

CHAPTER 1

A Prologue to the Connections Journey

We hope you and your child are as excited about the coming journey as are we!

—*Connections Newsletter*

In literature, the epic tales of odysseys began with prologues. Before the pilgrimage, journey, or adventure began, such salient facts as were necessary for the audience to know in order to understand the story were announced in the prologue. This chapter is the prologue to the Connections odyssey.

PORT OF ORIGIN: CEDAR CITY AND ITS SCHOOLS

At the north edge of town, where residential subdivisions give way to the rolling hills of southern Ohio farmland, a municipal water tower proclaims Cedar City as “Home of the Chiefs.”¹ Such a proclamation is particularly apt since the tower is neighbor to the sprawling, single story edifice that is Cedar City High School. The proclamation also reflects the prominent place of the schools in the life of the community.

Located within commuting distance of three urban areas, Cedar City and the surrounding township served by the Cedar City schools is a postcard prototype of small towns of the American heartland. With a heritage whose origins coincide with Ohio’s statehood, Cedar City is described in the local Chamber of Commerce’s visitors’ guide in Norman Rockwell-ian terms: “Rich in history [Cedar City] tempts you with its picturesque 19th-century ambiance.” Cedar City’s location and atmosphere have contributed to the population growth and economic expansion the community has experienced beginning in the 1960s and continuing into the current decade. In coping with the changes growth

brings, the community has faced the challenge of maintaining the stability of its historic character. The Cedar City schools have faced the same challenge.

Not surprisingly, the community's growth has had a pronounced effect on the school system. As a district newsletter pointed out, "It is practically impossible to drive in any direction in our district and not see new construction . . . And new houses and new apartments mean new students" (District keeps growing, January 1994, p. 4). Indeed, as the district's 1992–1993 annual report indicated, enrollment had been growing at the rate of about 150 students per year for the last seven years. This pattern of growth led to the current year's addition of eight science classrooms to the high school as well as the beginning of construction of a new building to house grades four and five.

This growth has challenged the district's finances.² The current building projects were financed through a bond levy passed in 1992, and a permanent improvement levy was passed in November of 1993. But because the district had not sought an operating levy since 1980 and because state funds to the district had been cut in recent years, a cash balance comparison included in the district's 1992–1993 annual report showed that the general operating budget had experienced a declining balance since 1990. It is not surprising, then, that the district's finances would be a concern during Connections' initial implementation.

The changes in Cedar City Schools had not been confined to physical facilities. Several changes in administrative personnel were made in the three years prior to Connections' implementation. In 1990, Martin Young assumed the superintendency; the next year brought Mike Davis to Cedar City as the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction; and 1992 saw several changes in building leadership, including a new high school principal, George Cerny. Under this new leadership, the district adopted a new vision statement and each school created a building mission statement (appendix A), an extensive staff development program was initiated, and curriculum innovations (such as hands-on science for grades K–4) were introduced. All of the changes were envisioned as enhancing an educational program that enjoyed a reputation for excellence (Mike Davis interview, May 11, 1993). The 1992–1993 annual report pointed to the dis-

trict's North Central Accreditation and the many awards the schools had received, including Blue Ribbon Schools and state recognition for an outstanding drug-free education program. So it was against this backdrop of change within the context of a stable reputation for excellence that Cedar City schools announced the creation of the Connections program on March 10, 1993.

THE CONNECTIONS JOURNEY SHIPMATES

As Mike Davis and George Cerny prepared for Connections and moved for its adoption, both administrators knew selecting the members of the teaching team would be of great consequence. As Davis put it, "It was critical . . . the teachers needed to be enthusiastic . . . Having teachers that parents would recognize as top-notch was important" (May 11, 1993). With only one year as principal, George Cerny's selection of the Connections teaching team was guided by three factors: the opportunities he had had for observing the teaching and interaction of his staff, the interested teachers' areas of certification and experience with the district's ninth grade curriculum, and the advice of the department chairs. Cerny also knew that he wanted at least one female teacher as part of the team. Given these considerations, the principal chose the Connections teaching team: Sheryl Hart, Tim Schwartz, Bernie Lyons, and Dan Centers. Their introductions will focus on their life and work outside of Connections, but they may also shed light on the stories told in the chapters which follow.

Sheryl Hart, English Teacher

With twenty-five years in the district, Sheryl was the veteran teacher of the group. During her tenure, she had already taught both English and art and worked in all five buildings in the district.³ Living and working in Cedar City for so long, it seemed that Sheryl knew everyone, and everyone knew Sheryl. Prior to coming to the high school three years earlier, Sheryl had been part of a close-knit group of teachers at the junior high. It was this "family" that saw her through her divorce and new marriage nine years ago. And family was a theme that surfaced often as I talked with and came to know Sheryl.

The joys of family and home were the focus of Sheryl's life. Homey touches—a pink bud vase with a few artificial pink flowers, a pink and white two-peg coat rack, a personal desk fan, and a thermos for her herbal tea—distinguished Sheryl's desk area. Most prominent on Sheryl's desk was a smiling picture of her three-year-old granddaughter, Katie. The portrait was there not only because Sheryl unabashedly doted on Katie, but because of its inspirational power—"Who could look at that face and not smile?" Sheryl's devotion to family was particularly evident in a May 1994 interview for the local newspaper's weekly "Teachers speak out" feature. Asked for "family information," Sheryl took care to mention each family member: her parents (retired and living in Cedar City); her husband, John; her stepson, Adam (a senior at Cedar City High School); her son, her daughter-in-law, and her two granddaughters.

Balancing her devotion to home and family with her commitment to school, students, and colleagues was not always easy. At times the two blended well—as when John and Sheryl attended Adam's wrestling matches or chaperoned a school dance, or when Sheryl brought Katie along to "cool" for an hour's work during a weekend. Sometimes they didn't—being a teacher at the school her stepson attended at times cast Sheryl in the role of "wicked stepmother." And often, the finiteness of time brought home and school into conflict. When a teacher friend asked Sheryl to participate in a student-faculty retreat scheduled for a weekend in January, Sheryl, acknowledging that "This is just the kind of thing I enjoy" and that she hated to disappoint her friend and the students who wanted her to come, recognized her need for time at home apart from school was stronger and she declined the invitation.

The conflicted feelings Sheryl expressed in this incident revealed her deep concern and interest in her school family of teachers and students. I often heard and observed these feelings for her school family during the Connections year. Students often visited Sheryl's room, sometimes to work as a student aide or on business related to her role as a class advisor, but at times for no other reason than just to visit. One student in particular, Steven, was a frequent morning visitor. Steven shared Sheryl's interest in science fiction and was in the process of writing a story to be sub-

mitted for publication. Half-glasses perched on her nose and her neatly coifed red head bent to the task of editing Steven's efforts, Sheryl spoke with the student about his writing, his thoughts on current events, the books he had read lately, and his plans for the future. This mentoring type of relationship with students was one Sheryl valued. When asked (in the "Teachers speak out" interview) to recall the "proudest moment in your career," Sheryl replied, "Two of my former students that I still correspond with have become English teachers and credit my influence as being the reason for their career choices."

Just as her relationship with students was important to Sheryl, she also valued her ties to her fellow teachers. Often, as fourth period ended, a female teacher would meet Sheryl in the hall or peek into Sheryl's room to ask about plans for lunch. And Sheryl, speaking of her colleagues in the English hall, referred to them as "neighbors." When a teacher survey about staff morale was circulated in November, Sheryl shared her responses with me. Asked to identify her role among the staff, Sheryl had circled "mix with many" rather than "isolated"; she had circled "no" when asked "Do you feel isolated from other teachers?"; and in response to "What can we do to improve interaction between departments?" Sheryl had written "More social get-togethers . . . especially in the A.M. when we're not so tired." As she joined the Connections teaching team, Sheryl's sociable nature would be distinctly evident in the way she built her relationship with Tim, Dan, and Bernie.

Perhaps Sheryl's introduction is best summarized in her own words. The local newspaper profile included Sheryl's comments when asked why she is a teacher: "At the risk of sounding totally corny, I love it. I think it's what I do best. Except for the paper work, I love every aspect of it. I enjoy the reading, sharing, planning, writing, and working with students. I've always wanted to teach."

Tim Schwartz, Learning Disabilities Teacher

Tim came to Connections with fifteen years of teaching experience, the last eight within the Cedar City system. Most of his teaching experience, and all of his years at Cedar City, had been as a learning disabilities teacher. But like Sheryl, Tim also had a

background in art education. Also like Sheryl, he had taught at the junior high before coming to the high school five years ago. And again like Sheryl, it appeared that Tim knew everyone and everyone knew Tim in this small community. His strong community ties came of being a native son: he was a graduate of the Cedar City Schools.

A look at the area surrounding his teacher's desk revealed much about Tim. What was immediately noticeable was the number of calendars and schedules—among them a desk calendar, a schedule for IEP (Individual Education Plan) conferences, a memo about an upcoming meeting from the local teachers association president, basketball scouting and winter sports schedules. The calendars and schedules reflected Tim's multiple roles at Cedar City High School.

The IEP conference schedule reflected Tim's role as a special education teacher. During the spring of 1993, Tim was honored at the annual county work-study banquet as "Teacher of the Year." As a special education teacher, Tim implemented the IEPs for eighteen learning disabilities students, ten of whom were ninth-grade students enrolled in Connections. But contact with parents and concerns that student goals and educational programs were being addressed were not confined to the week of formal conferences held in April. Regular documentation of student progress in mainstream classes meant constant conversation with other faculty members who taught learning disabilities students. Tim needed to set aside time, at times in blocks of two days or more, for academic assessment using instruments such as Key Math. Tim's "study skills" class, held the last period each day, derived its content from the needs of his students. It was a time for assisting students with their assignments, for providing tutoring or alternative instruction in difficult concepts or tasks, and for working with students individually or in small groups to develop strategies for success with the various elements of the high school curriculum. Filling the role of learning disabilities (LD) teacher had created two professional habits that Tim saw himself as bringing to Connections: "I see myself as one who keeps records; I write a lot of stuff down. And then I see myself as flexible. I can jump off and go wherever I'm needed. I'm used to that as an LD teacher" (September 17, 1993).

The memo from the local teachers association president reflected Tim's role as an elected building representative on the association's executive committee. The role involved both communication and politics. Politics were especially visible at two points during the school year. During the fall, seven candidates vied for two open seats on the board of education. The election took on significance as two candidates appeared to be allied to Freedom 2000, an emerging group concerned with issues of reform and opposing outcome based education in particular. The association sponsored a forum at which all the candidates appeared and later acted to recommend three candidates. Politics and the teachers association were also visible during the spring as the board of education acted to place an operating levy on the May ballot and to make budget cuts that necessitated a reduction in force. As a building representative, Tim would be actively involved in both issues.

The basketball scouting and winter sports schedules reflected Tim's role as an assistant basketball coach. Tim's interest in sports was evidenced not only in the schedules taped to his blackboard behind his desk, but also in the *USA Today* newspaper that was delivered each morning by a student aide. Invariably, Tim would scan the front page but then move to the sports section for more detailed reading. As a baseball card aficionado and collector, Tim's interest was particularly piqued during the early fall and spring by baseball reports. But with November came the scrimmages and scouting duties of his coaching role, a role that had its frustrations. As Tim commented, "Everything that could go wrong with basketball is—injuries, grades, uniforms not in" (November 30, 1993). Nor was the role without its demands, particularly on Tim's time. One morning, early in November, Tim was not at school at his usual early hour. Harried and hurried, Tim entered his room explaining, "I didn't get up until 7:05 . . . I set out my clothes last night because I know how tired I get during basketball season" (November 16, 1993). This year the time demands, even though anticipated, seemed more acutely felt. Another desk artifact helps to explain.

Amid the calendars and schedules sat a picture of Tim's wife, Peg, a fifth-grade teacher for Cedar City. As with Sheryl, the picture revealed Tim's strong family ties. For Tim, family encompassed not

only his wife but also his parents and sisters and the house he and Peg had recently purchased. His mother had died two years before, and his father fell ill soon after. Frequent hospital stays led to this autumn's decision to place his father in a nursing home, a decision made easier by one sister's being a nurse there. For weeks, each PA system announcement that "Mr. Schwartz, you have a call" brought an anxious look to Tim's normally relaxed expression. Finally, early in October, Tim's father died.

So throughout the fall, as basketball season arrived, Tim was faced with the duties accompanying his role as executor for his father—duties such as cleaning out his father's belongings and selling his father's car. At the same time, work on a house being built next to Tim and Peg's home created a mess in their yard and the water softener acted up, events that would normally not have ruffled Tim's affable demeanor. But as Tim commented to Bernie one morning, "Normally that small stuff doesn't bother me, but not now" (November 30, 1993).

Just as Tim shared with Sheryl an art background, strong community ties, junior high teaching experience, and devotion to family, he also shared interests and experiences with Bernie Lyons.

Bernie Lyons, Social Studies Teacher

Bernie Lyons loved (and loves) his wife, his family, teaching, coaching, and the Cleveland Browns. Balancing his devotions had made Bernie a self-styled "organization freak" (October 5, 1993), paying attention to cycles and patterns of daily life. After fifteen years of teaching, nine of them at Cedar City High School, the rhythms of the school year were familiar to Bernie. For Bernie, the pattern included his usual hours after school coaching soccer in the fall and track in the spring. Bernie's household also had its school year rhythms, rhythms that reflected the work his wife, Karen, does as a county school psychologist serving Cedar City Schools and the needs and interests of their three children: Angie, twelve; Ron, eight; and Mollie, two. This year, the household and school rhythms would each have their moments of change.

Some of the moments were minor, as when Bernie's youngest child's "night terrors" disrupted several nights' sleep. Others

could be anticipated in a two career household, for example, when Karen took a course for recertification during the spring while Bernie was coaching track, the household schedule became what Bernie characterized as “el suckola.” But other changes were more major.

One such change came in October when the family, including the dog, moved. Each facet of the move—selling the old house, holding a garage sale, moving belongings into the new house, painting, and holding a Christmas open house—merited at least a mention at daily planning sessions with his colleagues. But without question, the change that most affected Bernie was the death of his mother in late October.

Separated by distance (his parents’ home was in South Carolina) and voicing the frustration of helplessness in the face of his mother’s pancreatic cancer, Bernie—like Tim—spent the early weeks of the school year cringing each time the PA called him to the office to take a telephone call. So in late September, when Tim told the group that his father was near death, Bernie said, “I know what you’re saying” (September 21, 1993). The combined stresses of the household move and his mother’s death took their toll: “I find myself being short with Karen and the kids. We had to go away over Thanksgiving for Karen’s family, but that was hard. We’re still not totally unpacked and that bothers me. The swing set’s not in—I see it every time I go out the back door. We need to get a dog house. We went Christmas shopping without the kids last night, and the kid trashed the house . . . I can’t veg out” (November 30, 1993).

Yet during this time Bernie willingly took on the role of representing the high school on the panel of teachers who posed questions at the teachers association’s Meet the Candidates forum.

Change was not limited to home. In addition to joining the Connections teaching team, that same year Bernie teamed with the English department chair, Daisy Nelson, for the last two periods each day to teach the American history portion of an American studies dyad. Being part of this dyad meant meeting regularly with Daisy to coordinate curricula and design learning experiences. For example, together Bernie and Daisy devised a Civil War meal project for the first week of December. Also during that

week, Bernie decided to submit his resignation as soccer coach for the following fall. As he explained to Assistant Superintendent Mike Davis in early February, "This is the most work I've ever had teaching."

Yet the year was not without its moments of stability. The normal rhythms of the school year—grading periods, faculty Christmas lunch carry-ins, a winter running club he formed for track team members, NCAA basketball pools, his son's participation in elementary school field day events, his role as coach for his daughter's spring soccer team, the routines of coaching the school's track team, and many snow days—made the winter and early spring a period of relative stability in Bernie's year. But one final dramatic event marked the last weeks of school: Bernie underwent an emergency appendectomy on May 22, 1994.

Certainly Bernie's year was far from ordinary. Glimpses of what is ordinary for Bernie can be seen in an October 1993 district newsletter profile that featured him. The article described Bernie's background, including his master's degree in gifted education, and offered this portrait:

You know, he's one of those teachers that students say can be very demanding but they really like his class anyway. He's one that lives and breathes his subject—history . . . He is now in his 16th year as a teacher and says he couldn't think of doing anything else . . . His interests include sports, reading, fishing, his family, and, of course, history. When asked about his life's work, he shared these thoughts: "It's a challenge to *motivate* teenagers to enjoy and appreciate history. That's why I tried to include a variety of teaching methods and approaches in my instruction."

Bernie's loves, the changes he experienced during the year, and his busy involvement in the life of Cedar City and its schools—all of these elements would shape Bernie's relationships as part of the Connections teaching team.

Dan Centers, Physical Science Teacher

Dan worked for ten years in industry before coming to Cedar City High School to teach physical science and physics in 1990. During the Connections year, he was enrolled in a master's degree

program in educational technology. Some aspects of Dan's life and work that shaped his Connections year were readily apparent: his extracurricular school roles and his interest and work with technology. But as a quiet, often reticent, and above all a private person, it took time and rare moments of self-revelation to really get to know Dan.

Unlike Bernie, Tim, or Sheryl, no family pictures set on his desk. But as the year went by, such moments gradually revealed the influences family had on Dan. One moment came on a November morning when a student stopped by Dan's room before the tardy bell sounded. The student had brought a piece of creative writing, a "Star Trek" script, he wanted Dan to read. As the student, a classic "nerd," left, Dan commented, "Just my luck, some day I'll have a kid just like that." I asked Dan if his comment reflected that he was like this student when he was that age. "Oh, no!" Dan quickly responded, "I was a lousy student until about eleventh grade, one who would go smoking by the trees."

Through such snippets of conversation a family picture emerged. Born in New York as the last of three children (with a sister ten years older and a brother seven years older), Dan's family moved to a suburb of the city north of Cedar City in time for him to attend the large high school there. Dan's sister now lived in suburban Detroit with her family, and Dan's father made his home with them most of the time. But for about ten days of each month, his father stayed with Dan. Unmarried and living alone in a house in a village north of Cedar City, Dan sometimes found his father's visits disconcerting. As Dan commented one morning, "It drives me crazy. He goes through all my dishes in a day and a half" (June 6, 1994). Dan's father is a widower; Dan's mother died of a brain tumor six years earlier.

So when Bernie's mother was dying, Dan talked privately with Bernie. "I told [him] of my experience, so he could share. I said, 'You know I went through that myself. At least in my case and yours, you have time to say I love you and come to terms'" (September 10, 1993). One legacy Dan's mother left him was a recipe for stuffing Dan made when the family visited his home for Thanksgiving. Cooking and hosting the family gathering, a tradition begun while his mother was still alive, was something Dan enjoyed.

More visibly so than his family, Dan's extracurricular work affected his Connections experience. His role as senior class advisor claimed many a morning before classes began. After a fall fund-raising sale and a Christmas dance, the frequency of these meetings with class officers and representatives increased dramatically as the date of the junior-senior prom loomed ever closer. Myriad details—choosing colors and a song for the theme; preparing wills and prophecies; arranging for pictures, tickets, chaperones, traffic control—needed Dan's attention. As would be his custom in other situations, Dan created a computer file to organize all of these details.

These morning meetings revealed more than Dan's organizing abilities and attention to detail. They were also times when students occasionally witnessed Dan's own brand of humor. As planning at one session became a frenzy of ideas, Dan, referring to his early receding hairline, joked, "I'm getting all charged up! My hair's standing on end! *Both* of them!" Another session produced the wry comment "When I was your age, about five years ago," which immediately drew laughter. But more often, Dan's witticisms were less broad and sometimes escaped students. Such wit would not escape his teaching colleagues.

Just as he was conscientious in his work as senior class advisor, Dan also took his membership on both the district's Instructional Council and Instructional Technology Committee seriously. As one of two elected representatives from the high school to the Instructional Council, the monthly meetings exposed Dan to a wide range of curriculum issues. For example, Dan reported that the January meeting considered issues of grouping, weighted grades, and the continuation of honors English at the ninth-grade level (January 11, 1994). Such issues certainly had political overtones, as did the Instructional Technology Committee's effort to create computer laboratories from units donated to the district. Dan doubted the possibility and efficiency of this effort (November 16, 1993).

This concern for efficiency evident in his extracurricular work was compatible both with Dan's interest and extensive use of computers and with his choice of educational technology as his field of graduate study. As the Connections year ended, he was looking forward to the internship experiences he would have over

the summer. A foundations course he had taken during the fall had not generated the same enthusiasm. Part of the educational technology degree program, it was a course Dan appeared to endure rather than enjoy. As the fall term came to a close, Dan commented on the course's lack of organization: "There's no text. The professor rambles" (November 16, 1993).

Dan's dry wit and self-deprecating humor, his skills at organizing, his attention to detail, and his expertise with computers and complex television uses would be evident in the niche Dan carved for himself on the Connections team.

Together, Sheryl, Tim, Bernie, and Dan would be shipmates on the Connections journey. Others also were involved in the Connections journey.

Sojourners and Fellow Travelers

Sharon Finch, a parent of a Connections student, volunteered her expertise soon after her daughter's enrollment was assured. As a part-time art teacher in a nearby city district, Sharon's schedule left her Fridays open so that she was available during the Connections block. Sharon wanted to devise and instruct students in art projects that would connect with the Connections curriculum. In order to become familiar with the instructional units being planned, she attended meetings with the Connections teachers during the summer. So it was that Sharon Finch came to be a Connections sojourner, visiting approximately one Friday each month to provide art instruction.

Another sojourner arrived as a surprise in mid-September. Terri Gabriel, a third-year English education major at an area university, came to Cedar City High School to observe and participate in field experiences during the university's fall quarter. Terri's arrival came as a surprise because, while she was aware that a student would be coming to Cedar City High School's English department, Sheryl had not understood that the student would be assigned to her. With her broad New York City accent, Terri's "Good morning!" greeting soon became a regular part of the first-period Friday common planning time. But her presence during planning time, like her presence during Connections class periods, was that of an observer. Terri and Sheryl had agreed that

during each Friday's visit, Terri would observe and assist with grading papers during the Connections block and gradually assume some teaching duties during Sheryl's afternoon ninth-grade honors English classes. So Connections students would become accustomed to Terri's presence as an observer on Friday mornings, but they would not come to recognize her as part of the teaching team. All too quickly, Terri's university quarter ended and her limited sojourn with Connections was over.

Another university student's sojourn, also a surprise, came just as Cedar City High School began first semester exams. Jim Pelfrey's sixteen-week assignment as Dan's student teacher was a last-minute affair. Jim's roommate had been paired with a biology teacher at Cedar City High School, so when Jim needed a student teaching assignment in physics, Dan was chosen as Jim's cooperating teacher. After an initial period of observing and assisting with lab work and grading, Jim assumed limited teaching responsibilities with Dan's afternoon physics classes. The harsh winter created an unusual number of snow days, so Jim's entre to Connections teaching responsibilities was delayed until February 22. But long before that, Jim's youthful good looks had attracted the attention of female Connections students. A month before the end of the Cedar City school year, Jim's Connections sojourn ended as he graduated.

Unlike sojourners whose ties to Connections were defined by days of the week or portions of the year, fellow travelers were present at Cedar City High School on a daily basis. The freshman class counselor, Barbara Matthews, would deal with student schedules, serve as a school contact for parents of learning disabilities students, and coordinate the ninth-grade proficiency test.⁴ Two administrators were also fellow travelers on the Connections journey.

The Connections year was George Cerny's second year as principal of Cedar City High School. With Mike Davis, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, George had visited a program in a suburban Ohio high school that served as a model for Connections. He had also arranged for the chairs of the English, social studies, and science departments to visit and observe the program. It was also George who wrote the application for a grant of ten thousand dollars used to purchase teaching resources and pay for a summer planning stipend for the Con-

nections teachers. During the Connections year, George would often find occasion to visit Connections classes, and he twice brought visitors from nearby schools with him. At times, his observations were for the explicit purpose of teacher evaluation, a duty he and the assistant principal shared. This year George would evaluate Tim and Sheryl. Bernie, the sole Connections teacher with tenure, was not scheduled for evaluation this year. Dan would be formally observed and evaluated by Frank Barton, the assistant principal.

Frank Barton's travels with Connections would not be limited to the role of evaluating one teacher. As is the tradition in many high schools, one of Frank's major roles as assistant principal was to deal with student discipline issues. Frank had years of experience in this role; the year would be his last before retiring. During the course of the year, several Connections students were summoned to Frank's office to see his aquarium and receive Frank's swift and fair meting out of justice—a few on a fairly regular basis. The infractions would range from tardiness to theft of school property, from continued class disruptions that merited a referral from a teacher to parking violations. But students in trouble were not the only ones who knew Frank. All of Cedar City High School—faculty, students, cooks, custodians, bus drivers—knew Frank as the voice that started each day.

OF TIDE AND TIME: ROUTINES AND SCHEDULES

The warning bell sounded at 7:30; the tardy bell tolled at 7:35; and, while news aired on Channel One, teachers took attendance.⁵ But the day truly began with the morning announcements. Virtually every day, Frank's voice could be heard throughout the building saying, "Good morning, and welcome to [Cedar City] High School." Routinely, after a sports report, after reminders of extracurricular meetings, and after verbal teacher memos had been issued, Frank concluded the announcements with his daily injunction: "Have a great day, and we'll see you in the halls." For the forty-four teachers, three counselors, the athletic director, the two administrators, and more than 750 students, the seven-period day had begun.

The four Connections teachers shared a common planning time during first period each day. The next three class periods formed the Connections block. Each Connections teacher also had a regular planning period during the fifth period, which also included a half hour for lunch. During the last two class periods, Sheryl taught two sections of honors English 9, Bernie taught the American studies dyad, Dan taught two sections of physics, and Tim taught LD classes. (See appendix B for school schedules.)

Within the Connections block, routines and schedules also emerged. At the beginning of the school year, the teachers divided the eighty Connections students into four advisory groups, with each given a color name. The ten learning disabilities students were included in Tim's group of twenty, the Red group. (Tim explained that his choice of name was based on his love for the Cincinnati Reds.) Sheryl's group became the Blue group, and Dan's was the Green group. Not content to give his group a common primary color title, Bernie christened his group Magenta. The three-period block of time allowed the Connections teachers to create various schedule options. There would be times when the entire Connections cohort met for the full block; for example, on the first day, for many of Sharon's art projects, or to see a movie. At other times, the Red group would be parceled out among the other three groups for a three-way rotation based on academic content areas. More complex was a combining of Red-Green/Blue-Magenta in a 1½-1½ period configuration balanced out over a period of three days. The block also allowed for field trips to be planned with minimal disruption to the non-Connections portion of the day.

Yet another major influence on the times and tides that would affect the Connections journey would be the Cedar City High School building itself.

QUARTERS AND ACCOMMODATIONS: CEDAR CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Cedar City High School was completed in 1969, but many long-time residents still referred to it as "the new high school." Even without the incised concrete sign proclaiming the building's iden-

tity, the large parking lot, long driveway, and sports fields all revealed the building's character as a high school. Entering the building removed any doubt. The cinder block walls painted beige, the neutral color of the tile floors, the building directory, the bulletin boards that dotted the main hallway, and, above all, the yellow-enameled lockers all fit the decor common to most high schools. But a look down the main hallway revealed touches that were different as well.

A grouping of four chairs upholstered in a semblance of gold, one of the school colors, was arranged to create a lobby of sorts at the main entrance. Benches had been placed at intervals along the central corridor, and students often clustered there before school or between classes. Interspersed among the bulletin boards, display cases exhibited student artwork. An electronic message board and banners relieved the constant beige of the walls. It was a pleasant and clean atmosphere—no graffiti-covered walls, no signs of inattention to maintenance—that bespoke the character of the town and the student body. It was an environment that was comfortable for the overwhelmingly white, middle-class students of Cedar City.

Exploring the rooms and corridors off the main hall also revealed much about Cedar City High School. The auditorium, with its cushioned seats, large stage, and lighting and sound systems for theatrical productions, was large enough to accommodate the full student body. The gym was also designed to hold large audiences in its bleachers. Two classrooms had been designated for the Air Force ROTC program, and its students proudly dressed in their blue uniforms each Thursday. But the ROTC classroom identity was apparent only by peering into the rooms. All of the classrooms had the solid metal door and rectangular regularity of traditional school design. Signals such as the room numbers above the door, the presence of such fixtures as science laboratories, and individual teacher decoration served to distinguish one classroom from another. But by far the most salient feature, and the one that allowed freshmen to navigate their way through the halls without becoming totally lost during the first days of school, was the configuration of corridors by curricular departments. As I soon would learn, the configuration was not only physical.

This constellation pattern by department had significance for the Connections program. Sheryl's classroom (132) was located at the intersection of the English wing and the library. Bernie's room (138) in the Social Studies wing was separated from the English end of the hall by the library and the main corridor. At the beginning of the year, Dan's room (314) at the end of the science wing was quite distant from Sheryl's or Bernie's, but it was across the hall from the large study hall room (307) that would be allocated to Connections during the Connections block. When the new science rooms were completed at midyear, Dan moved to his new classroom on the extension of the math wing. Tim, whose room was shared with another special education teacher and so was not available to him during the Connections block for the first semester, claimed Dan's old room as his own at the beginning of February. The Connections teachers' scattered classrooms would affect student travel between rooms when the Connections schedule was out of sync with building periods. The scattered geography of Connections classrooms would also affect communication within the teaching team.

THE PROLOGUE CONCLUDES

Cedar City and the high school, the Connections teachers, administrators, and others who would be part of the Connections odyssey have been introduced. Now it is time for the stories of the Connections journey to begin.