HOW STUDENTS’ INTERPRETATION OF PLACE RELATE TO EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN HIGH SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

Schools are designed, renovated, and built without much consideration given to how students experience the very halls they walk or the classrooms they inhabit. As a result, educational researchers often render absent the impact of school places on students and overemphasize nonmaterial considerations such as curricula or accountability. This lack of knowledge leads educational stakeholders to assume that particular practices in teaching, organization, and policy will affect the educational experiences of students in beneficial ways. The purpose of this research is to explore students’ interpretation of the school environment, referred to as place, as it relates to the experiences in high school. The study used an in-depth interviewing strategy that involved a walking tour, individual interviews, and focus groups of 16 high school students from central Alabama. The findings suggest that the place of school is multidimensional. Place shapes us cognitively, emotionally, and physically. The study explores these dimensions in order to explain how place shapes us through experience. The results demonstrate that educational stakeholders can benefit from an understanding of how students perceive their schools and the particular places they comprise.
DEDICATION

For my daughters, Adrienne and Rachel, you are my greatest accomplishment.

For my husband, Jeff, thank you for believing in me.

For high school students everywhere, without whom there would be no value

in the place of schooling.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Whether the aim of public education is to give children an opportunity for social mobility and success that surpasses that of their parents (Muller & Schiller, 2005) or to produce citizens who can maintain and pass the nation’s values and goals to the next generation (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003), we can all agree that students should benefit from their time spent in educational institutions. Much educational research and reform centers on the development of curricula, promising practices of instruction, and efficient organizational structure. In comparison with research that addresses such structural aspects of education, very little empirical evidence exists regarding place and experience based on the interpretations from a high school student’s point of view. Central to this gap in scholarship is a distinct lack of knowledge concerning students’ interpretation of their school experiences.

As an educator for the past 20 years, I became aware of the social and economic aspects of place in many different schools in which I worked. I have seen much disparity in the physical facilities of schools as well as in the climate of the school environment. Some schools are austere, have neatly painted walls, manicured lawns, and a positive, supportive school climate. Other schools have peeling paint, rusted lockers, and a negative school climate. I wonder how students interpret these physical surroundings and the influence on their experiences. What is the relationship between place and the experience within these schools? I realized that “place” was much more complex than a singular physical location, and as such, influenced the experiences of the students in multiple ways.
The notion of “place” can cause confusion because of the multiple meanings of such a concept. Many researchers may use “place” as an object of analysis (Casey, 1998; Dant, 2005; Gruenewald, 2003; Tuan, 1977). The term *place* can refer to the physicality and materiality of those surroundings (Casey, 1998; Tuan, 1977). Place is also considered in terms of a continuous series of changes, a process, in one’s experience (Abram, 1996; Cannatella, 2007; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Wollan, 2003). The concept of place can range from a physical location to an all-encompassing idea about social environment. For the purposes of this study, place is a process comprised of the intersection of the material and social environment. Only when you start paying attention to place, do you realize the influence it has on our experiences. Regardless of your theoretical approach, place is important because it is part of the social context of experience in which meaning is constructed (Kuntz & Berger, 2011; Massey, 1994; Tuan, 1977).

**Place as Process**

Place is a process constructed through the material and social world. Others have explored the phenomenological aspect of place by seeking to understand the continuous process of feelings, actions, and emotions that constitute being and experience. I employ “being-in-place” (Cannatella, 2007, p. 622) as a theoretical framework in order to explore place as a process related to the experience of students in high school. Cannatella (2007) posited that the characteristics of place influence the development of self through an embodied sense of being-in-place. The process occurs through the way we inhabit place cognitively, emotionally, and physically. For example, cognitively, students know where the principal’s office is located. They make conscious and unconscious choices about the routes they take to avoid the principal’s office or to go by a friend’s locker. Emotionally, they may feel differently in the principal’s office than in the lunchroom. Physically, these emotions are expressed about the place by a tense
posture or a nervous wringing of the hands when called to the office. A series of changes occurs in the experience of the student based on the intersection of the material and the social environment.

The previous example illustrates how place can be used as a lens to analyze social environment. Place can also be used as lens to analyze the material environment. Casey (1998) perceived of school as a lived place, “place as it is felt from within kinesthetically and place as the arena which perceived bodies appear from without” (p. 224). This means that place is a thing that is intimately connected to the individuals therein. From classrooms to hallways to bathrooms, children are a part of the school. Casey (1998) explained that place has a virtual dimension because it is a place that one chooses to go and might incur possible action. Bodies and place are inseparable as well as distinct from each other. High school becomes a familiar place for the students because of the way they manage and negotiate the material environment as well as the social.

Researchers have cast an interpretative eye on place in order to understand how the built and material environments affect human beings. Tuan (1977) emphasized that place is a special kind of object because it is where humans embody feelings, images, and thoughts in a tangible way. A material environment can clarify social roles and relations. “Man-made space can refine human feeling and perception,” (Tuan, 1977, p. 102). For example, the designed environment, such as a high school, can reveal the social roles of students and teachers, jocks and nerds, or loners. The expression of bodily movements is unique to each place in that one acts differently in the classroom than in the gymnasium. The practices that result from the relationship between human and object are embodied practices (Dant, 2005; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Tuan, 1977) as
seen in the actions of the students in hallways and classrooms. A building, such as a school, can articulate a social order or impact senses and feelings.

This study represents an alternative exploration of public schooling in order to understand the intersection of the material and social environments in school. Using the school as the object of analysis can provide an option to the conventional views of schooling. Exploring the way in which place shapes experience can benefit students by helping educational institutions provide positive experiences in the social, cultural, and academic realms of school.

**Statement of the Problem**

Schools are designed, renovated, and built without much consideration given to how students experience the very halls they walk or the classrooms they inhabit. As a result, educational researchers often render absent the impact of school places on students and overemphasize nonmaterial considerations such as curricula or accountability. This lack of knowledge leads schools to assume that particular practices in teaching, organization, and policy will affect the educational experiences of students in beneficial ways. This project addresses the dynamic intersection of place as process and student experiences. The goal is to highlight the relationship between place and experience in schooling in order to better inform those who make educative decisions.

**Purpose**

Understanding student experience is key to instigating productive change in educational institutions. The purpose of this research is to explore students’ interpretation of place as it relates to the educational experience. Specifically, students’ interpretation of place is the entry point to examining the relationship between students and their experiences within the practices of the school environment.
Research Questions

Bourdieu (1990) explained that knowledge is constructed through experiences within a place. Interpretation of such “lived experiences” (van Manen, 1990) by students can provide insight into how they make sense of their educational experiences. With this in mind, the following questions explore the complex school environment as related to place.

Research Question 1: What school places have social significance for high school students?

Research Question 2: What meanings do students give to the places they occupy?

Research Question 3: How does navigation of these places influence how students experience schooling?

Research Design

In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative methodology was chosen for the study. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that enables a descriptive study of individual, lived experiences within a specific context and setting. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explained that a qualitative approach attracts researchers because “they seek strategies of empirical inquiry that will allow them to make connections among lived experiences, larger social and cultural structures, and the here and now” (p. 367). In order to explore the proposed connections in this study, a qualitative approach lent itself to face-to-face encounters and interactions in which such data could be collected. The chosen strategies for collecting the empirical evidence for this study used the three interview series framework (Seidman, 1998). The walking tour, individual interview, and focus group complement each other by the depth that can be achieved in each subsequent interview.

Because the nature of the study focuses on exploring individual lived experiences, interviewing enabled a descriptive study that stresses the importance of context, setting, and
participants’ worldviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The process of interviewing provides a narrative approach to access data through which people describe their world and is not intended to qualify the “external realities” (Silverman, 2000, p. 821) of the participants. This means that the interview can only serve to gain the perspectives of the participants and does not reflect an exact truth about those experiences. This type of interviewing was chosen because it provides structure, as well as flexibility, in collecting students’ personal accounts of their high school.

The in-depth interviewing strategy for this study included three types of interviews with 16 students. At the beginning of the study, the first interview format was an informal, conversational walking tour of the school conducted with 16 selected participants individually. Each interview began with participants drawing a map of their school and then walking with me around the school and talking about the school. These interviews lasted from 1 to 1 ½ hours. During the tour, the interviews were recorded. They were transcribed within one week of the actual interview. Field notes recorded the sequence of places and comments about the places. Inductive analysis based on word frequency was the method for analyzing the findings.

After the first interviews were completed, the same 16 participants were interviewed individually. Open-ended questions were based on the findings from the walking tour. Individual interviews lasted from 1 to 1 ½ hours. The interviews were recorded and transcribed within one week of each interview. Inductive analysis based on word frequency and thematic coding were the methods used for analyzing the findings. Additionally, the students had the opportunity in a third interview to reflect on their transcribed interviews and the meanings of the school experience.

At the end of the study, focus groups were used to confirm and disconfirm findings from the previous interviews. Open-ended questions and group activities such as knowledge ratings,
word sorts, and brainstorming provided opportunities for the participant to consider the findings. Each focus group interview lasted one hour. Four focus groups, with 4 to 5 members each, were organized by grade. The personal responses and the interviews of the high school students were used in the analysis. The combination of the interview with the activities provided opportunities for the participants to contribute to the conversation in greater depth. The interviews were flexible, interactive, and generative in nature in order to achieve depth of description (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

**Participant Selection**

A small high school in central Alabama was chosen for this study. Purposive sampling of the 331 students in 9th through 12th grades was used to select the participants. This means that each student was selected because she/he had a particular attribute that had relevance to the research questions and as well as provided diversity in the selection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Because the population was fairly homogenous, the sample selection included internal diversity. The selection criteria included age, gender, extracurricular activities, and academic achievement. Sixteen participants were chosen for the study. Although this is a small sample in comparison to a quantitative study, the choice of 16 students provided a depth of analysis and information that is rich in detail and multidimensional (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Stake, 2000). The study was approved by the University of Alabama Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A).

**Data Analysis**

The sociological tradition of collecting and analyzing data “treats text as a window into human experience” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 769). The transcription of free-flowing text from open-ended interviews provided the content for analysis of words and phrases. One form of analysis used a data reduction of key words, and the other form coded the text based on themes.
Use of the qualitative software program QSR International’s Nvivo9 (2010) helped organize the
data into the conceptual categories needed for the study. It should be noted that qualitative
software assisted in data management, but the final analysis and interpretation rested with the
researcher (Weitzman, 2000).

Ryan and Bernard (2000) explained that researchers must make judgments about the text
as they analyze it. With this in mind, a basis for choosing key words and themes was needed.
Key words were chosen based on naming places, emotions, and actions. Common sense
constructs and past experience about the place of school and educational experiences were also
used. The data analysis involved analyzing key words and dialogue with qualitative software.

The data base was comprised of 16 hand-drawn maps, 16 informal interviews, 16
structured interviews, eight follow-up content checks, and four focus group interviews. Such in-
depth analysis of free flowing text assisted in identifying patterns and meanings within the
interviews. Analysis provided insight into how students interpreted place and in what ways their
educational experiences were influenced by aspects of the school environment. Using a
qualitative software program improved consistency in searching, speed in analyzing, better
representation of the data, and consolidation of the interviews (Weitzman, 2000).

**Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study could contribute empirical evidence to existing research,
influence policy formation, and provide an important voice in the school reform conversation.
The goal of the study is to better understand the intersection of student experience and the school
environment. Specifically, this study can add to existing research by challenging traditional
views of school reform. A student’s voice has value in the educational discourse. Student
perspectives can shift the focus from the accountability of education as a product to the power of schooling as process.

1. This study can add to the existing body of knowledge about place and the educational experience. The influence of place on experience is well documented and theorized by the likes of Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), Casey (1998), and Dant (2005). The many factors associated with the educational experiences such as curricula, resources, teaching, and learning encompass the contexts of schooling (Petrin, 2005). Yet, little empirical evidence exists about the influence of place as specifically related to practices that occur within educational experiences. Much discourse surrounds place as object; I hope to highlight the influence of place as process.

2. This study can provide empirical evidence to challenge the traditional views of school reform policy that have omitted the voices of students in the equitable education conversation. The Coleman Report (1966) cited the inability of school reform efforts to close achievement gaps and address the inequities in schools. Many policies have been enacted to address these inequities, ranging from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) to the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). However, this critique of school reform efforts has continued. It seems that policymakers may be so far removed from students that they have no idea how policy affects those who are on the receiving end of school reform efforts.

3. By seeking the students’ interpretation of place, an often lost voice is included in the discourse related to education. Enough evidence exists to support the value of multiple voices when making important decisions about schooling (Fullan, 2007). Thus, providing the students in a small, rural community the opportunity to contribute to such a conversation can give a new perspective to decision-making about educational institutions. Although school reform policy addresses many aspects of schooling, little attention has been paid to how students’ responses to
place intersect with the results of governmental policies intended to reform educational institutions. Place as a component of school reform has the capacity to improve the schooling experience as a whole.

**Limitations**

A limitation of the study is the entry point with which I am viewing schooling. Because I am focusing on the student experience of schools, the study does not address other users of similar places, such as custodians, teachers, or administrators. I acknowledge this limitation; however, I also recognize the importance and benefits of gaining an in-depth knowledge of student experiences of schools.

In-depth interviewing has limitations as well. Because interviewing requires personal interaction between the researcher and participant, cooperation is essential to the quality of the interview results. Interviewing is not a neutral tool in research because the interviewer and the interviewee bring prior experiences and different perspectives to the interview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Because my purpose is not to get exact answers to exact questions but to better understand students and their experiences, in-depth interviewing is the most appropriate choice of method.

My positionality on the topic of study may prove to be a limitation because of my preconceived notions about student engagement in the learning process and the school environment. I have been in education for 20 years as a classroom teacher, central office reading coach, state department of education literacy coach, and now instructor in a college of education. I have a progressive and social reconstructionist philosophy concerning education. I believe schools should be student centered and work to help students make a difference in their communities. As the research progressed, I had to consciously put aside my prejudices about
what “I thought a good school should be” in order to focus on the students’ interpretation of their school.

The use of qualitative software presents its own limitations. Cautions concerning the use of qualitative software are explained by Weitzman (2000). It is important to avoid allowing software components such as “autocoding” do the analysis or let the codes shape the analysis. With this understanding, I have chosen to use Nvivo9 qualitative software because of its ability to handle large amounts of data, its ease and efficiency of use, and its ability to assist with the conceptualization of the data.

**Key Terms**

The terms used in a research study may have different meanings based on the context in which such terms are used. The more common terms have been defined in the next section to clarify the concepts used to explore the research question.

*Place* is a process constructed through the intersection of the material and the social environment.

*Being-in-place* encompasses the following (Cannatella, 2007):

- *Objective place* refers to the physical properties of an environment and that which can only be perceived through the senses.

- *Dwelling* means having a sense of place. Dwelling in place is achieved as one participates, engages, and perceives through our body and senses.

- *Embodiment* is expression through bodily actions and intentional bodily movements.

*Environment* represents the social and cultural forces that shape the life of a person.

*Process* is a continuous action or series of changes that occur in a definite manner.
Experience is commonly understood as the conscious awareness and understanding of reality and the events of one’s life (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen expanded this concrete definition of experience to explain the “lived experience” as an experience that involves the awareness of self in the experience.

- **The lived space (spatiality)** can be described as how one feels in a physical place.
- **Lived time (temporality)** moves based on our feelings or meaning attached to how we feel about the experiences.
- **The lived body (corporeality)** means that we are bodily in the world. The experiences students engage are done by and through the body.
- **The lived other (relationality)** encompasses the relationships we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them.

Practices can be described as an embodied sequence of habitual or repeated actions learned through the culture (Dant, 2005). Practice can be described as “the recurrent categories of talk or action” that “are regularized features of everyday life” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 123).

Episodes are experiences that are unpredictable and dramatic events (Lofland et al., 2006). Episodes do not occur regularly and include such examples as divorce, death, victimization, or natural disasters.

Encounters are microexperiences that involve the coming together of two or more persons (Lofland et al., 2006). Physical presence and intent of mutual involvement constitutes an encounter.
Conclusion

Although it is not within the scope of this study to address all the factors that impact educational experiences, exploring the students’ interpretations of place can give insight into one aspect of school environment. Places are centers of experience and thus teach us about how the world works and shape our identity. Once the student perspective is accessed through in-depth interviewing and analysis, the findings could provide an alternate voice in the school reform conversation. Understanding the students’ perspective can shed light and provide guidance when making decisions about aspects of education. The place of high school from the student’s viewpoint can help us appreciate how students experience the world of education as human beings. The relationship between place and experience is important to explore because it is one key to helping educators be cognizant of their affect on the lives of students that attend high school.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the purpose, significance, and design of the study. Chapter 2 offers “being-in-place” (Cannatella, 2007) as a framework for thinking about place as a process and the perceptions of the material and social environments. The “lived experience” (van Manen, 1990) serves as the framework for analyzing interpretation of experience. Chapter 3 describes the qualitative approach used in the study for data collection and analysis of the high school students’ interpretation of place and the experiences within high school. Chapter 4 describes the findings gathered from the series of interviews and correlates the results to the theoretical frameworks described in chapter 2. Chapter 5 concludes the study with a phenomenologically informed discussion of the participants’ experiences within socially constructed realities. This is achieved by charting the students’ navigation of their school environment through a composite analysis of their school day. Specifically, I am orienting the
analysis to social/ transgressive spaces and academic spaces. It is understood that these spaces can be mutually inclusive.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An educational institution is more than just a school building and parking lots. The term *school* can conjure up images of buildings, friends, enemies, smells, lunchroom food, pep rallies, homework, favorite teachers, and despised classes. The “place of school” is actually a process constructed through the intersection of senses, perception, and action. Social and cultural forces are at work in the experiences that shape the life of students within school. Due to compulsory education laws, school is one of the primary public institutions where teenagers spend countless hours exerting social, emotional, and psychological energy. Thoughtful consideration of the “place of school” is important because this is where young people act, think, feel, learn, socialize, communicate, and develop on a daily basis.

As a topic for educational research, place has been subsumed by the emphasis on such issues as curricula, school reform, or equity in education. Adding the school environment as a dimension of such issues can better inform the research implications for the school experience as a whole. Operationalizing place as a process contributes to the concrete application of theory to practice. Educational stakeholders can benefit from developing a general understanding of students’ conceptions of school as a place. Applying this understanding to the school experience can promote action to create schools as positive learning environments.

The desire of those in qualitative research to access multiple voices is not new and has provided valuable perspectives about the social context of the school experience. The students’ interpretation of place in the educational experience is important to consider because they are
most intimately involved in and influenced by school, whether in a beneficial manner or not. Student voices can provide fresh insight into aspects of schooling that have been overlooked by traditional approaches in education.

The purpose of this review is to provide a framework for thinking about place, students, and their experiences of school. Many scholars and researchers have studied, explored, and investigated the influence of place and experience in other institutions. My intent of the review is to demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between place and experience. The following topics structure this discussion:

1. The definition of place.
2. The conceptual framework of being-in-place (Cannatella, 2007).
3. Examples of the cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions of being-in-place.
5. A synthesis of place and experience.
6. Types of experiences in social settings.

Through this review of literature, I make the case that this study can fill a gap in the research because it addresses place as a process in the experience of students. From this platform, I then discuss educational experiences that are promoted within the school environment.

**Place Matters**

*The places we inhabit physically, emotionally, and cognitively help to form an essential aspect of our phenomenological selves.*


School places are important because they influence social experience. Cannatella (2006) explained that places do matter because of three characteristics that contribute to the process of
being-in-place: (1) *Objective place* describes the material environment and organizational structures that are perceived through cognition; (2) Emotional connections are present when one “*dwells in place.*” This refers to engaging, perceiving, and giving to the experiences of the place; (3) *Embodiment* of place is the physical movement and expression by the body. Place as a process is foundational to the on-going and ever-changing interaction of these dimensions. Interpretations of place shape experiences in the material and social environments of human beings. Although distinct, the three characteristics of place cannot be separated because each relies on the other to form a sense of being. The environment is dynamic. Being-in-place involves a multidimensional process of adjusting and refining one’s interpretations of place. It is the process by which cognition, emotion, and embodiment of an environment shape experience. A question posed by Howard Cannatella (2007) gets to the heart of understanding place from a high school student’s perspective.

Is the world of education too preoccupied with other things to concern itself with the experience of the self in place, the idea of reaching to a place, sustaining a place that is mine, to become part of a place as a place that is intimately felt, a place that changes as a consequence of the self being there? (p. 626)

Conventional thinking about schools seeks to help students succeed academically, be prepared for work, or communicate well. Cannatella (2007) expressed that students experience the place of school in ways that do not align with traditional educative discourse. The school environment shapes students in a variety of ways. For example, imagine going to a strange and unfamiliar place. You try to perceive things you recognize through visual or auditory senses. Images and sounds are unfamiliar. Consciously or unconsciously, you try to orient yourself to the new place. You feel challenged or uncomfortable and look for clues as to where to stand or move. You watch others for acceptable or unacceptable behaviors. This example illustrates how place is a process of thinking, feeling, and reacting. Students recognize the structure of school
through mental processes of cognition. Once oriented, they have emotions, dispositions, and motivations that influence how they feel in the school environment and the way they act and react to situations.

Place can change us cognitively and emotionally by the transference of societal and individualistic values. *American Individualism: Child Rearing in Three Neighborhoods* by Kusserow (2004) illustrates such change through the child-rearing practices of parents. Kusserow conducted a 2-year ethnographic study to explore individualistic tendencies in the child-rearing practices of three neighborhoods. The findings suggest that parents prepared their children for different classed futures based on the social class in which they moved. This study also is a good example of the way in which place can shape experience.

Cognition, the perception of the material environment, is one way in which children can make sense of their social world. Kusserow (2004) explained that the neighborhood in which the children lived differed economically and racially. Each neighborhood was representational of a particular social class that could be recognized through the material environment. Parkside, which was a wealthy, mainly White neighborhood, looked different from Kelley, a White, working-class community in Queens. Kelley was similar to Queenstown in socioeconomic status but differed in the ethnic composition of the residents. Queenstown neighborhoods consisted of a mixed ethnicity, somewhat lower class, working community. Cognition, as a dimension of being-in-place, enabled the children to recognize the material environment of their communities.

Place can change one emotionally. The findings of Kusserow’s (2004) study demonstrate that the place in which one lives influences the personality needed. Based on where the families lived, parents prepared their children emotionally by teaching individualistic tendencies. Parents from Queenstown emphasized a protective individualism that protects oneself from violence,
poverty, and misfortune. The place where this was seen the most was in tough neighborhoods. Projective individualism was taught to the children that lived in Kelley. The parents in this neighborhood used child-rearing practices that focused on encouragement to better oneself economically and develop a sense of community. Parents from Parkside prepared their children emotionally through psychologized individualism. This means that child-rearing practices focused on understanding of self. Feelings, rights, and uniqueness of the children were the important values. Through the emotional dimension of being-in-place, the children were influenced by child rearing practices to “dwell in place.” They developed a sense of place through the dispositions, motivations, personality, and mood of the people in their neighborhood.

Place can change us physically in that our bodily actions are dictated by needed responses in particular places. Children from each neighborhood were taught how to act and react in places they lived (Kusserow, 2004). Parents from Kelley and Queenstown prepared their children to have tendencies of hard individualism. This type of individualism reflected a resilient self that is strong enough to protect itself or project itself into a higher social class. A child’s independence was highly valued and enacted within the constraints of routine and order. Soft individualism tendencies were taught by the parents from Parkside in raising their children. This type of parenting emphasized the delicacy of the child’s self. Parents reared their children with extreme care, resources, and a gentle touch. It would seem that children who embodied resilience as a form of individualism acted differently than those that were raised with a gentle touch.

The theoretical framework of being-in-place is a way to analyze how material and social environments shape us through cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions. The dimensions of being-in-place operate in physical and social settings, sometimes referred to as environment. The dimensions of place operate collectively and simultaneously as a process. However, the
following review of literature explicates specific examples of each dimension from previous studies for the purpose of clarity.

**Cognitive Dimensions of Being-in-Place**

The cognitive dimension of being-in-place is important because a person exists locally somewhere and continually makes sense of a place. We are able to locate ourselves within an environment through the mental processes of cognition. Objective place refers to the physical properties of an environment that can only be perceived through the senses. Place is inhabited cognitively through the perception of, thinking about, and speaking in a physical setting. The senses are the modes through which a person knows and constructs reality (Tuan, 1977). For example, the architecture of a school is a designed environment with intentional educational purposes that influence the visual, tactile, auditory, and kinesthetic senses. Unintentional consequences of the design are less obvious but nonetheless experienced by the students. Classrooms with square dimensions and tiny windows, long halls and bare walls, trophy cases, and polished gym floors convey meaning regardless of intentions.

**Objective Place and Material Environment**

Objective place is comprised of the material environment, the perception of the senses, and the organizational structure. Objective place provides a qualitative medium through which the inequities of schools can be made visible. Several studies have exposed the blatant disparities in the material environment of school experiences for students. For example, Kozol (1992) wrote the seminal book *Savage Inequalities* in order to describe the conditions of schools across the nation. From physical facilities to teachers to books to curriculum, he described the differences between urban and suburban schools. He visited four geographical areas and observed 30 schools, interviewed parents, teachers, and students, and examined standardized test data in
Illinois, New York, Mississippi, and Texas. He concluded that urban students were negatively affected by the unequal treatment. Urban students were aware of the disparities between their schools and suburban schools. Such awareness was interpreted cognitively by the students and changed cultural expectations, feelings of self-worth, or aspirations for the future.

In a follow-up study, Kozol (2005) conducted observations and interviews at 60 different American schools and illustrated how inequitable funding created vast discrepancies in the facilities and materials between schools. The inequitable conditions, lack of materials, and underqualified teachers still exist in the urban school experience for a mostly Black and Hispanic population. Cognitively, the squalor and desolate conditions are recognized by the students as unequal. Emotional responses might be that children feel uncared for and insecure about where they go to school.

As an elementary teacher in an inner city school in Toronto, McLaren (2003) witnessed firsthand the lack of equitable treatment for his “corridor kids,” as seen in the poor conditions of the school and the lack of materials and qualified teachers. Cries from the Corridor chronicles his experience during the 4 years that he taught in the suburb of Jane Finch Corridor. This excerpt from the journal illustrates the importance of place: “After teaching in the area for a few months, I was aware of what the environment could do to kids” (McLaren, 2003, p. 84.) He drew many conclusions from his experience related to equal opportunity, culturally responsive teaching, and confronting oppression. The material environment reflects a level of equity of funding, which in turn, influences the students’ experiences. Not all schools are funded equally, and in the long run the students are the greatest losers in the process.
Objective Place and Social Environment

Objective place can change cultural expectations through the perceptions of one’s surroundings. The way place is understood cognitively is evident in the research study *Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, in which Bourdieu et al. (1999) analyzed the social suffering of individuals in contemporary society. He and his team selected people to interview based on comparing the places in which they lived. “To understand what happens in places like ‘projects’ or ‘housing developments’ as well as certain kinds of schools, place brings together people who have nothing in common and forces them to live together” (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 3). This comparison is seen in the two families interviewed on Jonquil Street and through descriptions that exemplify each family’s perspective about the place in which they lived.

The first family: “This warm little world, closed in on itself and perfectly self-sufficient, with its lovingly polished sideboard decorated with photographs of the girls and knick-knacks surrounding the older girl’s occupational diploma; the bookcase covered with more knick-knacks and photos, with its three shelves of encyclopedia volumes…” (p. 7.)

The second family: “M. Amezziane’s seems cold and barren with its cushionless leatherette sofa, its inexpensive rug that shows a mosque, its wrought iron coffee table” (p. 10)

Each place was perceived based on the material environment, using what is seen and felt as the basis to convey meaning. The family’s social realities were made visible by the material environment.

Place influences the use of language. *Ways with Words* (Brice, 1983) explored the importance that linguistic capital played in a child’s success in school. The author conducted an ethnographic study of schooling in the Piedmont Carolinas. Two working class communities were compared to a middle class community in a nearby town. Brice’s findings revealed that the two rural communities of Trackton (African-American community) and Roadville (White
community) had very different language patterns as compared to the town community (African-American and White community). The influence of the lack of linguistic capital revealed that Black working-class children were not socialized to cope with the language patterns used in school and quickly fell behind. White working class children developed cognitive and linguistic patterns but did not gain interpretive skills to sustain academic success. The mismatch between language used at home and language used at school put working class kids at a disadvantage. The residential place of children’s homes can negatively influenced their success in school. Experiences in each particular place demanded a particular linguistic proficiency. Brice’s (1983) study of language patterns between communities, home, and school reflects the influence of the social environment on the use of language.

**Emotional Dimensions of Being-in-Place**

Dwelling in place means that a person has a sense of place. This sense of place is formed from the emotional connections that are remembered and created through interaction with a place. Sense of place is more than a positive awareness of the material environment. A sense of place is molded by past experiences imbued with emotions such as acceptance, belonging, comfort, alienation, or fear. Cannatella (2007) explained that we are able to dwell in a place when we participate, engage, and perceive through our body and senses. Such engagement is called “self-givenness” (p. 625). For example, students must actually “give of self” by being in the school to develop an awareness of the place itself. This means that one must be in a place emotionally, as well as physically, to make meaning. Children develop a sense of place through experience (Tuan, 1977) in that the older they become, the more experiences they have, and their sense of place expands.
Places evoke a feeling and sense of temporality in the material environment. Enduring places are tied to humanity and emotion (Tuan, 1977). A “place consciousness” emerges related to the educational institutions. School has moved from just a location (which begins with the architecture) to a complex social system. “Certain objects, natural and man-made, persist as places through eons of time, outlining the patronage of particular cultures” (Tuan, 1977, p. 163). The building and accompanying grounds of a high school become a realm made visible and tangible through the physicality of place. Schooling becomes a long-lasting memory because of the emotions attached to the material and social environment.

**Dwelling in Place and Material Environment**

From a mining town to a boxing gym to a homeless shelter, physical place influences the construction of identity in the life of people. A particular place can influence the experiences that occur within that place (Speller & Twigger-Ross, 2009). Studies that illustrate the connection between place and identity provide evidence as to the relationship between a sense of place and the material environment. For example, negotiating one’s identity can take place in geographic and physical spaces such as communities and schools, but also in houses, parks, or even bedrooms (Petrovic & Ballard, 2005). Petrovic and Ballard interviewed young women between the ages of 18 and 22 to explore the places that high school girls explored a lesbian identity. The findings identify geographical, physical, intuitive, and temporal places as spaces in which these girls could explore identity. This study points to the importance of place in the formation of identity. Certain places imparted a sense of freedom and security to explore their identity.

Material environment can influence one’s identity. Emotional connections are made through engagement and participating in a physical place. Desjarlais (1997) shared the way architectural design influences identity in *Shelter Blues*. The book is based on a 16-month study
that looked into the personal world of individuals who divided their lives between homeless shelters and the streets. He interviewed and observed more than 40 homeless men and women of various ethnicities, ranging in age from early 20s to mid-60s who frequented a homeless shelter.

Desjarlais (1997) described the Boston Station Street Shelter as an unfinished governmental services building that had many irregularities in form and function. It was a building that was started but never finished. “The themes of madness, danger, inhumanity, pointlessness, and incompleteness common to many perceptions of the building were closely tied to the building’s architectural features” (p. 51). He concluded that the place of the homeless shelter, due to the arrangement of the structure and objects, perpetuated the feelings of homelessness, illness, and abjection.

**Dwelling in Place and Social Environment**

Place can determine the dispositions and motivations of people. In a study that investigated the relationship between spatial change (of place) and the construction of self (Speller & Twigger-Ross, 2009), place was found to be an integral part of the identity process. The research describes the cultural and social changes experienced by a mining community that had to be physically relocated. The perspectives of 88 townspeople were used in a 6-year longitudinal study. Identity process theory was used to look at the social world and its effect on identity. The study found that when the community had to move to a new location, there was a decline in the sense of community. The decline was attributed to the notion that identity was based on attachment to a local area. The change in the place of the community resulted in a change in identity. Additionally, the continuity of experience was disrupted by the move. A change in behavior patterns and new values and priorities were evident after the move from the
old village to the new village. The authors concluded that physical environment plays an important role in not only forming, but supporting identity.

A collection of individual research projects centered on the construction of identity within particular places related to schools. Bettis and Adams (2005) explored identity formation in 15 studies, with conclusions emphasizing the importance of physical places to the identity work of the girls. Places such as bathrooms, bedrooms, halls, and classrooms are locations in which adolescent girls construct a sense of self on a daily basis. Merton (2005) described that the home remained important to the junior high aged girls as a place where they could figure out how they saw themselves in relation to others. This illustrates that the social environment can impact the individual’s conception of self.

**Physical Dimensions of Being-in-Place**

Place can create routines. The physical dimension of place is evident in the intentional and unintentional movements of the human beings. Embodiment is expression through bodily actions and intentional bodily movements (Cannatella, 2007). The body leads us into a place through voluntary and involuntary responses to the environment (Casey, 1998). Students experience the school environment through the body. The way they move through the halls and the routes they take to class, how they greet each other or not, the awkwardness of being new or walking into class late, or the uneasiness of meeting with the principal are examples of how students embody experience. Embodiment is an intrinsic part of one’s relation to locality, being, cognition, and place (Cannatella, 2007).

**Embodiment and Material Environment**

Place influences us physically by our actions within and reactions to an environment. Embodied practices of culture can help understand how human practices are engaged with
specific objects to generate different practices within the culture (Dant, 2005). “Engagement in
the material world involves a form of communication in which our senses ‘question’ things and
‘things reply to them’ so the sensory information from things is a ‘language that teaches itself’”
(Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 319). The ordinary, practical, everyday material life of people has a
direct impact on social relationships (Dant, 2005). These social relationships are an integral piece
of the development and formation of how we act, think, and feel. An embodied existence makes
one feel connected and feel transformed by the experience of living among others and forming
significant relationships.

As Dant (2005) looked closely at how mechanics interact with cars in his book
Materiality and Society, he provided a context for understanding embodiment. Dant’s study
focused specifically on objects and the techniques used by the mechanics. The findings
demonstrated subtle interactions with some objects and the development of an embodied
knowledge of physical properties. For example, as the mechanic Ray changes a tire and he
responds effortlessly to the firmness of the nut and the weight of the tire. The lever becomes an
extension of his arm; he embodies the act for changing a tire because of the multiple times he
has practiced these operations and used these tools. Dant concluded that the mechanics’ “know
how” (p. 133) was an embodied capacity to intentionally act when working on cars.

Students interact with a “school building” in much the same way. They embody the
purposes of school in very individual behaviors. For example, students may avoid going into the
bathroom between classes for different reasons. They step over other students sitting in the
hallway or take a different route to avoid the hassle of walking through the sea of legs on the
floor. Intentional or unintentional movement through the hallways convey an embodied
understanding of the school spaces.
The practices that result from the relationship between human and object are embodied practices (Dant 2005; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Tuan, 1977). Dant (2005) posited that orientation to the material things in the world is embodied and engaged. This means that it is through touch and manipulation that the object has relevance. These practices are an embodied sequence of habitual or repeated actions that are learned through the culture.

**Embodiment and Social Environment**

Schools provide a place for young people to develop a sense of self, embody the practices within, and gain meaning from their experiences. The experiences of place can have either a negative or positive impact on students’ lives. This is an important point to consider because they spend a large part of their youth inside the place of school. Place is caught in a space where things are happening (Tuan, 1977). The educational experience occurs through how we inhabit the place of school, how we act intentionally, and the physical building itself.

Embodied existence differs according to place. Jewett (2005) suggested that a person’s identity differs based on the physical place (material environment). Four girls self-identified as “bad-asses” on the bus controlled the school bus on the rides to and from school. However, outside of the bus environment, the girls did not socialize with each other or convey the same control in the school environment. This study is an example of how behaviors that embody power or submission change according to place.

Place influences what we do and how we do it. For example, Wacquant (2004) spent 3 years in the boxing trade in a Chicago gym learning the art of pugilism. Through the eyes of the local fighters and his own experiences within the gym, he cast a sociological lens on human practice. *Body and Soul* is unique in that the place of the experience was visceral and embodied. Wacquant explained the construction of a lived experience as the coordination of the body, the
individual consciousness, and the collectivity that mold and make a boxer. His experience was centrally located in a boxing gym. Emersion in the pugilistic art enabled him to explore how one becomes part of a social world and internalizes practice and a sense of identity based on a particular place. The gym, the place of the conditioning, preparation, and practice of the boxers conveyed meaning. Just as the gym had more meaning in the social world of the boxers than just a place to practice, an educational institution is more than just a school building and the accompanying grounds. The meaning of place resides in the dynamic relationship between the building and the physical realities such as sweat, heat, or lights, and the embodied experience.

**Experience Counts**

*From a phenomenological point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings.*

—van Manen, 1990, p. 5.

So begins van Manen (1990) in his book *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. Experience is important because it shapes our interpretation of place, which in turn, shapes our experiences. I draw on van Manen’s concept of existential themes as a theoretical framework to explore the relationship between experience and being-in-place. Synthesis of the two concepts reveals the reciprocal relationship between the interpretation of place and experience.

Van Manen (1990) explained that the basics of human beings’ lived experiences in the world encompass four existential themes. Interpretations of place are filtered through lived experiences subsumed by spatiality, temporality, corporeality, and relationality.

1. The lived space (spatiality) can be described as how one feels in a physical place such as a school, a cathedral, or a baseball field. Is the space familiar or uncomfortable? A lived space is comfortable (or not) based on the where the place is physically and how one feels in that
space. For example, the perception of the sheer size of a cathedral evokes emotions of awe. Preferences for or aversions to places is another way to structure meaning through spatial interpretations.

2. Lived time (temporality) moves based on feelings or meaning attached to experiences. Examples would be “boring” or “exciting” or “my how time flies when you’re having fun.” The world moves based on the past, present, and future memories, hopes, and expectations. Positive or negative memories are another example of temporal interpretations of a place. How one carries oneself, whether one is approachable, friendly, or alienated involve temporality. As seen in the examples, lived time is subjective and thus not to be confused with “clock time.”

3. The lived body (corporeality) means that we are physically in the world. The experiences students engage are done by and through the body. Merleau-Ponty (1962) explained that it is one’s body that is used to take up perspective, and the body situates all other objects in space and time. Bodies must have a place in which to move, and it is through this movement we experience each other. For example, playing basketball requires physical skill in the sport and knowledge of the game in order to play. A basketball game could be in a driveway or on a court. Our body moves intentionally based on where we are playing the game and unintentionally as the skills become embodied. Corporeal interpretation of place can reveal and conceal things about ourselves. For example, when meeting someone for the first time our discomfort is interpreted through awkwardness or blushing with embarrassment.

4. Lived other (relationality) encompasses the relationships we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them. Relationships with others reflect the cumulative effects of interpreting place. Relationships form through the coalescence of lived space, time, and body. The reciprocal nature of interpretation and experience can be expressed as the
existential theme of lived other. Using the basketball analogy again will help clarify this concept. A basketball player likes shooting hoops on her driveway with friends and family. She is relaxed and can put her skills to good use. The time spent involved in this experience is pleasurable and goes by quickly. Now, move the same basketball player to the gymnasium. The emotion evoked in the gym is one of competition as she practices and prepares for a game on Thursday night. Practice focuses on improving the skill set of a team in order to win the game. A certain level of anxiety is expected. Practices are long, and she looks forward to going home. The process of being-in-place and experience culminates in the relationships we have with others to constitute the lifeworld of people. The basketball player exercised the same skill set but had different relationships with those that participated. Her lifeworld in the gym was much different from the lifeworld of the driveway basketball court.

Interpretation of place through relationality is highly personal in that a sense of support or security or trepidation is reflected in the relationships embraced or avoided. Conversational relation describes the encounter that “searches the social for a sense of purpose” (van Manen, 1990, p. 105). The human lifeworld is the lived world as experienced in everyday situations and relations (van Manen, 1990). Lifeworlds are different for different people. A parent’s lifeworld may encompass a home, job, and family. A teacher’s lifeworld may include the classroom or school. It is the student’s lifeworld that is of most interest to this study. The existential themes constitute the experiences of people and cannot be considered in isolation. The following studies illustrate how these themes are inherent in the lifeworlds of student experiences. Delving into lived experiences can help to better understand schooling and educational institutions. Practices, episodes, and encounters are a way to classify experiences in order to make sense of an individual’s world (Lofland et al., 2006).
Place is a complex process with multiple possibilities and interpretations of experiences. Being-in-place provides the framework that describes the cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions that are interpreted in the school environment. The existential themes of lived space, time, body, and other offer a structure for analyzing the lived experiences of the students. The next section illustrates the way in which experience can be described and interpreted in order to understand the dimensions of being-in-place.

**Experience and Place**

Experiences encompass the lives of individuals and shape their world. The experiential qualities of space, time, body, and relationships structure the interpretation of the practical, everyday life. Place as a process manifests itself through these experiences, which can be categorized as practices, episodes, or encounters. Table 1 provides examples of studies that demonstrate the connections between experience and place.

**Practices.** Practice can be described as “the recurrent categories of talk or action” that “are regularized features of everyday life” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 123). Often unrecognized, a range of practices compose one’s day from getting up in the morning, to going to work, to reading before bed. To understand practice, one must investigate how the individuals are situated within that place. Prior experiences, cultural rules, and examples set by others influence these practices. One becomes part of a social world and internalizes practices (through experience) and forms a sense of identity within a particular place (Wacquant, 2004). Practices may or may not involve other people.
Table 1

*Studies that Connect Experience and Place*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Experience</th>
<th>Ethnography</th>
<th>Physical Dimension of Place</th>
<th>Emotional Dimension of Place</th>
<th>Cognitive Dimension of Place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(Embodied Place)</td>
<td>(Dwelling-in-Place)</td>
<td>(Objective Place)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Practice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recurrent categories of talk or action</td>
<td>Women without Class (Bettie, 2003)</td>
<td>Enacted girl culture</td>
<td>Unspoken boundaries related to class</td>
<td>Waretown High School</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Routines of home and school</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Groups congregated in specific locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unequal Childhoods</td>
<td>(Lareau, 2003)</td>
<td>Child-rearing practices</td>
<td>Sense of entitlement</td>
<td>Neighborhoods</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Dispositions</td>
<td>Third graders</td>
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<td>Language skills</td>
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<td>Ain’t No Makin’ It</td>
<td>(MacLeod, 1987)</td>
<td>Studying, working, school involvement</td>
<td>Conformed to school culture</td>
<td>Church, school, community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Drinking, fighting</td>
<td>Resisted school culture</td>
<td>Street, alleys, doorways to apartment building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning to Labor</td>
<td>(Willis, 1977)</td>
<td>Disrupted classes, skipped school</td>
<td>Open opposition to the school culture</td>
<td>School</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compliance with school rules</td>
<td>Conformed to school culture</td>
<td>Working class neighborhood</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Episode</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unpredictable, singular, often traumatic event</td>
<td>Class Dismissed (McLaran, 2000)</td>
<td>Student walk-out</td>
<td>Outrage</td>
<td>Berkely High School</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher walk-out</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
<td>Arson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student protests</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Conditions of school and materials; cancelled classes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Encounter</strong></td>
<td>Jocks &amp; Burnouts</td>
<td>Groups congregated according to social category</td>
<td>Class issues</td>
<td>High school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief experiences that involve physical presence and intent of mutual involvement</td>
<td>(Eckert, 1989)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Different parts of the building</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Group affiliation</td>
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<td>Social Network</td>
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Class as a performance revealed the practices between lower and middle class high school girls. In the ethnography *Women without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*, Bettie (2003) explored the lived experiences of high school girls. The author spent a year in Waretown High School in California’s Central Valley. The 60 high school senior girls that she studied were from different classes and racial/ethnic locations. They described their own experiences of being girl-women and the discourses that constructed their experiences.

Practices based on class could be seen in the routines of the girls at the school. Bettie (2003) found that the girls could be grouped by the families from which they came. Girls from “hard-living” families were supported by low-paying, less stable jobs that lacked healthcare benefits. Girls from the “settled-living” families were supported by jobs of relative security, higher pay, and healthcare benefits. Peer groups could be differentiated by the practices of the girls. Hard-living girls such as the smokers/rockers and Cholas refused to participate in pep rallies, award ceremonies, or extracurricular activities. Settled-living girls such as the Las Chicas enacted a girl culture through fashion, shopping, make-up and hair. Bettie (2003) found unspoken boundaries that were part of everyday interaction that revealed symbolic distinctions and differences between students.
In Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Identity, Lareau (2003) conducted an ethnographic study that explored the experiences related to child-rearing practices. The study involved interviewing and observing 12 families of third graders that ranged economically from upper/middle class to working class to poor. Laureu’s findings linked social inequalities with differences between child-rearing practices. Concerted cultivation child-rearing practices cultivate interests and abilities through extracurricular activities and developing reasoning and language skills. A sense of entitlement exists within the children for the right to pursue interests. Accomplishment of natural growth child-rearing practices emphasizes that children’s free time is unstructured, and parents do not elicit children’s feelings or opinions. Instead, the children are expected to obey the parents, structure their own free time, and mature without the parents’ help except to protect, feed, and clothe.

The dispositions of the third-grader participants were formed by the type of child rearing they experienced. “Parents’ social class impacts children’s life experience” (Lareau, 2003, p. 3). Thus, it seemed that middle and upper class children were raised in “concerted cultivation”; they had many life experiences that developed their middle class dispositions. Alternately, children from working class and poor families experienced “accomplishment as natural growth” child raising strategies, and thus their dispositions were different.

In Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs, Willis (1977) conducted an ethnographic study that explored not just why working class kids get working class jobs, but also tried to understand why these young men chose to embrace a counterculture that actually was detrimental to future opportunities. The “Lads” rejected the school’s achievement ideology, disrupted classes, and made fun of everyone and everything. They displayed open opposition to the school. Alternately, the “Ear’oles” conformed as students, aspired to middle
class jobs, and complied with school rules. Willis argued that external cultural values influence the behavior of students in school and their futures as well. The end result would seem that the boys’ experiences, in and out of school, influenced them to respond differently to their external circumstances. The practices of the “Lad’s” were influenced by the cultural values of the working class male as compared to the cultural values of the middle class. The differences in the practices helped explain the Lads’ resistance to the school culture.

In *Ain’t No Makin’ It*, MacLeod (1987) highlighted the struggles and inequalities faced by inner city youth through the conversations and observations of the Hallway Hangers and Brothers of Clarendon Heights. The Hangers were mostly White, and the Brothers were Black, but both groups were from the same low-income neighborhood and attended the same high school. Using participant observation and interviews, MacLeod explored the experiences of the teenagers’ lives of family, work, and school.

The findings reflect a disparity between the two groups about their aspirations for the future. The Brothers conformed to the school culture and the hope for a better future through education. The interactions they had were mainly limited to the members of their group. A focus on school, church, and athletics comprised their daily activities with their group and community. The Hallway Hangers’ interactions occurred mainly on a specific corner of a street in the neighborhood. They focused on drinking, talking trash, and fighting. The Hallway Hangers rejected conformity and school for a realistic and pessimistic view about what the future would hold. Eight years later, the Hallway Hangers were right where they expected to be, and the Brothers had not been able to achieve their aspirations for a better life. Conclusions drawn by MacLeod (1987) assert that structural inequality creates poverty, and that society is structured to create poverty and inequality, which is mirrored in schools.
**Episodes.** Episodes are experiences that are unpredictable and dramatic events (Lofland et al., 2006). Episodes do not occur regularly and include such examples as divorce, death, victimization, or natural disasters. The number of people and activities involved in an episode can span time and places. One school in Berkley, California had several episodic events in a school in the form of arson, student riots, teacher walkouts, and negative media attention (Maran, 2000). Episodes may or may not involve other people.

In *Class Dismissed*, Maran (2000) explored the lives of three particular students in-depth who attended an inner-city school of 3,200. This study was located in the most integrated school in the United States, Berkley High School. One focus of the study was the lack of renovations, over-crowded classrooms, understaffed faculty, and outdated or nonexistent instructional materials. Thus, this led the author to critique the equitable distribution of resources. These inequities are visible in the physical place and influence a student’s experience in high school. Implications of the study led Maran to advocate the increase of per pupil spending and funding schools equitably to improve the quality of the educational experience for students.

Episodic events frequently occurred at the school. The teachers held a rally to protest low pay and poor working conditions. The students walked out of class to demand better pay for their teachers. There were two arson fires in 24 hours, which made a total of 10 arson fires in the last year. Classes were cancelled, student records lost, or rooms became overcrowded as new arrangements were made until the buildings were rebuilt. Although not as common as daily practices, episode greatly influences the experience of students. For example, the central office’s attempt to address truancy was an episode that affected the school. A truant officer was sent around the neighborhoods and picked up anyone who might be a high school student. The
students felt that targeting of certain individuals was based on racial bias. The students were outraged, and the Black Student Union organized a student rally during lunch time.

**Encounters.** Encounters are microexperiences that involve the coming together of two or more persons (Lofland et al., 2006). Physical presence and intent of mutual involvement constitutes an encounter. Examples of encounters might be the interaction among individuals at a cocktail party or the checkout line at the grocery store. These experiences must involve someone else and verbal exchanges (Lofland et al., 2006).

Encounters between members of groups in schools are described in several ethnographies conducted in high schools. Belton High School, a school of 2,000 students, was where Eckert (1989) conducted a 2-year study. *Jocks & Burnouts: Social Categories and Identity in the High School* was the culmination of exploring class issues in high school. The school was purposefully chosen because of its homogenous, suburban character in order to focus on class and identity. Two groups were identified that are common to most high schools. Jocks represented those students who accept, participate, and embrace the school culture (not literally athletes). Burnouts (not literally drug users) were those students who opposed, rebelled, and rejected the school culture. Membership in the groups was not required, as these were not cliques. The divisions between the two groups were based on adult middle and working class differences.

Encounters within the school occurred between the members of each group. The groups actually “lived” within different areas of the school based on the courses they took. The use of the building was tied to class schedules and daily routines such as where you walk in the hall. *Wall huggers* (Eckert, 1989, p. 46) is a self-explanatory term. Therefore, a social network is created in such a place based on how you go through the day. The bounded social system of an
encounter was maintained by the relations of those within the groups. Encounters, these microexperiences of interaction, are influenced by peer culture and school performance.

Table 2 illustrates the possible ways that the participants in the above studies may have interpreted the places they inhabited. Because spatiality denotes how we feel in a place, interpretation can have its origins in the socioeconomic status from which one comes. Thus, feelings that are negative, liberating, or oppressive can be related to economic spaces. Interpreting place through one’s actions and reactions can reveal things about self. For example, refusal to participate may be viewed as the corporeal interpretation of resistance. Aspirations are an example of how we interpret the future through temporality. Relational interpretations based on interpersonal significance seem to be the most commonly studied aspect of experience.

Conclusion

The review of literature examined the dimensions of two theoretical frameworks in order to guide the design, analysis, and implications of the study. First, being-in-place provided a way to think about physical place in broader terms through cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions (Cannatella, 2007). Previous studies concerning the importance of place on identity and equity support the interrelatedness of physical location (objective place), emotional awareness (dwelling in place), and recurring practices in place (embodiment). For example, place influenced the life experiences of students and their identity (Bettis & Adams, 2005; Desjarlais, 1997; Petrovic & Ballard, 2005; Speller & Twigger-Ross, 2009).

A second theoretical framework was needed to understand the role of experience in one’s interpretation of place. Existential themes of a lived experience (van Manen, 1990) served as the guide to understanding experience. The dimensions of spatiality, temporality, relationality, and
<table>
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<td>Aspirations for the future differed based on class</td>
<td>Strong high school group affiliation:</td>
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<td><em>(Bettie, 2003)</em></td>
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<td>Counter-culture</td>
<td>Aging out of gangs or school</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enacted a girl culture through fashion, make-up, and hair</td>
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<td><strong>Unequal Childhods</strong></td>
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<td><em>(Lareau, 2003)</em></td>
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<td>Concerted cultivation</td>
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<td><strong>Ain't No Makin' It</strong></td>
<td>Low income neighborhood</td>
<td>Study, work, obey, school involvement</td>
<td>Belief that working hard would get a good job</td>
<td>Strong group affiliation</td>
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<td><em>(MacLeod, 1987)</em></td>
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<td>Fight, drink, smoke, curse, skip school</td>
<td>Realistic and pessimistic view of the future</td>
<td>Brothers</td>
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<td><em>(Willis, 1977)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Class Dismissed</strong></td>
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<td>Protesting poor conditions</td>
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<td>Most integrated school in the United States; 3,200 students</td>
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<td><em>(McLaran, 2000)</em></td>
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<td>Student walk outs</td>
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<td><strong>Jocks &amp; Burnouts</strong></td>
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<td>Moved within school areas based on high school courses</td>
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<td>Social network</td>
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<td><em>(Eckert, 1989)</em></td>
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corporeality contribute to the way one makes sense of the world. Existential themes helped to identify the different type of experiences in previous studies in terms of practice, episodes, and encounters. The process of being-in-place is integral to such experiences. New understandings about the relationship between place and experience can be gained. Because place matters and experience count in the lives of students in high school.

The synthesis of place and experience inform the design and methodology as described in chapter 3. The review of literature demonstrates the connections between being-in-place and experience as related to the interpretation of place. Exploring an environment about people and through people requires the in-depth focus of qualitative research. The strategies used in the research were informal and formal interviews and focus groups. Qualitative research was chosen as the best method for exploring how students’ interpretation of place related to their experiences in high school.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

How do students’ interpretation of place relate to educational experiences? The review of literature in chapter 2 provided a framework for addressing the complexity of place and experience. Understanding place as a process required a methodology that allowed insight into interpretations of place through cognitive, emotional, and embodied dimensions. It was no easy task to operationalize being-in-place or the nature of experience. Interpretations can only come from individuals, which required a methodology that concentrated on lived experience and used deeply personal strategy that centered on the individual.

Qualitative research is the chosen method of inquiry because it enables a descriptive study of individual lived experiences within a specific context and setting. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explained that a qualitative approach attracts researchers because “they seek strategies of empirical inquiry that will allow them to make connections among lived experiences, larger social and cultural structures, and the here and now” (p. 367). In order to explore the proposed relationships in this study, data collection required face-to-face encounters and interactions. In-depth phenomenological-based interviewing enabled the researcher to “explore complex issues in the subject area by examining the concrete experiences of people in that area and the meaning the experiences have for them” (Seidman, 1998, p. 10). The students’ behavior became meaningful when placed within a context of their experiences in a school environment.

Data were collected from 16 high school students who attended a small, rural school in central Alabama. The methodology used was a qualitative approach to research and analyzing
social settings. The strategies included informal and formal interviews and focus groups. The methodology section contains the rationale for choosing qualitative research and the specific strategies, and the data collection, management, and analysis used in the study.

A variety of interviews were used during the study. A walking tour of the school, guided by a student, served as an informal interview and an opportunity for observations. Next, a structured interview with each participant provided depth and reflection to build upon the first interview. Lastly, focus groups served as a means of triangulating the findings from the interview series for each participant. The purpose of interviewing was based on understanding the experiences of the high school students and the meaning they made from those experiences. Each phase of the interview occurred 2 to 3 weeks apart. This allowed for the analysis of the findings in order to generate follow-up questions specific to each participant.

**Identifying and Sampling Participants**

The selection of the site was based on the nature of the research question. A high school was chosen because the students have experience in the educational system for an extended period of time, and a high school setting provides multiple opportunities for exploring the research question.

**Participants**

A small high school in central Alabama was chosen for this study. Purposive sampling of the 331 students in the 9th through 12th grades was used to select the participants. This means that each student was selected because they had a particular attribute that had relevance to the research questions and as provided diversity to the selection (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Because the population was fairly homogenous, the sample selection had to include internal diversity. Thus, the selection criteria included age, gender, extracurricular activities, and academic
achievement. Sixteen participants were chosen for the study, a small sample size in comparison to that of a quantitative study. Designing the study to include multiple interviews students provided depth of analysis and information that is rich in detail and multidimensional (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Stake, 2000).

The criteria considered for purposive selection was prioritized based on their importance in providing a symbolic representation and diversity for data collection. First, priority selection was given to age and gender. Age/grade level was important because the students needed one or more years of experience in the high school setting. Selection by gender ensured demographic balance in that male and female students may have had different perspectives on place and materiality. Secondary priority was given to extracurricular activities and academic achievement to ensure internal diversity of sampling. Extracurricular involvement was a criterion because the activities in multiple settings and at various events could provide a comparative analysis between those involved and those not involved in extracurricular activities. Academic achievement was used as a criterion because the attitudes and behaviors of students achieving at different levels may vary in regard to perspective and practice.

Grade level was another criterion. Participants included 3 ninth graders, 4 tenth graders, 4 eleventh graders, and 5 twelfth graders. Eight of the participants were female students, and eight of the participants were male students. Academic criteria included 9 students who made As and Bs; 3 students who made Bs and Cs; and 4 students who made Cs, Ds, and Fs. The level of involvement in extracurricular activities ranged from no involvement (4 participants); involved in two or less extracurricular activities (8 participants); and involved in three or more activities (4 participants).
Place

Campbell County High School (fictitious name) is the second largest high school in Campbell County (fictitious name). The Campbell County Public School System serves all Campbell County students except those in the city of Prado (fictitious name). There are four elementary schools that encompass grades PK-6 in a variety of configurations; one middle school (Grades 5-8), four high schools (Grades 7-12), and one technical school (Grades 10-12). The students come from five small surrounding towns. Approximately 2,800 students attend these schools. Campbell County is considered an at-risk county (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2006) because it is at risk of becoming economically distressed. This means that Campbell County has a 3-year average employment rate that is at least 125% less than the national average; the per capita income is 67% of the national average; and the poverty rate is 125% higher than the national average. The school is not only geographically isolated and defined as rural, but it is also disadvantaged and can be described as working-class and economically poor.

Campbell County High School is located in a town that is the county seat. It is the second largest town in Campbell County with a population of 937 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The town mirrors the economic and geographic description of the county. Located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, The town is 55 miles northwest of a city with a population of 252,000. The closest town is 38 miles away and has a population of 50,000 people. The median income is $33,937, below the average for the state. The estimated per capita income is $20,143. The demographics of the town are as follows: 97% White, non-Hispanic; 1.3% American Indian; and 1.1% Hispanic. The major source of income and occupation for males is industry related to
wood products, and for females it is education. The information thus far describes Campbell County High School as a low-income, working class, White, rural community.

**Research Questions**

A qualitative approach enables the researcher to elicit multiple realities based on subjective understandings. Interviews of the participants attempted to explicate these subjective understandings by focusing on three research questions. I wanted to study this relationship in order to expand the knowledge of how place relates to experience. I proposed to apply the current understanding of place to a secondary school setting. Although similar studies have focused on the social context of schooling (Bettie, 2003; Eckert, 1989; Lareau, 2003; MacLeod, 1987; Willis, 1977), less has been done to explore the students’ interpretation of place and schooling.

Research Question 1: What school places have social significance for high school students?

Research Question 2: What meanings do students give to the places they occupy?

Research Question 3: How does navigation of these places influence how students experience schooling?

The process of interviewing was used to address the research questions. Interviewing provides a narrative approach to access data with which people describe their world and is not intended to qualify the “external realities” (Silverman, 2000, p. 821) of the participants. This means that the interview can only serve to gain the perspectives of the participants and does not reflect an exact truth about those experiences. This type of interviewing was chosen because it provides structure, as well as flexibility, in collecting students’ personal accounts of their high school experiences.

Seidman (1998) recommended a three-interview series as the structure for in-depth interviewing. The first interview established the context of the participants’ experience and their
past history within that context. The second interview permitted participants to reconstruct the
details of their experience within the context of the occurrence. The last interview provided an
opportunity for the participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences. Field notes based
on observations were written after each walking tour with the students and consisted of mental
notes, jotted notes, and analytic memos (Lofland et al., 2006).

Qualitative Methods

In the analysis of social settings, the researcher must consider the units of social
organization and the multiple aspects of the topic for analysis (Lofland et al., 2006).
Categorizing and conceptualizing the dimensions of a social setting should encompass the actors,
activities, time, and place. Organizational scale varies with the number of actors involved,
various activities or behaviors, period of time, and the physical size of the space. Aspects are
forms of the social context that come from cognition, emotion, and hierarchy (Lofland et al.,
2006). For example, a specific unit of study that emerged from the interviews was the idea of
encounters as an important aspect of place in the social setting of high school.

Validity “has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation
fits the description” (Janesick, 2000, p. 393). Validation of the findings was done according to
two dimensions.

1. Communicative validation is ensuring that the process of communication with the
participants is correctly recorded, evaluated by the focus of the study, and adjusted as needed
(Winter, 2004). Using the analytic memo, transcribing interviews before the next phase of
interviews, and using the reflective interviews were the means of validating the communication
between the participants and me.
2. Triangulation enables the researcher to view the issue from different points (Flick, 2004). The findings encompassed a series of interviews and the focus groups in order to check the integrity of the inferences drawn from the data. Such a structure was used with a flexible timeline for the interviews and focus groups.

**Data Collection**

To address each of the research questions, it was necessary to gain access to the students’ interpretation of places and experiences. This began with the students’ drawing a map of the school. The walking tour was the initial strategy to access the students’ perceptions related to important places within the school. The structured interviews provided information related to the students’ attitudes about the important places in the school and how they felt about the school. Insights were also gained about the culture of the school. The interviews permitted a medium for the students to express this culture. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then thematic and axial coding was applied to the transcribed interviews.

**Interviews**

The in-depth interviewing strategy for this study used the three interview series structure (Seidman, 1998) with 16 students. The structure allowed each interview to build upon and explore the participants’ interpretation of their experiences based on prior and subsequent responses. This process layered the interviews so that depth and description were optimized. Focus group interviews were conducted at the end of the data collection. Focus groups provided a social context for clarification of the previous interview findings.

Two levels of questioning used during the individual interviews—content mapping and content mining—provided details and depth (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Content mapping questions raised general issues related to place, perspectives, and experience. Content mining
questions (probes) explored in detail the topic of discussion and elicited more information, description, and explanation. Interview questions were generated based on the findings from previous interviews in addition to a standard set of questions needed to focus the content of the interview.

A postmodern lens was applied to the interview process. The researcher makes choices in the study by what is collected and how it is collected. I realize that my personal viewpoints about students, instruction, school, and experiences are part of the process. Interviewing 16 students multiple times provided a broad spectrum of responses. Thus, when generating and responding to questions for each interview, I tried to be cognizant that I influenced the participants’ responses to a certain degree as well as the items I found important. Following interview protocols helped to maintain a consistency with data collection. Adhering to the theoretical frameworks provided guidance in the interpretation of the findings.

Interview 1: Focused history within the school. Prior to the interviews, participants drew a map of the school and labeled their five favorite places (See Appendix B). This interview was conducted simultaneously during a walking tour conducted separately with each of 16 individual students. We began walking from the assistant principal’s office, and the tour lasted between 1 and 2 hours. Each student carried an audio-digital recording microphone to record the conversation. The questions established a context grounded in the student’s past history within the high school. As each student took me on a tour of the high school, I took note of the order and location of each place. Recording the conversation between the students and me provided data to be transcribed at a later date.

Anderson (2004) explained that walking invokes memory of time, space, place, and experience; what he called “spatiality of memory” (p. 256). The walking tour is a “constitutive
co-ingredience of people and place” (p. 259). This type of unstructured interview assisted in understanding the complex behavior of the students without imposing a pre-established expectation of responses (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). The interview questions dealt with particular places and experiences inside and outside of the school building. Appendix C contains the interview protocols. Each interview was conducted and recorded during the student’s free time. I then transcribed each interview before continuing on to the next interview. Inductive analysis was the method for analyzing the findings. The findings provided additional content for the questions for Interview 2.

**Interview 2: Details of the experience.** The second interview included the same 16 participants. Each participant was interviewed individually with open-ended questions generated from the findings of the walking tour in addition to a standard set of questions (See Appendix C). The location of the interview was in the vacant assistant principal’s office. The individual interviews lasted approximately 1 to 1½ hours during the students’ free period. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The focus of the questions was on the interpretation of place and their school experiences. Inductive analysis was used to interpret the findings. The findings were checked during the third meeting with the participant.

**Interview 3: Reflection on meaning.** The third meeting with the participants provided the opportunity for the participants to reflect on the meaning that place and the experiences of high school held for them. If some of the responses from the previous interviews were unclear, I met with the participant. There were only eight of these content-check interviews needed. The identified participants reviewed their individual transcriptions and clarified particular points for me. The content of the interview was generated from the transcriptions of their previous interviews and a set of standard questions (Appendix C). Again, the location of the interviews
was in the vacant assistant principal’s office. This interview lasted 30 minutes and occurred during their activity period.

**Field Notes**

Observational field notes were taken during and after the walking tour interview, as can be seen in the example in Appendix D. As an observer, I understood that writing field notes is an active process of interpretation (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). As an inscription of social life and discourse, I was describing events based on my own purposes, sensitivities, and concerns. Thus, the findings cannot be separated from the observational process. I tried to honor the meanings and concerns of the participants through accurate transcription, content checking with individual students, and member checking with the focus groups. Field notes provided a “grounding and resource for examining a broader context” of the students’ perspectives about their school (Emerson et al., 1995).

**Focus Groups**

A focus group is a setting in which the researcher asks many specific questions based on findings after much research has occurred in the project (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). Focus groups are a way to triangulate the findings gained from the interviews and field notes. The use of focus groups can add depth and meaning to the findings from the interview and field notes. There are many advantages to using focus groups. They can produce cumulative and elaborate data (Fontana & Prokos, 2007). The focus group was a flexible format to understand the everyday life of high school students. It was also good to use in a social and cultural context such as a high school.

At the end of the study, four focus groups were formed. Each focus group was organized by the grade level of the participants. Interactive activities were added to the interviewing
process. First, I explained to the participants about the findings I had gathered from the interviews and observations. It was my intent to draw out additional conversation about the findings. I used a poster that listed the 40 places they had identified in the school and the 10 most important places. I then asked them to sort those places based on student-controlled places and teacher-controlled places. Second, I gave each student 20 cards with an emotion written on each card. Ten of the cards were positive emotions, and 10 were negative emotions. They sorted the emotion cards based on student-controlled places and teacher-controlled places. Figure 1 is an example of the word-sort activity.

![Figure 1. Example of student emotion word sort activity.](image)

Third, a knowledge rating strategy (Appendix E) was used to help the students evaluate their activities within social, academic, and activity places. Lastly, questions were asked of the whole group from the Interview Protocols. Inductive analysis was the method used to analyzing the findings. The content used in the focus groups was based on the findings from the previous interviews but also included a standard group of questions.

It is worth noting that the process used for data management was flexible and recursive. I used a small notepad to jot field notes during the walking tour. At the end of each interview session, I jotted notes while the events of the day were still fresh. After each interview, I transcribed the interviews on the subsequent weekend before the next interview. Through this process, I was able to focus or expound on participants’ interests, concerns, and issues as the
research progressed. I tried to maintain the focus on the perceptions and experiences of place, but sometimes the participants digressed into conversations about other topics.

**Data Analysis of Place**

The sociological tradition of collecting and analyzing data “treats text as a window into human experience” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 769). The transcription of free-flowing text from open-ended interviews provided the content for analysis of words, phrases, and chunks of text. One form of analysis used was data reduction of key words, and the other form was coding of the text based on themes. Use of the qualitative software program Nvivo9 (2010) helped organize the data into the conceptual categories needed for the study.

Ryan and Bernard (2000) explained that researchers must make judgments about the text as they analyze it. With this in mind, I needed a basis for choosing the source of the themes and key words. Appendix F lists the key words that were chosen based on the naming of places in the school, words such as gym or hallway. Common sense constructs such as “hanging out” or “doing break” became useful in the analysis of experiences as seen in Appendix G. Chapter 4 describes the analysis in detail. The data analysis involved two steps:

1. Analyzing words: The method used for analyzing free-flowing text began with a data reduction process. Key words underwent a word count that showed patterns of words in a text that used “autocoding” (Ryan & Bernard, 2000) within the software program. The key words were grouped by theme. Word analysis followed, in that the themes were identified in the text: setting, artifacts, events, and actors (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This step targeted patterns within and among the interviews.

2. Analyzing chunks of text: I used a manual coding process in which there were two steps (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). First, the samples identified for this research project were the
walking tour, structured interview, and focus group. The unit of analysis was each interview. Second, I identified four themes to target, as mentioned previously. At this point, inductive coding began as I marked the text based on the initial themes and additional themes or subthemes that were added to the coding process.

The data base encompassed 16 informal interviews, 16 structured interviews, eight content checks, and four group interviews. Such in-depth analysis of free flowing text assisted in identifying patterns and meanings that provided insight into how students interpreted place and in what ways their educational experiences were influenced by the school environment. Using a qualitative software program improved consistency in searching, speed in analyzing, representation of the data, and consolidation of the interviews (Weitzman, 2000). Focus groups were used at the end of the research process to confirm and disconfirm findings.

**Data Analysis of Experience**

Figure 2 illustrates the data collection path followed as a guide in collecting data. I was able to generate multiple reports from the NVivo9 software to as I analyzed the students’ interpretation of place and their school experience. Chapter 4 describes the findings in terms of the relationship between places and experience that can be seen in an encounter. Encounters are a type of experience that is are influenced by the physical place, emotional responses, and actions of the participants (Lofland et al., 2006).

Place and experience were the broad categorizations for the study. As the interviews accumulated, a specific type of topic emerged from the students’ interpretations. As a specific unit of study, encounters helped focus the analysis of identifying places in the social setting of high school. “An encounter is a tiny social system formed when two or more persons are in one
another’s immediate physical presence and strive to maintain a single (ordinarily spoken) focus of mutual involvement” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 124). For this school, encounters between themselves and peers stood out as closely related to their movement through the school, as well as being influenced by the structure of the school.

Encounters, as experiences, come from a *folk-elicited source* of personal accounts (Lofland et al., 2006). Lofland et al. recommended that the rule of mutual exclusiveness and the rule of exhaustiveness be applied to the analysis. Mutual exclusiveness can be achieved by analyzing the interviews of each participant based on the conceptual framework. The rule of exhaustiveness enabled to the researcher to compare interviews to pertinent categories.

Multiple places provided the space in which people have encounters of varying frequency and magnitude. Frequency of the encounters can be measured by the number of encounters and possibilities. The magnitude of each encounter refers to the strength, intensity, or size of the occurrence (Lofland et al., 2006). Analysis of the frequency and magnitude of encounters is done

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**Figure 2.** Data collection path.
by finding patterns in the interviews. Structures within a social setting have patterns, predictability, and order (Lofland et al., 2006). The structure of an encounter is influenced by informal and formal routines. The informal routines can reflect an organizational segmentation or patterns of interaction. Processes are a “series of actions, change, or functions” that result in a particular outcome (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 152). Daily encounters can be cyclical in nature. The process can be apparent in the cyclical manner of regular and recognizable interactions of participants.

Table 3 summarizes the data management and analysis used in this study. The results of the walking tour, interviews, and focus groups point toward the participants having reasoning through their actions. The strategies used by the participants to negotiate places in high school were analyzed. Adhering to one’s routine and knowing others’ routines was explored to understand how participants construct each encounter.

Chapter 3 described the research methods utilized to access and interpret the participants’ perspectives about place and experience. A qualitative approach provided the foundation in the selection of in-depth interviewing as the main strategy for collecting data. Analysis of data was divided according to place or experience in order to answer the research questions concerning place, meaning, and experience. Chapter 4 discusses the findings that resulted from the implementation of the study design.
Table 3

Data Management and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Data Management</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Walking Tour             | When: activity period  
Where: entire school  
Who: 16 participants and researcher  
How: individually, students took me on a tour of the school. | 1. Students drew a map of the school.  
2. Audio-taped the interview during tour of the school.  
3. Took field notes. | 1. Sequenced the location of places based on importance.  
2. Wrote up the field notes  
3. Analyzed the notes using key words and phrases with NVivo9. | Generated interview questions based on the student responses from the walking tour. Wrote analytic memo. |
| Individual Interviews    | When: activity period  
Where: TBA  
Who: The same 16 participants.  
How: Individually interviewed each of the participants. | 1. Audio-taped interviews  
2. Transcribed Interviews | 1. Analytic memo  
2. Analyzed data using key words and phrases with NVivo9 (qualitative software) | Generated interview questions based on the student responses from the individual interviews. |
| Focus Groups             | When: Activity period/P.E.  
Where: Annex building  
Who: students by grade level  
How: interviewed each grade level group. | 1. Audio-taped interviews  
2. Transcribed Interviews | 1. Analytic memo  
2. Analyzed data using key words and phrases with NVivo9 (qualitative software) | Used results to confirm/disconfirm the interviews. |
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore participants’ interpretation of place as it related to their experiences within high school. In order to gain a better understanding of place, the analysis of the study is based on descriptive elaborations of participants’ perspectives about places and experiences in high school. For these participants, high school consisted of, predictable, daily routines punctuated by interactions with peers and teachers. The material and social environment converged in short experiences called encounters. Encounters between themselves and peers stood out as closely related to their movement throughout the school. An encounter can be described as “the tiny social system formed when two or more persons are in one’s immediate physical presence” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 124). Although their daily routines may have seemed unremarkable, routines appeared to be important as students negotiated the school day to increase or decrease the likelihood of encounters. Qualitative analysis was conducted on a total of 38 interviews and four focus group sessions. Sixteen high school students were the source of the information collected. The software program used for the analysis, NVivo9 (QSR International, 2010), provided multiple avenues for analyzing the walking tours, individual interviews, content checks, and focus groups. The process for analysis included data reduction of key words and the coding of the text based on themes.

Figure 3 illustrates the reciprocal relationship that existed between students’ interpretation of place and their experiences in school. Place is a process constructed through the
intersection of the material and social environments. Students inhabited place through cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions of being. These dimensions were the context of the interpretations. The participants interpreted their experiences through corporeal, spatial, temporal, and relational perceptions. These perceptions were how they interpreted place. In turn, their future experiences were influenced by the nature of the interpretations. For example, Participant 11 always avoided the ninth-grade hallway. She thought that it was noisy and crowded and had experienced negative interactions with other students. Her past experience of going through the hall influenced how she felt about the hallway and how she acted when she went down the hallway. Participant 16 spent as much time in the ninth-grade hallway as possible. The same place entailed for her a fun time of roughhousing and laughing. Her experiences had been positive, so she interpreted the same environment differently. The participants internalized their experiences, and the resulting perceptions influenced their interpretations.

For clarification, it was important to make the distinction between the material environment and the social environment in which the interactions occurred within particular places. The physical setting was the material environment, such as the gymnasium or bell schedule. The social environment was the social setting, such as meeting friends, beating the tardy bell, or having break time. The data were analyzed and organized according to the intersection of these constructs within the material and social environments of the high school. The findings operationalized this relationship by describing the context of place as process and the lens through which the school environment was perceived.
Figure 3. Relationship between students’ interpretation of place and their experiences in school.

Research Question 1 addressed the social significance of places in the school: What school places have social significance for high school students? Cognitively, the objective quality of place is seen in the material environment. The physical design of the school was seen in the examples of boundaries of concrete walls, sidewalks, classrooms, football stadium, and the Annex building. The material environment was identified by the physical place in the school. The social environment was identified by the important places in the school. For example, “sports places” included the gym and field house because sports were “played” in those locations.

Research Question 2 addressed the social meanings that places had for them: What meanings do students give to the places they occupy? The material environment was the location
of the emotional involvement of the participants. Participants were aware of the school environment and sense of place as they made choices. Dwelling in place means that people have an awareness and sense of place as they give of themselves to the place. An example of dwelling in place is seen in the reasoning of students about where they “hung out” or “did not hang out” during their free time. Choosing favorite places such as the hallway or biology classroom indicates the social, emotional involvement with school. Participants also described the emotions that were felt in particular places, such as Participant 15 saying “the office makes me nervous.”

Research Question 3 sought to explore the strategies that students used to negotiate the places in the high school: How does navigation of these places influence how students experience schooling? The physical dimension of place means that students embody the place through the expression of their bodies. Embodiment of particular places can be seen in the practices and strategies students used depending on where they were in the material environment. For example, students acted differently in the classroom than they did in the hallway.

Sample Population

Table 4 shows the demographics and criteria used to select the participants. Grade level was one criterion. Participants included 3 ninth graders, 4 tenth graders, 4 eleventh graders, and 5 twelfth graders. Eight of the participants were female students, and 8 of the participants were male students. Academic criteria included 9 students who made As and Bs; 3 students who made Bs and Cs; and 4 students who made Cs, Ds, and Fs. The level of involvement in extracurricular activities ranged from 4 participants claiming no involvement, to 8 participants involved in two or less extracurricular activities, to 4 participants involved in three or more activities. Demographically, the participants were all White, were from working class families, and lived in a rural area.
### Table 4

**Characteristics of Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade at time of study</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/B Students</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/C Students</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C/D/F Students</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extracurricular Activities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Involvement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in 2 or less</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in 3 or more</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cognitive Dimensions of Being-in-Place

Research Question 1: What school places have social significance for high school students?

Cognitive dimensions of place are perceived through the corporeal, spatial, and relational experiences. This means that the participants perceived place through the location of the body in a physical setting, perception of the social setting, and their position in relation to others. For example, corporeal interpretations might include the physical structure in the material environment, sensory perceptions of the social setting, and the position of oneself in relation to others in the material and social environment.

To determine the places that were significant to participants, I conducted interviews and focus groups. Frequency was as a key component in the initial analysis. For example, participants made 57 references to the technical school. The specific numbers used in the study to describe the findings are based on the frequency of times that key words were mentioned by participants during the walking tour, interviews, and focus groups. The places in the school, the frequency of the participants going to those places, and the time spent in each place were identified. Participants identified places during the walking tour by giving names to the material environment of the school, such as gym, hall, classroom, technical school, or football field.

Corporeal Interpretation of Objective Place

Corporeality (the lived body) means that we are bodily in the world (van Manen, 1990). The experiences that the participants engaged were done by and through the body. The participants interpreted the school grounds and organizational structures through a corporeal perspective. For example, this perspective sees the material environment (the physical facilities) and feels the structure of the social environment (daily routines).
Figure 4 shows that the participants identified 40 places within the school during the walking tour. Field note observations indicated that the high school building itself might be limited to the five halls, 12 classrooms, and 3 labs, but the building additions, sports fields, and technology school constituted places that students negotiated on a daily basis. Students initially identified physical places during the walking tour. For example, vocational places were any classes that were at the technical school.

![Campbell County High School complex](image)

*Figure 4. Campbell County High School complex.*

Table 5 indicates that many places emerged as having social significance for the participants. However, places could also be categorized by the participants based on the purpose...
of each particular place. For example, classrooms were for learning, hallways were for hanging out with friends, and the gym was for sports and hanging out.

Table 5

*Places Identified in the Walking Tour*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight room</td>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>Agriculture shop</td>
<td>Main office</td>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>Walkways</td>
<td>Nature trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locker room</td>
<td>Annex</td>
<td>Tech School</td>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Hallway</td>
<td>Front entrance</td>
<td>Outdoor classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football field</td>
<td>Band room</td>
<td>Auto mechanics</td>
<td>Nurse’s office</td>
<td>Locker's</td>
<td>Back entrance</td>
<td>Cheerleading trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball field</td>
<td>Computer lab</td>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>Assistant Principal’s office</td>
<td>Commons area</td>
<td>Back of school</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball field</td>
<td>Conference room</td>
<td>Cosmetology</td>
<td>Janitor’s office</td>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>Walkway to tech center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Family/Consumer Science Marketing</td>
<td>Around the Annex building</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Bus and car rider area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BTA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parking lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the interviews suggested that each place could be categorized by the practices that occurred within each place. Participants acted in a certain way depending on the social and cognitive demands of the places in which they were physically located. The embodiment of place was expressed through bodily actions and intentional movements (Cannatella, 2007). For example, academic places are those in which one learns; thus the classroom was considered an academic place. The assignment of place to each category was
revised during the focus group sessions. The findings suggest that physical place had social purposes for the students. For example, the participants agreed that the parking lot and the gym should be categorized as social places as well as sports places. Places and experiences had different meanings for the participants based on the purposes of each place.

Based on the initial coding of the interviews, it seemed that the gym should be categorized as a sports place. According to the perceptions of the participants, the gym was a place for structured, coach-directed basketball or volleyball practice, or working out in the weight room. The material environment, physical spaces in school, also varied in purpose based on the time of day. For example, the lunchroom was a place to eat from 10:30 to 12:30, but it was also a place to hang out during break time from 9:10 to 9:30.

For example, this dialogue illustrates how students spent their time.

*R*: What do you do while you are there?

P4: I’ve spent a lot of time in there. I come up here in the summer for basketball and for football. I mean I would come to football in the morning about 6:00 and then go down to the track and run for basketball, come back up here and work out again for basketball some on my legs. Uh, scrimmage or so for a couple of hours and then come back at 6 o’clock that night and do more football stuff.

However, responses from the focus group interviews required another look at the previous interviews. A new theme emerged for the gym as a social place. It was a place where the participants went for free time or just to hang out. They might play basketball, “shoot hoops,” but it was unstructured and not directed by coaches. The gym was also a site of gender conflict because the boys always got priority in use of the gym.

*R*: Where do you like to hang out?

P8: The gym is the biggest place that we hang out. The film room. We don’t watch films, we just want to get out of class and we hide from the teachers. We go down there. Sometimes there are tables and chairs and sometimes it’s empty. And there’s a TV down there.
P14: The boys are usually in the gym. As much as they can get in the gym to play basketball, they will. If we have a sub, they want to get out and go shoot hoops.

P9: All the guys, they go to the gym. Like every chance they get. If they’re skipping, they’re in the gym.

During the focus group session, the participants also suggested that marketing classes and business classes should be in the “vocational places” column. These classes are taught at the technical school as described by Participant 1 in his daily routine.

R: Describe your daily routine?

P1: Then I walk down to the tech school to go to Mr. P., my marketing class. And then, usually in there, we just do, usually gives us PowerPoint and we talk. Sometimes he gives us projects that we do. Uh, like the Sports Marketing class, it was for DECA [Marketing Club].

P4: Then after I go back to my locker and I go down to the tech school. Where I am in business right now. It’s Mr. P. I think I’m in the Entrepreneur class right now. I took marketing last year.

P11: This is my other class I have. This is my business education. This is where I learn typing. This is my typing class. There’s a lot more because it’s different from the school and it has its own equipment. And then you have your marketing education.

Spatial Interpretation of Objective Place

Spatiality (lived space) describes how one feels in a material environment (van Manen, 1990). A lived space is comfortable (or not) based on where the place is physically and the meanings ascribed to that space. Spatial interpretations occur through the emotional perceptions about the material environment. This can be seen in the participants’ decisions about important places based on the frequency of references.

Further analysis of place based on individual interviews revealed that 10 of the 40 initial places were personally valued by the participants. Table 6 shows important places based on the frequency of the word classroom combined with the specific “content classes/or teacher names,” which would suggest that participants spent a large portion of their daily routine in academic
places. On the other hand, social places such as hallways, break area, locker, and gym were not mentioned as often, revealing that less time was spent in social places, according to their daily routines. The frequency of key words indicates the sense of place that the participants had about material environments in the school.

Table 6

References to Places from Individual Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Frequency of Coding “Daily Routine”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockers</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break Area</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Room</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex Building</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech School</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech School</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Class</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personally significant places were valued differently than meaningful places to the school as a whole. During the focus group, the participants were asked to identify the most important places for the school. Appendix E illustrates how the participants evaluated each place based on the importance related to three themes: activity places, academic places, and social places. This comparison is critical because it shows that the participants had an understanding about the purposes of school, but when given a choice, they chose the social places in which to spend their time. They knew how to act, what they could get away with, and who was watching in the different locations in the school. For example, Participant 15 explained when he was most likely to go to the hallway. “My teachers let me go to the hall after I finish my work. So, I get my stuff done so I can go in the hall.” They had knowledge concerning what behavior was needed and/or allowed in certain places in the school.

Table 7 illustrates that a low percentage of the participants did view the gym and weight room as important, but most agreed that activity places were not that important in the school. Alternately, 100% of the participants agreed that the classroom was the most important academic place for the school. With reference to social place, the hallways were thought to be the most important place for 69% of the participants.
Table 7

The Most Important Places in the School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Participants Agreed</th>
<th>Participants Disagreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity Places</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Room</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Room</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrapbooking Room</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Places</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech School</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Places</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallway</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockers</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break Area</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relational Interpretation of Objective Place**

Relationality (lived other) encompasses the relationships we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them (van Manen, 1990). Cognitively, we position ourselves in relation to others based on structure and sensory perceptions. The reasons for avoiding places are examples of relational interpretations of place. For example, the participants
knew which places to avoid in the material environment, such as “stinky places” or “noisy halls.” Interpretations based on perceived relationships influenced choices about whom to avoid such as “stuck up people.”

Table 8 lists the places that students avoided if they had a choice. Participants did not go to these places as they went about their daily routines. The reasons for such decisions were based on a lack of interest in the activity associated with the place, personal conflicts, they were crowded and noisy, or they elicited uncomfortable feelings.

Table 8

*Places I Do NOT Like to Hang Out*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th># Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Room</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Class</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrooms</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Room</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth-Grade Hall</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of interest
P1: I don’t go to the library cuz I don’t like to read.
P4: I don’t like band, so I don’t go to the band room.

Personal conflict
P2: Me and the teacher don’t get along. Well, we do get along. We don’t have real issues; maybe it’s just math class.
P6: I don’t hang out in any classrooms unless I have to.
P8: Nobody likes the math teacher.
P11: I do not hang out in math class. I don’t try to stick around. I hate math. I mean, I try to learn it, but then you know and I kind of give up because the teacher’s kind of mean, and if you ask a question, she’s a butt about it and says you should have listened the first time. And you’re like “woman, I tried to listen.”

Crowded and noisy
P1: There’s lots of people in the hallways, it’s crowded. And everybody’s running back and forth to get books and go to class.
P9: Lunchroom. I don’t like the noise. All the kids. Middle schoolers are usually in the gym and they are loud.
P12: In the front here, the Commons Area or whatever you call it. There are too many people. They go like their own groups. I don’t like crowds.
P15: I don’t hang out in the hallways between classes because it’s too crowded. There’s too many kids, way too many kids.

Uncomfortable feelings
P12: I don’t hang out in the office. No, normally, half the time, if I’m in trouble, I’m in the office anyway.
P15: Not the office. Have you seen the principal? He can be very intimidating.
P5: I don’t hang out in the office because it makes me nervous.
P5: I don’t hang out in the bathrooms because they’re gross.
P12: I don’t hang out in the bathrooms. That’s just a little weird.
P14: You don’t go to the bathrooms during, like between classes or break or anything. We just…some people have had weird experiences in the bathrooms, so we don’t go. We
go during class. Like when, we avoid it during break. Like lesbians, I’ve heard, I’ve never seen anything, but I’ve just heard stories. And I’m scared.

The participants were able to articulate the reasons for the choices they made about where they went during the day. Some places had meaning based on relationships with others, a feeling of ownership, the activity inherent in the place, or the ability to gain a certain amount of temporary freedom from authority.

Although the responses varied among the participants, the common places identified in the walking tour were also found to be important to the participants. The cognition of the material environment was limited by those senses that perceived the boundaries of concrete walls, the touch of surfaces, the sounds of bells, or the smell of the lunchroom. The students identified parts of the material environment as they labeled classrooms and halls. The material environment alone cannot fully address the question of social significance. The accompanying feelings about and awareness of specific locations gave the places in high school varying levels of importance.

The cognitive dimension of being-in-place determines the places that have social significance for high school students. Specifically, there were two types of places that held social significance for these participants. Academic places in terms of the classrooms and the technical school were important to the students. Social places that were significant included the hallway, gym, and lunchroom. Academic places were seen as the reason for going to school. Social places were seen as opportunities to relax and talk to friends.

**Emotional Dimensions of Being-in-Place**

Research Question 2: What meanings do students give to the places they occupy?

Emotional dimensions of place were perceived through the spatial, temporal, and relational experiences. This means that the participants perceived place through the feelings they
attached to the physical setting, emotions evoked by a social setting, and their relationship to others. For example, emotional interpretations might include how one feels about a particular part of the school, choices they make about going places, and level of involvement in school.

**Spatial Interpretation of Dwelling in Place**

Spatiality (lived space) describes how one feels in a social environment (van Manen, 1990). The participants interpreted the social environment through feelings about favorite places and where they liked to hang out. Spatial interpretations of a place occurred through the emotional perceptions about the social environment.

Results indicate that participants had preferences related to particular places. Table 9 shows the top favorite places for the participants as identified during the walking tour. One can see that the favorite places of the participants were diverse and varied based on individual choices. Although identified in terms of the material environment, choices were made based on the presence of friends.
### Table 9

**Individual Favorite Places in the School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>First Choice</th>
<th>Second Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Football field</td>
<td>Weight Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resource classroom</td>
<td>Electronics classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Conference Room</td>
<td>History classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Football field</td>
<td>Weight Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Band Room</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Auto-mechanics shop</td>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ag shop</td>
<td>Auto-mechanics shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>10th-grade hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Science classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Senior Hall</td>
<td>Electronics classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>English classroom</td>
<td>Weight Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hall by Ag Shop</td>
<td>Resource classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Weight Room</td>
<td>Algebra classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chemistry class</td>
<td>Math classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Resource classroom</td>
<td>Study hall classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Lockers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the individual interviews, participants were asked to identify personally chosen places for hanging out such as certain hallways, lunchrooms, and classrooms. Because the participants chose to hang out in certain places, an inference can be drawn that these places were
meaningful to the individuals. Non-teacher supervised, unstructured time, usually during their morning break, was spent hanging out around the lockers, in the hallways, and even in the classrooms.

*R: Where do you like to hang out?*

P11: Around my locker, in the ninth-grade hallway until we get kicked out. The English teacher complains because she says she can’t get through the hallway. And you’re standing there, so she makes us leave. So, we go to the little area around the door. I leave to another part of the hall. I don’t really hang out anywhere else because of classes and stuff. So, I go to classes. I go to my locker probably at break or in the morning. In between classes, I do occasionally but I’ve worked out a system where I take two books, just however it works out.

P7: Uh, mostly the classes, hallways. Auto mechanics the most. We have ‘em all just one period but… I’m in there 42 minutes each class. Just one class. Mostly the 10th-grade hallway, down by the office. The gym. Get to go there very little. No class there. I go to the gym on assemblies and if we get a free day or something.

P10: Uh, over by the lunchroom in that hallway, beside my locker, and going toward the tech center are the three main places I reckon.

P12: Like my favorite places and all that? Okay, Mr. Train’s room is that hallway or outside, like past those doors. In that ground area, outside those doors (outside of the ag shop kind of). I hang in Ms. Washington’s class.

Analysis of the interviews also revealed that the participants’ choices of the places where they “liked to hang out” were based on the presence of friends and the freedom provided by particular places as illustrated in Table 10. The term *hang out* incorporates the place as well as the reason for hanging out in certain places. P6 explained, “I choose places where there are less teachers, I guess, more freedom to go and do.”

**Temporal Interpretation of Dwelling in Place**

Lived time (temporality) moves based on our feelings or meaning attached to how we feel about the experiences. Lived time is a synthesis of the physical and emotional dimensions of place. Students constituted and reconstituted where and how they spent their free time. Free time can be thought of as unstructured, student-controlled time. Although free time was formally
scheduled as a break from 10:05 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., the students were able to manipulate their
day to include more free time during and in between classes.

P1: The gym is where we usually go when we’re not doing anything in class. Teachers like, you know, like you can go somewhere, and we’re like okay we’ll go to the gym. That’s when we usually go there. We play basketball.

P4: The field house, it’s where most of my friends are, football players, basketball. That’s where I spend most of my time I guess. I go sixth, seventh period. Sometimes break, whenever. Whenever I can get out of class. During break, I go to the field house and then whatever I’m doing there I get done and I pretty much just walk around.

R: So, how many times a day can you possibly be here?

P4: On a good day, I can be here three to four periods a day if we’re not doing anything in class, I can legitimately get out and come up here.

P2: The resource room or the weight room. I’m just anywhere. Right now, my routine has changed. I have a girlfriend in ninth grade. We meet in between class. We meet up during Activity period. We just sit down and talk, and flirt I guess you could say.

P10: Do hallways count? That’s where I am most of the day. That’s only 5 minutes between classes but I think that, I just feel like I have more time just sittin’ in the hallway than I do anywhere else. I like being in the hallway, that’s just where everything happens.

P12: Okay, Mr. Train’s room is that hallway or outside, like past those doors. In that ground area, outside those doors. Most of the time, I’m out in the hallways, just doing my own thing. I like to get out of class because there’s most of the people that is in there I do not like and I do not want to associate with so I do the nice thing and I leave. Keep from saying anything bad. The hallway is my place to escape.

P16: Yes, you can pretty much go wherever you want to during break.

Some participants thought that the formal daily routine did change occasionally due to assemblies or “wanting to change things up a bit.” However, most felt that the daily routine changed very little and preferred to have it stay the same each day).

P4: In between classes I kind of just take my time, I guess. Not really slow, I go to my locker and make sure I get everything and head back to class. We have 4 minutes between classes. They let me leave when I finish my work, and when I leave I usually go to the gym or field house. I go the same way every time. During break, well, it depends on who’s here. If I know somebody’s not here that I normally talk to, I won’t go that way. I mainly stay in my hall.
P11: My routine changes sometimes. I kind of switch it up some I guess. You could say, like, I don’t always go like, when you come from my lockers down here, I don’t always go this way, sometimes I’ll go that way by the counselor’s office, go down that hall. It just depends. I think it might be a little quicker when I do that, if I’m running late but usually, I’m just a pretty routine person.

P12: Yea, I go whatever way I feel like. If I don’t like you then I’m not walking with you. No. It all depends if it was like a day, that happened yesterday, where we have an assembly. And, the days just get messed up because of that. That’s the only way that it changes.

P16: Not usually, I’m pretty set in my routines. Except for breaks, sometimes, varies on where I go and who I want to hang out with. Who I hang out with that day depends on who I’ve been speaking to more. It’s usually my goofy friends because they’re pretty funny. Sometimes I go a different way to biology. I’ll switch it up and go around this way instead of that way just to change things up.

P3: I always go through the building, cuz going out the front, a lot of times you’ll get called for skipping or something. Oh, if they see you exit. So, we always go down the hallways. Just so, we’re not like, you know.

P5: I go to my locker every period to get my books.

P10: The tech center? I always go this way. I hate going that other way cuz there’s garbage cans and stuff out there. Yea, I just always like walking down here cuz of the scenery.

P12: And, I go through the Annex building and go out those doors to the tech center, and I go down the grassy hill. I take the long way okay. I’m not, I don’t like my teacher down there so I have to calm myself because I normally get in trouble down there. Like yesterday, I bailed class, after I did all my work, got all my work and stuff done.. I always take the same route. I don’t go the short way, I go the long way. Keeps me away from my teachers and keeps me out of trouble longer. Until I enter the room. No, they don’t care. They love me. I am loved by all my teachers.

P14: It’s kind of routine, it’s kind of the same every day. Yea, pretty much. It’s a big square around here, you don’t walk the way around the square to get to your locker. You just cut through, I guess the easiest route is what we’re used to. Sometimes I do somewhere else, like off campus.

Relational Interpretation of Dwelling in Place

The participants’ relational experiences in school included teachers as well as peers.

Relative to the findings concerning teacher-controlled and student-controlled places, patterns emerged based on the participants’ feelings associated with such places. Table 10 shows that
more negative feelings were associated with teacher-controlled places than student controlled places. For example, Participant 1 is a straight-A student and has negative feelings about his classes. Classes were described as irritating, miserable, upsetting, skeptical, powerless, and provoking. Participant 15 is a student who is failing who also has negative feelings about classes. These feelings were described as bored, unhappy, and nervous. Participant 16 is another straight-A student who described feelings about classes as guilty, hesitant, frustrated, confused, embarrassed, and anxious. Appendix H provides a complete list of feelings associated with teacher-controlled and student-controlled places.

Table 10  

*Feelings Associated with Places*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teacher Controlled</th>
<th>Student Controlled</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 20  63  57  25  32  17
In comparison, more positive feelings were associated with student-controlled places than with teacher-controlled places. Participant 7 was a very quiet and shy person who expressed feelings associated with student-dominated places as satisfied, calm, understanding, and courageous. Participant 9 was a straight-A student and associated feelings of daring, rebellious, free, and curious with student-dominated places. Participant 10, a solid-B student, said that student-dominated places were cheerful, and he felt content when in those places.

It should be noted that some students did feel positive feelings when in teacher-dominated places. Participant 14, a straight-A student, felt confident, important, certain, interested, calm, and satisfied. However, the same was not true when in student-dominated places. She felt negative feelings such as alienated, bored, offended, humiliated, and worked up. When compared with the previous findings concerning places where students like to hang out or favorite places, positive feelings were associated with these choices. The inverse of this relationship is true as well. Places student did not want to hang out or least favorite places were associated with negative feelings. Thus, it would seem that emotional cognition, how students felt, was related to the meaning they ascribed to particular places at school. Places did not have meaning unto themselves but were ascribed meanings as places passed through the interpretative lens of the participants.

When asked to identify their favorite part of the day, students answered, “going home.” Figure 5 illustrates the participants’ feelings in general by identifying their favorite and least favorite part of the day.
Figure 5. Evaluating the school day.

Thirteen of the participants described high school classes as their least favorite part of the school day for a variety of reasons. These perceptions were based on the participants feeling a lack of respect, boredom, rushed, or the dislike of the teacher.

P1: The teacher treats us like babies and she doesn’t follow up on assignments. It gets on my nerves.

P10: I don’t like going to that class. The teacher and I don’t get along. I’ve never been good at English.

P11: It’s difficult being with that man in there. He’s very unpleasant. He just makes me want to hit him.

P5: It’s in the morning, and I don’t like Algebra II very much. I’m okay at it but I don’t like it. To be honest, I don’t like my teacher.

P12: History teacher talks too fast. The business teacher is just weird. The classes, it’s the work, not the teachers really.

P7: Well, we got to take notes and he just says the notes to us and we gotta hurry up and write ‘em down. Sometimes I can’t get all my notes.
P14: It’s the atmosphere I’m doing it in. I feel like I am rushed all the time. And I feel like I can’t ask questions.

P9: The topic and the teacher are boring.

P16: I don’t understand Algebra. It’s not good. I was told it will just get harder so I am scared because I have trouble now.

P15: Math stresses me out so bad. I dread it so bad.

On the other hand, going home at the end of the day was the majority of the participants’ favorite part of the day.

P1: It is the end of the day and I get to leave.

P2: End of the day because we get to go home.

P7: Leaving school is my favorite part.

P8: Going home after practice.

A place can give a sense of freedom, restraint, comfort, opportunity, and experience. Students associated negative and positive feelings based on teacher-controlled places and student-controlled places. The emotions evoked by previous experiences within material and social environments influenced the participants’ intentions for going to particular physical places. Positive feelings about a place could be seen in the way a participant described moving through the 12th-grade hall by “taking my time.” An example of the way negative feelings influenced strategy was evidence by the way one participant avoided the bathroom in between classes because “weird things went on in there.”

The emotional dimension of being-in-place informed the meanings that students gave to the places they occupied. The meanings students gave to the academic and social places were based on value, control, and preference. Participants preferred places that gave them freedom to move around and socialize. Their favorite places in school were determined by the presence of friends or a favorite teacher. Negative feelings were more often associated with teacher-
controlled spaces. Positive feelings were associated with student-controlled spaces. The value participants assigned to preferred places emanated from their sense of control in the place of school.

**Physical Dimensions of Being-in-Place**

Research Question 3: How does navigation of these places influence how students experience school?

Physical dimensions of place are perceived through the corporeal, temporal, and relational experiences. This means that the participants experienced the material environment through and by the body in an embodied existence. They intentionally or unintentionally expressed their emotions through their bodies. They physically positioned themselves in relation to others. For example, participants identified with a particular group and thus positioned themselves to be in the same places as the other group members.

**Corporeal Interpretation of Embodied Place**

Participants interpreted the routines and practices of the school environment through a corporeal perspective. This means that their bodies moved through the school and engaged in the activities of the school consciously and unconsciously. For example, when the bell rang, they left the classroom; when a basketball was thrown to them, they caught it.

Table 11 illustrates that the structure of the school day is influenced by the patterns of interactions and the predictability of the order of these experiences. The daily routines of the participants provided organizational structure. The navigation from one place to the next provided opportunities for socialization. The formal institutional arrangements such as the bell schedule, availability of breakfast and lunch, and the length of break contributed to the structure. Informal practices such as the route one took to each class or whom one met at the locker after fourth period were no less part of a daily routine for the participants than the sequence of classes
they attended. The participants’ day consisted of such a routine. The only variation occurred when they had activities outside of the school grounds, such as competitions or conferences, or if they had an assembly.

Meanings given to the places where participants chose to go focused on the interaction with friends and time to talk. For example, some participants chose the lockers as a place to hang out because it was a place they already went to to get their books for class, but also because most of their acquaintances and friends were available to talk in that area in between classes.

*R: Name the places you like to hang out. When do you go there? What do you do?*

P10: I hang out at the locker. It’s when we’re putting all our books up is when we stand around and talk for a minute or so. I have friends around me.

P16: The locker because that’s kind of where I end usually when I’m walking. I always stop at my locker and get something out. And usually, if people are following, that’s where we stop and talk. It’s in the freshman hallway.

The most common place to hang out for students was the hallway. One reason for choosing the hallway was the likelihood and possibility of running into friends. In contrast, an isolated hallway might be chosen in order to avoid crowds or people.

P6: The hall by the office because of my girlfriend. She hangs out there and that’s all her friends, so…that’s the 10th graders. I hang out there third period, which is break.

P7: I hang out in the hallway because that’s just where everybody just stays at in our grade.

P12: (Hallway by Mr. Train’s Room). Cuz, I’m not like one of those real people, like, person. So, and I don’t like big crowds, so I go out and hang with my people. Everybody else is not like, I’m not calling them outsiders, but you know, I barely associate with anybody. So, it’s normally 10th and up that I associate with. In my hall, there is only one or two people and me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Routine</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:20 or later</td>
<td>Arrive at School</td>
<td>Parking lot, Lunchroom, Hallways, Locker</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eat Breakfast or Not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go to locker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:47</td>
<td>First Period</td>
<td>Classrooms, Gym</td>
<td>Teacher, Classmates, Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:38</td>
<td>Go to Locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:42</td>
<td>Second Period</td>
<td>Classrooms, Gym</td>
<td>Teacher, Classmates, Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Go to Locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:34</td>
<td>Activity Period</td>
<td>Classrooms, Gym</td>
<td>Teachers, Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>Lunchroom, Hallways, Locker, Break Area, Gym</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outside of Annex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Go to Locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:19</td>
<td>Fourth Period</td>
<td>Classrooms, Gym</td>
<td>Teachers, Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:07</td>
<td>Go to Locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:11</td>
<td>Fifth Period</td>
<td>Classroom, Gym</td>
<td>Teachers, Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:59</td>
<td>Go to locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:03</td>
<td>Sixth Period</td>
<td>Classroom, Gym, Lunchroom</td>
<td>Teachers, Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:16</td>
<td>Go to Locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:20</td>
<td>Seventh Period</td>
<td>Classroom, Gym</td>
<td>Teachers, Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:08</td>
<td>Go to locker</td>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:12</td>
<td>Eighth Period</td>
<td>Classroom, Gym</td>
<td>Teachers, Friends, Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>End of School</td>
<td>Lockers, Hallway, Parking Lot, Bus and Car Rider Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05</td>
<td>Buses leave</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05-4:30</td>
<td>Key Club</td>
<td>The Math Room</td>
<td>Scrapbooking Team, Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:05-5:00</td>
<td>Football and Band in the Fall</td>
<td>Football field, Band Room, Band Room,</td>
<td>Team Mates, Coaches, Parents, Band Members, Cheerleaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Softball and Baseball in the Spring</td>
<td>Softball Field, Baseball Field,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volleyball—Year Round</td>
<td>Practice Field, Cheerleader Trailer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A few participants did choose classrooms as places to spend their unstructured time, such as during break or in-between classes. There were three classrooms that were chosen most frequently by those that like to hang out in the classroom.

P2: (The resource room) that’s where all me, me and all my pals meet. All of just get together and we hang out and talk about stuff and that’s where we go. I hang out every day, whenever we have free time. Inside the room, sometimes we’ll travel out but most of the time, we’re inside. Ms. Apple’s my favorite place to go.

P9: I hang out in (the math) classroom cuz I have her fourth period for a teacher’s aide. So, during break I just go in there. Instead of hanging out in the hallways. In the library, I have Yearbook. Sixth period. We sit on the couch and stuff once we get done with our sections.

P14: (The chemistry teacher’s room). I love her anyways. And I have a class, like, it’s during break, so I go in there during break and after break I have a class in there. So, I just go in there, all my friends are in there usually. I either do homework or just eat or whatever. I like the atmosphere in there.

Temporal Interpretation of Embodied Place

The physical dimension of place embodies feelings about the movement of time. Feelings about the material or social environment can make time move slowly or quickly. The participants had a real “sense of time” related to their routines. The social reality of the participants was influenced by memories, past experiences, and individual personality.

To understand the participants’ perception of time, they were asked “Where do you spend most of your time?” Fifty-four percent of participants felt that most of their time was spent in academic places such as the classroom, library, or conference room. This compares closely to the 46% of the participants who felt that the time was spent in social places such as the hallway/halls, gym, lunchroom, and break area. Figure 6 illustrates the percentages of participants who felt that most of the school day was spent in particular places.
Findings for the time spent outside of the regular school hours varied among the 16 participants involved in the study. Seven participants estimated that at least 15 hours per week were spent participating in sports, service clubs, or academic clubs. Five of the participants estimated 1 to 6 hours per week in the same manner. Four participants did not spend any time outside of the regular school day at the school for any reason. Participants had a firm grasp of the time they spent after school.

*R: How much time do you spend at school outside the regular school day?*

P5: I stay late a lot for either, like during marching season we stay for band till 5:30 ish. Plus, I stayed for basketball. We came at night though, from like 6 to 8 or 5 to 8, whatever. And then, for Scrapbook I’ve been staying until like 5 ish, 4:30.

P13: One and half hours a week for Key Club, 4 days a week. When I’m doing volleyball, mom comes and gets me at 4:30 because I have practice in Hanceville because it starts at Hanceville/Wallace State.

P12: I come early to see my boyfriend. That’s the only reason I come early. I don’t stay after 3:00 unless I’m in trouble and got after school suspension. Which I’ve had once.

P6: I try not to. I’ll go to a few football games. Other than that, I try not to. I don’t have no interest in staying up here. I have til next year till I graduate.
P7: None. Except I go to the football games on Friday nights. I go to some basketball games.

P15: I do not stay after 3, most definitely. Besides, 3:05 when the busses are here, cuz I ride the bus. But when the bell rings at 3, boom I’m out the door.

The overall findings from the walking tour and interviews convey the variety and scope of places in the high school that are important to participants. A myriad of places in the school, the places involved in the participants’ daily routines, the frequency of time spent in certain places, and the amount of time spent in those places were identified. These findings are based on the participants’ interpretation of place and their experiences in high school. The next step in understanding the relationship between place and experience was to explore the meanings participants gave to the places that they had identified as important (or not important).

**Relational Interpretation of Embodied Place**

Relational interpretation of place means that we understand our environment through the relations within material and social environments. Participants acted out these interpretations through bodily expressions. For example, participants chose extracurricular activities based on the involvement of friends in the same activity or they sat with the same group of people at lunch every day.

Participants spent “after school time” involved in extracurricular activities with other students in the school. Each extracurricular activity was connected to a certain place involving areas such as football, softball, and baseball fields or classrooms used for after-school meetings for Beta Club or Key Club.

*R: What activities are you involved in at school?*

P6: Auto-mechanics competition with TORCH. I used to play baseball and basketball and football. I played baseball for 5 years and then I hadn’t played no more, since like, that’s when I was little I played. I played basketball in middle school. I played football a few years, didn’t really like it. I played last year, so I don’t know. I hated it. I hated every
second of it. I don’t see what people find in football. There’s nothing fun about just, getting yelled at, getting screamed at, sweating your butt off, for people that don’t appreciate. Yea, I don’t get that.

P8: Beta Club. I like it. I’m not very much involved in it because I am too busy with my sports. Key Club. I like it because we help the community. We help the tornado victims, go to the elementary school and help with the book fair or field day. F.T.A. Future Teachers of America. it’s a good reason to get out of class. I hear that you get to teach a lesson to little kids. Volleyball. I love it. I’ve played since sixth grade. We are really good. We used to be a lot better but we lost a coach and player. So we are in a rebuilding phase right now but still doing good. Softball. I like it because it is outside.

P12: No. I do my own thing.

Based on the interviews, material and social environment merged as a place of school. It would seem that the participants constructed their informal daily routine based on with whom they would interact or who they would avoid. Participants used the knowledge of “who hangs out where” as a part of constructing their school day. Knowledge of the formal, institutionalized routine provided a predictable framework for each day. This knowledge in turn, allowed them to plan and carry out their informal routine.

The physical dimension embodied experiences in the material and social environment through the navigation of the “place of school.” Students were not just navigating a material environment but a social one as well. The quality of the interactions in the social environment influenced where they liked to spend their time in the physical setting. Organizational structures such as class schedules and extracurricular activities determined how they spent most of their time. Informal routines such “break time” or “getting out of class” guided with whom they interacted.

**Conceptualization of an Encounter**

Experiences encompass the life of an individual and shape the perception of their world. Encounters, as a type of experience, operationalize the concept of place as a process that
constructs the intersection of the material and social environments. An encounter can be described as “the tiny social system formed when two or more persons are in one’s immediate physical presence” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 124). Figure 7 synthesizes the information from the analysis of the literature as well as the findings from the study. The conceptual framework demonstrates the multidimensional relationships between mental processes, feelings, and the body that come together to form an encounter. Encounters were chosen as the unit of study because of the brevity, frequency, and interactive nature of the encounter as an experience.

Figure 7. Conceptualization of an encounter.

The findings suggest that the place of school cannot be limited to the material environment, that which can only be perceived through the senses. The social environment of the
students is a facet of place as well. Participants negotiated encounters through daily routines and choices about preferred and important places of interaction. An awareness of student- and teacher-controlled place helped them decide on the routes they would take to class, gym, or lunch. Ultimately, astute interpretation of the cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions of being in school influenced how the participants negotiated and managed the daily encounters experienced in school.

**Corporeal Interpretations: Types of Encounters**

Participants described the experiences that occurred within the school. The participants’ experiences were reflected in the listing of intentional and unintentional acts that they had participated in or observed. Table 12 illustrates the many possibilities for the physical places where a variety of experiences could occur. It would seem that there was more of a variety and more possibilities of encounters in the classroom as compared to at the locker. Table 12 conveys the type of interactions from the participants’ viewpoints. They described these experiences during the interviews and focus groups. Many of the interactions were common to different places, such as talking and gossiping. Alternately, some interactions were particular to certain places, such as playing music or checking out books.

It appears that the classrooms and gym had the greatest opportunity for various encounters from learning to cheating to pulling a chair out from under someone. The lunchroom and hallways were places for additional encounters such as relaxing, getting on Facebook, or throwing food. Break areas, by participant definition, included classrooms, gym, hallways, and lunchroom, where participants gossiped, fought, kissed, and told jokes. The band room, library, and technical school were more limited in the opportunities they provided for encounters.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Learning, studying, joking, telling stories, talk, play cards, socialize, text, gossip, argue, goof off, sit, eat, sleep, do my work and sleep when I get a chance, learn that there’s more than one planet, boring teachers, fights, boredom, drama, hanging out, projects, after school activities, cheating, touchy-feely, pulling chair out from under other people, farting, nose picking, people don’t shut up, teacher instructs us, get yelled out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>Fights, lots of gossip, sports, finishing homework, assemblies, talent show practice, chat, sit, eat, talk, watch Riley try to play basketball, play, basketball, kid around, where we get concerned looks from AF, we hear about Ashley’s intimate life with this guy, I hang out with Bee, we get local entertainment, people have awkward conversations, work out, socialize, drama, studying, paddling, hit in the face with balls, birds, everything that happens in the hallway happens in the gym, motor boating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallway</td>
<td>Walk girlfriend to class, talking, fighting, gossiping, yelling, crying, cliques, holding hands, playing jokes, eat, text, pantsing, mooning, attacking, kicked, dancing, singing, magic tricks, get away from people, we laugh, stand by locker, walking, goof off, trust exercises (me and my friends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch Room</td>
<td>Eating, relaxing, Face booking, laughing, studying, gossiping, fighting, arguments, socialize, play cards, text, eat like a fat kid, talk, hanging out, drama, hanging out with friends, throwing food, sometimes they bring leftovers, goofing off, go there for break a lot, don’t eat, make fun of them always having chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break Area</td>
<td>Gossip, fighting, yelling, kissing, eat, tell jokes, talk to older kids, sit in the lunchroom and feed my face with food from Coach, sit with Don and Cathy and Haley, sit, have fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech School</td>
<td>Electronics, meet friends from other schools, learning, working, fixing, helping, get in trouble a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Prom, typing, checking out books, study, sleep on the amazing couch, talk and hang out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Room</td>
<td>Practice, making fun, playing music, talking with friends, just doing dumb things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Sit around and talk, drive away as fast as possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13 lists the physical places that the participants liked to “hang out.” However, if you think of place as a process, then the act of hanging out entailed more than going to a material environment: it included the interactions that constituted the social environment.

Table 13

*Places I Like to Hang Out*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallways</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fieldhouse</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Room</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkway to Tech Center</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the Annex building</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-mechanics Shop</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Room</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One might think that the lunchroom was only available during lunchtime. However, as a preferred place to go for the participants, the lunchroom served multiple purposes throughout the day.
P15: Lunchroom: That’s where everybody hangs out. Sometimes I eat and sit at the table and talk to friends. I go at breakfast, break, and lunch. I go in the morning for breakfast and then I leave. At lunch we are eating, doing homework, talking. Actually me and Brook kind of sit down there, three seats away from them because all you hear down here is whining, flirting, and arguments. We separate ourselves just to have some peace and quiet. Like, we don’t really talk really loud down there. And its, a little less embarrassing if you’re sitting down here and then up there cuz everybody kind of looks at ‘em. The girls sit in a big group and talk and then about half way through, a little more than half way through, when the guys get done, they come and we all talk.

P16: I like the lunchroom. That’s where we’re sorta all together at a table and we can talk more there. We have 20 to 25 minutes, I’m not really sure. I go during sixth period—12:30. We’re the last class to get lunch. Sometimes I get hungry, but we have a break and time to eat and have a snack. You can go to the lunchroom to get food. You can get it there.

The school offered extracurricular activities related to sports, such as football, softball, baseball, and volleyball, and academic activities such as Beta Club, Key Club, and Scholar’s Bowl. Level of involvement in the activities ranged from 4 respondents who did not participate in any extracurricular activities to 4 participants who were involved in three or more activities.

P2: Football. I love football. I do pretty much anything I can for it, and it’s my passion and pride. And I don’t like it for people to mess with my football and mess with my guys. Mess with means try to bring us down or use our name incorrectly. I get here 15 minutes early every day to start my workout. When football training is out, I will stay till, and that also varies on the coaches’ mood. Sometimes, we’ll get out somewhere around 6:30 and it is also during the day.

P: 4. So my freshman year I was kind of getting the hang of being on varsity and stuff, but my 9th- and 10th-grade year I was really pushed into the, you gotta know what to do, you gotta play. I’ve been doing that the past 2 years. I’d be here to about 6, 6:30. Wednesday, we get out about 5.

P8: Volleyball—I love it. I’ve played since sixth grade. We are really good. We used to be a lot better, but we lost a coach and player. So we are in a rebuilding phase right now but still doing good. Softball—I like it because it is outside. During volleyball season, we go to the elementary gym and have practice until about 6. Right now, it is softball, and like, we had a game yesterday, and I didn’t go home until 10.

P13: Uh, well, see, I play volleyball. Club volleyball and school volleyball. So, I play all year round. I have played on junior high, JV, and I was going to play on Varsity last year but then I just moved back down to JV. I get a little intimidated. I was state runner-up too. Yes, that’s what the school is known for, volleyball. That’s why, when you come into the, when you see the town of Prado (fictitious name).
Spatial Interpretations: Feelings about Encounters

Participants had a sense of ownership pertaining to certain places within the school.

P2: I don’t hang out in the hallway because none of my friends are in the hallways, and we always hang out in a certain room cuz, the room is basically our room. It’s like our territory, it’s ours. It’s where we all hang out, it’s where we all get together, and it’s ours. And it’s like everybody else that I’m friends with, that I don’t hang out a whole lot with, that’s like their territory, where they hang out at. And so basically, we don’t go in and disturb them or take over what they have or just join in with them. Cuz, most of the time, we’re not really accepted. Alright, my guys, the guys I hang around with, I guess other people may call them strange and outcasts.

P2: Football players will hang out in the gym area cuz that’s basically our territory. That is football players, and when you get to the weight room area and the film room, you don’t go past the film room. You may can go into the weight room if you’re in sports, but you cannot go past that film room because that’s ours. That is no one else, it’s not baseball, not basketball, not soccer, softball, anything. The locker room is ours. That’s their domain.

P11: I like to hang out at my locker because I guess it’s kind of like a territorial thing, I just like, I know it’s mine because I own it so I’m just gonna stand there.

P12: When I get off the bus and I go right there (front doors) and I go straight to my hall. I let all the little kids know “That’s my hall!” And my boyfriend comes over there and me and him sit down. And we basically, talk you know. (I don’t go to my locker. I carry all my stuff. All day. I take it home. I don’t go to my locker. I don’t even know why I paid for a locker. It’s by the 10th grade.). Then I go straight back to that hall and my boyfriend does too and so does his friend.
The results of the walking tours, interviews, and focus groups pointed toward participants who were “actively engaged in and attempting to negotiate their social settings” (Lofland et al., 2006, p. 166). Students reasoned through the classes they chose, how they spent their free time, routes they took to class, ownership of places, and the extracurricular activities in which they participated. The participants used time and place to construct, negotiate, and manage the frequency and magnitude of the daily encounters with their peers, teachers, and administrators. The strategies that the participants used to enable such encounters constructed each situation by adhering to one’s routine and knowing others’ routines.

Participants had choice in some of the classes they took in high school. Although students were academically tracked, there were options for electives. Students had different reasons for taking particular electives.

**Friends are in the class**

P4: Marketing? Yea, because all my friends were in there. I really didn’t pay attention (he laughs) yea but…

*R: The subject you didn’t care about but the class…*

P4: Yea, I like Mr. B too. He’s cool.

**See value in the class**

P5: My favorite part would be going down to Entrepreneurship. Cuz I love that class. I love business. And Mr. B is great. We study and learn how to do a business plan. We had marketing last year. I think about applying it to my music career.

**Graduate early**

*R: So, what are you doing? Like the courses you’re paying for, it’s giving you high school credits.*

P3: Yes, because I’m supposed to be an 11th grader, but I’m taking online courses to graduate early. Normally, it’s credit recovery, but I just wanted to get out early. So, that’s what I’m doing.
R: You like going to school out here?

P3: I do.

R: But, you’re ready to get out.

P3: Yes. All these years going to the same place. Startin to gettin boring now.

R: So you’ve been on this campus since fifth grade.

P3: Yes, a long time now. About 5, 7, or 8 years.

The types of encounters were similar in most places, whereas the frequency and magnitude of the encounters varied by place. For example, talking and sitting were common to encounters in all places identified by the participants. However, individual conversations occurred most frequently in student-controlled places. The length of the conversations differed between the hallway and the break areas. The hallway conversations were about two or four minutes long, whereas the break area conversations (during break) were about twenty minutes in length.

Temporal Interpretations: Frequency of Encounters

Table 14 shows that students referenced peer-initiated encounters, such as joking and playing around, more frequently than teacher-initiated encounters, such as learning and studying. Encounters are maintained by the relations of the people involved, thus students referenced joking and playing around 21 times and learning only 8 times.

The time commitment that students made to the activities is another example of the way in which students managed the frequency and magnitude of encounters.

P5: Key Club is one that I’ve been really involved in. I was really passionate about the Key Club in the 9th and 10th grade. And I still am. I love Key club, it’s one of my favorite clubs. I stay late a lot for either, like during marching season we stay for band till 5:30 ish. Plus, I stayed for basketball. We came at night though, from like 6 to 8 or 5 to 8, whatever. And then, for Scrapbook I’ve been staying until like 5 ish, 4:30.
P11: Key Club is part of Scrapbook. That’s what we make the scrapbook for, it’s for a Key Club convention, we compete. I don’t play any sports even though I am in Varsity Athletics. It’s just we work out. I work out with the people who do play sports. I just like it. And Key Club and scrapbooking. Scrapbooking is an hour and half, 4 days a week from 3 to 4:30. On weekends, only if its key club. Not very often. Fridays I just go home. I go to the football games, but they are only half the season, I guess.

P13: I’m in Junior Beta Club. It’s an Honor Society. You get like the letter in the fifth grade and you’re in it the sixth grade. If your grades drop, then you get kicked out. Key Club where you just help the community. I make the Scrapbook. We meet for about 1 and 1/2 hours a week for Key Club, 4 days a week.

P14: Key Club and Vice-President. I like Key Club the best. I love Key Club. It’s really involved in helping and it’s really involved in like what goes on at school. It is welcoming to everybody and it’s inclusive so it doesn’t really matter what your grades are or who you are or what you do. You can come and do it and it’s just, it’s fun. I stay until 4 or 4:30 Monday through Thursday unless I have an appointment. If there’s a football game you go to that. But I don’t come up at night or on the weekends. I didn’t go to any basketball games or softball or baseball games.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Encounter</th>
<th>Number of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joking and Playing Around</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fights</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class work/Homework</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama and Gossip</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanging Out</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing Sports</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texting, FB, Phone</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flirting/Kissing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra School Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting into Trouble</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling Stories</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants engaged in habitual tasks, such as going to the locker in between classes, meeting at the same place at break, or using every minute of the 4 minutes between classes to “talk” before entering the classroom. Participants had reasoned through their movement from one place to the next based on choice, time, preference, and other students. Thus, they used time and place to construct, negotiate, and manage the daily encounters they had with peers and teachers.

**Relational Interpretations: Peers and Encounters**

Table 15 illustrates how participants used the knowledge of “who hangs out where” as a part of constructing their school day. Knowledge of the formal, institutionalized routine provided a predictable framework for each day. This knowledge in turns, allowed them to plan and carry out their informal routine.

Routines and classrooms represent the material environment, such as going to math for first period. The social environment is evident also because the participants knew whom they could expect to see in each place.

- By the lunchroom—Gamers

*R: Who hangs out where?*

P1: You have us, which is like, we play video games, we’re nerdy but we’re not…. *(Are you Gamers?)* Well, kind of…we hang out in that spot by the lunchroom.

- In the Commons Area—By Grade

*R: Who hangs out where?*

P12: In the morning, everyone that hangs out over in the Commons Area is, they basically hang out when they get up there. They hang out in the same place, in the mornings. And then, wherever else they want go, they’ll go do whatever they want to. I mean ninth graders. By the lunchroom, and like where the office is, there’s some 12th graders, it’s kind of, it’s a big group. It’s 12th graders, 11th graders and 10th graders. They all got there little communication thing going.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Self-Identified Group</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gamers/Nerds</td>
<td>Friends/Everybody in 12\textsuperscript{th} grade</td>
<td>Hall by the Lunchroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Football players</td>
<td>Gym, Weight Room, Film Room, Locker Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcast/Nerds</td>
<td>Friends who go to Resource Classmates from other schools</td>
<td>Resource Room, Tech Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>Football, basketball, baseball</td>
<td>Gym, Weight Room, Film Room, Locker Room, the Fields, Halls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Advanced Group</td>
<td>Classmates in the classes</td>
<td>Classes/Science Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key Club</td>
<td>Standard group friends</td>
<td>Hallway/Key Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Not in one</td>
<td>Auto-mechanic friends, Girlfriend</td>
<td>Tech School, 10\textsuperscript{th}-Grade Hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10\textsuperscript{th} graders</td>
<td>10\textsuperscript{th}-grade friends</td>
<td>Auto-mechanics, 10\textsuperscript{th}-Grade Hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Athletes</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10\textsuperscript{th} graders</td>
<td></td>
<td>10\textsuperscript{th}-Grade Hallway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Advanced Group</td>
<td>Classmates in the classes</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yearbook</td>
<td></td>
<td>Math Room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. None

11. Not a popular kid and not a total loser either

12. Gangster

13. Ninth grade

14. Key Clubber

15. Anti-drama Group

16. Sporty Group

- The Hallway—Popular Kids

R: Who hangs out where?

P11: I guess you could say that the “popular kids,” they hang out on that corner, coming from the foyer into the ninth-grade hallways. They kind of congregate around the corner.

P15: This is where the “big dogs” as everybody hangs out, which I think is stupid cuz you aint’ no big dog. By big dog, they mean rulers of the school. Seniors, I guess. Which I’m a senior but I don’t consider myself one of them. I’m just another person, just like anybody else. I don’t own this school. Quite frankly, I don’t know who does own the school, the county? The state?
P14: And then all the senior girls, the popular senior girls (I don’t really have labels) they sit in front of the lunchroom facing each other. Some are against the wall and some are in the hall.

P16: All the 10th-grade people that are sort of athletic and more popular, whatever, I guess you say, they stay on the, they sit lined up on the hall between the office and library.

P13: The popular and the clean people, which is who I hang out with, we hang out by the teacher’s lounge. And then, the socially awkward, quiet people, I guess, they hang out kind of right in the hallway outside the conference room. Then, the kind of …..nasty, I don’t know what you’d call em. They hang out at the end of our hallway, down there.

- In the classroom—Academically Tracked

**R: Who hangs out where?**

P5: But, in my class, we’re clicky with like it’s just the Advanced class and the Standard class. We grouped by who we’re with all day, the academics. And I don’t like that. The Advanced kids hang out in Ms. Baker’s room, the Standard kids hang out in the hallway.

P9: During break and stuff, a lot of the like the B class, they hang out. Like the, not the advanced, not the …literally, they make Bs. It’s divided into like Advanced, then ones that you know, they don’t really try that hard, and then the ones that really don’t care about school. Or the ones that struggle, the ones in the C class. I am in Advanced. They hang out, in between, like the, those, that hallway (by the counselor’s office). A lot of em’ hang out in front of the lunchroom.

- In the Ag shop—Southern Boys

**R: Who hangs out where?**

P14: Other people, a lot of the like, “southern” I guess would be a good word, boys that hunt, the country boys, they like to go to the Ag shop and they play guitar and stuff in there and the banjo. Mr. Train plays. And they hang out, just in the Ag shop and do stuff.

Participants moved between student-controlled places, such as regular stops to the locker and movement through the hallway, to the teacher-controlled places of the classroom. The informal routine does change, according to participants.

P2: The popular group always changes. I mean, there’s, they’ll have moments and spells where they’re mad at somebody and they’ll go hang out in this different group. It’s still the popular group; it’s just a different posse. And, just they’re different people and they’ll hang around with them, and then sometimes they get backstabber. They change up so much, now I used to be in their group but they change up so much and they’ll have so
many attitudes about different things. I just got fed up with it and just, I just went to the nerdy group because our attitudes...we’ll get mad at each other, but eventually, we’ll settle it. And we stay in the same group, we don’t go nowhere, we just, we’ll argue, fuss, and fight. We’ll die down in a minute and we’ll just be fine. All school, the world’s at peace. Whereas, the popular group, the world’s never at peace.

P10: [Has her own informal routine]: It all depends on what day it is. Most of the time, I’m out in the hallways, just doing my own thing. Cuz, like most of the time, my teachers will let me go out of my classroom after I get all my work and stuff done. And they know I have it done and they look at it and see if I just wrote down answers. I don’t just write down answers. I do what I’m supposed to do. That’s why I come here to school to do. So, they tell me, okay, you know. I go do my own little thing and sometimes my boyfriend walks around with me at school. I like to get out of class because there’s most of the people that is in there I do not like and I do not want to associate with so I do the nice thing and I leave. Keep from saying anything bad. The hallway is my place to escape.

Student interpretation of place was related to experiences in the school through their own sense of being-in-place. Place not only happened to students, the students made place happen. Encounters demonstrated a relationship between the material environment, dwelling, and embodiment as a process of being-in-place. Students used time and place to construct, negotiate, and manage the frequency and magnitude of daily experiences with peers and teachers.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework of being-in-place (Cannatella, 2007) guided the decisions in collecting and reporting the findings as related to the cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions of experience. Objective place, as an aspect of being, was addressed by the participants’ identification of the different places in their school and describing the structure of their day. They were cognitively aware of the material environment. The emotional dimension of being was seen in the way the participants dwelled in particular places. Dwelling, as an aspect of being, was seen in the participants’ evaluation and choices of their experiences within particular places. Embodiment, as an aspect of being-in-place, was seen in the daily practices and strategies of the participants in their routines at school.
The concept that emerged from the results reflected the importance of the encounter as a small, but powerful experience in the lifeworld of the participants in high school. Applying the theoretical framework of lived experience (van Manen, 1990) to being-in-place provided a conceptual framework for the encounter. Chapter 5 discusses such a conceptualization of experience and the implications for students and schools.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Place is important. The places we live, the places we go, and the places we remember. Place is also taken for granted in our own daily lives and decisions. School is such a place. This study demonstrated the multidimensional aspects of place as integral to the school experience. I argue that one purpose of a school is to provide a satisfying and productive environment for the students who enter its doors; thus place should not be taken for granted but considered closely in the experience of students in high school.

The discussion reproduces a phenomenological focus in that the participants’ experiences are described and interpreted through their socially constructed realities. Chapter 4 illustrated the ways in which the participants interpreted the place of school and their experiences. This chapter discusses how and why the students’ navigation of the school environment helped them to make sense of their day. Specifically, I am orienting the analysis to social/transgressive spaces and academic spaces. It is understood that these spaces can be mutually inclusive. However, the participants saw the two spaces as separate places in the school, so I have done so for this discussion.

Four themes emerged in the navigation of place:

1. Academic and social spaces were differentiated by the skill needed to navigate each place cognitively, emotionally, and physically.

2. The result of navigating the school environment culminated in the interactions with teachers and peers, termed *encounters*. 

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3. Behaviors that reflected navigation of the school environment included compliance, engagement, or resistance in the academic spaces. Practices used in the transgressive spaces centered around decreasing or increasing the likelihood of encounters.

4. Participants reasoned through their behaviors in terms of positionality, value, preference, and motivation of the student.

The findings suggest that classrooms and hallways were the locations of such academic or social spaces. Ultimately, school experiences were influenced by the interactions in the material and social environments. Daily routines exemplified the conscious and unconscious navigation of the school environment. Participants navigated the school environment by reasoning through routines, planning routes to class, enacting behaviors, and controlling interactions. The participants made meaning of their experiences according to positive and negative encounters, expectations, quality of interactions, feelings of self-worth, approval, or dissatisfaction with the place of school.

The participants situated their positions and intentions in the school environment through the navigation of their daily routines and practices. A first-person narrative of “A Day in the Life of Pat” is used to draw a composite picture of the relationship between place and experience. Dialogue from the interviews was compiled to represent a narrative of a reflective story that recognizes that the participants are social beings, self-interpreting, and influenced by the researcher–participant relationship.

**A Day in the Life of Pat**

As a senior, Pat’s sense of place was expressed in the certainty and understanding of his perceived control of daily routines. Freedom seemed to be a concept that he felt he had in school;
freedom to talk, to wonder the halls, to eat, or to goof off. Knowledge of cognitive, emotional, and physical boundaries coupled with independence created a comfortable environment for him.

I love this school because it has the most freedom of any school I’ve been to. And I’ve transferred to several, several different schools. But uh, it has the most freedom of any school because, you can have your phone out as long as you’re not having them out in class. And you can talk, yell, slide on your belly down the hallway and they won't get on to you. It’s just enough freedom where you’re able to feel comfortable and do what you want to do but at the same time, you know you can’t do some things. I give most of that credit to the principal. He’s a good principal. I like him. He’s just a nice guy. In the mornings, if nobody’s out there, I’ll walk over there and like hit him on the arm or something and he’ll push me or just play around with me. I love messin’ with him. Most of his kids love him for it, except the trouble makers.

The way in which the participants navigated such boundaries of behavior and interaction differed between social spaces, such as hallways, and academic spaces, such as classrooms. Reasons for determining their position or direction within the school environment were based on the place they were navigating at that moment.

**Navigating Academic Spaces: Classrooms and Teachers**

Academic spaces were navigated cognitively through adhering to the routines of the adults in charge. The perceived freedom that Pat expresses about the school contrasts to the reality of his first-period class. Pat had a clear understanding of the nature of teacher-controlled places and the coach’s routines and expectations in the varsity athletics class. Physically, he embodied the expectations of the class through weight lifting as directed by the coach. He navigated the emotional terrain of being an athlete by his love of football.

**Starting My Day**

The first word I would describe is it’s hectic. It’s wild. Because, as soon as I step off the bus, and I come in through the main entrance, if I missed my breakfast at home, I’ll go straight to the lunchroom, grab me a quick biscuit, chunk it down and I run straight to athletics because, we are required. The bus gets here right around 7:20 and we are required to be in the weight room, all weights set up, everything ready to go by 7:30 exactly, as soon as he walks in that door. If he walks in that door at 7:30 and he says
“Alright, get ready to lift.” We all should be sitting right there, white T-shirts, black shorts, every bit of us ready. Ready to go at 7:30.

Cognitively, the weight room is the objective place that Pat goes each morning. Emotionally, he understand the purpose of the early morning work outs. He has become part of the team through these shared experiences with his team mates. He is able to dwell in this place because he exhibits a self-givenness to morning ritual. He throws himself into the task of weight lifting before school four days of the week.

First Period, Varsity Athletics

But school starts 7:45 but we start early because we have extra workouts included, that he’s put into our system. Like, if your sick, you’re not gonna move as fast or if you’re sore you’re not going to be as quick. So, he gives us a little extra time, but he also has it required that you got to get this done, and it is fast paced. And we always normally stretch, unless we have some sort of meeting. But, we stretch for 10 to 5 minutes. We’ll just basically stretch every bit of our muscles that we just destroyed first period. Stretch it all out, get loose and get calm. So, we get as quickly as we can get done, so we have maybe 15 or 10 something minutes to get a shower, get dressed, get ready for second period and don’t be late or he will punish us. Punishment, depends on what kind of mood he’s in that day. Some days, he’ll just make us run, and some days he’ll make us run and do sit-ups, push-ups, straight-legged deadlift, body squats, silly jumps (they’re not funny), and frog hops. Depends on what mood. But, I love football.

In the previous example, Pat’s relationship to the coach is positioned by his role as a football player. Compliance is embraced because he values the sport above his own physical or emotional needs.

Second Period, English Class

Students are aware of teacher-controlled spaces in the school. In English class, Pat knows that the teacher is in charge but he feels that he is positioned as a child by the teacher.

Emotionally, as an adolescent, this is an obstacle to the goals of independence he has for himself. He responds by resisting the teacher’s attempt at engaging him. He embodies this resistance by ignoring the teacher.
My least favorite part of the day is probably just going to English. I just don’t like that class. That is second period. I really don’t get along with the teacher I guess, that and, I just never been good at English, especially the grammar part of it. We’re not doing much of that this year.

It all started from day one when she walked in with her seashell. Like, I know that sounds crazy but she was talking to us. She had just moved from an elementary school library position to us, high school English. And so she was like, she was talking to us and we weren’t listening, it was like the first day of school. And so she put her seashell up to her ear and we were like “What are doing?” She’s like, whenever I want y’all to be quiet, I’m going to put this up to my ear. And we were just kind of like “okay.” She said, “It relaxes me, I hear the ocean.” And when she wants us to be quiet, she turns out the lights. We don’t respond to that. I don’t even notice half the time she does it. And then, like she tells us to do these things, and when we do ‘em, she decides not to do ‘em or she forgets about ‘em. We had resumes that we had last year. We didn’t get ‘em back for the rest of the year. We come back the next year, like earlier this year, “What happened to our resumes?” She’s like, “I couldn’t find ‘em.”

Pat sees no personal value in the English class, so he focuses on the interactions with his friends. Personal values are sometimes in conflict with the institutional values. Thus, Pat may inhabit the objective place of the classroom, go through the motions of a “student,” but without his own sense of place in English class, the experience may not be a positive or productive one.

Objective place can also be evident in the material environment. Pat’s description of the computer lab illustrates the influence of the material environment on the perceptions of a place. Already he does not care for the class, thus the attempt at engaging him through the use of computers is a failed one and compounds his negative emotions about English class.

In there we usually watch a movie, take a test, do poems or something like that. The topic and teacher are just boring. I have friends in there and we usually get in trouble for talking and not paying attention. I’ve never really gotten in trouble at school though. We sometimes go to the computer lab if she wants us to look something up for a movie or something, but not very often. That computer room is way down past the library.

Very, very few times we ever go to computer lab. And it’s always locked and there’s strict rules on it. No gum, no food, no drinks, and…It’s for everybody, they try to get us all in there to do projects like PowerPoints and essays. And it’s really, it’s kind of sad a bit, because there’s 24 computers in there, I believe, and maybe 15 or so work. In my class I have 32. It’s very complicated to get in there. You have to share a computer and everything and it’s really difficult to try to get work done, especially if you’re doing it as team work. Some of the teachers only allow certain number of students inside one group, so it makes things so much harder on it, on one computer.
The use of the computer lab breaks up the routine for him but provides little motivation because of the lack of adequate equipment. Once again, adherence to the rules in the computer lab are part of the compliance of teacher-controlled places and his position as student.

Third Period, Activity Period

Pat’s preference for reading on his own terms is in contrast to school-imposed directives about reading practices. Although he views himself as a capable reader, he struggles with compliance and thus embodies this resistance through changing his third-period activity routine between going to the lunchroom for AR reading or his math class to do other homework.

During activity period (third period) you are supposed to read and catch up on your AR points, but if you already have them then you can go, well not anywhere you want to go, you have to have permission to be where you’re at. But, usually, I just ask to go sit in the hallway, me and a couple of friends. I sit against the wall by the lunchroom. I’m one of those people. I love to read I just don’t like to be forced to read. I don’t like being confined into one thing that they make you read. We should read in the library. That would be better than stuck on the lunchroom tables. Sometimes I can concentrate to read, except when I’m talking.

Many things can motivate a student in school. The emphasis of performance (AR points) over the mastery of reading does not provide Pat with the motivation needed to involve him. The importance of the objective place (lunchroom vs. library) on his choice for reading was highlighted in the previous example.

Fourth Period, Math Class

Although Pat understands the value of math class, he attributes his lack of success in the class to a personal flaw. He copes with this lack of success through claiming to hate math. He interprets the class through how he feels about math and patiently waits for his time in there to end each day. He navigates this academic space by adjusting the coping behaviors to accept that the lack of success as inevitable.
Then I go to my math class, which is right around the corner over there, Algebraic connections. I have a test in there today. And I probably didn’t pass. I hope I did. I understood some of it but most of it I didn’t. I still don’t. I never been good in math. I don’t comprehend it. Other subjects I do fine in, like science and English, I’m good at that. Oh yea, and reading and history. I’m good at.

Ain’t nothing against her, it just goes by so slow. And math, I absolutely hate math. Nothing against her, I hate math! I hate it cuz I just never got it and it just gets harder and harder and just, it’s dumb. I ain’t ever goin’ use none of that ever. I’m never really goin’ need none of that. I’ve never seen anything I am gonna need. If I do need it, I got a calculator. And for what I want to do, ain’t nothing I’m gonna do that’s gonna need Algebra. I have to take it again next year. It’s so hard. It’s ridiculous.

The embodiment of his frustration is evident in his physical reaction to math class. When he walks into the classroom, he slumps in a chair and lays his head on his desk. This is an example of nonverbal communication. This term helps describe the interrelatedness of the math classroom, the feelings about math, and the expression by the body culminating in “place.”

*Fifth Period, Science Class*

Alternately, Pat attributes his success in science class to external factors such as the teacher’s ability in instruction or the content itself. Cognitively he is aware of the differences in instruction, but emotionally he interprets the value of the class as related to the relationship he has with the teacher. He feels safe and secure in her presence. His preference for “hands-on” instruction increases his motivation for pursuing his interests further. The success in the class is not based on the grade he makes, but how he feels in the class. This feeling has transferred to aspirations for the future in a science occupation.

I like my science room. It’s so clean, and she has those really nice tables that are flat, two-person tables. She has a really clean room. That’s where I take chemistry. I don’t like feeling dirty and grimy and I can’t concentrate. I’m not OCD I guess I just can’t handle it. I look forward to going to her class at fifth period. I don’t know why I like it, I am just in to all that stuff, just science and the body. It’s just cool. I know all of them, in my grade but I’m just not like, great friends of them but I know who they are. I really like the content.

She’s one of the best teachers here. You know how teachers get mad and like yell and stuff, she never does that. She’s just calm about everything. And if she’s getting on to you she does it with a smile I guess you could say. I guess it’s just a really cool
atmosphere and I kind of want to do that for the rest of my life so I’m really interested. Something to do with chemistry, like making medicine or something like that.

We do science labs. We had one yesterday and the day before. I just love that and she is such a good teacher. Right now, we get to go to the lab a little more often than what we have been because the parts we’re getting into is starting to require for us to see rather than just work it out on a piece of paper or see her talk about it. We have gone twice in the last week. I like it. It is much more fun than sitting behind a desk and looking at a piece of paper all day long.

The science class description supports the argument for the importance of the objective place that is inhabited cognitively by students. This example show that Pat perceives his science classroom through his senses, such as the clean classroom; through his tactile sense, such as hands-on activities; and visually, such as the smiling teaching.

*Sixth Period, Electronics*

The preference for the electronics class is also attributed to external factors such as the presence of “hands-on” instruction. Pat makes sure that he signs up for this class each semester. The interactions with the teacher and other students give Pat a sense of belongingness. Feelings of accomplishment are achieved through group efforts directed at a visible product.

I like going towards electronics, I go down there and all my friends are walking down there too so we’ll always walk together and just talk and stuff.

For me, I have a very small class. I’m very lucky. There’s four of us in there. So, we get a lot more hands on. My electronics teacher, he gives us a whole lot more hands on, rather than some of the other classes he has. But, we have mobile homes inside and we have a couple hand-made built houses. We wire the whole house, we wire the mobile home. This is, the second semester is electrical wiring, first semester is electronics. So, right now we’re doing the residential wiring. We’re in the midst of all our glory now.

This example points to the importance of the material environment for Pat as he develops a sense of self in school. For him, the intentional movement of learning to “wire a house” contributes to the self-givenness of his emotional involvement with learning.
Seventh Period, History Class

Pat’s last period of the day is history. He complies with academic expectations by trying to keep up. He positions himself within the modified advance group. As he points out, the academic expectations differ in the class. He is well aware of the difference but accepts this as a personal trait.

I think we have 5 minutes in between classes. I like walking to and after history. History is okay I guess. We got to take notes, and he just says the notes to us and we gotta hurry up and write them down. You gotta be quick at writing to do ‘em. Sometimes I can get all the notes. I have friends in the class

We have books we just haven’t been using them. We just bring our binder. When we play Jeopardy every day, it’s so boring. We just work on work a lot. If we get done we can talk and all. We do the same stuff in the other classes but everyone’s is like on a different level. Like you would go to advanced, modified advance, and standard. And I’m on modified advance, which is the middle of it. So, everybody does the same thing but we’re on different levels on how we go with it. It’s mostly just everyone does their own work and turns it in.

Students navigate academic spaces by attributing lack of success to personal flaws or success to the nature of the content or the teacher. They cope with teacher-controlled spaces through resistance or compliance. Their personal motivations, values, or preferences determine how they navigate these spaces. Navigation of the academic spaces was closely tied to the interactions with teachers. Pat responds to what he considers boring teachers with noncompliance and considers such classes as negative experiences and of no value. Classes that he likes are based on having a good teacher, interesting content, and the presence of friends.

Where does an academic space end and the social space begin? Does the bell ringing, the classroom threshold, or the teacher clearing her throat mark this boundary? Although the two may seem to exist in a dichotomous harmony, the line between what students perceive as academic or social is blurred. Transgressive spaces are within the realm of the social for the purposes of this discussion, but it is acknowledged that social spaces can also exist within
academic spaces. Place as a process is what separates the two concepts. The way in which a person’s cognition, emotion, and embodiment come together influence the interpretation of place as academic or social.

**Navigating Transgressive Spaces: Hallways and Friends**

Transgressive places had a deep importance for the participants. These places, for students, were not where they went to spend “time in between classes.” The time they spent in academic spaces was actually “time in between the transgressive spaces.” Hallways were transgressive spaces in that the students moved beyond the objective and emotional boundaries of the academic spaces of the classroom. Cognitively, Pat used the organizational structure of the bell schedule to manage his use of transgressive spaces.

*My Routine*

I go to my locker every period to get my books. Sometimes I talk to people around my locker. They are not the same people I hang out with. I like to talk to some seniors in the hall but then like, our class, I have friends in my grade but they’re not in my, they’re in the standard class instead of the advanced class. I have a locker beside them. And I’ll talk to them and see how their day’s going. Other than that, I just go to class. Talk to girls sometimes.

Sometime I hang out around the Annex building, like, if like a girl walks me to class or whatever, I’ll stand there and talk to her for a little bit and then go to class. He’s not real strict on like, being exactly on time. So, if the bell rings he’s not, he doesn’t really care. That’s really a time I’ll see people, walk me to class or whatever. I go there because that’s where everybody is usually and like, between classes, that’s where, that’s the only place I have time to go pretty much.

Transgressive spaces involve encounters with peers. Cognitively, Pat knows where to go to meet his friends. In general, the encounters are brief moments at the locker or the time spent walking to class. He stretches out this time by a minute or two in order to talk to a girl outside the Annex building. This is an example of place as process. Place in this instance, is constructed by the material environment in which he moves (the Annex building) and the social environment in which he engages (talks to a girl).
Preferred Places

Preferences for particular places evolve from emotions connected to a physical, objective environment. Pat’s feelings about safe places combined with the design of the school impact his movements through the school. The preferred transgressive spaces for Pat include grade-level halls because of continuity of experience in these particular physical locations.

In between classes we just kind of walk around and do whatever. I guess I picked this for my favorite place. My locker is right down here right in the middle of things and I always skip it but its right here. It’s when we’re putting all our books up and we stand around and talk for a minute or so. I have friends around me. Usually the classes stick to their hall. Like juniors tend to hang out in the junior and freshmen in the ninth-grade hall, so and so forth. Out here (the hall between the lunchroom and back of office) in the mornings, its seniors and juniors, because seniors have a little bitty hallway, so we always just come into the junior hallway because it’s so big. We sit on one wall and they sit on the other wall. Usually, we stick to classes, I don’t know why.

Pat seeks to manipulate where he goes in order to achieve a level of security and comfort concerning the encounters he might have by keeping his interactions limited to grade-level friends. This emotional dimension of place is met by following a routinized pattern in the movement from class to class.

Routines Stay the Same

Whereas the classroom was perceived as being controlled by the teacher, the following excerpts suggest that transgressive spaces, such as the hallway, were student-controlled places. Encounters, in the form of “talking” to friends, gave value to such places as the hallway, field house, or outside walkway to the technical center.

I am in the hallway in between classes. I kind of just take my time, I guess. Not really slow, I go to my locker and make sure I get everything and head back to class. We have 4 minutes between classes. That’s where we use to sit right there, every morning, during break. We twist the sophomore lockers too. You don’t mess with the seniors, but you can mess with anybody else.

Uh, maybe I walk around through the senior or sophomore hall, to see if I can find anybody to talk to I guess. It’s the two biggest halls and that’s where most people hang out at. I go the same way every time. During break, well, it depends on who’s here. If I
know somebody’s not here that I normally talk to, I won’t go that way. I mainly stay in my hall.

The interpretation of place through a temporal lens makes these transgressive spaces memorable for Pat. The example above about twisting the lockers demonstrates the power of encounters on the memories made in high school. Knowing whose locker you can mess with shows how place as a process comes together in the perception of the material environment, the awareness of the social environment, and the intentional act that lead to a memorable experience.

*Group Affiliations: Finding My Place*

Social relationships can make one feel connected and transformed by affiliation with particular groups. The daily break in the morning at the school is the time when the students navigate such relationships by identifying with and positioning themselves in order to make connections. They navigate 20 minutes of break time by knowing, adjusting, and refining their routine to increase or decrease the likelihood of encounters.

After that, we have break, that’s when we go out to the hallway beside the lunchroom and talk. Or we go sit in the math classroom. And we sit at these square tables, you saw them today, blue-topped ones. We sit around and eat our break and we talk. You can have your phones out during break so we’ll be saying our new high score on Temple Run or something really goofy. Guys sit at the back and eat their snacks, breakfast or break, which is breakfast from the lunchroom, and talk about sports or ESPN sometimes. The girls talk about our chemistry homework or sit at the middle table doing all their Scrapbook stuff. And usually sit at the same tables and you usually just wander around and see what everybody’s doing.

Pat feels that he has control over with whom he interacts and when, through planning how he will spend his time during break. He has a clear knowledge of the group affiliations in the school and has definite opinions about each.
**Academics**

Organizational structure of the school tracks students by diploma. This structure strongly influences group affiliation at the school. Dispositions to school culture are impacted by the academic group with which students identified. Pat recognizes the unfairness of such a structure.

Yea, our school is pretty cliquey I would say. Um, my grade is one of the least cliquish. Well at least my class. But, in my class, we’re cliquey with like it’s just the advanced class and the standard class. We grouped by who we’re with all day, the academics. And I don’t like that. One thing that really bugs me is I feel like the standard class feels like they’re dumb. Like, they’ll tell you I am in the dumb class, and I’m dumb. They don’t do anything. It’s like the teachers don’t expect anything out of them, if they’re in that class. Advanced is you can be in the top 10, and you have to take Spanish and um, it’s all. You get a different degree, I’m not sure about that. I know that advanced, you can be on. You all have to get the same amount of credits but you take different classes. They’ll be taking Geometry their senior year, we are taking Pre-Calculus. We’re taking Algebra II, they’re taking Algebra I. I’m not sure, it’s just different. Like math and sciences.

So my friends in those classes, I only get to see in the hallway. When did that start, it started in ninth grade. In middle school, everybody is just you know, you have your friends. In high school, we have been separated by our class rank. The advanced kids hang out in the science room, the standard kids hang out in the hallway. Like, they sit in the hallway or the gym. They have a bunch of free classes like study halls in the gym and just don’t do anything. Like the whole day. That just bugs me because I feel like that they think they are dumb. Or just not smart. And that’s not true at all. I just wish that they expected more out of them.

Relationships between students is influenced by the organizational structure of the school. Because structure is an objective dimension of being-in-place, an inference can be drawn that such structure influences the sense of place and an embodied existence of place. All of this is to say that tracking has the capacity to influence how one feels and acts based on an organizational structure.

**Grade Level**

Schools provide places for young people to develop a sense of self, embody practices, and gain meaning from their experiences. Organizational structures such as grade levels comprise part of the meaning making that students do. Embodiment of place is visible in terms
that range from one’s personality to hygiene. Students position themselves in relation to other students. For example, Pat defines people according to grade level, such as where 9th or 10th graders hang out. He also compares himself based on the level of hygiene, such as clean or nasty, and even personality, such as quiet or friendly.

The ninth grade hang out right there at the corner by the teacher’s lounge. I don’t wanna be mean. The popular and the clean people, which is who I hang out with, we hang out by the teacher’s lounge. And then, the socially awkward, quiet people, I guess, they hang out kind of right in the hallway outside the conference room. Then, the kind of ……nasty, I don’t know what you’d call em. They hang out at the end of our hallway, down there.

Then, 10th grade, their popular people, hang out by the vending machines, they sit against that wall. And then, the less popular people, there, that’s a good word, they just stand around in the hallway. And the band people, hang out, sometimes they’ll hang out in the band room, like near the band room. That wall is where they sit down. I really don’t go to the 11th and 12th grade that much because its down that way, but I know that the 11th graders sit, like, there’s the lockers, they sit right there between the vending machines and the lockers, their popular people. And then, I don’t know where their less popular people hang out. Maybe just like just stand around the hallway. And then the seniors sit across from the 11th graders, by the lunchroom, where the popular seniors are.

Where Pat gathers with his friends is a part of his sense of place. The physical, objective place identifies him as a 10th grader and popular. This in turn gives him a feeling of acceptance that is embodied through his relaxed posture and joking around with friends. The presence of groups is noted by where they gather and what they do. Each group is stereotyped by Pat according to their mental processes of perception. It is interesting to note that the emotional dimension is largely ignored in his assessment of the two groups he describes.

Emo/Gothic people kind of find a dark corner. Like right here, all the little couples, the real lovey, dovey ones. Will probably go to the Annex building, and you know. I mean there’s cameras but not many people in there. They go out and make out, in the Annex building. Or just flirt, but probably make-out sessions. It’s kind of empty out there.

Like the southern boys, they sit like in the floor with their legs stuck out and you have to step over them. And they won’t move their legs for anyone but the teachers and then it’s like parting the waters. They sit with their girlfriends.

We also have a lot of lesbians. We do. And there’s not many gay guys, there’s one that I know of and he’s real open about it. But, there’s a bunch of lesbians. And, they’re real open. And if you ever, it’s all about, they are graphic too. They’re just like a girl and guy relationship, they’ll kiss and hold hands. It’s really not pleasant to me.
Place influences the students physically in their embodied practices of the culture. Students interpret these embodied practices based on the dispositions to cultural practices within their frame of reference. Anyone outside their normative view is stereotyped. Pat is able to easily label the groups within the school, even if it is done inaccurately and based on little interaction with groups to which he refers.

**Hanging Out during Break**

Place influences the students physically through their actions and reactions to the school environment. The intentional and unintentional movements of the students comprise the nature of the encounters they have on a daily basis as they navigate the social spaces by exhibiting acceptable or unacceptable behaviors of their peers.

A lot of people go to the bathroom to talk because they don’t want everyone else to hear what they’re talking about, they go in the bathrooms. But, I wouldn’t go in the bathroom to talk. I don’t hang out in the bathrooms cuz they are gross. And, I don’t hang out in the office cuz it makes me nervous. We don’t go in the bathrooms. Just, like, you don’t go in the bathrooms during, like between classes or break or anything. We, just…some people have had like weird experiences in the bathrooms, so we don’t go. We go to the bathroom during class. Like when, we avoid it during break. Like between classes it’s okay but during break you just don’t go to the bathroom. Like, lesbians in the bathroom. I’ve heard, I’ve never seen anything, but I’ve just heard stories. And I’m scared. (Laughs.) Yea.

The perception of place does not always coincide with the reality of place. Transgressive spaces have public and private locations. The hallways seem to be private in one way, as they are not under the gaze of the teacher. The hallways are also very public because one is under the gaze of the other students. As a student-controlled place, the hallways are the space for movement between classes but also movement between public and private places.

**Territorial Places**

Pat valued a sense of control over particular places. An emotional connection of ownership of a locker or place in the hall is embodied through claiming that place through
physical presence and communication to other students. The role of “owner” is evident in the consistent behavior of going to the same places every day and being recognized by other students.

I go to my locker probably at break or in the morning. In between classes, I do occasionally but I’ve worked out a system where I take two books, just however it works out. I like to hang out at my locker because I guess it’s kind of like a territorial thing. I just like, I know its mine because I own it so I’m just gonna stand there. People beside me at the locker are my best friend—he’s on the left side and the right side, a girl. I have a top locker, he has a top, and she has a top. Underneath, there’s a 12th grader, or not a 12th grader, but a 10th grader who has a locker underneath mine and I’ve never seen anybody get in the locker underneath me so I’m not sure anybody has it. So, I hang out at my locker and the hall and classrooms pretty much, that’s the only time we get to hang out really.

Pat’s day may seem repetitious, that’s because it is repetitious. It is a continuous process of constructing the place of school through inhabiting the material environment (the school building) and the social environment (emotions, relationships, actions). Slight variations in the objective place or a sense of place can confirm or disconfirm a previous experience. Intentional movement or a change in the local existence of a group affiliation and location in the hallway can influence future actions and reactions. It is through repetitious encounters with teachers and peers and friends that the process of place is evolving and shaping the experiences of high school.

Implications for Academic Spaces

A Tale of Two Classrooms: Transforming a “Place” of Learning

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us.*

—Dickens, 1950, p. 3,

The contradiction exemplified so eloquently in the first paragraph of Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* poignantly creates a metaphor for the possibilities of creating a classroom as a
positive learning environment. For one classroom, it can provide the best of times, the age of wisdom, the epoch of belief, the season of Light, and the spring of hope. In comparison, another classroom can experience the worst of times, the epoch of incredulity, the season of Darkness, and a winter of despair.

How does a brick building transform into a place of learning? How can individual rooms within this place become one in which “learning” turns into a tangible and desired need not only for students but teachers as well? The answer lies within the assumptions that students have about learning and the use of active engagement as a means to address these assumptions.

The Worst of Times

Gary walks into his second period classroom and takes his assigned seat, fifth seat on the third row. The bell rings, and the teacher smiles and asks the class to get out their textbooks and get ready to take notes on the taxonomy of species. The teacher begins to lecture about the content of which she is knowledgeable and passionate. Gary asks his neighbor, “What page did she say?” The teacher sees Gary talking and says, “Gary, you know there is no talking in my class without permission from me. Please open your book to page 103.” Gary can tell she loves the content, but he has trouble with it because he has problems making connections. Gary tries to listen as he doodles.

At different times during the class, the teacher asks factual questions about the content. Gary scans the book to try and answer them; however, he can’t quite get them right, and the teacher goes on to another student. At the end of the class, Gary answers the questions at the end of the section as directed by the teacher. He quickly hands in his paper. He leaves class with a vague concept of what was presented in class today and hopes there is not a pop quiz in class tomorrow.
Gary experienced “the worst of times” with his learning because of beliefs he has about the learning process. According to Zmuda (2009), students operate within a mode of compliance, as compared to engagement, based on a set of beliefs about schooling.

- The rules of a classroom and a content area are based on what the teacher wants.
- What the teacher wants me to say is more important than what I want to say.
- The point of an assignment is to get it done.
- Once an assignment is finished, it’s off the to-do list.
- If I make a mistake, my job is to replace it with the right answer.
- I feel proud of my work only if I receive a good grade.
- Speed is synonymous with intelligence.
- Once I get too far behind I can never catch up.
- What I’m learning in school doesn’t have much to do with my life—but it isn’t supposed to, it’s school.

“Too many students have become compliant workers who simply follow directions and complete the necessary paperwork on time” (Zmuda, 2009, p. XX). These beliefs about learning persist because of repeated experiences within classrooms that encourage compliance. In comparison, engaged students raise additional questions, evaluate validity of sources, synthesize feedback, read for content knowledge, feel ownership of the learning process, and make connections to real-world applications.

The Best of Times

Sarah enters her third-period class and takes a seat at the second table on the right-hand side of the classroom. The teacher says good morning and refers them to the materials on their table. At the table is a packet of cards with the names of different plants and animals on them.
The students are asked to sort these organisms into groups and be able to explain their grouping. Sarah and her group get right to work sorting and grouping by place. They laugh a little as they remember funny stories about “encounters” of the buggy kind as well as debate the groupings. Groups share one set of organisms and the explanation for that particular grouping.

The class continues by delving into the textbook and using a strategy called Reciprocal Teaching as they investigate the use of taxonomies in biology. Sarah likes this strategy because she can focus on one piece of text at a time, take notes, and then discuss it with her group, which helps her understand the concept better. The class ends with a 2- minute video about organisms, and the teacher asks them to identify the hierarchy of species within the video and explain why this is important to know as a scientist. Sarah leaves class with a good understanding of the concept of taxonomy, but more importantly, she is looking forward to tomorrow and learning more. She might even check out the kingdom of Animalia on the Internet when she gets home.

Sarah has experienced the “best of times” in this classroom. She was actively engaged in the content. Actively engaging students is achieved by providing multiple opportunities and contexts for the students to engage in dialogue, read and write in a variety of situations, investigate relevant and meaningful concepts, and use technology as a medium for learning. “Active engagement is characterized by the application of effective learning and problem solving strategies, and students’ use of these strategies is dependent on a belief that effort leads to success and that failure can be remedied by a change in strategy (Gardner, 1990, as cited by Ames, 1992, p. 262). Thus, engaging students can motivate them to believe in their own ability and agency in learning.

Characteristics of the classroom environment influence student motivation. Often, teachers attribute “lack of motivation” to outside factors or internal personality factors, when in
fact, motivational issues are related to the climate of the classroom (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). Actively engaging students inherently changes the climate of the classroom because of the social interactions between teachers and students, opportunities for ownership of learning processes, and the way in which students are encouraged to think about their academic abilities. In this context, “motivation is a complex part of human psychology and behavior that influences how individuals choose to invest their time, how much energy they exert in any given task, how they think and feel about the task, and how long they persist at the task” (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006, p. 332). Many things in school can motivate (or not) a student. Teachers, however, can impact motivation because of the structures they control. Including active engagement within these structures can help the students feel competent, view learning as a process, as well as meet the social relational need of adolescents.

The Age of Wisdom

Sarah’s classroom environment became a place of learning for her through the teacher’s selection of strategies that engaged the class and gave her the opportunity to delve into the content. The classroom climate focused on student learning as well as the needs of student learners. In contrast, Gary’s classroom environment focused on the dissemination of information by the teacher and completion of assignments based on teacher set standards. One classroom was transformed into a place of learning by actively engaging the students in the content and their own learning, which results in motivation and agency in future endeavors in learning. The other classroom environment was dictated by beliefs about learning that lead to compliance, boredom, and little connections to self, text, or world.

Actively engaging students can transform a classroom into a tangible desire (a.k.a. motivation) to become a lifelong learner and make the learning real and visible for students. The
challenge for educators is to realize that we “have everything before us” and use what we know
about learning, motivation, and active engagement to transform the classroom into a “spring of
hope” and a place of learning.

**Implications for Social Spaces**

Transgressive spaces give meaning to the place of school. Positive and negative emotions
within social spaces are as vital to the social environment as academic spaces are to achievement.
Transgressive spaces provide the opportunity to form, maintain, and end relationships in an
adult-free setting. Student control of these spaces enables a freedom of movement needed to
navigate the place of school in order to satisfy basic human needs. Cognitive, emotional, and
physical dimensions come together in transgressive spaces as a way for students to make sense
of their day.

With this said, it is important for those involved in education to realize the importance of
transgressive space. Limitations or increased control over these spaces are not the answer to
problems in schools. Alternately, educators should advert any problems students may have with
navigating transgressive spaces, such as bullying, self-destructive behaviors, or isolation.

Educators should seriously consider creating the kind of places that encourage positive
encounters. A concerted effort should be made to discern the nature of the negative encounters in
school. The challenge is to understand the influence of particular types of encounters on
academic achievement and the level of involvement in the school culture. A school will need to
provide open and friendly places to increase social interaction. Comfortable and quiet places are
needed as well to ensure privacy for students. Hallways, band room, gym, courtyard, outdoor
classroom, and lunchroom are as vital to creating a positive environment as the classrooms.
Varying the type of possible encounters in each of these places will provide the students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of place.

The community is a part of schooling as well. A sense of place extends outside of the physical building of the school. The intent of a school should be to convey an open and friendly place that will increase the interactions between the school and the community. Encounters with the community have the possibility of creating learning opportunities for students in a variety of settings. Having a school that is a preferred choice for students, the family, and the community can shift attitudes about the school in a positive way by increasing involvement in the school. The school should be viewed as a place that is a resource for the community, such as in the use of space, program resources, education, and training.

**Future Research**

Further investigation should address a deeper exploration of the process of being-in-place. Awareness of the relationship between place and experience should be investigated further so that the school experience is beneficial to those who attend the schools.

What role does the teacher play in the student’s interpretation of place in the high school? Does the teacher encourage freedom of choice for students? Does the teacher make use of a school courtyard or outdoor classroom that could provide a sense of freedom and learning opportunities at the same time. Student-centered classrooms provide more opportunities for socialization. The inquiry-based approach to learning encourages interactions among the students. Instruction through inquiry-based learning allows the students to be involved in their own learning by guided innovation of a topic and developing skills needed along the way. The use of emerging technologies can give students a sense of control over their learning. In order to
achieve maximum use of emerging processes, a school should use technology to support literacy development by incorporating technology into everyday practices.

Students who receive a place-based education interpret the place of school differently than those who attend more traditional institutions. Gruenewald (2003) explained that “places are pedagogical” (p. 621). Places are centers of experience and thus teach us about how the world works and shape our identity. This research study has the potential to highlight the importance of place as part of school reform.

The point of becoming more conscious of places in education is to extend our notions of pedagogy and accountability outward to places. Thus extended, pedagogy becomes more relevant to the lived experiences of students and teachers, and accountability is reconceptualized so that places matter to educators, students, and citizens in tangible ways. (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 620)

This awareness could result in the designing and funding of schools to incorporate practices that make a connection between education and the places we live. Gruenewald (2003) argued for place-based education in which one looks outside of the school for learning and empathy with the environment and community. I believe this thinking can be transferred to the high school as a microcosm of place that is part of a larger community. The idea that place is pedagogical can be transferred to the high school community. Because culture and identity are intertwined (Casey, 1998), place-based education has the potential to influence the impact of place on high school culture and the identity formation of the high school students.

Place provides the boundaries and geometric perspective in which humans live (Dant, 2005). Material environment is the place where people engage directly or enact intentionality. For example, Gruenewald (2003) explained that we should be more “conscious of the places to extend our notions of pedagogy and accountability outward toward places” (p. 620). By being more conscious of place, pedagogy is relevant to the lived experiences of students and teachers.
Gruenewald (2003) argued for place-based education in which one looks outside of the school for learning and empathy with the environment and community. He understood that learning in a variety of different physical places can extend the school environment outside of a traditional educational institution. Place as location has value for the education of children.

**Conclusion**

Based on the reciprocal relationship between students’ interpretation of place and their experiences in school environment, place should be considered a process that is constructed through the intersection of the material and social environments. Students inhabit place through cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions of being. They interpret their experiences through corporeal, spatial, temporal, and relational perceptions. In turn, their future experiences are influenced by the nature of the interpretations.

To clarify, it is important to make the distinction between the material environment and the social environment in which the interactions occur within particular places. The physical setting is the material environment, such as the gymnasium or bell schedule. The social environment is the social setting, such as meeting friends, beating the tardy bell, or break time. The data were analyzed and organized according to the intersection of these constructs within the material and social environments of the high school. The findings operationalized this relationship by describing how participants’ interpretations of place influenced their experiences and the reciprocity of the experience shaping their interpretations.

The cognitive dimension of being-in-place determines the places that have social significance for high school students. Specifically, there were two types of places that held social significance for these participants.
The emotional dimension of being-in-place informed the meanings that students gave to the places they occupied. The meanings students gave to the academic and social places were based on value, control, and preference. Participants preferred places that gave them freedom to move around and socialize. Their favorite places in school were determined by the presence of friends or a favorite teacher. Negative feelings were more often associated with teacher-controlled spaces. Positive feelings were associated with student-controlled spaces. The value participants assigned to preferred places emanated from their sense of control in the place of school.

The physical dimension embodied experiences in the material and social environment through the navigation of the “place of school.” Students were not just navigating a material environment but a social one as well. The quality of the interactions in the social environment influenced where they liked to spend their time in the physical setting. Organizational structures such as class schedules and extracurricular activities determined how they spent most of their time. Informal routines such as break time or getting out of class guided with whom they interacted.

How do schools create places where students want to be that meet the purpose of schooling? Students already have a sense of being-in-place in school settings from the many years of experience. The concern here is the overemphasis on instruction and the underemphasis on place and experience. The existing students within the school that I visited had many negative experiences associated with school. A past focus on controlling behavior and the learning of basic skills had created students that were just “doing time” and “pretending at school.” To shift the students’ sense-of-place from the negative to the positive will take work in creating routines
and practices that meet their social needs as well as their academic needs. The participants’ interpretation of place confirmed what I believe about student experience in school.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
April 14, 2011

Tedi Gordon
Dept of ELPTS
College of Education
Box 870102

Re: IRB#: 11-OR-128 “How High School Students Understand Place”

Dear Tedi Gordon:

The University of Alabama Non-Medical Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(*) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on April 13, 2012. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Study Closure Form.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved stamped consent forms to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carapate T. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office of Research Compliance
The University of Alabama

139
April 12, 2012

Tedi Taylor Gordon
Department of Instructional Leadership
College of Education
Box 870302

Re: IRB#: 11-OR-128-R1 “How High School Students Understand ‘Place’"

Dear Tedi Gordon:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application.

Your protocol has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on April 11, 2013. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of the IRB Renewal Application. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. Changes in this study cannot be initiated without IRB approval, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of the IRB Request for Study Closure Form.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carri Y. Myles, MSM, CIM
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office of Research Compliance
The University of Alabama
APPENDIX B
EXAMPLE OF A MAP DRAWN BY A PARTICIPANT
Example of a map drawn by a participant.
Walking Tour Questions for Interview #1

1. “I would like for you to show me your school. Think of yourself as a tour guide and me as a new student. Take me to all the important places in the school.”

2. Probing questions might include:
   a. Why is this particular place important?
   b. What has happened to you here?
   c. Why is this place not important?
   d. What is the place used for?

Standard Questions for Interview #2

1. Name the places you hang out in school. Probe: Why do you go there? When are you most likely to go to these places?

2. Name the places you do not hang out in school? Probe: Why not? Do others students hang out there? Why or why not?

3. Describe a typical day of school by telling me where you go during the day. Probe: When do the places you go to each day change or vary? Do you go ever take a different route to get to there?

4. Where do you spend most of your time while you are at school? Why? Probe: What do you do during this time?

5. How much time do you spend at school outside that of the regular class day? Probe: What do you do during this time?

6. What activities are you involved in at school? Probe: How do you feel about the activities? What makes you say that?

7. What is your favorite part of the school day? Probe: What is your least favorite part of the school day?

8. You have told me about places and activities here at the school. Describe some of the people who are usually in these particular places? Probe: What are they doing while they are in these places?
9. Who hangs out where? Why do certain people hang out in certain places? Probe: Does this change from day to day? How so?

**Reflective Questions for Interview #3**

1. What school places have significance for you?
2. What meanings do you give to the places?
3. How do these places influence your experiences at school?
4. How do places influence what you do at school?

**Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. What school places have significance for you?
2. What meanings do you give to the places?
3. How do these places influence your experiences at school?
4. How do places influence what you do at school?
APPENDIX D

OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTE FORM
### Observational Field Note Memo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Starting Place</th>
<th>Last Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Participant:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order of Places</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Artifacts/Objects:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Interactions</th>
<th>Dialogue Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Summary of Observation**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Comments/Reflections</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
APPENDIX E

KNOWLEDGE RATING ACTIVITY
## Knowledge Rating Scale

### Academic Places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The classroom is the most important place in the school.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The technical center is the most important place in school.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The library is the most important place in school.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social Places

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The hallway is the most important place in school.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The gym is the most important place in school.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The locker area is the most important place in school.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The break area is the most important place in school.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results of Knowledge Rating Activity

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<th>Places</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extra-curricular</strong></td>
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<td>Gym</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Weight Room</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Room</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrapbooking Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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APPENDIX F

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES
### Key Words and Phrases

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<td>Coaches</td>
<td>Who does what</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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</table>
Common Sense Constructs

Joking and Playing Around

Fights

Eating

Sitting

Sleeping

Texting/FB/Phone

Talking

Class and Homework

Learning

Studying

Cheating

Drama/Gossip

Hanging Out

Playing Sports

Extra Activities

Flirting

Telling Stories

Getting in Trouble
APPENDIX H

HOW PARTICIPANTS FEEL IN TEACHER- OR STUDENT-CONTROLLED PLACES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teacher Dominated Places</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Student Dominated Places</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#2 11th grader</td>
<td>Vulnerable, Miserable, Lousy, Powerless, Useless, Upset, Challenged, Irritated</td>
<td>Safe, Content, Considerate, Inspired, Cheerful, Determined, Reliable</td>
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<tr>
<td>#14 11th grader</td>
<td>Confident, Important, Certain, Interested, Calm, Satisfied</td>
<td>Alienated, Bored, Playful, Offended, Neutral, Humiliated, Worked up</td>
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<tr>
<td>#5 11th grader</td>
<td>Secure, Annoyed, Angry, Frustrated, Tense, Hesitant, Eager</td>
<td>Free, Daring, Sensitive, Anxious, Confused, Distrustful, Rebellious, Curious, Embarrassed, Discouraged, Snoopy</td>
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<td>#6 11th grader</td>
<td>Frustrated, Discouraged, Hesitant, Tense</td>
<td>Daring, Free, Secure, Rebellious, Guilty, Annoyed, Eager</td>
<td>Passionate, Curious</td>
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<td>#10 12th grader</td>
<td>Vulnerable, Determined, Second Period, Upset, Provoked, Irritated</td>
<td>Impulsive, Optimistic, Reliable, Considerate</td>
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<td>#4 12th grader</td>
<td>Miserable, Tense, Confused, Anxious, Frustrated</td>
<td>Rebellious, Free, Daring</td>
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| #  | 12th grader | Tense | Anxious | Angry | Daring | Annoyed | Confused | Frustrated | Rebellious | Free | Curious | # 9
12th grader | Calm | Bored | Unhappy | Important | Nervous | Neutral | Interested | Worked up | Courageous | Confident | Fortunate |
<p>| #1 | 12th grader | Skeptical | Powerless | Second period | Irritated | Miserable | Upset | Provoked | Content | Reliable | Cheerful | Determined |
| #8 | 10th grader | Safe | Irritated | Challenged | Content | Inspired | Miserable | Upset | Cheerful | Reliable | Considerate | Determined | Optimistic | Lousy | Useless | Impulsive | Skeptical | Provoked | Inferior |
| #3 | 10th grader | Irritated | Challenged | Inspired | Upset | Cheerful | Skeptical | Determined | Optimistic | Reliable | Safe | Impulsive | Content |
| #7 | 10th grader | Unhappy | Lonely | Bored | Confident | Satisfied | Humiliated | Calm | Understanding | Courageous | Worked up | Interested | Important | Neutral | Playful |</p>
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