Chapter 3: Methodology

Arts-Based Research

Throughout the course of my doctoral studies, and particularly in investigating the research methodologies that would be most appropriate for this project, I became familiar with the emerging field of art-based research. When my Core Professor, Dr. Penn, introduced me to the pioneering work in this area of McNiff (1998), the "artist-scholar concept" she had been discussing with me for some time became clear. The concept of the artist-scholar is rather absent from our current culture but, nonetheless, it has become a metaphorical home for me in my lifelong struggle to reconcile the mysteries of creative process with the seemingly intractable verification issues of academic inquiry and research. This journey has been a process of getting my academic persona to work *with* my artistic persona rather than against it. It has been a kind of internal reconciliation of intellect, passion and proclivity.

I was 18 years old and halfway through my freshman year at Carnegie-Mellon University when I had my first serious self-confrontation regarding the vital need to balance the seemingly conflicting elements of malleable artistic creativity with those of rigid academic scholarship. The internal conflict was overwhelming and the emotional fallout nearly put me in the hospital, but the experience effectively made the point that the *balance* of mind, body, emotions, and spirit would be a major theme in my intellectual, emotional and creative development. This theme of balance resurfaced in this research study and also in the subject being researched.

As a prominent scholar in the research field, McNiff (1998) commented in *Art-Based Research* on the need for new ways of conceptualizing research paradigms to include arts-based subjects:

I feel that attempts to further variety through the creation of new typologies of 'qualitative' research contribute to the increasing emphasis being placed on teaching stock research methods. Establishing lists of types creates the impression that the categories are all-inclusive. When "phenomenological", "heuristic", and "hermeneutic" methods are designated as "qualitative research" methodologies, they are presented as aspects of behavioral science. These procedures are larger in scope. The effort to include them in an expanded scientific paradigm is a reflection of scientism which assumes that science is the only tool for understanding human experience. (p. 14)

Later in this discussion, McNiff went on to say,

The greatest challenge presented by art-based research is the boundless possibilities. It is much easier to approach the design of a research project through a sequence of standard steps. In keeping with the nature of creative experience, art-based research may sometimes encourage immersion in the uncertainties of experience, 'finding' a personally fulfilling path of inquiry, and the emergence of understanding through an often unpredictable process of exploration. These values are quite different from the teaching of research through the planned implementation of a set of principles established in advance. Art-based inquiry, like art itself, may often include carefully calculated studies but the truly distinguishing feature of creative discovery is the embrace of the unknown. This way of research is clearly self-selecting and not for everyone. However, it must be made available for those artists who desire to use their skills and unique sensitivities to research their experience. (pp. 15-16)

The Qualitative Research Paradigm

Some research methodologies seemed better suited to the educational components of this study while some seemed more appropriate to the social action component. The arts component offered yet another perspective when considering a suitable methodology. The essential interdisciplinary nature of this inquiry, which spans the arts, social theory, and educational theory, made the choice of research methodology particularly challenging. The paradigm of qualitative research emerged clearly as the umbrella under which this entire inquiry would be conducted. Shank (2006), author of *Qualitative Research: A Personal Skills Approach,* examined the value of qualitative research as it related to this type of inquiry:

> What are some areas for research in which meaning is much more important than verification? Following are just a few examples. In my own research, I have been very interested in how people find sources of informal learning to enrich their lives. In this sort of research, meaning is front and center. Other researchers have been interested in tracking down that one unique person who can help us reconceptualize a field, and these researchers have brought their findings back to the world at large. Finally, qualitative research is very useful in discovering heritage-in-use, or practices that convey a way of understanding the everyday world. Research efforts can simultaneously uncover and critique these "gold mines" of ordinary meaning that permeate our everyday worlds. The list of examples is endless, and they all have one thing in common. Most of their basic questions would not make sense, as stated and then researched, from a traditional quantitative perspective. To work in the quantitative research world, they would have to be operationalized, or theorized, or objectified. Being able to *not* have to

do these things is one of the greatest strengths and promises of qualitative research. (p. 222)

Founding Lovewell Institute and developing the Lovewell Method have provided an unending series of "these 'gold mines' of ordinary meaning that permeate our everyday worlds" (Shank, 2006, p. 222). Breakthroughs occur everyday in Lovewell workshops as children discover new ways to learn, new ways to heal, and new ways to perceive life. Over the years, I have often wondered why more research has not been conducted in the area of the synergetic interplay between the arts, education, social transformation, and personal development. Now, I know why. Capturing these breakthroughs and converting them into useful research data is a subtle and tedious task. I now understand why so many practitioners in this field would rather just do the work than do the research. But the evolution of qualitative research has made this task a bit easier. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p. 4).

It is important to point out that this PDE/dissertation pauses at the intersection of art and science. This can be a dangerous intersection for an artist/scholar. Eisner (2002) eloquently expressed the perils of this crossing:

The influence of psychology on education had another fall-out. In the process science and art became estranged. Science was considered dependable, the artistic process was not. Science was cognitive, the arts were emotional. Science was teachable, the arts required talent. Science was testable, the arts were matters of preference. Science was useful and the arts were ornamental. It was clear to many then as it is to many today which side of the coin mattered. As I said, one relied

on art when there was no science to provide guidance. Art was a fall-back

position. (p. 2)

Perhaps more research focused on this area might contribute to bridging the

apparent chasm between science and the arts by pointing out scientific structure in the

artistic process, as well as implementing more artful approaches to scientific inquiry. The

study of Lovewell Institute calls for an interactive form of research to align with the

philosophy of the organization predicated on empowering learners through the creative

process. Many of the activities utilized in Lovewell workshops center on engaging the

participants in exercises that focus on expanding creativity. According to Brearley (2000)

in her article "Exploring the Creative Voice in an Academic Context," qualitative

research permits the researcher to invite the reader to share the experience, as follows:

To engage with research represented in creative form is a creative act in itself.

The invitation to the reader in creative forms of representation is different from

the invitation in a traditional piece of research. This is based on the belief that

meaning is not encountered, but constructed and that the act of constructive

interpretation is a creative event (Barone & Eisner, 1997). The use of the

language of "writer" and "reader" does not fit in such a model. What were once

passive readers can now be invited into an experience, through the lens of their

own world…. Creative representation of research data seeks to explore a deeper

understanding of the complexity of human experience through the use of a new

vocabulary. It also challenges many of the conventions of the academy. (p. 1)

I have chosen to use several distinct but synchronous qualitative approaches to the

design of this arts-based research project. The methods are synthesized in an effort to

capture the nuances of the data and maximize the depth of the observations. The merging

of several qualitative research methodologies resulted in a symbiosis that permitted the researcher to effectively and authentically unite with the research. According to Deacon (2000),

> Qualitative research can be systematic and rigorous and still be innovative, creative, and actively dynamic. . . . The goal is to make research engaging for everyone involved, while at the same time capturing the real experiences of dynamic, multi-dimensional, living systems. (p. 8)

Integrated and Layered Research Methods

This study was comprised of three research questions. The first question was, "What is Lovewell?" Chapters 4 through 9 of this PDE/dissertation endeavor to answer that question through a blend of historiography and autoethnography. The second research question was, "How does Lovewell affect its constituents?" The Lovewell archive contains a wealth of information concerning the effects of the Lovewell Method and process on students, parents, staff, and communities in the form of written evaluations, press, and editorial articles. This archive includes videos of interviews with parents, students, teachers, and community leaders discussing various aspects of the programs from numerous perspectives. Endorsement correspondence and grant applications also contain valuable data. Scripts, lyrics, songs, DVDs, CDs, and videos of the interdisciplinary artworks created by the students and staff through the Lovewell process contain valuable documentation of the issues being examined as well as the method and styles in which students articulate and confront those issues. Also, in regard to the second research question, I designed and administered a 5-point Likert Survey Questionnaire to the participants in a Lovewell summer workshop. This information was examined through a more conventional qualitative analysis; however, the integration and

layering of historiography and autoethnography continued to play a part in the interpretation of this data.

The third research question was, "What is Lovewell's potential for growth and what new relevant theories can be derived from this research?" In Chapter 13, "Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusions," I endeavor to answer the third question by synthesizing all the research data and fusing it into a discussion of the conclusions and recommendations that can be drawn from this study. It is an evaluation and interpretation of the combined data utilizing a blend of all of the methodologies previously employed in this study: historiography, autoethnography, and traditional qualitative methods.

Historiography and Autoethnography

As I contemplated the best approach to designing the research for this study, I realized that being the *primary* historiological source (Block, 1971), and having access to all the artifacts connected with Lovewell Institute, was only the beginning of my quest to understand and articulate what I had witnessed. Not only had I collected the history and documentation, but also I had *experienced* the events and the people who breathed life and infused creativity into the organization (Alexander, 1987; Campbell, 1995; Dewey, 1934). I needed a research design component that allowed me to fully utilize my knowledge *and* experience in an epistemological sense. Janesick (1994) shed light on this challenge in a passage from the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*:

> In addition, the qualitative researcher is very much like an artist at various stages in the design process, in terms of situating and recontextualizing the research project within the shared experience of the researcher and the participants in the study. Dewey sees art as the bridge between the experience of individuals and the

community. In other words, art forces us to think about how human beings are related to each other in their respective worlds. (p. 210)

Historiography raises questions about what constitutes an historical event. I am certain that the birth, growth, and influence of Lovewell Institute and the Lovewell Method is at least a story worth telling. Some historiographical narratives are more important than others and only time will tell where this story stands on a scale of importance. A sense of history has to start somewhere, and I have been compelled to capture some of Lovewell Institute's history in these pages. This was a story I had to tell. White (1987) explained why personal narrative is important to historiographical writing in his book *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*:

So natural is the impulse to narrate, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report on the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent--or, as in some domains of contemporary Western intellectual and artistic culture, programmatically refused. Considered as panglobal facts of culture, narrative and narration are less problems than simply data. As the late (and profoundly missed) Roland Barthes remarked, narrative "is simply there like life itself . . . international, transhistorical, transcultural." (1) Far from being a problem, then, narrative might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling (2) the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific. (p. 1)

Historiography also raises the question of whether the historiographer should seek objectivity or simply come to terms with his or her own subjectivity. This question

opened the door to autoethnography in which the researcher consciously enters the

inquiry as an active participant in the research process well aware of the benefits and

pitfalls of subjectivity. Ellis (1999), a leading expert in the field of autoethnography,

described this methodology in her article, "Heartful Autoethnography," from the

Qualitative Health Research Journal:

> Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that
>
> displays multiple layers of consciousness. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze,
>
> first through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and
>
> cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a
>
> vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist
>
> cultural interpretations (cf. Deck, 1990; Neumann, 1996; Reed-Danahay, 1997).
>
> As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between
>
> the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition.
>
> Usually written in first person voice, autoethnographic texts appear in a variety of
>
> forms - short stories, poetry, fiction, novels, photographic essays, personal essays,
>
> journals, fragmented and layered writing, and social science prose. In these texts,
>
> concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-
>
> consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories
>
> impacted by history and social structure, which themselves are dialectically
>
> revealed through actions, feelings, thoughts and language. (p. 674)

Autoethnography, synthesized with historiography, emerged as the most effective

design by which to answer the first research question, "What is Lovewell?" In retrospect,

the process of founding Lovewell Institute and developing the Lovewell Method was a

research project in and of itself. The first step in this inquiry was seeing myself in the role

of an authentic "qualitative researcher" and accepting the responsibilities that accompany

that role. In the introduction to the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin &

Lincoln, 1994), I discovered a research concept that articulated my relationship with this

study:

> The multiple methodologies of qualitative research may be viewed as a bricolage,
>
> and the researcher as a *bricoleur*. Nelson, Treichler, and Grossberg (1992, p. 2),
>
> Levi-Strauss (1966, p. 17), and Weinstein and Weinstein, (1991, p. 161) clarify
>
> the meaning of these two terms. A *bricoleur* is a 'Jack of all trades or a kind of
>
> professional do-it-yourself person' (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17). The *bricoleur*
>
> produces a bricolage, that is, a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that
>
> provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation . . . The qualitative
>
> researcher-as-*bricoleur* uses the tools of his or her methodological trade,
>
> deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials as are at hand
>
> (Becker, 1989). If new tools have to be invented, or pieced together, then the
>
> researcher will do this. (p. 3)

One of the "new tools" that I have invented for this study is the use of a non-APA

style device in chapters 4 through 7. Interspersed throughout these historiographical

chapters there will be indented sections in Arial font set aside by single spacing that

express the autoethnographic perspective. In other words, the chronology of historical

events and activities will appear in standard APA format in Times New Roman font; the

contextualized reflective material will appear in Arial font, single-spaced, and indented.

Occasionally, the distinction between the historiographical sections and the

autoethnographic sections is blurred; however, in general, the autoethnographic sections

break the chronological flow and reflect upon the contextual influence that the historical

events have had on Lovewell Institute and the Lovewell Method.

Sampling

In my study, identifying the appropriate informants was a relatively straightforward exercise. The history and literature of Lovewell Institute was created by people I know and to whom I have access. In the case of the Likert Survey Questionnaire, I selected participants who had just completed the 2004 Lovewell Summer Workshop on the campus of NSU in Davie, Florida. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, "All sampling is done with some purpose in mind. Within the conventional paradigm that purpose almost always is to define a sample that is in some sense *representative* of a population to which it is desired to generalize" (pp. 199-200). The purpose of this study is to derive information regarding Lovewell Institute and the Lovewell Method, and all of the informants selected for this study are familiar, in some way, with the institute and the method. In that sense, they certainly represent the population that have knowledge and experience in the area being studied. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) maintained that,

> A good informant is one who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study (Morse, 1986, 1991b). *Primary selection* of participants describes the opportunity for the researcher to sample informants using these criteria. (p. 228)

Although this inquiry utilized several different research methodologies, all of the informants generally fit into this category of *primary selection*. Informants in the historical and autoethnographical portions of this study were observed over an extended period of time and were familiar with Lovewell Institute and the Lovewell Method as they were developing. Participants in the Likert Survey Questionnaire had just completed

an intensive 4-week workshop that was well-established and well developed.

Out of the 40 students in the 2004 Lovewell Summer Workshop who were offered the opportunity to participate in the Likert Survey Questionnaire, 29 students returned the Informed Consent Forms signed by their parents. Four additional students agreed to participate but did not meet the deadline for parental signatures and were not included in this study. Eighteen respondents were participants in the teen program and were between the ages of 13 and 18. Eleven respondents were participants in the junior program and were between the ages of 8 and 12. A description of the interdisciplinary art works they created during the 2004 Lovewell Summer Workshop appears in chapter 8. The teen program produced *Banned Together--A Musical Taking Liberties* (Lovewell Institute, 2004b), and the junior program produced *Art Divided--Art United* (Lovewell Institute, 2004a). The programs ran concurrently; however, they were staffed by separate Lovewell instructors in the arts disciplines (the administrator and technical director were shared by both programs). The survey was administered during the closure exercises on the day after the final performances.

The site selected for administering the Likert Survey Questionnaire was the cafeteria of NSU's Sonken Building where rehearsals for the workshop had taken place. It was safe, secure, peaceful, and familiar to the participants in the survey.

Data Gathering

I collected the data for this study in several different formats. The historiographical material was compiled from numerous appointment books; diaries; journals; newspaper articles; personal experience; observations; conversations with teachers, students, staff, artists, parents, board members, arts leaders, and experts in related fields; and a vast collection of interdisciplinary artworks, artifacts, and archives

that I had accumulated starting in the early 1980s when I began to formulate the organization that would become Lovewell Institute. The autoethnographic sections layered over the history were added later in an effort to interpret and give meaning to the historical data.

The real challenge with the collected data was determining what was actually relevant to this inquiry. The raw data consisted of thousands of pages related to the Lovewell programs, such as outlines of activities, contracts, scripts, musical scores, lyric sheets, proposals, audition specifications, facilities requests, marketing materials, letters from students and parents, minutes of board meetings, budgets, financial reports, and playbills. Then there were hundreds of hours of video and audio recordings of the material written and performed by the students including postproduction interviews with staff instructors, student participants, their parents, and their teachers. Although 20 years of gathering this information had been stimulating, the sheer volume of data was slightly overwhelming when it came down to the issue of relevancy. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated,

> Productive data collection is the most exciting phase of qualitative inquiry; during this phase, out of confusion, order and understanding *emerge*. But the emergence of this understanding does not take place without effort. Only with diligent observation and conceptual work on the part of the researcher do the patterns of relationships become apparent. This takes time, determination, persistence, and perseverance. (p. 229)

By focusing on the research questions, order and understanding did eventually begin to emerge out of the sea of raw data. The data derived from this historical and autoethnographic information directly informed the first research question, What is

Lovewell?

The second research question was "How Does Lovewell Affect its Constituents?" and required a different method of data collection. I devised a second format for the purpose of collecting new data that addressed the second question. This instrument was a conventional 5-point Likert Survey Questionnaire (see Appendix A). I designed the survey with the guidance of Dr. Sherry Penn, my first core faculty advisor at Union Institute & University, and Dr. Alan Altman, a research professor and colleague at NSU. There were numerous planning sessions with Dr. Penn and Dr. Altman regarding the nature of the questions used in the survey. There were 22 items on the questionnaire. The first 21 items were designed to measure the participants' attitudes regarding the Lovewell experience on an affective continuum ranging from *agree strongly* to *disagree strongly*. Item 22 asked the respondents to write and answer their own question regarding their experience at Lovewell. In chapter 12, I examine each attitudinal statement on the survey individually and endeavor to interpret the meaning and significance indicated by the responses (see Appendix C for a full view of the Combined Statistical Data of all of the respondents).

I administered the Likert Survey Questionnaire to 29 students enrolled in the 2004 Lovewell Summer Workshop. After studying the Union Institute & University's *Handbook for Research With Human Subjects*, I took the online tutorial and sent my 16-page research proposal to the Union Institute and University Institutional Review Board (UI&U IRB) for approval. It was approved by the UI&U IRB on July 10, 2004. Because all the subjects were 18 years or younger, the UI&U IRB determined that I needed to distribute two written forms to each participant, one of which their parents was required to sign and return to me. The first was a "Your Rights as a Participant" form (see

Appendix D) that let the participants know the parameters of the study and what the

expectations would be should they choose to participate. I explained the research study to

the students as I handed out the form. I assured them that they were absolutely not

required to participate; however, if they did, they would do so with complete anonymity.

The second document required by the UI&U IRB was the Informed Consent Form (see

Appendix E) that provided more detailed information regarding the research study and

secured the signed approval from the parent for their child's participation in the study.

This Likert Survey Questionnaire provided a wealth of new data that proved to be

very valuable in answering the second research question. There were, however, several

other sources of data that addressed how Lovewell affected its constituents. Over the

years, certain data were collected and analyzed in order to meet the requirements of

grants awarded to the Lovewell programs, and some evaluations were conducted to

gather information for Lovewell Institute and partnering organizations in an effort to

improve the quality of programs. Professional research consultants from institutions such

as Florida Atlantic University, NSU, Broward Cultural Council, the Boys & Girls Clubs

of Broward County, and the YMCA of Broward County have examined and assessed

several Lovewell programs.

The evaluations by Kline (1994) and by Rokicki and Rokicki (2000) both

intended to determine overall program effectiveness. The NSU (1995) evaluation

attempted other methods of assessing the effects of the Lovewell program on the

students' self-esteem and self-discipline. This was accomplished by using the

Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1984), an 80-item

standardized self-report survey designed to assess self-concept, and a 15-item rating scale

designed to measure a participant's productivity within the program. Pre- and

postprogram evaluations were administered and staff-artists were also interviewed. I was

not the researcher in those projects, but I was the artistic director and project director of

the Lovewell program being assessed and had access to the results of their findings.

Some of the findings were relevant to this study and are examined in chapter 12.

Yoon's (2000) doctoral dissertation, *Perceived Contributions of Educational*

Drama and Theatre: A Case Study of Lovewell Institute for the Creative Arts, although

not directly focused on the same issues as this PDE/dissertation, also provided some

insightful information and relevant raw data. Yoon used a qualitative research design for

his dissertation--an observational case study focusing on interviews and data derived

from Lovewell staff, students, and parents. Some of this data are contextualized and

examined in chapter 12.

Triangulation and Tacit Knowledge

Triangulation and tacit knowledge both played a role in the data collection phase

of this study, especially in regard to the third research question, "What is Lovewell's

Potential for Growth and What New Relevant Theories can be Derived From This

Research?" Denzin (1978) identified four basic types of triangulation: (a) data

triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d)

methodological triangulation. This inquiry utilized two of these types of triangulation.

First, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), data triangulation implies "the use of a

variety of data sources in a study" (p. 214). The wide variety of data sources already

mentioned above provided the information synthesized in addressing the third research

question.

The second type of triangulation employed in this study was methodological

triangulation, which indicated "the use of multiple methods to study a single problem"

(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 215). As mentioned earlier, I have used a combination of methods including historiography, autoethnography, and more conventional qualitative methods such as the Likert Survey Questionnaire. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that the quality and veracity of an inquiry might be improved by using various research methods because "the imperfections of one are cancelled out by the strengths of another" (p. 306). Lincoln and Guda went on to poetically describe how this occurs: "It is as though a fisherman were to use multiple nets, each of which had a compliment of holes, but placed together so that the holes in one net were covered by intact portions of other nets" (p. 306). This resonated with the way I believe that the various methods used in this study have been integrated to better illuminate the subject.

Tacit knowledge refers to information that is gleaned from more internal and often nonverbal sources. Moustakas (1990) stated, "In obtaining information that will contribute to resolution of an issue, or illumination of a problem, the tacit dimension underlies and precedes intuition and guides the researcher into untapped directions and sources of meaning" (p. 22). Because of my lengthy and intimate relationship with Lovewell Institute, I bring a substantial amount of tacit knowledge into this study. I have merged this tacit knowledge with external information gathered from the variety of other resources referred to earlier. According to Moustakas (1990),

> From the tacit dimension, a kind of bridge is formed between the implicit knowledge inherent in the tacit and the explicit knowledge which is observable and describable. The bridge between the explicit and the tacit is the realm of the between, or the intuitive. In intuition, from the subsidiary or observable factors one utilizes an internal capacity to make inferences and arrive at a knowledge of underlying structures or dynamics. . . . While the tacit is pure mystery in its focal

nature--ineffable and unspecifiable--in the intuitive process one draws on clues; one senses a pattern or underlying condition that enables one to imagine and then characterize the reality, state of mind, or condition. In intuition we perceive something, observe it, and look again and again from clue to clue until we surmise the truth. (p. 23)

In reviewing the historical events of Lovewell, the individuals who have animated the Lovewell Institute and Lovewell Method, and the statistical data generated through this study, I have found that I must finally rely on a certain amount of tacit knowledge in order to contextualize and articulate the meaning of what I have found. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that the naturalist researcher:

argues for the legitimation of tacit (intuitive, felt) knowledge in addition to propositional knowledge (knowledge expressible in language form) because often the nuances of the multiple realities can be appreciated only in this way; because much of the interaction between the investigator and respondent or object occurs at this level; and because tacit knowledge mirrors more fairly and accurately the value patterns of the investigator. (p. 40)

There was no way I was going to unlearn what I had learned about Lovewell, or "un-know" what I knew about how the organization and method had developed. What I could do was to make every effort to collect and analyze the old data *and* new data as a qualitative *researcher* instead of as a founder, artistic director, or board member. I used this study as an opportunity to take a fresh look at a familiar subject with an open mind to new perspectives and new possibilities. I have no desire to be a "salesman" for the Lovewell Institute or the Lovewell Method. There is no advantage to anyone in promulgating a method that is not effective or an institute that has no merit. This data

collection and analysis forced me to face hard questions concerning the real value and future of Lovewell Institute. With this in mind, I have come to value the contribution of tacit knowledge. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "Admitting tacit knowledge not only widens the investigator's ability to apprehend and adjust to phenomena-in-context, it also enables the emergence of theory that could not otherwise have been articulated" (p. 208).

Data Analysis

Bringing order and structure to the data collected in this study was largely a matter of focusing on the specific exigencies of each of the three research questions. A significant amount of data had been gathered before I designed the research model, so once the questions were devised, the analysis began immediately. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) stated, "The analysis of data begins shortly after the data collection commences and continues during the data collection and beyond" (p. 229).

My analysis of the accumulated data was predicated on the theory that the manner in which I had acquired knowledge and interfaced with the social world through creative process was not unique to me but applied to a much larger audience. Expressing myself creatively by writing songs, writing plays, and directing interdisciplinary productions were the means by which I learned history; social studies; human behavior; and discipline-specific skills in music, theatre, dance, and design. Creating realities on stage and then analyzing them empirically *and* through the lens of the audience, I was able to expand my knowledge of many subjects simultaneously. The joy I encountered through this method of learning motivated me to conceptualize Lovewell Institute in an effort to share that experience with others. My theory was that there were others who would benefit from this creative approach to learning and interfacing with the world.

Therefore, the analysis of this data was actually an extension of what I had been doing intuitively all my life. That is why this inquiry, in many ways, resembles a story. It is not a linguistic coincidence that this PDE/dissertation is entitled *The Story of Lovewell Institute: Its Vision, Theory and Method*. The historiographical and autoethnographic portions of this study could best be described as narrative analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explained as follows:

> To a striking extent, narrative analysis is rather loosely formulated, almost intuitive, using terms defined by the analyst (see Reissman, 1993). Narrative analysis typically takes the perspective of the teller, rather than that of the society, as in Propp's and Levi-Strauss's models. If one defines narrative as a story with a beginning, middle, and end that reveals someone's experiences, narratives take many forms, are told in many settings, before many audiences, and with various degrees of connection to actual events or persons. Thus themes, principal metaphors, definitions of narrative, defining structures of stories (beginning, middle and end), and conclusions are often defined poetically and artistically and are quite context bound. (p. 465)

Analysis of the Likert Survey Questionnaire was achieved through an interpretation of the statistical results of each of the 22 items included on the questionnaire. My interpretation of the numbers, percentages, and statistics involved an organizational strategy that required me to break down the results from the Likert Survey Questionnaire into categories and examine the data from a more conventional qualitative perspective. According to Shank (2006),

> The term analysis comes from the Greek verb analyein, which means "to break apart" or "to resolve into its elements" (Reese, 1996, p. 18). When we are looking

at analysis in terms of coding and meaning generation, this is a particularly apt

term. What is coding, other than the breaking down of data into its relevant parts

or elements? But we have also seen data handling and synthesis that strives to

keep the data whole. Here, we are interested in seeing how phenomena can be

understood on their own terms, and at their own levels. (p. 165)

Item 22 on the Likert Survey Questionnaire asked the respondents to "Write your

own question regarding your experience at Lovewell and answer it" (see Appendix A for

the full Likert Survey Questionnaire). Four major themes emerged from the responses to

Item 22: (a) acceptance, (b) the value of creative process training and transfer, (c)

friendship, and (d) confidence building.

Trustworthiness

Having investigated the research methodologies of historiography and

autoethnography, I am well aware of the potential dangers of introducing *self* into the

inquiry. McNiff (1998) shed light on this issue:

The introspective nature of artistic inquiry increases the problems of self-

immersion. This pitfall is accompanied by the fear that a more personal approach

to research will fail to generate information that is useful to others. Our personal

voices, beliefs, backgrounds, and interests are critically important contributors to

experiential inquiry, but we must use these attributes to connect to others, the

traditions of knowledge, and the current needs of our profession. (p. 151)

Since I have stepped back from the daily activities of Lovewell Institute and no

longer receive any remuneration from the organization, I have become more circumspect

than I was during the formative years. My genuine desire to "generate information that is

useful to others" (McNiff, 1998, p. 151) has hopefully overpowered any inclination to

prejudice the results of the study. My primary goal in answering the third question (What is Lovewell's potential for growth and what new relevant theories can be derived from this research?) was to derive meaning from the research data that would have some value to Lovewell Institute and to the domains of interdisciplinary arts, education, and social action. The issue of *meaning construction* was addressed in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994):

> Qualitative evaluation á la Eisner or Guba and Lincoln is unabashedly subjective, unapologetically imbued with the individual perspectives and frames of the inquirer. No apologies are offered here for two main reasons. First, along with many in and outside of interpretivism, these theorists maintain that objectivity--understood as distanced detachment and neutrality intended to guard against bias and thereby to insure the attainment of truth--is not possible and therefore should be rejected as a regulative ideal for social inquiry. Second, from an interpretivist perspective, it is precisely the individual qualities of the human inquirer that are valued indispensable to meaning construction. In fact, Eisner's evaluation theory directly calls upon the substantive expertise of the individual connoisseur or expert. With a conjoint grounding in the arts, this theory highlights the enlightened eye and the seasoned judgment of the inquirer, along with his or her expertise in representation or in making public what has been seen. (p. 539)

During my investigation into autoethnography, I discovered that two colleagues at NSU were experts in the field and had taught courses and published articles on the methodology. Dr. Douglas Flemons and Dr. Shelly Green provided me with valuable resources that helped clear the path for this study and provide regulatory guidelines that assure trustworthiness. They suggested a book that I have frequently cited in this study,

Naturalistic Inquiry by Lincoln and Guba (1985). One of the relevant topics discussed in their book is establishing trustworthiness. This information was especially meaningful as I labored with answering my third research question:

> The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? (Lincoln & Guba, p. 290)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) went on to suggest that in order to assure trustworthiness, inquirers ask themselves questions based on these four construct areas: (a) truth value, (b) applicability, (c) consistency, and (d) neutrality. These questions gave me some helpful guidelines as I set about the task of authenticating and assessing the acceptability of this study (Dey, 1993; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) described these same four areas in slightly different terms: "Trustworthiness consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (these are the constructionist equivalents of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity" (p. 508). In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how I addressed the issue of trustworthiness within the construct of these four components.

   Credibility (truth value). Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggested that there are several techniques that increase the probability of credibility. Among those techniques are prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity, and member checks. I have employed some of these techniques. In terms of prolonged engagement, I have engaged in ongoing conversations over the span of 20 years with educators, arts professionals, lawyers, health professionals, and

social activists regarding the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of

Lovewell Institute and the Lovewell Method. Knowing that my autoethnography is a

work in progress, I have poured over journals, letters, appointment books, and random

expressive writing samples in an effort to separate the facts from the fiction and the

personal bias from the universal truths.

Persistent observation has been a way of life for me on practically a day-to-day

24-hour basis over the last 20 years. All four of my children have attended many

Lovewell workshops and my oldest child, after interning for several years, is now

becoming a full-fledged staff member for the summer workshop. My wife has played in

the orchestra for numerous Lovewell productions. The staff members often meet at my

home to discuss programmatic and staffing issues. I meet with the board of directors

frequently to discuss strategic planning and financial issues. I have observed the

Lovewell process from various perspectives including founder, instructor, board member,

parent, and audience member.

I have also had the privilege of peer debriefing with several colleagues on the

faculty of NSU. Guba and Lincoln (1989) defined *peer debriefing* as

> The process of engaging, with a disinterested peer, in extended and extensive
>
> discussions of one's findings, conclusions, tentative analyses, and, occasionally,
>
> field stresses, the purpose of which is both testing out the findings with someone
>
> who has no contractual interest in the situation and also helping to make
>
> propositional that tacit and implicit information that the evaluator might possess.
>
> (p. 237)

It was helpful to discuss certain issues with peers who were outside of the context of

Lovewell because they could offer a more objective viewpoint of my relationship to the

data and the inquiry.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) considered member checks to be "the single most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 239). This technique involves testing and verifying the data and interpretations with the individuals and groups from whom the data were originally provided. I have had the opportunity to share data related to this study with Lovewell staff members, board members, and parents. They have verified certain data and made adjustments to some of my interpretations. The spirit of Lovewell has always been highly collaborative so this process of member checking has been a fairly natural extension of the procedure normally used in internal evaluations of the organization.

The *truth value* of this study has also been enhanced by the utilization of triangulation as described earlier in this chapter: According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "The technique of *triangulation* is the third mode of improving the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible" (p. 305).

Transferability (applicability). Transferability, sometimes referred to as applicability or external validity, is the process by which the findings of an inquiry might be generalized to other situations or used with a different population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1990). In the case of Lovewell Institute and the Lovewell Method, there are many arts-based educational programs looking for ways in which to become more effective and more creative. If some of the data in this study are applicable to other situations, those decision makers will ultimately determine the transferability. Lincoln and Guba stated that

> if there is to be transferability, the burden of proof lies less with the original
>
> investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere. The

original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do. The best advice to give anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate empirical evidence about contextual similarity; the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible. (p. 298)

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), providing sufficient descriptive data is also referred to as "thick description, a term first attributed to anthropologist Gilbert Ryle and elaborated by Clifford Geertz (1973)" (p. 241). Descriptive data and thick description are prevalent in this study and provide ample information to those seeking contextual similarity.

Dependability (consistency) and confirmability (objectivity). Shank (2006) stated "Dependability refers to our ability to know where the data in a given study comes from, how it was collected, and how it was used. Lincoln and Guba (1985) saw dependability as the qualitative correlate of reliability" (p. 114). In this study, I have addressed the issues of dependability and confirmability by describing in detail the process of where and how I collected the data, as well as how I have used these data to answer the three research questions. I have left an extensive "audit trail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 319) and archived a substantial "residue of records" (p. 319) including scripts, videotapes, evaluations, and all original copies of the Likert Survey Questionnaire results. According to Lincoln and Guba, "Two other techniques (triangulation and the keeping of a reflexive journal) suggested by Guba (1981) for confirmability will be seen to dovetail with the audit process and hence are no longer discussed independently" (pp. 318-319). Other techniques such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and member checks as discussed earlier in this chapter contribute to the dependability, confirmability, and

reliability of this study. In chapter 8, the themes chosen by workshop participants are examined and the scripts and videos of the productions that the participants created are available for examination by readers who wish to verify the findings. The Likert Survey Questionnaire results and the "other assessments" referred to in chapter 12 are also archived and available for verification.

Ethical Considerations

In sections of this study I have used direct quotes or references related to students, parents, and Lovewell personnel. Sometimes these individuals' real names are mentioned. In a few instances, I have changed the names because of the sensitive nature of the content. In cases where the actual names were used, I secured permission from the individuals by having them sign the Permission to be Referenced in Dissertation Form included in Appendix F. The Lovewell Method requires participants in the workshops to use their personal experiences as the raw material out of which to create their original interdisciplinary artworks. This part of the creative process encourages the students to examine and reflect upon certain possibly disturbing events in their personal history that would inform the theme of the production being created. Consequently, the staff is trained to deal with the strong emotions that occasionally arise out of this kind of self-scrutiny. In the telling of some of these stories, I have endeavored to maintain the participants' anonymity by changing the names or simply referring to each as "the student."

I felt that this section on *trustworthiness* was not complete without an explanation of the efforts I have made to assure that this study was ethically conducted. Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated,

We have observed that widely used texts on qualitative methods separate out

ethics discussions of reliability and validity. Our position is that these cannot be

separated. For a study to be trustworthy, it must be more than reliable and valid; it

must be ethical. (p. 63)

In the Likert Survey Questionnaire, total anonymity was achieved with all 28

respondents and their questionnaires. As stated earlier, I archived Informed Consent

Forms (see Appendix E for the blank form) signed by the parents of all 29 of the

respondents. Some of the Lovewell board members referred to in this inquiry are now

deceased, but permission for any unpublished references or quotations from living

persons has been secured with the Permission to be Referenced in Dissertation Form (see

Appendix F).

Crystallization

A compelling isomorphic phenomenon occurred while researching and

constructing this study. The Lovewell Method itself utilizes techniques that are parallel to

many of the techniques utilized in the design of this inquiry. The similarity of techniques

involves the way reflexive writing becomes an engaging and valid method of examining

internally and externally generated data simultaneously. The Lovewell Method uses

autobiography and reflection as sources of content for the dramatic productions created

through the process, much as I have used autoethnography and my own development as

an artist to create certain sections of this study dealing with learning styles and the ways

in which I absorb and integrate data. I have learned much from the plays I have written

and directed. The students of Lovewell are informed by the plays they write about their

lived experiences. Ethnographic drama was identified by Richardson (1994) as a

legitimate method of inquiry in a way that aptly describes some characteristics of the

Lovewell process:

Originating in the lived experience, encoded in field notes, transformed into an ethnographic play, performed, tape-recorded, and then reedited for publication, the printed script might well be fancied the definitive or "valid" version, particularly by those who privilege the published over the "original" or the performance over the lived experience. What happens if we accept this validity claim? Dramatic construction provides multiple sites of invention and potential contestation for validity, the blurring of oral and written texts, rhetorical moves, ethical dilemmas, and authority/authorship. It doesn't just "talk about" these issues, it *is* these issues. (p. 522)

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed triangulation as a technique I used to assure trustworthiness and validity in this study. This was the traditional explanation. Richardson (1991) proposed an entirely new approach to the subject of triangulation that seems to capture the depth and breadth to which this inquiry aspires:

I propose that the central image for "validity" for postmodernist texts is not the triangle--a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central image is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose. Not triangulation, crystallization. In postmodernist mixed-genre texts, we have moved from plane geometry to light theory, where light can be both waves and particles. Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of "validity" (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how

texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened,

complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. (p. 522)

This explanation resonates with my tacit knowledge regarding the need for a new

research paradigm calibrated to capture the nuances and validity of dramatic

ethnographic writing. The concept of crystallization applies to the subject being studied

in this inquiry as well as the process by which I have observed the data generated by this

study.

Here is a diagram that illustrates the blending of the various research

methodologies used in this study:

Research Methodologies
Engaged in the study of Lovewell Institute for the Creative Arts: It's Vision, Theory, and Method

Autoethnography
Longitudinal metacognative inquiry

Historiography
Researcher as
"primary source"

Lovewell Institute

Qualitative Methods
5-point Likert Survey,
Yoon Case Study (2000),
Examination of existing studies,
assessments and evaluations