms was initiated. Desimone (2002) noted that “the second wave focused primarily on broadening and deepening the relationship between schools and families, addressing the needs of special groups of students, attracting and retaining effective teachers, upgrading teacher education, and restructuring teachers' roles to make them more professional (Carnegie Corporation, 1986; Metz, 1988; Hawley, 1988)” (p. 433). Regardless of these two recent waves of reform, schools did not change much (Desimone, 2002).

Meta-analyses of the literature on school reform generally concur that most reforms have not been institutionalized or as successful as their author's desired (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Ravitch, 2000; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Borman, Hewes, Overman & Brown, 2004) and are found lacking. The piecemeal and inept assistance programs that were part of Title I schools since the mid-1960s resulted in a growing idea that at-risk students and high-poverty schools could be better served by Comprehensive School Reform (CSR). Borman et al. (2004) state that "this belief was encouraged by informed opinion (e.g., Rotberg, Harvey, 1993), by general findings from the effective schools research tradition (Edmonds, 1979; Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000), and by the concept of systemic reform (e.g., Smith & O'Day, 1991), more than by specific pioneering empirical studies" (p. 57). There are several educational change advocates according to Stokes and Carr-Chellman "(Banathy, 1991, 1996; Reigeluth, 1994; Jenlink, 1995; Peck and Carr, 1997; Cuban, 2003) that blame the failure of school reforms on the piecemeal, reductionist approach" (p. 97). The number of empirical studies related to comprehensive school reform is limited and primarily theoretical in nature, but provides a solid foundation for discourse.

Noell and Gansle (2009) discuss selected issues surrounding ethical, theoretical, and pragmatic concepts of systemic change, stating "implementing and sustaining goal-directed systemic change in education is a complex issue" (p. 78). They illustrate an organizational heuristic for describing the challenges confronting systems change agents along three dimensions. These dimensions include the selection of what to change, the ethical implications of the change, and the initiation and sustaining of the change. Durden (2008) notes that there are many widely used reform models: Success for All, Accelerated Reader, Direct Instruction, and Core Knowledge and NCLB. However, NCLB has 11 components which all comprehensive

school reforms must demonstrate in order to receive federal funding. Durden notes the reform models are all very different in the “educational philosophy, instructional methods, and content focus employed” (p. 407) and these differences are explanations of why school reform efforts continue to be challenged. As Crowley and Hauser (2007) note, “several researchers have published useful guides for educators who are responsible for evaluating research on whole school improvement models (e.g., Cicchinelli & Barley, 1999; Fashola, 2004; Zhang, Fashola, Floch, Aladjem, & Uekawa, 2000; Hansel, 2000; Herman et al., 1999; Ross, 2000; Slavin, 2003; Slavin & Fashola, 1998; Stringfield, 1998; Traub, 1999; Yap et al., 2000)” (p. 38) but yet the teachers concur that efforts are still found lacking.

Taylor’s (2006) study identifies a common pitfall of educational reform sustainability. The study examined a sample of 395 urban, disadvantaged, low-achieving elementary and middle schools using Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) in 2001–2002 and found that nearly 1/3 of these CSR schools ended their relationships with their model developers by the end of 2003–2004. However, the remaining 2/3 of schools successfully sustained a reform relationship for more than 3 years—in some cases for more than a decade. Cohn (2005) goes on to note that initial studies by the Harvard Civil Rights Project (Sunderman & Kim, 2004) and the Center on Education Policy (2003) of district implementation of NCLB across the country reveal important challenges as school leaders begin to grapple with the complex array of NCLB requirements. Erlichson (2004) states that implementation of a federally mandated CSR in New Jersey did not garner teacher support and buy-in. This is a critical element to the implementation of any type of reform program. The research concluded that “teachers did not feel that they had been adequately involved in the selection of the (reform) model” (Erlichson, 2004, p. 19). If teachers feel that their opinions have not been included in the reform model, then marginalized

individuals *certainly* are not likely to feel part of the reform debate. If we truly want an inclusive school reform discussion, we need to find ways to ensure that not only to internal stakeholders such as teachers and external stakeholders such as business leaders, but also marginalized populations such as homeless are invited and engaged in the discussion.

Desimone et al. (2004) studied the implementation of new elementary programs by utilizing focus group data. The study participants were 20 preschool teachers, 22 kindergarten teachers, and 53 parents from 10 schools in 5 states. This was a multiyear, multisite study of a comprehensive school reform program, the School of the 21st Century (Desimone, Payne, Fedoravicius, Henrich, & Finn-Stevenson, 2004). The participants reported that preschool and elementary teachers were able to collaborate and coordinate curriculum with the individual students and improve transitions to kindergarten for preschool students and their parents, and increased and sustained parent involvement as a result of the implementation of this school reform program. The data from the focus groups also showed that implementation challenges negotiating the use of the classrooms, conflict in the sharing of resources such as the library and playground, building an understanding and respect for preschool education on the part of elementary school teachers, dealing with salary inequities between preschool and elementary teachers, and protecting preschool from the negative aspects of the accountability environment.

The literature of the continuing dialogue of school reform is immense and diverse. As we can see from the research, there are many pertinent issues dealing with school reform, from implementation, to sustainability, to teacher buy-in that continue to challenge school reform efforts. Based upon the reform literature, we know that reform efforts have been failing and the need to look beyond the complex issues and start at the grass roots is essential. Starting at the

grass roots level may provide ideas for improving implementation efforts, enhance sustainability, and ultimately raise reform awareness through broader dialogue.

Systems Theory/ Systems Thinking

Michael Fullan, the leading expert on change in education, states

"The main problem is not the absence of innovation in schools, but rather the presence of too many disconnected, episodic, fragmented, superficially adorned projects."

- Michael Fullan, 2001, in *The New Meaning of Educational Change*

The previous research with marginalized populations in general, and homeless veterans in particular, seems to focus primarily on personal experiences of homeless or other socially marginalized populations, but does not engage respondents in idealized design activities. My study seeks out a rarely heard audience of homeless veterans within the theoretical framework of system theory, systems thinking, idealized systems design and systemic change. Through the application of systems theory to the complex problem of engaging marginalized populations, the researcher believes that school reforms efforts will become increasingly effective and more widely accepted.

A system can be identified as a coordinated set of parts used to accomplish one or more goals (Checkland, 1981). At the most intricate level, it is an assemblage of interrelated objects that are interdependent with shared intentions. Examples of systems include social systems, ecological systems, and, especially significant to this inquiry, educational systems. The word "system" descends from the Greek verb *sunistanai*, which originally meant, "to cause to stand together" (Senge, 1994, p. 91). As this origin suggests, "the structure of a system includes the quality of perception with which we, the observer, cause it to stand together" (Senge, 1994, p.

90). Webster's Online Dictionary (2009) says that a system is a "regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole". According to Bertalanffy (1968) a general systems theory should "derive from a general definition of system as a complex of interacting components, concepts characteristic of organized wholes such as interaction, sum, mechanization, centralization, competition, finality and so forth, and to apply them to concrete phenomena" (p.13). The concrete phenomena in this study are homeless veterans' educational experiences and their design of future educational systems.

Bertalanffy (1968) was among those who were the first to introduce General Systems Theory, which governs organization of a system's entities. Banathy and Jenlink (1996) report that during the early 1950s the fundamental elements of the general theory of systems were established by researchers such as Ashby, Bertalanffy, Boulding, Fagen, Gerard, Rappaport, and Wiener. Our society has seen a substantial paradigm shift in the way we view the world since the mid 20th century. Society has evolved from an industrial age to an information age, seemingly overnight. Watson and Reigeluth (2008) "note that over the past decade, new approaches to instruction and education have been increasingly advocated to meet these needs of the information-age society and learners" (p. 46). Our industrial-age view of the world has forever changed due to knowledge, technology and the "flattening" of the world. In his 2005 best seller, *The World is Flat*, author Thomas Friedman alludes to the concept of a flat world where society begins to experience and view globalization through a new lens. This new lens focuses on a system in which societies are instantly linked to and affected by all others. Not only is society experiencing a paradigm shift, so is our current educational system. Hutchins (1996) provides us with a basic understanding of the critical shift to systems thinking:

The shift in world view to a systems perspective recognized that systems don't operate in isolation; they are interdependent and connected, and cause and effect aren't linear. That is, because everything is connected to everything else, no single action can be isolated as the single cause of something else. (p. 13-14)

Hutchins (1996) and Ackoff (1974) maintain that all problems are "messy", and have complex solutions. Doll (1993) describes education as a social system that is complex and chaotic. One means of understanding an educational problem better is by looking at it systematically and holistically, without reducing the problem to one solution. Approaching a problem from a reductionist view causes us to disregard another symptom or solution that may be plausible. Bertalanffy (1952) points out that this systems view is not new. Aristotle stated that "the whole is more than the sum of its parts" (p. 149) and that relationships between parts are a vital element, as stated by Bertalanffy:

The properties and modes of action of higher levels are not explicable by the summation of the properties and modes of action of their components taken in isolation. If, however, we know the ensemble of the components and the relations existing between them, then the higher levels are derivable from the components. (1952, p. 48)

As a result, it is imperative to look not only at the parts, but also at the relationships between the parts, how they relate, and how an adjustment in one part impacts the others. Through research and insight into homeless veterans' educational perspectives, the parts of the educational system that have been left out can begin to take their place within the system. Ackoff stated "... no problem ever exists in complete isolation. Every problem interacts with other problems and is therefore part of a set of interrelated problems, a system of problems" (1974, p. 21). If one is to think systemically, (Carr, 1996b) one must not disregard any element

of the system. This thought is perhaps the most simplistic, obvious, and fundamental connection in systems thinking. Ackoff (1981) looked at a system as “a whole that cannot be divided into independent parts. From this, two of its most important properties derive: every part of a system has properties that it loses when separated from the system, and every system has some properties – its essential ones- that none of its parts do” (p. 15).

Hammond (2002) notes that a systems view of education developed in various disciplines, such as behavioral sciences, mathematics, physics, social sciences, and so forth. In education, a major impetus was given to systems thinking by Banathy (1991), Reigeluth (1993), Jenlink (1995), Carr (1998) and other researchers. Banathy (1991) explains the fragmented approach to the study of education:

In education, we study the sociology of the classroom, the psychology of instruction, the economics of education, the anthropology of school culture, and the politics of governance. This way of trying to understand education brings to mind the parable about a group of blind men who try to describe an elephant by touching its various parts. Compartmentalized inquiry, combined with the use of widely differing orientations, methods, and languages of separate disciplines, results in unintegrated and incomplete knowledge and characterizations. (p. 9 – 10)

Banathy and Jenlink (1996) call attention to the philosophy of systems which seeks to uncover “the most general assumptions lying at the roots of any and all parts of systems inquiry” (p. 39). By investigating the roots of the educational system through homeless veterans, I may better inform the larger body of educational reform efforts. However, just discovering and broadcasting the roots will not assist in the sprouting of a reformed education system; that will

require a change in our current thinking. Peck and Carr (1997) recognize the concept of systems thinking as a necessary component to making educational change efforts viable. They call for a “destruction of traditional power structures” and the creation of procedures for continuous improvement that involve empowered stakeholders who will serve their communities (p. 316).

Banathy (1991) according to Lee (2006) provides an overview of systems and how the application of systems can be approached. Banathy states that

systems can be understood as a philosophy, a universal assumption about the purpose, relationships and productivity of the entities of a system, with a clear emphasis on the instrumentality of systemic values and beliefs for the sustainability and development of systems. Systems can also be understood as theory, or systemic claims we may have about the nature and behavior of the systems we study or in which we operate....

Additionally, systems can be perceived as methodology, or possible concrete applications of systems theory to the constant challenges and opportunities of our particular systems, often in an attempt to facilitate systems design and/or systemic change (Banathy, 1991) (Lee, p. 21).

Banathy (1991) and subsequently Peck and Carr (1997), Fullan (2001), and Reigeluth (2008), postulate that in schools the problem is not the deficiency of innovations but the presence of too many piecemeal projects. The fragmented and piecemeal approach to education and reforms that stay within the system instead of stepping out of it are the major cause for unsuccessful educational change. The call is instead for a systems design approach that stretches the boundaries of the current system, and involves designing a new system, a future educational system for our society, user-design (Carr-Chellman, 2007). User design is a design perspective that allows users to participate in the design of learning environments. User design is a

philosophy that encourages the design of the learning system to those within the system.

Furthermore, user-design is a philosophy that falls under soft systems, a discussion of the differences between systems, hard and soft is therefore appropriate to the research question.

Hard and Soft Systems

A paradigm shift has taken place within the literature of Systems. Checkland (1981, 2000) differentiates between two schools of thought within systems theory: hard systems and soft systems. During the 1950s -1960s, one expressed concept dominated systems thinking- hard systems. Throughout the 1970s in to the 1990s, soft systems thinking evolved. According to Checkland, (2000) in the era following World War II, efforts were made to implement wartime operations research to industrial companies and government agencies. As a result, a paradigm shift in systems thinking was developed, now called `hard' systems thinking. This new thinking was concerned broadly with engineering a system to achieve its objectives. He continues to explain “systems were here assumed to exist in the world; it was assumed that they could be defined as goal seeking; and ideas of system control were generalized in cybernetics” (2000, p. 49). Hard systems have their foundations in systems engineering, as an approach to solving technical problems. Hard systems have a clear goal using an input-process-output model (Checkland, 1981). An example of a hard-system approach can be understood through a factory assembly line. Workers on the assembly line receive training, which is considered a soft system. However, the manufacture of the car or machine parts would be the hard system. Hard systems proponents are interested in knowing the processes but also in having an objective goal beforehand (Checkland, 1981). Advocates of the hard systems approach include Jenkins, (1972) and Hitch (1955). Along with Checkland, they agree that hard systems presuppose that the world is a set of systems and that these can be methodically engineered to attain objectives.

Checkland (2000) poignantly paints a picture of soft systems in the article *Soft Systems Methodology: A thirty year retrospective* where, “the world is understood to be problematic, but it is also assumed that the process of inquiry into the problematic situations that make up the world can be organized as a system. In other words, assumed systemicity is shifted: from taking the world to be systemic to taking the process of inquiry to be systemic” (Checkland, 1994, p. 80). Soft systems have no known end that can be predicted (Checkland, 1981) and contain factors that are of a social nature and have no identifiable end. The idea that one might not find the absolute answer is an accepted position (Checkland, 1981; Hutchins, 1996). Proponents of soft systems include Churchman (1968), and Hutchins (1996).

The conceptual framework of this study falls within systems theory, which states that any given system involves several components, interconnections and interdependencies (Bertalanffy, 1968). Manipulating one element of the system will impact the rest of the system (Capra, 1982). For instance, education is part of a larger system-- a school, community, state, society --and it has subsystems such as the curricula, educators, facilitators, and so forth. When it comes to homeless veterans’ school experiences, various societal components (teachers, parents, students, curriculum, etc.) compose individuals’ experiences. Homeless veterans are a part of the educational system that has failed but their experiences have been ignored. Garnering their perspectives generated new knowledge regarding school reform and could lead to improved reform efforts.

Systems theory was used in this particular research study as a theoretical foundation because of its main assertion that everything is connected to everything else and that one part of the system influences the others. Another part of system theory is systems design which call for user-design. This aspect of systems theory is central to the research question that asks for

perceptions of an ideal school. Furthermore, the systems approach is more “suitable for ill-defined, messy, or wicked problems” (Checkland, 2000, p. 49). Most can agree that societal and more specifically educational issues are at times messy and affect various constituents. The theory is pertinent to this particular study because of the theory’s well-known relation to education reform and its applicability to the successful relationships between societal issues. The concepts of interdependency and interconnectedness are unquestionably in alignment with the process of school reform. To systemically make an effort to reform education, one must consider every part involved in the system. If we are to attempt to understand educational experiences through a marginalized group, we must include their voices in the reform of their own systems because they are, indeed, a vital part of the system. It would be wrong to presume that the users, just because they lack formal power or are considered “non-experts”, are not part of the systems and do not hold any voice in the process of school reform—or even more importantly that they do not hold some important information that can create better designs for new schools.

Systemic Change

Michael Fullan (2001) is noted for being the first researcher to associate Change Theory with school reform. Fullan says that “the vast majority of change efforts are misconceived because they fail to understand and harness the combined forces of moral purpose and skilled change agency” (Fullan, 1993, p. 42). Understanding and illustrating a system facilitates understanding of when and where there are problems, and what can be done to improve the system. Most of the current literature on systemic change in the field of education focuses on system change as it applies to school reform. Banathy, a leader in education reform and change, states that

change happens to us, to the systems to which we belong, to other systems that surround us, and in the larger societal environment in which we and our systems are embedded. Change also flows from our systems to the environment. How we relate to change can make all the difference. We can be spectators or its victims, or we can take charge by “evoking fresh creative responses” to it and, thus, become masters of change. (1996, p. 38)

Systemic change stems from systems thinking (Hutchins, 1996), which is a discipline rooted in a “framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things” (Senge, 1990, p. 68). Carr-Chellman (1998) defines systemic change as “holistic, contextualized, and stakeholder-owned” and systematic as “linear, generalizable, and typically top-down or expert driven” (p. 370). The author continues to explain “systemic change has its foundations in systems theories—both hard (Beishon & Peters, 1972; Demming, 1982; Hall, 1962; Opter, 1955) and soft (Banathy, 1968; Boulding, 1985; Checkland, 1981; Churchman, 1968; Hutchins, 1996)” (p. 370). Primary to systems thinking is the idea that systemic change is comprehensive. Systems thinking “recognizes that a fundamental change in one aspect of a system requires fundamental changes in other aspects in order for it to be successful. In education, it must pervade all levels of the system: classroom, building, district, community, state government, and federal government” (Reigeluth, 1994, p. 3). Reigeluth (1994) and Banathy (1991) both conclude that systemic change must include the nature of the learning experiences, the instructional system that implements those learning experiences, the administrative system that supports the instructional system, and the governance of the whole educational system.

A concise history of change research can be found in Everett Rogers' fourth edition of *Diffusion of Innovations* (1995), where he traces formal change research to Gabriel Tarde's 1903 book, *The Laws of Imitation*. Tarde was a French lawyer and judge who is regarded as one of the founders of sociology and social psychology (Rogers, 1995). Tarde wrote about social factors leading to invention. He looked at social systems from the perspective of a feedback loop that included the criminal justice system. Similar research emerged from anthropologists in England, Germany, and Austria soon after Tarde's writings in France.

The diffusion of innovations theory is comprehensively acknowledged in the systems literature (Surry & Brennan, 1998; Rogers, 1995; Rogers & Scott, 1997). However, recently a different approach to change (i.e., systemic change) has represented a new paradigm of thinking (systems thinking). The new method of thinking has changed from the industrial mentality to the information approach, which entails redesigning the entire system and helping all stakeholders of the system to evolve their intellectual models. Any debate regarding change, and, more recently, systemic change must mention Rogers' research because it has a significant impact on the change literature. Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory (1995) attributes the first known study to investigate the diffusion of an innovation to Bruce Ryan at the University of Iowa. For the first major diffusion study of the modern era, Ryan tested the adoption of a hybrid-seed corn (Ryan & Gross, 1943). From this point, efforts in other fields, namely sociology, garnered strength, and the theory subsequently evolved in such fields as anthropology and education, extending the knowledge base of the field. Rogers' theory helped shape the education field holistically, as it was grounded in eras full of innovation and change.

Arthur Levine (1980) extrapolates from his book *Why Innovations Fail* to help us understand the connection between reform, change, and innovations. He states

Innovation combines the elements of reform and change; reform implying new and change implying different. Innovation can operationally be defined as any departure from the traditional practices of an organization. As a result, the elements of newness inherent in innovations is a relative phenomenon-what is new in one place is old in the next. (p. 3-4)

Newness in systemic change is a phenomenon explored extensively by Jenlink et al. (1998). According to Jenlink et al. (1998), a new system has a purpose of systemic change. The purpose is to design a different and dramatically more effective educational system from what currently exists. They Jenlink et al. define systemic change as an approach to change that:

- Recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies among the parts of the educational system, with the consequence that desired changes in one part of the system are accompanied by changes in other parts that are necessary to support those desired changes, and
- Recognizes the interrelationships and interdependencies between the educational system and its community, including parents, employers, social service agencies, religious organizations, and much more, with the consequence that all those stakeholders are given active ownership over the change effort (p. 219).

Systems thinking is a vital component of any systemic change effort. For instance, to make any significant progress in reform efforts, all members of the system must be consulted. Jenlink et al. expound upon the concept of inclusivity as it relates to change efforts. They note that change effort should include all people “who have a stake in the educational system (stakeholders), such as school board members, administrators, teachers, students, parents, business and community people (including religious, social service, justice, and political

leaders), and university people” (Jenlink et al., 1998, p. 220). The concept of inclusivity is vital to discussing educational change and insuring the inclusion of unheard populations. In this case, homeless veterans are individuals who are part of the educational system and who have hitherto been left unheard in reform efforts.

Although inclusivity is a major component of change efforts, there are other aspects of change that provide challenges to educational reform. Strauss (1978) provides additional clarification to the complexity of change in social and societal systems.

[W]e are confronting a universe marked by tremendous fluidity; it won't and can't stand still. It is a universe where fragmentation, splintering, and disappearance are the mirror images of appearance, emergence, and coalescence. This is a universe where nothing is strictly determined. Its phenomena should be partly determinable via naturalistic analysis, including the phenomena of men [and women] participating in the construction of the structures which shape their lives. (Strauss, 1978, p. 123 in Strauss and Corbin 2003)

It is precisely this fluidity of our culture that thwarts many school reform efforts. Thus, the systemic change agenda needs to evolve and change with the fluidity and cohesiveness that will sustain reform efforts. One means to this cohesive and sustaining state is to change our current thinking from an industrial mode to an information system. Jenlink (2001) clarifies this thinking by stating “the patterns and processes of change inherited from the industrial era, more concerned with cultural reproduction and control, no longer meet the needs of a postmodern society or the children of that society” (p. 283). Banathy (2001) provides an overview of educational change thinking from the old to the new needs of education. Banathy suggests:

<i>The old story of Education:</i>	<i>The new story of Education:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transmits the culture, maintaining the existing state, as a rather closed system. • Acts as an autonomous social agency, separated from other societal systems. • Provides instruction to individuals during their schooling years. • Focuses on the basics, the traditional subject matters and prepares for occupation roles. • Is organized around the instructional level: teachers present subject matters to students. • Provides for teacher- class and teacher – student interaction as the primary modes of schooling. • Uses instructional means and resources that are textbook-based and are confined mainly within the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets and shapes the society as a future-creating, innovative open social system. • Integrates with others social and human service systems as a comprehensive system of learning and human development • Provides life-long learning experiences for the full development of all individuals. • Provides for socio-cultural, moral and physical/mental/spiritual development as well as civic, economic, political, scientific, technological and aesthetic learning experiences. • Is organized around the learning experience level, arranging the environment so that learners can master learning tasks. • Uses a variety of modes: self-directed learning, team learning, technology-assisted learning, and social and organizational learning. • Mobilizes all learning resources and arrangements available in the community. Learning is situated in the life experiences of learners.

Concepts of the fluidity of change and the paradigm shift in thinking from the industrial to the information approach, coupled with the idea that attempts to fix the old system are outmoded and that there is a need for a completely new system, are at the forefront of systemic change and school reform efforts. However, if we continue to ignore marginalized voices, our reform efforts may continue to fail. Watson and Reigeluth (2004) call for methods to “better utilize the power of community members’ ownership in educational change; it is crucial to

explore and learn more about ways to enhance community members' involvement in school district systemic transformation efforts" (p. 62). Listening to homeless veterans will enhance all community members' involvement and could lead to the transformation of school districts. A systemic approach to educational change might be the single, most comprehensive, and thus most effective method of generating meaningful and sustainable paradigm change in an educational environment, by bringing forth the participation and contribution of all components and stakeholders, and thus leading to the transformation of the system.

Education Systems Design

The process of transforming a school system is a far more complex and difficult endeavor than is piecemeal reform (Banathy, 1991; Peck and Carr, 1997; Fullan, 2001; Reigeluth, 2008), because it requires designing and implementing an entirely new paradigm of education, rather than changing a piece within the existing paradigm (Reigeluth, 1996). Watson, Watson, and Reigeluth, (2008) note that the primary approach to systemic transformation that has been offered in the literature is the idealized design approach pioneered by Russell Ackoff (1999) in the corporate sector and adapted by Banathy (1996) to educational systems. In terms of a conceptual framework, this explorative study is based on idealized systems design from within the Educational Systems Design (ESD) framework (Banathy, 1991). ESD incorporates Banathy's (1991, 1996) concept of an idealized systems design as the notion of the "ideal" as the focal point; the new educational system is created by "those who serve the system, those who are served by it, others who have a vested interest in it, and all those who are affected by it" (p. 195).

Reigeluth (1994) makes it clear that ESD is concerned with generating a new paradigm of education thinking, as opposed to making changes within the old system. ESD incorporates fundamental principles from systems theory such as comprehensive change which involves

making a change in one aspect of a system and how that change will affect all other aspects of that system. But also it asserts that perhaps the best way to think about changing the system is to change it all at once rather than in piecemeal fashion. To date ESD literature has heavily advocated user-design (Banathy, 1992, 1996, 2000; Reigeluth, 1993; Jenlink, 1995, 2001) approaches, but only as it applies to those currently within the system, never as it applies to those who have been excluded or completely marginalized from the mainstream of society. It is unlikely that the views of homeless veterans will be considered unless they have some way of providing feedback about their experiences in the system. This study seeks to collect and widely distribute the voices of a group of homeless veterans to the broader educational reform community.

The inclusion of marginalized groups is a key component to ESD. Carr (1996 a, b, c; Carr-Chellman, 2007) argues that for stakeholder participation to be truly effective, it must be obvious to the stakeholders that the effort associated with the design is worth their while. Stakeholders will agree to participate if they strongly feel their voice will be heard (Carr-Chellman & Savoy, 2004), and honestly listened to. “Enacting substantive change requires more than a simple open invitation to stakeholders to participate Each unique situation determines who the users are, and each user has a different experience and knowledge level” (Carr-Chellman & Savoy, p. 376, 2004). Banathy endorses the idea that if all users of the system are involved in the design, the individual values, ideas, and aspirations will be better incorporated into the design and thereby foster deeper commitment to the innovation (Banathy, 1994). Users are empowered by participation (Carr-Chellman, 2007). Jenlink (2004) continues that systems design recognizes the rights of each person who serves the system or is served by the system to be included in determining the conceptions and actions that guide the creating of a new system (Banathy, 1996,

2000; Jenlink, 2001) (p.331). Cuban (2001), in his examination of technology integration in several schools in California's high-tech Silicon Valley, noted low adoption rates amongst teachers, suggesting that the externally-imposed reform was not seen as useful to most teachers, and thus they had little expectation of changing their practice once computers arrived. By incorporating the visions, perspectives, and voices of homeless veterans into the educational systems design dialogue, we may see a significant impact on the future of school systems design.

Understanding Homeless Veterans

“As long as there are veterans or veteran family members searching for shelter on the streets...we have failed in our duty to honor the commitment of the brave men and women who chose to serve.”

- Senator Barack Obama, 2007

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty states that approximately 3.5 million people, 1.35 million of them children, are likely to experience homelessness in a given year (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2007). Veterans make up between 38 and 40 percent of the male homeless population, whereas in the general population they comprise approximately 20 percent of all males (Benda, 2006). Homeless veterans essentially have the same homelessness risk factors as other homeless Americans: poverty, joblessness, mental illness, and substance abuse (Rosenheck and Koegel 1993).

Robert Rosenheck has researched homelessness and more specifically homeless veterans in the United States for decades. Rosenheck et al. (1996) made this observation about veterans

In spite of [a] long history of homelessness among veterans, the appearance of large numbers of them during the 1980s was not easy to understand. Since World War II, U.S.

Veterans have been offered a broad range of special benefits, including educational assistance, home loan guaranties, pension and disability payments, and free health care. In fact, veterans consistently have higher median incomes, lower rates of poverty and unemployment, and are better educated than U.S. males in similar age groups. Veterans should have been less vulnerable to homelessness than other Americans. (p. 97)

Rosenheck & Koegel (1993) reviewed data from a series of 1980s reports regarding homeless veterans and found that homeless veterans were older than homeless non-veterans; more likely to be white, they had more years of education and were more likely to have been married, but were not different on indicators of residential instability, current social functioning, physical health, mental illness or substance abuse. When comparing homeless veterans to nonveteran homeless Tessler, Rosenheck, and Gamache (2002) found that veterans have 12:43 years of education compared to 11:21 years of education for non-veterans.

Homeless veterans are a complex subset of our population, thus they are difficult to accurately describe. Homeless are transient, difficult to record in terms of overall numbers, and are found to live in both rural and urban settings. To better understand homeless veterans the National Coalition of Homeless Veterans compiled a factsheet to describe some of the major characteristics of these individuals. Out of the number of homeless veterans that have been studied the Coalition notes that:

- 23% of homeless population are veterans
- 33% of male homeless population are veterans
- 47% Vietnam Era
- 17% post Vietnam
- 15% pre Vietnam
- 67% served three or more years
- 33% stationed in war zone
- 25% have used VA Homeless Services
- 85% completed high school/GED compared to 56% of non-veterans

- 89% received Honorable Discharge
- 79% reside in central cities
- 16% reside in suburban areas
- 5% reside in rural areas
- 76% experience alcohol, drug, or mental health problems
- 46% white males compared to 34% non-veterans
- 46% age 45 or older compared to 20% non-veterans
- Service needs:
 - 45% help finding job
 - 37% finding housing (p.1)

This list paints a clearer picture of the services provided to veterans, the setting they may live in, and problems they face. Homeless veterans come from a wide variety of backgrounds depending on the dates they served in the military and their physical location, urban vs. rural. This diversity of homeless veterans influenced the type of responses that I received and the experiences that they shared. I feel that projecting these diverse voices will ultimately impact the dearth of literature dealing with unheard voices.

A November 11, 2008 article by Nevius in the San Francisco Chronicle titled *No way to honor veterans: 2,000 veterans homeless in S.F.; An estimated 2,000 former service members live on S.F. streets or in shelters*. Although the title of this article relates to a microcosm of homelessness--veterans in a geographical region--the title alludes to a macrocosm within the United States in regard to the number of homeless veterans across the nation on a given night. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates nearly 196,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. According to the VA's 2008 CHALENG (Community Homelessness Assessment) report, approximately 400,000 veterans experience homelessness during the year (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, 2009). Hombs (2001) estimates that thirty percent of homeless are veterans. When examined separately by sex, 1 percent of homeless women are veterans compared to 33 percent of homeless men. For men, this proportion is not different from

the 31 percent of the general client male population whom the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates were veterans in 1996, but somewhat lower than the 40 percent of veterans among homeless men found in a systematic synthesis of data from other studies of homeless populations (Rosenheck et al. 1996).

Although homelessness is a societal issue that, like school reform, cannot be resolved overnight, homeless persons need to be integrated into societal decision making. The inclusion of these unheard voices into the school reform conversation will engender a dialogue that is more inclusive, and, I believe, will effective the design of schools. It is important to understand that I am not suggesting that the educational system is solely or even primarily responsible for the troubles facing homeless veterans—not at all (Carr-Chellman et al., 2009). Their situations are by and large the result of complex societal and personal factors. I believe, based on this study, that all manner of factors: family life, neighborhood values, and social support systems are critical forces in their lives and their futures. I sought answers to a fairly fundamental question they have never been asked, “What could schools look like?”

Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on school reform, systems thinking, systematic change and educational systems design in relation to the research question. The concept of school reform was elucidated from a United States historical perspective to illustrate that attempts to sustain reform efforts throughout the last half of the twentieth century were bleak. Because reform efforts failed, it was essential to highlight some of the challenges of school reform from the extant literature. Systems thinking was presented in a variety of contexts and a definition of systems thinking was developed in order to provide a framework from which the study was based. Systematic change and educational systems design were presented to bring

attention to identify with systematic change efforts and to better situate the phenomenon of educational systems design being studied in this research. Finally an understanding of homeless veterans was presented to appreciate what the literature states about this group of participants.

Chapter 3. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

“And so it is “I,” the person among other persons, alone yet inseparable from the community of others, who sees as if for the first time and who reflectively comes to know the meanings that awaken in my consciousness. I am the person who gives existence its essence, the one who returns essence to existential life”. - Moustakas, 1994, p. 58

This chapter begins with a formulation of the research questions. I then discuss issues concerning the phenomenological research method relevant to the question, introduce the research site and participants, explain how I collected and analyzed the data, and, finally discuss issues of trustworthiness. Particular attention is paid to the rationale for using this qualitative methodology, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures.

This study answered the question: How do homeless veterans perceive and describe their educational experiences and ideal design of schools? Many researchers have studied underrepresented populations in different parts of various social systems. However, there are very few studies which reflect the opinions of nontraditional populations on the educational system. Furthermore, to date, most educational reform efforts have been top down (Surry, 1997) and input from "non experts" have been largely ignored. The purpose of this study was to explore nontraditional populations' experiences of educational systems and perspectives of idealized design of schools. For this study, homeless veterans were selected as individuals with a prominent role in our society, but yet unheard in the current education reform debate. Furthermore, veterans tend to have a wide variety of educational experiences. Some homeless veterans, for example, have high school degrees (GED or Diploma) while others have extensive military training and graduate degrees in a variety of fields. Because of homeless veterans'

diverse educational backgrounds and their status in society, they make up a population who I believe can significantly affect educational reform if their voices are projected. I anticipated that the knowledge generated from this inquiry would afford new insights into educational systems and ultimately inform educational reform efforts. A qualitative multi-perspective study methodology was employed to illustrate the phenomenon under examination. Qualitative methods are ideally suited to the task of describing lived experiences from an individual perspective. Participants of this study included purposely selected individuals, consisting of a comparative number of homeless veterans, until themes were exhausted.

The **three questions** that guided and remain at the forefront of this research were:

1. What was the nature of the educational experiences of homeless veterans?
2. From homeless veterans' vantage points, how would homeless veterans improve schools?
3. What does an ideal educational system look like from homeless veterans' perspectives?

Researcher Identity

As an apprentice researcher for the "Unheard Voices" longitudinal research study with Dr. Carr-Chellman, I have interviewed thirteen homeless individuals regarding their educational experiences. However, I have found that sometimes, it is essential to remove oneself from one's current environment to better understand it. Thus, the Ph.D. coursework at Penn State University provided in-depth understanding of social and philosophical issues in education as they relate to class, gender, and race (Aronowitz, & Giroux, 1985; Kanpol, & McLaren, 1995; McLaren, & Torres, 1999; Hooks, 1994). The coursework presented the impetus for applying a holistic systems perspective to researching homeless veterans and their educational experiences. My work with homeless populations points out that there are significant differences between homeless veterans' perspectives, and those of the more general homeless population.

Through my courses and readings, I began to understand the value of educational systems design (Banathy, 1991; Reigeluth, C., 1993; Jenlink, P., 2004). As a student, I valued good instructional design because it was organized and I learned and developed skills necessary for my advancement as a designer. As a student studying design, I identified with design processes and the value it adds to education. However, instructional design and educational systems design are at opposite ends of the design gamut. Some models of instructional design are very strict in their application with any changes drastically affecting the validity of the model. Some, on the other hand, are only a set of procedures that can be transferred, translated or transplanted. It is up to the instructional designer to compare the current situation to the model to decide what should be done to facilitate learning. Contrast that with educational systems design which is constantly evolving, adjusting to future educational endeavors, interconnected, interdependent, and consistently comprehensive. Educational systems design is not new, but is imperative to how future students grow and develop. Banathy (1991) explains the dynamic state of educational systems design and how we can improve our vision and existing system:

At times of accelerating and dynamic societal changes, when a new stage is unfolding in societal evolution, inquiry should not focus on improving existing systems. A “focus within” limits perception in education to the old societal image (of the machine age) in which the system is still rooted. A design rooted in an outdated image is useless. Locked in an old design, such as we are now in education, we must break the old frame of thinking and reframe our “mindset.” We should “jump out from the system,” explore educational change and renewal from the larger vistas of the transformed society, and envision a new design. (p.15)

Owens and Valesky note that school reform has been pervasive and that efforts have been expanded to make changes in U.S. schools. However, school reform frequently means extremely different things to different people because they apply various theories when trying to understand and explain things in education (2007). A quote by Michael Fullan, an expert on change in education, stated, "The main problem is not the absence of innovation in schools, but rather the presence of too many disconnected, episodic, fragmented, superficially adorned projects" (2001, p. 21). This disconnected nature of our current educational system influences and inhibits educational progress. The need to systematically and holistically include unheard voices in the current reform debate could have a vital impact on the future of educational systems design and reform, and on the future of America. I believe that if we truly try to understand the lived educational experiences of Homeless Veterans their experiences can assist us in our efforts to design instruction and help guide educational systems design.

My view of this research is pragmatic. Neither homelessness, nor the general nature of education are problems that can be solved in a closed environment. We need to begin to incorporate voices into the school reform literature that have previously been unheard. I believe that incorporating educated persons (veterans) who at some level may not be accepted by society (homeless) as a worthwhile population for information will provide valuable insight to the school reform debate.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

"Research methods are plans used in the pursuit of knowledge. They are outlines of investigative journeys, laying out previously developed paths, which, if followed by researchers, are supposed to lead to valid knowledge" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 41). Through course work at

the Ph.D. level, I experienced both qualitative and quantitative research methods at a critical level. The positivistic courses stimulated me to consider the power of controlling the social environment and generalizing research. However, my interest piqued during a class titled *Qualitative Research in Adult Education*. This course introduced me to the theories, principles, and practice of qualitative research, a naturalistic research environment (Marshall, C., & Rossman, G., 1989; Creswell, J., 2007; Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A., 2008). Qualitative research is a method where individuals construct meaning from their experiences and can liberate themselves from those conditions that are restricting to that experience. Liberating oneself from the data or bracketing is the “act of suspending one’s various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world” (Van Manen, 1998, p. 175). By suspending one’s beliefs and getting to the essence of the experience is an objective of qualitative research. It was in my second qualitative course, *Applied Qualitative Research for Work Practice, Innovation, and Systems Design*, which enabled me to investigate qualitative research paradigms and methodologies and to develop my research skills (Rossman & Rallis, 1998) for this study.

Qualitative research methods have a long and distinguished history saturated with diverse theoretical beliefs. In *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) summarize a long and distinguished history of qualitative research in North America, dating back to the 1920s and 1930s at the Chicago School. They point to eight historical periods in North America that cut across numerous educational fields. Denzin and Lincoln define the periods as the “traditional (1900-1950); the modernist or golden age (1950-1970); blurred genres (1970-1986); the crisis of representation (1986-1990); the postmodern, a period of experimental and new ethnographies (1990-1995); post experimental inquiry (1995-2000); the

methodologically contested present (2000-2004); and the fractured future (2005-)...the eighth moment asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states-globalization, freedom, and community ” (p.3). Denzin and Lincoln note “that any definition of qualitative research must work within this complex historical field. Qualitative research means different things in each of these moments” (2000, p. 3).

It was imperative to acquire a firm understanding and definition of the method before proceeding with the research. For a foundational explanation of qualitative research I adopted Denzin and Lincoln’s definition. They define qualitative research as

...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (2000, p. 3)

Creswell (1998) adds that the qualitative paradigm is a constructivist approach, naturalistic, interpretive and post-positivist or postmodern. The interpretive nature of my research question is congruent to the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative methods as it is an approach in which individuals reconstruct life experiences. The qualitative method assumes that reality is not objective but subjective and that individuals create meaning from lived

experiences. Denzin & Lincoln (2000, p. 20) describe five 'phases' that clarify the 'type of activity' researchers engage in, which can aid in the identification of the philosophical orientation: (1) The researcher as multicultural subject, (2) theoretical paradigm and perspective, (3) research strategies, (4) methods of collection and analysis, and (5) the art and politics of interpretation and evaluation. By means of the philosophical qualitative foundation, this study is grounded in an explicit qualitative approach, phenomenology.

I chose phenomenology as my research "road map" according to the specific taxonomic beliefs within the qualitative research paradigm (Creswell, 2007; Creswell 1998; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Van Manen, 2003), as the beliefs clearly fit with my inquisitiveness about the lived experience of the participants. Van Manen notes, "the way in which one articulates certain questions has something to do with the research method that one tends to identify with" (2003, p. 2). My question sought lived educational experiences and perspectives of homeless veterans. Because of my focus on lived experiences, phenomenological concepts frame the research approach and methodology. Van Manen defines a lived experience as... "the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect upon it" (Van Manen, 1998, p. 9).

Choosing a phenomenological method is based on the supposition that we do not fully understand educational experiences from marginalized individuals and school reform since contributions on these issues have been from a limited constituency. A phenomenological approach provides the discourse with perspectives and lived experiences of our educational systems. Sokolowski (2000) wrote in relation to conducting phenomenological research and has observed "Phenomenological statements, like philosophical statements, state the obvious and the necessary. They tell us what we already know. They are not new information, but even if not

new, they can still be important and illuminating, because we often are very confused about just such trivialities and necessities” (p. 57). The trivialities that have been researched are school reform. However, as Sokolowski notes the trivialities can still be illuminating and produce new knowledge. This research allowed the researcher to study how homeless veterans experienced the phenomenon of education, apart from how theories and models predict it should unfold. Through the use of such procedures as semi-structured interviews and participant observation, the study was able to better understand and give voice to homeless veterans’ dynamic educational experiences.

Rationale for Implementing a Phenomenological Approach

In *Doing Phenomenology: Essays on and in Phenomenology*, Spiegelberg (1975) implied that attempting to cover the field of phenomenological literature in regard to the lived experience is nearly impossible but does sort through some common characteristics: (1) Experience is an ‘intentional’ act in which an experiencer is directed toward an experienced object; (2) A full experience is a synthesis of several intentional acts; (3) The experience of an object refers beyond itself; (4) Experience has temporary structure; (5) Experience extends to any type of individual objects; (6) Experience forms the pre-predicative stage of our cognitive life; (7) Experience constitutes the experienced; and, (8) Experience is a combination of receptive and spontaneous processes. I believe this perspective of the field makes a circular observation, but what is common throughout is the theme of the lived experience. It is precisely this intentional lived experience that I sought from a phenomenological approach.

Qualitative research can be conducted using various approaches. I used a qualitative method because it is predominantly useful in “describing multidimensional, complex

interpersonal interactions where the limited focus of quantitative measures would be inadequate” (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 243). Qualitative methods are ideally suited to the task of describing and understanding educational change and individuals perspectives. To garner understanding and individual’s perspectives this research utilized phenomenological methodology.

Phenomenology is rooted in the work of 19th century and early 20th philosophers-- Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty (Hultgren, 1989). Phenomenology aims to study lived and existential meanings while describing and interpreting them in their essence (Van Manen, 2003). Leedy & Ormod (2001) continue, phenomenology attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of a particular situation or phenomenon- the “lived experiences of several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51). According to Holstein and Gubrium (1994), Husserl believed that the "relationship between perception and its objects was not passive" (p. 263). This means that perception is not objective, but that each individual seeks meaning from what he or she observes or experiences. In essence, a perceiver creates meaning.

Phenomenology is the study of a lived experience. A phenomenological research approach was chosen because it “does not explain, but rather it creates understanding among the set of observers and observed” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p.100). “Phenomenology does not produce empirical or theoretical observations or accounts. Instead, it offers accounts of experienced space, time, body, and human relation as we live them” (Van Manen, 1998, p.184). Further Van Manen explains that “phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 9). Therefore, the intent of the researcher is to unearth the meanings of the daily experiences and remain true when reporting facts. This is accomplished by means of a systematic process of uncovering, describing, and exploring

meaning of the lived experience. A key concept of the process according to Giorgi (1985) is that of 'description'. It is the emphasis of the description of the world lived in by a person that translates into the experience. This is done through the inquiry process which attempts to unfold the experience by asking "what is this experience?" This process is an inductive, descriptive research method that attempts to study phenomena as they are consciously experienced (Beck, 1994). Van Manen concludes that phenomenology differs from other disciplines in that "it does not aim to explicate meanings specific to particular cultures (ethnography), to certain social groups (sociology), to historical periods (history), to mental types (psychology) or to an individuals' life history (biography). Rather, phenomenology attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our lifeworld" (1997, p. 11).

Van Manen noted that phenomenology aims to gain a deeper appreciation of the nature or understanding of our everyday experiences systematically, holistically, and comprehensively (2003). As I watched homeless veterans, I wondered what their educational experiences were like. How do they describe their favorite teachers? What classes were their favorites and why? How do they describe their friends, and the activities they were involved in as students? Questions arise regarding the school building and the surrounding facilities. A phenomenological approach enabled me to explore these questions. Answers to these questions can assist educational leaders, policy makers, politicians, and all interested parties to gain an understanding and rich image of underrepresented individuals educational experiences. The research method was chosen because it does not provide us with conclusions that can be generalized and used for prescribing and predicting. However, implementing this method brought all interested entities closer to their educational experiences and perceptions.

Phenomenology has various theoretical assumptions based upon the theorists and methodologists in a particular discipline (Schwandt, 1997). Thus, several assumptions need to be clarified before conducting a phenomenological study. Foremost, phenomenology is a philosophy. German philosopher Edmund Husserl was the first to use the label phenomenology as a framework for conducting research (Beyer, 2009). Husserl (1931) asserts that people can only know what they have the opportunity to experience. Therefore, what participants experience and how they describe their world becomes important in understanding any phenomenon. Martin Heidegger (who was mentored by Husserl) developed another phenomenological approach known as Hermeneutics meaning interpretation (Annells, 1996). Heidegger suggests that researchers interpret data based upon their own experiences and knowledge. Husserl's beliefs differ in that researchers are able to bracket or suspend their own preconceptions so they do not influence the interpretation of the respondents' experience (Parahoo, 2006). The opposing schools of thought in phenomenology, description (Husserl) and interpretation (Heidegger) have different applications dependent on the researchers who chose to implement their philosophical approaches. My philosophical beliefs align with Husserl's approach where I acknowledge my presuppositions and attempted to bracket my beliefs and describe the rich experience as it manifests through the participants descriptions. However, I share values with Van Manen's (2003) thought that interpretation "is closely allied to Husserl's and Heidegger's notion of phenomenological description" and "all description is ultimately interpretation" (p. 25-26). Therefore, the two terms "describe" and "interpret" work together in my philosophical research approach to provide a thick and rich account of the lived experience.

Van Manen acknowledges that description and interpretation are valued aspects of the phenomenological philosophy. He asserts:

Phenomenological human science is the study of lived or existential meanings; it attempts to describe and interpret these meanings to a certain degree of depth and richness. In this focus upon meaning, phenomenology differs from some other social or human sciences, which may focus not on meanings but on statistical relationships among variables, on the predominance of social opinions, or on the occurrence or frequency of certain behaviors. (1998, p. 11)

To me phenomenology means more than just explaining what a reflection means to another person about an experience. Phenomenology is going beyond surface details and explanations to capture the nucleus of the experience and represent the experience in a critical and objective manner. Through the participants own words I provide an understanding of the phenomenon of homeless veterans' school experiences and perspectives of idealized school design.

Phenomenology as a Research Method

Phenomenology is a major qualitative tradition (Creswell, 1998) and a research methods framework (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenologist's use this method to assemble experiences in a way that others can understand the world and cultivate a worldview (Patton, 2002). This is discrete from other methodologies as Van Manen explains:

Phenomenology is distinct from other methodologies since it does not explicate meanings specific to particular cultures (ethnography), to certain social groups (sociology), to historical periods (history), to mental types (psychology), or to an individual's personal

life history (biography). Rather, phenomenology's goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of meaning of our everyday experiences. (1998, p. 11)

Blodgett-McDeavitt (1997) elucidate the method further with the explanation,

Phenomenology is a research design used to study deep human experience. Not used to create new judgments or find new theories, phenomenology reduces rich descriptions of human experience to underlying, common themes, resulting in a short description in which every word accurately depicts the phenomenon as experienced. (p.10)

As a method, I believe that to truly appreciate the experiences of participants, researchers must acknowledge and put aside their experiences and perspectives (bracketing) (Moustakas, 1994). One can argue that to really understand another individual's experiences, a researcher must collect as much data relating to the research question as they can. My research question attempted to generate the right kinds of data to understand the participants' lived experiences. Moustakas (1994) explains that, besides collecting data, bracketing one's perspective is the first step in coming to know things, with the subsequent task being phenomenological reduction. This task is "that of describing in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). I feel that it is beneficial to recognize, give voice to, and capture the experiences of those underrepresented individuals through their own lenses. Revealing their stories provides first-hand descriptions about educational experiences and perspectives. Implementing a phenomenological research method supported my objective, through what Husserl and other qualitative researchers refer to as the

process of phenomenological reduction. Phenomenological reduction is a method of suspending belief and experiencing things the way they are (Moustakas, 1994). I attempted to bracket my experiences and perspectives focusing on the experience, while remaining visible in the examination and interpretation of data.

It was my goal to illustrate and interpret the meaning of a person's journey from their perspective. However, Van Manen (2003) inquired about the feasibility of bracketing indicating that we cannot suspend everything we know about the phenomena we study. He elucidated, "If we simply try to forget or ignore what we already know, we may find that the presuppositions persistently creep back into our reflections" (p. 47). I remained steadfast in my goal of bracketing my presuppositions by continually reflecting upon the suppositions that find their way in the reflections. However, as the researcher, I acknowledge my presuppositions and participated in the examination of data and the portraits of the experiences. By capturing the participants' innate understanding through bracketing and interpretation, I hoped to better comprehend and give voice to the participants lived experiences.

Research Participants

Entering the Field

In order to grasp and portray homeless veterans' reality, it was essential that I had some shared experiences with them. I have been co-advisor to the student group *Northeast Pennsylvania Alliance Against Homelessness* at Bloomsburg University for six years. As co-advisor, I have worked at soup kitchens, visited homeless shelters; worked clothing drives to garner garments for homeless and walked the streets of various cities in Pennsylvania talking with homeless individuals. It was during a conversation at a day drop in center in Northeastern Pennsylvania that my sensitivities were piqued towards homeless people, and more specifically,

homeless veterans. At this day drop in center I spoke to a United States Gulf War veteran who had a master's degree in Occupational Therapy and sleeps on cement steps in the blistering cold; he is homeless. After a thirty minute conversation I learned a great deal about the homeless culture and knew that this could be the conversation that changed my life.

I have entered the field on numerous occasions building rapport with homeless individuals and specifically homeless veterans. I have found that veterans remain close to each other as if part of the infantry family well after their days of service. In my conversations, many express their educational backgrounds. As the researcher, I have vast experiences as a student and educator. My lived experience as a student in multiple educational settings and my knowledge of theory intermingles with the educational experiences of homeless veterans in a potentially dynamic way. I have conducted numerous interviews in various setting with homeless individuals, including veterans, as part of my work on the Unheard Voices project with Dr. Alison Carr-Chellman. I have worked city streets, soup kitchens, and shelters while talking and listening to homeless stories. Doing so has built up my credibility and rapport with homeless to make them feel at ease when I begin to interview them about their experiences. I felt that building rapport was crucial to my data collection as I have experienced the difficulties of trying to interview without having a shared experience with the individuals. I felt that they were apprehensive about the questions I was asking and attempted to answer the question instead of sharing their experience. Building the credibility eased the researcher- participant exchange and built trustworthiness throughout the research. These shared experiences were essential for me to be able to identify with the individuals and interpret their experiences.

Research Participants

Qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on a relatively small number of participants (Patton, 1990). When selecting participants for a phenomenological study it is essential that all of the participants experience the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). I interviewed individuals as they were available and as they emerge on the streets, in shelters, and in soup kitchens. My original plan was to interview the participants during the summer months when the weather is more favorable for locating individuals if there were sleeping outside. However, I found that homeless are more transient during the summer months looking for seasonal work. Therefore, I started interviewing participants in the middle of fall after season work ended and transitional housing units started accepting nightly residents. The overall participant size for this project depended on the richness and depth of the interviews to the saturation point and my ability to explore the phenomenon. Dukes (1984) and Riemen (1986) recommended no more than 10 participants in a phenomenological study (as cited in Creswell, p. 126, 1998). I used criterion sampling and focused on the experiences of 11 homeless veterans to the point of saturation. Criterion sampling is a form of non-probability sampling. Criterion sampling attempts “to review and study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton, 2002, p. 238). Denzin and Lincoln note that many qualitative researchers employ. . . purposive, and not random sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and participants where. . . the process being studied are likely to occur (2000, p. 370). With criterion sampling, the participants are "hand-picked" for the research. Ezzy (2002) further ties criterion with purposeful sampling by stating, “A purposeful sample is one that provides a clear criterion or rationale for the selection of participants, or places to observe, or events, that relates to the research questions” (2002, p. 74). The criteria used to identify individuals for this study are 1) homeless 2) veteran

based upon the definition of homeless veterans in chapter 1 of this document and have experience in an educational setting.

Homeless veterans were chosen purposely because they are underrepresented in society by overall number (less than 13% of the population are veterans, United States Census Bureau, 2003), class, and educational attainment. The individuals themselves were selected based upon opportunistic or emergent sampling (Patton, 2002). Patton states that “unlike experimental designs, emergent qualitative designs can include the option of adding to a sample to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities after fieldwork has begun. Being open to following wherever the data leads is a primary strength of qualitative fieldwork strategies” (2002, p.240). Due to my sensitive and at times hard-to-find participants, I incorporated emergent sampling to garner data and exhaust themes (Patton, 2002). I believe it was best to use this sampling strategy because homeless individuals are generally reclusive and often times lack permanency in their daily lives. I had to interview individuals as they were available or as they emerged on the streets, in shelters, and in soup kitchens. The overall participant size for this project depended on the richness and depth of the interviews and progress of each interview towards a point of saturation.

Data Collection

One way for us to really know another person’s experience is to try and experience the phenomenon ourselves. In order to do this I used interviews as my main data collection strategy. The purpose of in-depth interviewing is to understand the experience of other people and the meaning that they make of that experience. One model of in-depth phenomenological interviewing, advocated by Seidman (1998), involves a series of three separate interviews with each participant. Following this model I conducted three separate interviews with each veteran.

An interview protocol was followed which consists of open-ended questions (In Appendix A). An interview protocol was created to organize questions and take field notes during the interview about the responses of the interviewee (Creswell, 1998). The interview questions provided multiple probes into the experience. They were designed to elicit how individuals made sense of their experiences and perspectives of schools.

According to Seidman (1998), the first interview establishes the context of the participants' experience and focuses on their life history. The individuals were asked to reflect upon their past learning experiences and to talk about themselves in light of their educational experiences. The second interview encouraged the participants to think about their educational experiences and possible improvements to the school system. The purpose of the culminating interview was for participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience and create their ideal design of school. I wanted to include here the possibility of a fourth interview that would allow the participants to engage in an imaginative process with images or scenarios to create an ideal school. However, I found that it was difficult for the participants to imagine the design of a school. Seidman (1998) writes "Making sense or meaning making requires that the participants look at how the factors in their lives interacted to bring them to the present situation. It also requires that they look at their present experience in detail and within the context in which it occurs" (p. 12).

According to Seidman (1998) the third interview may be the most important, but cannot be productive if the foundation for it has not been established in the first two interviews. Responses from the first two interviews helped inform the questions for the third interview and reach a point of saturation.

To obtain a richness of data, I also employed memoing, or note taking. This is the process of recording brief notes that describe what I learned or experienced at that point in time. Because field notes are timely and not reflective of the experience they are invaluable to the research process. Field notes helped me to formulate probing questions throughout the interview as well as assist with the data analysis process by locating the exact time of a quote in the transcript. In addition, I recorded all permitted interviews in audio and video formats which helped me make observations of the participants. The video data was also important to the primary goal of amplification of these voices as video resources are more easily accessible for the general population of policy makers and educational reformers.

Data Analysis

There are a variety of techniques one could use to analyze qualitatively generated data. Phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp and illuminate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people (Patton, 2002). Data analysis is an ongoing and iterative (nonlinear) process in qualitative research. The process is not linear, however cyclical, collecting and analyzing data throughout the research study. I concur with Merriam (2002), that data analysis in qualitative research actually begins with data collection. The analysis method progressed until the homeless veterans' perspectives and experiences reached a point of saturation. Throughout the entire progression of qualitative data analysis, I engaged in memoing which is recording brief notes describing what I am learning at that point in time from the data. Memoing assisted with the data analysis process. For instance, it helped to locate direct quotes from the transcribed audio easier. In addition to memoing I recorded ideas and potential coding schemes from the beginning and continued through the entire coding/analysis process (Braun & Clark, 2006) technically referred to as constant

comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, a majority of the analytic work emanated after the audio was transcribed into text, where it was organized and reorganized semi-systematically.

Moustakas (1994) book *Phenomenological Research Methods* is one of the few texts that comprehensively examines how to synthesize and analyze phenomenologically generated data. I referred to Moustakas' (1994) work to establish my phenomenological analytic procedures. I attempted to expose and decipher the structures and interrelationships of the phenomenon under inspection (Polkinghorne, 1989). Phenomenological analysis required "an ability to be reflective, insightful, sensitive to language, and constantly open to experience" (Van Manen, 2003, p. xi). More specifically it is concerned with understanding how the everyday, the life world is constituted (Van Manen, 1998). Thus, phenomenological analysis required me to be open minded, discerning as themes emerge from the data. In summary, I wanted to make sense of their experiences; to portray the educational experiences of homeless veterans and provide the essence of their perspectives of ideal schools.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1962) wrote, "Because we are in the world, we are condemned to meaning" and meaning, consequently, is at the crux of phenomenology and the description of the human experience. My intention was not to describe worldly objects, but to describe the experiences and perceptions of a person. I sought to produce an accurate, clear, and articulate description of the experience (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Always being conscious of the theoretical framework, which guided this study, (i.e. phenomenology) the primary purpose of data analysis was to explore the essence and structures of human experience. I allude to Moustakas' (1994) method to establish phenomenological analytic strategies. Moustakas offers different phenomenological analysis strategies in different

chapters of *Phenomenological Research Methods*. I employed Moustakas analytic strategies (Horizontalization, Thematizing, Textural-Structural Description) and specific tools (Epoche, Reduction, Imaginative Variation, and Synthesis) of phenomenological analysis simplified by Patton (2002) to analyze the data. The *epoche* focuses on identification and suspension of researcher's preconceptions, *reduction* leads to the construction of rich, accurate, and complete textural account of the phenomenon as experienced by participants of the study, *imaginative variation* is aimed at generating the structural meanings behind the textural descriptions, and finally, *synthesis* unifies the meanings and essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole (Moustakas, 1994).

Epoche

The data analysis process is not perspective, it is simply a guide and method of analyzing phenomenological data. The data analysis process commenced with a flexible data collection instrument (Smith & Osborn, 2003) for semi-structured interviews. There are other means of collecting data (diaries, personal accounts) but semi-structured interviews are the most suitable for the research question explored. I utilized semi-structured interviews because they permitted me to investigate and probe initial responses which enabled the data to be elaborated and the essences to permeate. After the interviews were recorded, I transcribed the interviews verbatim to remain close to the data. As Atkinson and Heritage (1984) point out, the production and use of transcripts are essentially "research activities." Engaging in the transcription process afforded me with extended periods orienting myself to the essence of the experience. Moreover, it was beneficial for me to transcribe the interview data because I created the interview protocol, have expertise in the interview subject, and have participated in both verbal and nonverbal exchanges with the participants.

After the data were transcribed from audio to text format, I continued the analysis process. The next step in the phenomenological reduction process is what Moustakas refers to as “epoche” (1994, p. 85). During this phase I attempted to set aside, or bracket, all preconceived notions about the phenomenon at hand to the greatest extent possible. During the epoche phase the goal was to derive new knowledge and experience things, events, and people anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85).

Horizontalization

“Horizontalization stems from the idea that the researcher should be receptive to and place value on every statement or piece of data” (Leeh & Onwuegzie, 2008, p. 400). After transcriptions were completed each data set (individual interview) was read separately several times in order to gain a richer sense of the data. Concurrent to the reading, annotations and notes of interest to the research question were recorded in the margins to gain a comprehensive knowledge base of the transcript. In the subsequent step of the phenomenological data analysis process, I listed every significant statement which was relevant to the topic. Each statement, or horizon of the experience, was given equal value. This method is called horizontalization which includes a process of listing every expression relevant to the experience, deleting repetitive or overlapping statements, and leaving the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). It was a way of systematically evaluating the data while attending to each data item and identifying interesting aspects that may form repeated patterns.

During this phase I systematically listed every statement and treated each with equal value. Patton (2002) describes this process by saying “the data are spread out for examination” (p. 486) as if they are on a horizon. I generated a list of interesting data and signify meaning units by using codes. Using codes helped to extrapolate themes from the data. This process was

cyclical in nature with my mind going back and forth between the literature and the emerging data. By working through the horizontalization process I was able to bracket presuppositions and delete meaning units that are irrelevant to the phenomenon. Thus, my goal after this phase was to have only the unique aspects of the experience. I wanted to examine the participants' lived experiences with a sense of candidness while at the same time allowing my understandings, beliefs, biases, presuppositions, and theories to work freely to facilitate reflection (Van Manen, 2003).

Thematizing

Following the transcription and then first reading, annotation, and horizontalization, I reread each transcript again to identify themes. A theme captures something significant about the data connected to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). Thematizing demanded an increased attentiveness to the data, and an openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life (Rossman, 2003). Smith & Obsorn explain that “the themes move the response to a slightly higher level of abstraction ... so the skill at this stage is finding expressions which are high level enough to allow theoretical connections within and across cases but which are still grounded in the particularity of the specific thing said” (2003, p. 68). In thematizing, phenomenologist’s “cluster the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121). Once connections are established and preliminary codes were generated, then themes were identified which related to the research question. This is one aspect that Rubin and Rubin (1995) claim is exciting about analysis because “you discover themes and concepts embedded throughout your interviews” (p. 226).

Polkinghorne (1989) explains that thematizing is a process that is not accomplished by technical procedure as it is in quantitative analysis, such as the transformation of a group of raw scores into standard deviation and mean scores; but rather requires the linguistic capacity to understand the meaning of statements (p. 52). Further, themes were selected based upon their depth, richness and how well they illuminated the voices of the participants. To capture the essence of the participants' experiences required the theme discovery process to be iterative in nature; going back to the transcribed interviews repeatedly to ensure themes relate to the data. My philosophical research beliefs contained bracketed as well as interpretive assumptions. Van Manen proposes that making something of a "text or lived experience by interpreting its meaning is more accurately a process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure—grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of "seeing" meaning" (1990, p. 79). It is precisely this "seeing" that I attempted to illustrate in the thematizing process.

Textual- Structural Integration

The textural-structural synthesis integrates the textural and structural descriptions into a comprehensive description of the experience characterizing the group as a whole (Moustakas, 1994). Textual descriptions of the experience are "what" the participants experienced with the phenomenon. Structural descriptions of the experience are descriptions of "how" the experience happened. My goal was to integrate the textural and structural descriptions and provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data (Braun & Clark, 2006). The textual-structural synthesis allowed for a deeper understanding of the data.

The goal of my analysis was to create a composite description of the "essence" of the experience through the common themes. Through the process of bracketing, thematizing, and

textual-structural integration my analysis sought to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience for a group of people (Patton, 2002) experiencing the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

Phenomenological researchers describe multiple lived experiences seeking the truths, not Truth (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The critical issue in describing these truths is the issue of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research seeks to determine “How can an inquirer persuade his or audience (including self) that the findings are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290)?

Patton (2002) identifies five alternative sets of criteria for judging the quality and credibility of qualitative research: traditional scientific research criteria, social construction and constructivist criteria, artistic and evocative criteria, critical change criteria, and evaluation standards and principles (p. 544-545). Each specific set of criteria are related to epistemic and social change assumptions.

I used Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria for trustworthiness and techniques to meet each criterion as a standard for my study. The four criteria for trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which are the naturalist’s equivalents to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) established several strategies to establish trustworthiness starting with the design of the study. The researcher should design the study so that data are gathered over a period of time. My goal was to gather data on at least three occasions. I created an interview protocol that spanned three sessions with the participant. Trustworthiness is established through prolonged engagement with the participants (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I felt

that a one-shot interview session would severely limit data gathering because of the complexity of the experience. Therefore I collected data over a prolonged period of time through three sessions. The second strategy Rossman and Rallis recommend is sharing interpretations of the findings with participants. Lincoln and Guba have called this activity “member checking” (1985, p. 314). Member checking allows the participants to argue, extend, confirm, or re-examine certain data or findings. Although this was a challenging act with homeless veterans, I did check with the participant regarding my interpretation of the data. Triangulation is a strategy Rossman and Rallis recommend as a method of enhancing credibility. “Triangulation of sources” (Patton, 2002, p. 556) is a method that uses multiple sources of data to illustrate the lived experience under investigation. Triangulation strategies included data from multiple interviews, multiple perspectives, and field notes. Finally, contextualizing the findings by place, time and personal assumptions were methods that I took to ensure that I have bounded the study and complex social phenomena (Rossman and Rallis, 2003).

Summary

This chapter described the researcher’s identity as it relates to the research study, the rationale for a phenomenological framework and the methodology utilized in this study. The research participants and sampling procedures were discussed. Specific data collection techniques, sources of data, and analysis methods were also part of the chapter. Lastly, trustworthiness (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) strategies were discussed. The chapters that follow will present the findings of this research, discuss their implications, and offer suggestions for subsequent research.

Chapter 4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter will introduce the eleven Caucasian males who are self-identified homeless veterans that participated in this study. This brief introduction will aid in understanding the research findings. A capsule summary of the participants' unique past experiences will provide context for their individual viewpoints, and for the varied anecdotes they related to me. All the participants' names and places have been accurately researched and presented below. It is important because I am attempting to project their voices. Hiding their names or identities is antithetical to the purposes of this research. The chapter then reports the results of this study of homeless veterans' educational experiences and school design ideas.

Participants' profiles

Bob

Bob, affectionately referred to by the other veterans as "Sarge", because of his higher military rank and his local status as a knowledgeable expert, was a transient homeless veteran continually in and out of homeless shelters. At the time of this interview, he was living in a transitional housing unit in Wilkes-Barre, PA. He graduated from a public high school in the Wilkes Barre area. Bob is currently attending Luzerne County Community College. He states, "I'm a good solid B student. I made honor roll many times here at LCCC when I attended back in the '80s before I went into the military. So, I'm a good student." Bob was one of the participants who had attended jump school in the military as well as taking additional classes at several universities. Bob is one of the few participants that did not have time for extracurricular

activities during his school years, because his non-scholastic time was occupied with work after school. His best memories of school are learning new things to feed his thirst for knowledge.

Bob retired in July 2006 as sergeant first class E-7 after 22 years of military service between active Army, Navy and PA National Guard. He was involved in two combat tours Desert Shield with active army, and Operation Iraqi Freedom II for 435 days. Bob joined the navy right out of high school and was stationed in San Diego California, aboard the Merrill DD976- Diesel Destroyer. During this time he did a West-Pack out of San Diego California that included stops at various islands in the pacific. While Bob's information about military background was shared, several others were not and so only those who volunteered information about their military background more specifically will be detailed in these profiles, particularly if it becomes important later in the analysis/results.

Dan

At the time of his interview, Dan had been residing in a homeless shelter in Scranton, PA for three months. He served in the Army for six years. He was raised in a rural community in New York, but was forced to move to suburban New York as a teenager. He graduated from the public school system, specifically East High School in Buffalo, New York. Dan described himself as someone who liked school because of the challenges it involved, including the challenge of waking up at “seven o’clock in the morning” to leave for school. Dan was also very interested in music; at school he performed as part of an acappella group, participated in a choral group, and was a member of the school drama club. Due to the many extracurricular activities that occupied so much of his time, Dan shouldered a very heavy student workload during his school years.

Bill

At the time of his interview, Bill had resided at a homeless shelter in Scranton, PA for two months. Bill grew up in the Philadelphia area and attended several public schools before graduating. Bill stated that, by the time he was in eighth grade, he “knew I wanted to be in the military, so I strived to be the best the person I could in there until I graduated. And after I graduated that September, I went into the military.” Bill was a self-described sports enthusiast who enjoyed playing football. He stated that some of his best school memories were “just friends. . . Football. . . Played football. I mean, I was a sports nut. I liked sports.” He also stated that tests were not his favorite schoolwork and that he didn’t like some teachers. In fact, Bill recalled moving to another high school to get away from a specific teacher that he felt had picked on him. Bill served 10 years active Navy and ended his career as an E5- second class petty officer. At this rank he served as the ship service man. His primary jobs included being the barber, stocking the vending machine, being the “laundry guy”, and he was also affectionately referred to as the “butler”. Similar to Bob, he also served one tour as a Desert Storm veteran.

Rusty

At the time of his interview, Rusty had resided in a homeless shelter in Scranton, PA for four months. Rusty grew up in the Florida area and graduated from Mainland Public High School. Rusty describes himself as an average student. “I basically – which you look back and you think about it – I should’ve maybe studied more. I did it just enough to get by, just to keep – because I liked to play sports, I just wanted to keep my grades up enough to where I could still play.” Rusty was a gregarious individual that liked school and had many friends. He took pride in his school and was supported heavily by his family. Rusty served in the Marines infantry for

thirteen years. He did a substantial amount of resonance work in Pakistan, Afghanistan and most of the Middle East.

Paul

Paul was a local homeless man in the Wilkes-Barre, PA area at the time of his interview. He was not part of a transitional housing unit, nor was he affiliated with any other organization that helps the homeless. Paul was a solitary nomad that worked hard and liked to share stories. He graduated from Hanover Area High School, a public school in Hanover, PA. Paul served in the Army immediately after high school. Following life in the military he pursued an associate's degree from a local community college. He stated early in the interview that he loved school, exclaiming, "I love it. I love it. It's education – you can't get enough of it." Paul was a self-described power lifter and sports enthusiast. He, like most of the veterans, focused a great deal of his energies on athletics during his school years, but explained that he also liked the academic side of schools. When asked what he liked most about school, he stated, "Learning. Learning more. Bettering myself. You know, when you go to school and you educate yourself, you better yourself."

Mike

At the time of his interview, Mike had resided in a homeless shelter in Scranton, PA for three months. Mike served in the Army for four years. He grew up in Harvey's Lake, PA and graduated from a local public high school. Mike described himself as "a normal student. I was athletic. I didn't – basically stuck to myself, went to school every day, did what I had to do. That's about it." Mike was another dedicated athlete, and had participated in baseball, football, and wrestling at school. Mike, at 23 years old, was the youngest participant of this research study. He described himself as, "very kind, always listening, helping people. If they

(classmates) need help with their schoolwork or anything else, in general I would help them.” At the time of the interview Mike was attempting to enroll at a local community college to study automotive machinery.

Grumpy

Grumpy was self-described as being “shy”, but was one of the most colorful individuals to participate in this study. Throughout his youth, Grumpy was sent to numerous foster homes, ending up in Northeastern PA. The last official grade that he completed was the eighth, at a public school in Wilkes-Barre, PA. He was determined to enter the military, so he earned his GED. Grumpy described himself as a student who was, “Not very interested in school, especially at that age and stuff, you know. I liked sports. . . I liked the sports and I liked the hanging out and stuff. . . I got a little older and appreciated the girls, of course, you know.” Most of the conversations with Grumpy always came back to his school experiences with sports. After quitting high school, he was drafted by the Marine Corps in 1967. He served as a Marine Corp infantryman for one tour in Vietnam. He illustrated to me that most of what he did in the military was grunt work.

Pinky

Pinky was a man who had been homeless for several years. At the time of his interview he was living in a transitional housing unit in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Pinky spent his grade school and early high school years in a private Catholic school in Newark, New Jersey. Afterwards, his family moved back to Wilkes-Barre, PA, where he attended a public school, GAR High School, until eleventh grade. In his junior year his family moved to upstate New York, where he finished high school. Pinky was another veteran who really liked school. He explained, “That they taught you things you wouldn’t have learned otherwise. The street learning is great and

necessary, but school learning is extremely necessary. If you don't read or write, if you can't do math, you get lost in the world."

Pinky was the oldest veteran that I interviewed, and held a wealth of experiences. Pinky served in the military as a Navy corpsman (essentially an EMT of the military) for seven years. He served in Vietnam on multiple tours.

Ron

Ron was originally from the Levittown area of Philadelphia. At the time of his interview he was living in a transitional housing unit in Williamsport, PA. Ron served in the Army until he was discharged. As a child he attended public school in the Philadelphia area. He also attended a military school and a private school in Winfield, Pennsylvania, up until eleventh grade. When asked if he liked school, Ron replied, "Not really. Earlier I did, but after say ninth grade, no, not so much. I started to sow my oats." Ron shared many memories of his educational experiences.

Jack

Jack was a homeless veteran living on a friend's couch at the time of this interview in Bloomsburg, PA. Jack served in the Marines for several years. He grew up and attended public school (till tenth grade) called Steel Valley, southeast of Pittsburgh. Jack claims that his education level was a "little above average. I think aptitude was good, but I didn't want to do it." He grew up in a rough neighborhood and stated, "Well, when I was in my early years, like eighth, ninth, and tenth grade, I feel we were all cheated out of an education. Because there was always race riots. A teacher got gang-raped by one or two blacks. There was a lot of fighting. You had to be in a gang or a clique." So Jack was a self-professed member of a gang. He claimed the best thing about being in school was, "Just being a boss." He was the boss of a local

gang that patrolled the schools, and this helped to ensure his safety, security, and passage through the curriculum.

Brian

Brian is a transient homeless veteran who travels to different areas of the United States for work. At the time of his interview he was living in a transitional housing unit in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Brian was born in East Stroudsburg, PA, and spent most of his life in West Patterson, New Jersey, seventeen miles from New York. He attended Catholic school until eighth grade, the highest grade offered by his Catholic school. After eighth grade, he attended the public Passaic Valley High School, and eventually graduated. Brian described that, in school, he “was pretty good. I was an A/B student. I never had to study. I was one of those guys, you know? But if I liked the class, I really did good in the class. But if it was something that I didn’t like, like the one guy with Russian history, he was just – he was a moron. Take it with a grain of salt. But I passed all my classes.” Brian remembered that he was very interested in athletics in high school, and specialized in basketball. He was so good at basketball that the Ohio State Buckeyes sought him as a potential team member. He missed his chance of attending Ohio State because of a family health emergency that forced him to get a job. Instead of going to college, he joined the Navy to support his family. Brian served in the Navy for several years. His rate in the military was an operations specialist, more specifically a combat information center (CIC). In this position he manned the radar to determine what’s out there, what is going to attack, and reported to his superior methods to handle the situation.

Results

This section reports the results of this study of homeless veterans’ educational experiences and school design ideas. In the analysis of the collected data, six major themes and

six sub-themes emerged. The first two themes are related to the participants' individual experiences: 1) Caring teachers (with the sub-themes of Going the Extra Mile, Mutual Respect, Student-Teacher special bond); 2) Impact of extracurricular activities, especially sports, as motivator. The remaining four themes emerged in relation to the participants' idealized design of schools: 1) Latest Technology, 2) Pragmatic Curricula, 3) Teachers (with the sub-themes of Caring Teachers, Active Learning environments), 4) Dress Code

In the following descriptions of the themes, I reproduce the participants' original verbal emphases. The emphases throughout participants' interviews were organic, borne of heartfelt discussion of very sensitive and personal topics. In some cases, the amount and degree of emphasis is what led me to recognize certain topics as important themes.

What follows is a detailed reporting of themes and sub-themes of the lived educational experience of the participants. Then, I report the themes and sub-themes of the homeless veterans' perceptions of ideal school design.

Theme #1: Caring Teachers

Sub-themes:

- Going the Extra Mile
- Mutual Respect
- Student- Teacher special bond

Going the extra mile

Teachers, such as Kohl (1984), have given passionate voice to their belief that "a teacher has an obligation to care about every student" (p. 66). Noddings (1992) demonstrates that the academic goals of the academy fail to be met unless teachers provide students with a caring and supportive classroom environment. The homeless veterans in this study repeatedly focused on

caring teachers as an important part of their educational experiences. They expressed that they expected teachers to go the extra mile and appreciated it when they did. Carr-Chellman et al. (2009) found a similar element in prisoners' educational experiences; most prisoners' conversations about their educational experiences centered on a "good" teacher. Bosworth (1995) explored middle school students' perceptions of a "good" teacher; most described certain personality characteristics as traits of a "good teacher". These findings are in line with the data gleaned from the lived experiences of homeless veterans. This data shows that participants continually characterized particular teachers as "good". Dan regarded a teacher that inspired him as "good." He stated that the reason he liked his favorite class was because, "I had a good teacher. Mr. Krause, he was a music teacher. He was very inspiring and he – I mean, he was a good guy" (Dan, personal communication, 10/15/09).

Throughout the interviews, I followed up participants' statements with the questions "why" and "how did you come to this conclusion," because I wanted to dive deeper into their experiences. So I pursued Dan's idea of a good teacher by asking him, "What was it about him (the teacher) that you liked?" Dan stated that, "He motivated the students. He didn't yell at anybody. He was on . . . , you know . . . first-name basis more so than . . . he always talked to you about how your day was doing, not just school, you know? And if you were doing hard in school, he'd stay after and he'd actually help you study and get you hooked up with resources" (Dan, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Dan and many other homeless veterans made it clear that they expected teachers to go the extra mile by staying after school, knowing students' names, providing extra learning support, and being there for the students; the veterans regarded these things as desirable personality traits of a "caring" teacher. Rusty shared this thought on caring teachers:

They always seemed to be there for me . . . or helping make sure I did what I needed to do. A lot of people now are teaching for the wrong reasons. . . To me, it's like being a doctor, I think. . . If you're not going to take pride in what you do or aren't doing it to help people, then you don't need to be teaching. Because a lot of people are just doing it for the money and they could care less and that's why they're – I mean, I understand everybody wants to get paid, but isn't it more about the kids than you, you know? (Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Ron explains that he considers a caring teacher to be a teacher with compassion for students and enthusiasm for teaching. He elucidates:

I think in a nutshell the things that I have a forte for today are because my interest was piqued in the early stages of development by enthusiastic teachers, you know, and by compassion. You know, the ones that really were good at teaching that really learned to punch through, you know? And sometimes they had to avoid the, you know, the set curriculum from the school district to do that. (Ron, personal communication, 10/29/09)

Rogers (1991) administered an open-ended questionnaire to 26 fourth-grade children which focused on the student's feelings about the school and the teachers. He found that students identified caring teachers by simple words and actions. The synthesized student data suggested that teachers show caring by encouraging students, by advising, by listening, by showing concern and understanding for the individual, by providing a safe and secure environment, by being fair, by making school fun, by arranging an interesting curriculum, and by assisting in schoolwork. According to the homeless veterans, they too recognized the same behaviors as marks of a caring teacher. They responded to these teachers better because of the teachers' willingness to go the

extra mile. When I asked Bill about his experiences of one caring teacher, he stated the teacher would:

Try to help that person get through the school instead of putting on their report card failed, must come to summer school, you know? That doesn't work for me. That's just like passing the buck, you know? To me, they should spend that quality time. That's what teachers are for, you know, spend that quality time that student needs. (Bill, personal communication, 10/17/09)

Pinky commented on the need for extra attention by stating that the caring teachers, "not only taught, but if they seen that you were not getting the things they said in the manner they wanted you to get it, they noticed that, came and put some extra attention to you personally, and made sure that you garnered that knowledge in the way they offered it." (Pinky, personal communication, 10/29/09)

The majority of the participants considered a caring teacher to be one that would "go the extra mile" and do whatever he or she could to help students. Simple actions, such as conversing with students about a topic other than school, showing enthusiasm for the curriculum, or motivating the students, elicited positive feedback.

Mutual Respect

Throughout the interviews, the sub-theme of respect was central to a variety of discussions of the homeless veterans' school experiences. The participants repeatedly emphasized that they regarded respect for students as well as respect for teachers and authorities as important and fundamental to a school. Not only did they feel that students should respect

teachers, but that teachers should respect students. Thus, the manner in which teachers spoke to students was a sign of respect and caring. Pinky explained how the way a teacher talks to a student can be an indication of whether he or she cares for the student. He stated:

Well, when I graduated high school it was probably my best experience because the mayor of the town was also a teacher in the school. He taught science and chemistry, basic science. But he was so intelligent and calm, easygoing, relaxed, and you could never ask him a question that he'd just say I don't know to. He would find – he would say, you know, I don't know, but see me in three hours or see me tomorrow, and he would find it for you. He would come back with an answer or with a way you could seek an answer to the question. And he was a remarkable person in his – he never talked down to anybody. He was on your level, and not only your level, but the whole class's level. And I notice everybody gravitated toward him. Everybody seemed to gravitate toward him for answers, and he never, never shirked his duty and always come up with it. (Pinky, personal communication, 10/29/09)

Rogers (1991) explains, “for some children, sadly, school may offer the only safe haven in life, the only place where anyone cares for them” (p. 176). He paints a vivid picture of what it might take to show a student that you care for them and assure them that what you are teaching is important. Grumpy corroborates this view when he notes that, due to his home life, he ignored any teacher who failed to meet his expectations:

See, the reason why I looked up to teachers so much and I expected more from them is because of the type of setting I was out of besides school. As I said, being brought up a ward of the state, mental hospital because they had no place else to put me, but they're

not important enough, you know? Children's Service Center when I went to Franklin Street School, ward of the state – oh, I'm just another number to you, . . . I'm just another body to you. . . So I expected people in the education fields to take more of an interest. . . And when they didn't, it's like I rebelled. . . I said, oh, okay, I'm getting the same shit in school as I'm getting from wherever I was at that I had called home. So, of course, that's why the mentality of, you know, you're not interested in me, well fuck you – I got enough people that's not interested in me. And, you know, you get bitterer and bitterer. One of the first people after Mr. Robinson, which I really – and people might think I'm nuts, and I don't care what they think of me. One of the people that meant the most to me? The friggin' DI at boot camp. Oh, god, did I get myself in so much shit. But that man, he taught me how to survive. He taught me how to survive without no help from nobody. And that was his whole function. People said, oh, he's a miserable – hey, when I went over in another country, I remembered what that man said and it got me back here in one piece. (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/18/09)

Unfortunately Grumpy was one veteran who did not graduate, but had what most would consider a successful military career. Rumberger (1995) examined dropout rates of middle school students and found that “Students who reported having better and more caring teachers had 16% lower odds of dropping out, even controlling for other attitudes and background characteristics” (p. 606). Phelan, Davidson, and Cao (1992) found that when students perceive their teachers as not caring, they feel a lack of incentive to do schoolwork or participate in classroom activities. This finding is in line with the sentiments experienced by the participants of this study. Grumpy's resentment against teachers that he felt did not care caused him to rebel

against school in general. Judging from the literature and this research with homeless veterans, students, generally speaking, want to feel that their teachers care for and respect them.

Student - Teacher special bond

Teachers who took interest in a sport, club, extracurricular event, or activity outside the classroom often created a special bond with students that shared these extracurricular interests. Such activities are a main source of identity for students, and the participants felt that it was just as important for teachers to show that they cared by joining in the non-schoolroom activities as it was to show care during school hours. Throughout the data collection, it was apparent that sports were a common way of passing successfully through school for most participants. Paul talks about athletics fondly, recounting a time when his coach created a special bond with him. When speaking about his coaches he states:

They (the coaches) were in my life. You know, when you're on a track field or you're in a weightlifting meet and you lose, they were there for me. You got to lose to be a winner, they told me. It might sound crazy, but then you respect the winner's circle. You can't always win, you know? There's a winner, there are losers. You know, and it gave me a lot of wisdom in just growing up, being a man, you know? (Paul, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Grumpy focused on teachers who failed, in his eyes, to display caring natures outside the classroom:

See, to me, once I saw that a teacher really didn't have a special interest in me besides the classroom, I more or less just ditched them and I ditched what they were trying to teach. It was, like, you don't really care about me . . . you're only interested in what you have to

teach. That was my attitude. That was my mentality. If you can't take it to the next level, well, then you ain't worth my time sitting here. I come here for the chocolate milk and the cookies. And that was my mentality. And I realize it was understandable but it was wrong for me to, you know, deprive myself of the education. But that's the way I thought. (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/18/09)

I asked him what teachers had shown a special interest in him outside of the classroom, and he immediately mentioned his football coach. He explained that, "he was, like, our football coach, and he was a tough old bird. But for some reason he and I clicked, and I listened to a lot that he said, you know?" (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/16/09)

He explained further:

You know, like, some people you click with, and a lot of the kids on the high school football team, they, you know, like were away from stuff. A lot of people really thought well of him (football coach), and yeah, he can't be all that bad. And then I used to listen to the stuff that he said, and he was pretty much on the mark. He didn't pull no punches or anything, you know? And back in them days, like, if you got out of line he had no problem coming over and smacking you in the back of the head, you know? And was a tough old bird, like I said. Threw me up against the lockers a couple of times, but – I just liked his style, you know. No-nonsense style, you're here to play football. And that's what he did, you know? He would coach the activities strictly. (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/16/09)

Mike had a similar experience of a wrestling coach; he stated that his "wrestling coach was with my English teacher, taught me a lot of different morals of life and how to take care of

it” (Mike, personal communication, 10/16/09). To understand coaches’ influence on life skills, Gould et al. (2007) examined high school football coaches and how they developed life skills in their players. The coaches in the study did not view coaching in life skills as separate from general sports coaching, but did note that the personal development of their players was a main concern. Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Nataro, (2002) looked at youth mentors; they explain that young people identify people like relatives, coaches, counselors, and teachers as natural mentors, and feel that such mentors played pivotal roles in their development. As the participants’ voices illustrate, mentors and coaches played vital roles in the homeless veterans’ lives through sports and other social bonds.

Snyder (1972) found that high school athletes rank their coaches second only to parents in terms of influencing their educational and occupational plans. I wanted more understanding of how coaches had impacted participants’ lives, so I asked Grumpy, “Why him (your coach)? . . . Why this guy? . . . What was so great about him?” He described the impact as:

More or less, like, he was one that installed some of the viciousness but he was also the one that, you know, he liked it clean. When you played, you played, you know, the sportsmanship he wanted and everything. Of course, which I didn’t follow that guidance of his and stuff. But I liked him because he took care of a lot of the kids after school. It would be nothing to have three or four or five kids sitting around having a soda with him and them talking or him trying to help them out with problems and stuff. A lot of the teachers, you know, didn’t have time for that. He did. He took it to the next level. I went to him with a number of problems. He tried to help me out as much as he could.
(Grumpy, personal communication, 10/16/09)

Throughout this section the voices of homeless veterans have illustrated the impact student-teacher bonds have on student's lives. Teachers and coaches were viewed by the homeless veterans as mentors and advisors in educational, occupational, and personal areas. It is important that parents, school administrators and students understand how important shared ties with teachers and coaches are in a student's life.

The homeless veterans' strong belief in the importance of a caring teacher emerges as the central theme of this data. It is interesting to note that although not all the participants had a caring teacher, they all could envision the actions of a caring teacher. Commonly, they felt that a caring teacher would go the extra mile, respect everyone, and possess a special bond with the student.

Theme #2: Impact of extracurricular activities

Sub-theme:

- Sports as Motivators

Throughout these interviews, I found that there were many subtle connections about each homeless veteran that, in their own way, contributed to their educational experiences. For instance, extracurricular activities were important aspects of the veterans' educational experiences, and they related those activities to school. Here are some vignettes of the participants' experiences of extracurricular activities as educational motivators that emerged from the data.

Sports as Motivators

Rusty played sports year-round, and felt that sports were his chief reason for attending school. Rusty explained:

I played baseball, football, I wrestled, played soccer. . . that's what kept me in school. That's why I went to school. There was always something to do, you know, sports. Sometimes we were just finishing up one sport and I'm starting another sport at the same time, you know? And there was, like, issues where we had games on the same day. That was pretty crazy. That was fun, though. I had a great time, and I'd do it all again.

(Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Rusty, like most of the veterans, went to school to play sports, instead of playing sports as a supplement to learning. Dan stated that he, "did cheerleading, wrestling, football, basketball – I did it all. Throughout the four years. I divided the seasons and covered all the bases. Keep busy, keep busy, keep going through school" (Dan, personal communication, 10/5/09).

Throughout the data collection phase, I grew increasingly intrigued by the recurrent theme of sports as a motivating factor for attending school. I wanted to find out if the participants liked school apart from sporting activities. When I asked Rusty if he liked school, he explained, "Yeah, I did because I liked to play sports and that was my motivation to go to school, to go to class, just because if you missed class or your attendance was off and your grades dropped (you could not play) . . . I just wanted to play sports and that was it" (Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09). Rusty and other participants expressed similar sentiments as to their motivation for attending school.

Although Rusty acknowledges that sports were his main focus in school, he admits that he could have learned more if he had applied himself to academics:

As a student, I could've been smarter than I think. I just – I feel that I was sometimes, like, smart enough to get by without studying, but at the same time I should've studied

more because I probably would've learned more. I just knew enough to get by without – I was more about going to practice or something than I was doing my homework if I had to. I guess I would do just enough to get to where my grades were acceptable so I could keep playing, you know? (Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Paul felt that his sports abilities led to his being passed along and prevented him from using his full intellectual potential. “I was very good in track and field. I was very good in weightlifting, you know? I was one of them that passed through school with my athletic abilities because I know I had an edge. And Sabatini was the principal. He was the head track coach. So what's he going to tell the teachers? Take care of Paulie” (Paul, personal communication, 10/17/09). Rusty related a similar experience; he knew that he could get by as long as he played sports. He recalled that

I just wanted to keep my grades up enough to where I could still play, basically. I did okay in some classes. Some classes, I struggled, but again, because I didn't apply myself, I think. Now that you're at this age you look back and, you know. . . you don't realize until now your options are limited because you should've done more then, but everybody just thought about having fun because nobody worries about later until later comes . . . (Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Being passed along was a privilege for athletes, denied to other students. The athletes knew this and were determined to play sports to ensure their success in school. Alder and Alder (1985) suggest that “many athletes were shepherded through high school” and are often ill-prepared for college and fail as a result. Passing athletes through high school because of their physical ability and ignoring their educational progress seems like an extreme failure on the part

of the educational system (Benson, 2000; Ferris, Finser & McDonald, 2004; Rische, P., 2008), but Rusty put a positive spin on the unethical aspects of the system. He stated that he “just wanted to play sports”, but a lot of what he learned carried over into his military career. He explained that,

Playing team sports . . . carries over to my time in the service, too, because you’re a team, you know? Everybody works together, you know; . . . rely on each other, stuff like that. And there’s a lot to be said for that. I think that’s a good lesson to learn even as a kid. I don’t care if you win or not. You don’t have to win, just, you know, this is your team, you know? A little, I guess, camaraderie, loyalty, you know, stuff like that that you can lean from playing team sports. (Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Grumpy was one of the few veterans who spoke out against being passed along because he was an athlete. He thought that he had more potential for school work. However, he was an athlete, and athletes at his school were passed along regardless of educational ability. Grumpy explained,

I just was one of them that I kept my grades where I used to graduate every year, but I think sometimes they passed me just so I wasn’t left behind, you know. I had a lot more potential than I – how I am trying to say it – I could’ve done a lot better in school than I did if I would’ve put my mind to it instead of being distracted by all the negative things. . . I’m not stupid. I know I’m not stupid. I just – I got sidetracked, you know? (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/16/09)

Educators typically focus on the academic learning in schools, and not on “tacit learning,” those extracurricular activities that can benefit a student as much as classroom lessons. Rusty admits that he should have applied himself more in school; however, he continues to

attribute his positive career experiences to his school athletic activities. Mike's experience is similar; his favorite memories from school were, "being able to graduate, basically playing sports, learning lots of different things every day." However, Rusty, Paul, and other veterans interviewed felt that, although sports were a factor that kept them in school, they should have put more time into their educational endeavors. Paul concludes, "education comes first. If you don't have an education, you're not going nowhere. You know, you could be the greatest track star, you could be the greatest weightlifter, but if you can't pick up a book and read it and comprehend what's in it, how good are you? I won't be no good" (Paul, personal communication, 10/15/09). Dan also felt that he should have observed more self-discipline during his school years:

If I could go back to school? If I could go back to school, I think I would – after so many sports, I think I'd more key in on one and work on it than being everywhere. Because my thing was to keep myself busy, and I really just did everything. I had a lot of opportunities with my size, I could go in any sport. I think I'd just hone down on one sport, stick with the music and just, you know, go through that and look for a college experience. Because when I was going to school, I'm, like, all right, all I need to do is graduate, and I can join the army. So – I mean, I had good grades, but that's the only thing that was on my mind at that time. (Dan, personal communication, 10/5/09)

Comments such as Dan's and Rusty's illustrate that the participants utilized lessons learned in sports in their military careers. As Rusty noted, participating in sports taught him about winning and losing, teamwork, camaraderie, and loyalty, all valuable assets to his career in the military. Traditional educational activities did not motivate these participants to stay in

school, but extracurricular activities did motivate them, as well as aid them in later life. The participants' experiences agree with research by Dworkin, Larson, and Hansen (2003), who found in a study of 55 high school adolescents involved in extracurricular and community-based activities (72% of whom were involved in sport) that these adolescents viewed extracurricular activities as an important growth experience that helped them to learn psychological skills such as goal-setting, time management, and emotional. It is important to note that previous research conducted by Carr-Chellman, et al. (2009) on prisoners' educational experiences did not find sports as a motivating factor in schools.

Ideal Design of Schools

Mitra (2004) contends that the "notion of 'student voice,' or a student role in the decision making and change efforts of schools, has emerged in the new millennium as a potential strategy for improving the success of school reform efforts. Yet few studies have examined this construct either theoretically or empirically" (p.651). I concur that it is essential to school reform efforts to provide a voice for students currently in the system and previously served by it. When I asked Grumpy, "If you could think of an ideal school and you were the principal of that school – so, you're the principal of this school – what would you change in the school?" The response from Grumpy caught me off guard. Grumpy stated, "That's a hard question to answer, and I'll explain to you why, okay? I'm pretty much of a realist, and I take things for how they are. And, not to be disrespectful to you or anything, but that's like a fantasy question. My response was, "That's exactly why I'm asking you." Grumpy then stated, "And I have a hard time dealing with dreams and stuff. I have a hard time dealing with hope. To me, every day above ground is a good day. But as far as being able to put myself in that position and stuff, I really can't answer that

question”.... (Grumpy, personal communication, 11/28/09). It is precisely this type of conversation that I feared. I feared that homeless veterans would be reluctant to voice their opinions because no one had every asked them introspective questions about their educational experiences and ideas. In this section I encouraged this traditionally silent group to share their visions of an ideal school.

Theme #1: Latest Technology

When the homeless veterans were asked to describe their ideal school, they responded with an assortment of answers. Increased use of technology and a more supportive and flexible curriculum were common themes in their responses. Jack thought that classes should remain the same, but felt that they should offer, “More computer classes, because that’s the future, computers and stuff like that. Like, my phone still amazes me. I can do everything on my phone, don’t need a laptop” (Jack, personal communication, 10/6/09). Most participants alluded to some form of technology. Most participants wanted more technology classes, and some wanted a technologically advanced school that would make wide use of television and computer-based programs. Rusty explained that if he designed a school, the school should have:

As much high tech (technology) as it could. The information highway would have to be wide open, a lot of computers, a lot of media input. I’m not saying everybody can have a channel and walk through the hallways and look at MTV or something, I mean, like CNN or something. Even the news, you can learn something from the news. Yeah, just so everybody’s up to date. Because a lot of people don’t even look at the newspapers, much less the news. You could talk to them about Afghanistan, and they’re like, “Where’s that,” you know? But yeah, I’d definitely have to have some high tech, a lot of media input. (Rusty, personal communication, 10/15/09)

The participants did not consider the layout of the school building a special consideration in their ideal school design. This perspective is in stark contrast to the findings of Carr-Chellman et al. (2009) in their study of the prison population's educational ideas. The prison population wanted schools with more "structure, order, and authority" (p. 165). Rather, the homeless veterans felt that the modernization of the school equipment was most important to school success. They felt that the latest equipment would result in a better school, which would then lead to better education. Rusty believed that schools should have:

State of the art, modern design, everything is new within reason. I wouldn't take anything in an experimental stage. Real-life technology, stuff that's already proven itself, but still at the same time as high tech as possible. Because I don't want to put something in and have it not working the first time. But definitely a nice building, modern design with all kinds of different accessibilities for handicapped but then maybe even big enough if I had to put a dinosaur in a science building or something, I'd want to be able to get an exhibit in if I had to. Because, you know, schools like to have their exhibits and stuff. . . state of the art departments, top-notch fields, all science departments, computers, biology sciences, earth sciences, whatever. Everything, as much equipment as we could get, top of the line stuff. Because, I mean, I remember my biology class, and this stuff looked like it came out of the stone age. I was, like, hey this is what they used to use? Yeah, well, the equipment still works, it gets the job done, you're only cutting a frog anyway, so don't worry about it, you know? I left it go. (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09)

Rusty is a middle-aged man who utilized the public library's computers on a daily basis to search for jobs and explore areas of interest. He explained that computers are starting to be integrated into all aspects of education and that an ideal school should have proven technologies such as computers to ensure a progressive education. He also expressed his belief in the benefits of hands-on learning and an interactive learning environment with room for free thinking. Pinky shared Rusty's belief in the need for a state-of-the-art, technology-driven school:

I would like to see it keep up with the technology that is available, the computers. But it needs an unlimited amount of funds to do this. But, strive to do that, keep – you know, there's so much out of date, you're teaching people things that are out of date because the books just haven't been upgraded. Now, with the computers, this should be banned to teach outdated stuff, stuff that is no longer believed to be true or necessary. How many times I've seen teachers say, look, this is an old book, I want you to give the answers from this book, not from what you think might be true. With computers now in schools, I don't think that's necessary. (Pinky, personal communication, 11/1/09)

Pinky is a man in his sixties that did not learn how to use computers until recently. His computer skills are very basic; he does not know how to type, but can navigate well on the Internet. In his statement he was trying to highlight the dramatic difference between print and electronic media. With his limited knowledge of computers, he believed that because computers are newer print media, they do not contain "outdated" content the way the older print medium does. The difference is more nuanced than that; computers can locate old as well as new content, and can supplement rather than replace print materials in a technology-driven classroom. All participants regarded technology as an essential classroom tool for the improvement of

education. It is interesting that these individuals, all with limited access to technology, thought that an ideal school should contain a great deal of technology. The participants' endorsement of the notion that "we have to have technology, because technology is what you need to succeed and develop" tends toward technological determinism. According to Pannabecker (1991) "Technological determinism implies diminished human choice and responsibility in controlling technology. When pressed, few people would claim unadulterated determinism and most would assert that humans have some degree of freedom to influence the direction of technology" (p.3). The participants' belief in technological determinism is unusual, considering their overall technology usage and needs. Further research that examines their ideas of technology integration in the curriculum will help explain their views on technological determinism.

Theme #2: Pragmatic Curricula

In John Dewey's 1906 book *The Child and the Curriculum*, he asserts that the curriculum should imitate real life challenges and "occupations" of daily life. Learning emerges in doing, and not in repeating facts and information on tests. Dewey's writings have shaped the educational landscape in America and continue to affect the way we educate students today. Bob is a forty-six-year-old who has recently started attending college. We had a lengthy discussion about teachers and his ideal school design. He felt that learning does not always occur in the classroom, and that it is valuable to learn everyday tasks in school. Bob states:

If I was in charge (of a school) . . . I go back to wanting a teacher, not a preacher, okay?

Make sure learning is going on every second of every minute of every day, okay?

Because you might find yourself in my situation, a forty-six-year-old freshman in college, okay? . . . And you really don't need a school. You could grab a book and learn

something. Education does not happen in a classroom setting sometimes. You could learn things from friends, associates, family. And it doesn't really take much, you know – hey, what are you doing there? Hey, how does that work? You know, questions, learning, you know. (Bob, personal communication, 10/16/09)

I was intrigued by his statement regarding using a book as a reference when you need to learn something. I also interested in hearing his view on learning from friends, associates, and family members. I followed this statement with, “Do you think a lot of learning happens outside of the classroom?” Bob continued:

To a large degree. Maybe I could say this, where, start with the classroom and then back it up with practical experience outside the classroom, okay? Tell them that, I mean, learning is a 24/7 occupation that you do all your life. You never have enough knowledge. Knowledge is like money, you never have enough, you know? (Bob, personal communication, 10/16/09)

Connecting education to life's experiences and future job opportunities was vitally important to the participants. Although federal mandates continue to standardize education, the participants' visions of an ideal school curriculum were quite different. They wanted more autonomy in the curriculum and lessons more relevant to their lives. When asked about his ideal school design, Dan conceded that education is the point of a school, “but I also believe that, like I said, teaching basic life lessons, like responsibility, . . . teaching that if you don't do this, this will happen and you'll end up in a homeless shelter. . . Definitely responsibility, independence, like, basic communication skills, and just how to carry yourself” (Dan, personal communication, 10/17/09).

Many of the homeless veterans struggled with basic tasks like paying bills on time, showing up to work on time, and generally being more responsible. They often times pointed to the lack of these basic elements in the school curriculum. Bob holds a similar opinion, and sees the value in a basic curriculum. He notes that the curriculum should include:

All the general studies, like, math, science, history, social studies. And I definitely think, like, most colleges that you go to, . . .they ask, . . .you know, . . .for chemistry courses depending on what you're going in, . . . and I'd definitely have a chemistry course. And, you know, . . . I can't say gym isn't important because, . . . you know, it's like a release for some people. But I'd definitely have music classes . . . not just because I like music, but music is an expression . . . They say if you listen to classical music as a child, it helps your brain grow. . . So I definitely think exposure to that sort of growth is definitely advantageous for students. (Bob, personal communication, 10/18/09)

Exercise and the traditional education courses were vitally important to the homeless veterans. Mike shares the same philosophy about the general education curriculum, but would like to see more diversity of course offerings for those with other interests. He states,

I would actually offer normal classes that are required, you know, math, reading, history, and all that. I would also throw in there woodworking, machine shop, or graphic arts for the extracurricular who want to take up a trade . . . There'd be extra physical education class for some of the athletes that want to, you know, get more exercise in on their routine for the day. (Mike, personal communication, 10/16/09)

The idea of retaining essential classes while still permitting students to explore their talents was of great value to the participants of this study, and an essential element of their ideal

school design. Fundamental classes such as math, science, and history were perceived as an important part of the curriculum. However, so were traditionally less scholastic classes such as art and music. These are the classes most often cut due to academic stringencies (Eisner, 1998), but some of the most desirable courses, according to the participants of this study. Not only were the courses desirable, but often the instructors of those courses were viewed most favorably. Dan noted that he and his music teacher “were on a tight level because we both shared the same interest in music. We both were, like, music is my life. And so we were very – we were on a friend basis more than a teacher/student, it was like friends” (Dan, personal communication, 10/5/09). He motivated Dan, he understood Dan, and they shared a common love for music that helped Dan through school.

Ron explained that he would prefer teachers to go beyond the normal curriculum and provide more interactive and individualized instruction. He illustrated his idea by stating that teachers should have the,

Enthusiasm and maybe give a little bit more than the usual school curriculum would allow. Offering more information, making it a little bit more streamlined, but then trying to captivate everybody in the class, you know, and then recognizing the ones that would excel in certain subjects and capitalize on those people, too, you know, in extra time after class and things like that. Because the subjects I’m good in today, when I reflect back, it’s basically because of the teachers that I had in those subjects. They turned me on to it. (Ron, personal communication, 10/29/09)

Dewey’s 1909 book *The Child and the Curriculum* set up a school design that is still sought after by today’s educators. His contention that learning emerges from doing, and not

from repeating facts and information on tests, is also a chief part of the curriculum design of the former educational system participants interviewed in this study.

Theme #3: Teachers

When a participant stated that teachers were important to their design of schools, I asked if they could tell me more about teachers. My question was answered with a variety of responses which ranged from describing the characteristics they would look for in a teacher, to how they would search for a particular type of teacher. Pinky observed that schools need to hire, “dedicated ones. Somebody who went into teaching as a dedication. They are out there. They are out there. There are people who are teaching who could go out in the world and make better money than they do as teachers but stay with teaching out of love of it. That is the type of teacher you need to hire” (Pinky, personal communication, 11/1/09). Rusty shares, “I want a teacher that I know is here for the students, not here to cash a paycheck” (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09). Bob would hire, “Educational gods that just ooze knowledge from every orifice of their body. And students that look at these people and say, wow, I want to be just like him or her. Just educational gods that just spew knowledge from every orifice of their body” (Bob, personal communication, 10/18/09). Rusty shared an assortment of teacher-related thoughts. Teachers had a strong effect on his school work and were essential to the design of his ideal school. He described his experiences with diverse teachers and spoke about the value that their divergent backgrounds bring to a school. This strong desire to have a school with a diverse staff led him to suggest how he would search for teachers. Rusty explained that he would search for teachers by sending:

Out some kind of nationwide – I’d even go worldwide, because I’d want an ethnic mix, you know? . . . So there wouldn’t be a racial problem, I’d be as diverse in my ethnic

groups as I could just so – because you can learn more about people by interacting with them– I did with a lot of my friends. Especially in the military, you’d be surprised. There’s more Hispanics, Haitians, Cubans than there are actually white Americans. Indians, even. There are people from other countries that are joining our service. There are more of them in our own services than there are of us . . . but like I said, you meet some good, decent people there. And everybody’s different and that’s what makes the world go round. But, yeah, I’d have a diverse faculty, because everybody knows something from somewhere, it doesn’t have to always be in America. You know, there are smart people in other places. I’d try to get them to come to my school and teach.

(Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09)

However, hiring excellent, diverse god-like teachers is not at all simple, as some of the veterans point out. Pinky cautions that, “You have to watch for people hiring family and friends just to get them a position without the qualifications that I was just saying. Nepotism ruins schools a lot” (Pinky, personal communication, 11/1/09). Paul noted that politics play an important role in any hiring for a teaching position. He states:

I think it’s the politics, favoritisms, you know, putting their brother-in-law or their sister-in-law instead of putting a good teacher that deserves to be there. You know, not a family member or something like that. Put the best teacher in that school. If there’s something wrong in that school, I’m down on the principal, he runs it. If he can’t keep order, replace him. Just the good, not the bad. (Paul, personal communication, 10/15/09)

Paul explained that the “building to me is not important. It’s the teachers in the building. It’s like a tradesman, if he’s not a good laborer, the trade would be no good. So you can have the

beautifullest school in the world, but if you've got the lousiest teachers, pretty school don't bring education to the kids" (Paul, personal communication, 10/17/09). Ron draws on another work-related analogy to enhance his point about the importance of teachers. He concludes:

I think with teaching as well as a politician or a weatherman, there's the few occupations that you really don't have to do your job and you can still retain your position. There aren't too many positions out there, let's face it, David, that if we didn't do our jobs we'd still have our jobs. However, with a teacher and a weatherman and a politician, that's not true. And I think there should be stricter criteria as far as teachers go, too, to gauge what – not just the students, but the teachers also need to be tested as well, I think, to find what the output is. You know, because maybe if the output isn't proper, then the input to the children might not be there, so we have to look at both ends of the spectrum. (Ron, personal communication, 11/1/09)

There was a sense that teachers are not teaching students. Ron compared teachers to politicians and weathermen, who are not always doing a good job. Strong undertones of teacher accountability were illustrated by Ron and subsequently by Brian. Brian stated his view of teachers' functions very seriously, noting:

You know, kind of like what Bush said – was it Bush? Yeah, it was the first Bush, you know, no child will be left behind. Now, how many kids are we leaving behind, you know? I think another job of the school to make sure that you've got teachers who teach. I like this idea that teachers have to take tests to prove that they can teach, that they're not just going with the system and doing the curriculum that's given to them. You know, make these teachers earn their salaries. I mean, some of these teachers, you

know, high school teachers making, what, fifty, fifty-six thousand, you know? And the average guy that gets out of high school, he's slinging burgers at McDonald's making minimum wage. But, you know, hold the teachers accountable. If they're not doing their job, you know – look, get with the program here or we're going to let you go. And, you know, don't leave the kids behind, you know? (Brian, personal communication, 11/15/09)

The sub-theme of stricter criteria for teachers recurred in interviews with various participants. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) mandates all states to ensure that their teachers are highly qualified. To be deemed highly qualified by NCLB, teachers must have: 1) “a bachelor's degree, 2) full state certification or licensure (Praxis Series of Tests), and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach. Demonstration of Competency: New elementary school teachers have to pass a state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills. Teachers in middle and high school must prove that they know the subjects they teach by passing a state test in their subjects, completing an academic major or coursework equivalent to a major in their subjects, or by receiving an advanced degree or advanced certification/credential” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 22-23). The homeless veterans' ideas of teacher testing aligns directly with the NCLB, which requires testing for most teachers; in fact, the participants supported the federal government's testing of teachers. As a reform effort NCLB has failed (Smith, 2005; Jones, 2007; Behrent, 2009), but this research shows that the testing aspect of NCLB might have potential that demands additional research. The homeless veterans certainly believe that testing is good for teachers and ensures a quality education. Paul expressed opinions similar to Brian's. He said:

[I] would take them on state board exam. See where they are on the state board exam. If you're below my average, you won't get in, you know? I mean, teachers are the essential. They're teaching our kids. So if the teacher is mediocre, what's he going to do for your kid, my kid? It's going to be mediocre. The best teachers. The best teachers. (Paul, personal communication, 10/17/09)

Hiring a particular type of teacher is a theme that recurred throughout the data. Most of the veterans described a specific teacher style that would be best suited to their design of schools. As a follow-up question, I asked them, "What type of teachers would you have if you could design a school?" Bill responded with, "I would hire teachers that I think have some type of military background, because I could trust them to get the job done." I wanted to know why he would hire someone from the military, so I inquired, "you don't think someone without a military background could get the job done, then?" He continued:

I think there's too many pushover teachers today, you know? I think there's teachers that the kid teaches the teacher instead of the teacher teaching the kid. Because I see kids come home today with a mouth on them that, when I was younger, if it ever came out of my mouth, I would've been through the door, you know? And it's crazy. I mean, I was always taught to respect your elders, and you have kids, like, telling you to go to hell and F you and this and that, you know. And they're, like, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old? It's like, come on – that ain't working for me. And that's where that military standard comes in with the schooling. I guarantee you that would never happen, it's like the kids would be doing boot camp for 12 years. That's how it would be. (Bill, personal communication, 11/17/09)

Without a doubt, the participants' military experiences shaped their concepts of an ideal school design. The way the homeless veterans related school personnel to military personnel was particularly noticeable. Bob felt that his senior drill instructor would be an ideal teacher, and would have hired him for his ideal school, because

the man was just total blank-face steel . . . you did not want to even think of crossing this man. [The drill instructor was a] stern disciplinarian to the extreme. . . If you had problems, he'd work with you, okay, but he's not going to do it for you, and you know, like I say, stern disciplinarian, just stone-face cold. (Bob, personal communication, 10/16/09)

I followed up Bob's description of the drill instructor with the question, "What made him a good teacher? Do you remember what he did?" Bob responded with:

I guess just his personality, okay? He was quirky, to say the least, but he did get his point across. I always like to tell the story there is two types of people in education, teachers and preacher, okay? The preachers get up on a blackboard and da-da-da-da-da-da and, "You got that?" And everybody goes, "Yeah." And you know nobody got it. But a good teacher will make sure everybody gets the point, you know? (Bob, personal communication, 10/16/09)

Bob's desire for a teacher who makes sure that students "get the point" overlapped with another theme of the participants' ideal school designs, that of caring teachers. It is important to note that Bob did not feel that teachers have to be "soft" to be caring. Teacher personality is at the center of most the participants' ideal school designs. The next two sections present themes

that emerged throughout the interviews: caring teachers and motivated teachers. Teachers with both of these traits were actively sought in all of the veterans' ideal school designs.

Caring Teachers

What is "caring"? A few of the homeless veterans' definitions were simple synonyms, such as "inspiring", "motivating" or "helping," but most defined several dimensions or characteristics of caring. The vets sometimes identified caring in terms of single acts outside the classroom (e.g., sitting around having a soda with students and then talking to them and helping them out with problems), but more often they saw caring as an integral part of teacher-student relationships within the classroom. Pinky expressed his view of caring teachers by stating that his ideal school design:

would insist that the teachers get to know the students that they're teaching and let the students get to know them as people. Because when I teacher talks to you, it's one thing, but when a friend talks to you, somebody you know talks to you, somebody you've got to know talks to you, it's something different. And the best teachers were the ones who were open with the students and got to know them. I think I would insist on that in the teachers. (Pinky, personal communication, 11/1/09)

Phelan, Davidson, and Thanh examined students' perceptions of the school learning environment. They found that the number of student references to "wanting caring teachers" is so great that it "speaks to the quiet desperation and loneliness of many adolescents in today's society" (1992, p. 698). When probed about the design of schools, the participants echoed this study by saying that they would try to make sure a school possessed caring teachers.

Rusty would design a school by trying:

to staff it the best possible – like I said earlier about these teachers, if I was a principal or if I had any say in it, I'd personally want, . . . before they even were hired . . . I'd want to interview them myself just to see what kind of person they are, if they're going to be the type that's going to be there for the kids, you know? . . . Because there's a lot of kids that fall through the cracks. You know what I mean? And I'd like to stop some of that, you know? . . . And there'd be no passing just because, like, if you were playing sports – because I knew a lot of guys that did do that, too. That just got, you know . . . let him go, let him go, let him go. And some of these guys could barely write their names . . . literally . . . you know? (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09)

For Rusty, it is desirable for a caring teacher to “be there” for the kids. Most participants agreed with Rusty that “being there” was synonymous with “caring.” Rusty also felt that passing a student just for their participation in sports is *not* caring. He suggests that if the individuals who passed in this way had been in the charge of a caring teacher, they would have passed to the next grade only because of educational achievement, not athletic ability. Paul, a very athletic-minded man in high school, concurs with Rusty that passing students because of athletic ability should not be tolerated. Paul responded that he would:

Hold them (teachers) accountable. Being a school director, I'd fire you for that purpose. I'd put somebody in that seat who is going to teach that kid what he needs to go to college. . . Of course, the athletics are going to be there, but his prime or her primary purpose is to get a degree, so when they do finish school or they go to be a football player or a basketball player, whatever, they know they always got that to go back on

(education). And in case they get injured, they always have that piece of paper saying that they graduated. (Paul, personal communication, 10/17/09)

Another common theme which emerged from participants' discussions of the concept of caring was that caring includes capturing their attention. Nearly all the participants felt that instruction which captured students' attention was a form of caring teaching. For a few students, the phrase "meaningful teaching" was synonymous with "caring." Dan stated that an ideal school:

All depends on the teachers. It all depends on the staff. It all depends on the community. It all depends on the students. I would say a good school is one that offers avenues of approach for people from every background. Like, you say if you have a small-town school, a lot of the people are focused. You have a lot of students from the same, you know – there the teachers were the student's father's teachers, and so on, it's just a cycle. . . A good school should be able to take care of people in any situation and help them to be motivated, to learn how to get focused. . . (Dan, personal communication, 10/17/09)

Dan's definition of an ideal school is one with motivated teachers who are able to help students get focused. Regardless of background, most of the participants agreed that teachers needed to be involved—deeply involved in student's lives. Rusty stated that “you've (teachers) got to be there to be involved with the students. Again, you just – oh, I don't have time for him. And you get a lot of that, you know? ...I want a teacher that I know is here for the students, not here to cash a paycheck” (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09). Ron shared the same sentiment by stating we need teachers, “with the enthusiasm and the heart. Somebody that's in it

for more than a paycheck beyond the testing and the qualifications. And how do we look into the heart? How do we tell when somebody truly wants to be involved? Well, maybe by the hours they spend at school” (Ron, personal communication, 11/1/09). Spending additional hours at school, which homeless veterans label as a characteristic of motivated teachers, has been at the heart of the recent and hotly debated firing of a Rhode Island school’s teaching staff. The school board, in February 2010, voted to fire all its teachers in a move to improve the educational system (Kayne, 2010). Teacher resistance to being asked to work longer hours and spend additional time on student-related activities was one of the chief issues between the school and the teachers’ union. What the homeless veterans desire from teachers is what the teachers’ union in Rhode Island is being forced to consent to in this new school reform attempt.

This theme of the participants’ desire to staff a school with caring teachers recurred throughout the interviews. As I previously noted, caring was variously defined by the participants. In a lengthy conversation with Grumpy, he indicated that he felt very few people cared for him. This feeling carried over into the school setting. He did not think that teachers cared, unless they were punishing him. “Like I said, when I was going to school I was more or less a loner. And people knew I was a loner. And people knew that they did not come on over with their suggestions and tell me what to do” (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/18/09). When he acted out in school and was sent to detention and counselors, this made him feel that people cared. He explains that punishment and counseling would be part of his design of school.

I think detention is good. Yeah, I do, because I’ve seen a lot of – when I was – the little bit that I was in school, I saw detention work for a lot more than it didn’t work for. I mean, I was one of the oddballs. But that just had to do with my lifestyle completely. I was, like, not the average Joe. I think the average Joe and somebody who really has

some potential that wants to use it, I think detention is good. I think counseling is good, I really do. I think a lot of things can – you know, when you get a kid that has problems at home and stuff and you go to see the counselor and the counselor shows that they care and they back up what they say, I think it can eliminate a lot of problems. I think they got a lot of good stuff in, you know, the way of trying to help with the behavior and stuff, I really do. What could they do more? I say hire more counselors. I think the counselor thing, that they really mean well, but it's like anything else – they get hit with everything, you know? I'm not making excuses, but they can only do so much. But I do think detention's good, I do think counseling's good. I would like to see more family...
(Grumpy, personal communication, 10/18/09)

Grumpy associated the ability to talk with someone in a respected position as a form of caring. Thus, when he was disciplined, or sent to a counselor, it provided him with an opportunity to convey his perspective. What is more, he had an adult focus attention and time on him; two elements he was not receiving at home. Although he expresses his attitude as if he were being disciplined, it was more about teachers being there and showing that they cared through the extra attention he received that was important to Grumpy.

Most homeless veterans identified more than one dimension or attribute when discussing an ideal school design. The theme of a caring teacher was prevalent throughout the interviews. The responses of Rusty, Dan, Grumpy, and Ron illustrate their ideas of what it means to be a caring teacher. In looking at what all the participants said, four themes dominated their ideas of caring in an educational setting: helping, accountability, motivation, and being there for students.

Throughout the interviews it was evident that the participants had a vivid conception of caring teachers and wanted such teachers for their ideal school design.

Active Learning environments through Teachers

Motivation is not a term policy-makers correlate with school design and curriculum standards. Why do they not focus on motivation? In discussions of the participants' ideal school design, they often mentioned their wish for active learning environments through motivated teachers. Motivation manifests itself in teachers, and others who serve people, in varied forms. They described motivated teachers as individuals who are motivated to learn, motivated to teach, motivated to be a good teacher, and motivated to make learning applicable to life. When asked how he would hire motivated teachers, Dan explained the process would "be all in the screening of the teachers to make sure they're motivated. Because that's where everything starts, that's where everything goes. They help the students grow and to be adults they will become." He continues:

I mean, they'd do screenings and interviews for teachers. It'd have to be people who are obviously motivated to learn. Anybody can stand up front and teach something, but they'd have to really want to be motivated to help the students. I mean, anybody can stand up in front of the room and lecture something for a half an hour, bell rings, you're done, you leave. I mean, they'd have to be someone who preferably could key in on problems and be able to track progress. If you have someone who, you take – like, today I'm taking the placement test. You get one on the first day to see where you're at. And they'd have to be someone who can really examine that and see, okay, he's having trouble on this subject and this aspect of this study. (Dan, personal communication, 10/17/09)

Dan's characterization of a motivated teacher includes teachers who are "motivated to learn" and "motivated to help students". He goes on to explain that motivation includes being able to key in on problems and being able to "read" and aid students who are not grasping the lesson content. Like many of the homeless veterans with whom I spoke, Dan in his definition reflects his admiration for motivation, a trait the participants felt was important for teachers.

Linked to the participants' preference for a motivated teacher was their desire for an active learning environment. Rusty explains that, in the role of a principal, he would monitor teachers to make sure they were motivated and were providing such an environment:

I think I'd be more of a hands-on type principal. I'd come in the classroom probably and sit for a couple minutes or even the whole class maybe just to see how the teacher is teaching, you know? What kind of relationship he or she has with the students, you know? How they interact with the students. Because again, if you're not motivating the students, you've got to, like, bring it to life or something. Something that they're going to remember instead of just reading it verbatim from the book. You know what I mean? I think you've got to make it interesting or people just turn away from it. (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09).

Bob observes:

If I was trying to get an educational background, I'd think the best you could with anybody is ignite their mind. It's like a grass fire that wants to burn, all you have to do is toss the match, okay? Now, as a teacher, how would you toss the match in there, that's the question, you know? It might be different for Johnny than it is Davy and Linda and Lisa, and there's where a good teacher comes in. Again, a teacher could teach somebody

one point three to five different ways. Because not everybody learns the same way. Nobody's mind is the same. (Bob, personal communication, 10/18/09).

Again, we see here the link between the idea of a caring teacher through motivation making the curriculum relevant and “bringing it to life.” The veterans expressed a desire for a classroom that captured their attention, and, as we saw in Rusty's illustration, a curriculum that was relevant to their lives. Grumpy noted how difficult it is to make something relevant, stating, “Judging by myself, I think one of the teacher's hardest things is the presentation. You have to do it in a way where you can keep the students' interest. Because it's so easy for a student nowadays” (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/18/09). We can see from Ron's perspective below that he feels teachers who create a learning environment through their own personal motivation make that environment engaging for the student. He ties his learning experiences in school, when the instructor was attentive to the students and made the class content applicable to their lives, to an experience in the military. As Ron described it,

I got along pretty good with a lot of my teachers. And like I said, they were good teachers, I think. They were good – the way I see it, as a student, you've got to like your teacher, because you're going to learn from somebody that, you know, makes the class interesting or takes the time instead of just have the lesson plan and just you read out of the book and then everything comes out of the book, you know? Like I said, make the subject come alive, you know? And you'll get kids – and back to, like, even in the military I noticed a lot of guys, if they liked a certain thing that we were getting trained, you know, they picked it up quicker than if they, like, oh, this is stupid, I don't need this. You know what I mean? They were more active learning and would pick it up because

they were interested in it other than they just quit and give up just because they thought it was too hard or they couldn't do it or it was stupid. (Ron, personal communication, 11/1/09).

Often homeless veterans experienced curricula that failed to engage them. Although some participants viewed particular teaching styles as central to motivation, Rusty's concept of a motivated teacher pertains to the teachers' treatment of the curriculum. Rusty states:

Well, again, back to the teachers, you know? And again, maybe the length of class, you know? Because like I said, sometimes – it just – I don't know. It seems like sometimes there's just not enough time to teach everything you want to teach. You can just throw it out there and hope maybe that somebody picks up on it, you know? And I think that's what happening now. And again, back to the teachers, the teachers have to motivate. Teachers – you're in a class with however many minutes this class is going to be, you're in there and you know who the good students are, who's struggling, you know? You've got to start it, you can't just, ah, I don't have time today, you know? Like the doctors with the Hippocratic oath, if you're not going to take the oath, then why be a doctor, you know? Same with a teacher, because you're in a position that this is the future of our country or, you know, the future of our generation, you know, our legacy or something, you know? We've got to step up. I don't know, that's just what I think. (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09).

While I did notice some differences in the veterans' definitions of motivation, these did not detract from the voices of most of the veterans, who considered motivation a central component of an ideal school design. One of their proposed methods of hiring motivated

teachers was to screen them to determine if they are motivated to learn, motivated to help students, motivated to go beyond the set curriculum, and motivated to make learning applicable and active. I gleaned from the participants' voices that they considered motivation an important aspect of teaching, and a trait that teachers in their ideal school design should have.

Theme #4: Dress Code

The way we dress plays an important role in the social relations of everyday life. This has been a major concern of schools and educational bureaucracies for decades (Meadmore & Symes, 1997). We assume that we know how to design schools. There are numerous research reports on school design, and many people have been involved in the school design dialogue. However, some of the design issues we assume we have settled continue to be a part of the school reform dialogue. For instance, Yeung (2009) examined the effect of school uniforms on student achievement. The notion of a dress code is not a new phenomenon, and some would think it an obsolete one, but it is still highly prominent in the school reform and design literature. The homeless veterans of this study also stressed the importance of a dress code policy throughout their descriptions of an idealized educational system.

The emergence of a dress code concept was not surprising, considering the military background of the participants. Most military personnel are required to wear a uniform on a daily basis. However, it is not the idea of wearing a particular dress that is compelling for the participants, but the school design reasons behind a dress code. Bob knows this well. He related,

I'm very pro for dress codes and uniforms, okay? Because, again, my military background, okay? If a student looks sharp, he is sharp. . . There is no, well, I'm wearing Gucci and you're wearing Wal-Mart, okay? Kind of sets the mood for . . . we're

going to learn now, okay? I remember in my elementary school years, “Put your thinking cap on.” And . . . now I’m wearing a uniform, so I’m putting my thinking cap on. I’m going to learn something here, you know? (Bob, personal communication, 10/18/09)

Bob explains this similar concept when he was in the military. He explained to me that when all who wear a uniform are respected and provides the soldier with a sense of pride. Paul supported this idea in relation to a school dress code; he believes “in a dress code because daddy might make more money than the other daddy, and you dressing your kid up in all top-notch clothes, and then the kid that just trying, just don’t have it economy-wise, you have a dress code, everything to me is equal” (Paul, personal communication, 10/17/09).

A concern for some of the respondents was that their individuality and self-expression would be eliminated by a dress code. I find this interesting because as military personnel, there are different uniforms that signify rank, military division, and a method of distinguishing units. Although Rusty thought that self-expression was important, he felt a dress code was still necessary in schools. He said that:

You have to conform – I, like, I don’t know . . . But then I think – I believe a lot in individuality. I think you should be allowed to express yourself, you know? . . . Within reason. I’m not saying you’ve got to come to school half naked, you know. I mean, wearing your pants down past your butt, you know. But, you know, something – casual dress, nothing, you know – like I said, individuality, but you have to come to school clean. You can’t be all like, you know, look like you just rolled out the gutter, you know? (Rusty, personal communication, 10/17/09).

Rusty vividly expresses his support for the idea of a uniform policy in schools. His sentiments are related to Bill's in that students should be clean, and dressed respectfully. These are two concepts that are instilled in military personnel. While in the military, personnel are encouraged to be well dressed and clean shaven. Bill expresses his opinions about a dress code :

You see what kids wear today? . . . Pants halfway down their ass. You know, I don't understand that. . . But yeah, there would definitely be a uniform. But there would be, like, I'd have it to wear it with, . . .like, . . . maybe a couple different color uniforms to wear, because it'd seem like you're wearing the same stuff every day . . . you know? Because I know when I was a kid, I didn't want to wear the same stuff every day, you know, but just blend it in a little bit, have different colors. (Bill, personal communication, 10/17/09).

Ron, was a well spoken individual who was living in a transitional housing unit at the time of our interview. He was a reformed Christian who valued his experiences in the military for making him into the individual that he is today. Ron had a unique experience in that he attended both a public school and a private school where dress codes were enforced. He shared with me his comments about a school dress code:

I would have a reasonable casual dress code, yeah. I wouldn't want anybody in the school to feel intimidated by another person. Yeah, and I think with certain types of dress and, you know, certain types of hairstyles, piercings and tattoos, it can be intimidating to the unindoctrinated. They never have been exposed to it and they knew that these tattoos alone – you know, now that everybody has them it means nothing. It doesn't distinguish status. It did years ago, but now it doesn't and somebody who doesn't know might not

know that. If you go out in the country in the middle of Kansas, you have a bunch of tattoos on, then they'd look at you strange. And you may be one of the most devout Christians in the world. Because look at those kids from New York, they look like beasts. There were good kids, but – I think I would try to make standards for dress, you know, where people would want to feel that they didn't have to compete or watch over their shoulder, you know? (Ron, personal communication, 11/1/09)

Like many of the homeless veterans with whom I spoke, Paul, Ron, and Bill have strong feelings on the “why” of a dress code. These feelings are not absolutely common to all the participants. Pinky, who attended a school with a dress code, did not think dress codes were important or would make a difference in his ideal school design, and concluded, “Well, I went to a Catholic school where we had to wear a coat and tie. It never bothered me because everybody in the school was doing it and you could change when you come home. Uniforms do not make a difference” (Pinky, personal communication, 11/1/09).

Potential school violence also played a role in the participants' desire to incorporate a dress code into school design. Grumpy's educational experiences were rooted in a violent school system. He based his decision for a dress code on the size of the school:

I understand what they're trying to do by that (dress code), okay? And the no backpacks or checking backpacks because you got a lot of stuff (violence), . . . especially at a lot of the larger high schools or when you come to the larger cities with all the shit that's going down and stuff. Hmm. . . I think smaller schools . . . I don't think it's really needed (a dress code). When you go into the big cities like Philadelphia and New York or New Jersey, their high schools, yeah, I do. (Grumpy, personal communication, 10/18/09)

Grumpy included backpack regulation as part of the dress code, because guns could be and sometimes were stored in backpacks at larger schools. Overall, his belief in the need of a dress code was derived from his experiences at large violent schools.

Mike, who did not attend a violent school, was still deeply concerned about the safety of individuals and the safety value of a dress code. He said that

all this gangster stuff, I wouldn't – I don't know, I couldn't do anything about that, but in the school – I don't know if I'd have a dress code or anything. Maybe not, but I'd definitely have to have some kind of controlled security, though. Cameras, maybe even. Just – I don't know, I don't want to give them the chance, because if they get too much freedom and then sometimes that backfires on you, too (referring to individual dress). (Mike, personal communication, 10/17/09).

The importance of a dress code to an ideal school design was a major theme in most of my interviews with the participants. According to the homeless veterans, a dress code helps to foster learning, safety, equality, and cleanliness. A dress code is something that can still play a major part in school design, as we can see from the vivid responses of the participants, to whom it was particularly important.

While the research participants' interviews provided various portrayals of their experiences and images of ideal school design, there were themes common to all interviews and interwoven throughout the research. The veterans' school experiences had shown them the importance of a caring teacher that went the extra mile, showed respect, and cultivated a special student- teacher bond. The participants' had also experience the impact of extracurricular activities on their lives at school. Four themes emerged as central to their ideal school designs:

implementation of the newest technology, pragmatic curricula, caring and motivated teachers in an active learning environment, and a formal dress code policy.

Summary

In this chapter, I have provided data depicting homeless veterans' educational experiences and perceptions of idealized school design, guided by a phenomenological design and method of analysis. In the next chapter, I summarize the research investigation, comment on the future of research possibilities, and the professional and personal implications of what I have learned from my research of the educational experiences of homeless veterans.

Chapter 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This qualitative investigation explored homeless veterans' educational experiences and their perceptions of an ideal school by utilizing a phenomenological research methodology. Phenomenological concepts were utilized to explore three questions, which guided and remained at the forefront of this research. These questions were: 1) what was the nature of homeless veterans' educational experiences? 2) How would homeless veterans improve schools? 3) What does an ideal educational system look like from homeless veterans' perspectives? Homeless veterans' voices are not currently heard in the school reform, educational systems design, and user design literature. In the light of educational reformers' thoughts such as Finns (2008) assertion that fundamentally nothing has really changed in schools in the last twenty-five years, I believe that it is important to start listening to marginalized individuals' voices as they can provide valuable insight to the design of educational systems. I think that scholars, educational reformers, and teachers will find this approach to educational research and school design useful, as it adds to the already rich data on the subject by examining marginalized individuals' perspectives.

Each homeless veteran in this study expanded on the subject of their life educational experiences in various discussions. Whether they were talking about their extracurricular school accomplishments, disciplinarian teachers, or their plans for the next educational phase of their life, all provided articulate descriptions of their experiences. In my investigation, I sought to understand the participants' descriptions of their educational experiences, as well as their ideas of school design. I conducted three in-depth interviews with 11 different participants until I reached a point of saturation (Strauss, 1987). The iterative analysis process commenced at the data collection phase. After transcribing the interviews verbatim, I synthesized the data

systematically by first giving full attention to all of its content as if spread out on a “horizon” (Moustakas, 1994). I examined the verbatim descriptions of the elements that were relevant to the experiences and generated codes. I then coded the meaningful units of discourse--word, sentence, or paragraph--in the transcriptions. Subsequently, I utilized thematizing (Moustakas, 1994) to help investigate patterns and understand the structure of the experiences. Thematizing led to textural-structural syntheses, which represented the experiences of the group as a whole. Finally, I validated the process by checking with participants to see if they agreed with the statements within the analysis context (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

This study did not attempt to define the nature of homeless veterans’ school experiences. Nor did it indicate that some educational experiences and school design ideas are more important than others. Rather, this study was interested in discovering the educational ideas of this group of homeless veterans at this particular place and time; I do not assume that these findings are true of all homeless veterans in all parts of the United States. That is not to say that the findings of this study will not inform school reform and school design in other schools in other parts of the country. It is assumed that readers of this research are capable of drawing their own conclusions about the research.

Prior to my interviews, the participants mentioned to me on more than one occasion that no one has ever asked them about their educational experiences before. The homeless veterans were eager to voice their educational experiences and ideas of school design. Their ideal school designs were shaped through their lifetime educational experiences. The findings of this dissertation should not come as a surprise to scholars familiar with educational reform literature and user-design and systems theory. In fact, the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education were issued in 1918 by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education highlight

similar themes many decades ago. This commission regarded the following as the main objectives of education: 1. Health. 2. Command of fundamental processes. 3. Worthy home membership. 4. Vocation. 5. Citizenship. 6. Worthy use of leisure. 7. Ethical character. All seven of these are interrelated and to not to be divided into separate fields. Themes from this study relate to the Commission's objectives. The six themes that emerged from a thorough analysis of the data will be summarized below. The conclusions stemming from these six major themes and sub-themes are discussed in this chapter. First, I summarize the educational experiences of the participating homeless veterans. Next, I discuss the participants' ideal design of schools. Then, I summarize the research's implications for educational reform and systems design.

Summary of the Findings

Lived Experience Theme #1: Caring teachers

According to Noddings (1992), the academic goals of the academy fail to be met unless teachers provide students with a caring and supportive classroom environment. Further research has shown that a caring and supportive classroom environment is desired by students. Other research has shown that creating a caring and supportive environment for learners can be difficult and presents some significant challenges. This study demonstrates the complicated nature of the characteristics that make up a caring teacher.

Although they do have military experience in common, homeless veterans do not otherwise share similar life experiences, beliefs, values, and educational experiences. The lived experiences of these participants and educational paths they took to get to this point in their lives were unique, intriguing, and diverse. From studying these experiences, I realized that a

generalized account of homeless veterans' educational experiences would not work. Therefore, the participants' illustrations of what it means to be a caring teacher were presented in the findings through their voices. I did not attempt to generalize a definition of caring, but sought to project with their voices what it means to be a caring teacher.

The homeless veterans in this study repeatedly focused on caring teachers as an important part of their educational experiences. The majority of the participants considered a caring teacher to be one that would "go the extra mile" and do whatever he or she could to help students. Kohl (1984), believes that "a teacher has an obligation to care about every student" (p. 66). This was certainly a sentiment felt by the participants as Dan referenced a teacher going the extra mile by illustrating "he'd (the teacher) stay after and he'd actually help you study and get you hooked up with resources". Simple actions such as staying after school to hook students up with resources, or conversing with students about a topic other than school, spending quality time, showing enthusiasm for the curriculum, and motivating the students elicited positive feedback. Mutual respect and teacher-student bonds were two other sub-themes important to the idea of a caring teacher.

Lived Experience Theme #2: Impact of extracurricular activities, especially sports, as motivator

A majority of the homeless veterans in this study played sports year-round. Throughout the interviews, the theme of sports and extracurricular activities as a motivating factor for attending school recurred. The importance of extracurricular activities as a motivation to stay in school has been examined in research literature. Bridges et al. (2008) researched five California high schools to find why students dropped out of school. They found that "School clubs and sports were a definite source of motivation for students to stay in school, providing them with

fun and interesting activities, making them feel like they “belonged,” motivating them to get better grades to meet eligibility requirements, and providing positive relationships with coaches” (p. 19). One principle of the 1918 Cardinal principles of secondary education is Worthy Use of Leisure. It is noted in the report that schools should provide appropriate recreation. Rusty supports this research by explaining, “I liked to play sports and that was my motivation to go to school, to go to class”. Fundamentally, extracurricular activities have remained a cornerstone of education since the commission’s report and are still desired by participants of the educational system.

Educators naturally direct their attention to academic learning in schools, and not towards “tacit learning.” Dynarski, et al., (2008), supported by the U.S. Department of Education, combined the talents of several educators to create a guide that presented a series of six recommendations for reducing dropout rates. The guide suggested that schools should “accommodate the varying interests of students at risk of dropping out by providing extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, after-school field trips, guest speakers, postsecondary partnerships, or service groups” (p.33). Many of the participants noted that what they learned through extracurricular activities influenced their career decisions and helped them to be successful in those chosen careers.

The idea of extracurricular activities as motivator was somewhat problematic for a number of the participants in the study, however. Many mentioned various problems resulting from the activities. Some participants felt they had been kept from discovering their full intellectual potential due to the lack of study time resulting from sports involvement, while others strongly disapproved of the frequent passing of athletes through high school because of

their physical ability. These problems complicated the notion of extracurricular activities as an entirely beneficial student motivator.

Ideal Design of Schools

Banathy's (1991) work focuses on the importance of user-design, or providing users with voices in school reform. This research study seeks to provide voices unheard in mainstream society with an opportunity to be heard. The section on ideal school design allows us to hear marginalized individuals' views of educational reform. The four themes that permeated the interviews with the participants on this subject are discussed.

School Design Theme #1: Latest Technology

Various researchers (Galbraith & Haines, 1998; Pedretti, Mayer-Smith, & Woodrow, 1998) contend that the voices of students, those most affected by technology implementation, must be heard. Carr-Chellman (2007) and Banathy (1991) deduce that for user design to be effective, it must be empowering, and allow users to have ownership of the systems they design. There is a wealth of literature on technology and the adoption of technology within schools, but little research focuses on empowering all users of the educational system. Technology--whether a blackboard, desktop computer, or cell phone--has always been an important part of our culture and continues to evolve more rapidly than ever before. Although utilized by homeless veterans, technology is not a simple panacea for educational reform. Li (2007) examined students' views about technology; specifically, their perceptions of technology integration in schools. The researcher found that 87.3% of the students liked technology and felt that it could be an effective teaching tool. The data also found that students felt that it provided more access to information, and wanted to see and use technology every day. These views were shared by the homeless

veterans. From their perspective, technology is a means to a better education, provides access to more and better information, and is the key force in the development of future jobs. They desired buildings that were technologically advanced, classes that were technologically driven, and access to state-of-the-art technologies. Rusty felt that a school should have “as much high tech (technology) as it could. The information highway would have to be wide open, a lot of computers, a lot of media input.” What is most important to this part of the research is that marginalized individuals feel that technology has an important role in the design of schools. In short, they viewed technology as vital to success.

School Design Theme #2: Pragmatic Curricula

William James and John Dewey, psychologists, philosophers, and educational reformers, spent decades at the start of the twentieth century founding and formulating their philosophy of educational pragmatism. Educational pragmatists focus on real-life experiences as the primary source of education and knowledge. For example, a field trip to a reptile zoo would be more of a learning experience than simply reading about reptiles in a class textbook. Dewey noted, “A progressive society counts individual variations as precious since it finds in them the means of its own growth. Hence a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in its educational measures” (1916, p. 305). I believe that pragmatic educational philosophies were considered important by the homeless veterans in this research study, judging by their responses. Pragmatic curricula were also important in 1918 as part of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. The *Vocation* objective was to expose as many professions to students as possible so they could choose the most suitable occupation. This remains true in this study as the participants desired experience in many fields as part of their school experience.

The participants noted that people are continuously learning in today's changing world and that education does not end once a person is out of school. Their ideas included designing a curriculum that starts with the classroom and then is supported by practical experience outside the classroom. Though school curricula continue to be restricted by standardized education, the participants' picture of an ideal school curriculum was quite different. Their quotes indicate their preference for more autonomy in the curriculum and an educational system more relevant to students' lives. While basic classes such as math, science, and history were perceived by the participants as an essential part of the curriculum, so were less traditionally academic classes like art, graphic design, woodshop and music. Participants also stated throughout their interviews that they preferred teachers to go beyond the normal curriculum and provide more interactive and individualized instruction. In short, homeless veterans wanted a pragmatic curriculum that was relevant to students' lives and provided a flexible environment, thereby enhancing their futures.

School Design Theme #3: Teachers

Caring is an important part of the educational system. Researchers have established a general definition of caring in education (Rogers & Webb, 1991; Noddings, 1994; Osterman, 2000; Stronge, 2007). "Caring" emerged as a characteristic that homeless veterans sought in teachers for their ideal school. Caring was the chief teacher quality they looked for, but motivating teaching that would provide active learning environments was among the sub-themes of their vision of an ideal school teacher. They felt that a caring teacher would help students and motivate them to learn. It was important to the homeless veterans that the teachers get to know their students and let the students get to know them as more than just a teacher. One participant said that to prevent students from failing, he would want to interview teachers before hiring

them, to ensure that they cared and would not let students “fall through the cracks”.

Interviewing prospective teachers was one way to make sure that teachers were there for the students and not for the paycheck.

Most of the characteristics described in the interviews were intrinsic qualities, innate in certain teachers while developed over time by others. Nearly all the participants considered classroom instruction as part of caring for students. They felt that the ability to capture students’ attention was a necessary component of teaching and, when not innate to an individual, could be learned. Demonstrations of caring were even found in punishment. Some participants explained that when they were sent to detention or counselors, they felt like someone cared for them. As was noted in the analysis section, there are many forms of caring for students, and all the participants considered caring teachers highly desirable in one form or other.

School Design Theme #4: Dress Code

School administrators, school-boards, teachers, parents, and students are all aware of the ongoing dress code policy debates that abound in both public and private institutions. Brunsmma (2004) states that there is a dearth of scholarly information on the history of school uniforms. One could cite various reasons for this lack of research. However, this study confirms that the concept of dress codes still permeates discussion of school design. The participants held strong views on the concept that will perhaps help inform the discourse on dress code policies.

The homeless veterans felt uniforms to be important to school design partly because of their military experience. Traditionally, military personnel are required to dress in a uniform. These homeless veterans tended to believe that being dressed in a uniform meant something special. One participant stated, “If a student looks sharp, he is sharp,” and that being “sharp” will consequently lead to success in the classroom. Another participant likened donning a

school uniform to putting “your thinking cap on,” feeling that a distinct “study” outfit helped put students in a studying frame of mind. Other participants felt that implementing a dress code could decrease peer judgments based on clothing, competition between students who sought to “out-dress” each other, and disparity between social classes. In their study of prisoners’ ideas of school design, Carr-Chellman et al. (2009) found that prisoners desired uniforms in schools as a deterrent to violence. The homeless veterans in this study also felt that uniforms would help reduce the amount of school violence. Some participants outlined various issues--such as feelings of a lack of individuality--that a dress code could cause, but in general the participants were proponents of a dress code and felt that it would enhance learning.

Limitations

To better understand this research, a brief explanation of what I did not try to accomplish may set the tone. This dissertation did not explain why veterans are homeless or how to improve their individual situations. It did not seek to pinpoint their plight in life as caused by education or any other single social factor. I did not try to link education to homelessness nor provide insight as to how we can solve the homeless problem in the United States. Likewise, I did not share information on how to create a school that would serve currently homeless children or adults. It is also limited by the research instrument, myself. I naturally have a set of presumptions that were constantly reflected upon to ensure that biases did not color the interpretations. Therefore, I am limited by my own presumptions, biases, and my ability to suspend those thoughts. I minimized my subjective biases to the best of my ability by suspending my prior professional knowledge and personal educational experiences. For instance, I spent many hours building rapport with homeless veterans before data collection

commenced. During this time many military stories were shared along with educational experiences that related to this study. When I synthesized the data it was important to only focus on the data and not let the preconceptions from these conversations and stories infiltrate my thoughts during data analysis. In my investigation I chiefly sought to understand the participants' experiences through their words.

Another possible limitation concerns the gender composition of the study group. I only interviewed 11 homeless veterans, all male. The participants, however, were fairly diverse in other aspects, such as social backgrounds, range of educational level, military experience, time spent homeless, age, and number of schools attended.

Any lessons learned from this research could provide invaluable information to others involved in educational systems, user-design, or school reform; the intent of this study is to provide the reader with a picture of homeless veterans' educational experiences and their visions of an ideal school's design.

Conclusions and possible research studies

Evan Thomas's March 6, 2010 *Newsweek* article, "Why we must fire bad teachers," is one of the most recent popular press articles to cite a national problem in the United States educational system and seek an answer to the question, "what truly makes a difference in the classroom"? There have been various studies on curriculum, class size, and testing, but it is my contention that to truly understand what makes a difference, individuals served by the system need to be examined to uncover new sources of data (Banathy, 1996, 2000; Jenlink, 2001). In Chapter One of this study, I demonstrated the need for this research project. While this study has achieved its intended purpose of making our society's unheard voices heard in the education

reform and school design dialogue, it has also pointed to the need for further research. First, it is imperative that we continue to evaluate all individuals' experiences in our educational system, with the goal of drawing on these experiences to improve the system. Homeless veterans are just one subset of marginalized individuals in our society that could significantly contribute to school design. For instance, while this study reported the lived experiences of male homeless veterans, a possible follow-up study could involve female homeless veterans. The inclusion of female voices in the dialogue seems important. While there is no reason to believe that there would be a substantial gender-based difference between studies of male and female homeless veterans, the lack of female voices in the current study does limit its findings and warrant future research. The viewpoints of additional groups such as migrant workers and the working poor could extend the current body of ideal school design by marginalized individuals.

This research study contributes to our knowledge of user-design (Banathy, 1991), systems theory and educational reform on various levels. Examining the educational system from a bottom-up (Carr-Chellman et al., 2009), user-design perspective will help shape systems theory and reform education debates. Further, the themes that emerged can promote diverse approaches to designing instruction and curricula, and generally help inform educational systems. It is important that we continue to include the voices of all system participants in the school design and educational reform debate. As Carr- Chellman and Savoy (2004) note, "Enacting substantive change requires more than a simple open invitation to stakeholders to participate. Each unique situation determines who the users are, and each user has a different experience and knowledge level" (p. 376). This was evident in this research project, as each participant brought a unique perspective to the concept of school design and education reform.

As Dewey noted in his 1916 work, “a democratic society must, in consistency with its ideal, allow for intellectual freedom and the play of diverse gifts and interests in its educational measures” (p. 305). Sometimes groups do not have a seat at the educational reform and educational design table. Dewey challenges us to follow the ideals of intellectual freedom and include these marginalized groups, including homeless veterans, in the education reform discussion. Without their voices we may continue to spiral into educational reform chaos. This research explored the ideas of one marginalized group and gave them a voice at the educational reform and school design table, allowing them to share their experiences and perceptions with an audience that has hitherto failed to listen. I hope we can move beyond our current decision-making process in which only privileged individuals participate. As we attempt to improve school reform in the new millennium, we need to begin empowering the non-privileged with ability to make decisions and guide school change efforts.

References

- Ackoff, R. L. (1974). *Redesigning the future*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Ackoff, R. L. (1981). *Creating the corporate future*. John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Ackoff, R. L. (1999). *Recreating the Corporation: A Design of Organizations for the 21st Century*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alder, P., & Alder, P.A. (1985). From idealism to pragmatic detachment: The academic performance of college athletes. *Sociology of Education*, 58 (4), 241-250.
- Annells, M. (1996). Hermeneutic phenomenology: Philosophical perspectives and current use in nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 23(4), 705-713.
- Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. A. (1985). *Education under siege: The conservative, liberal, and radical debate over schooling*. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey.
- Arredondo, D. E., Arredondo, D. E., Rucinski, T. T., & Rucinski, T. T. (1998). Principal perceptions and beliefs about integrated curriculum use. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 36(3), 286.
- Atkinson, J. M., & Heritage, J. C. (Eds.). (1984). *Structures of social action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Banathy, B. H. (1991). *Systems design of education*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.
- Banathy, B. H. (1992). Comprehensive systems design in education: The prime imperative: Building a design culture. *Educational Technology*, 32(6), 33-35.
- Banathy, B. H. (1994). Creating our future in an age of transformation. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 7(3), 87-102.

- Banathy, B. H. (1995). There is no more important task than transforming education by design. *System Practice*, 8(3), 259-262.
- Banathy, B. H. (1996). Conversation in social systems design. *Educational Technology* 36(1), 39-41.
- Banathy, B. H. (2000). *Guided Evolution of Society: A Systems View*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum, New York.
- Banathy, B. (2001). We enter the twenty-first century with schooling designed in the nineteenth. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 18(4), 287-298.
- Banathy, B., & Jenlink, P. (1996). Systems inquiry and its application in education. In D. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of research for educational communications and technology*. New York: Macmillan.
- Beck, C. (1994). Phenomenology: Its use in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 31(6), 499-510.
- Behrent, M. (2009). Reclaiming our freedom to teach: Education reform in the Obama era. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(2), 240-246.
- Bertalanffy, L. v. (1952). *Problems of Life. An evaluation of modern biological and scientific thoughts*. New York: Watts and Co. Ltd
- Bertalanffy, L. v. (1968). *General systems theory*. New York: Braziller.
- Benda, B. B. (2006). Survival analysis of social support and trauma among homeless male and female veterans who abuse substances. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 76, 70-79.
- Benson, K. F. (2000). Constructing academic inadequacy: African American athletes' stories of schooling. *Journal of Higher Education*, 71(2), 223-246.

- Bentz, V. M., & Shapiro, J. J. (1998). *Mindful enquiry in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Berman, P. & McLaughlin. (1974). *Federal programs supporting educational change Vol. I: A model of educational change*. Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation
- Beyer, C. (2009). *Edmund Husserl*. Retrieved 08/22, 2009, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/husserl>
- Blodgett-McDeavitt, C. (1997). Meaning of participating in technology training: A phenomenology. Paper presented at the *Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education*, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Retrieved November 2009 from <http://web.archive.org/web/20041209064839/http://www.anrecs.msu.edu/research/blodgett.htm>.
- Borman, B. D., Slavin, R. E., Cheung, A. C. K., Chamberlain, A. M., Madden, N. A., Chambers, B. (2005). The national randomized field trial of success for all: Second year outcomes. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(4), 673-696.
- Borman, G., Hewes, G., Overman, L., & Brown, S. (2004). *Comprehensive school reform and achievement: A meta-analysis* (No. ED-99-CO-0137). Washington D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform.
- Bosworth, K. (1995). Caring for others and being cared for: Students talk caring in school. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(9), 686-693.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

- Bridges, M., Brauckmann, S., Medina, O., Mireles, L., Spain, A., & Fuller, B. (2008). Giving a student voice to California's dropout crisis. *California Dropout Research Project Report #8*, 1-47.
- Brown, F., & Hunter, R. C. (1998). School-based management: Involving minority parents in shared decision making. *Urban Education*, 33(1), 95-122.
- Brunsma, D. L. (2004). *The school uniform movement and what it tells us about American education: A symbolic crusade*. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Education.
- Capra, F. (1982). *The turning point: Science, society and the rising culture*. New York: Bantam.
- Carnegie Corporation, Forum on Education and the Economy. (1986). A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century (Report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession). Washington, DC: Author.
- Carr, A. A. (1996a). Distinguishing systemic from systematic! *Tech Trends* 41(1), 21-30.
- Carr, A. A. (1996b). Leadership and community participation: Four case studies. *Journal of Curriculum Supervision*. 12(2), 152-168.
- Carr, A. A. (1996c). The participation race: Kentucky's site based decision teams. *School Community Journal*. 6(2), 27-46.
- Carr-Chellman, A. (1998). Systemic change: Critically reviewing the literature. *Educational Research & Evaluation*, 4(4), 369-394.
- Carr-Chellman, A. (2005). Stealing our smarts: Indigenous knowledge in on-line learning. *Seminar.Net - International Journal of Media, Technology and Lifelong Learning*, 1(2).
- Carr-Chellman, A. (2007). *User-design*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Carr-Chellman, A., Almeida, L., Beabout, B., & Gursoy, H. (2009). Idealized visions from behind bars: Prisoners' perspectives on school change. *International Journal of Educational Reform, 18*(2), 155-172.
- Carr-Chellman, A., & Savoy, M. (2004). Follow the yellow brick path: Finding our way home via Banathy's user-design. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 17*(4), 373.
- Center on Education Policy. (2003). *A first look inside 15 school districts in 2002–2003*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Checkland, P. (1981). *Systems thinking, systems practice*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Checkland, P. (1994). Systems theory and management thinking. *American Behavioral Scientist, 38*(1), 75-91.
- Checkland, P. (2000). Soft systems methodology: A thirty year retrospective. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 17* (S11-S58).
- Churchman, C.W. (1968). *The systems approach*. New York: Delacorte Press.
- Cohen, C. I., D'Onofrio, A., Larkin, L., Berkholder, P., & Fishman, H. (1999). A comparison of consumer and provider preferences for research on homeless veterans. *Community Mental Health Journal, 35*(3), 273.
- Cohn, C. A. (2005). NCLB implementation challenges: The local superintendent's view. *Peabody Journal of Education, 80*(2), 156-169.
- Comer, J. P. (1980). *School power: Implications of an intervention project*. New York: Free Press.
- Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. Cardinal principles of secondary education. Bulletin no. 35. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Bureau of Education, 1918.

- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Crowley, J. J., & Hauser, A. G. (2007). Evaluating whole school improvement models: Creating meaningful and reasonable standards of review. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 12(1), 37-58.
- Crozier, G. (2005). 'There's a war against our children': Black educational underachievement revisited. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(5), 585-598.
- Cuban, L. (2001). *Oversold and underused: computers in the classroom*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cuban, L., Kirkpatrick, H., & Peck, C. (2001). High access and low use of technologies in high school classrooms: Explaining an apparent paradox. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 813-834.
- Dareh, J. C. (1992). Impressions of school-based management: The Cincinnati story. In J. Lane, & E. G. Epps (Eds.), *Restructuring the schools: Problems and prospects*. Berkeley: CA: McCutchan.
- Davies, D. (1981). Citizen participation in decision making in the schools. In D. Davies (Ed.), *Communities and Their Schools* (pp. 83–119). New York: McGraw–Hill.
- Desimone, L. (2002). How can comprehensive school reform models be successfully implemented? *Review of Educational Research*, 72(3), 433.

- Desimone, L., Payne, B., Fedoravicius, N., Henrich, C. C., & Finn-Stevenson, M. (2004). Comprehensive school reform: An implementation study of preschool programs in elementary schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104(5), 369-389.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Development, U. S. D. (2007). "HUD reports drop in the number of chronically homeless persons: More resources and better reporting contribute to annual declines" Retrieved from <http://www.hud.gov/news/release.cfm?content=pr08-113.cfm>.
- Dewey, J. (1902). *The child and the curriculum*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Macmillian.
- Doll, W. (1993). *A post-modern perspective on curriculum*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Duffy, F. (2006). The process of systemic change. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 50(2), 41-51.
- Durden, T. (2008). Do your homework! Investigating the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in comprehensive school reform models serving diverse student populations. *The Urban Review*, 40(4), 403-419.
- Dworkin, J. B., Larson, R., & Hansen, D. (2003). Adolescents' accounts of growth experiences in youth activities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 32(1), 17-26.
- Dynarski, M., Clarke, L., Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., & Smink, J. (2008). *Dropout prevention: A practice guide* No. (NCEE 2008-4025). Washington, DC: National Center for

- Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>.
- Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective Schools for the Urban Poor. *Educational Leadership* 37, 15-24.
- Educational Testing Service. (2007). *America's perfect storm: Three forces changing our nation's future*. Retrieved 2/3, 2009, from http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/AmericasPerfectStorm.pdf.
- Eichelberger, T. (1989). *Disciplined inquiry: Understanding and doing educational research*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Eisner, E. (1998). Does experience in the arts boost academic achievement? *Art Education*, 51(1), 7-15.
- Erlichson, B. A. (2005). Comprehensive school reform in New Jersey: Waxing and waning support for model implementation. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 10(1), 11-32.
- Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative analysis: Practice and innovation*. Crows Nest, Australia: Crows Nest.
- Ferris, E., Finster, M., & McDonald, D. (2004). Academic fit of student-athletes: An analysis of NCAA division IA graduation rates. *Research in Higher Education*, 45(6), 555-575.
- Finn, C. E. (2008). *Troublemaker: A personal history of school reform since sputnik*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fontana, A., Schwartz, L. S., & Rosenheck, R. (1997). Posttraumatic stress disorder among female Vietnam veterans: A causal model of etiology. *American Journal of Public Health*, 87(2), 169.

- Friedman, T.L. (2005). *The world is flat: A brief history of the twenty-first century*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of educational Reform*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (1994). Coordinating top-down and bottom-up strategies for educational reform. *Systemic Reform: Perspectives on Personalizing Education*. Retrieved 1/20/2010 from http://www.michaelfullan.ca/Articles_98-99/09_94.pdf
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York: Teachers' College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2003). *Leading in a culture of change: Personal action guide and workbook*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2009). Large-scale reform comes of age. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2), 101-113.
- Fullan, M., & Pomfret, A. (1977). Research on curriculum and instruction implementation. *Review of Educational Research*, 47(2), 335-397.
- Furman, G. (2004). Moral leadership and the ethic of community. *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration*, 2(1), 1-8.
- Galbraith, P., & Haines, C. (1998). Disentangling the nexus: Attitudes to mathematics and technology in a computer learning environment. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 36, 275-290.
- Gamache, G., Rosenheck, R., & Tessler, R. (2003). Overrepresentation of women veterans among homeless women. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 1132.
- Giorgi, A. (1985). *Phenomenology and psychological research*. Pittsburgh, Pa; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Duquesne University Press; Distributed by Humanities Press.

- Giroux, H. (1991). Modernism, postmodernism, and feminism: Rethinking the boundaries of educational discourse. In Henry A. Giroux (Ed.), *Postmodernism, feminism, and cultural politics: Redrawing educational boundaries* (pp. 1-59). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory; strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co.
- Gould, D., Collins, K., Lauer, L., & Chung, Y. (2007). Coaching life skills through football: A study of award winning high school coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 19*(1), 16-37.
- Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*(3), 330.
- Hammond D. (2002). Exploring the genealogy of systems thinking. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science 19*, 429–439.
- Hawley, W. (1988). Missing pieces of the educational reform agenda: Or, Why the first and second waves may miss the boat. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 24*(4), 416-437.
- Hebert, T., & Durham, S. (2008). *High-stakes teaching: Practices that improve student learning*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Hitch, C.J. (1955). An appreciation of systems analysis. In S.L. Optner (Ed.), *Systems analysis*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin.
- Holcomb, E. L. (2001). *Asking the right questions: Techniques for collaboration and school change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (1994). Phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and interpretive practice. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 262-272). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (2005). Interpretive practice and social action. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research vol. 3* (pp. 483-546). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.
- Hombs, M. E. (2001). *American Homelessness: a reference handbook*. (3rd Ed.). Santa Barbara, Calif.
- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Hultgren, F. H. (1989). Introduction to interpretive inquiry. In F. H. Hultgren, & D. L. Coomer (Eds.), *Alternative modes of inquiry in home economics research* (pp. 37-59). Peoria, IL: Glencoe.
- Husserl, E. (1913). *General introduction to pure phenomenology*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology. translated*. New York: Macmillan.
- Hutchins, C.L. (1996) *Systemic thinking: Solving complex problems*. Aurora, CO: Professional Development Systems.
- Hutchins, C. L. (1996). *Systemic thinking: Solving complex problems*. Aurora, CO: Professional Development Systems.
- Ischinger, B. (2008). *Education at a glance 2008: OECD indicators*. France: OECD Publications.

- Jenkins, P.M. (1972). The systems approach. In J. Beishon & G. Peters (Eds.), *Systems behavior*. London: Open University Press.
- Jenlink, P.M. (1995). *Systemic Change: Touchstones for the Future Schools*. Skylight Training and Publishing Inc.: Arlington Heights, IL.
- Jenlink, P. M. (2001). Activity theory and the design of educational systems: Examining the mediational importance of conversation. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 18(4), 345–360.
- Jenlink, P. (2004). The pragmatics of educational systems design: A critical examination. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 17(4), 323-340.
- Jenlink, P. M., Reigeluth, C. M., Carr, A. A., & Nelson, L. M. (1998). Guidelines for facilitating systemic change in school districts. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 15(3), 217–233.
- Jones, B. D. (2007). The unintended outcomes of high-stakes testing. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 23(2), 65-86.
- Kaestle, C., & Lodewick, A. E. (2007). *To educate a nation: Federal and national strategies of school reform*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Kanpol, B., & McLaren, P. (1995). *Critical multiculturalism: Uncommon voices in a common struggle*. Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey.
- Kayne, R. (2010). *All teachers fired at Rhode Island school*. Retrieved 4/22, 2010, from <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/02/24/rhode.island.teachers/index.html>.
- Kohl, H. (1984). *Growing minds: On becoming a teacher*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Koret Task Force. (2003). A nation at risk underestimated the resistance to change from the organized interests of the K–12 public education system. *Education Next*, 3(2), 10-15.

- Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York: Crown Pub.
- Krathwohl, D. R. (1998). *Methods of educational & social science research: An integrated approach* (2nd ed.). New York; Harlow, England: Longman.
- Lee, S. (2006). The learner-centered paradigm of instruction and training. *Tech Trends* 50 (2), 21-22.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). *Practical research planning and design*. Upper Saddle River: Prentiss-Hall Inc.
- Leeh, N., & Onwuegzie, A. (2008). Horizontalization. In L. Given (Ed.), *The sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods (vol. 2)* (pp. 400). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Levine, A. (1980). *Why Innovation Fails*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Li, Q. (2007). Student and teacher views about technology: A tale of two cities? *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 39(4), 377.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lopate, C. (1969). Some effects of parent and community participation on public education. ERIC-IRCD urban disadvantaged series, number 3, February 1969.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park Calif.: Sage Publications.
- McKinney Act of 1987, § 2108 U.S. code title 5.
- McLaren, P., & Torres, R. (1999). Racism and multicultural education: Rethinking 'race' and 'whiteness' in late capitalism. In S. May (Ed.), *Critical multiculturalism: Rethinking multicultural and antiracist education* (pp. 42-76). Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press.
- McLaughlin, M., & Talbert, J. (2006). *Building school-based teacher learning communities: Professional strategies to improve student achievement*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Meadmore, D., & Symes, C. (1997). Keeping up appearances: Uniform policy for school diversity? *45*(2), 174-186.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. Great Britain: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (Ed.). (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Metz, M. (1988). Some missing elements in the educational reform movement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *24*(4), 446-460
- Mitra, D. (2004). The significance of students: Can increasing " student voice" in schools lead to gains in youth development? *The Teachers College Record*, *106*(4), 651-688.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Murray, C., Waas, G. A., & Murray, K. M. (2008). Child race and gender as moderators of the association between teacher–child relationships and school adjustment. *Psychology in the Schools*, *45*(6), 562-578.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2009* (NCES 2010–458). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
- National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. (2009). *National coalition for homeless veterans publications > brochures and fact sheets*. Retrieved April 8, 2009, from <http://www.nchv.org/brochures.cfm>.

- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. *The Elementary School Journal*, 84(2), 113-130.
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. (2008). *Homelessness & poverty in America*. Retrieved April 8, 2009, from <http://www.nlchp.org/hapia.cfm>.
- Nesbit, T. (2006). What's the matter with social class? *Adult Education Quarterly*, 56(3), 171-187.
- Nevius, C. (2008). No way to honor veterans 2,000 veterans homeless in S.F. *San Francisco Chronicle*, pp. A.1.
- Noell, G. H., & Gansle, K. A. (2009). Moving from good ideas in educational systems change to sustainable program implementation: Coming to terms with some of the realities. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46(1; 1), 79-89.
- Noddings, N. (1992). The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education. *Advances in contemporary educational thought, volume 8*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2007). *Education at a glance 2007: OECD indicators*. Retrieved 2/3, 2009, from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/36/4/40701218.pdf>
- Osterman, K. F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 323.
- Owens, R., & Valesky, T. (2007). *Organizational behavior in education: Adaptive leadership and school reform* (9th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

- Pannabecker, J. R. (1991). Technological impacts and determinism in technology education: Alternate metaphors from social constructivism. *Journal of Technology Education*, 3(1), 43-54.
- Parahoo, K. (2006). *Nursing research principles, process and issues* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Patrick, S. (2006). Influences of suprasystems on systemic change. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 50(2), 26-32.
- Patton, M. Q. (1992). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd. Ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Peck, K., & Carr, A. (1997). Restoring public confidence in schools through systems thinking. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 6(3), 316-323.
- Pedretti, E., Mayer-Smith, J., & Woodrow, J. (1998). Technology, text and talk: Students' perspectives on teaching and learning in a technology-enhanced secondary school classroom. *Science Education*, 82(5), 569-589.
- Phelan, P., Davidson, A. L., & Cao, H. T. (1992). Speaking up: Students' perspectives on school. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73(9), 695-704.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In S. Halling (Ed.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience* (pp. 41-60). New York: Plenum Press.

- Rampey, B. D., Dion, G. S., & Donahue, P. L. (2009). *NAEP 2008 trends in academic progress* (No. NCES 2009-479). U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences.
- Ravitch, D. (2000). *Left back: A century of failed school reforms*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rieckhoff, P. (2009, January 16). O'Reilly downplays number of homeless veterans. *Huffington Post*.
- Reigeluth, C. M. (1993). Principles of educational systems design. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 19(2), 117-131.
- Reigeluth, C. M. (1994). The imperative for systemic change. In *Systemic Change in Education*, edited by C. M. Reigeluth and R. J. Garfinkle, pp. 3-11. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications
- Reigeluth, C.M. (1996). A new paradigm of ISD? *Educational Technology*, 36(3), 13-20.
- Reigeluth, C. M. (2006). A leveraged emergent approach to systemic transformation. *TechTrends*, 50(2), 46-47.
- Reigeluth, C. M. (2008). Chaos theory and the sciences of complexity: Foundations for transforming education. In B. Despres (Ed.), *Systems thinkers in action: A field guide for effective change leadership in education*. (pp. 24-39). New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Reynolds, D. & Teddlie, C. (2000) School effectiveness and school improvement: past, present, and future, in: B. Moon, S. Brown & M. Ben-Peretz (Eds) *Routledge international companion to education* (London & New York, Routledge), 301-323.
- Rief, S. F., & Heimburge, J. A. (2006). *How to reach and teach all children in the inclusive classroom: Practical strategies, lessons, and activities* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Rishe, P. J. (2008). A reexamination of how athletic success impacts graduation rates: Comparing student-athletes to all other undergraduates. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 62(2), 407-427.
- Rogers, D. (1991). Conceptions of caring in a fourth grade classroom. *American Educational Research Association*, Chicago.
- Rogers, E. M., & Scott, K. L. (1997). The diffusion of innovations model and outreach from the national network of libraries of medicine to Native American communities. *Department of Communication and Journalism*, University of New Mexico. Albuquerque: New Mexico. Retrieved 2/5/2008 from <http://communitas.co.za/Dokumente/DiffusionofInnovationModelofChange.doc>
- Rogers, D., & Webb, J. (1991). The ethic of caring in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(3), 173-181.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Rosenheck, R., Frisman, L., & Chung, A. M. (1994). The proportion of veterans among homeless men. *American Journal of Public Health*, 84(3), 466-469.
- Rosenheck, R., Gallup, P., & Leda, C. A. (1991). Vietnam era and Vietnam combat veterans among the homeless. *American Journal of Public Health*, 81(5), 643.
- Rosenheck, R., & Koegel, P. (1993). Characteristics of veterans and nonveterans in three samples of homeless men. *Hospital & Community Psychiatry*, 44(9), 858-863.
- Rosenheck, R., Leda, C., Frisman, L., Lam, J., & Chung, A. (1996). Homeless veterans. In J. Baumohl (Ed.), *Homelessness in America* (pp. 97-108). Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
- Rossmann, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (1998). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

- Rossman, G. B. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Rotberg, I. C., & Harvey, J. J. (1993). *Federal policy options for improving the education of low-income students*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Rumberger, R. (1995). Dropping out of middle school: A multilevel analysis of students and schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 583-625.
- Ryan, B., & Gross, N. (1973). The Diffusion of Hybrid Seed Corn in Two Iowa Communities. *Rural Sociology*, 8, 15-24.
- Schwandt, T. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Seitz, H., & Bartholomew, C. (2008). Powerful portfolios for young children. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36(1), 63-68.
- Senge, P. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. London: Nicholas Brealey.
- Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A. B. (2008). *Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Smith, E. (2005). Raising standards in American schools: The case of no child left behind. *Journal of Education Policy*, 20(4), 507-524.

- Smith, J., & Osborn, M. (2003). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 51-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smith, M., & O'Day, J. (1991). Systemic school reform. In S.H. Fuhrman & B. Malen (Eds.), *The politics of curriculum and testing, Politics of Education Association yearbook, 1990* (pp. 233-267). London: Taylor & Francis.
- Snyder, E. E. (1972). Athletes' careers: The role of the coach in the athletes' future educational attainment. Paper presented at the *Scientific Congress in Conjunction with the XXth Olympic Games, Munich*,
- Sokolowski, R. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Spiegelberg, H. (1975). *Doing phenomenology: Essays on and in phenomenology*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Stedman, L. C., & Kaestle, C. F. (1987). Literacy and reading performance in the united states, from 1880 to the present. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 8-46.
- Stokes, H., & Carr-Chellman, A. (2007). Seeds of engagement: design conversations for educational change. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 24 (1), 91-101.
- Strauss, A. L. (1978). *Negotiations: varieties, contexts, processes and social order*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. Cambridge: MA: Cambridge University Press.

- Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. (2003). Grounded theory methodology: and overview. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of Qualitative Enquiry*, 158-182. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Stronge, J. H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers*. Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (2nd ed). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Sunderman, G., & Kim, J. (2004). *Increasing bureaucracy or increasing opportunities? School district experience with supplemental educational services*. Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project at Harvard.
- Surry, D. (1997). *Diffusion theory and instructional technology*. Retrieved 12/06, 2009, from <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwitr/docs/diffusion/>.
- Surry, D.W., & Brennan, J.P. (1998). *Diffusion of Instructional Innovations: Five Important, Unexplored Questions*. Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED422892).
- System (2010). *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Retrieved 1/15, 2009, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/system>
- Taylor, J. E. (2006). The struggle to survive: Examining the sustainability of schools' comprehensive school reform efforts. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 11(3), 331-352.
- Terrell, S. (1998). It just couldn't have been our school: A phenomenological study of the schooling experiences of African American male inmates. (University of Minnesota).
- Thomas, E. (2010). Why we must fire bad teachers. *Newsweek*, 155(12).
- Thompson, S. (2006). Experiences in systemic change. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 50(2), 34-41.

- Tessler, R., Rosenheck, R., & Gamache, G. (2002). Comparison of homeless veterans with other homeless men in a large clinical outreach program. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 73(2), 109.
- Tyack, D. B., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: A century of public school reform*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Tyack, D., & Tobin, W. (1994). The "grammar" of schooling: Why has it been so hard to change? *American Educational Research Journal*, 31(3), 453-479.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *A guide to education and no child left behind*. Washington, D.C: Office of the Secretary, Office of Public Affairs.
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *ESEA blueprint for reform*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (2007). *"HUD reports drop in the number of chronically homeless persons: More resources and better reporting contribute to annual declines"*. Retrieved 02/25, 2009, from <http://www.hud.gov/news/release.cfm?content=pr08-113.cfm>.
- Ulrich, W. (1983). *Critical heuristics of social planning*. Bern, Switzerland: Haupt.
- United States Census Bureau. (2003). *Veterans 2000*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-22.pdf>.
- United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *The Condition of Education 2004* (NCES 2004-077). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2009). *Homeless veterans*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>.

- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.
- Van Manen, M. (1998). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2003). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (4th ed.). Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.
- Watson, S., & Reigeluth, C. (2008). Community members' perceptions on social, cultural changes and its implication for educational transformation in a small school district community. *Journal of Organisational Transformation & Social Change*, 5(1), 45-65.
- Watson, S. L., Watson, W. R., & Reigeluth, C. M. (2008). Systems design for change in education and training. *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology*. 691-701.
- Wagner, T. (2008). *The global achievement gap: Why even our best schools don't teach the new survival skills our children need--and what we can do about it*. New York: Basic Books.
- Winkleby, M., & Fleshin, D. (1993). Physical, addictive, and psychiatric disorders among homeless veterans and nonveterans. *Public Health Reports*, 108(1), 30-36.
- Wong, K. K., & Rutledge, S. A. (2006). *System wide efforts to improve student achievement*. Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Pub.
- <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip062/2005029951.html>.
- Wong, S. T., Seago, J. A., Keane, D., & Grumbach, K. (2008). College students' perceptions of their experiences: What do minority students think? *Journal of Nursing Education*, 47(4), 190-195.

Yeung, R. (2009). Are school uniforms a good fit?: Results from the ECLS-K and the NELS.

Educational Policy 23(6), 847-874.

Yu, T. (2006). Challenging the politics of the “Model minority” stereotype: A case for

educational equality. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 39(4), 325-333.

Zimmerman, M. A., Bingenheimer, J. B., & Notaro, P. C. (2002). Natural mentors and

adolescent resiliency: A study with urban youth. *American Journal of Community*

Psychology, 30(2), 221-243.

Appendix. Semi Structured Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol for Homeless Veterans Study

Interview #1 30-60 minutes

HOMELESS VETERANS

1. Are you someone who has served in the armed forces? (If not, discontinue interview)
2. Do you currently have a regular nighttime residence? (U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness) (If yes, discontinue interview)
3. Do you currently live in a shelter or transitional housing? (if no discontinue interview unless the answer to #3 above was no).
4. How long have you been homeless in your life (more than six months have preference)

Basics...

- 1) Where are you from?
- 2) Where did you go to school as a child? Was the school public or private?
- 3) What was the last grade you completed?

“Tell me a little bit about your school experience”

- 1) How would you describe yourself as a student? as a person?
- 2) Did you like school? Could you elaborate? *
- 3) What are some of the best memories you have of being in school? Why did you choose these?
- 4) What are some of the negative memories you have about school? (if you attended school in the USA) Why did you choose these?
- 5) How have your experiences in school affected your life?

“For the next few questions, I want you to think of the one school that you remember best-

and answer all these questions about that particular school, OK?"

- 1) What's the name of this school?
- 2) Describe the building and the neighborhood. (Skip if outside USA)
- 3) Are there athletic fields or equipment around the school?
- 4) Did you play any sports or join any clubs (band / computer club) at this school?
- 5) What teachers do you remember? Describe them.
- 6) Who were your friends at this school? Describe them.
- 7) What are some valuable lessons you learned from your teachers at this school?
- 8) What are some valuable lessons you learned outside of class?
- 9) What are some lessons you learned from your family while you attended this school?
- 10) What would you do differently if you were to go back to school?
- 11) How did your family feel about this school?
- 12) Were you close to your family?
- 13) How did you feel about this school while you attended it?
- 14) What do you think about this school thinking back?

“For the next few questions, I want you to reflect on the idea of what would be an idea school.”

- 1) If you were the principal of that school, what would you change?
- 2) What is the job of a school?

- 3) What is the difference between a good school and a bad school?
- 4) Have you heard of the No Child Left Behind Act? What do you know about it? (If Outside USA, skip it)
- 5) Should public school students have to pass a state test to graduate from high school?
- 6) How can you tell if a student is doing well in school? * or if the student is doing bad in school.
- 7) What should a school do for a student who is failing in school? *What would you do, if you were a leader in the school and/or the community, to help failing students?

Interview Protocol for Homeless Veterans study
Interview #3 30-60 minutes

- 1) What would you do differently if you were to go back to school?
- 2) “If you could create a brand new school with no restrictions- what would you create?”
- 3) Can you describe to me what an ideal school looks like to you?

“Tell me a little bit about your school experience”

- 4) How would you describe yourself as a student? as a person?
- 5) Did you like school? Could you elaborate?
- 6) What are some of the best memories you have of being in school? Why did you choose these?
- 7) What are some of the negative memories you have about school? (if you attended school in the USA) Why did you choose these?

David Magolis

Vitae

Education:

Ph.D. Instructional Systems
Pennsylvania State University
State College, Pennsylvania
August 2010

Master of Arts in Adult Education and Communications Technology
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, Pennsylvania
December 2004

Master of Science in Library Science
Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Clarion, Pennsylvania
August 2003

Bachelor of Arts in Criminology
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Indiana, Pennsylvania
August 2002

Academic Positions:

Interim Director of Library Services
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
August 2009-present

Social Science Reference Librarian/ Webmaster/Assistant Professor
Library Department
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
August 2009

Social Science Reference Librarian/ Webmaster/Instructor
Library Department
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
August 2004-August 2009 (Tenured)

Adjunct Professor
Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Summer 2008-present