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RETROSPECTIVE PERCEPTIONS OF THE DEATH OF A PARENT DURING ADOLESCENCE

Jennifer Catherine Wojcik

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Education.

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Your file Votre référence
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To God Who Sings Through Us

Voice 1 — God who sings through us, as the flute needs openness to receive the breath of melody, we pray to be open to the many ways your symphony of love plays in our lives.

Voice 2 — Thank you for the way that your enlivening Spirit touches us and moves through our beings. Remind us often that each one of us is a special instrument of yours. Together we create the wondrous music in your concert of love.

Voice 3 — You stand at the door of our hearts, asking for entrance. You desire to come in and share the intimacy of your presence with us.

Voice 4 — Behold, we open the door of our minds and hearts. We welcome your entrance and long for deeper union with you. Command make music in our lives. Dance through our days and sing in our hearts.

Voice 5 — We have days when we resist your movement and message. We seek you in stillness, but forget you in busyness. We yearn for fullness, but miss you in emptiness. We welcome you in joy, but reject you in sorrow. We rejoice in the harvest, but struggle with the planting.

Voice 6 — Open our inner eyes so that we may know you in all the dimensions of our lives. Help us to trust you in the numerous ups and downs, to believe that your song can happen in all aspects of our existence.

Voice 7 — God of courage and strength, we are waiting to receive your loving energy in the empty corners of our hearts. It is your power working through us that can do more than we can ever ask or imagine. It is your enlivening breath moving through us that enables us to overcome anxieties, fears, doubts and misgivings.

Voice 8 — Breathe through us, Music Maker, and let your song weave a melody through all we are and do. May we acknowledge your power at work in us and open ourselves to this blessing.

Voice 9 You are a God who accepts the uniqueness and beauty of every individual. You love us as we are while you yearn for us to be more. You invite us to extend this kind of love to those who challenge our compassion and our patience. Your love within us will give us the strength to love them as we ought.

Voice 10 Nudge us and encourage us to accept those people who are alien to our love. May your song of kindness and patience be sung through us. Fill our attitude toward others with notes of understanding and non-judgement.

This prayer is meant to be read by the voices who have given unconditional gentleness for the course of this project and whenever I needed them: past, and present. I am truly blessed to have these voices in my life because they continually offer limitless support and encouragement. The voices are precious to me. I notice there are eight names here, and ten parts. A few of you will have to double up. With love... from me to all of you.

John Joseph

Jean

Carolyn

Dianne

Dewitt

Noreen

Elaine

Stephen Christopher

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Abstract

This qualitative autobiography explored the educational experiences of three adults who were bereaved in adolescence by the deaths of their fathers. Part of the purpose of this study is to make meaning of the school experiences of the participants after their fathers died. Three stories of bereavement are told to illuminate the needs of the participants at school. These needs are to communicate about their bereavement, to receive acknowledgement of their father's deaths and to feel affirmation from their peers. Data reveal that teachers and school personnel rarely addressed participants' needs. More could have been done to help the participants work through their bereavement while at school. For example, media such as art, literature, and music are explored in this study as means to work creatively with bereavement. These media are called sign systems, and are presented in this study as resources teachers can draw from to raise awareness of the human experience of bereavement. Suggestions for incorporating sign systems in the classroom setting are offered to integrate discussion about bereavement and grief with school curriculum. A Representation of Data Interpretation web is presented to illustrate the stories of the participants, and how three bereaved people work through bereavement together. The findings of this study suggest that bereavement is not a maladie to be euphemized and covered up, rather, open

communication about bereavement in the school setting can increase empathy and understanding about the lives of our fellow human beings: their struggles and successes.

Contents

INTRODUCTION AND PRELUDE TO CHAPTER ONE

> We realize that we have been transformed in our passage through grief...we are seeing the world through new eyes. (Kennedy, 1991).

Adolescence is a transition time between childhood and adulthood, which for the purposes of this study falls between the ages of eleven and twenty (Morgan, 1990). Such a transition can be tumultuous for adolescents who have experienced the death of a parent. This experience plays repeatedly in my life. When I look back, I see that one day my Daddy was there, and the next day he was not. Despite all the details that go with my story, my father's death remains a cold shock nonetheless, largely because of the way dying was treated at school. What would you do, if this happened to you? Can one imagine, for example, the permanent absence of a mother or father during adolescence? What does this feel like? What are the ramifications in a teen's life? Can one picture a father's death in grade ten during exam week, after a lengthy illness, or when a fifteen year old who is estranged from her father suddenly learns of his death? What is it like to have to go to school after your father died? On the other hand, how about being eleven, and receiving a hospital phone call that Daddy died; the whole world blurs as a curtain of tears fall. How would these events change the course of an adolescent life? How could these events surface in that life? In this study, parental bereavement in adolescence and its effects on

the school experiences of three individuals is explored from multiple perspectives.

During interviews held in the spring and summer of 2006, the stories of two participants and me reveal what adolescent bereavement is like. To ensure confidentiality, I refer to the participants with the pseudonyms of *Ruth* and *Elizabeth*. The data also contain pseudonyms in place of names, dates, and locales throughout this thesis. I am also a participant in this study, and I refer to myself in the first person. It has been necessary for us to make sense of death. Some of our reactions to death like wanting to be alone, wanting the company of others, crying, ruminating, and celebrating are shared in these pages. For example, Ruth uses her own words to make meaning of bereavement in her life. She also rereads words written by her father to help remember him: "It was a joy to hear your voices the other day...the weather has been not nice these last few days...." like a moment frozen in time. Elizabeth stretches out her hand to grasp paintbrush and palate and uses art as her means to express her own adolescent bereavement. "Communal Strength" is Elizabeth's self-portrait that she volunteered for this research study. This work seemed to be quite removed from her father's death; but after our conversations, Elizabeth sees that the death of her father can be seen there, many years later after she was experiencing turmoil. Sitting at my cello, I can play and play, just as I did

when Daddy was flipping his paper around the corner, and commenting about my left hand articulation.

There is an emotional connection here, to our fathers. In this autobiographical study, we use our connections to remember, sometimes to celebrate, and to help others who are suffering through parental death in adolescence. In the pages that follow, our connections to our fathers are explored through our recollections of school experiences. We tell different stories to lead the reader alongside our experiences in bereavement. The value of stories is clear in the literature: "Stories provide structure for our perceptions of reality while our lives and perceptions of reality provide structure for our stories. We create our stories, then we see our lives and our truths through our stories" (Gilbert, 2002, p.225). Our stories of bereavement can bring the reader closer to the purpose of this autobiography.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to make meaning of past and present life experiences of adults who were bereaved in adolescence, and to add their stories to the bereavement literature. Many different school experiences are the focus of this study, coming from Ruth, Elizabeth and me. We unfold our grief stories through conversations, memories, and multiple vehicles of meaning, to fill the literature with our voices, as rests are filled with music.

As I immersed myself in developing this study, I began to see gaps in the literature and in practice. For example, there have been few Canadian studies in the last five years that have featured the experiences of bereaved children and adolescents. Furthermore, the bereavement manual at my school contains research material that is at least ten years old. A study filled with the voices of the participants contributes recent literature on grief and can lead to updated action plans for educators who encounter bereaved individuals. With this addition to literature, I feel it is important to show that bereavement is not an indictment to be suppressed and covered up, but a natural and healthy means of coping and responding to death.

Sharing our stories requires that the participants and I take risks. As a researcher, I am aware of the toll such emotional subject matter can have on my participants and me (Rager, 2005). We are telling stories of death, a subject that is routinely euphemized in our society. There may be extreme highs and lows, or simply a flat, uninteresting monotone. Our voices can be heard by the readers of this study. Our voices can reach bereaved adolescents, and people who are connected to them at school. The reader can be immersed in our conversations: expressions of grief that sometimes feel like a complete cacophony—melodies blurred, loud and harsh. Nevertheless, in the midst of risk and frowns that our subject matter is too direct or harsh, we play on for each other, to dovetail where one melody

fades in an extended theme—our voices intertwining in harmony; then separating.

Some educators may hesitate to explore bereavement, citing that such a powerful topic may harm the bereaved and non-bereaved. This can be an example of the negative side of grief that is documented in the literature. I found an exploration of the loss-oriented facet of grieving (Rask, 2002; Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt, 2001), and some studies explore how a grieving individual is occupied with yearning for the deceased. However, the literature I focus on in Chapter 3 is clear that exploring bereavement has many more benefits than hindrances for anyone who has an interest.

The following chapter continues the discussion about adolescence and includes my approach to this research study.

CHAPTER ONE: THE BUSINESS OF BEREAVED ADOLESCENTS

When individuals are traveling through adolescence, they are not really a child, nor are they an adult (Kandt, 1994). Some days, they can feel either childlike as they gaze into their past, or adult-like, as they look ahead into the future, or perhaps a combination of the two, as they look from one to the other. Then one day, a cataclysmic event happens that challenges the very foundations of their lives: the death of a parent. Every day afterwards, they are walking along what I envision as a bereavement bridge. Countless others who are similarly bereaved travel with them, and they soon realize that the span is vast: the banks are very far apart indeed! The bridge represents the path between childhood and adulthood, which Ruth, Elizabeth, and I have navigated.

We are in a constant state of traveling, (re)working our path in life from the death of our fathers to the present day, and back again. We are the participants in this study who can transport ourselves back to that bridge through our autobiographies, like looking back on ourselves as the main character in a story. The difference is that we are the authors of our stories: "Autobiographies are affirmations of the authority of personal experience, whereby the narrator becomes the author.....This transition from storyteller to author places the author in a position of authority over the story" (Beverley, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 556-557). The interests

of my participants and me can be revealed through expressive media such as art, writing, and music. These multiple vehicles to construct meaning are called sign systems (Short & Kauffman, 2000). Other studies have brought this term into the mainstream in the study of multiple literacies within the context of Teaching and Learning (Kendrick & McKay, 2004; Youngquist & Pataray-Ching, 2004; Short & Kaufman, 2000; Harste & Vasquez, 1998; Short, Harste & Burke, 1996). I review these studies in Chapter 3 of this thesis, in light of the research questions. I embrace the multiple literacies that my participants bring to this study. Literacy is "the ability to decode or encode meaning in any of the social forms through which meaning is conveyed" (Eisner, 1994, p.9). I provide opportunities so that my participants will have multiple ways through which to express their experiences. For example, I discuss at length Ruth's use of words to get things off her chest, Elizabeth's unsurpassed talents with oil on paper, as well as my humble intonations on cello. Our grief melodies will be structured in response to specific questions.

The Research Questions

These research questions are: How do participants tell the story of the death of their parent? What are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants? What action do the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved individuals at

school? I will be explaining the stories of adults who suffered parental death in adolescence because there is a cushion of time separating Ruth, Elizabeth and me from the onset of bereavement. I use this cushion to increase my idea of comfort for the participants. At the same time, I believe that time does not heal all wounds, but time has eased some of the pain of bereavement for me. Conversely, bereavement can somehow become off limits when grief is more recent, rawer. Let us examine the picture of adolescents who have been bereaved recently.

Adolescents Today: The Needs of Adolescents Now

Thousands of teens today experience grief for a multitude of reasons. Grief can be a response to death, divorce, failure to achieve goals or interpersonal conflict (Marwit & Carusa, 1998). For the purposes of this study, grief is defined as "...a normal psychological reaction to [a] loss, a complex process of detachment, which is not simply an emotion." (Retrieved January 2007 from The Canadian Psychological Association, http://www.cpa.ca/publications/yourhealthpsychologyworksfactsheets/grief/). The loss specific to this study is the death of an adolescent's parent. This loss is known as bereavement: "Bereavement means the death of a loved one such as a parent, child, spouse, or close friend. Bereavement is a common occurrence..." (Retrieved May 2007 from The Canadian Psychological Association,

http://www.cpa.ca/publications/yourhealthpsychologyworks factsheets/grief/). U.S. data suggest that approximately four percent of children younger than eighteen experienced the death of a parent in 1997 (Cole, Griffen, & Kreig 2003, p.587). In Cole's study, a Family Bereavement Program was offered to children and adolescents who suffered the death of a parent ten months previous. Risk factors like mental health problems, negative events or thoughts and active inhibition were identified in children and adolescents who were not coping well with bereavement. Protective factors like positive parenting, positive coping, and high self-esteem were also identified in children and adolescents who were coping well with bereavement. Data from England suggest that six percent of children experienced the death of a parent (Harrison and Harrington, 2001). In Harrison and Harrington's particular study, 1746 adolescents aged eleven to sixteen were asked to report on bereavement experiences like the death of first-degree relatives and second-degree relatives. The data showed that 77.6 percent of respondents had a bereavement experience, while about six percent of respondents had lost a parent (p.160). The risk of parental death by age sixteen was estimated at six percent (p.162).

I began to search databases for relevant Canadian studies, in the hopes of finding similar percentages for Canadian adolescents. To collect the Canadian data, I searched on the Statistics Canada website using the key words *bereavement* and *death rates* (Statistics Canada, 2007). There, I

found information on the number of registered deaths in each province from 2001-2006 per province. Since this data did not match what I was looking for, I emailed Statistics Canada researchers to try to retrieve Canadian bereavement data, to no avail. I began to agree that "Because of the methods by which mortality data are collected and tabulated in this country, there are no clear ways to determine [exactly] how many adolescents experience the death of a parent in a given year" (Guitierrez, 1999, p.359). I found no data that illuminates adolescent bereavement numbers in Canada to date. Canadian data has failed to offer bereavement numbers, other than to suggest that the number of deaths per province has increased in the last seven years (Statistics Canada. Deaths and Death rate by Province and Territory. Retrieved July, 2007 from http://www40.statcan.ca /l01/cst01/demo07a. htm?sdi=death%). I am hoping that this sad reality changes as I pursue my studies, because future Canadian bereavement numbers will broaden the offerings of Statistics Canada.

In the United States and the United Kingdom however, there are data on all types of childhood and adolescent bereavement. According to these latest findings, the number of affected children and adolescents in the United States in 2000 was approximately 2 213 000 (Wolchik, Tein, Sandler & Ayers, 2006). In the United Kingdom, "It is estimated that every 30 minutes a child or young person ...is bereaved of a parent—that's 55 a day, 20,000 children every year facing the future without a parent" August, 2007 from

http://www.winstonswish.org.uk /page.asp?section=00010001000300020001. For some of these children, the effects of parental bereavement can be numerous: depressive symptoms, sleep problems, appetite loss, and decreased school achievement (Guitierrez, 1999, p. 560). When I became familiar with the bigger picture and examined the sheer numbers of bereaved children and adolescents, I felt a need to investigate the effect which parental death has on adolescents. I soon discovered that adolescent bereavement research has had a short history (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt, 2001). One of the earlier studies about adolescent bereavement belongs to Harris (1991). Reading the early recollections of Harris' two participants as they mourned the death of their alcoholic father marked my departure into the literature on adolescent bereavement. I remember their pseudonyms were Paul and Greta, and Harris interviewed them to explore their adjustment to bereavement at school (Harris, 1991). University research courses followed, with an ever-expanding body of quantitative and qualitative studies that I separated into broad topic areas. I provide some of the first studies I found: teens and bereavement (Haine, Ayers, Sandler, Wolchick, & Weyer, 2003; Balk, 2004; Corr & Balk, 1996), children and bereavement (Dowdney, 2000), and comparing types of bereavement (Mack, 2001; Worden, Davies & McCown, 2000; Marwit & Carusa, 1998). These studies showed me that while bereavement is a broad field in the scholarly community, the number of studies that deal with adolescent bereavement is

relatively small. The number of studies, which underscore the role that educators play in bereavement, is even smaller. I would like to add to the qualitative literature on adolescent bereavement with this autobiography. This study belongs in the field of Education, because in part of this study I explore the impact that bereavement has at school. One way of exploration is by asking the participants how they respond to life experiences since the death of their parent. Like a sound post—that helps with resonation—my study inserts our voices into the qualitative literature on bereavement and provides another grief perspective: that of adults who were bereaved as teens. This sounding of new voices is the reason why I proposed this study, and it is the reason why this thesis is supported by a musical metaphor.

The Approach

I have approached this study by situating the voices and stories I will hear. The voices and stories intertwine and they are distinct, like the voices of a string trio that sound together and then drift apart. In this study, there are three voices belonging to three participants: Ruth, Elizabeth and me. Each story has similarities and differences that will be illuminated in an entire chapter devoted to themes supported in the data. Readers may have different views of each story, as I do, and their responses to each story may be similar or different. From my researcher-participant perspective, I have emerging reactions to each story, which I will attempt to put into images and words. One example of an image is Elizabeth's self-portrait [Appendix

C], and another image is entitled "Ode to Music" [Appendix D]. I will use "Ode to Music" as an image that I found myself in the course of Internet research for this study. A series of two canvas paintings were on sale at a local art store, so I ordered them promptly, because they portray my string instrument ensemble in a way that connects with me. When I looked at this image, I received a message that was beyond words, which somehow clarified the message behind my string instrument metaphor. I will explore this message further in the data interpretation chapter of this thesis. The use of images and words can help inform the reader, as well as myself, about the messages I want to convey with this study. In words then, I have scribbled down several questions to help focus my study, and support the research questions (see page 16). What are the stories of the participants? How did bereavement affect our school experiences? How did bereavement touch other parts of our lives? What can this study offer us in our grief journeys? How may this study inform the research as well as help other bereaved adults in the context of Education? With these questions, I feel as though my head is turning from the past to the present as I examine further. Our voices can intertwine and separate as we construct our explorations together. I wonder how many of us are out there. How many adults today suffered the death of a parent when they were teens? How many teens today are suffering the same fate? To answer these and other questions, I

close this chapter with the beginning of my story, and my intentions regarding this project.

One View From the Bridge: A Path From Adolescence

In my experience, this path began smoothly and it felt comfortable under my feet, until the death of my father, symbolized by a void where I had to jump. I had to jump from a life *with* my father to a life *without* my father. During this time, my voice was not heard, because I talked very little about my experience. For example, when I was at school I would not even mention my father. I did not want to make my peers uncomfortable. I wrote even less about my experience, because I did not want to commit my innermost thoughts to paper. Kandt (1994) writes that parentally bereaved adolescents do not volunteer information about their loss. As an adult, I still reflect on my loss twenty-five years later. I am growing and developing as an adult, without my father, but I still feel as though my father is with me. I believe our relationship has not been severed by death (Noppe, 2000). How can my father be here and not here at once? This puzzle helped tremendously in shaping this study. It also raised questions about losing a parent in adolescence. How many other teens today are bereaved? How can this study help them find a way to express their grief? What kind of response do they have to bereavement? What meaning can be made from their responses? How are things different or the same? What happens when adolescents bring their grief to school? How do their peers react? Do their

teachers or administrators show support? If so, how? With these questions and others, I was on the way to doing something about this issue: to provide an opportunity for Ruth, Elizabeth and me.

An Opportunity to Use Our Voices

It is my intent to compose an autobiography to allow the participants to voice grief experiences since the death of their parent, played along with my own grief melody. A study that features the grief stories of Ruth, Elizabeth and me will provide an opportunity for reflection and relation. We will have a chance to work with our school bereavement experiences. As Elizabeth so eloquently volunteered,

> "The whole process of healing involves one human being having contact with another human being."

We will have contact through conversations and sign systems. Our contact has the function of uniting us in our grief journey, the journey of life itself.

Summary

The introduction and first chapter are meant to acquaint the reader with the topic of adolescent bereavement and to present the purpose and research questions of this study. In the background, a musical metaphor is present, to gently draw the reader into the text, and to provide an alternative way to frame the details of this study. Eisner (1998) says that examples carried out by language foster visual learning. One example can

represent itself and something else at once. This is what I want to accomplish with the musical instrument metaphor: to provide the notes that convey meaning to the reader. Adolescent bereavement estimates and statistics bring to centre stage the reality that for millions of individuals, this study has relevance. The names of the participants were given, which are pseudonyms to provide anonymity and protection. I will now describe another image that came to my mind in the developing of this study, which is also musical and close to my heart. The image answers the question: how do I envision this study?

CHAPTER TWO: THE ENSEMBLE GATHERS TO PLAY

I can see this study in the visualization of a string instrument ensemble. To explain my choice of background metaphor, I turn to the literature. "It is revealing that in the English language we use metaphors that disclose the power of visualization as a source of human understanding" (Eisner, 1998, p.72). To help the reader understand the parts of this study, a group of musicians represents the participants—each with his or her own instrument coming together to create a "whole" sonority. The whole sonority refers to the harmony produced when more than one instrument is played simultaneously. Within a community of musicians, one individual ultimately depends on communing with other individuals towards the creation of melody and dissonance. This communion is likewise important for bereaved individuals, because telling of one's own experience is an effective coping mechanism: narration of real life stories affirms one's experience of self, and provides the basis for relating to others during bereavement (Anderson-Miller, 1995). In this study, we have autobiographies as the basis for communication with other adults who were bereaved in adolescence.

In my mind, the community is a metaphor—a string trio, consisting of two violins, and a cello. My original intention was to find participants to fit these roles. This translates to two participants and me. The members

would contribute to this study by adding their own unique timbre, or voice. Furthermore, the voices are the autobiographies of the players emerging as solos, duets, and trios, in a woven tapestry of bereavement experiences. An example of a solo is found in the literature: the death of a parent makes us feel so alone, as if we are jolted awake to face our own mortality (Kennedy, 1991).

The participants of this study receive their part, as I would normally assign instruments in music class: each player would be included in no particular order, and have the opportunity to create sound using a variety of techniques on their instrument. After each player has her instrument, the parts will be placed into a framework. In my music class, this framework could be a song in unison, a trio, a duet. For this study, the framework is from the perspective of Alfred Adler and John Bowlby (see Chapter 3).

Orchestration: Which Instruments Are Assigned In The Ensemble?

I have chosen three instruments that I know intimately in terms of their characteristics and sound quality. The voices of violins and a cello will form my ensemble. Each has its own position and function in the ensemble, while construction materials and attributes are common. Primarily, I equate my instruments with the autobiographies of each participant representing their unique style of life, defined as an organized belief system, or the unique way a person thinks, perceives and acts (Kern, Edwards, Flowers, Lambert & Belanger, 1999). The metaphorical instruments have another

meaning. I also see these instruments through an Adlerian lens as belonging to my style of life, because they represent a large part of my education and professional training. I have formally studied music performance, history, theory, and teaching for most of my life. I hold an Honours Baccalaureate in Music History, and a professional Music Specialist qualification, which I regularly use in elementary teaching practice. At the beginning of my music classes, I always introduce new instruments and explain how they function, their tone colour, and other features to engage students. I would now like to do the same for the readers of this thesis. Then, I will lead the reader inside the ensemble.

Instrument Acquaintances

I became aware that readers of this study might wonder about string instruments and their symbolism here. Why are string instruments being chosen? What are violins, and cellos? I agree with Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln (2001) who states:

> Metaphor, a literary device, is the backbone of social science writing. Like the spine, it permits movement, is blurred beneath the surface, and links parts together into a functional, coherent whole...the essence of metaphor is experiencing and understanding one thing in terms of another. This is accomplished through comparison or analogy (p.926).

I choose metaphor to represent the multi-faceted significance of my string trio. These marvels of ebony, maple, and rosewood have an important piece to play, as the voices of my participants.

Although my instruments share certain features, like having four strings and being plucked with the fingers or played with a bow, they also are unique. For instance, the first and second violins have high-pitched voices that usually play a melody in consort. Their tone quality is bright and cheerful, melancholy and heart felt, or somewhere in between. My cello has a deeper voice, supporting the ensemble with a *figured bass* line (see Appendix A). This orchestration represents my beliefs on how I view my place in the world because the instrument I play is the cello, which matches my style of life. I see myself as a supporter of others, just as the cello is an anchor for the ensemble (Grout, Palisca, & Burkholder, 2005). In this research study, I will be supportive with my skills as a researcher and with my skills as an educator, but at the same time, I am also a participant in the ensemble. This vantage point is indeed familiar, after more than twenty-five years of practice.

Perspective: The View from Inside Our Community of Bereavement

From inside the ensemble, there is a unique view to behold. Each musician has his or her own perspective once inside. For example, my perspective is from the cellist's position. In front of me I can see the first violinist. The second violinist is further to the right; therefore, I can see her

from a certain angle. From each player's position, no perspective or view of the ensemble is identical to the next. I have imagined that members could assume another perspective by changing seats; however, they would still view the ensemble through their eyes, and play with an assigned instrument. I think of this perspective as the worldview, or lens, that each member brings to the ensemble. My view from inside the ensemble is constructivist, as defined by Guba and Lincoln (1994; 2000): we are builders of knowledge and lifelong learners.

This view from inside the ensemble allows the individual to see that they are in a group with others who share similar experiences, where they can fully develop their capabilities, to serve their goals and help others. Their attitude towards other people can be seen in their participation. As an indivisible whole, a system, the human being is also a part of larger wholes or systems—the family, the community, all of humanity, our planet, and the cosmos. In these contexts, humans meet the three important life tasks according to Alfred Adler: work and school, intimacy and social relationships —all social challenges (Retrieved December 2006 from Alfred Adler Institutes of San Francisco and Northwestern Washington, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hstein/principl.htm). At the same time, the metaphor denotes a recognition and acceptance of Alfred Adler's notion of the interconnectedness of all people (Retrieved November 2006 from Alfred Adler Institutes of San Francisco and Northwestern

Washington, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/ homepages/hstein/ theoprac.htm#201). There are three players in the ensemble, Ruth, Elizabeth and me. I would now like to bring the reader into the community of our trio, with information about our rehearsal.

Setting the Stage: Position and Players; The Rehearsal

I am eager to reveal this ensemble in action now. The readers can imagine themselves in an auditorium, as the curtain call sounds back stage. The lights have dimmed, while a hush falls over the audience; the curtain opens. One can see music stands set up on the stage, which represents the stage of bereavement; one player strides to the cellist's position. This is me in April—July of 2006: patiently waiting on the stage with cello and bow poised to begin collecting the data (see Chapter 4).

Summary

This chapter provided an explanation for the background metaphor that is part of the fabric of this thesis. There is cause to use metaphor in this study, and I presented affirmation from Eisner (1998) who supports the use of metaphor to promote understanding. I choose a musical metaphor because of the prominent role music plays in my life. I believe readers can see my visualization of the string instrument ensemble and understand my alternative representations. In the next chapter, I will focus on the current literature on bereavement. The literature review I present will support my

main points on bereavement, and will end with the principles of community according to Adler (1930; 1970a&b) and attachment according to Bowlby (1980/1997).

CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Before I dive into the theory and scholarly literature on bereavement, I would ask the reader to return to the metaphorical stage for a moment, where the participants and I constructed our conversations about bereavement. I would like to remind the reader that the stage is set for a trio: first and second violins, and cello. This translates to seating for three, with three music stands just in front of each chair. One of these music stands will serve an important purpose shortly. Imagine, that I have returned to the stage for another chapter of this study. I will now use my music stand as an introduction to the theory and literature base of my research. My story continues....

The Cellist's Music Stand as Metaphor and Conceptual Framework

With any musician who has not memorized the tune, the music stand plays a crucial role: to hold what to practice. On my stand today are the copious leaflets that belong to this study. These "notes" have a dual meaning, both musical and literary. I always sit to face this stand when reading the notes, in appreciation of the support it gives. For a moment, I remove the papers and examine my music stand—which was a marvelous gift. I realize that each part represents a specific area of the literature for this study [Appendix F]. The relief of my stand includes explanations how each component is found in the literature.

Beginning at the bottom of the stand, three graceful inverted arches form the base—each one an exact replica of the other. The ends of these arches seem to come from three directions, symbolizing the unique lifestyles that are brought to this study. I am awestruck at this point, because there is a connection between the number of participants and the number of feet on my stand. I could not predict this event during the proposal stage of this research, nor did I imagine the base of my stand would represent my trio. This is a metaphor of Alfred Adler's style of life (Adler, 1930). More on Adler's Individual Psychology will end this chapter.

Traveling upwards, arches attach to the spine of the stand. These prompted me to think about how children are attached to their parents, and how attached I was to my father. This begins attachment theory offered by Bowlby (1980). More on this framework will join Adler's theory later in this chapter.

Higher still is the spine itself. Without the spine of the stand, the stand would not have core strength. My analogy emerges; the spine is to the music stand what the parent is to the family. In my study, the parent-spine has died, but the children remain attached to the spine. There is an ongoing attachment to the deceased by adolescents, according to Bowlby (1997). The participants and I attach ourselves to the memory of our fathers, as our bereavement unfolds and we move forward in time. Continuing with life in the face of bereavement is an example of coping (Stroebe, Hansson,

Stroebe, & Schutt, 2001). I would like to clarify that I identify with the positive connotation of the word coping in my exploration. For the purposes of this thesis, coping is readjustment, working through, or absorbing bereavement into the fabric of one's life. This has a positive implication, because in this thesis, bereavement is not a maladie, nor is bereavement harmful, and I provide literature that supports this view. For example, Hurd (1999) includes information about mourning: the deceased parent-child relationship must be positive and nurturing, there must be support from the surviving parent or caregiver, there must be family communication, and a support network is necessary. I believe these suggestions represent the ideal environment in which one can adjust to bereavement. The realities of the participants can approximate these suggestions, and differ from them.

On top of the bereavement spine is the copper extension that supports the gallery. The extension is used to raise and lower the shelf. There, sheet music is displayed. Extended fully, the gallery is far from the spine of bereavement, but retracted, the gallery is right next to the spine of bereavement again. I see this extension as a working mechanism to distance my participants and me from bereavement, much like the passage of time. In the literature, working with bereavement can involve the use of sign systems, or other actions: crying, writing in a journal (bibliotherapy), physical activities, art, music (Rask, Kaunonen & Ilmonen, 2002). Sign systems are also part of this review. This study provides dialogue on

bereavement, which can take many forms: such as talking, writing, sketching, singing, playing, solving problems, or dancing to new insights (Short, Kauffman & Kahn, 2000). I am reminded of the literature about separation and loss. People can adjust to the loss of a loved one in a healthy manner (Bowlby, 1980). The shelf is the uppermost part of the stand. It supports whatever music I wish to display there. The task of playing this music is what life is all about: melody, rhythm, beat, and expression. These are equal to the life tasks of Alfred Adler: the challenges that people face in relation to work and school, intimacy and social relationships (Adler, 1930). An interpolation between each task is the attitude that the individual has toward the life tasks, as illustrated in the Style of Life Tree (Stein, 2007. Retrieved July, 2007 from http://ourworld.compuserve.com/ homepages/hstein/ tree.htm), See Appendix B. Just as there is a relationship between Adler's three life tasks, there is also a relationship between the elements of music.

To begin the review, I define adolescence for the purposes of this study, and include relevant sources on adolescence and bereavement that are necessary to situate the reader and myself closer to the scholarly literature. Specific bereavement issues are presented to illuminate some broad topics in bereavement literature. The bereavement issues I discuss are adolescent bereavement, working with bereavement (coping), and perceptions of death and kinds of bereavement. Following the literature on

bereavement issues is literature on sign systems. Then I present a brief explanation of Individual Psychology from Alfred Adler, and Attachment Theory from John Bowlby, which I use in this study. After the theoretical explanations, I begin a new chapter explaining my methodological approach. My intention with this review is to summarize research, illuminate gaps in the knowledge base, provide some findings of relevant studies, and provide the conceptual framework upon which this study is crafted (Mertens & McLaughlin, 2004, pp. 36-37).

Definition of Adolescence

The word adolescence has the Latin root adolescentia—meaning a person in the growing age (Howard & Medway, 2004; Dubas, Miller & Petersen, 2003; Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Unfortunately, this definition is imprecise. What does 'the growing age' mean? 'The growing age' could refer to any time in a person's life when there is any kind of growth (physical, spiritual, social, etc.). Relevant studies for this review show different age ranges. For example, for Corr and Balk (1996), adolescence occurs between the ages of 12 and 20 years, while Rosen (1991) refers to adolescents as teenagers. This could mean any age between thirteen and nineteen. Marwit and Carusa (1998) defined adolescence as the ages between 13 and 20. I looked for recent studies and found that one expanded on the age range of adolescence to include eleven year olds

(Harrison and Harrington, 2001). Unfortunately, the definition of adolescence continues to be unclear, because there are so many ranges, and subdivisions within adolescence; early, middle and late were most common (Noppe, and Noppe, 1997; Balk, 1991). For the purposes of this study, I use the definition of adolescence from the World Health Organization because this range is the most recent and it lends a global perspective to this study, in keeping with Adler's Individual Psychology:

> One in every five people in the world is an adolescent—defined as a person between 10 and 19 years of age. Out of 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide, about 85% live in developing countries and the remainder live in the industrialized world. (Retrieved March 2007 from the World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/child-adolescent-health/OVERVIEW /AHD/adh_over.htm.

Relevant Sources: Adolescence and Bereavement

Although some sources on bereavement stretch back ninety years (Freud, 1917), the literature relevant to adolescent bereavement has a much shorter history of about thirty years (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt, 2001). Some would even suggest this range is more like twenty years (Balk, 2004). In the beginning of my literature search, I became aware of just how broad the topic of bereavement is. I narrowed my search parameters to include studies of adolescent bereavement in the context of education, to support the educational component of my study. Fortunately, the quantity

of adolescent bereavement research has increased in the last two decades with the founding of two professional societies: The Society for Research on Adolescence and The European Association for Research on Adolescence (Dubas, Miller & Petersen, 2003). Both associations have the goal of understanding adolescence through research and dissemination (March 2007 from http://www.s-r-a.org/about.html; http://www.earaonline.org/index.html). Recent adolescent bereavement research is accessible through these sites, as well as through the ERIC and Psych Info databases.

In visiting these sites and the research databases, I decided to begin with studies that are most similar to the present study, as a summary of what is available today. The reader can note that these studies are also different for reasons like participant circumstances (age, age at time of bereavement, type of parent loss), methodology (genre of research), and theoretical framework. What follows is a review of the three studies I found by using the keywords 'adolescent bereavement' in the aforementioned databases. Hurd (1999) explores how adults view their childhood bereavement experiences. This study is similar to my study because adults are the participants, and bereavement occurred in childhood. Hurd uses Q methodology and factor analysis to contribute a comparison between two perspectives on childhood bereavement that affect clinical practice: the psychodynamic model and experiential model. The psychodynamic view on bereavement suggests that depression is inevitable for those who are

bereaved, while the experiential model suggests that a bereaved person can adjust to bereavement and depression is not inevitable.

Hurd asks adults who were bereaved as children how they respond to the death of their parent. This mirrors my first research question: *how do the participants tell the story of the death of their parent*. The responses are measured and yield four factors, or responses to bereavement: appreciation, frustration, enmeshment, and ambivalence. Hurd's research questions ask whether all children who are bereaved suffer depression, as earlier theorists assumed (Freud, 1917; Wolfenstein, 1966) or whether they can adjust to bereavement as Bowlby (1980) suggests. The author explains how Bowlby challenged this assumption, known as the "later behaviour hypothesis" and began to explore childhood experiences of bereavement. Bowlby's view was that children could experience healthy mourning based on the following environmental factors: "...the relationship between the child and the deceased parent, the emotional and psychological support of the surviving parent, the communication about the death in the family and its impact, the participation of the child in the funeral rites, and the extent of the child's network of support from extended family and others (Hurd, p.19). Hurd found that based on his data, depression is not inevitable in adolescent bereavement while Bowlbian attachment theory was adequate in explaining factors like the family relationships and environment in bereavement.

Another adolescent bereavement study belongs to Balk and Vesta (1998). The authors illuminate the psychological development of Rhonda [pseudonym] for four years following the death of her father. This study is similar to my study because the participant is an adult who is reflecting on the death of her father. According to one of the authors, longitudinal case studies in adolescent bereavement were needed in the 1980's and 1990's (Balk, 1991). This one follows Rhonda, a college student whose father died when she was nineteen. Rhonda's grief response was measured many times with quantitative instruments like the Impact of Event Scale (a type of survey), the Grant Foundation Bereavement Inventory (a type of structured interview), and Rhonda's own journal. The authors questioned whether quantitative data was sufficient to measure Rhonda's grief, and listed themes from Rhonda's journal like her ongoing relationship with her father, coping with his death and how her bereavement affected events in her life, and life lessons (Balk & Vesta, 1998, p. 34). The authors found that quantitative data did not accurately reflect Rhonda's feelings, and that qualitative data may hold more accuracy, based on what Rhonda reported.

Neimeyer and Hogan (2001) also explore grief and the efficacy of qualitative and quantitative approaches to bereavement. The authors explore whether quantitative or qualitative research methods can best explore grief. The authors conclude that no single research methodology holds the absolute truth. Their focus group model to explore grief embraces

both methodologies to illuminate participant grief. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are regarded as effective according to the literature on adolescent bereavement in the study.

The final adolescent bereavement study belongs to Schultz (2007). Six bereaved women between the ages of 18 and 25 participated in semi-structured interviews, to explore the effect that mother death has on daughter identity. Schultz presents 14 themes grouped into three meta-themes found in the data as well as implications for the literature on adolescent bereavement and clinical practice. The meta-themes are that the loss of a mother impacts a daughter's identity, the daughter needs to connect with other mother figures and with her emerging identity and the daughter needs to integrate mother death with her emergent identity.

Schultz found that mother loss profoundly affected the participants' identities. In seeking guidance after their mother's death, the participants sought and found relationships from varying sources: their fathers, their mother's family, or peers. Finally, Schultz found that women draw on their memories of their mothers to guide them in their identity development (p. 37). Some implications for the literature are that the study contributes research on how bereavement affects normative development in adolescence, and that the study benefits maternally bereaved adolescent girls. Furthermore, Schultz affirms that her findings can inform practice for those working with bereaved young adults. Schultz encourages clinicians to

be professionally sensitive about the uniqueness of the bereavement experiences of young women. Beyond this scope, the majority of studies address specific adolescent bereavement issues that I explain in relation to my research questions.

Specific Adolescence and Bereavement Issues in the Literature

History of Adolescence

Dubas, Miller, and Petersen (2003) examine the history of adolescence in North America in the 20th century. It is important to investigate research into adolescence to understand this transitional period in the lifespan. According to the authors, there is evidence of the increasing complexity that research on adolescence has undergone in the last two decades (Dubas, et.al., p. 376). Adolescence was once thought to be a singular transitional event. My impression of the singular transition explanation is that "one size fits all." One idea of adolescence used to be applied to everyone.

Today, adolescence is a multi-faceted time span that is unique to every individual. As individuals pass from childhood to adolescence, there are many paths available to take (Dubas, et.al., p. 377). These paths are dependent upon the context where adolescents find themselves. Self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control are explained, and related to the challenges that adolescents face. For definitions of these terms, please see Appendix A. For example, one challenge that adolescents face is

bereavement in many forms (Balk, 1991). Turner (1999) suggests that self-esteem, self-efficacy and locus of control increase if adolescents receive peer support to promote health. These articles complement the research on adolescent bereavement because they present further studies on adolescence and health promotion.

Working with Bereavement

Corr and Balk (1996) examine the literature on bereavement during adolescence. They conclude that bereavement research in this area has a short history; an idea also put forth by Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt, (2001). The effects of unresolved bereavement are documented from many sources: for some individuals social, physical, and cognitive symptoms can appear because of certain kinds of grieving. The phases of adolescence are presented from a developmental point of view, while coping suggestions to work with bereavement are included. Some coping strategies are to trust in the predictability of events, to gain a sense of mastery and control, to forge relationships marked by belonging, believing the world can be fair and just, and developing a confident self-image (Corr & Balk, 2001, p. 201).

Hunter (1997) is a founding member of Bereaved Families of Ontario, who provides feedback on "A Review of Bereaved Children and Teens" (1995), edited by Earl A. Grollman. Hunter concludes that this resource provides suggestions on further reading in the areas of childhood and adolescent bereavement from a group of experts that include Charles Corr,

Betty Davies, and John Morgan. These names came up in the bereavement research for issues outside the present study. This source is a guide for the bereavement researcher, who may need clarification about many issues like why adults can act as role models for bereaved teens, or the expansion on adolescents' experiences of loss and mourning. I was particularly interested in John Morgan's section of the book that shows a more philosophical view of death and bereavement. Morgan affirms that talking about death and dying is good for children and adolescents, because it shows them the reality of death and dying.

Dowdney (2000) identifies the moderating (pre-existing) and mediating (emergent after parent death) factors that contribute to a child's outcome while coping with parental bereavement. Some of the factors are firstly, the type of death (illness, suicide, accident), secondly, whether the death is expected or unexpected and thirdly, the gender of the parent who dies. A final important factor is the family—its mourning rituals and functioning (cohesion, communication). The author asks whether parental death increases child vulnerability at school. For example, what makes a bereaved child vulnerable? What factors protect the child from vulnerability? Depression, dysphoria and depression, and guilt are discussed as child bereavement responses when memories of the deceased parent are evoked at school. Dowdney also hypothesizes that the age and gender of the bereaved child moderates the outcome of bereavement. Namely, in younger

children, separation anxiety is common, while in adolescents, depression increases and is more common in girls (Harrington, 1994). Finally, the difficulty with acquiring participants for childhood bereavement studies is examined. The author's view is congruent with Gilbert (2002), who calls bereaved children and adolescents a hard to reach population.

Perceptions of Death and Perceptions of Adolescents' Understanding of Death

The Work Group on Palliative Care for Children of the International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement (1999) describes the myths and truths surrounding adolescents and death. According to the authors, adults have constructed myths around the subject of adolescence, bereavement, and death. As a reader, I found it worthwhile to read these myths and truths, and compare them to my own perceptions. The myths are that adolescents do not grieve, that they do not grieve as deeply as adults do, and that their grief is resolved quickly due to youthful resiliency. Conversely, the authors label the truths; adolescents often lack support for their grieving, their grief is suppressed or delayed and their grief has no time limit. Many recommendations follow, including that adolescents need opportunities to discuss death-related situations as they arise, without overburdening adolescents with adult responsibilities. Furthermore, the authors pose questions that mirror two research questions in the present study: "Do children and adolescents grieve, and how can they be helped? Do

schools have a role to play in assisting children and adolescents with issues related to dying, death, and bereavement?" (Adams & Deveau, 1995, p. 444). The authors' final question is similar to my third research question, that is: what action do the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved individuals at school?

Adolescents have an adult understanding of death (Corr, 1995). The understanding means that adolescents as young as eleven realize that a deceased person does not return, and that they will have to adjust to the loss of that person. In contrast, young children do not have this understanding, for some believe a deceased person could return. Furthermore, significant adults in a teen's life can ease the adjustment to life without the deceased person by maintaining open and healthy communication with the teen (Corr, p. 31). These adults may model coping behaviours for the teen who is working with the permanent absence of their parent.

Corr (1995) agrees with Morgan (1990) that teens have an adult understanding of death, and goes on to say that for early adolescents, death is threatening because it causes the teen to lose their newly discovered self. For example, teens are striving to know themselves in relationship to their parents and siblings in the family. They are forming their self-concept, or lifestyle. Furthermore, Morgan calls death "the enemy" from the perspective of some adolescents. In Morgan's book, a chapter centers on ten

adolescents from 11-17 years old who are bereaved by the death of a parent. These participants and their surviving parents are interviewed to document how they work through bereavement together. Morgan found that some participants demonstrated intense emotions, fear, and fascination with death, while family discussion decreased after some of the deaths. Family discussion (communication) decreased for some participants because the adolescents did not want to talk about death. This kind of withdrawal is common in bereavement.

Morgan suggests that further study on adolescents and bereavement is needed using a larger number of participants, a variety of geographic locations and different participant bereavement situations.

Kinds of Bereavement That Affect Adolescents: Bereavement Can Have Other Causes than Death

The kinds of bereavement that surfaced in the literature are vast indeed. In addition to parental bereavement, adolescents can also experience loss of other family members, friends, neighbours, co-workers, teachers, and pets. Furthermore, the reasons for death are similarly broad: from accidental death to murder, to war, to suicide. In focusing on parental death, Guitierrez (1999) finds that three times as many participants experienced the death of their fathers compared to the death of their

mothers. This is significant for those who have lost their fathers because they may not realize that others do share their kind of bereavement. Guitierrez also shows that the death of a parent can lead to suicide in a small percentage of grieving teens. However, he suggests that this result is rare, and that most teens work through their bereavement. Finally, the author describes how it is very difficult to recruit teen participants to talk about these issues.

Mack (2001) compares childhood disruptions like divorce with parental death. The data came from 4 341 adults who experienced either divorce or parental death in childhood. Mack worked with variables such as parent-child relationship quality and family structure to test her hypothesis: that there are differences between parental death and divorce experiences in childhood (p.426). It makes sense that a child who 'loses' their parent in divorce goes through a kind of grief at the absence of that parent. The implications for the parent-child relationship are negative when there is hostility and anger associated with divorce (p. 436). Perhaps the child will never see that parent again, or never know their identity. However, the one difference between divorce-loss and death-loss is that the latter is unequivocally permanent, whereas uncertainty in divorce-loss may keep some wondering about the status of their absent parent. Mack's findings indicate that there are clear "...differences among adults who experience divorce and parental death in childhood" according to her variables (p. 441).

Worden, Davies, and McCown (2000) compare parent death with sibling death. In measuring the responses of 125 bereaved children aged 6-18 years on the Achenbach Child Behaviour Check List (CBCL) the authors note differences based on type of loss (parent or sibling) and on the age and gender of the respondent. The authors provide percentages of children who are at risk for developing serious emotional or behavioural disturbances after sibling and parent death. These figures are based on all children interviewed: twenty-four percent for the parent-loss group and twenty-five percent for the sibling loss group (Worden et. al., p. 9). Information based on the gender of the respondent and the type of loss is also included. Based on the data, girls were more impacted by the loss of a sibling. Boys were more impacted by the loss of a parent (Worden, et.al., p. 10). The authors state that the reasons for these differences are not clear. Some suggestions on how families can serve the needs of bereaved children are open communication, shared feelings, creative problem solving, flexible roles, use of community resources, reorganization (adjustment), tolerance of individual differences, and confronting misconceptions.

In Raphael, Cubis, Lewin & Kelly (1990), the impact of parental death on adolescents' psychosocial characteristics is investigated. Australian adolescents completed questionnaires on their bereavement experiences. The authors wanted to examine whether adolescents who had lost a parent are different from adolescents from intact families (p. 699). Percentages of

deceased mothers versus deceased fathers are listed for the participants, aged 14-18 years. For example, 3.5% of male participants and 3.8% of female participants had deceased fathers; 1.5% of male participants and 1.1% of female participants had deceased mothers. Percentages of opposite gender deceased parents are also listed. To include these statistics shows how more participants were bereaved by father death. The authors conclude that participants whose parents died have disruptions to attachments in early life (Raphael et. al., p. 699). The recommendation for further research is to focus on parental care and family functioning in the development of psychosocial characteristics in adolescents. For example, new studies could examine how the surviving parent contributes to positive and negative adjustment strategies in bereaved teens.

Gaps in the Literature on Bereavement

Despite the wide range of literature, there are still gaps that I found. One area that I would like to address is to demonstrate the ways that bereaved individuals can work with their bereavement using sign systems at school. So far, in the literature, working through bereavement is referred to as griefwork (Worden, Davies & McCown 2000), coping (Adams & Deveau, 1995) and adaptation (Boerner & Heckhausen, 2003). I have found a few bereavement studies that connect to the needs of school communities when individual students are bereaved (Servaty-Seib, Peterson & Spang, 2003; Lowton & Higginson, 2003).

Servaty-Seib, Peterson, and Spang (2003) make recommendations for school personnel and counselors who need to notify individual students of the death of a loved one, and afterward, work with bereaved students. For the authors, school personnel represent a group of individuals who can assist bereaved students during grief. Data was gathered from 34 school counselors about death notification practices in their schools. The section of this article of particular interest to my study is what happens *after* the student is notified of a loved one's death. Since students may not have grief symptoms for years after the death of a loved one (Silverman & Worden, 1996), it is crucial for schools to be prepared when grief symptoms present themselves. The authors found that the school counselor could play several roles for bereaved students. Among these roles are listener, supporter, and director of aftercare, protector of privacy, advocate, and policy setter.

Another article explores how bereaved students are managed in British schools (Lowton & Higginson, 2003). Thirteen teachers from eight schools (both elementary and secondary) were interviewed about their experiences with bereaved children. The authors explored how the bereaved children reacted to a death, how the bereavement affected the class and the teacher, how the teacher attempted to support the students, and how death and bereavement were generally managed within the school (p. 721). The authors found that "...respondents often perceived students as not being able to discuss their bereavement in the class. This appeared to

be due to the low priority of death and bereavement within the school curriculum, ensuring little time of the school day for discussion of such issues" (p. 724). The authors continue with suggestions on how to manage bereaved students, including contacting local bereavement agencies, involving the family and surviving parent (in the case of parental bereavement). The school is perceived as a place that provides "...safety, normality and routine to newly bereaved children" (p. 726).

In my study, I ask the participants to use sign systems to work with their bereavement, and I speculate about how teachers can help bereaved students today. For example, teachers can integrate bereavement discussion into curriculum areas like language arts, and music. Two examples of this integration are presented in Chapter 5 of this study. A discussion of sign systems now follows, with extant literature references. Afterwards, I link sign systems to a second gap in the literature, and that is the role that school systems and educators play for bereaved students while they are at school.

Sign Systems and Literacy Connections at School

> "There are multiple worlds, multiple ways of knowing, and broad habits of mind." (Paul, 2006, p.3).

Sign systems are the ways that humans share and make meaning—through music, art, mathematics, drama, and language (Berghoff, Egawa, Harste & Hoonan 2000; Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996). Sign systems are

original, creative ways to produce ideas, to make different combinations, and to add new ideas to existing knowledge (Fleith, 2000). In Harste and Burke, 1996, one of the authors is an elementary school teacher who uses sign systems in her practice. Her study wanted to find whether sign systems helped students connect to literature. After a read-aloud lesson, a boy exclaimed that he needed to draw in response to the text. For this child, drawing allowed him to think about the story, and connect emotionally to the characters (Fleith, 2000). This teacher encouraged creative expression by giving the class the choice of which sign system to use. The students were interviewed several weeks after the sign systems exercise. "Children noted that they could more fully enter into and reflect on the story world because they experienced it from so many perspectives. They had not just talked about the book and done analytical thinking but had used art, music, mathematics, and movement to imaginatively and aesthetically consider the story" (Short, Kauffman & Khan, 2000, p. 40). The intrigue of sign systems is that they can be explored in all classroom settings, from pre-elementary to college and university and beyond.

In Harste and Vasquez (1998), multiple sign systems become one way to answer three main questions within a college-level language arts course. The authors used sign systems to help construct the main themes of the course: "What is learning, and who decides? How do you organize a curriculum based on learning? What are the different ways curriculum has

been organized and why? (Harste & Vasquez, 1998, p. 268). Since Harste is the professor of the course, the article uses entries from his journal to demonstrate his experiences in preparing to teach the course (Harste & Vasquez, 1998). For example, one entry is a sketch of an Australian bird that Harste made while at a conference on Whole Language. Another example is a sketch made by the author's son on the pages of a scholarly publication. These sketches have meaning for Harste, and they add to his work as a professor of Language Arts. The bird sketch is a metaphor for the conference and the child's sketch is a metaphor for the scholarly literature. These are ways to "document the learnings of a Language Arts professor" (p. 266).

Other sources connect multiple sign systems to multiple literacies (Paul, 2006). New literacies can help access meaning and deliver knowledge. The author suggests broad categories for these new literacies: tool literacies (working with technology), representation literacy (metaphorical-written text), and visual literacy (drama, dance, musical performance), finally, mathematical, media, and oral. All of these can be found in practice within education, because sign systems benefit the broadest range of students. For the purposes of this study, representation literacy and visual literacy are addressed in the data, as well as how teachers can introduce and explore sign systems. The integration of sign systems into teaching practice can begin for new and experienced teachers.

In Richards (2005), two groups of pre-service teachers were asked to integrate sign systems into their practicum. The rationale for this study is that sign systems benefit students, because they broaden the traditional means of expression, which is written and oral text. The pre-service teachers contributed their lesson plans as data for Richard's study. From the data, eight themes emerged. Several of these themes are pertinent to my study: teachers need to have practice with sign system integration, have literacy in different sign systems, acknowledge their assumptions about sign systems, and match the sign system to the task. Richards explains that certain sign systems are complementary with curriculum: music and poetry, dance and phys. ed., drama and oral communication. Richards found that the pre-service teachers relied on the sign systems with which they were most familiar: oral and written text. Perhaps with more exposure to teaching practice, these teachers would have less difficulty switching from the familiar systems, to less familiar systems in order to reach their students.

There are examples of teachers integrating sign systems with their practice in the literature (Andrews, 2005; Cantor, 2006; Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000). Andrews (2005) created a high school art class to attract all students. The purpose of the class was to strengthen visual arts in the classroom and to empower students. The author found five benefits to the program: the connection of art to other disciplines, partnerships with the

business world, and meaningful learning experiences for the students, the expansion of the teacher's role as facilitator and the increase of student responsibility (p.37). Students were empowered by art because they began to see connections to other disciplines (history, geography), their class projects were requested to decorate local businesses and any proceeds were donated to charity, their works had special meaning for the students. Similarly, in Dunn-Snow and D'Amelio (2000), the expansion of the teacher role is described. Teachers can talk to students about their art, know how art can be both creative and therapeutic, and collaborate with school counselors to design art-making activities that address specific issues. One of these specific issues could be bereavement.

According to Short, Kauffman, and Khan, (2000), learners naturally move between art, music, movement, math, drama, and language. In my teaching practice, I experience that learners are often restricted to language at school in the form of reading, writing, and oral communication. This statement is based on my observations during ten years of teaching experience at the elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels. If there are multiple ways of knowing, as Short, Harste, and Burke (1996) suggest, then it seems natural to use multiple systems to draw out meaning from everyday experiences. A range of sign systems broadens thinking, helps connect to memories, and enables thinking through feelings, to gain new

understandings (Short, et.al, 2000). What ways can multiple sign systems assist bereaved people in expressing what it means to be bereaved?

Multiple Sign Systems and Bereavement

In the literature, I read about ways to make meaning of grief and bereavement. For example, Ayyash-Abdo (2001) talks about bibliotherapy and art techniques as intervention strategies to help with mourning. Bibliotherapy is reading, viewing, or listening to material that helps people to solve problems, and better relate to bereavement (Ayyash-Abdo, p. 425). In Ayyash-Abdo's article, bibliotherapy and art techniques involve interaction between a child and an adult, whereby the child can begin to communicate about their loss through literature and art. Other studies connect bibliotherapy to Individual Psychology (Anderson, Kopp, Maniacci, 1999; Jackson, 2001). Similarly, in my study, I provided opportunities to communicate, by increasing the methods bereaved individuals could use to express themselves. In the chapter on data presentation, the reader can see how the participants explore art, music, and language to make meaning of grief and bereavement experiences.

The meaning of experience through art is portrayed for women with breast cancer (Predeger, 1996). The purpose of this article is to explore the acceptance of death when there is no cure for illness. Eighteen women, aged 39-70 who had terminal breast cancer used art to tap into their inner creativity and make meaning of their illness. Art was found to have positive

affects on the participants, who chose writing, journal drawing/painting, photo-realism, collage and water colour to express their emotions. The author found the participants were empowered because they connected to emotions. The author recommends that other nurses collaborate with their patients and allow them expression through the arts.

The purpose of another study is to design and pilot a music therapy-driven processing instrument with bereaved adolescents (Dalton & Krout, 2005). Twenty participants aged 12-18 who had experienced a death in the family in the previous three years attended a seven-week songwriting group to assist their grieving process. One hundred twenty-three songs composed by bereaved adolescents were grouped into lyrical themes such as Understanding, Feeling, Remembering, and Growing-Integrating. The authors found that songwriting helped adolescents improve their grief scores on a grief processing scale. Furthermore, the participants were engaged in songwriting because the author-therapists provided sample choruses for the participants. These choruses matched the participant-generated lyrical themes. I will now move on to the primary theoretical themes and secondary theoretical themes of this thesis.

Theoretical Framework: Alfred Adler

The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler forms the primary theoretical underpinning of this study. Alfred Adler was born in Vienna in 1870. At an early age, he decided to become a physician, and he grew to

practice medicine and psychiatry there (Boeree, 1997/2006). When he was invited to join Sigmund Freud's discussion group, he soon began to disagree with some of Freudian psychology, namely, that the individual is not a collection of theoretical concepts (Id, Ego, Superego), but is a unified whole—and can be understood in the context of his or her physical and social environment (Boeree, 1997/2006). Because Individual Psychology is a relational psychology, it fits with the topic of bereavement.

Individual Psychology offers a vantage point from which to view bereavement (Strauch, 2001). From an Adlerian perspective, the response to death depends on the lifestyle (life choices) of the individual and his or her social interest, or connection to the community (Hartshorne, 2003).

> "Lifestyle also refers to the underlying, unifying, goal-oriented dynamics upon which behavior, thought, and emotion as well as attitudes, morals and values are based. A lifestyle consists of a self-concept, other-concept, worldview, ethical convictions, and methods of operating. It has also been thought of as a rule of rules that offers a view of an individual's line of psychological movement" (Eckstein & Baruth, 1996; Mosak & Schulman, 1988).

The response to death also comes from the perceptions of the individual. These perceptions can encompass how the individuals situate themselves in relation to their families and siblings. For example, one person may respond

to the death of a parent with courage, whereas another may respond with hostility, or withdrawal, depending on how the individual views death and his or her position in the world and in the family. Hartshorne (2003) examines the various concepts of grief and mourning from an Adlerian perspective. Concepts like lifestyle, social interest, life tasks, and goal directedness are examined from a multicultural perspective (Hartshorne, p.150). The author concludes that the Adlerian model of grief goes further than other models, while having commonalities with them:

> Like the psychoanalytic perspective, Individual Psychology views grief as having a purpose...Like attachment theory, Individual Psychology sees the kind of relationship people have with the deceased as affecting the experience of grief...Like the psychosocial... approaches, Individual Psychology asserts that each [sic] individual creates their [sic] own perception of the world. The essence of an Adlerian model of grief is in this match (Hartshorne, p.151).

Individual Psychology works from the view that one looks at the context of a person's life and lifestyle. This allows the focus to be placed upon the individual *in community with other individuals*, with all their thoughts, feelings, and needs. Individuals co-exist in society as contributors, choosing to better themselves in consort with others. This view (re)develops

over a lifetime, while it ebbs and flows—touching all aspects of an individual's self-constructed belief system (Adler, 1970a). In this system, the individuals think, perceive, and act according to their style of life (Adler, 1930; Eckstein, Rasmussen, & Wittschen, 1999; Edwards & Kern, 1999; Gold, & Mansager, 2000; Hartshorne, 2003). In these sources, style of life is how individuals decide to live in relation to others, to meet the life tasks.

Adler proposed three life tasks: work and school, intimacy and social relationships. According to Adler, the ways that people meet the life tasks demonstrate how they cope with the challenges that fall before them (Weber, 2003), or the meaning that they attribute to their lives (Mc Arter in Mansager et. al., 2002, p. 185).

I found discussion about the number of life tasks in the literature (Dreikurs, & Mosak, 1967, 2000; Gold & Mansager, 2000; Mansager, Gold, Griffith, Kal, E., Manaster, McArter, et. al, 2002). For example, there have been suggestions that getting along with oneself and finding meaning in one's life (spirituality) could be the fourth and fifth life tasks (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1967; 2000). Dreikurs and Mosak suggest that Adler made implications about these extra tasks, however, Adler did not label these as tasks (Gold & Mansager, 2000). This is demonstrated in the Style of Life Tree, from Appendix B. "All the tasks that life demands can be divided in three categories: the individual's attitude toward others, toward work and

toward love." (Retrieved August 2005 from Alfred Adler Institutes of San Francisco and Northwestern Washington, http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hstein/tree.htm. In this study, the life tasks are labeled work and school, intimacy and social relationships.

It is important to note that the societal context cannot be separated from life tasks, because the interrelationship between people can form the individual's sense of self, which emerges in response to several factors. These are family constellation (make up of the family), socio-economic status, family values, religion and culture or tradition (Adler, 1970b). I was intrigued by this tenet and further investigation revealed a visual representation of Adler's style of life.

Imagine the trunk of a pine tree, with its own configuration of bark, needles, and branches (Adler, 1970a,&b). This sign system was constructed by Bruck (1901-1979) and later modified by Stein (1997). The tree represents one way to explain style of life from an Adlerian perspective, (see Appendix B). The three main branches of the tree are Occupation, Other People, and Love and Sex (work and school, intimacy and social relationships). These main branches are a sign system to represent relationships in a person's life. The trunk of the tree is the style of life itself. The roots of the tree are the factors that affect style of life: Health and Appearance, SES, Parental Attitudes, Family Constellation and Gender Role. I relate this tree to my study by posing questions next to the parts of

the tree. For example, where Stein inserts "Childhood Influences," I insert "Life before bereavement and grief"; where Stein inserts "Attitudes," I insert "How do these attitudes change as a result of grief?" Other sign systems have been constructed to represent more tenets of Adler's Individual Psychology.

Adler's Unity of Personality Scroll is another metaphor in Individual Psychology. Adler explains how the scroll needs to be unrolled in order to examine all the complexities of personality (Adler, 1930). I use this scroll to show the unique personality of the individual in the face of adjusting to bereavement because the scroll represents the complexities and beauty of each personality; for this reason, a scroll is purposefully part of each instrument in my trio. For example, on stringed instruments like the violin, the viola, the cello, and the double bass, there is a wooden scroll on one end; each scroll is unique, carved by the artisan with careful attention to form and function. For this study, adults bring their unique personalities while (re)forming their own style of life concurrently with the adjustments some meet in bereavement. One of these adjustments noted in the literature concerns the connections between people and how these connections are affected by death. While Adler called the connections between people social interest, another theorist coined the term attachment. That theorist is John Bowlby, and his idea of Attachment

Theory is the secondary theoretical theme of this thesis. A brief explanation of Attachment Theory follows.

What is Attachment?

The meaning of attachment in this study refers to the basic human need for security and support, which children derive from their parents, and I would argue, that we derive from each other: "Attachment theory underscores the central role of relationships in human development from the cradle to the grave" (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999). I explored references examining how teens react when attachment between a parent and child is severed by the death of that parent. Some have highlighted the vulnerabilities that are internal and external to a bereaved adolescent. The internal myths are that adolescents must work through emotional, psychological, intellectual, spiritual, limited coping behaviours, physical dependence on others, and social pressures. The external myths are that children do not grieve, children are innocent, childhood losses are dismissed, children's' needs are neglected as they grieve, adolescent grief is not tolerated; adults abuse authority to control teen behaviour and are insensitive about peer pressure (Attig, 1995). Others believe that the adolescent responds to parental bereavement in phases: numbing, yearning, searching for the parent, disorganization and despair, and reorganization (Bowlby, 1999). These are the basis of Attachment Theory.

According to the literature, Attachment Theory is the work of Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991), who revolutionized our thinking about a child's bond with his or her mother, and how that bond is affected in the event of separation between mother and child (Bretherton, 1992). The literature is clear that attachment theory, and grief and mourning have a common parentage in Bowlby's work (Noppe, 2000). In 1960, Bowlby published his first study on "Grief and Mourning in Infancy and Early Childhood." He found that children and infants do indeed mourn when their attachment figure is separate from them. This was revolutionary, because the prevailing psychoanalytical model suggested infants and children displayed separation anxiety, not mourning or grief. Although Bowlby revised his theory of attachment several times before his death in 1990, his four characteristics of attachment are still relevant today in the context of bereavement.

The four characteristics of attachment according to Bowlby are proximity maintenance, safe haven, secure base, and separation distress (Retrieved July 2007 from Van Wagner, (http://psychology.about.com/od/loveandattraction /ss/attachmentstyle.htm). For the purposes of this thesis, those who are attached to a parent want to be near that parent. They return to that parent for comfort and safety in times of fear or threat. This return is applicable to children and adults (Waters, Crowell, Elliot, Corcoran & Treboux, 2002) who feel a sense of security in the parent and are able to explore and experience new things because of that secure

feeling. Finally, anxiety occurs when the parent is absent. For the purposes of this thesis, Bowlby's characteristics of attachment are used to examine the relationship between the participants and their deceased fathers. There are a few studies that suggest an individual can remain attached to a deceased parent.

Noppe (2000) discusses how attachment bonds are maintained for some even in death. The author refers to the "continuing bonds" hypothesis of Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, and Stroebe (1992) which explains that even though a person has died, there remains a bond between that person and a living person. For example, an adolescent bereaved by a parent's death is still somehow attached to his or her parent. In the music stand metaphor, this is demonstrated because the children (arches) are still attached to the spine of the stand (parent—backbone of the family). Does a metaphysical attachment continue after the physical attachment between a teen and their parent is severed by death? Does Bowlby's notion of detachment refer to dissolution of the relationship? Noppe (2000) states: "Detachment...is not the same as dissolution of the relationship" (p.524). Noppe is referring to Bowlby's definition of detachment: a defense mechanism caused by the inaccessibility of the primary attachment figure. For the purposes of this study, detachment is a transposition of the movement or interpolation between people, meaning that the relationship between the deceased and

the living still exists. Another area in the literature supports the idea of continuing and changing attachment in bereavement.

Kennedy (1991) writes that the bond between a deceased parent and his or her child is transformed and it continues after death. After death, there is shock, descent and emergence occurring as a person works through bereavement (p.11). Kennedy makes suggestions for coping. Journaling through grief can help people remember loved ones. In rereading journal entries, memories can be brought to the surface. Dancing, singing or writing can help to express emotions and work with grief. Bereaved people can create their own sanctuary, filled with mementoes of the deceased. Kennedy encourages bereaved readers to be in the sanctuary undisturbed each day as the transformation of their relationship begins. Keeping the deceased person present in the lives of family and relatives is also encouraged, because "death ends a life, not a relationship" (p.71).

Summary

This chapter began with two views about my music stand. Is it just a piece of furniture, to hold up sheet music—or can it be a metaphor to represent the participants and their lifestyles, the spine of bereavement and coping with bereavement? In fact, it is both furniture and metaphor. I use my music stand in this way for readers like myself who prefer to visualize systems in order to learn about their parts. For me, the relief of the music stand is a sign system in itself, to convey a deeper meaning than simply

functionality (Appendix F). From the definition and history of adolescence, a thread was stitched connecting bereavement issues in the literature to the sign systems that can help some bereaved individuals work through their bereavement. I presented an overview of Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory as the primary and secondary theories that frame my research.

Now, it is time to close this chapter and begin another. While planning this study, I naturally progressed from theory to methodology. In the end, I returned to methodology in light of the research questions and data collected to reflect on the process of how the study was conducted. Then I began writing the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter about methodology, I would like to take the reader on a journey that was the process of conducting this study, after I received ethical approval. I hope that my efforts in this regard will demonstrate one way to conduct a study, which may be of help to readers and researchers who are exploring the topic of bereavement or are using a similar genre of qualitative research. To begin, I discuss qualitative research with references from the literature. Pertinent information follows about participants. I describe my research perspective in this study and how I collected the data. Finally, I explain how I maintained trustworthiness and analyzed the data.

The Qualitative Tradition of Research

> Part of the appeal of doing qualitative research lies in its pluralistic promise for exploring multiple ways of knowing multiple truths which [sic] respect individual differences in bereavement (Carverhill, 2002).

This study belongs to the autobiographical tradition of qualitative research because it follows an inquiry process to understand and explore the culture of bereaved adolescents. The researcher's own story, as well as the stories of the participants becomes part of this focus. The key to understanding these stories is the idea "...that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Merriam, 2002,

p.3). In other words, the participants bring their own ideas of reality to this forum. I seek to understand the meaning that the participants make of their bereavement; one person's meaning may not exactly match another's, based on the lifestyle of that participant. The distinguishing features of qualitative research are evident throughout. Rich verbal, interpretative descriptions will flow within the text (Merriam, 2002) to draw the reader into the culture of bereaved teens. I use a narrative approach to report the personal accounts of each participant (Gilbert, 2002). The reporting focuses on a holistic approach, which seeks to interpret process as well as outcome, as suggested by Creswell (1998; 2002), Gay and Airaisan (2003): how the problem is reported is as important as the unfolding solution. Qualitative research proceeds from conversations with people to a theory that in this study is most applicable to the participants and me.

Autobiography: The Cello's Voice is My Voice

The genre of research I have chosen is autobiography as defined by Ellis and Bochner (1996):

> Autobiographical accounts draw a relationship between experience and language, and the individual and culture...The act of reading one's own experience and the experience of someone else constitutes a place in time where the dimensions of experience are made meaningful along a variety of narrative lines (p.184).

I have used autobiography as an alternative form of qualitative writing. With its origins in the ethnographies of the 1920's, autobiography emerged as the lines between social science research and humanities research blurred (Ellis & Bochner, 1996). This genre is best suited to this study for several reasons. At its foundation, autobiography is interpretive and discovery-based, which is inductive (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Induction is the formation of general laws from particular cases (Retrieved July 2007 from Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inductive_reasoning). In autobiography, the researcher gathers stories from each participant, and organizes them around pivotal events in an individual's life (Denzin, 1989). These events are called epiphanies, or life course stages and experiences (Creswell, 1998). Finally, autobiography calls attention to how individuals act as vehicles of meaning (*Neumann* in Ellis & Bochner, 1996). There is a main component in autobiography that needs explanation: the incorporation of the researcher's own story as part of the central focus.

Researcher's Perspective

A portion of this study will be devoted to my experience since the death of my father, recorded alongside my participants' experiences. I weave my story through the data, using narrative strategies like metaphor, with thick description to make readers feel as well as think (Ellis and Bochner, 1996). An example of thick description is to have data from many sources: interview text, journals, email, audiocassette, or phone calls. I

fully agree that thick description draws the reader into the story, and I respond with a narrative genre of writing to reach a wide audience. My intent is to expand the genre of autobiography from the academic realm—to enlighten students and colleagues—to the applied realm—to influence school and work policy and to promote change (Fetterman, 1998).

Another component of this study is the perspective that I bring to the story. Experiencing the death of my father during early adolescence placed me in a culture of bereaved teens. I am still part of that culture, even though time has passed and I am now an adult. Because of my past life challenge, I can relate to adolescents today who are bereaved, and I can also relate to Ruth and Elizabeth. I tell the story of what it was like for me at that moment in my life, as though I were right back there, in order to illuminate the experience from an adult perspective, looking backwards in time. Ellis and Bochner (2002), who stress the importance of the researcher's own experience as a topic for investigation, suggest this approach. In the following chapter, I present the data in the form of vignettes. My statements about the data separate the indented portions of text and they help to place the data into sections (Appendix A). In this way, participant voices intertwine and connect by common thought, feeling, and behaviour. These feelings are framed by the factors that affect style of life: family constellation (make up of the family), socio-economic status, family values, religion and culture or tradition (Adler, 1970b). I also found

different thoughts feelings and behaviours within these factors, which will be explained in the chapter called Data Interpretation. I am familiar with some of what my participants are experiencing—to what degree will unfold as the interpretation continues.

Researcher's Assumptions: Predictions of the Notes to Come

> Let us assume that someone looks through a prism. The person will see light differently from the light he [sic] would otherwise see without the prism. Light would appear to him [sic] as if it were in different colors. If someone has built or found a pattern of life, he [sic] looks at things, or at life, through such a prism. He [sic] sees things from a particular angle.... This is an example of what we would call tendentious apperception, that one interprets anything that happens, or evaluates any event according to his [sic] own opinion. Sicher (1951), Retrieved from http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/hstein/qu-apper.htm.

The above quote demonstrates the Adlerian tenet that people see the world through their own lens. At the same time, people are open to the similar and different views of the world seen by others. I believe the lenses through which the world is viewed can be refocused. I acknowledge that I am entering into this study with a (re)formed lifestyle, which has given me certain opinions, biases and philosophical assumptions. I have my own lens; I see the world in relation to my experiences, while I also appreciate the

lenses being used by other people. My view can be explained using several categories: ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological (Guba & Lincoln 1994; 2000). I have thought about my particular assumptions as my predictions of the melodies to come. I will explain the categories to illuminate the meaning of each heading.

Ontological

The ontological response follows the question "What is the nature of reality?" (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; 2000). In this study, I believe there are multiple realities, both similar and different. These realities are viewed from the unique perspectives belonging to Ruth, Elizabeth and me. I have come to understand the ontology of this study through my string trio metaphor. Each participant comes to the group with her own instrument, which represents the style of life of that participant, as well as that participant's unique voice. The music produced by the string instrument is the voice of the participant and the data of this study. I expect that readers will have their own interpretations of these words, and apply them to their own realities. As the circle widens, the views and opinions of the participants may become mired and hard to distinguish. It may be useful for readers to depart from our common bereavement experience, and then examine our similar and differing opinions and biases when trying to make meaning of our stories. Then there is more room for examining who we are in relation to the research. This strategy has helped

me when I was asking questions about the epistemology of the researcher-participant-reader relationship.

Epistemological

The epistemological response follows the question "What is the relationship of the researcher to that researched?" (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; 2000). I am an active facilitator-interpreter in this study. I am a co-constructor of information; my task is to listen to stories, to influence the story, to search for deeper meaning and to be a conduit for the participants (Gilbert, 2002). My participants and I are equals in this experience, because I do not intend to adopt the 'expert' role. In Adler's words, "My role is less to assume the role of expert, than to give psychology away to those who need it" (Adler, 1930, p.16). However, I am using a coaching style of leadership (Fullan, 2001) to guide the conversations. I agree with Denzin and Lincoln (2000) who suggest that the participants and I link in a common experience. We create the findings as the investigation progresses (Denzin, 1989). These findings will be value and bias-laden.

Axiological

The axiological response follows the question "What is the role of values?" (Creswell, 1998, Guba & Lincoln, 1994; 2000). This study is laden with the values and biases of Ruth, Elizabeth and me. As I describe and tell the story of human actions, I include intentions, beliefs, motives, rules, and

values of Ruth and Elizabeth (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In the next chapter, the reader will have the opportunity to experience values and biases in the data. I see inclusion of values and biases as paramount in this study, to acknowledge and embrace the wholeness and uniqueness of each participant. This light on individuality is part of the Adlerian lens through which I see this study.

Methodological: Data Collection and Seidman's Model

The methodological response follows the question "What is the process of research?" (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; 2000). After I received ethical approval, I moved on to Data Collection. According to Merriam (2002), three sources of data collection are interviews, observations, and documents. In this study, I have made use of two kinds of sources. My primary source of data is six interviews with Ruth and Elizabeth. A secondary source of data is musical notes, song lyrics, and a letter, two oil paintings, and email correspondence. These sources of data were collected using Seidman's interviewing model.

Seidman's Three-Interview Model

> I interview because I am interested in other people's stories. Most simply put, stories are a way of knowing.....Interviewing, then, is a basic mode of inquiry. Recounting narratives of experience has been the major way throughout recorded

history that humans have made sense of their experience (Seidman, 2006, pp. 7-8).

The present study makes use of the three interview series by Seidman (2006), which is briefly explained here. Within this series, participants are interviewed three times each, following a specific structure. The first interview involves the focused life history of a participant. Here, the interviewer gathers as much information as possible about the participant, in order to illuminate the topic being studied in the context of an individual's experiences. Questions that fall into the life history component for the present study are found in Appendix H. The second interview follows within a period of 3 to 7 days. This time interval, according to Seidman, allows the participant to maintain a connection to the first interview (p. 21). In asking questions about the details of their life events, the researcher in turn experiences the details, as well as the participant's reconstruction of them. Questions that focus on the details of a life history are found in Appendix H. In the final interview, again following an interval of 3 to 7 days, the focus is the participant's reflection on their responses and life events. The participant is given the opportunity to examine the experiences shared and offer how they have come to understand, or make meaning of their experiences. For the present study, the three-interview model was used for Ruth and Elizabeth.

Interviewing: Participants

Ruth and Elizabeth were selected as participants based on the criteria for which I had approval. I was looking for three adults bereaved in adolescence by the death of a parent. My original aim was to have a trio of participants. I advertised in newsletters, and made presentations to groups to explain and promote my research. After several months, I received responses from two Canadian provinces. Ruth and Elizabeth were among three potential participants who fit the criteria. In the end, the third participant dropped out of the study after signing the consent form and having one interview. It is not ethical to use data from this participant, whereas Ruth and Elizabeth's data are fine to be used and analyzed in the following chapter, from our face-to-face conversations.

In the spring and summer months of 2006, interviews were held with Ruth and Elizabeth, using Seidman's three-interview model. Ruth was interviewed first, because she responded to my advertisement first, and because Elizabeth had not answered my call for participants until that summer. On three consecutive Wednesdays, Ruth and I met at a mutually agreed upon location that promoted our comfort. The goal was to place Ruth's behaviour in the context of her life and explore its meaning (Seidman, 2006). To each interview, I brought a booklet containing many interview questions that were drafted with the help of a certified Family Therapist (see Appendix H). I also had a digital recording device to record our

conversations. Each interview was about 100 minutes long. The week in between each interview allowed Ruth and me to reflect on the previous interview and type or respond to the transcripts.

On the first Wednesday, a detailed exploration of Ruth's life history was completed. I wanted to know as much as possible about Ruth's life in the context of her bereavement experience (Seidman, 2006). On the second Wednesday, Ruth and I talked about the death of her father and her life to the present day. I focused on the details of her bereavement experience, and asked questions to draw out her opinions (Seidman, 2006). On the final Wednesday, we reflected on bereavement, this research study and discussed sign systems as alternative means to work through bereavement. The three interviews with Ruth contain approximately 320 minutes of recorded conversation. The interviews were recorded using a digital recording device, in separate, secure files. Each interview was transcribed using a word processing program beginning as soon as possible after the interview. Completed transcripts were ready in about four days and were returned to Ruth prior to the next interview, to receive her comments, revisions, and approval. Ruth made comments and revisions on each transcript, down to the minutest detail. After Ruth's interviews were over, I waited for several weeks before I had a reply from Elizabeth.

As with Ruth, Elizabeth was given the opportunity to choose the location where we would meet. I had the same goal as with Ruth: to ensure

that Elizabeth was comfortable with the location. I was fortunate to be quite flexible in this regard because I am able to access many possibilities. Just by coincidence, Elizabeth chose a similar location as Ruth. I knew it was time to repeat the interview process I had conducted with Ruth. This time, I was able to fine-tune my approach. For example, I practiced the *listening more saying less* strategy, the *not interrupting and asking follow-up questions* strategy that I found in the literature (Seidman, 2006, pp. 78-88). Interviews were again held once weekly, this time each Thursday. The interviews followed the same approach used with Ruth: interview, transcription, submission, member check, reflection, next interview. When the interviews were complete, and the transcripts were checked and revised according to Elizabeth's editions, I began to reflect on issues like trustworthiness and data analysis.

Trustworthiness

> The traditional positivist criteria of internal and external validity are replaced by such terms as trustworthiness and authenticity [in the constructivist paradigm] (Guba & Lincoln, 2000, p.158)

In reflecting on the issue of trustworthiness, one can assume that the words of the participants in this study are true. I often asked myself in the course of collecting data whether the participants were responding with

their own views of their bereavement, or whether their views were somehow coloured by my participation in this study. Although I accept that I affect the data in some ways, at the same time, there are measures that can minimize my effect on the data. Seidman (2006) makes the trustworthiness determination simpler with his three-interview structure: "It encourages interviewing participants over the course of 1 to 3 weeks to account for idiosyncratic days and to check for the internal consistency of what they say" (Seidman, 2006, p.24). In using what I would call a semi-structured interview schedule, participants have enough time to reflect on what they have said, remember their line of discussion, revisit, and clarify certain points. The interview structure then, is one way to bolster the internal consistency of participant statements (Merriam, 2002).

Another way I maintain trustworthiness is in the use of member checks. I want to make sure that my transcript reflects what the participants said, in context. Rarely, the interview recording was difficult to discern, and the participants were very helpful in deciphering the text. We communicated regularly about the text in the transcript, and solved problems with unclear text together. Participants were provided a transcript as soon as possible after the interview, and they were asked to look it over for accuracy. I asked whether my rendition of their words was acceptable or not. Invariably, Ruth and Elizabeth had revisions for me. I would insert their revisions into the transcript and send it again.

The final way I maintained trustworthiness was to devote much time and planning to each stage of the research project. In particular, the interview questions were drafted with the help of a certified Family Therapist. I met with the therapist for her suggestions on types of questions and interviewing style. Several interviewing guides were also consulted for clarity before each interview. From the proposal stage, through to the seminar, ethics application, data collection, and analysis, I made every effort to be thorough and diligent. This is part of a 'good' qualitative study, according to Merriam (2002): "To a large extent, the validity and reliability of a study depend on the ethics of the researcher."

Preliminary Data Analysis

I transferred the six interviews from the digital recording machine to my personal computer after I transcribed and member checked each interview. I transferred and isolated one interview from the participant who dropped out of this study. Although I will never use this data, I opted to save it, along with the signed consent form of the participant who dropped out. This procedure is for consistency, and it follows the data storage information in the ethics application. The viable recordings yielded hundreds of typed pages that I arranged by date and participant name and stapled them into booklets. The three booklets belonging to the Ruth interviews and the three booklets belonging to the Elizabeth interviews were placed in legal-sized file folders of two different primary colours. Both file

folders are stored in a locked cabinet, while the recorded data is encrypted and password-protected on my computer.

As soon as possible after the participant revisions were complete, I read each transcript, and made notes in the margins. On the left margin, I made notes a first time and on the right margin, I made notes in a different coloured ink after a period of about three days. These were my preliminary responses to the data, and my reconstructions of my experience.

After the preliminary responses, I drafted three participant profiles. I began with Ruth's profile, then Elizabeth's profile and finally, my profile. The profiles are on plain sheets of paper using a popular graphic organizer from my teaching practice. This organizer is called a *web*. The webs are on top of the three booklets belonging to Ruth and Elizabeth, and I clipped them together, according to the commonly held categories belonging to the participants. They feature an overview of the data, following the three-interview structure (life history, bereavement and school experiences, and recommendations for educators).

With the profile booklets ready, and the two sets of my responses in the margins, my next task was to highlight the text using different coloured highlighters. The themes that were emerging in the data correspond to certain colours of highlighting. These coloured sections were compared for similarities and differences and are presented in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter on Methodology presents the process that guided my research project. Beginning with an introduction to qualitative research, the literature is referenced to support why this study is qualitative. The genre of autobiography was explained because the researcher's story is part of the data for this study. From the perspective of the researcher, I describe my position in this study, as well as the assumptions I bring. Data collection is described with reference to a three-part interviewing method (Seidman, 2006). This chapter ends with information about my preliminary analysis of the data, which leads to the next chapter on Presentation of Findings.

The Metaphor Emerges Again...

The stage is empty now. I am no longer playing duets with Ruth and Elizabeth. Instead, my music stand is nearly buckling under the weight of the transcripts. I have a special file box to store them, and I put them away carefully, almost reverently, to show my respect for the courage it took to tell these stories. Now I loosen the horsehair of my bow, and put it into my yawning cello case—velcro fastened. Loosening and retracting the endpin, I wonder how it could get this tight *every time*. I perform the familiar *click-thuck* of the closures, and after my cello is nestled safely, I hoist the strap onto my shoulder. Bending down, I have the transcripts, my stand, and I proceed to walk off stage. My brain feels as weighted with data as my body

feels with *stuff*. I could feel the cognitive and emotional connection to my participants beginning to form (Rager, 2005). I am walking up the red-carpeted aisle, when I hear the loud *thwack* of the house light switch. Looking back, there is less light than there is forward, so after a slight pause to balance everything, I continue into the light of Presentation of Findings, my next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is devoted to the stories told by Ruth, Elizabeth and me. These autobiographies become the lines of music in my trio, and if I had enough time, I could set our separate lines to music in the way I was trained. I could look for parts of speech that evoke a certain tone colour, and translate this into melody and harmony. The responses to my research questions could be worked into the notes, with themes emerging and receding. In this chapter, the data are organized into a *preliminary set* of themes that serve to organize the data. Within the data, square brackets are inserted by the researcher to clarify the meaning of the text. These clarifications were member checked by each participant for accuracy. After the presentation of the data using the preliminary set of themes, the three research questions emerge at the end of this chapter as part of a cross-case analysis that compares and contrasts similarities and differences in the data. In this comparison and contrast, the reader can observe a *secondary set* of themes that are different from the preliminary set. This secondary set emerged as I worked with the data.

I see the structure of this chapter as matching the format of a string instrument performance with a Prelude, and Movements (Grout, Palisca & Burkholder, 2005). A change in the format of text is meant to highlight the

melodies or responses that were performed by the players. Now the stage is set for the performance.

Prelude: The Introduction of Ruth

Ruth is a forty-two year old wife and mother of two children who was bereaved by the death of her father when she was fifteen. Just prior to our interview, Ruth was completing one year of Teacher's College. She is certified to teach in a Canadian province. Ruth lives in a large metropolitan city with her husband and two children.

Before Bereavement

Ruth was born in a large metropolitan center forty-two years ago. She grew up with one sister, and a very close set of extended relatives. Before bereavement, Ruth sees herself in the role of a younger sibling, because she has an older sister. Ruth gives a glimpse into her childhood before her father died. She tells us that she was very happy growing up, and she includes early information about her sister and childhood pets:

> Growing up, it was just my older sister and I. We had four pets over the course of my childhood. We had a dog named Micah. My mother thought that children should have a dog. We got him when we were really young, and when we moved houses when I was four and a half, my mother gave him away. I guess we were not old enough to take care of him. Then we got a

> cat named Sonya. And we very briefly had another dog, but he used to pee all over the floor every time my father came home...I think it was because he was really excited. He was really happy to see my father. We only had him for about two weeks. We had a Siamese cat, Cassy, who was the nicest in the world. All those conceptions that people have about Siamese cats did not fit Cassy. She was really the nicest cat because one family that took her in fell in love with her and wanted to get their own Siamese cat. My sister and I used to fight over which one of us would get to have her at the foot of our beds. She would sleep on one, and the other of us would call her over and she would finally settle in the middle.

Ruth's father and extended relatives ran the family business:

> My father and uncles all worked at my Grandpa's factory. My Grandfather opened a custom furniture company and emporium before I was born. One uncle was in charge of personnel; one uncle was in charge of payroll. My father was in charge of a little of everything. They were all around the same age, and they all rotated positions. They made beautiful furniture and beds. I have one desk that my father made for me there.

Ruth could not wait for her father to come home so they could do homework together. As the younger sibling, Ruth's homework did not require as much

time as did her older sister's. She enjoyed her homework time with her father, and wanted more:

> My father did homework with my older sister on the kitchen table. I used to do my homework and watch them. Every year, I would think *Next year, I can stay up late and do homework with Daddy.*

When there was no homework, there would be a family gathering:

> We had friends who would come over to our house and we used to sing folk songs. Between three families, we knew all of the folk songs. It was hysterical. We would just have a great time singing and drinking after dinner, and my father was indiscriminate with the songs that he taught us, so as a six year old, I knew all these drinking songs; not that my father would drink [to excess].

Ruth's recollection of family gatherings is described with a broad smile and much fondness. In our third interview, Ruth even sang for me. The selection she chose is "Midnight Special." The lyrics for this song are in Appendix E.

Bereaved By

Ruth was bereaved by the death of her father in 1977, when she was thirteen years old. In answer to the first research question,

Ruth provides many memories that she worked through over the past thirty years of her bereavement:

> I think he was about 5'10". That is not particularly tall but for my family, that was quite tall. He was a little overweight; constantly struggling with his weight...always...always. He always belonged to some gym or another. He started going bald at seventeen. He was cute, small eyes, my father.
>
> It was my father who died. My father was the centre of our extended family. He was the person who was somehow always there for everybody. So it was not just a loss in our immediate family, it also was like pulling out the pin. The whole thing just fell apart.

I asked Ruth to include any details about how her father died, and she volunteered that her father's death was not sudden. Ruth reconstructed events backwards from her father's death to the discovery of his illness, and then forwards in time, to just before his coma:

> No, he had cancer. He had it I think about a year and a half. My mother took on the role of two parents during his illness. He died in April of 1977. He was quite sick...he had Hodgkin's disease—highly curable. He had a very rare reaction to the chemotherapy that attacked his brain cells so he actually

> became paralyzed. It was quite nasty. So he ended up in a coma in hospital.
>
> He went into the hospital for testing. He woke up one morning and his arm was asleep...he did regain the feeling in it, but it wasn't quite right and it just lasted too long. He couldn't quite work his fingers to get the circulation going. He went and checked it out and [found out that] this reaction attacks the grey matter of the brain. At some point, he didn't want us to see him. He had gone to see his grandmother on her deathbed and he didn't want us to have the same experience. But at some point, he asked to see my older sister and me. He was obviously out of the coma, because he asked to see us. He was more or less paralyzed from here down [from the waist down].

But even though Ruth's father was ill for a year and a half, the news of his final decline came as a shock. When Ruth found out that her father was going to die, she was on a trip with friends:

> So one week out of every year, we would go away to a resort so that we could be in nature from morning until night. I knew my father was getting the results back of his test while I was away, so I called home. My mother didn't really want to tell me over the phone, but I pushed her, pushed her...I needed her to say it.

"It's not good Ruth."

"How not good is not good?"

"Actually, it has gotten worse."

Of course, I was devastated, I was crying, and one of my group leaders said: "She knew, didn't she"? [Ruth's mom knew or expected the news], which was an amazingly stupid thing to say. Because on top of feeling all these things, I was feeling stupid. I should have known?

Ruth's strong feelings continued just after her father's death, at the Shiva:

The way a Shiva works is that you are supposed to stay home for a week and people bring you food. They sign up for the meals and sometimes they just drop off food, but often they come and eat with you. I actually have very strong memories of laughing a lot. Morbid humour, most of the time and everybody was drinking; my Mother didn't put any restrictions on that. But we did a lot of reminiscing, so we really laughed a lot. Now I can't quite figure out how we found those things funny. Like one of them... there was one night, it was friends who came, and a woman who had survived the war in a concentration camp was reminiscing about being liberated from the camp. Everybody was laughing their heads off. I can't

> understand how she did that, and how we found it funny, but we did.

On the day before the Shiva, Ruth went to school and wrote two exams:

> My Mother said, "You can go to school or not, it's up to you." My older sister decided to stay home, but I wanted to go to school. So I wrote two exams on the Monday. I had the sense of everything being really unreal...life was normal for everybody else, and it was ripped apart for me. Everything was completely changed...and no one else...knew.

Ruth's feelings of uncertainty followed her to the funeral:

> I remember the funeral, and having to choose clothes and having to decide whether to wear makeup. It's trivial and it's ridiculous and yet so important; you are on display and when you are that age, and your parent dies. It is probably the first funeral that you have ever attended. You don't know what the process is, and you don't know what to expect...yet everyone else around you does. And you have to deal with all of these emotions at the same time.
>
> You know we had a neighbour down the street who was very helpful. She was trying to be supportive and she said to us "Whatever you guys want to do is fine." But in some ways, I

> actually would have preferred it if she had said, "This is what people are going to expect, whatever you want to do is fine." I had never been to a funeral. At least not one that I can remember. I talked to a friend of mine who is in her twenties, whose brother just died. She is experiencing the same thing...no matter what anyone else says it's wrong. But I think that you have to worry about being careful, but don't worry about being too careful. When people said, "I'm sorry," I thought w*hy are you apologizing you didn't do anything.* I think at that point I was angry. And anger expresses itself all over the map, even twenty-eight years later. It comes out every now and then.

I soon experienced Ruth's feelings about the subject of death. This is the next theme emerging from the data.

Feelings About Death

I have wondered whether the meaning that a person gives to death changes because of bereavement. Ruth has experienced her father's death, and this has meaning for her:

> I guess I would say that I haven't made sense of [death]. I have made sense of the fact that death—it's necessary. I can see that it is part of a cycle. I guess I really feel that every death is a tragedy. Some are bigger than others are and some affect

> you more than others, but it's always a tragedy. Things have to move on. Things that don't change are dead. You have either global death or individual ones. I can't say that it's unfair. I can't say that. I'm sure my father felt that it was unfair to him. But was it unfair to me? I'm glad to have had him for the time that I had him.

I asked Ruth how the death of her father makes her feel:

> Sad. I'm sure that I went through periods of anger, but I don't feel anything else but sad. I miss him. My mother remarried, and I have a younger half-sister, but I still feel sad.

Ruth stressed over two interviews that her father died before she had the chance to see him as human, with all his flaws and foibles.

> One thing I have had time to think about is that I never went through the [adolescent] period [when I challenged my father]. When my father died, he was still...fantastic...great. I needed [to go through that phase]. As much as parents may hate it— [children need] to go through that phase where [they feel that their parents] can't do anything right. So you can reconstruct them as...human. That's hard. Because my father died before I could see him as human, I have the image of this perfect parent...and you then have to grow up and be a perfect adult.

Ruth is looking forward to the day when her children see her as human.

In more words than these, Ruth reconstructed the story of her father's death. She provided a glimpse into her world of bereavement, and in doing so, revealed how her grief melody has unfolded in the years since 1977. This is the second research question that asks about school experiences before and after bereavement.

Sign Systems

When Ruth is grieving, and up until the present day, there are patterns that she recalls as she moves through grief to help adjust to the loss of her father:

> I don't think I do anything. I might talk about it. There are some big things...in the Ashkenazi Jewish tradition you name your children after people who have died. So my daughter is named after my mother and my son is named after my grandfather. I like that. But obviously, it's not an instant thing.
>
> I do believe that [grief] stages do occur. I have an analogy: it's like springtime in Canada. You know what it's like here—one day it's summer and one day it's winter. You know, and the days of summer gradually take over the days of winter.

By the third interview, Ruth had time to reflect on what helps her to move through grief. She provides the example of reading her father's letters:

It was 1976. That was an eventful summer when my father wrote us a really powerful letter. My father wrote a really beautiful powerful letter about the hostages in Israel, and I don't know where that one is. It was the first time that we got letters directly from him. It was the summer before he died. He was undergoing chemotherapy....horrible....

Ruth brought the one letter she has from her father, who wrote her from home while she was visiting her Grandparents. She took it out carefully, almost reverently, from a perfectly pressed envelope:

It's really....there is nothing remarkable about this letter. But it sounds like him...it was written by him.

It was a joy to hear your voices the other day. The weather here has not been nice these last days...while the weekend was a pleasure. No news from school...I hope you got along with Bubbie and were not too much trouble. I will close now, with love from me to you, Love, Berczy.

The words Ruth uses while she moves through grief are also of a more happy timbre, in the lyrics of songs:

Oh God, I remember all the songs. The songs that I remember the best were the ones that we sang in the car. We sang

"Midnight Special." It's about a person that was in jail, and if the train shines its light on them, they will get their freedom. Would you like me to sing it?

When you wake up in the morning, you hear the
ding dong ring
You go marching to the table; you see the same
damn thing.
Life before~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ [humming] and if you
say a word about it
You're in trouble with the man.
Let the midnight special shine its light on me
Oh let the midnight special shine its light on me.

It was a real treat to hear Ruth singing. I asked her about the other songs she remembers:

There were other songs that I remember that I really wish I could track down. So if you end up doing research on them, I would really like to know. Like the one where there is a person going off to war and his wife wants to go with him...and he keeps saying no, and then he says, "Yes my love, yes." Or I always liked another one they're both Johnnys... *Handsome winsome Johnny...fairest of them all* [humming; lyrics in Appendix G]. We used to sing the Ditzy Rover...the one about

> the boat that capsizes...I remember the end...*the captain got married and the cook she went to jail*...[humming].
>
> The songs are all over the map. There are many Jewish songs that were Negro spirituals...when they were slaves they were not able to talk about their slavery. I think in modern times those were changed into Christian songs. But we used to sing the ones that they sang because they had Jewish lyrics. My father was into many other songs too.

Ruth uses words and words in song as examples of moving through bereavement. It was as through this study that Ruth connected to her father's letter, and the songs. This connection will be explored in the next chapter on data interpretation. I asked Ruth about her perception of this study, after she initiated a discussion about my research and its purpose. She wanted to respond to how she thought this study could help other bereaved teens. I see Ruth's perception of the study as her personal response in the data. It was her prediction of how this study could unfold. Her response was a theme found in the data that will similarly be highlighted for the other participants.

Perception of this Study

Ruth feels the information contained in this study should reach bereaved individuals.

> The information should get out there...I found myself talking about [the study] afterwards. The things that came up in our conversation and the things we have in common make me feel supported. There is nothing strange about me; this is what happens to people who go through this [bereavement]. It's not strange at all; there is a definite pattern, and depending on what culture you're in...we're in North America...we're Caucasian...bereavement happens in a certain way. And it's happened that way for millennia, I imagine.

This study is also for non-bereaved individuals. Another theme that surfaced in the data is Three Wishes. Here, I place the data of interest that answers the third research question. Readers may want to know what action the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved individuals.

Three Wishes

Educators will inevitably meet bereaved students while at school. Ruth wishes that the school acknowledged her father's death:

> No they didn't...and I really would have liked it if they had but I think that I would have liked because of that sense that my world was falling apart, I never did get such a response from the school....that they were acknowledging....

Ruth reflected on what the school could have done for her between interviews. She returned wanting to discuss school response:

> I was thinking about something [that] you had asked last time. You were talking about what would have worked for me in school. I thought about my father a lot while at school. And I really think that would have benefited from someone who understood that I needed to talk about the gory details...that I needed to cry about it...that I needed to be able to talk about it. And not someone coming up to me and saying "There there...if you ever need to talk, come see me"; but someone coming and saying "Ok we are going into my office now and you are going to talk to me." I know maybe that it wouldn't work for other people, you know, to be forced into it, but I would *never* [emphasis in original] take someone up on a generic offer like that...ever ever...so I needed someone to say "Talk".

Ruth also wishes she was not singled out in front of the class:

> I remember [the subject of death] coming up at one place. He [the teacher] spoke about our belief in God and I said that I didn't believe in God. He asked me why not, and I think I said at the time "You know, my father died"...and he turned to the class and said..."Her father died so she is punishing God by not

> believing in Him." I felt this was a huge distortion of my words, and not at all an accurate reflection of my feelings...

I asked Ruth what she would say to this teacher:

> [Laughing]...I'd want to tell him that it was presumptuous, that it was rude...that if he wanted to have a conversation with me that it should have been directed to me...and not to the class, so that he would give me a chance to respond to him. That he took my words and twisted them into a form that he wanted to push his point. It was propaganda and it wasn't right.

My thanks go out to Ruth, who provided this information. Now we turn to Elizabeth, the second participant in the ensemble.

Prelude: The Introduction of Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a sixty-five year old single parent of a son. She was bereaved by the death of her father when she was fifteen. Around the course of our first interview, Elizabeth was preparing her artwork for a showing at a regional gallery. Elizabeth is an artist who owns an art studio where she has refined her technique for the last 28 years. She lives on a farm with her animals where she practices organic farming.

Before Bereavement

Elizabeth was born in a large metropolitan city in Africa, sixty-five years ago. She is the daughter of a British military officer and an African

mother. Growing up, she was the only child in the household. Elizabeth sees herself as an only child before bereavement. Even though her two stepbrothers from her mother's previous marriage lived nearby, she never was able to speak with them. Because her mother forbade it, she rarely had access to her father. Elizabeth gives an impression of her early childhood in Africa:

> In Africa, the only place that I was allowed free reign was the museum. In those days, the museum was just a building with warehouse shelves and all the artifacts were just stacked there, and I was able to play with them. The curators realized that my interest was not just a passing fancy, and they took me under their wing and they would explain what an object was and what it meant, and they would teach me.
>
> What captivated me, is that my father appreciated it; a line, a form, an expression. I could appreciate the same feeling that triggered someone thousands and thousands of years ago to create that form, that expression. That line form or expression meant something to someone enough that I could feel it too...And when I look at a painting in a museum, it would be a narrative even though it's 400 years old and you know nothing about the people. You can know something about the character, the life the environment of these people. There

were layers there. I would go home and memorize them, and they would be there with me.

Elizabeth describes her love for her Nanny, Baba, who was Elizabeth's constant companion, protecting her from her mother:

> And I escaped her [Elizabeth's mother] for the first five years because I had a governess. She was more educated than [most] and was educated in Europe. She washed me, cleaned me, slept with me, fed me, and taught me that a female has no value unless every moment is accounted and there is always someone with her.

Elizabeth describes leaving Africa and moving to England with her parents right after the war, when she was very young:

> That must have been '50-'51-'52. I was very young, but I was old enough to remember the trip to England—and how life changed. For my *Mother* [emphasis in original] it was a disaster because she was the baby of many children and got anything she wanted. She went from living in a cosmopolitan centre of the world that was in Africa at that time, to a disastrously primitive country where there wasn't even indoor water or bathrooms. You had to go to the garden and get your water and carry it in buckets.

> Yes, it was hell. Food was rationed and there was no such thing as heating. If you were five feet away from the fire, you were freezing. You couldn't get fresh fruit...anything that meant anything to her [her mother]. We lived there for seven years.

Elizabeth's relationship with her paternal family in England was positive, and she was happy for the protection from her mother:

> In England, there was my broadest family and they all adored me. I grew close to one of my cousins. We used to play the piano together, but I was not as good as she. They protected me. She [Elizabeth's mother] was on her best behaviour in England. It was when we left England that I realized that I was alone with my jailor, my captor, my tormentor. At the same time I adored her because she was my mother.

Elizabeth treasures the time she spent with her father on long walks in the country. She remarked on the wealth of knowledge he presented:

> I only remember the few times that I was with him. It was during very rare walks. He took me for walks in the country. I remember him showing me about the plants "You know this is Queen Anne's Lace and this is blackberries and this is where we are going to find raspberries. And this is oak and this is chestnut." I was transported because he would just fill my

> mind with whatever was there. He taught me how to climb a tree. I came back with a little cut in one pair of trousers, and my mother was very upset, so I changed into another pair and I did it again. That put the kybosh on those walks.

Elizabeth's protection soon wore off when her mother said they were moving to Canada, and her father was not coming:

> I adored my father, but my mother never allowed me too much proximity. One day, she said we were going to Canada, so I studied "What is Canada?" I said, "Mommy, we cannot go to Canada. In the summer, there are clouds of black flies and in the winter, you can be stampeded by herds of caribou!" I was horrified when she said, "Yes, we are going." Horror of horrors, my father wasn't coming.

Elizabeth was never told that her mother and father had divorced:

> She lied to me until she died. It was only as an adult playing back my memories that I realized that she must have just dumped him and left him to die alone. When I did contact my cousins, they agreed that it was a horrible shock when she tried to take me away. They tried to rebel, but no one could stop her and they were desolate but no one could stop her.
>
> He went with us to France...and then he went back...mother said he had business to look after....and then she said he wasn't

> well. In England, the medical attentions were paid for. Then later, she said he had leukemia. When I was in high school, I think it was grade nine or ten...he died [Arms swept upwards symmetrically]. A few years after that, I left home. I think I was seventeen.

Bereaved By

Elizabeth was bereaved by the death of her father when she was about fifteen. As was revealed in the data, Elizabeth was not sure exactly when her father died, and the reasons for his death remain a mystery because she is not convinced of the authenticity of what her mother told her. It makes sense to Elizabeth that her father died because of his cigarette smoking:

> The man smoked for a lifetime. He was born in 1888, and since he was young, he would smoke navy cut cigarettes. He lit one from the other; he would buy them by the case and never used more than one match in a day. When I was born, the doctor came to see him. The doctor said, "Look at your case of cigarettes, and look at your daughter in the crib. Make a decision, and if you make the wrong one, you will not see my face again." He told my mother to throw the cigarettes away, and she threw them out the window. I think someone got rich

> that day! He never smoked again, but for years, he would cough and you could hear the rumbling [in his chest].

Of particular interest to this study is that Elizabeth was separated from her father about three years prior to his death. I asked her how old she was when she was last in the presence of her father, and how she feels about this separation:

> I was eleven, but years later when he died, it was such a shock. I always knew he was very ill, but it was such a shock. Every year she [Elizabeth's mother] had been pacifying me, saying that we would go back to England. It wasn't until years after that I realized she had no intention of taking me to see my father. It was her intention to separate me from the rest of the family...including him. It was because of the kind of woman that she was. She had secrets that she did not want me to understand. It's so appallingly stupid on the one hand and but also the reason for a lifetime of suffering.

I asked Elizabeth how she came to know of the death of her father:

> She [Elizabeth's mother] told me. "Daddy's dead. Here's his watch."

Elizabeth revealed how she reacted to the loss, and that it was doubly poignant, because she had lost her father in addition to losing the opportunity to visit him herself when she grew older:

> The loss was an incredible loss. I fully expected in my adolescence to be able to go and connect with him as a person, as opposed to a little girl who didn't know anything. It was a tremendous shock, and I wailed for I don't know how long, on my own because she [Elizabeth's mother] didn't want me too upset. *He's dead; it's finished* [her mother's words].

The second research question asks about school experiences before and after bereavement. For Elizabeth, this process began with her parent's divorce and moving to Canada because she was permanently separated from her father:

> It was a mixed blessing that my mother did not allow me close relationships [father included]. From the point of view of having established a pattern of behaviour, it wasn't a problem. The long- term problem was in the fact that I wanted to communicate with him, and couldn't. That became even more painful when his presence wasn't there anymore. It was hard enough when he was in the same house, but when he wasn't even there anymore, whom could I talk to? The wall became my best friend.
>
> This is why I am here. There have been so many levels of emotions. I adored my father, and I thought he was a hero. I was never allowed to interact with him. I will always miss that

> interaction...regret that [separation]...yearn for it [interaction with her father]. But, the separation happened and I will never understand why.

The separation from her father became irrevocably permanent when Elizabeth learned of his death. The actions after the death of her father reveal some of her feelings about death.

Feelings about Death

Elizabeth and I talked about whether her father could feel her thoughts now. This opened up her beliefs about death:

> Well, your guess is as good as mine is. A part of me likes to believe that...I do believe that we are all one entity and that energy and matter is never lost. It may change, it may have different roles, but if there is any way that my sentiment could have been transmitted, I pray that it was; certainly not by any conventional means.

A black ribbon is a common symbol of mourning, grief, and respect. The ribbon can be worn on the left arm around the bicep, or on the left lapel. Elizabeth decided to wear a black scarf on her head:

> The first thing that I did was I put a black scarf over my head and that met with mockery at school because you don't grieve in Canada outwardly. I could not discuss this with anyone else...I had no one else at school so I withdrew; I sublimated

everything into action. Television was a very small part of life in those days. I would watch the news, the Lone Ranger after I got home after school. I loved watching that program, because I wanted to be a cowboy [laughing].

My refuge was in books and in doing. I sewed, I drew, and I read. It was tremendous, because it developed me.

In the years since her father's death, Elizabeth has developed a response to the pain of grief. She calls this response her medicine:

Whenever there is a pain, immediately, you need to find out why, so you can take that stupid splinter out of your foot, and continue. You can easily overcome pain that way. When you understand the rest of the iceberg, of which that is just the tip, you are coping with the pain. Some don't want to explore this; they are afraid of what they might find. They don't want to: they think it will hurt more, they don't understand. Appreciating that hurt, and having the courage to get out that splinter relies on deep introspection, quiet introspection. I already found my medicine and was on my way to healing.

Art is Elizabeth's medicine, which she uses to express herself and to sometimes overcome pain. This is Elizabeth's sign system. Elizabeth has used art as a means of working through her grief. It is through Elizabeth's art that her grief melody unfolds.

Sign Systems

Elizabeth's father taught her a diversion from the pain she was experiencing, primarily at the hands of her mother. Elizabeth explains how art became a means through which she could unconsciously work through sad experiences:

> Art will always be there. When I was in tears, my father once said to me "Do something that makes you happy. Draw a picture: what did we see yesterday?" He would divert my attention from tears to "What was it we saw?" [He showed Elizabeth the happiness around her]. Those little lessons that mean nothing at the moment are the primary staff on which your weight is borne and which bears you through difficult times.
>
> One of the best medicines when you are suffering is to be able to dance, to sing, to play an instrument, to paint. Because that part of your brain heals you. To fan the flame on the right side [of the brain] is what knits the raveled sleeve.

Elizabeth brought in a piece of her artwork to our second conversation. Entitled "Communal Strength" this oil on canvass self-portrait is described in detail. Elizabeth is grasping the outstretched hand from a loyal friend, who is helping her through a tumultuous time in her life:

> This painting was done tongue in cheek. You know, twenty minutes. It was done when you don't take something seriously and you say here, like this [motioning brushstrokes]. You don't think it's going to turn out because you were just fooling around. I looked at it afterwards, the next day, and I said, "You know, that's not half bad. I should paint like that all the time."
>
> At the time, I was doing it flippantly. As time wore on, when I looked at it, I had other sentiments. One of them was I wish I had her advice in times when I was going through such difficulty. This was the first time that I consciously tried to put down some feelings because of an event. If I had done something like this at the time of my father's death, it would have been an unconscious attempt. It wasn't with the proactive intention of putting down something that would get me out of it. There is a difference there. One is reactive rather than proactive.

I asked whether Elizabeth would ever paint reactively, and she included her ideas about a series of paintings. She wants to paint in response to her friend's death and her father's death:

> There is a series I wanted to do about death. When my dearest friend in the entire world finally died, I wanted to do a series

honouring him because he was a great hero of mine, next to my father. He was Polish, and a rather heroic proportion. However, I'm not exactly sure as to how to go about it yet.

The enjoyment Elizabeth feels when she paints was evident throughout our conversations, as she described the details of her sign system:

> This is oil on paper. I love oil on paper because it dries almost immediately and it just soaks in while the line just jumps out at you. I happened on a whole stash of this particular colour. Everybody said "What a disgusting colour, what are you going to do with that?" I said it was just...perfect. It is light, hope, and happiness and so I picked it and said, "Finally! I have a use for this paper!" I never had any problem using it after that.

This research study was also a source of enjoyment for Elizabeth. She describes her perceptions of this research project because it helped her to remember her father. Her personal response to the data is given in the following section:

Perception of this Study

> I was completely amazed after our first conversation, at the degree to which your questions made me go back and think. On the drive home, I was quite amazed at the degree to which your concerns made me mull over, look back, and dredge up

from my memories things that I put in the closet and never considered. "You should not live in the past, dwelling in the past is not going to help you" all these pat phrases that you grow up hearing. It has been an incredible learning experience because of that going back and trying to remember events. Like when you asked, "Do you remember your father's voice? Do you hear your father's voice?" It made me go back and I *did* remember it [Emphasis in original]. I felt as though I was enveloped in the most incredible—the most comforting blanket of love imaginable—whatever mushy things one feels.

What I find phenomenal was it made me discover him again. Then again, I realized the pain that it must have represented to me at the time, which is part of the reason that you put things away and you don't think about them anymore; to go back and rediscover him without the pain! You put it away, because you don't want to hurt. But then when you come back, you realize that it doesn't hurt, you bring the memory out, and you realize that it is full of warmth and wonder and he is with you. He can be with you every day, any moment. It's part of him, part of the world. The golden molecules that were part of him are free, and those molecules are part of us. The air that Jesus Christ or Buddha breathed we are now breathing. So in that

> sense that he is with me again, that warmth and protection, that positive energy is there.

I explained to Elizabeth the idea of sign systems and how alternative forms of expression fit into this study. In her response, Elizabeth would like this study to show children who are grieving how to express themselves and how they can make themselves feel better. I asked her whether she thought children would easily grasp the idea of sign systems:

> Each child will have different resources to bring to it: some may be able to express themselves in music, or in exams, singing, painting, writing, building things, discovering paths in the woods. Each child has to be made aware of the door they are to open that will have the answer for them—and to not be afraid of the pain, to feel it anyway. To cry, to feel unashamed, to find out how they can make the person that they are crying for so proud of them. They can find that answer inside of them, do something that they can feel proud of, and be a monument to them.

To grieving children and adolescents, Elizabeth says:

> You can find a way of making yourself into a hero. Make yourself feel better through construction, not destruction!

Three Wishes

After our exploration of sign systems, there was conversation about our hopes and dreams for students who are grieving. Elizabeth has several reconstructions about her school experience before and after the death of her father that she does not want others to have to go through. In response to the third research question, Elizabeth recommends action on the part of educators to meet the needs of bereaved students.

> The more that can be focused on the child at the moment of bereavement, not with the sense of "Oh you poor thing" or "You're going to have to get over it just like everyone else" but with a great big hug. Someone has to hold them until they get over it. Without that sense of connection, what do you have to give to their lives? They have to love you to understand that what you have to say has meaning.

Educators also have to be aware of bullying towards bereaved students, so they will not have to endure the bullying that followed Elizabeth from England to Canada:

> The first time I was in the company of other children was when I was sent to a public school in England. It was the most frightening experience I've ever had. Because I couldn't understand why anyone would behave the way the children were behaving. I had never been a child, and I found them

> unbelievably cruel [Elizabeth did not behave the way she saw the children behaving; she had never been that sort of child]. That closed me off again.

Finally, Elizabeth would like educators to take a more active role as advocates for bereaved and non-bereaved students, who may have no advocates at home:

> They were very delicate with me because all the way along they knew that there was some peculiarity...I was not like the other kids. First of all, I had no access to my father. I missed him so and shut down at school. Therefore, when we came to Montreal they didn't understand the level I was at in England, so they put me a year back. Then when we came from Quebec to Ontario, they said "Oh well" and they again put me a year back, so I was two years behind. So I shut down, and whenever we were tested, my tests were always over the top. I was just a lump in the classroom. I was afraid of saying anything [motions across her shut lips as if to say she would not speak]. There was no real communication...my mother never fought for me at school. I was completely alone at school and at home.

Many thanks go out to Elizabeth for all the information she provided. We will now move on to my responses within the established data themes.

Prelude: The Introduction of Jennifer, the Researcher

I am a thirty-six year old wife and owner of two cats. My father died when I was eleven, and in grade six. In my elementary teaching position, I thoroughly enjoy sparking new curiosities in my students. At the time of interviewing for this research study, I was celebrating the arrival of spring because I am passionate about the environment and I marvel at transitions between seasons. I live in the country with my wonderful husband.

Before Bereavement

I was born in a large metropolitan centre thirty-six years ago. In my early childhood, there were seven of us living in the same house. Everyone was a generation or two older than me, except my younger brother. My older siblings are at least ten years my senior. Because of this age gap, I see myself in the role of first-born child, and I hold many of the characteristics of the parental, nurturing first-born child. Before my father died, I can remember many things that show what my childhood was like. For example, there were many children living in our area, who would come over and play with us. My backyard was the best for Hide and Seek, thanks to my father's ingenious landscaping. We lived on a quieter street, and there was a large area where we could play on the road. We would play ball, hockey, tennis, badminton, and ride our bikes, roller skate, or just run—constantly—back and forth on the street. We were very active children, and we had to be in

when the streetlights went on, or if we saw my father from a distance give us the *home time* signal.

A special time in our family was birthdays. When I was young, it seemed that every month of the year was covered, because someone was having a birthday. I started the year, because my birthday is in January. I used to enjoy tracing patterns between our birthdays, but even more enjoyable was the cake and presents. There are so many pictures of someone blowing out birthday candles in our family albums. I used to compare the pictures from year to year of one of my siblings. One wintry day, it was my turn to celebrate.

On Saturday, January 27, 1979, I celebrated my birthday with family and a group of friends. My Mother and Godmother took a large group of us to Mother's Pizza Parlor and Spaghetti House. There were three large pizzas in the middle of a huge table, and pitchers of root beer too. The picture I still have of this happy occasion shows me blowing out the waxy figure eight candle. I was wearing a white blouse and navy blue pinafore, white leotards and black patent leather party shoes. The shoes even had a small heel. After all, I was eight, and Mommy said I could wear them. To this day, I can remember having to really sit up straight because my chin met the top of the cake, and I didn't want to mess the icing, or my chin. They all sang for me that day. My family sings "Happy Birthday" in four-part harmony.

Another special time in my family involves music. All of us are musically talented people, and I can remember the practice that went into music at home. We had a Mason and Hammelin piano accessible after school and on weekends. I can remember how my siblings and I would each take a turn playing the piano to prepare for weekly piano lessons. As a five year old, I remember hearing a Rockabilly number that I really liked. Rockabilly is a genre of music made popular by the legendary Elvis Aaron Presley. When it was over, I would shout "Happy Days!" because the chord structure matched a popular television theme. I also remember hearing vocals, trumpets, clarinets, and cellos in various parts of the house. We attended musical performances at the local high school. Unfortunately, I can't remember the actual music, because the auditorium seemed much more interesting at the time. What music I do remember vividly was played at our church. At the Folk Mass on Saturdays, I came to learn hymns by heart. I still use many selections from the Catholic Book of Worship, Volume 1 in my music classroom today. After Mass, we would sometimes get a soft serve ice cream (if we were good).

Another event from my childhood is the predictability of my mother's sumptuous meals. Since I am a morning person, I was usually up bright and early and ready for a hot breakfast. By 8:00 a.m., I was out the door for the half hour walk to school. At lunchtime, I raced home. I was hoping for tuna sandwiches with mayonnaise and fresh green onions or dill weed on whole

wheat bread, cream of mushroom soup and raw vegetables. After school, there was a peanut butter and honey sandwich and a glass of milk, and dinner was served at the table when my father came home. My favourite was salmon patties, boiled potatoes with butter and green beans with carrots. Our family ate together and we ate very well, thanks to my mother's talents in the kitchen. Despite these culinary memories, there did come a time when my father was no longer a regular at the dinner table, because he was in bed.

Bereaved By

I first became aware that my father was not well when he was sleeping more than usual. He was not at the dinner table regularly, because he was sleeping. There was Vicks Formula 44 in the bathroom linen closet for his cough, and he was taking Tylenol for his headaches. Before these remedies, my father never missed a day of work. Soon after, Daddy had a band-aid near his nose, because it covered a large sore that was not healing. I think I was nine.

I can't remember exactly if things got worse from then on, because I was not aware of the details of what was going on. I think things got better for a time, and then they worsened. What I do remember is calling for my mother because my father was having a seizure on the bathroom floor, and his prolonged stay in hospital. My brother, mother, and I would take public transit to go and see Daddy for the day. He did not come home in his special

bus any longer near the end. He would complain of the treatment he was receiving from the nurses.

I was bereaved by the death of my father in October of 1982. This was after a lengthy illness of about two years. I can remember sitting on the chesterfield, watching television. I think I had just finished my peanut butter and honey sandwich, when a phone call was received by my mother. In twenty seconds, we had news that my father expired at 4:00 that afternoon. Expired? What kind of verb is that? I thought about it for awhile and then found its synonym. My father had died. Quite unexpectedly, I got really loud and wet with tears. The television blurred because I was crying so hard. This took me back to a time when my younger brother and I were pushing buttons in the elevator of my sister's apartment building, and the doors closed before my mother and sister got there. We were separated from my mother and sister, and the tears likewise fell.

Two days later, my brother and I went trick or treating for Halloween. We were taken by one of my older sisters...it seemed that my older siblings rallied around my brother and I, from the moment my father died....While arriving at my best friend's house, I can remember being asked by my best friend's mother about how my father was doing. I will never forget how her face fell and her jaw dropped when she did not receive the usual answer. Instead, I said, "My father died on Friday at 4:00." Back at the sidewalk, my

sister must have seen that I was growing upset, so she took us home shortly after that.

Feelings about Death

My beliefs about death are rooted in my Catholic upbringing. I believe that in death, the spirit is freed from its earthen vessel and is reborn into a new existence. I do believe that people who have died can observe our lives from afar, and I do believe that those who have died are with us on some level that we cannot comprehend. When my father died, I had no feelings at all about death, other than it was what happened after Daddy fought illness for two years. At the onset of my bereavement, I would say that I experienced first-hand that death is inevitable. It was hopeless to prevent it.

As an eleven-year-old girl with braces on her teeth, I became ill after my fathers death. A case of mononucleosis kept me at home for November 1982 and some of December 1982. During my illness, I spent most of my time sleeping, just as my father did at the onset of his illness. My older siblings visited me often, bringing me wet cloths for my head, and tending to my needs. I can remember being quite emotional, because I was dealing with puberty too. I remember how touched I was that my mother made me a ham and lettuce sandwich and brought it to my room. I cried.

As I matured, my beliefs about death deepened. Death seemed clearly unavoidable, as well as a shock to those closest to the one who died.

Emotions surrounding a death can vary from moment to moment: shock, anger, sadness, elation, relief; occurring in no particular time and in no particular order. At the same time, death remains the shock that promotes instant change within a family, or a community. Like in my case, my older siblings became more like parents to me. And they were constantly looking out after me. As in my own Catholic faith, the death of Jesus Christ can be the salvation for the entire world. Death can have a positive, affirming, facet even in the midst of grief and sorrow. In all these veins, I felt I had no choice but to work with my father's death in my life. The next section on Sign Systems shows how I worked with my grief after my father's death, until the present day.

Sign Systems

It seems that the music in my family acted as a means for me to express the death of my father. Just prior to his death in October of 1982, I was given the opportunity to enroll in a strings class at school. This class was a strings class, where the rudiments of violin, viola, cello and bass were taught by a music specialist. I was very proud of the fact that a musical aptitude test the year before showed that I would succeed in such a class. In September 1982, some of my classmates and I began the music class. I soon had to choose a stringed instrument to play. The instrument I chose was the cello, because I am drawn to its melancholy timbre. I was also told by my teacher that the physiology of my hand and fingers would suit this

instrument. At the time, I had no idea that this instrument would help me to express grief, because my father was still alive when I began with cello instruction.

From those first attempts at this challenging instrument, I moved through three years of string playing at middle school. In high school, I switched to a Catholic school where a string program was offered. I continued with the cello, piano and voice. I received private lessons for cello and voice, in addition to private piano lessons. Soon, I was performing in enrichment strings, a local philharmonic orchestra and our school's prestigious Concert Choir. In university, I received a scholarship for admission into a music school with my cello audition. One of the pieces I auditioned with is Faure's Elegie in e-Minor, in homage to my father (Appendix J). This is the same piece that I weave into the fabric of this research study. I played the melody of this piece at the beginning of the seminar where I proposed this study to the university community. In all of these musical experiences, spanning the last twenty-five years, I have always used music in its various forms to express sentiments deep within me, to vent frustration, and to triumph over complicated runs of notes. I use music to channel sentiments that help me to cope with the challenges I experience, in life and bereavement. The role that music plays in my life is also woven into the fabric of this research study.

Perception of this Study

My perception of this study is my personal response to the study and its data that seems to be in a constant state of movement. One day, I can see this study in neat pieces, and another day, things seem disorganized and sometimes monumentous. For example, I once viewed some of the stages of this study: proposal, seminar, ethics, committee, and defense as organized compartments of work. I would put in my time, and these stages would be completed. I had this idea at the beginning of my research journey. As time went on, and some these stages were realized, I experienced the process of this study. It was not what I had predicted, and there was a need for flexibility and persistence. One fact is that this study has been with me for the last four years. It is a constant presence in my life—a goal that I have set for myself. I will explore more on my perception of this study in the next chapter on data interpretation. I will reveal whether my goals in this study have been realized in responding to the research questions.

Three Wishes

Do I have three wishes about how to meet the needs of bereaved students? Certainly! I believe these needs can be met, because some of my needs were met when I was in school. One example of when my needs were met happened when I was in grade five. At that time, my father was ill for about a year, and I am sure my teachers knew. My mathematics mark was slumping, and my report card said that this was below my abilities. My

teacher had me go to several sessions with a parent volunteer to work on my math. The parent volunteer soon discovered that I did not need the extra help, and said so to my teacher. In this way, I received affirmation that I was not stupid. I was just not doing the work. Also in grade five, I met with a school board counselor because my behaviour at school changed as my father's condition persisted. The worst was when I forged my father's signature on a math test, and burst into tears when my teacher asked why I would do such a thing. I met with the counselor that week.

There were two times when I showed my grief at school, and was helped immediately by school personnel. This is my second wish for students who are bereaved: that they too are helped when grief comes to school with them. The first time I showed my grief at school I was letting my emotions out in the girl's washroom. I believe I was in grade eight. I was booked for an appointment with the Guidance Counselor right away, because this was unlike me. I was expected to attend. In the next weeks and months, she had an open door policy for me. I was able to see her whenever I wanted, while at school. Since I liked structure, I asked whether we could meet on a regular basis. She agreed and I met with her every week until the end of the school year. Allowing me to make my own schedule gave me the control I needed. The second time I showed my grief at school happened many years later during an Advent mass in high school. I was in Concert Choir, and we were singing a song called "You Are Near." The song made me

think of my father who was not near to me. I left the gymnasium, and tore down the hall, looking for somewhere to let it all out. My music teacher followed me, and took me to the music room where CBC Radio was playing. I can't remember the follow up, but not having to perform the Responsorial Psalm removed the pressure I felt.

Even though my need to express my grief was met on two separate occasions, I was not protected from being bullied. After my father died, and right through my middle and high school years, I was known as 'the girl whose father died'. In middle school in particular, students approached me less, because they did not know how to approach me, or what to say to me. Some students called me 'bad luck' in front of others. They said that my father was sick enough to be dead, and it could be catching. As a result, I was convinced that I lost two very important friends because of my new image. Two boys pressured my friends not to walk with me to class. My best girlfriends walked with me less and less, and one of them chased me away when I tried to walk with them. Soon, they did not walk home with me and I started to walk alone. My third wish for students who are bereaved today is that their teachers educate everyone about the tools to work with bereavement in their classrooms. Teachers need to instruct students in the ways to approach and support students going through bereavement. Discussing the topic of bereavement openly can be educational for the bereaved and the non-bereaved.

Data Interpretation: Themes Emerging from the Data

The Underlying Framework

This section will explore the themes that emerged in the course of my comment building, and reflecting. Comment building is a term from my teaching practice that refers to the construction of words to serve a purpose. For this study, I built comments around the data from the interviews. Themes are presented according to the Adlerian and Bowlbian framework of this thesis. A cross-case analysis shows that Ruth, Elizabeth, and I have certain similar and different thoughts, feelings, and behaviours within our bereavement experiences. These feelings are framed by the factors that affect style of life: family constellation (the child's perception of their role in the family), socio-economic status, family values, religion and culture or tradition (Adler, 1970b). The themes I use to analyze the data across the three cases are Biographical Information (Family Constellation), Perception of Study, Bereaved By, School Experience, Suggestions for Educators, Feelings about Death, and Sign Systems. I will explain what I learned in each theme, illuminating similarities and differences, and relationships to the theoretical framework and literature where appropriate. These themes are illustrated in the Representation of Data Interpretation page in Appendix I. Please see Appendix I for further explanation.

Theme One: Biographical Information

Theme One of my data interpretation connects to the first and second research questions, which are: *how do the participants tell the story of the death of their parent; what are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants,* because it contains data about the death of a parent, and includes information about past bereavement experiences. In this section, I explore how bereavement affected the participants' perceptions of their position in the family. A discussion about perceived position in the family in bereavement is applicable to the participants and to bereaved students at school. I speculate that bereaved students today may be experiencing similar perceptions. I will now begin with the data.

The family constellation of each participant was the launching point for a diagram I drew to help me visualize the data [Appendix I]. What I mean by family constellation is the make up of the family, and the participant's perception of their place in the family (Stewart, Stewart, & Campbell, 2001). The reader can picture a star chart representing a family, and each member has to find a position on that chart in relation to the other members. It is the individual's perception of their place in the family that interests Adlerians (Johnson, Smith, & Nelson, 2003). How individuals react and perceive certain situations is unique, while how individuals conceptualize and perceive their position in the family is central to Family Constellation (Johnson, et.al., 2003). The participants' constellations have

similarities and differences. For example, when our fathers died, a space at the head of our constellations resulted. Our mothers and siblings moved to take up some of the space our fathers once occupied. In this way, our constellations changed, moving in adjustment to the loss of our fathers:

> The family acts to maintain a balance in its relationship...
>
> The family that has evolved over time into an established and predictable system is thrown into chaos and upheaval.
>
> For months [and longer] family members thrash around, seeking balance. (Kennedy, 1991, pp.107-108).

I looked for connections between family constellations in the data, to indicate how the participants responded to their surviving parent and their siblings in the face of bereavement. This is probably because I come from a large family and have had to find my place amongst my siblings. My focus on family constellation reflects my style of life. For the most part, the data suggests that Ruth and I see ourselves in the role of first-born children: we are leaders, sensitive to the wishes of our parents, who prefer order, structure, norms and rules (Stewart, Stewart & Campbell, 2001; Eckstein, 2000). Most interesting is the fact that we are not the first-born child in each of our families. Instead, we see ourselves as fulfilling a first-born role. We see ourselves as older siblings, who take on new responsibilities in

bereavement. For example, Ruth's mother began assuming more of the parenting responsibilities when Ruth's father became ill, while Ruth assumed parenting responsibilities for her younger sibling after her mother remarried and she became a big sister. Similarly, my mother and adult siblings assumed the role of parent together, in a demonstration of unity and support during my father's illness and after his death. I began to see myself as caregiver to my younger sibling and nieces. This is one characteristic of a first born child, according to Individual Psychology (Stewart, et. al., 2001; Eckstein, 2000). Similarly, bereaved students today may see themselves in the role of first-born children and take on more responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings, pets. How would this perception affect the student? Would they be under more stress and have symptoms described earlier (sleeplessness, depression, decreased school performance, social issues)? Would they feel pressure to be role models in class? I feel that teachers need to be aware of the student's perception of their place in the family in order to meet any new needs presented in bereavement. In Elizabeth's case, her perception is of an only child.

Because Elizabeth is an only child, her data often revealed that she felt alone, and controlled by her mother. Some attributes of the only child according to Individual Psychology can be a feeling of being controlled or scrutinized by the family, and the desire to become autonomous or independent (Stewart, et.al, 2001; Eckstein, 2000). Elizabeth did feel the

increasing control exerted by her mother up until the time she left home shortly after her father's death.

Elizabeth's data also reveals how she responded to the death of her father. In her life, her reaction was performed quietly, with a touch of introversion. Elizabeth described how she said nothing, and retreated into the background. At home, she withdrew from her mother. At school, she removed herself from participating and socializing with her peers, with whom she felt no common bonds. Her choice was to immerse herself in art; and she described at length her connection to paint, paper, and form. This is another response to bereavement that is found in the literature. After a parent's death, there can be a need to escape, to withdraw. This is not an unusual reaction (Mosak, Brown & Boldt, 1994). This is a choice to communicate with the self, as one tries to "recover...humanity as a function of both reframing and relearning our place in the world, our relationships with others and our relationship with ourselves" (Balk, 2004). Would bereaved students today have a similar need to withdraw?

From my experience in the educational system, I can speculate that bereaved students today would have similar and different reactions to bereavement, and these reactions could include a change in how they perceive their place in the family. Often in my practice, changes in the home life can have an effect on the school life of my students, and bereavement is no exception. The data have allowed me to realize that how

a person perceives their place in the family touches all aspects of their lives, and can play out at school in many ways. It is up to teachers to identify these student perceptions, or changes in these student perceptions, to best meet the needs of students. This can be accomplished through regular communication between teacher and student and between parent, siblings, and child.

When parents and siblings assume some of the responsibilities of a deceased parent, other kinds of communication can result (Corr, 1995). There were varying kinds of communication perceived by Ruth and me from our perspective of our role within the family. In Elizabeth's perception, there was no communication from her mother when she was separated from her father. Although Elizabeth's mother assumed more of the parenting responsibilities when the family moved from Africa and Elizabeth's governess was no longer there, in England, Elizabeth perceived much support from her extended family. Elizabeth relished her extended family in England, and grew particularly close to one cousin. However, that bond soon disappeared because Elizabeth and her mother moved to Canada. Elizabeth reacted with some rebellion, which was against her mother's wishes. Then her father died, and Elizabeth described how she felt no support from her mother, but she did feel her control. Eventually, Elizabeth could not continue living with her mother, and she left home at age seventeen.

In the literature, I found several messages that I assumed were applicable to bereavement experiences. The first message is that families can exist to support their members in the form of words, or actions as in role-modeling between siblings (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt 2001, p. 42). The data reveals how Elizabeth's bereavement experience is contrary to this message. Elizabeth's data reveals that she received no support from her mother when she wanted to visit her father, and she received no support when her father died. After collecting Elizabeth's data, my eyes were opened to an experience similar and different to my own. I questioned whether there are many other families with similar bereavement experiences. Would such a family ever enter into my teaching practice? If so, what would I do to support my student? The second message in the literature is that adult siblings can take on parenting roles for younger siblings (Kandt, 1994) and in this way, adolescents can be protected from stress if other adults assume the function of the lost person (Marwit & Carusa, 1998). Again, Elizabeth's bereavement experience is different from this message. Was Elizabeth protected from stress through her art, rather than through siblings? Who can protect adolescents if there is no one to assume some responsibilities of the lost person? Could teachers fulfill this role? Finally, literature is clear that open communication in families and at school is one necessary ingredient to begin working with bereavement (Noppe & Noppe, 1997; Lowton & Higginson, 2003). I read this final point in

the literature before I collected data. Then, I assumed that there would be some communication in each of my participant's families. For example, communication in Ruth's household was open during the Shiva. However, some data corrected my assumption, when I realized that family communication could also be closed. In fact, communication can be closed long before bereavement, like when Elizabeth was not permitted to speak with her father, or when the details of my father's illness were not discussed. If there is less communication on bereavement in families, and the literature says that communication is necessary, then where can this communication come from? The answer seems to lie with the school system. I will discuss this further in the section on School Experience within this chapter.

Theme Two: Perception of Community

> For Adler, persons must be ultimately understood in social context; it is in relationships that humans have their meaning (Jones & Butman, 1991).

The second theme I use to analyze the data is the attitude that the participants have toward the community inside this study, as well as the community outside this study. This theme connects to the Adlerian theory that supports this study. Theme 2 contains data pertinent to the Style of Life of the participant, as well as other Adlerian tenets described in Appendix A: Social Interest and Community. Adler's Individual Psychology is

a relational psychology (Watts, 2002). People are social beings, and when they become aware that they belong to the same life fabric, they realize that through action to help others they can construct an enduring community. With an Adlerian dimension, people can act in community, and set goals to meet life's challenges. Ruth, Elizabeth and I all have the goal of volunteering our experiences to help adolescents who are working with bereavement. Furthermore, our experiences can be educational for people who are not bereaved. We are socially interested women: the welfare of others is important to us.

> If people have developed the feeling of community..., they are likely to feel a deep belonging to the human race and, as a result, are able to empathize with their fellow humans...At the cognitive level, they can acknowledge the necessary interdependence with others, recognizing that the welfare of any one individual ultimately depends on the welfare of everyone. At the behavioral level, these thoughts and feelings can then be translated into actions aimed at self-development as well as cooperative and helpful movements directed toward others....community encompasses individuals' full development of their capacities, a process that is both personally fulfilling and results in people who have something worthwhile to contribute to one another (Stein and Edwards, Retrieved
>
> August, 2007 from http://ourworld. compuserve.com/homepages

/hstein/qu-comm.htm).

Stemming from Adlerian tenets, Theme 2 connects to the second research question, which asks for specific experiences from the participants. For Ruth and Elizabeth, the message I received is that they were participating to help the community of bereavement outside this study. Ruth wants others to read this study, and appreciate what bereavement is like. Elizabeth wants children to have the tools to heal themselves, and to have human contact at school to work through bereavement. Similarly, I want this study used in practice to help address the needs of bereaved students and non-bereaved students. Bereavement can be explored at school through literature, and music (Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000). Our message also appears in the third research question—to suggest action on the part of educators with the goal of communication, education, and relationship building. The tenets of Social Interest and Community in Individual Psychology support our perceptions of this study, and the third research question.

Theme Three: Bereaved By

In the proposal stage of this thesis, I could not have predicted that all the participants would have experienced the death of a father. This theme contains data that connects to the first and second research questions: *how do the participants tell the story about the death of their parent; what are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants*. Here,

data describes the death of a parent and bereavement experiences. After I examined the literature, I became aware that more adolescents are bereaved by father death than mother death. In fact, the ratio of participants who are bereaved by father death compared to participants who are bereaved by mother death is as high as three to one in some studies (Worden, Davies & McCown 2000; Guitierrez, 1999; Raphael, Cubis, Lewin & Kelly, 1990). In my Representation of Data Interpretation Diagram [Appendix I], I placed the word Father in the overlapping areas of our circles. This indicates our common bereavement experience. The reader should note common means only that the opposite-sex parent died. It does not refer to any details around the death, even though there are similarities between our experiences. For example, it seems that we have all placed our fathers on pedestals. In the data, Ruth said that her father died before she could see him with imperfections. Elizabeth sees her father as a heroic military officer whom she adored. I think of my father as a gentleman, a provider, with an enduring work ethic and unbreakable loyalty.

A question that surfaced in the course of this chapter is why do we place our fathers on pedestals? The notion of placing someone above others can indicate that they are unsullied, and perfect. Based on the data presented, I conclude that our fathers are not perfect. After all, our fathers have their own style of life, and responses to the life tasks. Yet, each of us has idealized our fathers. This is a common reaction to grief found in the

literature (Tuscon Unified School District. Retrieved July, 2007 from http://www.earcos.org /eac2006/download/bowers/TUSDCrisisManual06.pdf). Adler would suggest that an approach to the pedestal issue begins with a study of perception. A person will not perceive given situations as they actually exist, but according to a personal schema of apperception (Adler, 1970a). For the purposes of this study, a schema is a mental structure in which expectations and associations guide the data for experience (Noppe & Noppe, 1997). This is another label for style of life. Therefore, we see the best in our fathers. The schema of apperception is explained in the literature: "We will find that there are no two people who will draw the same conclusion from a similar situation" (Adler, 1927, p.29). Furthermore, "In the event of death, the child's degree of attachment to the deceased person plays a main part" (Adler, 1927, p. 240). According to the data, Ruth, Elizabeth, and I were all strongly attached to our fathers, and this may explain why we have idealized them. All of Bowlby's characteristics of attachment are present in the data: while our fathers were alive, we all had the desire to stay close to them, we would often return to them and we all experience varying degrees of separation anxiety and grief because our fathers are gone (Bowlby, 1980). Our fathers died before we had the natural tendency to pull away from them, and towards our peers, as it happens in adolescence. At school, we could not help but think of them. Did this distract us from our studies, or our peers? Did our

teachers empathize and acknowledge such distraction? Ruth highlighted this point plainly, across our conversations. Elizabeth described wanting to return to her father when she grew old enough. I have always reflected on what it would be like to know my father as an adult. Would bereavement then, somehow enhance our childhood feelings of our fathers? The answer is yes, based on the data and the literature (Bereaved Families of Ontario, 2004b; Marwit & Carusa 1998; Kennedy, 1991).

I believe the idealization of our fathers will continue, as our bereavement ebbs and flows in the future. I also believe this idealization has the function of bringing to the forefront positive memories of our fathers, as demonstrated by the data. Idealization is a coping strategy to help us adjust to life without our fathers, and to make sense of our new place within our families, and the world (Kennedy, 1991). I have often wondered whether these feelings would change in the future. I will revisit this idea of changing attitudes toward our fathers in the next chapter. For now, I will move onto the fourth theme found in the data.

Theme Four: School Experience

> What problems do bereaved teens bring to school?
> (Lowton & Higginson, 2003)

Theme 4 connects to the second and third research questions: *what are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants; what action do the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of*

bereaved students at school. As I begin my interpretation of our adolescent school experiences, I have that same awkward feeling that I described in earlier chapters. For me the adolescent school experience reminds me of my attempts at mattering to my friends and family. I have found a new label for this in the literature. Perceived mattering is the tendency to evaluate the self as significant to specific other people (Marshall, 2001). This is similar to Adler's Striving for Significance, because adolescents must be significant to their peers in order to construct their personal identity, or self definition (Eckstein, 1999). When I think of my adolescent experience, I once again feel the awkwardness of the life tasks: (work and school, intimacy and social relationships). I was constantly being challenged by these three areas and most of the time my adolescent attempts at meeting these tasks were first-time practice-runs.

Ruth and Elizabeth share my feelings within this theme. For all three of us, our school experiences added to our stress. I would even go so far as to conclude that some of our school experiences became obstacles in our griefwork. My intention is to once again highlight our school experiences for educators, who need to understand what did not work for us at school after our fathers died. The notion of community in the Adlerian sense can be a welcome environment for bereaved and non-bereaved students. Educators can foster this community, while they advocate for all students.

The main thing that did not help our bereavement while at school was the lack of communication about our losses. This communication could happen between staff and student, or better, between students using sign systems: music, math, art, drama, literature, science (Andrews, 2005). For the most part, communication was negligible, or cruel. The reader needs to be aware that our school experiences are at least twenty-five years old. Comparing schools of this time and real time can yield similarities and differences. For example, when Ruth's father died at the beginning of exam week, she chose to write a number of exams. She went to school, and perceived that things were normal for everyone but her. Afterwards, no one (schoolteachers or administrators) talked to her about her loss. Another view comes from Elizabeth, who was mocked at school. When she learned of her father's death, she wore a black headscarf to school. Did her peers or teachers ask why she was wearing such a garment? No. Her teachers were delicate with her, and her peers mocked her. In contrast to Ruth and Elizabeth's recollections, I believe that I was somewhat supported at school in the months before and following my father's death. Could this be because I had the most recent school experience, with the benefit of newer practices on bereavement? However, the support left a rather uncomfortable sensation: I often felt alone, and singled out. For example, seeing a counselor in grade five and the Guidance counselor in middle school separated me from my peers. These sessions were in isolation because I was

withdrawn from class. There was no class discussion led by the counselors. A class discussion led by the counselors would have surrounded me by my peer group and I could have shared my experience with my friends in a positive, open environment. Instead, I was angry and alone in my experience. These feelings are supported in the literature.

> Naturally, adolescence is in itself a difficult time, and the added loss of a parent is often too much for such a youngster to endure. They should be listened to and allowed to ventilate their feelings, whether they be guilt, anger, or plain sadness (Kubler-Ross, 1969).

While my last statement about anger and loneliness may seem cynical from the perspective of an eleven-year-old, readers need to understand that anger is a natural response to the death of a parent (Burnette & Fanshawe, 1997; Fanshawe & Burnette, 1991). In the data I found that Ruth, Elizabeth and I all described flashes of anger. Ruth was angry with her teacher who twisted her words and because her school did not acknowledge her father's death. Elizabeth was angry that she was bullied and held back two grades, partly because of the emotions associated with her father's death. I was angry that my friends would not talk to me about my father. We are all angry that the deaths of our fathers were not acknowledged at school. Communication could have softened these flashes for us, because sharing what we were feeling could serve as a kind of release valve for the pressures

we were experiencing. I would even conclude that given an appropriate time and place, Ruth and Elizabeth would have enjoyed communicating their loss in a safe and nurturing environment. The classroom is an ideal place to explore the emotions we felt. Our teachers could have facilitated lessons that focused on emotions to begin a discussion about life tasks (work and school, intimacy and social relationships). For example, an exploration about emotions of literary characters allows the focus to be on the character, rather than the student. This distance from their own emotions could benefit bereaved students. In the literature, enabling holistic learning means to develop the cognitive, social and emotional needs of students (Berger & Pollman, 1996). In a previous chapter, I inserted a reference about the enormous pressure that grieving students are under while at school. I found further support in the literature: few peers feel comfortable in the presence of someone who is bereaved and few non-bereaved peers are willing to talk with bereaved peers (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt 2001, p. 204). We were effectively cut off from our peers because we did not fit in (Perschy, 1997). In my view, the only way to reduce this isolation had to come from the school system, and the staff, because it was not coming from the student body. The intervention by our teachers and administrators would have been a welcome level of support in our bereavement. The following section describes some of the things we want administrators and teacher to do. The literature connects to what support

teachers and administrators can give bereaved students at school (Lowton & Higginson, 2003; Servaty-Seib, Peterson, & Sprang, 2003). Further suggestions for educators can be found in Appendix K (Compassionate Friends, Retrieved August 2007 from www.compassionatefriends.org).

Theme Five: Suggestions for Educators

Theme 5 connects to the third research question: *what action do the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved students at school.* Each participant revealed her recommendations for educators, based on her bereavement experiences. Ruth would like acknowledgement to increase for bereaved students. Elizabeth would like bereaved students to be supported. I would like educators to use the tools at their disposal (holistic education) to ameliorate the experiences of bereaved students. In the literature, there is evidence that school groups are valuable to grieving adolescents, while teachers are important contacts in the bereavement process (Lowton & Higginson, 2003). Bereaved students can receive support from their teachers. It is recommended that the teacher attend the funeral, if possible (Bereaved Families of Ontario, 2004c Retrieved August 18, 2004 from http://www.bfototonto.ca/articles /teacher .asp). Finally, bereaved students can be supported by their teachers, and receive acknowledgement through music. A sample lesson follows, that

connects all students to the emotion of empathy that is necessary to understand bereavement experiences.

The song called "Don't Laugh at Me" (Seskin & Shamblin, 2002) can be used. I first experienced this song at my school in the context of a discussion on bullying, but I feel the meaning of the lyrics also apply to bereavement. The lyrics present a group of characters who want to belong: a boy with glasses, a girl with braces, one beggar on the street. The chorus asks the listener not to laugh at these people, and through the beat, melody and rhythm, the listener can feel what it is like to be these characters. I prefer the recording by Peter, Paul and Mary, because the maturity and style of this group conveys empathy and social justice. When I listen to this song, I can remember how it felt when someone laughed at me. I feel the emotions of the characters in the song. To me, this song sounds like an appeal for help. Educators can play this song and other musical selections to help students connect to the emotion of empathy for the challenges that the characters face. According to Caswell (2005), "...music artistically conveys the emotion necessary to universally connect to the text" (p.5). Students can fully participate in this song by reciting, singing or playing. One idea is to ask students to add another verse that matches the rhyme scheme and melody of the song:

> I'm the girl in your math class, whose Daddy's not
> coming back

When you ask me to talk about him, I can't bear to sing or laugh

He was oh—so—very sick, and then he died one day.

In the literature, songwriting can help students express themselves, and can help teachers communicate ideas and emotions (Cantor, 2006). This lesson example could belong to a Language Arts class, or to a Music class. In my experience, the small community of the classroom provides the safe backdrop to explore empathy.

A school is a perpetual example of community on many levels—both large (whole school) and small (classroom). The head of the school is the administrator, who provides leadership and guidance (Fullan, 2001). I agree with Fullan (2001), who explains how administrators set the tone for the school, ideally, to bring enthusiasm, energy and hope as leaders. The administrator is also responsible for relationship building (Fullan, 2001). These relationships are between staff members, staff and students, students themselves, and the school and community. One of the most important aspects of leadership in my view is being able to recognize the needs of the people in your organization. Principal's Qualification courses have shown me that in the case of a school, administrators need to be aware of the feelings, needs, and concerns of their colleagues and their students. In the literature, this is known as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998).

Administrators can meet the needs of bereaved students and their teachers by actively seeking out professional development in this area, and bringing this development into their schools. One way to accomplish this is to have workshops for teachers during board-wide professional development days. I would like to see administrators servicing their teachers with workshops covering creativity, and integrating the arts into curriculum to address issues like bereavement. The recommendations taken from Oreck (2004) for administrators are:

- Teachers need ongoing support for their own creative and artistic development.
- Professional development aimed at teaching about the impact of the arts on students can be increased.
- Supervisors can organize in-service art workshops.

> "A classroom environment that enhances creativity provides students with choices, accepts different ideas, boosts self-confidence and focuses on students' strengths and interests" (Fleith, 2000).

The example of songwriting given earlier in this chapter is one where creativity was used to open a discussion on emotion, which can be the underlying theme of explorations on bereavement. Such a creative environment gives students and teachers time for creative thinking, acceptance of mistakes, imagining other viewpoints, exploring the environment, and questioning of assumptions (Fleith, 2000). It is time for administrators to make a concerted effort to educate the whole child

(cognitive, social and emotional) by supporting creativity. Creative classrooms and schools foster community.

In the literature, schools are portrayed as the anchors of the community, because of the many creative connections that the school can make with society. In one article, art students connect with the business community. Art students donate their projects to decorate local businesses, while the recipients in turn make a donation to the art department or to a local charity (Andrews, 2005). I believe the school *is* the society, comprised of hundreds of households and families. Within the school, there are individuals who act together toward common goals, and this strengthens the bonds between people. This action occurs ideally, as the teacher-specialist delivers new approaches to curriculum within the classroom, and the students work together to creatively process and problem-solve in subject areas. Another ideal example is when classrooms of students and teachers work together on larger projects. Recently, one school in my board ventured out into the community to participate in a clean up program on Earth Day. Students and staff worked together to beautify our environment. In Individual Psychology, such action fosters a cooperative harmony between individuals and society (Adler, 1970b). Bonds between individuals can be strengthened while a sense of accomplishment can be felt when goals are approached, or realized. Furthermore, my school community connects in a similar way to address issues like death and grief. In another school within

my board, death and grief are a natural part of the faith-based curriculum. School personnel work hard to support people who are grieving, or bereaved. Bereavement and death are issues that are discussed between staff and students in the context of world religion classes, as common life experiences that connect people from all cultures and faiths. There are opportunities to have multi-faith memorials for deceased community members. Acknowledgement of death in accordance with family needs and wishes is given through school events (planting a tree, dedicating a school event, collections for charity, community action). These are all ways to reach out to people in times of need. Sensitivity and allowing families to take the lead can also be paramount, to respect family and cultural practices. It is most important that educators utilize the communities and resources right on their doorsteps, in the face of bereavement and grief.

Theme Six: Feelings about Death

> The disengagement and connection to the deceased is the most taxing of life's challenges. We disengage from the living relationship and engage with the legacy components of the relationship (Boerner & Heckhausen, 2003).

The data shows our feelings about the deaths of our fathers. This theme connects to Bowlbian Attachment theory and Adlerian theory. Our feelings about the deaths of our fathers reveal our attachment to our fathers. Furthermore, feelings about death reveal our Style of Life and how we worked with bereavement as a Life Task. The one common theme that

(re)surfaced in our conversations was that death is a tragedy. I found this bereavement response in the literature (Mosak, Brown & Boldt, 1994), and in the data. We all felt that our fathers were taken from us too soon. This is not a surprising feeling, because we were just beginning our adolescence when our fathers died. For example, I find it unfair that I only have five distinct memories of my father. After these memories, there are no more. I was eleven when he died and this translates into a relatively short life history with him. This feeling is a usual response in bereavement (Mosak, et.al., 1994). I can say that the experience is similar for Ruth and Elizabeth. Ruth had thirteen years with her father, and Elizabeth had eleven, because she was separated from her father years before his death. Ruth, Elizabeth, and I ended one relationship with our fathers: a living relationship (Boerner & Heckhausen, 2003). In our bereavement, we began another kind of relationship with our fathers, which I would like to call a relationship of remembering. In Ruth's relationship with her father, she can read his words in the letter she has saved, or reminisce by singing songs. In Elizabeth's relationship with her father, she can see her father's heroism portrayed in her self-portrait, or recall walks in the woods. In my experience, this new relationship between my father and me continues through music and most recently, on film. About a year ago, I received a DVD of some of my father's home movies. There is one excerpt of my father carrying me around on his

shoulders. This is a rare excerpt, since my father was usually behind the camera.

We have all kept a sense of our fathers in our lives through artifacts. Ruth has a letter from her father, Elizabeth has her father's watch, and I have a picture of my father and his home movies. In Cairns (2001), the author describes the artifacts that women use to anchor and form themselves. Over a period of ten years, more than 100 women were interviewed about the objects they keep. Cairns found that women use treasured objects to give life meaning: "...such objects represented the women's experience of having been known, loved, understood and valued, and she used them to reinforce a sense of personal worth and to affirm the characteristics that others who loved her had most admired....the pattern of treasuring special possessions is widely shared among women" (pp. 3-4). This, according to Tyson-Rawson (1996) is one way to accept the reality of death. Collecting artifacts to help us remember our fathers is another example of a sign system. We have emotional reasons for treasuring these objects (Dittmar, 1991). In the data, these artifacts evoke happy memories for Ruth, Elizabeth and me.

Theme Seven: Sign Systems

> We can devise a better method of promoting learning than by talking, and we can provide more active involvement than listening (Barth, 2001, p.35).

Sign Systems surface within the data connecting to the three research questions: *how to the participants tell the story of the death of their parent; what are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants; what action do the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved students at school.* Although Ruth, Elizabeth, and I were talking and listening during our conversations, I believe the greatest part of our sharing was in the other ways we chose to communicate. Whether it was through Ruth's wonderful courage as she sang "Midnight Special" or Elizabeth's pride while she described "Communal Strength" or even when I purchased "Ode to Music" for my dining room wall, we were learning to communicate in different ways. We were transported to a reality beyond words into sound, colour and beauty. We received a more complete picture of our bereavement, and for me this promoted inspiration and understanding. I connected to how well both the lyrics of Midnight Special and the images in "Communal Strength" suit the topic of bereavement. The lyrics of Midnight Special could be the voice of someone who has just died, and they want their soul to be free. One image of "Communal Strength" is of a woman who is pulling Elizabeth upwards, like a guardian angel. Both perspectives are rooted in my Catholic beliefs in the afterlife. Readers may have perspectives suited to their own style of life. On the day when I reflected on our sign systems, I hurried home after our sharing, and wrote a poem in my journal:

I didn't think I would ever find

a man as nurturing as my father, mine.

Whose memory continues to erode with time.

Standing so tall and straight

Teaching me never to be late

He was taken too close to the gate.

Feet planted firmly on the bathroom floor

Hair slicked back with a dob of Score

Brut or Old Spice wafting out the door.

Life partner to my mother, mine.

For whom I have built a shrine.

One day we will be united.

The different forms of our sign systems become new languages through which we explore our emotional reaction to difficult situations (Klass, Silverman & Nickman, 1996). These forms are reflected in the literature: painting (Predeger, 1996), singing (Caswell, 2005), playing (Ansdell, 2002), and poetry (Lowe, 2006). Alfred Adler would say that we choose these forms because they belong to the whole of who we are as individuals, and they add to the community to which we are inextricably linked (Adler, 1970a). I feel excited and hopeful when I think about the implications of sign systems for bereaved adolescents in the classroom.

The literature is clear that bereaved adolescents need to express their emotions in ways that meet their needs (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe & Schutt, 2001), but they are sometimes reluctant to do so (DeMinco, 1995). This can be facilitated in the classroom setting with methods found in the literature (Fuhler, Farris & Nelson, 2006). Using the example of "Don't Laugh at Me" already presented, I put on my teacher hat to plan another lesson on emotions. I would like to take the reader into my classroom at this time. What if there were a huge canvas at the front of the classroom, and a life-size outline of a person took up the whole space? The "person" represents one character from the song, which students have already sung in class and before assemblies. Some students have memorized the text. I would allow students to choose the persona of the character, or use a real person that connects to current events or subject areas. I want to make the character as relevant as possible for my students (Andrews, 2005). Since I am not an expert artist, I would use the downloadable clip-art available from Microsoft. Printing a suitable example onto a transparency would allow me to project it onto the wall, trace first in pencil, and then use black paint to give the silhouette depth. In groups, students would be asked to write, draw, or symbolize the characteristics of this "person." Leading questions for the students are what is this person thinking, what is this person feeling, what about this person is important and why, finally, how can you help this person? The end result could look like the example provided in Appendix R.

The text boxes display hypothetical student responses, based on my experience with similar activities.

In providing the above activity, I would like to reach out to readers who are aware of the benefits of integrating creative activities into their lessons. Creative approaches within lessons do have a purpose, and that is to nurture the cognitive, social, and emotional development of the student. I have seen so many colleagues who need more confidence in their ability to inject creativity into lessons. At the same time, the fresh, creative approaches of some of my colleagues have made *me* want to be in their classes! I believe we can all learn from each other, ideally to ensure that our students are enjoying our lessons.

> When teachers are aware of and can engage their students in appreciation and exploration of experience in the world around us: form and shape, dynamics and colour, feelings and communication, they can find artistic experience in virtually any topic or subject area (Oreck, 2004, p. 56).

Other sign systems provide the means of expression that people can use to work with their bereavement. For example, poetry can promote emotional healing and personal growth, lend insight, and illuminate difficult situations needing problem solving (Mohr, 2006; Anderson, Kopp, & Maniacci 1999). When I wrote the poem about my father, presented earlier, I remembered how he would dab some of his after shave on me as I sat upon

the counter. I couldn't have been more than five or six. I wonder whether the readers of this thesis can identify with my poem. Sign systems open up possibilities for all students, and are resources for anyone who has contact with all students. In responding to the creative work of their students, teachers can talk with students about their work, and collaborate with colleagues to design creative activities that address issues like those already presented.

Summary

Chapter Five has taken readers through some of the data for this study. The data are organized into the form of a string instrument trio: with a Prelude, and Movements. This structure takes the reader on three separate journeys before and during bereavement. Some participant reconstructions of life events are included here, to support the purpose of this study and demonstrate connections to the research questions. The participants' data were arranged in seven themes: Prelude, Before Bereavement, Bereaved By, Feelings About Death, Sign Systems, Perception of Study, and Three Wishes. Pertinent data was included as my response to their realities (Fetterman, 1998). My arrangement sometimes felt like I was orchestrating the data—placing text in a specific way in a specific time and place in this chapter. In this way, I see the data like lines of music. I sought to answer the question why do members do what they do (Fetterman, 1998).

At the end of this chapter, I placed the data within several layers of interpretation, also with themes: Biographical Information (Family Constellation), Perception of Study, Bereaved By, School Experience, Suggestions for Educators, Feelings about Death, and Sign Systems. Part of my interpretation was to connect the data to school practice. Examples for teachers and administrators are included to illuminate the need for creativity when approaching lesson planning and professional development. The visual representation of my interpretation of the data is found in Appendix I. The underlying Adlerian and Bowlbian framework framed the course of my interpretation. In my words, I reviewed tenets from Individual Psychology and Attachment Theory. I situated the data in the following tenets: style of life, social interest, goal directedness, factors that effect style of life (family constellation), community, and attachment. While the data was organized within this framework, the themes were linked to the three research questions.

Looking back on this chapter, I see the many similarities that Ruth, Elizabeth, and I share within each theme. We are all well-educated women. We all are bereaved by the deaths of our fathers; we are all willing to discuss our bereavement, and this shows courage. However, these similarities are easy to find and explore. What I find more of a challenge is to search for our differences, and illuminate them. The literature is clear that reporting on differences between the researcher and participants poses

a unique challenge for the researcher (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Creswell, 1998). I have included some observations between us in a cross case analysis. In the next chapter, the conclusion of this study unfolds, beginning with a review of the study and the responses to the research questions.

CHAPTER SIX: REVIEW, RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reviews the present study and includes responses to the three research questions. References to the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 are included, as one basis for themes that are extensions of the research questions. My response to the present study will describe how conducting this study has changed me. Contributions to theory and recommendations for practice in the form of a visual (musical) representation are included. Areas for further research are followed by the conclusion of this study.

Review of the Study

This qualitative autobiography illuminated the school experiences of three adults who were bereaved by the deaths of their fathers in adolescence. In three interviews per participant, these experiences emerged using a semi-structured format (Seidman, 2006). Each participant interview was shaped using one of the three research questions. These are:

How do the participants tell the story of the death of their parent?

What are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants?

What action do the participants recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved individuals at school?

In this study, the primary source of data was six interviews between Ruth and Elizabeth. For data that belong with my bereavement story, the sources were my journal notes, reflections and responses during the data collection period (Spring-Summer, 2006). A secondary source of data was an Elegy, song lyrics, a letter, two oil paintings, report cards and email correspondence.

The primary data source provided me with about 400 pages of reconstructions of life experiences before, during, and after bereavement. These experiences occur in multiple locales, with school being the location pertinent to this study. The next section of this chapter responds to each research question and connects to the literature and data from Chapter 3, and Chapter 5 of this thesis. Following the response to the research question, the emergent themes that match the research question are explored. The following themes belong to the responses to the research questions only. They are separate from previous themes stated, because they emerged after data were collected and analyzed.

Research Question One:

How do the participants tell the story of the death of their parent?

One focus of this study has been to explore how adults tell their bereavement stories. The data demonstrates how three adults tell the story of the death of their parent. Many examples were included to illustrate

three stories of bereavement. Why do people do what they do in bereavement? In the data, we see that bereavement can sometimes be messy, and other times bereavement can be a joyous mélange of memories. The reader needs to know that bereavement can move between these extremes, and can include these extremes (Steeves, 2002). Furthermore, bereavement experiences are particular to every individual, and no two people will have the same response to bereavement (Adler, 1930). For Ruth, Elizabeth and me, our bereavement stories are told in unique and beautiful ways.

Bereavement Stories Using Sign Systems

One medium to express the deaths of our fathers has been a sign system. I conclude that the sign system we choose fits best with our style of life, while more than one sign system can be used by a person (Paul, 2006). Furthermore, sign systems can deliver the meaning behind our bereavement to foster understanding in others. [Sign systems] "...are human-invented tools that we use to reinterpret meaning, to express felt meaning, and to construct new meaning" (Youngquist & Pataray-Ching, 2004). For example, Ruth was hesitant about the whole concept of sign systems, I think because "creative dance" as an example of a sign system appeared in my call for participants. Despite her hesitation, Ruth sang to me halfway through the third interview with a spontaneity that refreshed me. As a music teacher, I encounter many adults who are quick to say that they cannot sing. In the

literature, confidence with creativity is one challenge for educators in planning lessons (Oreck, 2004). Therefore, when Ruth offered to sing, I realized that she had broken through her hesitation and would take a risk in her bereavement journey. I wondered whether the happy memories the song evoked gave her the courage to sing. Ruth went from using words to express the death of her father, to using words in song, which I call an embellishment to her bereavement melody. This progress, in Adler's Individual Psychology is the path towards mastery or superiority—to belong and feel worthy (Pearson & Wilborn, 1995). Ruth had control over her bereavement story because she was the author. In the data, Ruth described how she went home and proudly discussed her participation in this study with family and friends. Ruth included the realization that others go through bereavement too, and that her response was similar to other grief responses. By the third interview, I believe Ruth mastered her story, through the practice the interviews gave her. Ruth was hesitant, and then she sang and smiled with courage.

Ruth's choice of "Midnight Special" made her bereavement story clearer and more focused for me. Ruth was speaking to me through music: an affective language that I believe is universal. I connected with an image of Ruth and her father singing together. It was more powerful than words, transcripts or stories, because the image was spontaneous, emergent and unconfined. Instead of just hearing her story as narrative, and touching her

story under my transcript-typing fingers, I began to feel her story through the melody, beat and rhythm of the song. In fact, whenever I hear John Fogherty sing "Midnight Special" I will always think of Ruth. I think Ruth has inherited her father's joy of singing. With Elizabeth, sign systems were just as forthcoming. For some, using sign systems can be a large part of expression and communication.

> Like snapshots, the pictures capture sensory modes like sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch in a way that language cannot; they infer the moods, sentiments, relationships and interactions that are imbedded and diffused across many different literacy contexts
> (Kendricks & McKay, 2004, pp. 123-124).

Elizabeth is an artist who was more than eager to present one of her pieces for the purposes of this study. Right away, at the start of the second interview, she was offering to run out to her van to retrieve "Communal Strength" and show it to me. Her eagerness was transparent, and I had to request that we wait. The truth was that I was a little worried: the sky was threatening to pour, and I didn't want her portrait soaked! The conversation that followed was an art lesson, and I gobbled up all the morsels that Elizabeth had to offer. She was filling my mind with all the richness that Visual Arts has to offer the human psyche (Anderson, Knopp & Maniacci, 1999). Although we were still speaking affectively, and appealing to all of

our senses, talk of visual arts is a little farther from my musical forte, and so, I felt hesitant and out of my comfort zone. I would so appreciate regular professional development to boost my confidence with the visual arts. While I was absorbing Elizabeth's art expertise, I reflected that I might be feeling some of the hesitation that Ruth felt before she chose to sing. However, in seeing "Communal Strength", and hearing the artist herself describe its meaning, I was a bundle of questions and I felt like Elizabeth's bereavement story was right there for me, in that self-portrait. When Elizabeth's path in bereavement began, she explained how she was weak and incomplete: she could not see her father, her mother controlled her, and she had no other family to support her. She withdrew from participating at school. In her bereavement journey, I found strength and completeness, as portrayed in the heroism of "Communal Strength." Elizabeth did for herself what she wants children to do today: to heal themselves. Similar movement on a person's potential for improvement can be found in the literature on Alfred Adler's practice of clinical psychology. In one article, Adler's therapeutic style is described (Wood, 2003). According to the author, "Adler regarded all people as capable of creating and solving their problems through their own inventiveness. Adler empowered his patients by placing responsibility on them to reduce their pathology" (Wood, p. 288). For the purposes of this study, there is an emphasis on creativity to reduce a person's problems. Creativity can be accomplished with the use of sign systems.

The power of sign systems is at the forefront of the literature on bereavement, counseling, and especially education today. Literature on holistic education (Berger & Pollman, 1996) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) has opened the discussion about the different strengths and needs of students. My intention is to add to such literature with this study, so that different ways to make meaning of life and death are illuminated. There is no question in my mind that human beings can use sign systems as purpose-filling ways to strive for significance in this world (Wood, 2003). I feel very strongly that sign systems belong in teaching practice to embrace individual uniqueness, and to give students the opportunity to communicate in more than words (Michel, 1999).

Through music, poetry, and visual arts, teachers can model creation for their students, and perhaps evoke a response in them. Teachers and students can be witnesses to creativity, and regardless of their faith, language, or style of life, they can respond to what they experience. I see the teacher-student relationship as antiphonal: there is a call followed by a response (Grout, Palisca & Burkholder, 2005). Similarly, Faure's Elegie in e Minor is highlighted in this study to evoke a response in readers. What is the reader's response to this classical example of a funerary dirge? Do they become quiet, cry, or marvel at the amplitude of the pitches? One response is that Faure's Elegie sounds like grief. What would students do when they hear the notes? I could use Faure's melody creatively in the classroom. With

my cello at the front of the room, I could show my students where to place the bow, and what bow stroke to use. Students enjoy when I pass my bow around and they can touch the horsehair, silver, and wood. I could display the kinds of notes in a lesson about note placement on a musical staff. And all during the lesson, the deeper meaning of this Elegie would reverberate in my head. I can see my father's face when I play; his glasses helping him to see the almanac.

Like Ruth and Elizabeth, I use sign systems in my bereavement. Although I enjoy the classical genre, with my favourite contributors like Bach and Beethoven, I also enjoy gospel, jazz, and rock. I choose these genres and the vast repertoire inside to reflect my own style of life. I play different selections depending on my mood, or whimsy. I don't think I can count the pieces I have played, because my journey with music has a long history that nearly spans my lifetime. I don't think I can count the hours that I have spent practicing, either. For me—music is always there, when I need to play, sing, or listen. There is a whole branch of music devoted to wellness, called music therapy. One can listen to music as a means to increase wellness (Dalton & Krout, 2005). In times of stress, my musical appetite for the cello increases.

In the data, I included the first moments when I selected the cello as my instrument. I included recollections from Concert Choir in high school, and enrichment strings class. I included the prominence of music in my

family, and the value that I place on music as an elementary teaching subject. For me—music cannot be separated from my story of bereavement. Music fills in all the gaps of my autobiography, and it permeates the fabric of my life. I believe that music is one way I explore my bereavement. For some, alternate means of communication have benefits.

Taking Sign Systems into the Classroom

In practice, I can envision that sign systems are incorporated into the curriculum at school. One way to take sign systems into the classroom is to show teachers how to use them. This is beginning to be realized with pre-service teachers in some studies (Richards, 2005). In Richards' study, forty-two pre-service teachers were asked to incorporate sign systems into their lesson plans. Richards' found some success, in that the idea of sign systems as multiple ways of knowing was explored. The next step is to show experienced teachers and teacher-mentors how to incorporate sign systems into their practice. Administrators can begin by scheduling workshops with experts on creativity integration to boost teacher confidence in their own creative skills. I suggest that experienced teachers who use creative approaches in their practice begin with what Paul (2006) calls traditional literacy. Children's books can be the vehicle to explore issues like bereavement. This strategy is being practiced in my school board.

What is starting to happen in the elementary grades is the reading of children's books to explore meaning in *all* subject areas. In the past,

children's books were thought to be suited to early primary students (up to grade three). Now, children's books are being read to all elementary children. This means grade one teachers and grade eight teachers may use the same book in their lessons. In my experience, students sit intently to hear the wonderful accounts bestowed by authors from all disciplines. The readings are followed by activities that target multiple literacies: art, movement, music, language, science. One activity will be explained next, based on a popular book called The Cello of Mr. O (Cutler, 1999, please see Appendix M). This narrative fiction delivers a powerful message about death and bereavement.

From the perspective of a young girl in a war torn country, emotions are the focus. The girl describes how she is afraid, lonely for her father, hungry and in need of courage to endure the devastation all around her. The girl discovers that when Mr. O plays his cello, "...the music of the cello makes us feel less angry. And the courage of the cellist makes us feel less afraid (Cutler, 1999). I have explored this book with the use of a particular artifact from the Canadian War Museum (see Appendix N). The particular artifact is a ration tin given to me by a Naval cadet at the Canadian War Museum. According to veterans I met while at the museum, this tin was issued by the Canadian government for our troops during World War 2. It's contents then, are over 60 years old. The tin was opened by the cadet at the museum, so its contents are visible. The characters in The Cello of Mr.

O received rations every Wednesday at 4 o'clock, so this artifact fits into the story. Artifacts can allow students to experience the emotions of the main characters. Exploring characters and their emotions can give students insight into their own emotions. This approach has been used by Fuhler, Farris & Nelson (2006).

One Remembrance Day Lesson

One example of how to facilitate the lesson is as follows, suitable for a grade four class. Place the ration tin (or available artifacts) into separate paper bags at the front of the room. Other artifacts that fit into the story are also helpful: a jagged piece of rock, a broken toy, an old music book and an old black and white photograph. I make sure the artifacts are as diverse as possible and I keep in mind the interests of my students when choosing artifacts (one student may enjoy photography, while another student my have a collection of dolls). In my practice, I have enough artifacts to match the number of desk groupings in my classroom, plus a few extras. The students are not to see the artifacts, so I do this prior to the lesson. When students arrive, they will be interested in the bags. Tell students that the bags will help us talk about a very special book. The bags become "surprises" for group discussion to intrigue students. The students and I then move to a carpeted area of my classroom. It's a more intimate setting because students are free to sit anywhere on the floor, and they can curl up with large pillows or stuffed cats. When all students are settled, I read the

title aloud, and I give particular attention to the author and the illustrator. I usually make a comment about the cover, asking for predictions about the story. I repeat each prediction and connect the predictions to something about the cover. When all predictions have been taken, I read the book, allowing a lot of time for students to see the pictures.

Through handling, classifying and labeling each artifact, the students can make a connection between the artifact significance in their own lives and in the lives of the characters in the novel. This is one way to introduce and explore bereavement. An example worksheet for students is found in Appendix O to match this activity.

Theme One: The Benefits of Exploring Bereavement

A theme that surfaced as an extension of the first research question concerns the sharing of bereavement with others. Are there any benefits in reaching out to others when one is bereaved? My response to this theme is based upon the literature and the data for this study. I believe the participants benefited from exploring their bereavement. The benefits of exploring bereavement can be found in the literature (Lowton & Higginson, 2003; Noppe, & Noppe, 1997; Hunter, 1997). Sharing can be griefwork, sharing can foster community, and sharing can be a lifestyle choice. Peer support groups, bereavement organizations, church groups, family, and friends are available to help people who are working with life tasks like bereavement. The data shows how the participants explored bereavement

with others. Ruth would reach out to her family. Elizabeth would reach out to her friends when she left home. I would reach out to my family and religion. We would explore our bereavement in ways that matched our style of life. In Individual Psychology, sharing grief with others is an example of "...forming attachments and human bonding. The striving of the human is always in some way connected with bonding. Social interest is the expression of this tendency in a way that promotes human welfare" (Schulman, 1985). Perhaps our bonding in this study also gave us the opportunity to remember, reflect on, and celebrate our stories of bereavement. Although the involvement in this study is another way to work with bereavement, perhaps our community will extend to readers who can relate to our stories. In practice, this bonding can be reproduced with other individuals who are bereaved and non-bereaved.

Perhaps a discussion about bereavement that is age appropriate in the classroom that begins with a storybook, a song, a picture, and ends with an activity to increase empathy about people who are bereaved, can open up the topic of bereavement. In the literature, reading about someone else can develop social interest from an Adlerian perspective (Jackson, 2001). "The problems in life demand capacity...for co-operation, and preparation for it, the visible sign of social feeling" (Adler, 1929). Like coins tossed into a fountain, people can contribute morsels for others to appreciate. However,

there is another side to each coin. Each coin that falls has two faces—one that is revealed, and one that is hidden from view.

Theme Two: The Benefits of Not Sharing Bereavement Stories

Although revealing bereavement stories was the choice of three participants in this study, *not* revealing bereavement stories can be the choice of some readers, and even a participant in this study. Another theme that is an extension of the first research question is the benefits of not sharing bereavement stories. Some respond to bereavement by withdrawing. Introversion has been mentioned as a common way to adjust to bereavement. In this study, one participant dropped out of this study after the consent form was signed and the first interview was completed. For this individual, the choice not to share his bereavement story was made. It may not have been the right time, or the right method to explore bereavement for him. I have been reflecting on this concept while this study unfolds. How many others choose not to share their bereavement stories? In my research on Individual Psychology, it became clear that the individual has his or her own way of seeing the world, and making meaning in the world (Adler, 1970a). Furthermore, individuals make choices in life that reflect their style of life. For some, not sharing their bereavement can be one choice at some time in their lives. I agree that the decision to share bereavement stories is ultimately the individual's choice, and this study is not asking readers to share their bereavement experiences, nor is this study

telling others to share. Instead, this study demonstrates that people can work with their bereavement using one or more sign systems comfortable for them.

Research Question Two

What are the past and present bereavement experiences of the participants?

Some past and present bereavement experiences of the participants are included in Chapter 5 of this thesis. For the most part, the experiences occur at school, and are from the past lives of the participants. For the purposes of this thesis, readers need to be aware that these experiences are continually expanding (and aging) with the passage of time. Every participant has been bereaved for a certain length of time. Ruth's experience spans a time-period of about 30 years, while Elizabeth's experience spans about 50 years. My experience spans about 25 years. Altogether, our bereavement history totals more than a century. I made this calculation to illustrate the breadth of our history and to show the reader that we have spent the majority of our living years in bereavement. For every experience, there is something going on inside of us, and there is something going on outside of us. Two themes called external responses to bereavement and internal responses to bereavement are discussed in the next two sections. A simple explanation of these themes follows, and how they are connected.

Theme One: External Responses to Bereavement

One example of an external response is how people behave after they learn that a person is grieving. Sympathy, mockery, and silence were demonstrated in the data. For example, in the early days of bereavement, Ruth met with silence at school; Elizabeth met with mockery at school, while I met silence from my peers and some sympathy from my teachers. These responses sometimes made our relationships with other people stressful. Individual Psychology tells us that external responses are as numerous as the individuals that touch our lives: from a close friend at school to an acquaintance at church (Adler, 1970). Individual Psychology also tells us that all people are connected in cooperative harmony (Adler, 1970a). Using this framework, I wondered if external responses could reflect the state of harmony or attachment between people. For example, if this harmony is strong, is there sympathy, acknowledgement and patience for the bereaved person? If this harmony is weak, is there mockery, ambivalence, and indifference for the bereaved person? Based on the data, I believe that strong connections, or harmony, between people can result in mutually beneficial external responses: if I live in harmony with a colleague, a teacher, a friend, our connection can help us both in our life tasks. This is known as resilience because of social embeddedness in Individual Psychology (Strauch, 2001). Weaker connections between people can reduce mutually beneficial responses: if I have less of a connection to a colleague, a teacher,

a friend, our connection may not help us in our life tasks. For example, the participants sometimes felt little connection to their peers at school. Despite all the negative external responses to our bereavement, Elizabeth, Ruth and I were in control of how these affected our lives, and this is supported in the literature:

> [People are] capable of turning negative into positive. [We] may be found either on the negative or on the positive side of life as a result of the choice [we] make out of all the possibilities
> (De Vries, 1951).

More thought on the concept of different responses to bereavement caused me to realize that people can respond in many ways to bereavement: positively, negatively, or somewhere in between, depending on how the response is perceived by a person. When a person is looking for meaning in an experience, they can filter the information they receive (Gilbert, 2002). What one person perceives as negative, another person can perceive as less negative, or even positive. Furthermore, external responses can vary, depending on what other challenges people are facing, and how they are meeting these challenges externally and internally.

Theme Two: Internal Responses to Bereavement

In this study, some of the internal responses of the participants to bereavement have been included in the data. For example, Ruth, Elizabeth, and I described what bereavement felt like at school. Perhaps our recollections of bereavement can evoke a response in others. Our narratives are evolutionary representations of bereavement that are part of a continually evolving sketchbook of memories (Cortazzi, 1993/2002; Sandelowski, 1991). These stories can place the reader in the experience of bereavement, and may show them what bereavement feels like. If readers know what bereavement feels like, would their response to bereavement change?

What are their internal responses? These responses are rooted in the style of life of the individual, in their schema of apperception, and in their type of attachment with the grieving person (Bowlby, 1980). Are their responses similar to the responses we experienced at school? If so, then how can this study inform responses?

Because we want to help others with bereavement, in retrospect we suggested responses we would have preferred from our teachers and peers. These responses are: acknowledgement, communication and support. The third research question was designed to illuminate unwelcome responses to bereavement, and to suggest alternative responses for educators today.

Some of theses responses were positive, from my perspective. I turn now to the third research question, and its extended themes.

Research Question Three

What action do bereaved individuals recommend for educators to meet the needs of bereaved students at school?

The participants made recommendations for teachers and administrators to work with bereavement. The recommendations are to creatively communicate about bereavement on a small (classroom) or large (whole school) basis, to have professional development workshops that show teachers how to accomplish this creative communication, and to give students opportunities to find their own ways to work with bereavement (sign systems). If a student is bereaved, the teacher may be able to attend the funeral, a counselor or support worker can follow up periodically with the family, and teachers can open up discussion about bereavement in the classroom while respecting the wishes of the family. Finally, no-tolerance policies can be practiced for any kind of teasing of the bereaved student. An explanation of the extension themes of the third research question follows, in the context of schools.

Theme One: Meet the Needs of All Students

Meeting needs is a catch phrase in many fields of employment and education today. Employers must meet the needs of their employees, and

teachers must meet the needs of their students. In an ideal world, everyone's needs would be met but in reality, we sometimes fall short. The data shows examples of shortfalls in the experiences of three bereaved teens. The school community in ways we would have liked did not acknowledge our fathers' deaths. We think students and educators were not given ways to communicate with us about our loss. Communication about our fathers and acknowledgement of their deaths are examples of specific needs that can surpass all other needs surrounding the moment of bereavement and for many years afterwards
Servaty-Seibtt, Peterson, & Spang, 2003). One way to help with communication is to have procedures in place to address crises at school.

Fortunately, it seems that professional development programs to help educators explore bereavement and death are making their way into some schools. In the United States and Canada, the arts have been included in pre-service teacher training in the last decade (Oreck, 2004). Recently, summer institutes on the importance of the arts in curriculum have been offered by one provincial union. This is good news, and I would even call it progress, because these offerings represent additional support for educators and bereaved students to communicate. Communication is paramount if there is to be support of students at school (Howard & Medway, 2004). Here, I include data that makes recommendations in this regard. Elizabeth would like children to experience their grief in a safe, nurturing place, while

she recommends that children receive the human contact they need. This study contains information on how to provide these opportunities for students (songwriting, poetry, music, visual arts). The second theme that extends from the third research question is the availability of resources for bereaved students.

Theme Two: Resource Availability for New Kinds of Professional Development

As an elementary educator, I am aware of the state of resource availability in schools today. I would like to familiarize the reader with my own experiences pertinent to this extended theme of the third research question. Monies from the provincial government trickle down to school boards based on enrollment and specialized needs (April, 2007 from http://www.edu.gov.on. ca/eng/policyfunding/funding.html. These funds in turn reach principals, who spend them on items that ameliorate the ability of the teacher-specialist to deliver curriculum. For example, in any given year, I may receive textbooks, paper, notebooks, and the like for each student in my class. I supplement these resources with my personal collection and use my own money to fill gaps in resources. My school board also runs workshops for teachers and administrators on areas of need for our school. In the last year, I have attended school board workshops regarding writing, reading, mathematics, and evaluation. These are some of the methods that benefit students and staff. However, there are areas of

professional development that are neglected and in light of recent events and the data of this thesis, these areas need to be addressed. By *recent events*, I am referring to the deaths of 32 staff and students at an American school (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2007). One of these areas is in the subject of sociometry.

Sociometry by definition is the study of relationships within a group of people (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). When I was attending Teacher's College, we discussed how courses on sociometry used to be offered to teachers in one Canadian province. My colleagues and I soon learned that these courses have been phased out, and are virtually non-existent at the elementary level. In my present practice, I have completed professional development in *subject* matter: science, math, English and more. Where are the courses that focus on *people*?

To explore this theme further, I reflected on my own development in Principal's Qualification programs. There, many topics were covered over two parts. We did have instruction that I would call sociometric, in that we were learning about staffing and the relationships between departments. We used role-play often to demonstrate various stakeholders within a school. For example, I remember playing the role of Principal at a mock Parent Council meeting. This was certainly a creative approach, however, I would have liked to explore more on the interpersonal relationships within a school. I feel this area of professional development can be the entry point

where teachers can learn about issues like bereavement in their students. Another area of professional development that is neglected is the Arts.

Theme Three: Resource Availability for the Arts

> The arts are part of an extended repertoire of teaching techniques to promote active creative teaching and learning (Oreck, 2004).
>
> You don't have to be an artist, musician or dancer to facilitate arts-based learning (Cantor, 2006).

Dance, Music, Visual Arts and Drama are all subjects in the curricular documents of one Canadian province (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). In my experience as a music teacher, these curriculum areas provide an opportunity for students to express themselves in alternative ways. Although some view the Arts as fringe subjects, meaning that they are not part of "real learning" these are sign systems, and they cultivate student talent and creativity. With the continuing developments in the literature and practice on sign systems, multiple intelligences, whole language, and others, the Arts are increasingly regarded as an essential means to enrich student and educator experiences at school (Dunn-Snow & D'Amelio, 2000; Eisner, 1998). I believe the Arts can be incorporated into all professional development, especially at the elementary level. I have suggested several creative approaches that facilitate topics like empathy and bereavement. With increased exposure beginning with professional development for pre-service and practicing teachers and administrators, the comfort with these

subjects for staff can increase. Resources for these fields are essential, to enable rich and full communication for students and staff.

A Word of Caution for Readers

Responding to the research questions at this time suggests that the issues raised about adolescent bereavement have been resolved. I do not agree with this assumption, and I caution the reader about making this assumption. In fact, the answers Ruth, Elizabeth and I provided as well as the practical suggestions for creative lessons stand as they are for a brief moment in time, and will change and evolve constantly, even after this study is written and published. This is another example of the continuously evolving nature of qualitative autobiography (Sandelowski, 1991) and teaching practice (Marshall, 2005). Furthermore, I fully expect that I will have more layers of interpretation of any aspect of this study in the time to come, and I predict that I may one day regret not having the opportunity to make just one last addition, one last note or two. Some may consider the emergent nature of this study as one of its limitations.

Limitations of This Study

There are several aspects of this study that can be perceived as limitations. The first is the emotional, subjective connection that my participants and I have with the topic of bereavement. In the course of this project, this limitation has come from *outside* my study, in the way some

view bereavement. I am still uncertain as to why emotional responses could be limitations in this study. I do not believe that *feeling* bereavement through this study is an indictment for the participants and readers. Rather, I acknowledge that an intense emotional connection has repeatedly revealed itself in the text, and it has *enhanced* this study. I have frequently had to think and respond emotionally to the data. This kind of response is ignored or treated with suspicion according to Crawford (2005). I do not understand why emotion needs to be removed from research.

> Not to be able to feel, say (sic) a human relationship, is to miss what may very well be its most critical feature....in failing to experience the emotion of such moments, we miss out on an aspect of life that has the potential to inform (Eisner, 1998, pp. 80-81).

For example, the text resonates within me, and my response in turn influences how I interpret the data (Creswell, 2002). Similarly, Ruth and Elizabeth responded emotionally to the transcripts, and this has contributed to the data they shared in the following interview. In this way, my research is enriched by the values and biases of the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), which cannot be eliminated, so I used member checks as a means of verifying the data I collected. Our emotions are an integral part of our narratives. They part of our affective selves.

Another limitation for me is time constraints, which I have been quite aware of throughout this project. I am writing this thesis at the end of my

degree program, and I had to ask for an extension for reasons beyond my control. Time has put pressure on me to produce copious amounts of material, and endless revisions. In truth, the amount I produced was a new experience for me. I had no idea of the number of editions and revisions that were necessary until I was mired in them. I realize that my experience is not different from any other researcher, because we all have deadlines to meet, and submissions to make. However, as part of my story, this pressure was emotionally draining, which Seidman (2006) and Rager (2005) warned me about. "Progress in acknowledging the role of emotions as critical to the qualitative research process has not resulted in significant attention to recommendations for dealing with these emotions" (Rager, 2005, p.24). I have chosen to work with this pressure, using relaxation strategies that work for me, to meet the expectations of this qualitative autobiography. I take great pride in my abilities in this regard.

A third limitation can be that the data are resonant only to the participants. Everyone's grief melody is different (Kubler-Ross, 1969); therefore, I do not expect that the data of this study are transferable to other bereaved readers. However, I do expect that the data will be applicable to all who are suffering through grief. Readers may be able to identify with some aspect of the data or with current teaching and learning practices in this study.

Part of the third limitation of this study can be that the participants are all women who have lost their fathers at least twenty-five years ago. Although the sampling was not gendered on purpose, I do acknowledge that this study presents bereavement perspectives only from women who have lost the opposite-gender parent. I acknowledge that having a mixed-gender sample could enhance the transferability of this study to sons who have lost their mothers, sons who have lost their fathers, daughters who have lost their mothers, and so forth. Furthermore, there is a *dual-generational gap* that exists firstly between the three participant experiences, and secondly between participant experiences and the experiences of bereaved adolescents today. The participants belong to three different generations, and this was valuable within the study because it helped to create dialogue about bereavement. The perceptions of our experiences are far more important than the *dual-generational gap*. In Individual Psychology, "...early recollections can be used to open communication about perceptions of events and the meaning each person gives to them" (Dinkmeyer & Nims, 1995, p. 409). In Dinkmeyer and Nims' study, communication increased when family members were asked to collect early recollections from two different generations within their family (Dinkmeyer & Nims, 1995). The authors concluded that there was a consistency in social and emotional patterns revealed in the early recollections across generations (p. 408). In my study, the data show some consistency between the stories of multi-

generational participants. I suggest that there would be similar consistency between participant experiences and the experiences of bereaved adolescents today. For example, the retrospective perceptions of the participants are relevant to bereaved adolescents today because they deal with the same topic: bereavement. The revelation of their stories, regardless of how old, becomes a launching point for collaboration or commonality between the participants and adolescents today. Their stories are worthwhile because adolescents today need to know they are not alone in their grief, and they can have permission to share their stories. Dinkmeyer and Nim's technique could help educators in bridging generational gaps in bereavement, for the purposes of understanding different individuals. This brings us back to the purpose of my study.

My Purpose Revisited

The dual purpose of this study is to make meaning of the life experiences of adults who were bereaved in adolescence, and to make a contribution to the literature on bereavement. I believe I have succeeded in the first part of this endeavour—to make meaning of experiences—through storytelling and sign systems. I have come to understand the experiences of Ruth and Elizabeth, through narrative and sign systems, which in turn has brought me closer to understanding my own story. This is not to say that I haven't any more questions about our stories, because indeed I do. Some parts are still unclear to me. At the same time, there are parts of my own

story that have been clarified because I had the opportunity to (re)visit the experience with Ruth and Elizabeth. I have shown that this is also true for Ruth and Elizabeth, this clarification of long ago events. Recounting our narratives is one way to make sense of our experiences (Seidman, 2006). We made sense of our bereavement together, if only for a brief moment. Ruth, Elizabeth and I have developed what Adler would call *social interest:* we became interested in the stories of others.

The second side of my purpose is to contribute to the bereavement literature. Here, I present the Representation of Data Interpretation web, Appendix I. Navigating through the web is explained in the Appendix. This web symbolizes the stories of bereavement, and demonstrates our trio. Ruth, Elizabeth and I have been quoted in context, which in a way has released our masterwork into a wide amphitheatre called *The Literature.* When every reader attends our concert, in reading this study, Ruth, Elizabeth and I perform our grief melodies again and again. They will resound for others in ever-growing circles of influence that I explained in Chapter 1. This is the Adlerian picture, to touch a wider and wider audience: to make others aware of the subject of bereavement, and the needs of the bereaved. But there is also a small picture, at the individual level. This is the opportunity for expression, which is necessary to develop strategies for the interpretation of stressful events (Howard, & Medaway, 2004). We are modeling the ways that we worked through our bereavement

for readers. I believe I have succeeded in adding to the literature, through data from the participants and creative examples of alternative means of expression. The duality of my purpose has also influenced me, in a transformative way.

New Perspectives

This thesis has evolved over the last year as an exercise in my transformation. Although I was not aware that my ideas on bereavement were changing, in looking back, I see that the way I view bereavement has changed. My view has broadened to include Ruth and Elizabeth's experiences, in addition to my own. For example, I can trace a path backwards to the study's inception, and I can recall that during those planning days, I was focusing on my own story. I remember that my journal entries concerned my autobiography and included many experiences in my life. As the study progressed from the proposal stage to the seminar stage, I began to approach other stories of bereavement through the literature and through the predictions I had about my participants. Still further along, there was the ethics application and the call for participants. Finally, I was contacted by Ruth, and Elizabeth, and their stories of bereavement were told to me. I felt privileged to be witness to their life experiences, and somehow, I felt strength in our community. I looked forward to our interviews, and correspondence about the transcripts. Through this process, I now realize that my experience of bereavement is unique, and it has less in

common with other experiences than I once thought. This new view gives me hope for the readers of this thesis. I have a new perspective about bereavement.

I have hope that some of the readers of this thesis will hold influential positions now or in future: administrative positions, teaching positions that touch many many people during the course of a work or school day. I want to make these individuals aware of the unique experiences of bereavement in the lives of their colleagues and students, so they may best meet the needs of the bereaved. For these readers, the creative lessons contained in this study may be helpful in their practices. This study has contributed to research on bereavement, and may cultivate more research on how to meet these needs.

Future Considerations for Research Projects

One idea that has entered my mind is to reproduce this study with a new set of participants. This study contains the stories of three women who have experienced the deaths of their fathers. What about a study that interviews men who have suffered the deaths of their mothers or women who have suffered the deaths of their mothers in adolescence? Such a project could compliment the findings, provide new perspectives, and more examples of bereavement. Furthermore, the suggested study and the current study could appeal to the widest possible audience by including both sexes. In the research for this study, I have not come across studies on sons

who are bereaved by the deaths of their mothers in adolescence. However, I must admit that I was not actively looking for such studies, and in actively looking, I may find some. I have hope that this is the case.

Another idea I have is to visit multiple businesses and schools over a wide geographic area, to compare and contrast bereavement policies for employees or students. For example, one could interview managers, and teachers who have had bereaved colleagues and students, and find out their responses to bereavement. In this way, a researcher could begin to examine whether bereavement programs in place today reflect current research and practice across multiple contexts. Are creative integration workshops in place at these locales to increase communication between people?

The Value of this Study: The Harmonious Journey

The Cadenza and Finale

Qualitative research is bricolage and the researcher is the bricoleur
(Riches & Dawson, 2000)

In closing this project, I feel a strange sense of release—of calmness, like when the last notes of my *cadenza* have faded and there is a millisecond before the audience erupts into applause. In this brief moment, I can finally breathe freely, and enjoy the solace. I have composed a body of text, with words and sign systems from Ruth, Elizabeth, and me, with the guidance of my supervisor and committee, rich in metaphor, to reveal bereavement

experiences and to suggest approaches for practice. It has been a privilege to witness the words and sign systems that give attention to the lives of fellow human beings. I have often been humbled by the transformative nature that turned our stories, and enhanced our resolve to continue. Upon reflection, this research project has taken the last twelve months of my free time: typing, note taking, listening, reflecting, transcribing, composing—and it feels like *griefwork*. The composition is now ready for its debut performance, in concert halls all over the globe. I am excited, just as any composer would be, at the notion that our music will soon be heard, and hopefully be useful, to the audience. This study represents the best explanation we have to offer, in all its nuance and inflection, about a topic that Ruth, Elizabeth, and I have lived for the majority of our lives. I am also confident that my study provides more information about human, universal experience, and suggests creative approaches for the contexts where individuals work or attend school.

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Appendix A: Terms and Definitions

Alfred Adler's Family Constellation

The family constellation can be explained with a metaphor. Imagine a group of stars in our cosmos. Each has a relation to the other, and their position is fixed. Every family has its own constellation, or make up. For example, my family constellation has seven stars (immediate family). With our positions in the constellation, come expectations and responsibilities.

Family constellation is the *child's perception* of his or her position in the family. The term constellation refers to a group of "bodies", each of which has a place in relation to the places of the others. Dreikurs noted many commonalities among children who occupy certain positions in the family constellation. It is to be noted however, that it is the child's decision about how to function in that position that is most influential.

Alfred Adler's Goal Directedness

"Every psychological activity shows that its direction is governed by a predetermined goal. However, soon after a child's psychological development starts, all these tentative, individually recognizable goals, come under the dominance of the fictitious goal, a finale that is regarded as firmly established. In other words, like a character drawn by a good dramatist, the individual's inner life is guided by what occurs in the fifth act of the play.

This insight into any personality that can be derived from Individual Psychology leads us to an important concept: If we are to understand the nature of an individual, then every psychological manifestation should be perceived and understood as only preparatory for a particular goal. Everyone develops a final goal, either consciously or unconsciously, but ignorant of its meaning."

(From a new translation of "Individual Psychology, its Premises and Results" in The Practice and Theory of Indiviual Psychology, by Alfred Adler, in the AAISF/ATP Archives.

Alfred Adler's Social Interest

"Man is a social being. Expressed differently: The human being and all his capabilities and forms of expression are inseparably linked to the existence of others, just as he is linked to cosmic facts and to the demands of this earth." *(Alfred Adler, From a new translation of "Critical Considerations on the Meaning of Life," IZIP, Vol.III, 1924, in the AAINW/ATP Archives).*

Alfred Adler's Striving for Significance

"The striving for power is an important concept in Individual Psychology and can easily be misunderstood. A positive striving for power reflects a feeling of 'I can do something,' or 'I am able when there is understanding.' This is reflected in the Latin (posse- potestas) and the French (pouvoir- le pouvoir) derivations of the word. In this sense, a striving for power relates to the striving to overcome; to be strong and powerful enough to master various situations. In this way, Individual Psychology regards the striving for power, for ability, for knowledge, etc., as a positive means to attain relative security. This striving becomes negative when it does not serve a person's existence, but leads to a feeling of superiority, or when it leads to dominance." *(Alexander Mueller, From "Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology," an unpublished manuscript in the AAISF/ATP Archives.)*

Alfred Adler's Style of Life

The style of life is the core repetitive pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting that characterize the individual's unique attitude toward the tasks of life. There are five attitudes and five roots belonging to the style of life. Please see the Style of Life Tree in Appendix

Bereavement Issues in the Literature:

Adams (1999) describes the myths and realities surrounding adolescents and death. The truths are that adolescents lack support in their grieving, their grief is often suppressed or delayed and their grief has no time limit. He recommends that adolescents have opportunities to discuss death-related situations as they arise, without overburdening adolescents with adult responsibilities.

Corr (1995) presents that adolescents have an adult understanding of death, while significant adults in a teen's life maintain open and healthy communication with the teen. These adults may model coping behaviours for the teen who is grieving for their parent.

Corr & Balk (2001) examine the literature on bereavement during adolescence. They conclude that bereavement research in this area has a short history. The affects of unresolved bereavement are documented from many sources. The phases of adolescence are presented from a developmental point of view, while coping suggestions are included.

Dowdney (2000) describes the difficulty with acquiring participants for childhood bereavement studies. She discusses depression, dysphoria and depression in response to memories evoked at school. The age and sex of the bereaved child moderate the outcome; adolescent reactions are explored.

Dubas (2003) and Turner (1999) examine the history of adolescence in North America in the 20th century. As individuals pass from childhood to adolescence, there are many paths available to take. Some of these paths are not tumultuous. However, the definition and content of these paths are dependent upon the context in which the individual is situated. Self esteem, self efficacy and locus of control are explained and related to the challenges that adolescents face.

Guitierrez (1999) finds that three times as many teens lose their fathers as their mothers. This is significant for those who have lost their fathers. The death of a parent leads to suicidality in a small percentage of grieving teens. It is very difficult to recruit teen participants to talk about these issues.

Haine (2003) examined parentally bereaved children's locus of control and self-esteem in relation to their stress in bereavement. The results revealed that self-esteem was a significant mediator of the relations between stress in child and parent reports. Neither locus of control nor self-esteem was a significant moderator of the relations between stress and children's internalizing and externalizing problems. Implications for understanding parentally bereaved children's mental health problems and for developing preventive interventions are discussed.

Hunter (1997) and Kandt (1994) discuss the reactions of children and adolescents to death. Each reveal that children and adolescents need adult role models for support and comfort. Hunter is a founding member of Bereaved Families of Ontario.

Mack (2001) compares childhood disruptions like divorce with parental death. He finds that adults who were bereaved as children had a higher living parent-child relationship, lower self confidence and higher levels of

depression. Mack also provided information on John Bowlby's contributions of separation and loss.

Morgan (1990) agrees with Corr (1995) that teens have an adult understanding of death, and goes on to say that for early adolescents, death is threatening because it causes the teen to lose their newly discovered self. This is echoed in Adler's Individual Psychology (change of *style of life*).

In Raphael (1990), 2158 Australian adolescents were given questionnaires to answer about their bereavement experiences. Percentages of deceased mothers versus deceased fathers were listed for the participants, aged 14-18 years. Percentages of opposite gender deceased parents were also listed. The recommendation for further research was to focus on parental care and family functioning in the development of psychosocial characteristics in adolescents.

Stroebe (2001) explores whether quantitative or qualitative research methods can best measure grief. He concludes that no single view holds the absolute truth. His focus group model to explore grief embraces both methodologies to get to the real story of participant grief.

Worden (2000) compares parent death with sibling death. He found that boys were more impacted than girls by the loss of a parent in measuring their withdrawn behaviour. Worden also provides percentages of at risk children, regardless of the type of loss (25%) as well as information about boys after their father dies. Worden suggests how families can serve the needs of bereaved children through: open communication, shared feelings, creative problem solving, flexible roles, resources sought and used, reorganization, tolerance of individual differences, and confronting beliefs.

Figured Bass Line

In western music as far back as the Renaissance, a figured bass line refers to the line of musical notation usually in the bass clef. This line is most often played by an instrument with a low timbre, like a cello, a euphonium, or with the left hand in piano and foot pedals in organ. This terminology is also known as the *basso continuo* (Grout & Palisca, 2005). The composer would write the bass line to be played, with numbers and symbols under the notes. This would alert the performer to the kind of chords required, and the performer would then play the proper notes simultaneously. The actual reading of this line of music is known as *realization,* and it can involve much improvisation on the part of the master player. As a cellist, I have come across the *figured bass* line on occasion. I view this as a language which I had to learn. The other players in the ensemble listen to the *figured bass*

line, in order to create the full sonority. In my experience, the *figured bass* line is integral to the support and sustenance of the group.

Early Recollections (Alfred Adler)

According to the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler, *early recollections* are the first images of memories that a person can remember. These are the origins of the *style of life*. "When rightly understood in relation to the rest of an individual's life, his early recollections are found always to have a bearing on the central interests of that person's life. Early recollections give us hints and clues which are most valuable to follow when attempting the task of finding the direction of a person's striving. They are most helpful in revealing what one regards as values to be aimed for and what one senses as dangers to be avoided. They help us to see the kind of world which a particular person feels he is living in, and the early ways he found of meeting that world. They illuminate the origins of the style of life. The basic attitudes which have guided an individual throughout his life and which prevail, likewise, in his present situation, are reflected in those fragments which he has selected to epitomize his feeling about life, and to cherish in his memory as reminders. He has preserved these as his early recollections." (Alfred Adler, From "Significance of Earliest Recollections," *International Journal of Individual Psychology*, (1937) Vol. 3.

Life Tasks Added to Adler's Original Three Life Tasks

Alfred Adler's original life tasks involve the problems that people face with work and school, intimacy and social relationships. However, there have been suggestions that *getting along with oneself* and *finding meaning in one's life* (spirituality) could be the fourth and fifth life tasks (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1967, 2000). Dreikurs and Mosak suggest that Adler made implications about these extra tasks, but the fact remains that Adler never labeled these as tasks (Gold & Mansager, 2000). This is demonstrated in the Style of Life Tree. There are only three life tasks in the picture. In discussing whether to include three or five life tasks with my supervisor, it was decided that Adler's three life tasks would form the basis for this study for two reasons: to avoid complicating jargon so the reader could understand Adler's points, and to keep the study focused on Adler's basic principles.

Locus of Control

Locus of control theory is a concept that extends between psychology and sociology, which distinguishes between two types of people - *internals*, who attribute events to their own control, and *externals*, who attribute events in their life to external circumstances.

Pre-mature Adulthood

Children today are bombarded with messages about growing up quickly, through the media. For example I can go into a clothing store, and see the selections for young girls and teens. These are almost identical to adult selections, form fitting with bare midriffs and spaghetti straps. I can watch a music video, and see that young boys are acting like young men. Eckstein (1999) postulates that the media encourages children to grow up too fast. He cautions against this, since children may encounter too much freedom, and too many choices which cause confusion because they do not have the capacity to deal with mature issues. I agree that children are pressured to grow up too fast. In my teaching practice, I see this plainly when students dress inappropriately or act like the artists in the latest music video, or they reject certain activities because they are not "cool". When bereavement enters the picture for these children and teens, confusion increases, like there are too many balls in the air to juggle: growing up, friends, school, and family. Sooner or later, the balls may fall to the floor.

Reluctance to Face the Inevitability of Death

Death is routinely euphemized in our western society. For example, instead of saying that someone "died", we say "passed away"; instead of saying that a person's relative "died", we say "lost their mother, father", etc. These euphemisms distance us from death, and protect us from the emotional impact of death. A study which examines why death is treated this way is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Rhythm of Bereavement

A musical metaphor to describe the movement of grief in the lives of the bereaved fits into this study. This movement becomes the beats and rests of the composition of life. Beats refer to the steady meter of the composition, which stays constant. One can think about a heart beat, or the passage of time. Rests refer to the absence of sound in music, or to the time when people become distracted from their grief. For example, strong feelings of grief may be felt, followed by not so strong feelings of grief over a period of time. In my experience, I felt intense feelings of grief close to the death of my father. As time continued, these feelings lessened somewhat, and the rests between them lengthened. However, this is not to suggest that intense grief does not return. Intense grief does return, sometimes unexpectedly.

Self Esteem

In psychology, includes a person's subjective appraisal of himself or herself as intrinsically positive or negative to some degree.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an impression that one is capable of performing in a certain manner or attaining certain goals. It is a belief that one has the capabilities to execute the courses of actions required to manage prospective situations. Unlike efficacy, which is the power to produce an effect (in essence, competence), self-efficacy is the belief (whether or not accurate) that one has the power to produce that effect.

It is important here to understand the distinction between self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-esteem relates to a person's sense of self-worth, whereas self-efficacy relates to a person's perception of their ability to reach a goal. June, 2007 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-efficacy

Sign Systems

By definition, sign systems are alternate means to communicate meaning. Examples of sign systems are: literature, dance, music, drama, problem solving (mathematics), experiments (science). The rise of sign systems is related to the rise in the study of multiple intelligences, in education. Sign systems are now part of mainstream educational research with authors like Short& Kaufman, (2000) who examine how learners move naturally between art, music, movement, math, drama and language. A range of sign systems communicates broad meaning in order to gain new understanding of a particular human expression.

Sign Systems in the Literature

Richards (2002) wants to understand sign systems and their applications to children's literacy development. The growing interest in optimizing students' literacy development through the integration of multiple sign systems as

vehicles for learning is the focus for her study. She notes that the most important contribution that the endless categories of signs offer to the teaching and learning of literacy is the idea that the multiple communication modalities of sign systems expand students' choices for giving and making meaning.

Semali (2002) wrote "Transmediation as a Metaphor for New Literacies in Multimedia Classrooms". His study explores how transmediation extends the new literacies found in multimedia classrooms. The definition of transmediation is: responding to cultural texts in a range of sign systems -- art, movement, sculpture, dance, music, and so on -- as well as in words. Semali's study concludes that transmediation has the potential to capture the postmodern reality of multiple texts, multiple meanings, and multiple interpretations, which will inevitably help teachers communicate with students.

Koshewa (2001) investigated the multiple cultures, and multiple literacies within a grade five classroom. Data is from the author's work in his fifth-grade class as he helps his students understand the importance that culture plays in their representations of meaning. The opportunities to transcend language by using other sign systems allows multiculturalism to flourish. A schoolwide celebration of cultures through various sign systems is showcased.

Berghoff (2001) goes beyond words when she explores three articles in this themed issue written by classroom teachers, describing how and why they incorporate the arts into the arts as the heart of their language arts instruction. Concludes that sign systems and the arts are powerful tools for thinking, whether they are used efferently, to represent specific information, or aesthetically, to create vicarious, lived-through experiences.

In "New Ways of Thinking About Assessment and Curriculum" Berghoff (2000) discusses how a first-grade inclusive classroom immersed students in multiple sign systems to foster literacy, including art, drama, and music, science, and movement activities. The second part profiles a boy with learning difficulties and what was learned about him in an attempt to take an aesthetic stance toward assessment.

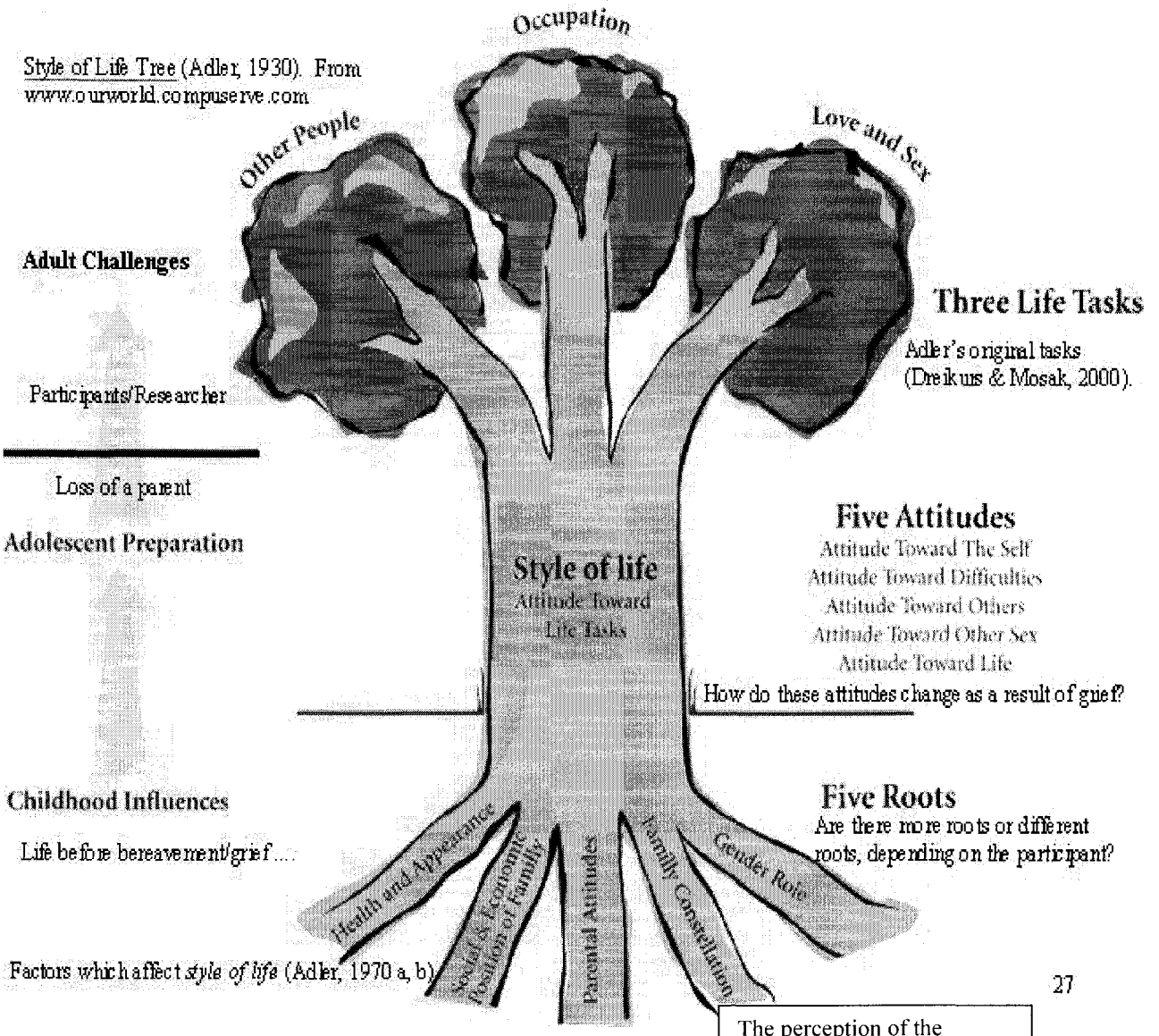
Carroll (1999) writes about sign systems in her article "Dancing on the Keyboard". This paper offers a theoretical rationale for the use of technology in the classroom. The rationale focuses on two aspects of literacy development: the ability to consider multiple symbolic perspectives in the

process of making meaning and the ability to reflect on language. Technology enables children to work with multiple sign systems simultaneously, thereby providing opportunities for them to reflect on language while constructing meaning from multiple perspectives in the social context of the classroom. How this resource is used affects literacy development in a multitude of ways. These theoretical constructs provide a foundation for suggestions for
practice, presented in a series of classroom scenarios.

Vignettes

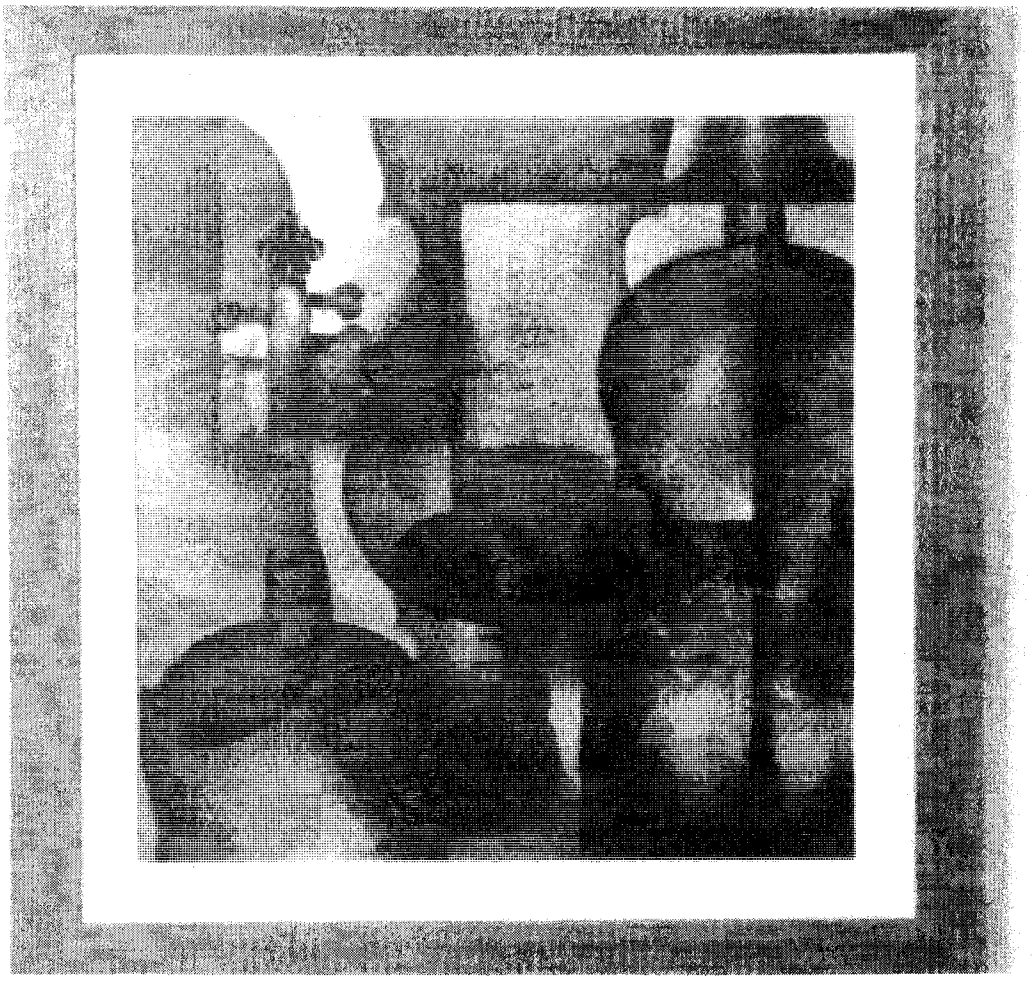
I will use short, descriptive inserts to illustrate my response to quotations in the analysis of and final written text of this study. The vignettes will serve two purposes: as a visual reminder to the reader that the participants and I are equals in the bereavement experience, and to emphasize the key points which connect me to my participants.

Appendix B: Style of Life Tree



Appendix C: "Communal Strength" Self-Portrait

Appendix D: "Ode to Music" Oil on Canvas



Appendix E: "The Midnight Special" Lyrics

Creedence Clearwater Revival

Well, you wake up in the morning
You hear the workbell ring
And-a march to the table to see the same old thing
Ain't no food upon the table and no fork up in the pan
But you better not complain, boy, you get in trouble with the man

Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a ever-lovin' light on me

Yonder come Miss Rosie
How in the world did you know?
By the way she wears her apron
And the clothes she wore
Umbrella on her shoulder
Piece of paper in her hand
She come to see the gov'nor
She wants to free her man

Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a ever-lovin' light on me

If you're ever in Houston
Oh, you better do right
You better not gamble
There, you better not fight at all
Or the sheriff will grab ya
And the boys will bring you down
The next thing you know, boy,
Oh, you're prison-bound

Oh, let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a ever-lovin' light on me

Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a ever-lovin' light on me

C.C.Rev Version
Well, you wake up in the morning
You hear the workbell ring
Then you march to the table
You see the same old thing
Ain't no food upon the table
There ain't no fork up in the pan
But you better not complain, boy
You get in trouble with the man

Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine its ever-lovin' light on me

Yonder come Miss Rosie
How in the world did you know?
By the way she wears her apron
And the clothes she wore
Umbrella on her shoulder
Piece of paper in her hand
She come to see the gov'nor
She come to free her man

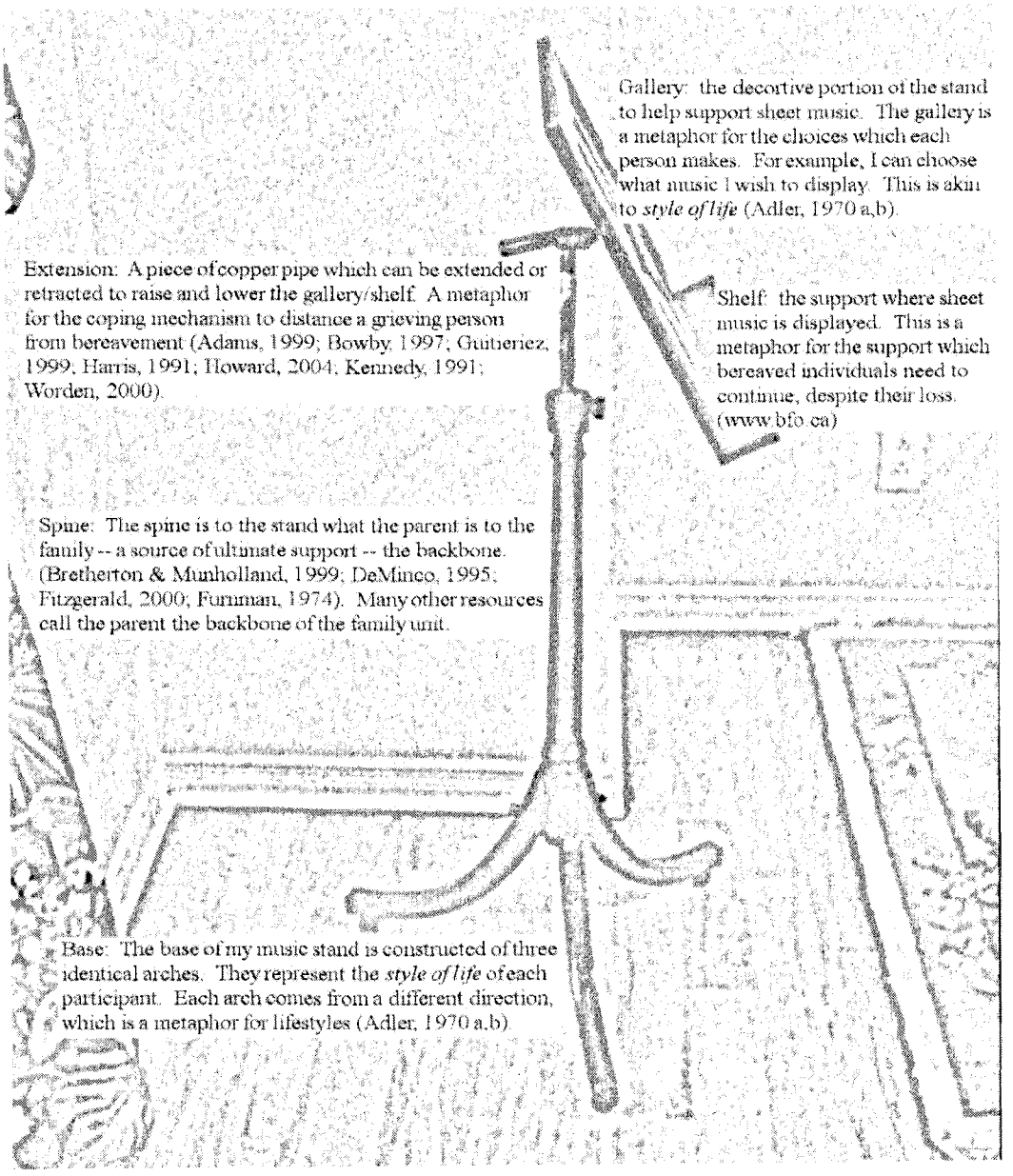
So let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
So let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine its ever-lovin' light on me

If you're ever in Houston
Well, you better do right
You better not gamble
There you better not fight
Or the sheriff will grab you
And the boys will bring you down
The next thing you know, boy,
Ooh, you're prison-bound

So let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
So let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me

Let the Midnight Special shine a light on me
Let the Midnight Special shine its ever-lovin' light on me

Appendix F: Music Stand Representing the Literature



Appendix G: "I Know Where I'm Going" Lyrics

I know where I'm going
And I know who's going with me
I know who I love
And my dear knows who I'll marry.

I have stockings of silk
And shoes of bright green leather
Combs to buckle my hair
And a ring for every finger.

O' feather beds are soft
And painted rooms are bonnie
But I would give them all
For my handsome winsome Johnny.

Some say that he's poor
But I say that he's bonnie
Fairest of them all
Is my handsome winsome Johnny.

Appendix H: Types of Questions for Interviews

After consulting with a certified Individual and Family Therapist, the following questions have been tailored to allow me to witness the bereavement stories of my participants. The questions will not be asked in a particular order, and they may need rewording so participants can understand what I am asking. These preliminary questions follow in categories. The questions belong in categories to fit the interview schedule: life history (attachment/style of life), bereavement related and reflection types. Sign system exploration is present in all sections. Before and after each session, I will introduce/revisit the purpose of the session in order for the participant to feel comfortable. After each session, I will comment on what the next session will be about and when it may take place, again, to promote comfort.

First Session: Introduction/Life History-Related Questions:

The following questions are intended to gather information about you. I am interested in recording information about your life history. This is an introductory interview.

1. What pseudonym would you like to use for the interview sessions?

2. Tell me about yourself. Is there anything going on in your life that you would like to include (home, school, work, marriage, job, children, other)? Do you have any special interests (hobbies, clubs, organizations)? If

so could you describe these? Do you own any pets? If so could you please describe them? How long have you had these pets? Did you have any pets when you were a child?

3. What brought you to this interview? Where did you see the advertisement? Please describe why you are here? What are you hoping to receive from this process? What interests you about this study? What are you looking for in this study? What goals do you have with regards to participating in this study? If so, please describe them. Do you feel comfortable enough to go back in time to the death of your parent?

4. Tell me about your loss. Which of your parents died? Tell me about how they died? How long has it been since your parent's death? How old were you when your parent died? What grade were you in (school)? How did you find out that your parent had died? How did your school experience change after the death of your parent?

6. What has life been like without your parent? How has your parent's death influenced your life? Has your parent's death taken your life in new directions than what the original route may have been? What would your life be like if your parent hadn't died? Do you feel your parent is still with you, somehow?

7. What is your belief about death? Has your view of death changed since your parent's death?

In these next few questions, I will be talking about expression. Keeping this in mind, you can use any way it is that you want to express yourself.

8. How has your parent's death made you feel? Would you say that you are you mad, glad, sad or afraid? Do your emotions change, or remain the same? How do you express these emotions? Can you use language, art, music, drama, to express yourself? What is your belief about how people have responded to your parent's death (home, school other experiences)? Have people responded differently to you (home, school, other experiences)?

9. What has changed in your life since your parent's death? How would you label these changes? Can you give examples of a change (past, present, home, school, work)?

10. What has changed in your family life since your parent's death? What means of expression could you use to represent this change? Which method would you use and why? How has your parent's death affected your home environment? Your work/school environment?

11. The methods you have used to adjust to the death of a parent can be called your griefwork or your grief story. How would you like to tell your grief story? Can you see yourself using language, art, music, or another means to tell this story? Which would you prefer? What information would you include? How can telling your grief story help you? Others? Please explain. What do you want others to understand about grief and bereavement?

Attachment/Style of Life Related Questions Before and After the Death:

1. Before their death, how would you describe your relationship with your parent? What was it like to lose your parent? Can you describe what the relationship to your parent feels like now? What do you believe about relationships after death? Is there a way you use to express these feelings? What is your way? Where did your beliefs come from?

2. What was living with your parent like? What memories come to mind? How would you describe your childhood experience?

3. What was school like before the death of your parent. Where did you go to school (city, rural)? What are some details about this school (small, large, K-8, K-6, etc). Can you describe your schooling? What were your favourite subjects? Did you have any friends (names will be omitted)? What fond memories would you like to share? What not so fond memories would you like to share? Describe your favourite teacher (name will be omitted)? How did you get to school (walk, drive, bus)? How far was school from home? How involved was/were your parent(s) in your schooling? What before/after school activities did you take part in? How old was/were your parent(s)/siblings when you were in school, in relation to your age?

4. How did your parent's death affect your school performance? Did your teachers/friends treat you differently? What was the hardest adjustment at school? Could you share any particular memories about school just after your parent died?

5. What has been the hardest thing about schooling regarding the death of your parent? Was your experience bumpy or smooth? Did anyone at school made things easier? Could you describe how people at school tried to make things easier? Are you satisfied that people at school did all they could to help you? How do you feel about the school response? Did the school community meet your needs? Why/why not? For the next session, could you please bring a symbol which has significance for you about your parent? What symbol would this be (photo, clothing, artifact, poem, etc).

Second Session: Coping/Bereavement Related Questions:

1. How are you adjusting to life without your parent? Is there a facet of you school experience which has endured today? Has your school experience helped you to adjust? Have you taken any courses to help you adjust? If so, what are these? Are there any things you do to make the adjustment smoother? Do you practice music, drama, dance, problem solving or literature to adjust? If you have not used these systems for expression, which one feels comfortable for you now?

2. What are your beliefs about grief? What do you do to express your grief? Do you paint, draw, play music, exercise? Why? Is there any opportunity for you to express your grief when you need to? Please explain. How do you feel about being unable to express your grief? Was there ever a time when you needed to express your grief and couldn't? What did you do? What do you want others to know about your grief? What do you want

others to do about your grief? 3. What support did/are you receive/ing? What support works for you? What do you need from your family and friends? Will this study support you in any way? If so, how? What do you want this study to accomplish?

4. What symbol/artifact did you bring? If you did not bring an artifact, would you feel comfortable choosing one from this box? Please choose an artifact that you can relate to your grief story, your parent, your emotions. Please describe why you chose this symbol. Is there a story about this symbol you could share? How do you feel about this symbol? How does the symbol connect you to your parent? How would you feel about creating a new symbol using one of the systems we discussed earlier (music, art, drama, dance, etc...). If you could create another symbol, what would it be? Would any of these connect you to your parent? How? Do you still feel connected to your parent? If so, how? For the next session, could you create something which symbolizes your grief story? What things would you feel comfortable creating/bringing which symbolize your grief story? For next session, will you create something, or bring in another artifact?

Third Session: Artifact Sharing, Meaning-Making Reflection Questions:

1. Is there a particular way you chose to represent your grief and bereavement? Can you describe it? In what medium did you represent your grief and bereavement? Tell me about your artifact. Did the discussion of

additional means of expression give you any ideas about your own expression? If so, please explain.

2. How do you make sense of your parent's death? Can you explain why you have come to these beliefs? How did these beliefs evolve over time? How has your schooling influenced your beliefs?

3. Is there anything that you do to improve your bereavement situation? Can you describe what works for you? Can you describe what doesn't work? Do you use music, art, dance, drama, language, etc to improve your bereavement?

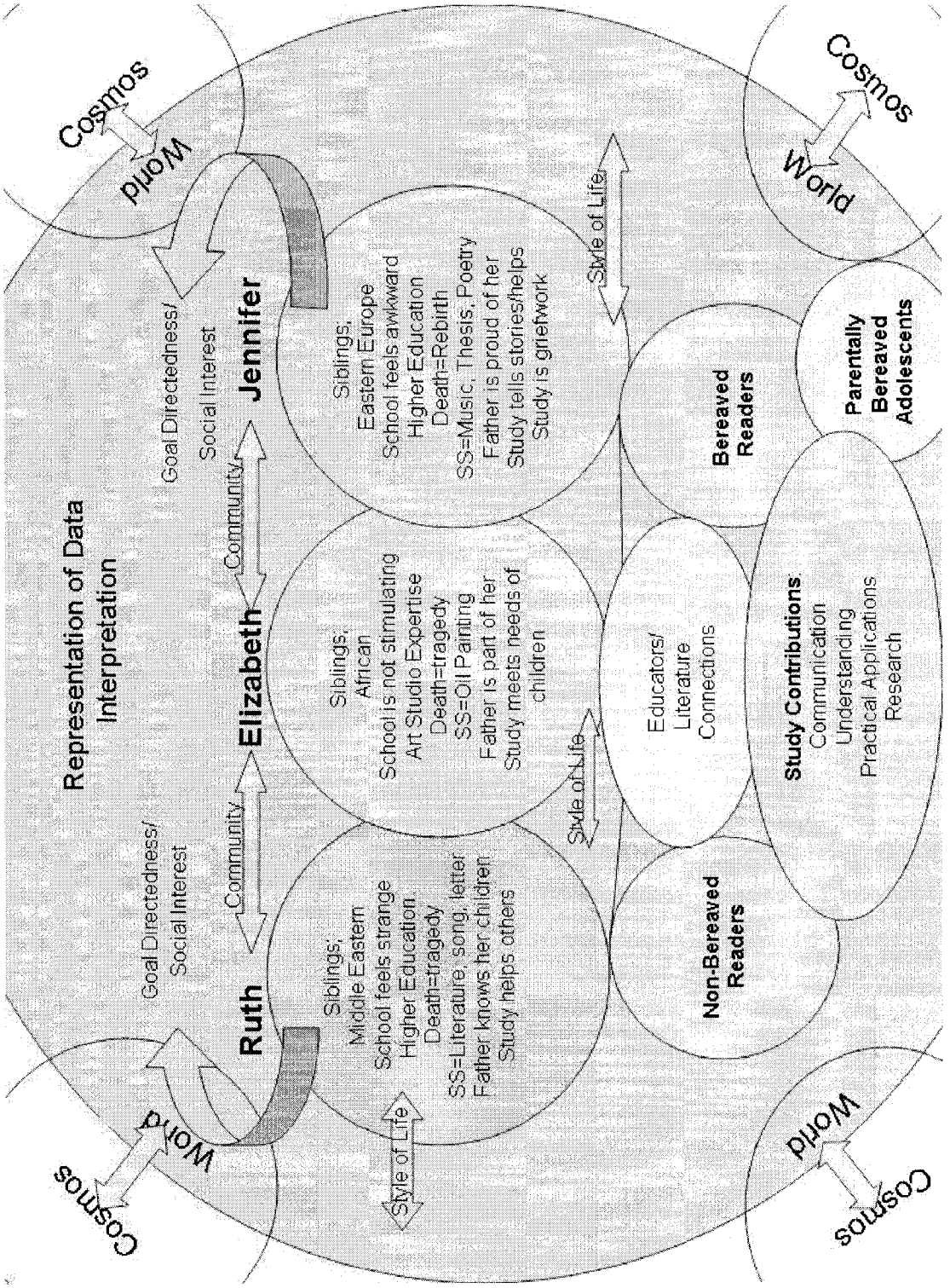
4. Is there anything that makes you feel closer to, or helps you remember your parent? Can you describe what this is? What triggers memories of your parent for you?

5. Would you be willing to represent your bereavement/grief, using an artifact in this box? Please choose an artifact and then describe how it relates to your grief story. Please explain why you chose this artifact. How does this artifact represent something about your parent/your grief journey.

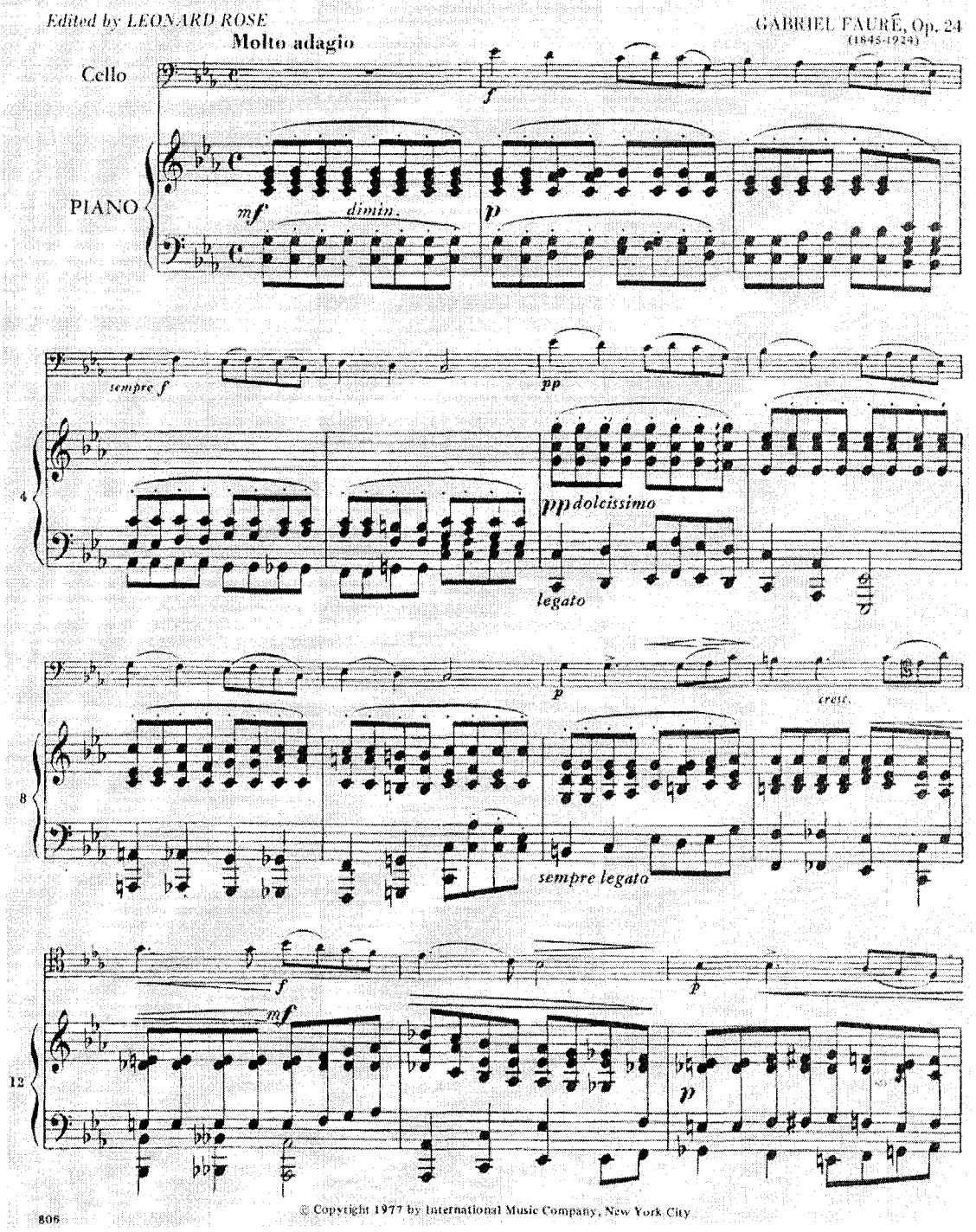
Appendix I: Representation of Data Diagram Description

The following diagram represents my perception of the data collected from Ruth, Elizabeth and me. An explanation follows as to how to navigate in the diagram. The profiles of the participants appear as three central overlapping circles because our stories are the primary source of data in this study. Within our circles, are the themes that emerged in our stories. Between our profiles, there are Community arrows. This is one tenet of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology that links us together in the human experience. Other curved arrows are turned upwards, signaling more tenets from Individual Psychology. Goal directedness and social interest help us through our lives. More small arrows labeled "Style of Life" show the core of the personality and how it radiates outwards, touching the social environment. This is another tenet from Individual Psychology. Outside our circles of experience, there are other circles, representing the stake holders for whom this study has relevance. Non-bereaved readers, bereaved readers, and educators benefit from the study contributions of communication, understanding, practical applications and research. Finally, the big picture is illustrated with incomplete circles that touch planet Earth and the cosmos. These designs show that human kind is part of the infiniteness of creation.

Appendix I: Representation of Data Diagram



Appendix J: "Faure's Elegie in e Minor"



Appendix K: Suggestions for Teachers and School Counselors

Teachers, classmates, and school personnel make up a child's "second family." They, too, feel pain and a sense of helplessness when a member of that family dies or experiences the death of a sibling. These guidelines have been prepared by bereaved parents, surviving children, school personnel, and professional caregivers in an effort to aid those in a school setting who want to help when a child dies.

The Grief of Children

There is no road map for a child to follow when he or she is grieving the loss of a sibling or classmate. Children are apt to bottle up their feelings around adults, especially adults who also are grieving. Students who have suffered the death of a brother or sister are often referred to as the "forgotten mourners" because so much attention is paid to the parents of the child who has died. Students who have a classmate die may feel the same way, depending on the level of support received both at home and at school. As a result, their actions and behavior in the classroom and with other children may reflect this. While no one can know what children are thinking, cues can be taken from their behavior.

You may notice many different reactions: withdrawal, aggressiveness, anger, panic, anxiety, guilt, fear, regression, and symptoms of bodily distress. Observe, and exercise patience and understanding.

When children are grieving, they have shortened attention spans and may have trouble concentrating, which in turn will affect their schoolwork.

While children might attempt to deny feelings of anger, hurt, and fear by repressing them, eventually grief takes over and their feelings leak out. Children have to reestablish a self-identity,

whether because of their changed families at home or their changed "second families" at school.

Perceptions of Death

A child's understanding of death changes with age and experience. Preschool- and kindergarten-age children usually see death as temporary. Those ages 6 to 8 generally understand the child will not return and death is universal (it could happen to me). Children ages 9 to 12 do understand the reality of death and may be curious about the biological aspects of death. Children 13 years of age and older fully understand the concept of death and perceive death on an adult level and will mourn accordingly.

Understanding Feelings of Grief

When a student or a brother or sister of a student dies, teachers should examine their own feelings about death and grief. Share your feelings with the children within your class. Know that it's okay to cry, be sad or angry, and even smile. Children cannot be shielded from death and grief, and a thoughtful approach taken in the classroom can help them in the future.

If a student seeks you out to talk, be available and really listen. Hear with your ears, your eyes, and your heart. A warm hug says, "I know what happened and I care. I am here if you need me."

Be open and honest with your feelings. Create an atmosphere of open acceptance that invites questions and fosters confidence that you are concerned.

Encourage children to express their grief openly, but in ways that are not disruptive to the class or damaging to other students. Acknowledge the reality that grief hurts, but do not attempt to rescue the child (or the class, or yourself) from that pain. Be supportive and available to classmates who may want to know how they can help.

Provide a quiet, private place where a student may go whenever he or she feels a need to be alone. Almost anything that happens in the classroom may trigger tears. Respect the need that

students have to grieve while helping classmates realize that grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss.

Help students to recognize that death is a natural part of life. Use such opportunities as a fallen leaf, a wilted flower, and the death of an insect, bird, or class pet to discuss death as a part of the life cycle. Explore feelings about death, loss, and grief through books while fostering discussions as a classroom family.

Grief in the Classroom

Remember that the class functions as a group, and sharing grief may benefit the entire class. Thus, students can be exposed to death in a safe and caring atmosphere where the grieving children find people who are compassionate and supportive.

When a student has lost a sibling, try not to single out the grieving child for special privileges or compensations. While this is tempting, the student needs to feel a part of the peer group and should be expected to function accordingly. Temper your expectations with kindness and understanding, but continue to expect the student to function.

If possible, meet with a few of the bereaved student's friends to help them cope and explore how to be supportive. Friends often feel uncomfortable and awkward in their attempts to make contact.

Help a bereaved student find a supportive peer group. Oftentimes there are other students within the school or school district who are coping with similar losses. An invitation to share with each other might be welcome.

For the School Counselor

Be open to ways of providing support to classrooms and students when a child has died.

Make available books and bereavement materials that can help the students and teachers to explore their feelings of loss.

Encourage classes to find ways to remember a classmate who

has died or to support one of their own when a sibling has died. Encourage not only classroom discussions but also expressions of grief, such as a display of poems, pictures, or drawings. Other ways to remember a student or a sibling may be for a class to prepare cards for the family, create a memory book, plant a remembrance tree, or create some other type of memorial. Yearbooks can have a remembrance page, and graduation ceremonies may include in some way a student who has died. Do something to acknowledge the death, thus giving students permission to do the same.

Children and young people will continue to deal with the death of a family member as they grow and mature. Continue to be available, to reach out and to *care*, just as you do now.

Appendix L: Literary Titles for Educators

Talking to children about death through books and resources

Author	Title	Description	Publication Information	Availability
Johnson , Joy and Grollman, Earl	A Child's Book About Burial and Cremation	This is a workbook that children can both read and write inside of. This book describes the different stages of the burial or cremation of a loved one.	The Centering Corp, 2001. www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Stillwell, Elaine	Sweet Memories	A book full of creative projects appropriate for Children ages 6 to 9 and adults that can help create healing and loving memories of Holidays and other special days.	The Centering Corp, 2001. www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Kiehne-Munoz, Marisol	Since My Brother Died / Desde Que Murio Mi Hermano	This book is in both English and Spanish. This story explores some of the ways that children might react to a sibling dying and some of the feelings they may experience.	The Centering Corp, 2000. www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Ferguson, Dorothy	A bunch of Balloons	This is a book to help grieving children acknowledge what they have lost and celebrate what they still have left when someone they love has died	The Centering Corp, 1992. www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service

Johnson , Joy and Grollman, Earl	A Child's Book About Funerals and Cemeteries	This is a workbook that children can both read and write inside of. This book describes the different stages of the funeral and what to expect at the cemetery.	The Centering Corp, 2001. www.centering.org Z e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Wolfelt, Alan D.	How I feel	A colouring book for grieving children	Batesville Management Services 1996. Batesville Indiana. Call 1(800) 446-2504 or 1(800) 622-8373(USA)	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Dernederlanden, Christine and Griffith, Angie	Where is Robert?	A book designed to help children cope with death and the emotions that arise from the grieving experience. This book often can be purchased with a memory box for the child and care giver to collect and share special items that are meaningful.	Robert's Press Publishing Group. ($18.95 CND) www.robertspress.ca e-mail: robertspress@sympatico.ca	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Heegaard, Marge	When someone very special dies	This book was designed to teach basic concepts of death and help children understand and express the feelings that have when someone special dies.	Woodlands Press Minneapolis, MN. 1988	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service

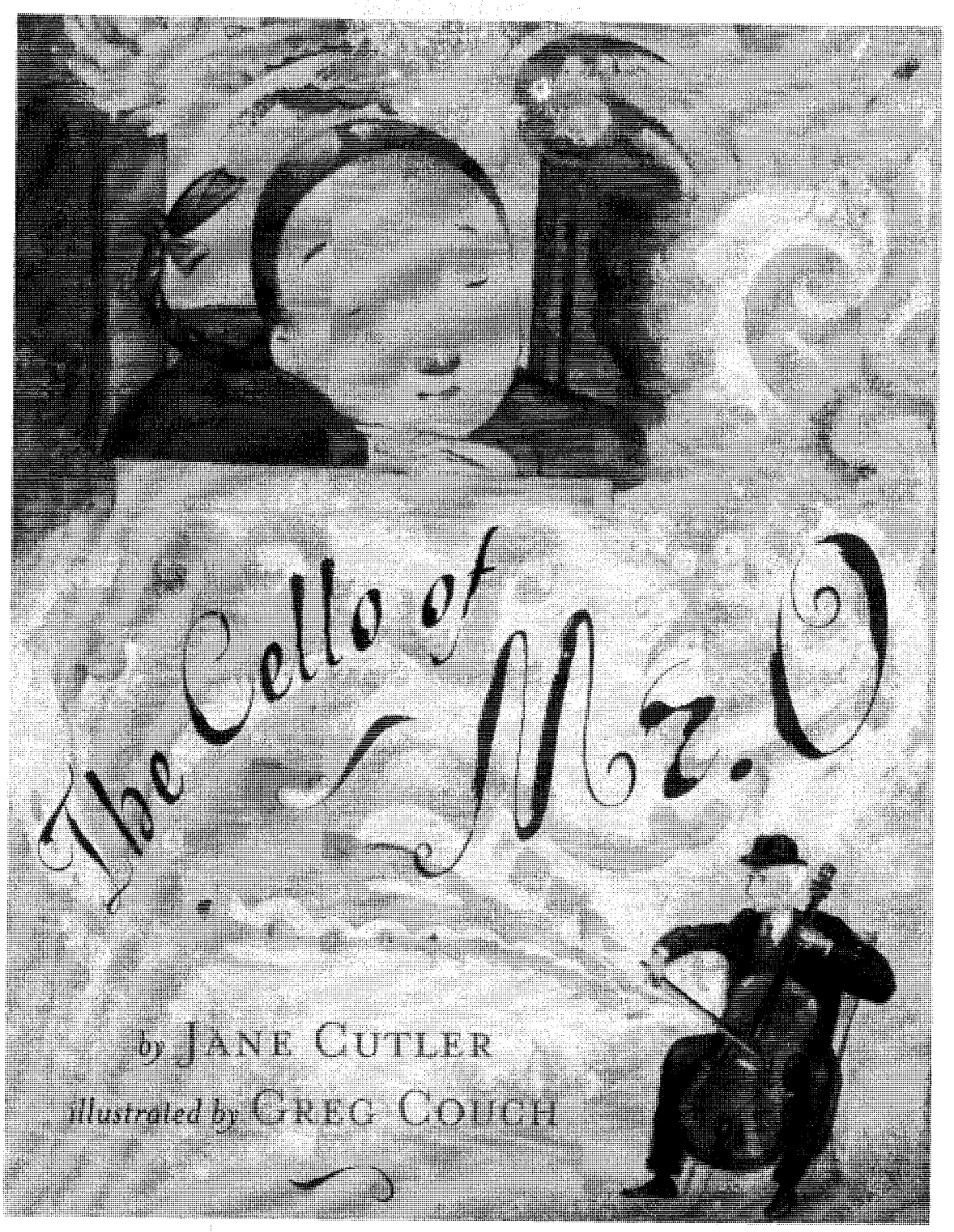
Heegaard, Marge	When someone has a very serious illness. Children can learn to cope with loss and change	This book was designed to help children understand and express feelings that arise when someone in their family has a serious illness.	Woodlands Press Minneapolis, MN. 1991	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Krasny Brown, Laurie and Brown, Mark	When Dinosaurs Die: A guide to understanding death	This book provides an imaginative and structured format to help children understand death and loss.	Little, Brown and Company, New York, 1996. $21.95 CND Caversham Books 1 (800) 361-6120	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
LEVY, Erin	Children are not paper dolls.	A book for and about bereaved siblings with direct quotes and drawings from children ages 10 to 3.	The Publishers Mark, 1982	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service
Coburn, John B.	Anne and the Sand Dobbies	A book to help discuss death with children	Morehouse-Barlow 1986	HSC CHIP
Foster-Morgan, Kathleen	Sunflower Mountain	A book to help discuss death with children	Sunflower Publishing, 1995	HSC CHIP
GROLLMAN, Earl A.	Talking about death: a dialogue between parents and child...	For Parents and Children	Beacon Press, 1990	HSC CHIP

JOHNSON, Joy	Tell me, Papa: a family book for children's questions about death and funerals	For Parents	Centering Corporation , 1978 www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC CHIP
GRYTE, Marilyn	No new baby: for boys and girls whose expected siblings dies...	For Parents and Children	Centering Corporation, 1988 www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	HSC CHIP
ADKINS, Michael C.	Orknon was my friend.	The story of a little boy whose dearest friend has died. 4 to 8 years	Image Publishing, 1984.	
ALBERTSON, Sandra Hayward	Endings and beginnings.	Family renewal following the death of a young father.	Ballantine Books, 1980.	
Al-Chokhachy, E.	The Angel with the Golden Glow.	A story about a special little boy and his family and how they savoured every moment they shared.	Marblehead, MA PennyBear Co. 1998.	
BLACKBURN, Lynn Bennett	Timothy Duck.	The story of the death of a friend. For young children.	Centering Corporation, 1987. www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com	
BRANDENBURG, A.	The Two of Them.	The story of the special relationship between a girl and her grandfather.	New York Mulberry Books, 1979.	
dePAOLA, Tomie	Nana upstairs & Nana downstairs.	Love and death in a caring family.	Penguin Books, 1973.	

DODGE, Nancy C.	Thumpy's story.	Shared love and grief when a sister dies. Ages 7 to 77 and to read aloud to younger children.	Prairie Lark Press, 1984.
HARPUR, Tom	he mouse that couldn't squeak.	A story about a mouse who couldn't squeak like the others, but when a threat appears, he turns his handicap into an asset and saves the day.	Oxford University Press, 1988.
HICKMAN, Martha Whitmore	Last week my brother Anthony died.	A picture book about the death of a 4 week old sibling ages 3 to 7	Abingdon, 1984.
JOHNSON, Joy and Marv with GOLDSTEINS, Heather, Ray and Jody	Where's Jess?	Lots of questions and feelings when your sister or brother dies. For young siblings.	Centering Corporation, 1982. www.centering.org e-mail: j1200@aol.com
JOHNSON, Phillip E.	"Goodbye Mom, goodbye."	Canadian book with Christian focus. 8 to 12 years.	Welsh Publishing Company, 1987.
GOULD, Deborah	Grandpa's slide show.	A story for children about the relationship between two boys and their grandfather which even survives his death.	HarperCollins Children's Books 1991, for ages 5 to 8
KUBLER ROSS, Elizabeth	A letter to a child with cancer.	A touching letter, created with coloured crayons.	Shanti Nilaya, 1979.

LANCASTER, Matthew	Hang tough.	By a lovable, courageous 10 -year-old boy about his treatment for cancer.	Paulist Press, 1983.
LEE, Virginia	The magic Moth.	Told through the eyes of a 6 year old, this story explores the impact of 10 year old Maryanne's death on her family. 6 to 9 years or younger.	Houghton Mifflin, 1972.
McGREGOR, Molly	The sky goes on forever.	Short, easy to read about life and death with reference to child's pet.	M.M. Press, 1999.
O'TOOLE, Donna	Aarvy Aardvark finds hope.	A read aloud story for people of all ages.	CELO Press, 1988, unpaged.
SCHULTZ, Charles M.	Why Charlie Brown, why?	When one of the Peanut gang becomes very ill, it forces the others to do some soul searching.	Topper Books, 1990, unpaged.
YOUNG POSEN, Robyn	Samantha's Unicorn	An illustrated book to help children and families talk about illness and death	HSC Palliative and Bereavement Care Service, Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care
HANSON, Warren	The Next Place	A beautifully illustrated book about dying and after death	Waldman House Press, 1998
BARBER, Erika R.	Letters from a Friend: A Siblings Guide for Coping and Grief	A workbook full of activities to help to address the needs and issues of children and adolescents who experience the death of sibling.	Baywood Publishing Company 2003. 1-800-638-7819

Appendix M: The Cello of Mr. O.
Summary from book jacket and cover illustration.



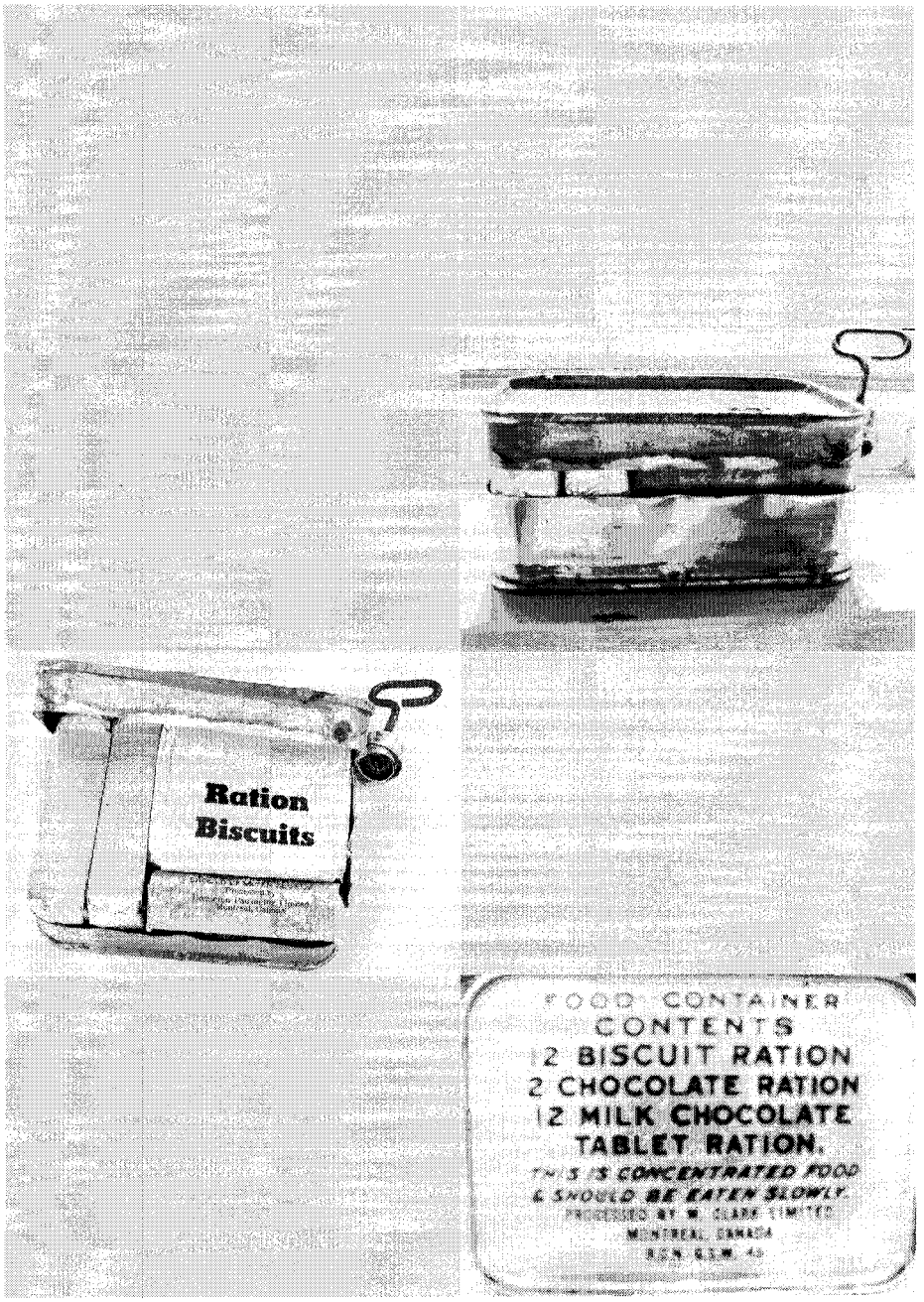
In this picture book about a war-torn city, a little girl struggles with many emotions. Her father is away fighting. There is no heating oil, and food is scarce. Bombs have devastated the neighborhood, so she and her friends must work out their anxieties and fears indoors.

Mr. O, the famous musician who lives upstairs, gets angry at them for their noisy hallway games. "You kids!" he shouts, as if just being a kid was a bad thing.

But when a rocket destroys the relief truck that brings their meager rations, Mr. O surprises them all. He takes his cello into the middle of the square—where he can be seen by everyone, even by the attackers who blew up the supply truck—and he plays. And through his music, the little girl learns that courage can sustain the soul just as bread sustains the body.

In glowing watercolors, Greg Couch beautifully captures Jane Cutler's stirring message about the resilience of the human spirit.

Appendix N: Ration Tin from the Canadian War Museum.



Appendix O: Student Group Worksheet

What object do you see? How does this object connect to you?

_____

_____

_____

This object belongs to someone from the story. Whom does this object belong to? How do you know?

_____

_____

_____

Why is this object important to that person? How do you know?

_____

_____

_____

Group Greatness....Why was your group great?

How did your group share the object?

_____

_____

Name the roles your group used. Print the person's name beside their role.

Readers _____ Planners _____

Illustraton Helper_____ Asker _____

Word Wizard Helper_____IT Tech. _____

Appendix P: Bill of Rights for Grieving People
Thoughts for Educators

You have the right to your own feelings. Your feelings are neither right or wrong. They are just feelings.

You have the right to express your grief and be comforted in ways you choose. If you do not get comfort, you have the right to request additional support.

You have the right to continued loving care, but you must understand that it may sometimes be difficult for those who love you to provide that care.

You have the right to help plan and to participate in the funeral rites, as much or as little as you wish.

You have the right to ask questions and receive thoughtful, honest answers.

You have the right to be treated as an interested and important individual, not as someone's child.

If you are a surviving sibling, you have the right to maintain your own identity, without any transference of any kind from your dead sibling.

You have the right to grieve for days and years, however long it takes for you to feel good again. There is no set time to feel better. It's okay to not feel better.

You have the right to be free from guilt, or continued grief, and you have the right to counseling if you need or want it.

You have the right to be a comforter to others who are grieving, to share your grief, and their grief, making you both feel better.

Appendix Q: "Don't Laugh at Me" Lyrics

I'm a little boy with glasses, the one they call a "geek"
A little girl who never smiles cuz I got braces on my teeth
And I know how it feels to cry myself to sleep

I'm that kid on every playground who's always chosen last
A single teenage mother tryin' to overcome my past
You don't have to be my friend but is it too much to ask

Don't laugh at me; don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain
In God's eyes we're all the same
Some day we'll all have perfect wings
Don't laugh at me

I'm the beggar on the corner
You've passed me on the street
I wouldn't be out here begging if I had enough to eat
And don't think I don't notice that our eyes never meet

Don't laugh at me; don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain
In God's eyes we're all the same
Some day we'll all have perfect wings
Don't laugh at me

I'm Fat. I'm Thin. I'm Short. I'm Tall. I'm Deaf. I'm Blind.
Hey aren't we all?
Don't laugh at me; don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain
In God's eyes we're all the same
Some day we'll all have perfect wings
Don't laugh at me

Don't laugh at me

Written by
Steve Seskin & Allen Shamblin
Sung by
Peter, Paul & Mary

Appendix R: Don't Laugh at Me Silhouette Masterwork
Text boxes contain hypothetic student responses.