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WHERE WERE YOU? RHIZOMATIC REFLECTIONS ON THE MEMOIRS OF STUDENTS
WHO WERE CHILDREN AT THE TIME OF SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001

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ABSTRACT

The field of trauma studies offers numerous recommendations on how contentious events—such as the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 (9/11)—have been handled and should be handled by those who work closely with children. Having always struggled with large-scale traumatic events personally, I found myself wondering what impact teachers’ and caregivers’ words and actions on 9/11 and in the days following had on the children under their care. I pursued this wondering by interviewing five students¹ from the Pennsylvania State University—one aspiring social studies teacher, one aspiring education policy-reformer, one aspiring music teacher, one aspiring elementary school teacher, and one aspiring school psychologist—all of whom were elementary school children at the time of 9/11. I collected these persons’ recollections and reflections on their experiences related to 9/11 through an oral history method of collection. Following the interviews, I transcribed and compiled their memories into a memoir format. Referencing Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) exploration of rhizomes, I analyzed the ways I was transformed as a becoming-researcher and becoming-teacher, the ways the participants transformed others, and the ways the participants were transformed via human connection. I assert that human connection transforms relationships and experiences in the context of traumatic events in indefinable ways and consider what this study means for teachers, administrators, and policy makers.

¹ All participants have been given a pseudonym to protect their identities.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My teacher gasped. “A plane hit the World Trade Center,” she announced in disbelief. It had been a picture-perfect morning, weather-wise. Our third grade classroom was located on the western side of our elementary school’s courtyard, so the morning sun poured through the windows, turning everything within its reach a shimmery gold. We had been working silently at our desks, our teacher behind her computer, when she told us the news. For whatever reason, that moment made an impression on my third grade self and transformed the way I think about teaching. At the time, I remember thinking that our teacher must have respected us enough as individuals to tell us upfront about the attacks. I carry these memories with me today as I make decisions about handling contentious issues in my own classroom.

In many of my education classes, my peers and I shared our memories from 9/11 and reflected upon the choices our teachers and parents made about how they approached their discussions with us. As I listened to my peers’ perspectives during those discussions, I realized I felt strongly that teachers should have told their students about the attacks that day and held meaningful discussions about the context of the attacks in the days following. I began to wonder how some of my peers felt about the ways in which their teachers handled the situation. Furthermore, I began to wonder how students perceive the ways in which adults talk to them about traumatic experiences such as 9/11, and what implications their perceptions hold for me as a future educator. All of these thoughts and experiences guided me while I pursued this research project. Little did I know how this project would change my schema about the multiplicities that

are people—specifically children and teachers—and the endless factors that come into play in everyday interactions in classrooms.

Rationale

As I began my research of the literature on the relationships that exist between 9/11 and elementary education, I found myself inundated with countless articles on how educational resources, teachers, principals, and psychological professionals handled or suggested handling 9/11 or other traumatic events in elementary school contexts. The perspective that seemed lacking in the plethora of existing 9/11 literature to me, however, was that of the students—how did they feel about how their teachers and caregivers handled 9/11? 9/11 was extraordinary in that elicited an emotional response from all persons of all ages; furthermore, I felt that there were emotions and stories left untold that would add an important dimension to the existing body of 9/11 research.

Additionally, on a more personal level, I have always been deeply emotionally affected by major traumatic events and have struggled to work through them (i.e., 9/11, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, Boston Marathon). Knowing that it will be important that I have somewhat of an idea of how to talk about complicated and dire circumstances such as these when I have students of my own, I decided to pursue this research project in the interest of bettering myself as a teacher and as a person.

In the context of the existing body of literature on 9/11, this study seeks to add the voices of children, complicate the ways in which teachers and other persons who work with children perceive what children can handle, and consider what human connection might look like in the context of traumatic events. This study is important because there are few scholarly articles that

exist that consider children's perspectives on 9/11 and how they felt about how it was handled. Additionally, it is my hope that this study will transform the ways in which the next generation of teachers that interact with this thesis think about children and contentious issues in the elementary classroom.

It is for the aforementioned reasons that I have set out on this research journey. By seeking out the perspectives of others in the context of this tragic event and considering the value and substance said perspectives offer the field of education and humanity in general, I began to accept that it's okay to not have all of the answers.

Research Question

At the commencement of this research experience, I meandered through the literature, unsure of what my research question was, but knew and felt what it is I wanted to accomplish. This changed over the course of time, as I am left with more wonderings and fewer answers than I had anticipated. This is in part due to the nature of the research, in part due to the theory I use to consider my findings, and in part due to the nature of qualitative research in general. My questions, then, have morphed into the following states: What memories do persons who were school children at the time of the 9/11 attacks have of the day and how it was handled? What transformations emerged from these experiences and from our conversations regarding said experiences? What implications does this process hold for me as a future educator of elementary school children? It is important to research these particular questions, especially for the population of future teachers so that they may find ways in which to communicate and connect with children in order to provide comfort and support.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, I must define several terms that come up throughout the remainder of the thesis. First of all, I will refer to the September 11, 2001 as 9/11 or the attacks or a combination of the two. The phrase events of 9/11 refers to the attacks and the events following the day of the attacks. Traumatic events here means an event that is too incomprehensible for the response systems of the persons who experienced said event. The rest of the terms that need to be defined are those that have been described and used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). These terms are: rhizome; and, and, and; becoming; stratified; representational; deterritorialized; reterritorialized; nomadic thought; arborescent; and flight lines. A rhizome is a horizontal, rather than hierarchical, consideration of how all persons, contexts, things, and, and, and are connected. The conjunction and, and, and is meant to signify that the possibilities of other things that follow and, and, and are indefinable and limitless. I have used this term in order for it to act in a similar fashion to an ellipsis. For example, as there is no way to know the extent of the human connections examined in this study, I use and, and, and in order to leave open the possibilities of the connections that occurred as well as those that have yet to emerge. Stratified and representational, in the context of Deleuzian theory, is characteristic of rigid, traditional thought and old ways of thinking. Deterritorialized references that which is not stratified and not representational; rather, deterritorialization occurs when hegemonic thinking is abandoned for more unexpected possibilities. Arborescent is synonymous with hierarchical thought that categorizes. Finally, flight lines are connections and experiences that transform and create flow. In this study, I detail how I began to abandon my stratified, representational, and arborescent perceptions of children in the context of traumatic events for a more open, deterritorialized

understanding of the possibilities that could occur in those situations. By doing so, I have opened myself up to the potential flight lines that can occur in interactions with children. In sum, these terms aid in an understanding of children in the context of traumatic events by disrupting former predispositions on the issue.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

There is an extensive body of literature in existence that stemmed from the terrorist attacks that occurred on 9/11. For the purposes of this thesis, I sought research that explores the responses of children and those who work with children in reaction to the events of that day. As I researched the existing body of literature, I used the following search terms: children and 9/11, elementary school and 9/11, and trauma studies in elementary school. However, the studies referenced in the following pages are not limited to those within the elementary school context. I took these studies into consideration in order to get a broader picture of what literature exists on how 9/11 was handled in classrooms across the country.

In the following literature review, I present four perspectives that exist in 9/11 research. These perspectives look at 9/11 through a psychological lens, through a humanitarian lens, through a lens that presents the arts as coping mechanisms, and through a reflective lens from the perspectives of teachers. The psychological lens focuses on the experiences of psychiatric professionals within the contexts of specific cases and groups of cases, the humanitarian lens focuses on how 9/11 and contentious issues should be handled with elementary-aged students, the arts-as-coping-mechanism lens focuses on those art projects that were completed in schools in the aftermath of 9/11 and the transformations that occurred in those contexts, and the reflective lens examines several specific examples of how 9/11 was handled in U.S. classrooms.

From a Psychological Perspective

Given the traumatic nature of the events of 9/11, a significant portion of the literature that exists was researched in order to benefit those persons who were psychologically affected by the attacks. As the epidemiologist Ezra Susser shared in a personal communication (2001) with Amsel and Marshall (2003), “terrorism, regardless of the weapons used, is not so much biological warfare as it is *psychological warfare*” (p. 80). The idea of terrorism as psychological warfare asserts that damage caused by terrorism extends far beyond that which can be perceived on a superficial level. Subsequently, much of the psychological research pursued in the aftermath of 9/11 highlights some of the damaging effects that persisted long after the rubble and debris was cleaned up at Ground Zero. This psychological damage caused by terrorism is referred to as the *iconography of terrorism* (Amsel & Marshall, 2003, p. 81). It is through this psychological lens that clinical psychologists and trauma specialists conducted their research on the state of citizens’ welfare post-9/11.

The body of psychological research based on 9/11 can be categorized as the medical side of trauma studies. How do trauma specialists define trauma? Coates (2003) defines psychological trauma as the following:

Trauma entails yet a further escalation of the system toward a kind of dramatically hyperaroused state in which the organism’s ability to effectively respond to the threat begins to break down. The threat is too massive, too immediate, too ‘unthinkable’ in its proportions and implications to be encompassed by the organism’s response systems. (p. 3)

Furthermore, Coates discusses the diversity of ways in which trauma and traumatic events may be experienced, making the field’s current definition of psychological trauma somewhat vague.

A new understanding of trauma that has emerged from contemporary trauma specialists' attempts to redefine trauma entails the following: "Trauma must be understood in its relational and attachment context" (Coates, 2003, p. 2). Coates suggests that said relationships of those who experience trauma or traumatic situations have serious implications for the welfare of the individuals in question:

The greater the strength of the human bonds that connect an individual to others, and the more those bonds are accessible in times of danger, the less likely it is that an individual will be severely traumatized and the more likely it is that he or she may recover afterward. There is a limit, to be sure, when even the most securely related individual will be overwhelmed by a threat that is too massive to be borne, whether it occurs in war or on the 96th floor of a burning building. But one must also remember that the basic human instinct, even on the 96th floor, is to make contact with someone else—even if it has to be by cell phone and even when it is clear that it will be futile in terms of rescue. (pp. 3-4)

The emphasis placed on the value of human connection is consistent across the literature that examines 9/11 through a psychological lens, including those studies that concentrated on the effects that the attacks had on children.

Children were among those persons most deeply affected by the events of 9/11, particularly those living in the areas surrounding the three crash sites. In the weeks following 9/11, the stories of children who lived in downtown Manhattan predominantly detailed how and when they were picked up from school and how long it took to find out if their family members were safe or not (Coates et al., 2003, p. 26). Pfefferbaum et al., Marshall, Pfefferbaum, Regehr, and Galea found the following in their studies of the correlation between children's exposure to traumatic events and the likelihood that they would develop PTSD:

Studies of children's reactions to the Oklahoma City bombing and the 9/11 attack on the WTC have found that those who lost a loved one, were closer to Ground Zero, or watched the disaster repeatedly on television, in addition to those who had experienced previous trauma, were at greatest risk for PTSD. (as cited in Coates et al., 2003, p. 31)

Contrarily, in *Children of War*, Freud and Burlingham (1943) assert that unless children are directly impacted by a traumatic event, they are relatively unphased:

The war acquires comparatively little significance for children so long as it only threatens their lives, disturbs their material comfort, or cuts their food rations. It becomes enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life and uproots the first emotional attachments of the child within the family group. (as cited in Coates et al, 2003, pp. 31-32)

This is not to say, however, that those children who were not living in the areas surrounding the sites of the attacks were unaffected by 9/11. Webb (2002) noted that 9/11 affected even those children who did not lose someone close to them. Furthermore, Noppe et al. (2007) acknowledge the findings of those studies that examined the impact 9/11 had on children who lived far from the attacks:

Although proximity is an important factor in terms of the severity of the reactions to a public tragedy, it is becoming clear from research findings such as those by Halpern-Felsher and Millstein that the psychological impact of September 11th extended far beyond the sites of the attacks. (as cited in Noppe et al.)

The effects of the attacks of 9/11 were not limited to children in the United States. After 9/11, researchers reported that children around the world were having nightmares and struggling to focus in school after having been exposed to video footage of the planes crashing into the

World Trade Center. Countries that communicated said emotional disturbances among their youth include Armenia, Borneo, Chile, Egypt, France, Turkmenistan, and Zimbabwe as mentioned by Wright et al., Cantor, Mares, and Oliver, Cantor and Nathanson, L'etat du monde, and Pfefferbaum et al.; however, this is surely an incomplete list (as cited in Hoven et al., 2003, pp. 52-53). Hoven explains that the reports of these incidences are telling of the enormity of the attacks because, "Whereas major disasters occur frequently throughout the world, in some places on a regular basis, rarely, if ever, do these occurrences have such a powerful impact beyond the national borders in which they happen" (Hoven, 2003, pp. 52-53).

In their research, psychologists have noted the some of the many outlets and services for helping children and their families cope that emerged after 9/11. One of the areas most carefully studied was Kids' Corner, located at the Pier 94 Family Assistance Center in New York City, NY. The Pier 94 Family Assistance Center provided a variety of counseling and social services to those families who sought its support. "Gretchen Buchenholtz (2002) from the Association to Benefit Children described Pier 94 as 'a utopia of comprehensive coordinated services.... It was the 'instinctive' response of people who knew how to respond with respect, compassion, caring, and love'" (as cited in Coates et al., 2003, p. 29). Kids' Corner was a place at which parents could leave their children while they consulted with the variety of Family Assistance agencies available to them. Kids' Corner contained various play materials—particularly those that would allow the children to symbolically represent the attacks such as blocks, fire engines, police cars, and rescue vehicles—an arts and crafts area, and a well-stocked collection of books, snacks, and stuffed animals for all to take advantage of (Coates et al., 2003, p. 30). Coates et al. (2003) spent approximately three months observing the interactions of the patrons of Kids' Corner and noticed the initial fervor with which the children created symbolic representations of the attacks:

Countless paintings of the planes crashing in to the WTC, the towers burning, and people leaping from windows, often shown aflame. Some paintings were compulsively repetitive, the mark of acute traumatization, but most, though somewhat driven and repetitive, were executed with a defiant zeal and liveliness, as if the children were aware they were struggling to cope creatively with their shock, disbelief, and perhaps their overstimulated aggression by putting it into imagery.... Younger children who weren't too depressed to play elaborated narratives with block towers and rescue vehicles. (pp. 34-35)

Indeed, many mental health professionals reported children's perceived need to symbolically represent the events or express their loss via multimodal means (Harris, 2003; Schechter, 2003). There were many children, however, who were still too much in shock to participate in these activities immediately following the attacks and appeared "numb, withdrawn, and unresponsive." For those children, the workers at Kids' Corner attempted to comfort them with therapy dogs and discussion (Coates et al., 2003, p. 34). The Family Assistance Center at Pier 94 was open for approximately 460 days after 9/11 when it finally closed its doors in December 2002 (Public Health: Seattle and King County, 2015).

Those researchers who have studied 9/11 through a psychological lens note that the coping mechanisms made available to children in weeks and months following the attacks were not limited to psychological services. Hoven et al. (2003) bring to light the various service projects taken on by the public school students of New York City:

Perusing the web pages of individual schools in the months following the attack revealed a high level of student involvement, both in school and after school, in developing programs to address potential problems like prejudicial action against some Middle

Eastern members of the school community.... This was not a period of apathy or paralysis for the youth of NYC. (pp. 54-55)

Additionally, Degnan (2002) notes the dedication shown by teachers and other school staff that distributed food and resources to those new schools where children had been relocated following the attacks, comforted students, and accepted additional responsibilities on the students' behalf (as cited by Hoven et al., 2003, pp. 54-55). Beyond New York City, Washington D.C., and Shanksville, schoolchildren around the country and around the world sent teddy bears, art, cards, letters, and Japanese paper cranes in order to comfort the children who lived in the areas surrounding the locations of the attacks. The path leading up to Pier 94 was given the name the Walk of Bears because countless teddy bears that had been sent by schoolchildren affected by the Oklahoma City bombing were lined there (Coates et al., 2003, pp. 28-29). By giving students' who might have been indirectly impacted by the attacks the opportunity to help and provide support to other children, their teachers provided them with an outlet through which they could cope (Herman et al., 2003, pp. 247-248). These services represent a small number of the services offered to grieving children in the weeks and months following 9/11.

What recommendations emerged from the data that child psychologists and psychiatrists collected following 9/11? Coates et al., guided by the framework set by Pynoos and Nader in 1988 following the Oklahoma City bombings, developed a set of recommendations for helping children to cope healthfully. These recommendations included facilitating symbolic representation through play and art; offering to listen to children who are ready to talk; clarifying details, but not probing, as children develop a narrative of what happened; helping children to imagine what they might be able to do in order to repair the damage to give them a restored sense of agency; normalizing their feelings so as to diminish any feelings of isolation; and

supporting attachment bonds with lost loved ones (Coates et al., 2003, pp. 36-37). Researchers emphasize the importance of talking through the events with the children rather than shielding them from it, as the latter might promote complications later on for both adult and child.

The idea that children were too young to understand or needed to be protected in their innocence could serve denial. We speculated that ‘protecting the child’s innocence’ also could represent a need to construct an imaginary space of innocence, projected onto the child, as a way to defend against the adult’s sense of violation (Coates et al., 2003, p. 38).

Researchers in the field of medical trauma studies attest to the multiple ways in which trauma and traumatic events are experienced; therefore, they contend, the situations of those who experience trauma and traumatic events need to be approached responsively.

There are no simple truths in the world of trauma studies, no easy-to-remember rules of thumb for the clinician to memorize. There are no tried-and-true interventions suitable across the board, no cognitive-behavioral anodynes or pharmacologic magic bullets or depth-psychological schematizations that will hold true for a majority or even a sizable minority of cases. (Coates, 2003, p. 13)

Primarily, however, the psychological literature that exists on children on the events of 9/11—and any major traumatic event for that matter—supports having open discussions with children about the issues, so long as the content and pragmatics of the discussions are developmentally appropriate (Herman et al., 2003, pp. 247-248). These discussions, when reduced to their very crux, reiterate psychologists’ argument for the need for human connection (Coates, 2003, pp. 3-4). “Despite the passage of almost a decade, there is still much to be learned regarding the effects of 9/11 on children’s and adolescents’ development” (Eisenberg & Silver, 2011, p. 477).

From the Perspective of Concerned Adults

In the weeks, months, and years following 9/11, children and adults struggled to make sense of the day's traumatic events. Many articles were published, both scholarly and otherwise, that relayed advice for those persons who regularly worked with children regarding how to handle the hard conversations about the day that would inevitably arise. This research also falls under the category of trauma studies; however, Hartman (1995) makes clear the distinction between medical trauma studies and trauma studies in the humanities: "...trauma studies in the humanities is not clinical, nor does it seek to 'heal.' Instead, it 'operates on the level of theory, and of exegesis in the service of insights about human functioning'" (as cited in Dutro & Bien, 2013). After reviewing the research that takes this stance, I present the literature in the following order: the argument for discussions with children about the 9/11 attacks and how to have said discussions.

On September 12, 2001, every teacher in American was a social studies teacher for a few days. Students all over the country were not concerned with standardized tests and graduation requirements. Neither were teachers. Teachers were confronted with questions such as, *Why do they hate us? Are we safe? Will it happen here? Why did they do this? Will any of my loved ones have to go to war?* (Hinde, 2004, p. 31)

Teachers around the country were faced with difficult decisions regarding how to talk with their students about 9/11, or if to talk with them at all in the days following the attacks. Some teachers weren't given a choice in how they got to handle the situation, as administrators instructed them how to respond. Some teachers who weren't given an option as to how to respond were told not to say anything to the students about the day (Noppe et al., 2007, p. 48). Many educational researchers oppose this approach of silence as they feel it missed the opportunity to engage

students in thoughtful conversations about difficult issues and sent messages about what is or is not appropriate for school. Elizabeth Hinde's article *Bones of Contention: Teaching Controversial Issues* (2004) raises such an argument:

Consider what message teachers are relaying to children when teachers do not answer students' questions or respond to their comments (which are sometimes erroneous or prejudicial). Their message is clearly that the school is not the place for discussion of such topics—that these issues are not important enough to be addressed, although they may be the focus of media attention. (p. 31)

Furthermore, Giroux (2008) argues that civic education that addresses issues such as 9/11 is an essential dimension of justice in society because “it provides individuals with the skills, knowledge, and passions to talk back to power while simultaneously emphasizing both the necessity to question” (p. 226). Thus, not talking about contentious issues such as 9/11 sends alarming messages to students and families that schools are not the place for such emotional discussions. Simultaneously, the decision to forgo discussions suppresses the aforementioned element of justice. “Controversies, however, should be instruments of progress in a democracy, and therefore should be an integral part of the social studies curriculum. The test of a democratic republic is how its citizens handle controversies and disagreements” (Hinde, 2004, p. 31).

Once teachers made the decision to make their classrooms a place in which it is important to have these hard discussions, careful consideration had to be taken when contemplating an approach. This stands true for any difficult conversation with children. Elizabeth Dutro, a trauma studies in the humanities scholar at University of Colorado, Boulder refers to this decision as moving “toward a pedagogy of the incomprehensible” (Dutro, 2013). Drawing from

postmodernist theories, Dutro asserts that our feelings and memories associated with traumatic events are incomprehensible:

... the idea of incomprehensibility is meant to invoke a metaphorical space of not knowing, one that I believe can be harnessed for children's benefit in classrooms.

Although I do not intend a literal meaning of incomprehensible, we may often experience the narration of another's trauma, *feel* it, as a space where words *do* often fail and our sense of ability to contain and order the universe is suspended. (Dutro, 2013, p. 303)

By acknowledging these open spaces of difficult discussions in the classroom as incomprehensible and unable to be categorized, teachers dismiss "any assumed dichotomous relationship between happiness and sadness" (p. 307). This is essential for creating a pedagogy of the incomprehensible as it lends itself to a classroom affect of not knowing rather than stratified, representational ways of thinking. Pedagogy of the incomprehensible, then, creates opportunities for many lines of flight to emerge (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

... by inviting and acknowledging the full range of life stories into classrooms, we also invite the overwhelming sense that we can't know or hear or tell all the stories that reside in any space where people exist together. We are always on the cusp of silence, but teetering on the edge of that precipice needs to be motivating, not paralyzing—for to step backward into safety is to know we are ensuring that silence prevails. (p. 308)

Once a pedagogy of the incomprehensible is established within a classroom, Dutro suggests that teachers act as witnesses to the speaking wounds of their students and in turn, allow the students to act as witnesses the teacher's speaking wounds as well. The idea of the speaking wound was initially proposed by Caruth (as cited in Dutro & Bien, 2013). The speaking wound challenges the binaries that have been constructed to label institutions, such as schools, as places

in which it is inappropriate to share difficult experiences. Furthermore, allowing students to act as witnesses to teachers' speaking wounds breaks down the binary that exists between teacher and student. Dutro and Bien point out that it is important to keep in mind that, "Reciprocity is not about adults imposing their woes on children and youth, but it is about purposefully allowing students to glimpse shared human plights and respond with empathy and connection..." (2013, p. 24). What does witnessing entail exactly? Dutro explains that witnessing, first and foremost, needs to be approached with the intention of allowing the story to "cut us to the core and prompt our own testimony" (2008, p. 431). "The witnessing might involve empathetic emotional responses or expressions—verbal and non-verbal—that acknowledge the weight and importance of the stories told" (p. 427). It is through the acknowledgement of the incomprehensible, the witness of the classroom community's speaking wounds, and raw, emotional responses that the students' plights of some of the most difficult situations become lighter just from sharing them with a companion.

Beyond the recommendations from those in the humanities' trauma studies, recommendations come from direct resources such as the National September 11 Memorial & Museum. After consulting with various experts on how to approach conversations about 9/11 with children, the 9/11 Memorial composed the following recommendations: Allow those children who want to talk about 9/11 talk and do not force those who do not want to talk; let the child's interests and thoughts guide the conversation; respond appropriately to the developmental stage of the child; be honest; acknowledge that no one person has all the answers; "highlight [the thousands of individual] stories to help humanize the events, and avoid stereotypes and simplifications" (p. 2); watch for unhealthy behaviors and contact the appropriate professionals

and resources when necessary; monitor what and how much media they take in on the issue; and emphasize hope (National September 11 Memorial & Museum, 2014).

The aforementioned scholars take a theoretical standpoint on children and 9/11, offering advice for pedagogical practice. The field of trauma studies examines literature from the standpoint of concerned adults—whether teachers, parents, or other professionals who work with children—overwhelmingly supports having conversations with children about 9/11 and controversial issues in general. What those conversations may entail should be handled responsively and sensitively, as the variables in each situation are unique.

Using the Arts as Coping Mechanisms in the Classroom

As previously mentioned in the context of the psychological trauma studies literature (Coates et al., 2003), mental health professionals encourage children who experience trauma or traumatic events to symbolically represent the event. Many teachers recognize and utilize the arts in their classrooms as effective means of allowing students to symbolically represent traumatic events. This certainly held true in the weeks following 9/11. Based on the literature I have reviewed on the topic, I present the 9/11 arts literature in the following order: literature, visual art, and drama.

In the aftermath of 9/11, many authors and poets—children and adult alike—composed pieces in response to the attacks. In the anthology of children's responses *Messages to Ground Zero: Children Respond to September 11, 2001*, Harold O. Levy and Shelley Harwayne (2002) write:

On the morning of September 11th, 2001 many of our New York City students saw, heard, smelled, and felt things that none of the grown-ups were prepared to explain. Our

students, as well as students throughout our country, picked up their pens, pencils, crayons, markers, and paintbrushes and attempted to make sense of this most incomprehensible of acts. Our children attempted to use their words and their art to wrap their arms around the tragedy that befell families in the New York metropolitan area as well as residents of Washington and Pennsylvania, a tragedy that brought heart-wrenching sorrow to citizens throughout our land. Our children also used their writing and art to offer condolence, comfort others and, of course, bear witness. (p. viii)

These children were able to reconcile at least some of the disequilibrium that shook their world on 9/11 through their creations. In their writing and illustrations, the student authors and illustrators touch upon the day's events, the heroes who came to the rescue, the process of reckoning and making sense, where they were at the time of the attacks, letters from children from all around the world addressed to the children of New York, hope, and remembering that day. These students' writing and artwork serves as evidence of the children's exploration of some very provocative and profound themes associated with 9/11. For example, Jacob, a fourth grader from Manhattan wrote the following poem that explores life and death:

At the end of my story, at the end of me, I shall overcome life's greatest fears.

At the end of time, at the end of the minute, I will be with you always, every second.

When the sun won't shine, and the moon is the only light,

Eternity is nothing to how long I promise to stay with you.

Your sky is lonely, your moonlight is a shadow behind you.

Although your sunlight is bright and life goes on and on hope is a simple thing that will show the light within. (p. 129)

Jacob's poem is just one example of the wrestling with questions that took place through the students' art. The process of composing their poems, stories, and illustrations provided a cathartic outlet through which the students could explore the meaning of life, death, and the many other themes and questions that presented themselves following 9/11.

In 1977, Bernstein found the following about using literature with children after traumatic situations:

Reading books as a form of therapy (bibliotherapy) gave children the opportunity to identify with others undergoing the same problems, helped them realize that they were not alone, provided catharsis, and facilitated the process of sharing their problems with others. (as cited in Rycik, 2006, p. 145)

In "Making Meaning for Children: The Events of 9-11", Kay A. Chick recommends several texts to share with children—grades one through three—in order to help them understand and catalyze meaningful discussions. This article suggests that literature, when used in a shared experience, can open doors to meaningful discussions and understanding for children. Included in her recommendations are: *The Day America Cried* by Dr. Teri J. Schwartz; *New York's Bravest* by Mary Pope Osborne; *This Place I Know: Poems of Comfort* edited by Georgia Heard; *Messages to Ground Zero: Children Respond to September 11, 2001*; *Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures of the John J. Harvey* by Maira Kalman; and *September 12th: We Knew Everything Would be All Right* by first grade students at H. Byron Masterson Elementary School in Kennett, Missouri (as cited in Chick, 2004). Although reading in itself does not engage children in symbolic representation, reading books such as those listed above with children may lead to discussions in which symbolic representation is encouraged. Chick asserts that these books can serve as age-

appropriate conversation starters for children as young as first grade while simultaneously appealing to children's emotional and developmental needs (p. 29).

In addition to literature, the visual arts also served as a cathartic outlet for children following 9/11. Jeannette Smith Anthos, an art teacher in Conyers, Georgia, noticed that her students were still depicting the attacks during free drawing, months after 9/11 occurred (2004, p. 46). Wanting to give students space to express their lingering feelings about the attacks, she and her classes explored Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*, which was created in response to the bombing of a small Spanish village. After critiquing the piece, Anthos asked the students to analyze the emotion behind the painting. "I wanted students to concentrate on people's emotions more than the repeated images of destruction displayed by the media" (Anthos, 2004, p. 46). The students examined abstraction and ways in which to represent images and emotions using symbols, textures, and values. As a result, the students created representations of 9/11 that allowed them to process the emotions that accompanied that day.

Creating these images in tribute to 9/11 was a wonderful thing for students... Picasso's style provided a forum for students to express emotions, as opposed to worrying about getting it right. As long as they were expressing themselves, they were doing it right. The project allowed us to remember and to heal. (Anthos, 2004, p. 47)

Teachers also created symbolic representations of 9/11 through theater and dramatic play. Vivian Gussin Paley documented the dramatic play in which her kindergarten students engaged following 9/11 in her book *A Child's Work* (2004). Fifteen months after 9/11, a boy in Paley's class wrote a story that reflected the attacks. Although hesitant, Paley allowed the students to act out the story:

The boy, as the plane, flew to the spot where the building was and then gently curled up in a ball on the floor. I brought five children to play the people. They took their roles of being hurt very seriously and when I read ‘they got to die’ they lay down in total silence. The room was hushed. Then I called up another five children as firemen who walked among the bodies of their classmates, holding hoses and putting out the fire. We all watched in stunned silence. (Paley, 2004, p. 108)

During an earlier play session, the children recreated the events of the day with a slight twist at the end: the children imagined that they fell from the plane and safely into the river, accompanied by their floatation devices. Paley emphasizes the importance of the fact that the children have the freedom to change the ending for themselves:

Grownups may speak often of that terrible time and there will be repeated reports and replays on television, but the children must be able to imagine themselves swimming to safety and using their jackets as pillows.... There is no activity for which young children are better prepared than fantasy play. Nothing is more dependable and risk-free, and the dangers are only pretend. (pp. 7-8)

By allowing the children to play out the events of 9/11, Paley provided her students with a space in which they could process the attacks.

Similarly to Paley’s classroom but in a different context, Amy S. Green (2006) created a space in her classroom in which her students could begin to process emotions that accompanied 9/11. Green had her students construct a play based on oral histories they collected from people they knew on their memories of 9/11. After collecting the oral histories and turning the data into dialogue, students performed the play for an audience. The emotions with which the students interacted and took on became much rawer and much more tangible for the students:

What happens to us in the aggregate also happens to each of us as individuals. Our subjects were in different locations when the planes hit. Some of them escaped unscathed while others were not so lucky. Their coping mechanisms varied widely. A few broke down in fear while others stayed calm and performed their professional duties. The single unifying feature of the collected interviews was their candor. In the weeks after September 11th, emotions were close to the surface. It didn't take much prompting for people to tell us what they really thought and felt. (Green, 2006, p. 361)

By allowing students to experiment and explore the emotions associated with 9/11 Green gave her students the opportunity to not only cope with their own feelings, but also empathize with others.

The literature that exists regarding the utilization of the arts as a coping mechanism for children following 9/11 presents qualitative data that reaffirms the notion of symbolic representation as a positive means of coping. Researchers assert that as long as projects were presented and carried out sensitively and tactfully, symbolic representation of the events of 9/11 through the arts was beneficial for children.

Memoirs and Reflective Research

Professionals across a myriad of fields compiled recommendations for how to have discussions with children about 9/11 in the weeks and months following the attacks; but what actually happened during 9/11 and the days and weeks following in classrooms? How did teachers, administrators, and other concerned adults handle the situation? Scholars conducted studies and collected memoirs in order to get a better picture of the answers to these questions.

Noppe et al. (2007) conducted a survey among middle school and high school students and teachers regarding how 9/11 was handled in their respective schools and their emotional responses to how it was handled. From that survey, the researchers learned that of the 634 students surveyed, 79.5% learned of the attacks from teachers (p. 47). Of the 152 teachers surveyed, 62.4% received information regarding what to tell students (p. 48). 52% of the teachers surveyed shared that they attempted to give out as much information about the attacks to the students as possible so as to use the experience as a learning opportunity. Additionally, 30% of the teachers felt it was important that they maintain a reasonable amount of normalcy and routine in their classroom so as to give the students a sense of security. Noppe et al. found that many of the students surveyed sought honesty from their teachers regarding the attacks. The researchers denote that a common theme that emerged from the interviews was the importance of “[making] kids aware of current events” (pp. 50-53).

In What?! Another New Mandate? What Award-Winning Teachers Do When School Rules Change, awarding-winning teachers Vincent Carbone, Jr., Mary Daneels, Carmella Ettaro, Percy Hill, Steven T. Jackson, Sharon Jeffery, and Michelle Mash share their testimonies of how they handled 9/11 in their classrooms. Hill and Mash explain how they were instructed by administrators not share information with the children, nor comment on the events. They both, however, allowed students to talk about how they felt:

We made ourselves available to listen and let the children know that we care and to offer support, security, and love. We gave them little advice, but encouraged them to speak from their hearts. There were no right or wrong feelings and no right or wrong answers. Only the words that came from their innocence and youthful wisdom were honest and correct. (Hill, 2003, p. 129)

Carbone, Daneels, Ettaro, Jackson, and Jeffery provided students the opportunity to discuss the attacks and ask questions. Daneels (2003) references Maslow in her reflection:

Dr. Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' taught us that people do not learn (self-actualize) until their need for safety is met. The events of September 11, 2001, shook everyone's perception of the world around them to the core. To go on with the lesson plan that day would have been absurd. The students had questions and I did not have all of the answers, but I could provide a safe environment for them to share their thoughts, dispel myths, and learn from the tragic events as they unfolded. I could give them unconditional acceptance, no matter what their fears were. (p. 125)

Regardless of whether or not the teachers were the first to break the news to the students or not, all of the teachers whose reflections were included in the anthology stressed the importance of allowing the students to express their emotions freely, which coincides with all of the aforementioned literature.

Conclusion

This review of the literature examined the research that exists on children and adults' responses to the events of 9/11. Across the disciplines considered here, I cannot help but notice that the common thread through them returns to Coates's (2003) assertion of the preponderance human connection has in the context of traumatic situations. Whether the connection is created and maintained through psychological services, classroom discussion, or shared experiences through the arts, human connection has made a positive difference in the process of our nation's children's healing in the aftermath of 9/11.

The purpose of this study is to add to and complicate the existing body of literature on 9/11 by offering a new and different perspective on human connection in the elementary classroom context of traumatic events.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study is to include the voices of children—or in this case, persons who were children at the time in question—in the existing body of research on 9/11. In the context of this study, this purpose translated into collecting memories of people who were elementary school children at the time of the 9/11 attacks and constructing their memories into a narrative configuration. I begin this thesis with a report of the methods. Then I continue on to a chapter containing the five memoirs with an analysis chapter immediately following. I conclude this thesis with implications for the classroom and recommendations for future practice.

The focus of this study is centered on the memoirs of the five participants who agreed to contribute their memories of 9/11. I decided to utilize an oral historical method of collecting and organizing the participants' stories. Historians trace the origin of oral histories back to Allan Nevins, who used oral histories in his research at Columbia University in the 1940s. "Nevins was the first to initiate a systematic and disciplined effort to record on tape, preserve, and make available for future research recollections deemed of historical significance" (American Social History Productions, Inc., 2014). Berg (2001) cites several researchers who detail the benefits of oral histories as a data collection method:

Oral histories also offer access to the ordinary unreported interests and tribulations of everyday life along with the better documented occurrences of floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters (Burgess, 1991; Ritchie, 1995; Samuel, 1991; Tonkin, 1995). Oral histories allow researchers to investigate ordinary people as well as documents. (p. 221)

I chose to use oral histories as my method of data collection for this study in order to investigate “ordinary” schoolchildren’s experiences with 9/11 and to maintain the integrity of their stories.

For this study, I chose participants who were friends of mine who attended Penn State, University Park for time and screening purposes. As I considered whom in my friend group I wanted to ask to take part in this study, I decided to limit my selection to those who were in education-related programs as I thought that those in education might be more in-tune with and aware of the decisions their teachers made at the time of the attacks. Having controlled one variable of my subject selection, I thought that the perspectives included should be somewhat diverse beyond that. With that in mind, I approached the five people I did as I felt that they come from different walks of life that I thought might provide this study with a rich variety in stories for a number of reasons beyond those listed here. Within the group of people I selected, there is an aspiring music teacher, an aspiring education policy-reformer, an aspiring social studies teacher, an aspiring school psychologist, and an aspiring elementary school teacher. At the time of the attacks, one participant was in first grade, two were in third grade, one was in fourth grade, and one was in fifth grade. Three participants were living in Pennsylvania, one in New Jersey, and one in New York at the time of the attacks. Two participants identify as European-American, one as African-American, one as Hispanic and European-American, and one as Asian-American. Then, I asked the participants if they would be involved in my study via a verbal script. Each person was given a pseudonym in order to protect his or her identity. This study is not meant to be representative of any one population of people, nor were participants picked for any one trait they possess. There are countless stories from the day of 9/11 and no single story can take on more than its own perspective. To put the participants’ stories in context, I have given some background information on each person in the following paragraphs.

Lauren Rogers grew up in California until the summer before third grade when her family moved to a small town in eastern Pennsylvania. Lauren was in third grade, living in a small eastern Pennsylvania town when the 9/11 attacks occurred. Her family later moved to a nearby town where Lauren eventually graduated from the town's school district. Lauren will graduate from Penn State in May 2015 with a degree in Childhood and Early Adolescent Education with a certification to teach social studies in grades four through eight. She aspires to be a middle school social studies teacher.

Mark Clinton lived in a small town in central Pennsylvania for all of his life up until college. He was in third grade at the time of 9/11. He attended school in his town's local school district from which he graduated in June 2013. Mark will graduate from Penn State in May 2017 with a degree in Education and Public Policy. He aspires to work as an education policy transformer.

Whitney Mitchell was raised in the Queens and East neighborhoods of New York City before moving to Brooklyn before her fourth grade year. At the time of 9/11, Whitney was in fourth grade at a small school in Brooklyn. Her family had moved to Brooklyn in order to live closer to both of Whitney's grandmothers. She attended several different schools in her elementary school and middle school years before she was accepted to a performing arts high school within the city. Whitney graduated from Penn State in May 2014 with a degree in Music. She aspires to be a music teacher.

Brad McConaughey lived in a New Jersey suburb of New York City in which he attended the local school until he graduated in June 2011. Brad was in third grade at the suburb's local school at the time of 9/11. His uncle was one of the first responders to 9/11 as he was a firefighter in Long Island. Brad will graduate from Penn State in May 2015 with a degree in

Childhood and Early Adolescent Education with a certification to teach preschool through fourth grade. He aspires to teach an intermediate grade on the elementary level.

Priya Patel grew up in a college town in western Pennsylvania. She was in fifth grade at the nearby Pennsylvania college's lab school at the time of 9/11. For her undergraduate degree, Priya attended a state university in Pennsylvania and graduated in 2012 with a degree in Psychology. From 2012 to 2014, she taught a second grade class in Ohio through Teach for America. Currently, Priya is a doctoral candidate in the School Psychology program at Penn State. Priya aspires to be a school psychologist.

Because this study involved the participation of humans, there were many ethical considerations to take into account prior to the interviews. My selection process for this study was entirely based off of who I thought would offer a perspective that would enrich this study because of its inclusion. When I asked the participants to be a part of this study, they were made aware that they were by no means obligated to take part for any reason. Using a consent script, I reminded the participants prior to each interview that they were under no obligation to take part in this study and that they were free to opt out for whatever reason at any time. I took the participants' privacy wishes into consideration when I designated times and places for each of the interviews. I gave each participant a pseudonym in order to protect his or her identity. It is through these processes and considerations that I have taken great care to respect the wishes and protect the identities of each of the participants of this study.

I decided that I wanted to format my interviews in a semi-structured style. Cohen and Crabtree (2006) define semi-structured interviews through the following terms: the interviewer and subject engage in a formal interview; the interviewer has a list of questions or topics with which to guide the conversation; and the interviewer may allow the conversation to stray from

the guide whenever he or she feels that it is appropriate. I formulated the majority of the interview questions to be as open-ended as possible so as to allow the subjects to tell their stories in a way that was both natural and logical for them (see Appendix A). Additionally, I asked questions that I thought would elicit memories that were at the heart of the experiences of 9/11 for the participants. I commenced data collection by recording the interviews with each of the five study participants using the Voice Memos application on my cell phone. I met with each of the participants individually once for 15-50 minutes in person or via Skype. Once I had compiled the participants' responses to my questions, I transcribed each interview. Using the transcripts, I assembled five memoirs based on the stories and responses they shared in their interviews. I asked each participant to read over his or her memoir in order to ensure that I conveyed his or her perspective appropriately.

As I listened to each participant's experiences on and following 9/11, my understanding that pedagogical choices must be made on a context-to-context basis began to emerge. It is for this reason that I decided to analyze these interviews using rhizomatic reflection, referencing the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Rhizomatic ways of thinking, as defined previously, are those that view persons, places, things, experiences, feelings, and, and, and horizontally rather than hierarchically, in new rather than old ways of thinking. Because I wanted to new ways to consider the ways in which teachers and other adults handled the events of 9/11 with children, I thought that this theoretical approach would be an appropriate choice for my study; however, unlike most research that utilizes rhizomes as an analysis tool, I chose to complete a rhizomatic reflection rather than a complete rhizoanalysis in order to focus in on the transformations that occurred over the course of the participants' experiences, my interactions with research, and, and, and. Additionally, the method of rhizomatic reflection allowed me to

experiment with this theory in new and surprising ways in this, my first interaction with this theory.

Given the limited resources and experiences I have with research of this nature, there are several limitations to this study. First, this study is not meant to be representative of any group of people anywhere. Thus, it cannot be assumed that the implications and connections of each participant's memoir will translate well in a different context. This also means that this study is not replicable. Second of all, the participants' interviews are dependent upon the clarity of their memories of the events on and surrounding 9/11; therefore, they are subject to historical inaccuracies. Thirdly, because my analysis is a rhizomatic reflection rather than a rhizoanalysis, this study does not entail the entirety of the concepts that Deleuze and Guattari asserted in their work. Additionally, there are still categorized elements of this study (e.g., chapter order), a characteristic of hegemonic thinking that diverges from rhizomatic thinking. In this study, said categories are utilized for the purposes of clarity and cohesion. Despite these limitations, this study provides a new perspective on 9/11 to the existing body of 9/11 literature in that it explores the suspension of knowing on how to handle traumatic situations in the classroom.

Chapter 4

Findings

The memoirs in the following pages are comprised of the stories that my fellow education students shared with me during their interviews. With their help, I wove the responses from their individual interviews into a narrative semblance of what that day looked like for each. The stories of 9/11 are unique—no two are the same. With that being said, those persons whose stories are shared here are not meant to be representative of any particular population of people anywhere. These stories belong exclusively to those persons who shared them with me; however, they do come in contact with others' stories, which I share in the following pages.

Lauren Rogers

As a new student, Lauren Rogers was beginning to get to know her classmates at the beginning of third grade. Her family had moved from California to eastern Pennsylvania earlier in the summer and she was just getting acclimated to the school community. On a September morning early in the school year, a very normal gym class made a turn for the abnormal. She remembers that her class was playing and running around in the gym— a room that her third grade self remembers with remarkably high ceilings and yellow floors—when the teacher asked them to join her on the floor. A teacher rolled a TV cart in so that all could see. “There’s been an attack on the United States,” the teacher explained before she flicked on the TV and changed the channel. The image that appeared on the screen was one that haunted television screens across the country for the weeks and months following that day: the image of the first airplane hitting

the World Trade Center in New York City. Lauren and her classmates sat on the gymnasium floor, gathered around the television. She has no recollection of feeling any particularly strong emotions from that initial viewing of the footage; however, as the day progressed, she remembers feeling more and more confused about what had happened and what it meant. Later on in the day, an announcement was made saying, “There was an attack in New York City, an airplane hit some buildings, but nobody in our school was related to anybody who was hurt.” The whole school seemed to breathe a collective sigh of relief. Beyond the announcement, Lauren’s teachers and classmates said very little about the attacks. They stayed in school for the rest of the day and carried on as usual.

At home, although her parents talked more extensively with her older brother about what happened that day, her parents reached out to her as well, more specifically to gauge how she was feeling:

I remember them trying to ask me about it, like, ‘How does this make you feel?’ Those types of things. But I remember... not wanting to talk to them, you know? Which was very, like, a ‘me’ thing to do in my childhood. I wouldn’t go home and tell them something that happened at school, so I think they tried and when I didn’t have questions or want to talk about it, there wasn’t any pushback on that, like, ‘We really should talk about this,’ or that type of thing.

Above all other emotions, she felt confused. Even though her family was now closer in proximity to New York City and Washington, D.C. since their move from California, the attacks and people she saw on the news seemed worlds away. It wasn’t until the next day that the reality of 9/11 became much more tangible.

The next day, upon starting the school day, Lauren's teacher asked the class to join her in a circle on the carpet. The students' quiet chatter was hushed by the solemnness of the teacher's expression. They listened intently as the teacher spoke. The teacher explained that the pilot of the first plane that hit the World Trade Center the day before was the father of two girls who attended their school. The students sat in stunned silence. The teacher opened the floor for discussion, giving the students time to ask any questions or express any emotions they might have had. The thick silence persisted. At that time, no students felt like sharing. The conversation ended there. Lauren recalls the overwhelming melancholy her classmates felt. To be sure, she was upset and disturbed; however, it was a different kind of upset, given that she was still new to the school and that she had had very little interaction with the girls whose father was killed. The loss within her school's community brought the tragedy much closer to home than before. The following weekend at home, Lauren received a call from one of her friends from back in California. The friend called to check in with Lauren and make sure she was okay since she had just moved from the West Coast to the East Coast. This struck Lauren as odd.

And I remember, even though I had had this close thing of [my schoolmates' father], like, I knew someone who had been affected by it, I remember saying to my parents, like, 'Why wouldn't she think we weren't okay? We don't live in New York City...' Like, I'm one of the people getting a call to see if I'm okay. I didn't get that.

These encounters made the attacks more personal. The closeness and realness began to scare her.

In the weeks, months, and years following 9/11, Lauren recalls that her school had very little collective reaction to the attacks:

... there wasn't guidance there. A separate thing from [this] is that I have had a teacher commit suicide later in my life while she was our teacher. So I'm comparing how I

remember that event compared with this event and... guidance counselors were always there and they came into our classrooms and I have all of these separate sort of memories of that, and for this I don't remember there being other support that came in or like, kind of like, not a pressure to, but an insistence that people talk about it or anything like that.

Although a school-wide conversation did not take place at the time of the attacks, Lauren found herself having an unexpected, unsettling conversation with two of the teachers about one particular effect that the attacks had a year later:

In fourth grade, I had a buddy. You know how you do buddies—fourth graders and first graders read to each other or something? So this was a new town, we had moved between third and fourth grade. But in fourth grade I had a buddy who was a first grader and she was from Afghanistan. And I remember one day she didn't come anymore. And the first grade teacher and the fourth grade teacher came and talked to me and they said, you know, because she was from Afghanistan, everybody was really bullying her and they had to pull her out of school. And I was like, 'I don't get it. Why would they do that?' And I remember, at the time, which to me now was like very—okay this is a fourth grader thinking—but I remember that she had white skin, like she was a very pale person, which from my understanding of Afghani people now, I understand, like, okay, so there's differences in how people look... But at the time, I remember being confused by that also, like, she doesn't even look like what we're saying that these terrorists look like. And I remember being really upset, so I was like, 'I know her though and she's not...' I just didn't understand why that would be, how someone would be treated because of where they're from.

At home, Lauren's dad tried to explain the significant impact that 9/11 was going to have on history. He told her that he was just a child at the time of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination and how that changed everything for him and for the world. He described to her watching the marches that followed Dr. King's death on television with his mom, although it made little impact on her at that time.

My response [was], 'You're old.' Because to me, hearing, 'I remember seeing Martin Luther King get shot', I wasn't like, 'Wow!' or have an emotional tie to Martin Luther King being shot—that was a 'history thing.' And he was trying to show me that, I think, between he saw this tragedy happen and I saw this tragedy happen, but at that age, I didn't see that. I was like, 'No, dad. Your thing is, like, in the history books.'

Although Lauren struggled to make a connection between her father's experiences with national traumatic events and her own, she began to understand the connection—as well as make connections of her own—later on in her educational career.

Years down the road, Lauren's middle school and early high school social studies classes studied some of the issues that stemmed from 9/11 including the War on Terror, the stereotyping of the Muslim people, and the building of the Park51 mosque; however, in her later high school social studies classes, she recalls doing very little perspective analysis, as cut and dry European History was the primary topic of study. Now, as a pre-service teacher pursuing a career in social studies education, Lauren reflects on the conversations facilitated in her education classes:

'How would you discuss patriotism and how does 9/11 play into that?' ... And then we later went on to discussing what patriotism is and stuff like that, but that was kind of the jumping off point for that class... It was very split in my class. There [are] 10 people in my class, almost all of whom want to be social studies teachers... But I remember, the

whole half of the class was like, ‘9/11 needs to be taught in a respectful way, in a very pro-America, red, white, and blue, we need to not ever question anything about it or question the response to it, but just kind of taking a whole day to be in memoriam for, like, the firefighters and the soldiers who later went to Afghanistan,’ and that sort of thing... And there were several who, myself included, were like, ‘This should be taught in a way now as a part of history that encompasses all that came with it.’ So, the terror of it, but also the... fanaticism isn’t the right word, but frantic, like, obsession that came after it, like terror mongers and the War on Terror and how that all spread[s] out across history. Which, I don’t think is an anti-patriotic view, it’s just looking at it as this is part of something that has affected how we changed our views on people and how does that all go together?

Although Lauren mostly kept to herself in the days following 9/11, her connections with her teachers, family, and friends transformed her 9/11 experiences in ways that contributed to the development of her understanding of 9/11 now. Lauren seeks to empower her future students with knowledge and perspective in the context of historical accounts such as 9/11.

Mark Clinton

It was approximately the sixth day of school when Mark Clinton’s first grade teacher was called out of the classroom to meet with the rest of the elementary school faculty and staff. The class had been working through their first math lesson when an announcement was made over the intercom for all teachers to report to a designated area. Only five-years-old at the time and relatively young for his grade, Mark’s memories of that day are fuzzy at best; but he does remember hearing the announcement and thinking how strange it was. In that moment, he

thought nothing of it, and continued to work under the supervision of the teacher's aide. Several moments passed by before his teacher returned. "No big deal," she said, "Let's just keep working." And work they did. The day was just another normal school day; that is, until the afternoon. The school's office received a phone call explaining the details of a bank robbery that had just taken place not too far from the school. Immediately, the school was locked down. Eventually, the school released the students long after the usual dismissal time. Mark recalls feeling confused by the school's lockdown, but returned home otherwise unphased.

When Mark arrived at home, he found his parents watching television in the living room, his mom's cheeks stained with tears. His parents sat him down and explained what had happened.

When I got home, my parents were there, they had the TV on the whole night. I mean my mom cries a lot, so she was crying all night, but they were just like, 'There are some bad people in this world and we can't really help it. But bad people do bad things.' I mean, I sat in the living room all night with my parents watching the footage over and over and over again because it just kept replaying... My mom always watched the news after that. And even the days after, they would just keep replaying it over and over and over again... all the planes. [I remember] feeling somber.

Above any other emotion, Mark felt confused. Confused as to what had happened, confused as to why the bad people did what they did, and confused as to why his teachers, his parents, and some of his older schoolmates were as upset as they were.

I think I was more confused than anything because I had never been in any of these places: I never went to DC or New York before these events, so I didn't really grasp the whole why it was such a big deal.

In the wake of the attacks, Mark's school made efforts to show the students how to react that would help or comfort others. In the following weeks and days, the students from Mark's school sent cards and packages to the survivors, firefighters, police officers, and others directly affected by 9/11. If his class or school had conversations about the events of that day, Mark has a hard time remember them.

I don't remember a lot of conversations.... I was five, so I was supposed to be in Kindergarten still, but [I remember] that it was a very somber mood. And I think other students understood what was happening more than I did because they would talk about it and I was just like, 'What?'

It wasn't until exactly one year later during a school wide assembly remembering 9/11 that the significance of the events of that day began to hit Mark.

I don't think I really understood what it was until the next year when we had a special assembly on September 11, 2002, and every class got a new flag for their classroom. I think that was when I really understood that it was a really, really big deal because then all of our teachers started crying during that assembly.

By observing his teachers', peers', and parents' reaction to 9/11, Mark understood that what happened that day was much more serious than he had initially thought.

Later in Mark's grade school career, he studied the roots of the conflict that spawned the 9/11 attacks. His social studies classes explored where the terrorist came from, the origins and the principles of Al-Qaeda, and the interactions America had with related terrorist organizations leading up to the attacks. He feels as though learning these things in school was an important perspective to take on, even years after 9/11. Mark's college classes, on the other hand, have yet to talk about the events of 9/11 in the context of the curriculum.

Mark's memories of 9/11 have faded over time; but what remains are the moments of human connection with his family, his classmates, the survivors, and his teachers that transformed his 9/11 experiences. "I hope that 9/11 doesn't become something like the Pearl Harbor day where's it's kind of forgotten." Mark hopes that the significance and tragedy of 9/11 is passed on to the children in schools each year so that the memory of those who lost their lives will live on.

Whitney Mitchell

Whitney Mitchell's new school was just one block away from her house in Brooklyn, NY. Having lived in various New York City neighborhoods over the course of several years, she was particularly pleased with her family's most recent move because it moved her closer to both of her grandmothers. The first days of fourth grade were relatively uneventful for Whitney. There were very few, if any, interruptions during a typical school day. That was why one particular September morning seemed especially out of the ordinary. The students in her class had been working on a writing prompt when suddenly, another teacher dashed into the room and hastily whispered something to their teacher. Their teacher's face fell. He whispered something back to the other teacher and left the room quickly without a word. A few moments later, their teacher returned looking frazzled. "What's going on?" the students demanded. Their teacher responded simply by saying, "We're figuring things out right now. We'll give you more information as we have it." Both teachers left the room this time, leaving the students under the care of the school's social studies teacher. The students turned to one another, inquiring about what might be going on. "What is happening?" Upon the teachers' return, the students strained to hear their conversation. "They just kept talking about looking out the window or something like

that, but obviously they weren't telling us anything." The "shiftiness" of the teachers' actions and body language that morning set off multiple red flags. Things began to escalate from there. The normally silent intercom began interrupting ever few minutes, paging for students to come to the office. The students in Whitney's class began bursting with questions: "Why are our parents coming? Where's my mom? Is my mom coming? What's going on? Is [it] the school? Are we in trouble? Why are you making the moves? You've got to tell us something!" At this point, the office was paging students through a steady stream of announcements.

'So and so come down to the office. So and so come down to the office.' And then it started with one kid. And then they were paging, like, five and six kids listing, listing them. So now we feel the panic. Everything in the air is super stiff. We're like, 'I don't know what is happening, everyone is kind of making stuff up.'

Whitney's classroom was at the front of the school, near the office and the sidewalk; those classrooms in the back of the school, however, had a clear view of Manhattan—and a direct line of sight to the World Trade Center. Days later, Whitney figured out that her teacher had left the room to see the billowing clouds of smoke that started to form over Manhattan, but at this point in time, all she knew was that she could see a crowd of parents swarming the school entrance on the sidewalk below. One by one, the office called her classmates down to be picked up, and one by one Whitney watched them leave, waiting anxiously for her name to be called. Whitney recalls the thoughts racing through her mind as she sat in the classroom:

I thought that there was a fire. I legitimately thought there was a fire or that there was a bomb in the school. That was how the adults were moving around us, you know, with such urgency. And then us, being super blind, just confused and... We felt every single thing that they felt, we just didn't know why we felt it, you know? It was kind of that

element of we were helpless because it's not like you could go downstairs and call your mom. Because it was already chaos paging the kids and so now everybody, I'm getting upset and I'm like, 'Where's my mom? And where's my sister? Where's mama?'

Eventually, Whitney heard her voice called over the intercom. As she fled down the school's stairs to the main entrance, the stairwell's walls and the sense of panic growing within her made her feel trapped. When she finally arrived at the main entrance, she found that it was her uncle who was picking her and her sister up to take them to their grandmother's house. The scene at the entrance, she remembers, was pure chaos. "...[We were] pumping through this crowd of people, you know, like parents and uncles and grandparents are climbing over one another to get their kid out of this building as soon as possible."

Whitney and her sister trailed quickly behind her uncle as they fought through the crowd until the masses dissipated.

When they arrived at their grandmother's house, all three of them made a beeline for the television. And there it was, plain as day on the screen. The reason the teachers had been moving around and whispering so frantically that morning, the reason for the mob of parents outside of the school, the reason Whitney and her sister were sitting on the living room floor of her grandmother's house at that moment: two planes had hit the Twin Towers, causing an explosion in lower Manhattan. The earth-shattering terror of it all struck Whitney as she watched the images playing over and over on the TV.

So all this unrest, all this chaos is manifested on TV and we're looking like... 'What is happening?' Right? So we're looking and I think the only thing I remember the most is like weeping because I had no idea where my mom was. And I don't think I thought so much about all the people that must've died because of the fire, because of the fact that

the buildings had collapsed... I just couldn't stop thinking about the aftermath. The smoke in the streets. The fact that people didn't know how they were getting to and fro. And I didn't know where my mom was at all. So I'm like, downtown Brooklyn, the proximity to the towers and to the bridge and to all that debris and stuff like that, I had no idea what that could have done. I couldn't imagine being out there in the street and just felt super uneasy thinking about the fact that my mom was out there and she didn't know where we were. She didn't know what was happening with us. They didn't know that they had let us out of school or what was happening in the school, we knew what was going on. It was just that kind of back and forth of just uncertainty... And so it was just that helplessness. You're just there. There's nothing that you can do to make the adults around you feel less uneasy and there's nothing you can do to... Until my mom walked through the door, I was a mess. My sister and I, we sat in front of the TV and just wept because it's like, these images, first of all, woah... The fact that they updated us the way that they did and you saw every single stage... completely mind-blowing. I mean, like, what are we even witnessing right now? And that confusion that you heard from the newscasters and as a kid, you feel more uneasy. And that feeling just kept growing and growing and kept getting worse, and now you mix in that sadness and that solemnness and you're just kind of like wow. Someone else really doesn't know where their mom is. Like, my mom could have been any of those people. Any of those people.

Relief washed over Whitney when her mother finally walked through the door. Whitney embraced her mother tightly, but paused—her mother smelled of ash. As grateful as she was that her mother was home, Whitney could not shake the looming feeling of dread that the events of that day had instilled in her.

It's just like being so close was like, you felt it in the air, in the school building, on the street, in the house, you *felt* that thing.... I don't know how to explain it, it was just, it was like everyone was on the same page. In the midst of all the chaos and what not, that central feeling of just confusion and just helplessness when there's nothing you can do, essentially, it was inevitable. And you felt it.

Although her teachers did not directly address the events of 9/11 on the day of the attacks—which Whitney attributes to the fact that they were still gathering information—she recalls her teacher encouraging the students to look at the events of 9/11 primarily with a sympathetic lens in the days following.

...we had as a school and things like that, like you know, like the moments of silence, recognizing as a whole that tragedy had occurred in our city.... And that things are going to be different forever, that we should be reaching out to one another, reaching out to our family and our friends... I was grateful, I am very fortunate that I didn't have anybody who was close in my family or connected to my family personally that was lost, but a lot of my close friends had extended family members who were lost. And so, as a result of that, they really focused on that community, us banding together. Regardless of trying to figure out why and all that type of stuff or hating, or pointing the finger at the terrorist or whatever the case may be, they were just like, 'You know, be aware that, you know your classmates may be going through some different things and we're going through different things, too, because now [when you] witness something like that, you feel different about the country, you feel different about the world, you feel different about people.'

The teachers put the students' personal and emotional needs before everything else in the days immediately after 9/11. Academically speaking, however, Whitney's teacher asked his students

to be analytical in their approach to the attacks, the media coverage, and the nation's response.

Whitney's class talked about the first time the Twin Towers were bombed in 1993, terrorism, the origins of al Qaeda and the Taliban, relations between the Middle East and America, the struggle over oil, the actual events and timing of 9/11, and, and, and. All of this helped Whitney to grasp the reality of that day and to create her own informed opinion.

'What is the country saying and what does the country want us [to think], what do we think? How can we create an educated knowledgeable response to this or a knowledgeable opinion?' So it got deep because you look at the kind of timeline of the country and the country's relationships and start looking at like the country's leaders and that was where a lot of thinking and putting pieces together and stuff like that started happening. So you had that emotional piece, you know? Where it was emotional—very, very tragic. And then you had that realization about of where the country's about to go as far as the war... So it was interesting to look at it like that and really delve deeper in it, which I don't think it made it better or worse, settled us or anything, but it made it more real and it made it more tangible as opposed to so unbelievable you didn't understand where it came from.... And they trusted us with that information. They trusted us to be able to understand it and to use it to shape our thinking moving forward... You still have to be knowledgeable, you still have to know what's going on, not just what the newscast was saying, but, you know, you had to know what was going on as far as the history of it all. These biased opinions that you see on the news [weren't] the only thing that... it wasn't your only resource. So it was good at that young that we were, like, hip. You know? [Our teacher] was not going to allow us to have the wool pulled over our eyes in anyway... he just wanted us to be aware of the resources we had to find, the information

that we needed.... So it was like they taught us [that] you have [to have] the balance between the pride for your country, the pride for yourself, the pride for your family, but you're learning how to respect others, regardless of where they're from. Regardless of what people from their place, or their country, or their religion did, you know what I'm saying, because we're informed.

As Whitney moved through her education, conversations about 9/11 came up in her classes on the anniversary of the attacks or on the surrounding days. Although the stories that her classmates brought to the table from that day were very different from her own, they helped her keep everything in perspective. "What came out of those [conversations] was that you see those things first hand, you were legitimately experiencing the differences in perspectives. Everybody handled it differently." Her teachers and professors didn't plan these conversations ahead of time. There was no lesson plan, objectives, or essential questions, but the conversations grew organically from Whitney and her peers' memories.

In retrospect, Whitney is grateful for the support and understanding of the adults in her life, and the initiative they took in helping her grow in compassion and intelligent media consumption in the days and weeks following the 9/11 attacks.

...human suffering is human suffering, regardless of whose hands it's at. Whether it's at the hands of Americans, or at the hands of Middle Easterners, or at the hands of the British, or at the hands of the French—human suffering is human suffering and at the end of the day, we have to work on that reconciliation in general. Reconciliation and not in the way that it's like revenge, but you're healing and reviving.... Thankfully, I walked away with my family intact, right? I walked away with my life, obviously. I walked away with my immediate family being safe and sound, you know, and that security. And I also

walked away with real knowledge. Real knowledge and the practice of going out there and looking for the real stuff. Because I think [our teacher] taught us just not to settle and be okay with the “okie doke” report. So as we continue to move forward and all this information is continuing to be unearthed and the war and studying that, the reasons why we went to war and why we’re still at war and things like that... I see it because [of] that influence. When things like this happen, you’ve got to go and do your work. As painful as it is, as hard as it is to read those words, to look at those numbers... tough! Tough. But I think we’ve got to do it....

Whitney’s interactions with her teacher, her family, her friends, and other New Yorkers transformed her perception of why her 9/11 experiences helped her in the process of becoming an informed citizen. Whitney continues to advocate developing informed opinions on world events by analyzing sources critically, questioning their validity and the implications they have for others.

Brad McConaughey

The day started out simply enough for Brad McConaughey. Brad attended an elementary school that was just a short walk from his childhood home in a New Jersey suburb of New York City. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, nothing seemed out of place; nothing, that is, until he was called down to the office for his parents to pick him up. Brad said goodbye to his third grade teacher and his friends in his class as he packed up his things and headed toward the office. As he got closer, he noticed that it wasn’t just his parents that were picking him up early—there was an entire group of parents waiting for their children. Although this raised Brad’s attention, he was distracted as he soon found his parents and they set out for the ten minute walk home.

Their walk home felt a lot like Brad's day in school—fairly normal, yet something was off. When his parents sat him down on the back porch, Brad realized his suspicions were correct. His parents calmly explained everything that had happened that morning.

I remember, vividly, walking home with my parents and they didn't say anything about it yet.... We're sitting on our back porch and I remember I'm on one side and my two parents are on the other side and they just start telling me what happened. Very honest, they were being very honest with me. I don't remember the specific wording they used, but they said a plane has hit the one tower, at least I think it was at that point. And I think what struck me about it, specifically, was my uncle was a firefighter in New York. Not in the city, but in Long Island, a bit out, outside of the city. And so my parents got to telling me that he was one of the ones who had to respond, had to go help. And at that point, I didn't really know what that meant. So, what is he doing? Is he going to help injured people? Is he trying to put out fires? Is there a fire? I didn't understand exactly the scope of what was happening and I was just concerned.

Brad's parents continued. They explained that in addition to his uncle, some of his schoolmates' families and people from their town may have been hurt because many of them worked at the World Trade Center, in the surrounding buildings, or as first responders.

...My uncle was one of my heroes. He's one of the bravest people I know and at that point, I was just terrified.... And so that's the main part of my concern. I was worried for him and all the other people who were responding.... I was thinking of my friends and my friends' parents, like, 'Are they all okay? Are they hurt? How are we going to find out information about this?' And I was just very, I go back to that word confused and

worried for, it was really, the whole town because so many of the people there go into the city every day.

Confused as to why people would do such a thing, but glad to be with his parents, Brad stepped inside the house to watch the news. The images of the burning towers, the smoke extending upward into the sky, and the streets surrounding the towers took him aback.

And so, that image is still just ingrained in my head of that whole building is just gone. Those people in that building... that was my impression of seeing that image and hearing the news anchors talk about the buildings and the people inside of them and the firefighters and the policemen and everyone that was there to help. It was a cause of concern because I just kept thinking of my uncle because he's one of them.... Where is he? What's he doing? And then I got to thinking that I'm not the only one who has an uncle or a dad, a firefighter or policeman there, maybe someone who works in that building, so how many other people are sitting on their couch watching the TV, these same thoughts going through their mind?

In the days after 9/11, the teachers and administrators at Brad's school handled the situation very delicately as they were painfully aware of the connections that many of their students had to the attacks.

I can't remember specific conversations I had with the teacher or the administrators or the principals or anything like that, but I do remember they were trying to be very sensitive about the issue and not really talk about its entirety and all of it that happened. They tried to paint the light of this horrible thing happened and there is many horrible things that resulted from it, but there are many heroic things and actions that we can look upon in

people's response to it and how they responded to it. Not only the way they talk, but their actions and how they go about their daily lives after an event like that.

At home, Brad's parents received a very happy phone call within days of the attacks: Brad's uncle was home, safe and sound. Due to their very intimate experience with concern for a loved one, Brad's parents were intentional about helping him view the aftermath of 9/11 with empathy.

...Just the fact that I had such a close connection with it because my uncle was there and they... took me under their wing. I guess you could say, this may be the teacher in me talking, but [they] made it a teaching moment into not hatred for those other people, but solidarity and trust in our own people and our own beliefs looking for those, looking to those people for support.

Between home and school, Brad felt comforted by the adults in his life, and looked to them for how to respond in those difficult times.

Since third grade, Brad has had many conversations about 9/11, in both academic and social situations. With his friends, the common threads in the discussions have been the intensity of the day, and how "unreal" it is that life changed so quickly over the span of just a few hours. In a broader sense, he reflected on how greatly his hometown was impacted by the attacks in those conversations.

There is now a memorial honoring all the people from our town that passed on that day that were either working in one of those buildings or on the street or something. We drive past it every day—it's in the center of town. Hundreds of names on that memorial and it's just a constant reminder of the horrible thing that happened and the way we can, even after that horrible thing, we can get past it by relying on each other for support.

On a similar note, Brad's conversations with his friends often touched upon how the tiniest change in schedules of their families or friends had the biggest impact.

... Sometimes the smallest of things just changed the entirety of someone's life. So, for example, one of my best friends, his dad was supposed to be boarding the train that morning, be in that building for work. Something odd happened that morning, he missed his train and so he stayed home. And he's still there. Living in that same town in the same house. To this day. It's just small things like that that just changed so much in that one person's story, how that one person experienced the event.

In college, the conversations about 9/11 in his classes gave Brad insight into others' experiences from that day. He had classes with people from all over the country. Their stories allowed Brad to compare and contrast others' experiences and reflections with his own.

It wasn't really just a New York thing or an East Coast thing, it was for our whole country. And it was just [comforting] hearing how, even though they were thousands of miles away from the event, it had a very powerful effect on those people as well.

Reflecting now as a future educator, Brad appreciates the sensitivity of the decisions that the adults in his life showed when they considered their approach to 9/11, particularly that of his parents. Because they were upfront with him and entrusted him with sensitive information, Brad felt supported and respected.

I greatly appreciated just the honesty and maturity that my parents addressed the issue with... Right away, I knew when they took me out on the porch, I knew they took me out of school for a reason, not just because. I knew it was a very serious topic, something that not only our family was dealing with, but families across the country.... [they] just really made me pay attention to the gravity of the situation and how it's not just our issue, it's a

human issue. That really made a difference in how I looked at the situation... the honesty, the trust, and the environment they set up to tell me that. It wasn't just on the walk home or in passing or to let the teachers deal with it. They didn't just want to tell me what happened, they wanted to show that there was support and people there to look upon, to help deal with the situation and [that I was] not going to be dealing with this alone.

Brad's connections with his family, his teachers, his friends, and his classmates gave him insight into how adults might help children understand empathy and multiple perspectives. Brad appreciates the ways in which the adults in his life, particularly his parents, influenced his perception of 9/11 then and now.

Priya Patel

Priya Patel, a headstrong, sensible fifth grader, was sitting with her seven classmates in their classroom when the office called her to be picked up one September morning. She paused for a moment, slightly puzzled as to why she was being picked up in the middle of the day, but gathered her things and left the classroom, nonetheless.

...When my parents picked me up, I was like, 'Why are you picking me up?' and they're like, 'We just want you to be at home,' and, yes, it was unusual. They don't usually pick me up from school early like that, so by then I realized that something weird was happening. It wasn't until I went home and my parents sat me down and explained that something pretty serious had happened. They said something along the lines of, 'Something really scary, [really] bad happened, and someone tried to hurt other Americans. Someone tried to hurt people in New York City,' and we watched the news...

I just remember them saying, ‘We just wanted you to be home with us during this time.’

The part that I thought was implied in that [was that] they were, you know... especially with the third plane landed pretty close to where we lived, really, an hour or so away, they just wanted me around them...

As Priya watched the news that evening, she realized that her teacher hadn’t let on at all that something had happened that day. In her mind, it had seemed like a completely normal school day. Perhaps, she considers as she reflects now, it was just that she was preoccupied with her own fifth grade thoughts, that her teacher did an excellent job of hiding the fact that she was aware that the country had been attacked, or that her teacher genuinely didn’t know. She can’t say for sure. In any case, the news of the attacks came as a complete shock. Always a logical person, Priya recalls feeling outraged at the illogic of the situation that was beyond her comprehension at that point in her life:

I mean, I just couldn’t even believe it, I thought it was something from a movie, you know? You get to see these kind of traumatic images from movies and things like that and I was just like, ‘Okay, this isn’t real life...’ I guess I might have been a little bit logical as a kid, too. I was just kind of like, ‘What are you gaining out of this? Terrorists, you died doing that!’ These were the types of things that ran through my head. ‘So not only did you kill and hurt so many people, but you died, too. Why?’ It just didn’t make sense. More so than an emotional memory, just because I didn’t have any family members or close friends who were directly affected by the events, I didn’t have, at that time, as much of an emotional reaction aside from this kind of concern for our country, you know, what was going to happen next kind of thing. It was mostly just logically—

this is stupid, I've always been so logical—like, very logically jarring. You know? Like, *what?* It really just didn't make any sense to me.

At school the next day and in the days following, Priya's class had a debrief of sorts to explain what had happened and to give the students an opportunity to ask questions and voice their thoughts. No memorial, no assembly, just a simple conversation with peers.

I remember in subsequent years when we would take moments of silence and we would take time about what happened and sometimes we would even have assemblies to learn about the event, but that actual year when it happened, I have very little memory.

It seemed to her at that time that beyond the classroom debrief, emotional support was offered to those students who needed it, but moved forward with everyone else.

My guess from the adults' perspectives, looking back, is that they probably did look for signs of whether or not we were, you know, if we felt well-supported or not and maybe my class seemed okay to the adults which is why they chose to take a little bit of time, but overall just move on, like, business as usual kind of stuff.

At home, Priya's support came in the form of knowledge and learning how to be an intelligent consumer of the media from her parents. Following the attacks, Priya began regularly watching the news with her parents and having discussions with them about what the next steps for the country were.

My parents were pretty good about it and they kind of encouraged me to watch with them to know what was going on.... So maybe more so than some of the actual coverage of the aftermath, my memories kind of jump forward to the next steps. This whole gearing up for war thing.... What I kind of remember was just, like, you know, nationally, what people were thinking, like, and actually, my memories kind of jump up a lot more to this

whole War on Iraq.... All of a sudden, I just remember watching the news about going to war with Iraq and hearing my parents—since most of my political views at the time came from them—was like, ‘Why are we going there? How is this the next logical step after this event to go there?’ And I just remember watching the news being, like, ‘What the heck is happening? Why?’

Yet again, the senselessness of the situation terrified Priya. Yet again, she found herself questioning the logic behind the decisions of people with more power than she had.

As Priya got older, her school and her teachers took the time to memorialize the attacks every 9/11. The teachers would share individual stories from 9/11 of those who witnessed the attacks or experienced them first hand.

...Sometimes I feel like the news exposes us to a lot of really terrible things in the world to the point where we almost get desensitized by them and I thought that that approach was, kind of brought us back to humanizing this event. It’s not just some event looming in the sky and in our distant memory or something, this is kind of a big deal.

As a student and later as a teacher, she appreciated the individual stories and she appreciated the moments of silence, but she always wondered why schools chose to pause to remember this specific event every year.

‘What about Pearl Harbor?’ I wondered, ‘And the other traumatic events that our country has witnessed? How healthy is it for us to keep taking a moment to remember this event?’ I remember thinking that even when I was in upper secondary school. I still don’t know the answer to that.

When Priya was a second grade teacher in Columbus, OH, those same concerns asserted themselves to the front of her mind in a whole new way, as she was the one in charge of the

classroom at that point. She and her co-teacher decided to talk about 9/11 with their students and showed a brief video to the students; but those concerns still left her feeling uneasy.

We did take the time to talk about this event that happened and kind of the implications it had on our society and how things have changed since then in the classroom to the degree that we could with our second graders. But I still, even during that time, wondered if we should take the time to talk about it. And I still kind of wonder about it. It's one thing when we take the time to talk about why we're having school off, if we have a day off for, like, Columbus Day. 'Oh hey, you're going to miss school? It's a holiday? Or an event? This is why we're missing it.' But this is an event that so many of our kids weren't even alive for. And while I think it's an important thing to talk about from a historical perspective, I wondered if talking about it on that day was wise.... We tried to be as sensitive as we could while still giving our kids the knowledge of, 'Listen this is a very important thing in history that is still impacting the way we live our lives today.' Because that part is important.

Fast forward to Priya's graduate work in school psychology. Although 9/11 has been referenced a few times in her classes thus far, her coursework hasn't done an in-depth analysis of the events of that day in the context of school psychology. Rather, her professors have asked the students to examine and consider the appropriate steps to provide the best emotional and mental health support to students in the event of minor or major tragedy such as 9/11. These steps include the possibilities of the PREPaRE Model and tiered screening, both of which enable school psychologists to provide various levels of mental health support to students with diverse needs. Additionally, Priya recalls a conversation in which their professors cautioned against

traumatizing children by making them talk about traumatic events. It is back to this discussion that Priya traces her concerns regarding 9/11 conversations in elementary classrooms.

...One thing we did learn is that you don't want to, I guess overly traumatize, like, if a kid is fine, you don't want to be like, 'Oh, well this really bad thing...' and you don't want to create memories of trauma in that kid because that's not going to be helpful either. But at the same time, you can't neglect the needs of kids, so it's kind of a tough line, especially when you have a mixed bag in your classroom of kids who are going to need those different supports. But that's one thing that I kind of took away from that, that this could also be why, throughout, I've felt a little bit uncomfortable about whether or not we should talk about this or not because it's not a trauma that our kids have had to experience.

One of the most frustrating and continuously prevalent issues with which Priya struggles in the context of 9/11 is the new order of racism that accompanied the executive and legislative orders that were flexed as a result of the attacks. Priya saw these forces even as a child.

Being brown skinned and stuff, I know that closer to the events, whenever we would travel to India to see my family frequently, we would get extra stops in the airports and things like that. It just made me even [angrier] that this thing happened, but it also made me angry about the way our country decided to handle it. I think security was very important, but to basically legally allow profiling and racism, I was just kind of like, 'What?!' And that kind of continues.... And while I've turn this into a slightly selfish thing, what I really mean is that the racist implications that have come about, partially, I think, due to the way that our country handled and the way that the media handled it, really suck.... I'm sorry, terrorist come in all shapes and sizes and colors and yes. There's

a really scary group of them that are of a certain persuasion because they have perverted their religion to this terrible place. But, yes, and so, fine. But there are also terrorists of plenty of other persuasions.

Priya's connections with her family, her teachers, her classmates, and her students transformed the ways in which Priya considered the effects that talking about contentious events have on elementary school children. Through her coursework, Priya continues to pursue her wonderings of how to deal with these contentious issues of trauma and race surrounding crises such as 9/11 and continues to question the authority of the powers that be in order to make decisions that are ultimately in the best interest of her future students.

Chapter 5

Analysis

The purpose of this study is to collect and consider the stories and memories of people who were schoolchildren at the time of the 9/11 attacks on the United States and to further complicate the literature's understanding of what it means to talk with children about contentious events in classrooms. Having had discussions with my fellow pre-service teachers in my education classes prior to this study about how our elementary school teachers and caregivers handled 9/11 within our individual classes and homes, my thought process followed a path that recognized only one way of handling the situation as acceptable: telling the students, making connections, and developing a historical understanding of the attacks. With this idea in mind, I pursued the interviews for this project with the intention of analyzing the memoirs that came forth from the interviews in the context of Sorin's (2005) *Changing Images of Childhood*. Sorin names ten social constructs of children and childhood and expands on the implications of each perception. These constructs are: the innocent child, the noble/saviour child, the evil child, the snowballing child, the miniature adult, the adult-in-training, the child as commodity, the child as victim, and the agentic child. Sorin asserts that as educators, we must question our own perceptions of childhood and make adjustments accordingly in order to benefit the children under our care. Additionally, Sorin points out that the constructs are not individual entities and may overlap and interact within certain contexts. Going into this study, I intended to make a case for the perception of the agentic child; however, while the constructs Sorin asserts certainly hold import and significance within early childhood practice, as I read the existing body of literature

of 9/11 and listened to the stories of those I interviewed, I realized that to put the stories—or the pieces of the stories, for that matter—into any one category asserted by any philosophy or philosopher would limit the possible connections and becomings that the stories held, leaving it stratified and representational. It is for this reason that I looked to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari for analysis tools that would help me open myself to the unknown and the incomprehensible and consider these stories in new and unexpected ways. In the foreword of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, p. x), Massumi cites Guattari's *Sur les Rapports Infirmiers-Médecins* (1995) as saying the following about the central perspective of La Borde, the psychiatric clinic at which Guattari worked:

‘The central perspective is...to promote human relations that do not automatically fall into roles or stereotypes but open onto fundamental relations of a metaphysical kind that *bring out* the most radical and basic alienations of madness or neurosis’ and channel them into revolutionary practice. (p. x)

While the context of this study is not a psychiatric clinic but elementary schools and homes, and the purpose of this study is not to revolutionize psychiatric practice but to transform my own pedagogical practice, the intentions of La Borde and the intentions of this study are connected—to transform the ways in which certain traditional institutions of thought are considered through nomadic thinking. Massumi (1987) describes nomadic thought as the following:

Rather than analyzing the world into discrete components, reducing their manyness to the One of identity, and ordering them by rank, it sums up a set of disparate circumstances in a shattering blow. It synthesizes a multiplicity of elements without effacing their heterogeneity or hindering their potential for future rearranging (to the contrary). (xiii)

It is through nomadic thought that I hope to complicate what I understand, what 9/11 research asserts, and, and, and about making human connections and talking with children in the context of traumatic events.

Deleuze and Guattari engage a dialogue of philosophical rhizomes—considerations of the connections between all multiplicities involved that abandon hegemonic processes—in order to disrupt and disturb arborescent, hierarchical notions. Rhizomes have no beginning or end, but rather are composed of many, many middles. There are no goals or ending points within rhizomes (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 1-25). I have considered the rhizomatic transformations that have occurred over the course of this study, during the periods of the subjects' lives that this study examines, and times in between and have dictated a glimpse of said transformations. In particular, I concentrated my ponderings on the elements of human connection that have made themselves known throughout this process and how my understanding of what is the “best” method of human connection was shattered and transformed into something less stratified. This analysis maps out the connections between what I thought I knew, what I learned, how I was changed by what I learned about the events of 9/11 and the participants' experiences, and how the participants' experiences changed them.

As previously stated, I felt solid and grounded in my opinions on handling contentious issues in the classroom, specifically 9/11, and felt that I had enough evidence to support said opinions prior to the commencement of this research project. Having felt very strongly about the ways that my teacher and family handled the situation with me and having interacted with some of my peers who felt similarly, I thought that it was important that teachers and caregivers told their children about 9/11 and engaged them in a dialogue about the context and implications of the attacks in order to aid them in becoming-media consumers and becoming-activists. With

these thoughts planted firmly—and arborescently, I might add—in my mind, I set out on my research journey with many blockages barricading the possibilities that could emerge from the analysis. Little did I know that it would be a journey of becoming-teacher and becoming-researcher.

As I read the existing body of literature on 9/11, one particular common thread throughout the perspectives spoke to me: human connection made a difference in the lives of those who directly and indirectly experienced 9/11 and human connection in the midst of trauma continues to make a difference in the lives of those who experience traumatic events (Coates, 2003). Rhizomatically, I was in the middle of becoming-researcher, being transformed by each piece of literature, my thoughts, my experiences with 9/11, my experiences in the classroom, my conversations with my professors, and, and, and. Thus, my understanding that human connection can function in multiple, multiple of ways was still emerging. Although rhizomatic analysis and psychoanalytic analysis are very different—rhizoanalysis involves the horizontal unexpected connections between things, whereas psychoanalysis is more concerned with representations of things we already think we understand—and although this common thread across the literature of human connection stems from the realm of psychoanalysis, I felt that Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on connectivity in rhizomes would allow me to consider new ways of understanding 9/11 and the memoirs I collected (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7).

Thus, I began the interviews. With each interview, I could feel myself opening up to the contexts and the horizontal transformations of each person's story. In Lauren's story, the elements of human connection include: her parents reaching out to her, offering to talk about the day and answer any questions; her teacher opening up classroom time for discussion of feelings and questions; her friend from California calling to make sure she and her family were okay; her

middle school and early high school teachers that started a dialogue between the students, the teachers, the news, history texts; her professors who establish conversations that pursue the students' memories of 9/11 and their reflections and ponderings as pre-service teachers; and, and, and.

Mark's brushes with human connection include: his parents' comforting and informing him the day of and the weeks following; his conversations about 9/11 with his classmates in the days and weeks following the attacks; his creation of cards and messages for the survivors, firefighters, and policemen; the assembly of his teachers and peers a year later that memorialized and honored those who were lost or injured in the attacks; and, and, and.

In Whitney's story, human connection can be seen in: her interactions with her peers on the day of as they all shared concern about what was happening; her interactions with her uncle and sister upon their first encounter following the attacks when they were picked up from school; the comfort her mother brought upon her return home and in the days and weeks following the attacks; the solidarity she reported feeling with other New Yorkers in the midst of the aftermath; her teacher and administrators' encouragement to reach out to her peers and make connections; her teacher's assistance as she and her classmates explored the back story of 9/11 and the contexts in which it occurred; the dialogues in which she took part in in college that offered new perspective of 9/11; and, and, and.

Brad's story offers examples of human connection in: the way in which his parents shared the news of the attacks and his uncle's role in the aftermath; his teachers' and administrators' sensitive approaches to the attacks in school; his conversation with his friends regarding their individual and shared experiences; the conversations he had in college with peers

from all over the United States, offering him a chance to examine multiple perspectives; and, and, and.

In Priya's story, elements of human connection include: her parents' decision to bring her home early from school so she could be with them; the debrief held within her class that included her teacher and her classmates; her parents' encouragement for her to watch the news in order to be informed on the issues surrounding 9/11; the individual stories that "humanized" 9/11 that her teachers shared with her and her classmates when she was older; her discussion with her second grade students and co-teacher when she had her own classroom; the exchanges with her professors and her cohort in graduate school about how situations such as 9/11 might be handled; and, and, and.

I realize that this is not a finite list of human connections within each story, for there are legions more of connections between the participants and their world at the time of the attacks, in the time following the attacks, and currently. It is through the ponderings of the multiplicities that are humans and human relationships and connectivity that I became more open to new possibilities that could be created in the context of the participants' stories.

The process of becoming-open, becoming-researcher allowed the flight lines of possibility of human connection to become unbound by my previous representational, hegemonic notions. I became more concerned with the questions that Massumi (1987) dictates in the foreword of *A Thousand Plateaus*:

The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body? (p. xv)

Through the unbinding process, then, not only was my understanding of human connection ruptured and exploded, but also my understandings of people, 9/11, memoirs, research, and, and, and. Since rhizomes connect all multiplicities in some way, the implications for me as a becoming-researcher, becoming-teacher, becoming-woman, becoming-friend, becoming-daughter, and, and, and are both infinite and unfathomable. I have been transformed through the process of becoming by undergoing a deterritorialization of sorts. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) illustrate Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization as the following:

Deterritorialization is the process of un-coding habitual relations, experiences, and usages of language in order to separate the foundational human image-opinion construct that orients thought in a specific manner. A re-composition or reterritorialization is the production of a higher quality of deterritorialization, which is the power of taking a quality beyond its actual occurrence and granting it a general extension, the power to actualize to become differently. (p. 89)

By abandoning the hegemonic blockages and opening myself up to the connectivity that exists within the memoirs, I realize that the definition of human connection—in this case, those within Lauren, Mark, Whitney, Brad, and Priya's lives—far more complex and contextual than I anticipated. If this is the case for human connection in these contexts, then to form generalizations of how contentious issues should be handled with children limits the possibilities that might emerge in those contexts. Through these transformations, I have become different as a becoming-teacher and becoming-researcher through the realization of the significance of opening myself up within the classroom.

As I consider how the participants of this study were changed by 9/11, I return again to their previously referenced encounters with human connection and consider the transformations they catalyzed upon those with whom they connected. In Lauren's story, not only was she transformed by her parents, her brother, her teachers, her classmates, her friend from California, her peers in her college cohort, but she transformed them as well. Mark's parents, classmates, interactions with survivors, school community transformed him, but he transformed those persons as well just by being part of their community. Whitney's classmates, uncle, sister, mother, fellow New Yorkers, teachers, administrators, and college peers transformed her experiences and were transformed by her in return. Brad transformed his parents', uncle's, teachers', administrators', friends', and college peers' experiences by being part of their community as they transformed him as well. Priya's parents, teacher, classmates, students, co-teacher, professors, and graduate school cohort transformed her experiences with 9/11 and she transformed theirs. Perhaps Lauren's connection with her college cohort transformed the ways in which they thought about teaching contentious events and patriotism in their future classrooms. Perhaps Mark's connection with the survivors through his cards and pictures cheered them up on a particularly rough day. Perhaps Whitney's little sister's perception of what it means to be informed was transformed by her older sister's fourth grade experiences with media literacy. Perhaps Brad's parents were transformed by their son's acts of empathy and compassion in the aftermath of 9/11, and decided to handle the situation similarly with his siblings. Perhaps Priya's connection with her second grade students led them to consider the ways in which events prior to their birth affect them now. Because of the endless chain of transformations that take place through human connection, it is impossible to define the extent to which the participants affected and were affected by those with whom they interacted in the midst of 9/11.

Importantly, although the aforementioned human connections are certainly shoots off of each participant's memoir rhizome, they are only portions of the participants' experiences. Additionally, it is important to note that I transformed the participants and the participants transformed me throughout this research process: I transformed them by asking them to be part of this study and asking them questions about what they remember and them I by agreeing to this study and responding to my questions in the ways that they did and leading me to consider new ways of being. They were transformed by reading their own stories—one participant described the experience of reading her own story as “bizarre” and another described it as “an out-of-body experience.” The human connections within the participants' stories, my stories, the stories of others, and, and, and are all connected and related within a rhizome.

What I thought I knew prior to this research experience, what I learned, how I was transformed, and how the participants were transformed by their experiences from 9/11 until now are all glimpses of the assemblage that are my encounters with 9/11, the participants' encounters with 9/11, and this research experience. This rhizomatic reflection, as in the nature of rhizomes, is by no means all-encompassing nor can it be concluded as new experiences and encounters are perpetually being produced, creating new ways of being in the context of 9/11, in the context of this study, in the context of my time and the participants' time spent at Penn State, and, and, and.

The findings of this study are not meant to contradict the existing body of literature on 9/11 as that would, in itself, go against the very nature of rhizome to not create binaries (which, ironically, by saying so I create a dualistic statement). The findings of this study, rather, complicate the literature and add an additional shoot off of what already exists. In my review of the literature, I discuss the psychological lens, the humanitarian lens, the lens that presents the arts as coping mechanisms, and the reflective lens that examine human connections in the

context of 9/11. By considering children's—or rather, those who were children at the time of the attacks—perspectives and by rhizomatically reflecting on my experiences with 9/11, the participants' experiences with 9/11, and my experiences within this research project, I affirm that, indeed, human connections—and connectivity in general—transformed the participants and myself and continue to transform us, but not in the ways I had anticipated, nor entirely in the ways that the literature had previously dictated.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

In Gilles Deleuze's *Negotiations* (1997), he says the following about the ways in which philosophy transforms us:

Negotiations sometimes last so long you don't know whether they're still part of the way or the beginning of peace. And philosophy's always caught between an anger with the way things are and the serenity it brings.... Not being a power, philosophy can't battle with the powers that be, but it fights a war without battles, a guerrilla campaign against them. And it can't converse with them, it's got nothing to tell them, nothing to communicate and can only negotiate. Since the powers aren't just external things, but permeate each of us, philosophy throws us all into constant negotiations with, and a guerrilla campaign against, ourselves. (frontispiece)

If it is a battle with myself into which my philosophical wanderings and wonderings have thrown me, then I must become at peace with the struggles that I continue to be transformed by as I move forward.

Although the process of this study has transformed me in innumerable ways, I would be remiss to say the process is "complete" or "finished." The nature of rhizomes is that there are no beginnings and no ends, but multiples of middles. Therefore, I will continue to be transformed by my interactions with 9/11, contentious issues in the classroom, human connections, and, and, and, just as I was prior to this research experience. I will continue to wrestle and battle with my perceptions, my interactions, my transformations, and, and, and. My recommendations, then, for

teachers, principals, and educational policymakers is to abandon hegemonic perceptions of children and what they “can” or “can’t” handle, and with that open the classroom space as a place in which rhizomatic human connection and transformation can take place.

Because of their occupation, teachers have daily—or almost daily—interaction with students; thus, they have the opportunity to connect with the students and create relationships. What these relationships need to entail differ from student to student, moment to moment. Each student and each moment interact with each other in new and surprising ways, ways that cannot be defined by generalizations or old ways of thinking. Through these relationships, teachers can be responsive to their students’ individual and unique needs. While I cannot say what responsiveness should or should not, does or does not look like in each classroom context, my recommendations come in three parts, all of which are connected. I encourage teachers to recognize students—and themselves, for that matter—for the dynamic multiplicities that they are and consider them within various contexts. Also, I encourage teachers to be open to the possibilities of responsiveness in their classroom in the context of traumatic events (e.g., having a classroom discussion with the students, talking with students individually, calling home to check in on the student, and, and, and). Additionally, I encourage teachers to allow transformations to take place—transformations of the self, of the students, of the classroom, of the school, and, and, and. The curriculum then is about the students’ lives—it grows from dialogues between students and teachers, not something pre-written or pre-determined.

Although most administrators and education policymakers have fewer face-to-face interactions with students on a day-to-day basis than the teachers do, they, too, are connected to the children and make decisions that result in differences in the way students’ lives pan out. Again, while I cannot make recommendations specific to any one situation, as all situations are

contextual, I pose three recommendations for administrators and policymakers that are interrelated. First, I recommend that they create a space for openness within the schools that they oversee. For administrators, that may translate into giving teachers more opportunities and time for discussion in their classes, allowing teachers to talk with their students as they see fit in the context of traumatic events, and, and, and. For policymakers that may translate into striking down legislation that consumes teachers' time in the classroom as they prepare for standardized tests, creating legislation that recognizes art and music—expressive modes of communication and human connection—as mandatory aspects of curriculum, and, and, and. Second, I encourage administrators and policymakers to reflect on students as multiplicities that cannot be contained by generalizations and classifications. Additionally, I encourage administrators and policymakers to open themselves to the transformations that might occur within schools, classrooms, themselves, and, and, and.

I have come to the conclusion of my thesis only to realize that there are no definite answers and many more questions than I had anticipated. This leaves me both, as Deleuze says, in battle and at peace with my findings and my thoughts, and most certainly still thinking. Just as Lauren, Mark, Whitney, Brad, and Priya were all transformed through human connections following the 9/11 attacks, I, too, have been transformed. As I consider the direction in which these transformations take me in the context of my teaching practice, I feel that connecting with my students in ways that they might feel supported must be a primary piece of the endless, edgeless puzzle that is teaching, regardless of whether we are in the context of a traumatic event or not. Again, what the connections and the contexts in which the connections grow are undefined as of now, but I will surely continue to work at keeping myself open to their possibilities. Although this thesis concludes here, the transformations do not end here. I will be

perpetually changed as I interact with texts, persons, events, contexts, and, and, and in the process of becoming-teacher, becoming-researcher.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. Where are you from?
2. How old were you at the time of the 9/11 attacks?
3. What grade were you in at the time of the 9/11 attacks?
4. Who was your teacher at the time of the 9/11 attacks?
5. Paint a picture for me of the things you saw, felt, and heard the morning of 9/11. Be as descriptive as possible.
 - a. How were you feeling at that time?
6. Tell me about your teacher's reaction to 9/11. What did he or she say? What did he or she do? How did he or she talk to students?
7. Talk to me about your school community's reaction to the events of 9/11.
8. What was your understanding of the 9/11 attacks during the time of and following the attacks? How did you acquire aforementioned understanding?
9. Were you exposed at all to the media's coverage of 9/11? If so, tell me about the memories you have of consuming it.
10. Have you had conversations about 9/11 in educational settings since 2001? If so, tell me about said conversations and what came from them.
11. Is there anything else you would like to add for the good of the order regarding your memories of school and the events surround 9/11?

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Chosen as one of 50 Penn State University Elementary Education majors to participate in a collaborative 185 day, full time elementary student teaching internship in a K-4th grade setting in the State College Area School District (Pennsylvania). This nationally recognized program received the 2011 Spirit of Partnership Award and the 2009 Award for Exemplary Professional Development School Achievement from the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS), the 2004 Holmes Partnership Award for the best partnership between a university and a school district, and the 2002 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education Award from the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)

- Prepared and implemented lessons in math, social studies, science, and literacy for 21 third grade students
- Differentiated instruction to support students receiving Title I, ESL, and Learning Support services
- Examined and translated state and national standards into classroom practice
- Implemented Tier 3 reading intervention with 9-year-old student
- Integrated technology into lessons using student Macintosh laptops, document cameras, and Google docs
- Actively participated in division, faculty, in-service, parent-student-teacher conference, and IEP meetings
- Conducted inquiry on the effects of multimodal assessment on student self-efficacy

Cambria County Youth Fair

Face painter

Ebensburg, PA

June 2014-August 2014

- Engaged children ages 2-15 years in discussions about the dangers of substance abuse
- Painted faces at the request of children ages 2-18 years in attendance at youth fairs

Saint Paul's Christian Preschool

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- Led physical activity lessons with 40 children ages 1-5 years incorporating music and storytelling
- Engaged in developmentally appropriate play with 46 children ages 0-5 years
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- Tutored 10 college students ages 18-23 years in need of signing practice
- Graded students' exams
- Checked students' workbooks
- Developed ABC story with 19-year-old student with intellectual disabilities in Life Link program

Arts & Literacy Block Curriculum Development Project*Pen-Pal/Curriculum Developer**State College, PA
Aug 2013-Dec 2013*

- Corresponded with 4th grade child, focusing on her interest in insects via handwritten letters
- Analyzed writing and writing motivation using a writing inventory
- Analyzed read-aloud skills and reading motivation using miscue analysis and questionnaire
- Developed cross-curricular science, on creating a bug field guide based on child's interest in bugs

Ebensburg United Methodist Church Vacation Bible School*Volunteer Music Teacher**Ebensburg, PA
June 2009-Aug 2014*

- Selected overall Bible School curriculum each year
- Selected appropriate songs for music time
- Expanded vocal range, taught Bible stories, and worked on matching pitch through music-making and dancing with 26 children ages 3-10 years

Friendship Tutoring Program*Volunteer Tutor**State College, PA
Aug 2012-Jan 2013*

- Provided support for a 2nd grade English Language Learner on her reading and math homework
- Implemented multimodal reading lessons that incorporated the child's drawing strength
- Focused specifically on reading comprehension and phonemic awareness skills

Workshops and Training

- SAMR Model Workshop
- Technology Integration Workshop
- Math Manipulative Seminar
- District-Wide Grade-Level Writing Meetings
- Writing Conventions Seminar
- Copyright Training
- Stewards of Children: Child Sexual Abuse Training

ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Essence of Joy Choir*Alto I**University Park, PA
Aug 2011-present*

- Prepared and performed musical repertoire of the African and African-American traditions
- Performed for audiences in Spain, France, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, New York, South Carolina, Vermont, as well various parts of Pennsylvania
- Taught the choir sign language to accompany a song entitled "There Remaineth a Rest" by Donald Lawrence

Essence of Joy THON*Co-Chair, Family Relations Chair**University Park, PA
Aug 2011-Aug 2014*

- Raised \$8,680.79 first year as co-chair, \$12,959.30 second year as co-chair, and \$14,275.28 third year as co-chair
- Established initial relationship with between THON family—the Keeners—and the organization in second year as co-chair
- Organized visits, care packages, surprises, hotel accommodations, and all other interactions with family
- Planned canning trips for 4-16 people to Ebensburg, PA, Harrisburg, PA, Lewistown, PA, and Hatfield, PA
- Planned and implemented alternative fundraisers including coffeehouses and caroling outings
- Created and put into action the organization's current system for dancer selection

Other Activities

- Sign Language Organization
- Student Pennsylvania State Educators' Association
- Oriana Singers Women's Choir

*Sept 2012-May 2014
Sept 2013-present
Aug 2011-May 2012*